



2020 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Drinking water bottling plant Saba

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Saba

Country: Dutch Caribbean

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Position: Policy officer

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Islands & Seaside
- Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID -19
- Post COVID -19 recovery
- One of the 17 SDGs* *(if yes, which one)* Click or tap to choose

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: <http://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices [here](#)



DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Saba is largely dependent on rain water catchment for water supply. This water is collected in cisterns all over the island and used for a wide variety of purposes, like agriculture, washing, cooking and sometimes drinking. At times of water shortage additional water is supplied via a reverse osmosis (RO) factory. This water is trucked from filling stations on the island and pumped into the cisterns. The Public Entity advises the community not to drink either the rain water or the RO water, because the quality cannot be guaranteed. Many people therefore purchase bottled water in supermarkets. There are several reasons why this is an undesirable situation. First, bottled water has a huge environmental impact: it needs to be imported from abroad and because of its large volume and weight has a major impact on Saba's environmental footprint with regards to transportation. Additionally, the bottles are single use and have to be burned at a landfill after use or, worse, end up in the environment through littering. The relatively high cost of bottled water creates another issue: some members of the community continue drinking water from cisterns because they cannot afford the bottled water. Additionally, the bottled water sold on Saba does not have the same high quality as what is demanded from the Electricity and Drinking Water Act BES. A third factor is Sabas dependence on import for the availability of drinking water. This makes the island very vulnerable in times of crises.

Methods, steps and tools applied

To ensure a self-sufficient supply of high quality and affordable drinking water, the Public Entity is installing a drinking water bottling plant on the island. In this plant, large reusable water bottles (3 and 5 gallon) will be filled with high quality drinking water that meets the requirements from the Electricity and Drinking Water Act BES. Because the water is produced locally and the government controls water production, the production costs can be kept low. It is expected that this water can be sold for around 2 thirds of the current price of bottled water and in the future can drop to 50% of that price or lower. The concept is that a fee would be paid for the bottle, which will be given back to the customer with the return of the bottle. This means that the person would essentially only be paying for the water. This price would be the same for everyone, locals and visitors alike, which means that longer term visitors who stay in villas or cottages, or the village managers themselves, may also benefit from buying these larger water bottles to have in their accommodation.

The project is executed in close consultation and with finances of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

Key success factors



A key success factor was the decision to produce drinking water in reusable bottles instead of disposable bottles. Initially there was a fear that the community would not be open to such a change (the reusable bottles are a lot larger and therefore more difficult to carry), but the current societal focus on sustainability and reduction of plastic waste has created more and more support for this decision. What also helped was that the government is simultaneously working on a single use plastic ban. In that light, both the high school and the government have already switched to water dispensers and reusable bottles. The use of large reusable bottles has therefore become more mainstream already in the past year.

Lessons learned

It was difficult to find the right water processing and bottling system for the small Saban population. With the help of advice from Vitens Evides International, an organization that shares Dutch expertise on drinking water provision in projects all over the world, a system was tailor made for the required demand and quality.

Results, achievements and recognitions

The government switching to water dispensers with reusable water bottles already saves over 50.000 bottles of water per year. It is expected that once the bottling plant is operational, the import of bottled water will reduce significantly. Some hotels have already started using water stations, which have water dispensers and give their guests reusable bottles to use. This can be expanded so that all hotels use this method for their guests, thereby highlighting our local water and further reducing the disposable water bottles on island.

Restaurants may also buy this water, which will reduce the cost of buying the imported small water bottles. Instead they can service water in pitchers filled via the large bottle dispensers, highlighting the local water and reducing the cost for the consumers.

Additional references



Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.

