

The Seychelles: towards a truly sustainable blue economy?

The concept of the blue economy, which emerged in 2010, aims to promote sustainable use of ocean and coastal area resources, encouraging economic growth while protecting marine ecosystems.



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Fishing with traps aboard a boat near Victoria, Seychelles.

In the 1980s, fishermen from Brittany and Spain began working in the abundant waters of the Seychelles. With them came an economy devoted to a largely foreign industrial fishing industry, with the creation of a port and a canning industry that now employs some 2,000 people.

During the Covid pandemic, tourism came to a halt, but the canning industry's exports soared to unprecedented levels, thanks in particular to strong global demand for long-life food products.

However, this canning industry may prove vulnerable under other conditions: during El Niño climate periods, pelagic fish stocks move eastwards, taking with them the foreign fishermen, who then prefer to unload their fish in Thailand, resulting in a significant loss of income for the Seychelles. And for a good reason: 10% of the GDP of this small country, which is highly vulnerable to external hazards, comes from tuna fishing and related activities.

In 2022, in light of this observation, the Seychelles' economic circuit was modelled. This digital model, which can be combined with physical and environmental data, incorporates the impact of medium- and long-term climate variations on the economy, thereby helping to create the conditions for a more stable and sustainable economy in the Seychelles.

Several approaches have been tested: installing offshore wind turbines to improve the country's energy independence, acquiring industrial or semi-industrial local boats to reduce dependence on foreign fishing fleets, or developing circular economy channels to recycle fishing equipment (such as used nets and fish aggregating devices left in the water by fishermen).

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- ... A digital model is helping the people of the Seychelles to gauge the economic impact of political decisions and environmental changes, and therefore to look to their future ...



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Artisanal fishing boat next to an industrial tuna boat in Port Victoria, Seychelles.

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Children fishing on a reef flat in Reao, French Polynesia. © IRD/S.Andréfouët

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