

Local communities engagement through the procurement of local food supplies in the Philippines

Quick facts



Type of procurement:
local food supplies



Year of inception: **2017**



Type of business: **Hotel**



Organisation name:
**El Nido Resorts –
Ten Knots Development Corporation**



Number of staff: **341**



Country/region: **Palawan, Philippines**

Background information

El Nido Resorts is a group of sustainable island resorts in the El Nido Town and Taytay municipalities in Palawan, Philippines. It comprises four island resorts and three estate hotels in the mainland which offers various tourist facilities and activities.

The resorts are located in an area that originally depended on farming and fishing – particularly in El Nido Town (41,606 inhabitants in 2015) and Taytay (75,165 inhabitants in 2015). However, tourism has now become a primary source of livelihood, growing at over 25% annually, with more than 200,000 tourists visiting the area in 2018.

The challenge

The popularity of El Nido as a prime tourist destination in the Philippines resulted in the rapid growth in tourist arrivals (200,000 tourists in 2018, approx. stays of 2.7 nights per guest) and led to an overall increase of the area's population – including locals. El Nido Resorts took up the challenge **to address an increasing food demand, while creating opportunities for the local communities** to generate income and engage throughout the food value chain.

The strategy

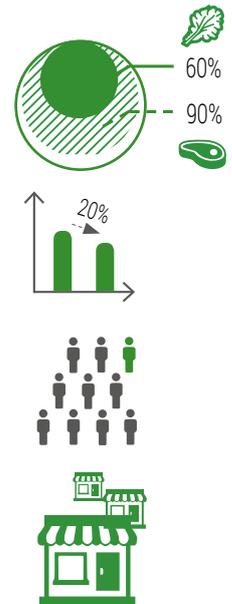
Not only did El Nido Resorts decide to create meaningful employment opportunities to hire locally and thus enable locals from El Nido and Taytay to earn a decent living and stay in their own community, the ambition was also **to support local food industries by specifically procuring from suppliers in the region**. The following actions support the El Nido Resorts local community engagement strategy:

- In 2017, A Memorandum of Agreement between the Ten Knots Development Corporation and EL-Nido-based farmers guarantees that at least one ton of vegetables per week are supplied by local farmers to El Nido Resorts. While this agreement aims at encouraging more locals to venture into farming, 19 tons of vegetables per month are still sourced from other provinces in Luzon.
- Since 2006, **training for local farmers** has been delivered on El Nido Resorts demonstration site facility, a 4-hectare organic farm in El Nido Town to help improve the quality of their produce for long-term sustainability. In addition, since June 2018, A 22-day free course on horticulture and vegetable production is run by El Nido Resorts for 25 farmers in cooperation with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

El Nido Resorts also sponsors community competency training. For example, women from local barangays (villages) are trained in weaving to produce native bags and slippers, which are purchased by El Nido Resorts as room amenities - thereby ensuring ongoing demand.
- In collaboration with the Asian Conservation Foundation, a **mapping of available natural resources as well as local manpower** was conducted to identify the potential of local communities.

Impacts

- In El Nido Resorts – focus has been given to creating more sustainable menus, using local and seasonal food – **locally and organically produced vegetables comprise 60% of total kitchen purchases**; while **locally reared livestock comprise 90% of total kitchen purchases**.
- Procuring local food enabled an overall reduction of overall **food costs of 20% in 2016**.
- Choosing local suppliers also enabled to reduce transportation costs, and ultimately contributed to reduce GHG emissions.
- **Locals represent nearly 90% of staff** in El Nido Resorts.
- Engaging local communities on food supplies triggered the **creation of local SMEs** in the tourism industry, including in the production of local handicrafts, small-scale accommodations, and local transportation services. These new businesses nurture the development of the local tourism industry.



“Sustainability expressed in gastronomy is one of the challenges faced by resorts and hotels in hard-to-reach areas today. Global standards and tastes rise every single day. To be authentic, which better partners can one find than among the locals?”

- Mariglo I. Laririt, Director of Sustainability, Ten Knots Development Corporation



Lessons learned

- ✓ Ensuring quality, volume, and variety of supply in remote areas is a challenge best met by partnering with local producers, who will benefit from such mutual engagement as much as the resorts and hotels which they supply.
- ✓ Encouraging agricultural activities within protected areas like El Nido may contribute to unwanted impacts such as forest conversion and pressure on coastal fisheries. To limit as much as possible such negative impacts, large consumers like resorts and hotels have a responsibility to only partner with farmers and fishermen who abide by protected area laws and engage in nature-friendly practices.



Training course at the El Nido Resorts demonstration site facility.

For further information

-  <http://www.elnidoresorts.com/sustainability;>
<http://environment.elnidoresorts.com/>
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Supported by:
 Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

based on a decision of the German Bundestag