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## Protecting paradise

By JoBeth Phillips Jun 17, 2013



In conjunction with marine conservation company, [WiseOceans](#), the [Four Seasons Resort Seychelles](#) and the Seychelles Ministry of Environment and Energy (MoEE) have joined together to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to promote environmental management and coral reef monitoring at Petite Anse bay in Mahé, Seychelles.

Wills Agricole, Principle Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and director general Flavien Joubert joined Four Seasons Resort Seychelles' general manager, Alex Porteous and its resort manager Bob Suri – along with Wise Oceans CEO, Abbie Hine, and members of the Resort's sustainability committee – to celebrate the relationship on the beach.

Four Seasons Resort Seychelles has had a WiseOceans marine educator on-site as a full-time member of staff for the past eight months, during which time a programme of talks, guided snorkelling excursions and Kids Club activities has been setup. In addition, the team has been monitoring marine life, such as turtles, rays and coral, and recording figures to use as part of a larger monitoring programme.

With the collaboration of the Ministry of Environment, they are now able to share this information, which will help expand the Ministry's resources for research in this part of Mahé, Seychelles.

They will be undertaking coral reef monitoring, beach profiling, turtle monitoring, and sighting of cetaceans for the MoEE, and also taking part in Reef Check and Coral Watch, two internationally-recognised non-Government- organisation monitoring programmes. In addition, the parties plan to begin a program of coral reef restoration to the bay, later in 2013.

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Moreover, Four Seasons Resort Seychelles set up a Green Fund in early 2012, which gives its guests the option of making a donation of one Euro per night of their stay, which goes towards supporting the work of WiseOceans at the Four Seasons Resort Seychelles.

Alex Porteous, general manager at the resort, comments: "The marine education programme is an important part of a larger project to continue supporting sustainability in our little piece of paradise here in Petite Anse. We realise that we are just a small part of this ecosystem, but we could have a larger negative impact on it if we don't provide checks on ourselves.

"In the last few months, we have brought in a green option for guests who would like to opt to have the linens refreshed less frequently to save water; biodegradable body wash and sun lotions at the beachside to ensure that we don't add any chemicals to the ocean that could bleach the coral; and introduced the green fund, allowing guests to donate towards the work that WiseOceans is doing to protect and promote the oceans.

"We are working closely to look for ways that we can do more. It is important to us as a company, and we know that it is important to our guests."

Talks and group-guided snorkels provided by WiseOceans are provided on a complimentary basis for resort guests. They can also opt to take a private guided snorkel for a small additional fee, which goes directly into the green fund, benefiting WiseOceans projects.

WiseOceans is also providing marine education for all staff at the resort, and will be giving swimming lessons to staff to allow team members to enjoy the beauty of their surroundings, and better understand the importance of protecting the Seychelles' fragile environment.

Wills Agricole is delighted with the new partnership and the opportunities it presents. "Where possible, Four Seasons Resort Seychelles and WiseOceans will involve the local community by keeping them informed and involved in the projects and to utilise their extensive knowledge of the area to enrich the project at Petite Anse.

"I am confident that with our concerted efforts, the Memorandum of Understanding we have signed will deliver the benefits it promises. We look forward to closely working with Four Seasons and WiseOceans as of now, and beyond."

### Images



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