

How do we create a sustainable and resilient Mauritius together?

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Towards a Sustainable and Resilient Mauritius

Never before has the topic of sustainability received so much attention. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 earlier this year, our lives have been disrupted in many ways. This has put the issue of environmental degradation and climate change in a new light. Becoming more sustainable and resilient is now an even stronger imperative.

As **Mr. Avinash Gopee, the Chairman of the Tourism Authority**, the lead organisation implementing the EU-funded **Sustainable Island Mauritius (SIM)** project said: "Following the numerous challenges that we face, this new era leads us to believe that sustainable tourism is more than ever a necessity in order to preserve the socio-economic resilience of Mauritius."

Protecting local producers, preserving the terrestrial and marine environment, encouraging a circular economy, participating in the development of the community, producing, and consuming intelligently, are all parameters to be urgently considered...”

The ongoing pandemic has put the tourism sector to a grinding halt. In addition to that, Mauritius is facing a ‘double burden’, following the oil spill and its ecological implications. Many biodiversity-rich sites are under threat, including the nature reserve Ile aux Aigrettes and the famous snorkelling and diving area of the Blue Bay Marine Park. Local residents, authorities, civil society organisations, and environmental groups have joined hands to contain the oil spill and save the mangrove forest and coral reefs that provide Mauritius with a healthy ecosystem.

Taking the recent developments into full consideration, **SIM** seeks to strengthen awareness and enhance actions towards more economic, social and environmental sustainability in Mauritius. We are working with local authorities, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Mauritius residents, and tourists in transforming the Mauritian tourism sector into a more sustainable, and thus resilient one.

Mr. Lindsay Morvan, the director of the Mauritian Tourism Authority noted in a [recent message](#) that “Involving the tourists in the rehabilitation phase will create a sense of belonging and shared values between them and local residents. Mauritius attracts more than a million visitors each year and each one brings back home timeless memories – this our chance to make these memories even more meaningful and impactful”. ([Read Lindsay Morvan's full statement here.](#))

As the [UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili](#) shared: “Sustainability must no longer be a niche part of tourism but rather the new norm for every part of our sector. It is in our hands to transform tourism and that emerging from COVID-19 becomes a turning point for sustainability.”

Although the primary goal of the **SIM** project is to strengthen the sustainability of the Mauritian tourism value chain, the actions leading there will generate positive impacts above and beyond this sector.

Let's join hands in reaching this goal together!

Join our **Sustainable Island Mauritius network** by engaging with us via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [website](#).

SIM & MS 165



Eco Label MS 165 Certification To 60 Operators -

5 Oct 2020: The **SIM** project supports the local set of standards from the **Mauritius Standards Bureau**, the **MS 165** that has been developed in consultation with the tourism actors. The locally developed Standards are on the same line as any other internationally recognized standards by the **Global Sustainable Tourism Council** and thus **beneficiate the same reputation and credibility to the International markets**. Following an Expression of Interest sent to Tour Operators and Operators in the accommodation sector, we are pleased to mention that operators who have satisfied the eligibility criteria are selected to benefit from the certification scheme. The certification will help hotels and tour operators to get better recognition by international audience and travellers. Let's work together to build a strong and sustainable tourism sector in Mauritius!. [Find out more on MS 165 here.](#)

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Featured Actions from the Network



'Otentik' handprints

The Hotel Group Attitude has exemplified the concept of a handprint – an action to alleviate a negative impact by engaging their guests and acting themselves on important issues. How do you offer a unique holiday experiences while at the same time protecting cultural heritage, preserving the ecosystem, and promoting sustainable economic development? Read about the highlights of Attitude's take on sustainable tourism and its concept of eco-committed hotels. But, before you read through, here's personal [video message](#) from **Raymond Duvergé, Head of Sales and Attitude employees**, from their homes to yours!

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My Pop-Up Store is seeking partnerships to grow local talent, creativity and innovation

Have you been to a **My Pop-Up Store**? When the **Sustainable island Mauritius** project was seeking to find beautiful, creative and authentic products by local artisans and designers we found many at **My Pop-Up Store (MPUS)**. Elizabeth de Marcy Chelin-Chabert started to procure high-end, original local products eight years ago for her shops that popped up on demand in front of Hotels or at markets and are now also permanent fixtures on the island known for a great local shopping experience. **MPUS** is now entering a new phase as Elizabeth is turning her enterprise into a non-profit organisation so she can do more for local artisans entrepreneurs and their value chain: crafts, manufacturing, local talents and local resources with a bigger goal in mind: to encourage the transition to a **circular economy in Mauritius**. Read about how you can become a partner with **MPUS** to support this transition and what **MPUS** has planned in detail in the next two years towards an empowered local creative community and all its stakeholders.

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[Support for Green
Financing](#)



Sustainable financing to support tourism actors in Mauritius

A recent workshop co-organised by the **Sustainable Island Mauritius (SIM)** project offered tourism Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) a comprehensive view on existing post-COVID-19 financial schemes as well as access to green finance for innovative and sustainable projects. Representatives of **SME Mauritius**, the **Development Bank of Mauritius**, **Mauritius Revenue Authority**, and **Sunref** shared the specificities of the respective financial schemes. [Find out more on the eligibility criteria.](#)

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Wakashio Oil Spill

Since the unfortunate event of the Oil Spill from the 'Wakashio' vessel, **SIM** has been called upon to assist the Authorities in the cleaning and rehabilitation phase of the East and South East coastal regions. Among the various aids, the following have been realised:

1. Rs 240,000 worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning equipment have been disbursed to help the volunteers
2. The focal point that liaised the private sector and the public authorities for the sponsorship programme has received support in the form of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning materials such as drums, rakes and important materials to construct artisanal booms that prevent the oil spill from reaching the shore.
3. The Mauritius Wildlife Organisation has received assistance in the form of protective glasses to transfer endangered animals and plants to secure places.
4. Link between the private sector and the authorities for sponsorship takings
5. Assistance in the communication panel of the authorities
6. Ongoing process for the cleaning and rehabilitation of affected mangroves in the area



Preservation of our Lagoon

23 Sept marked the launching of a campaign on the **preservation of our lagoons** around Mauritius. This initiative from the European Union with the support of **SIM** started at Riviere des Creoles with a cleaning activity followed by the signing of an MoU between the Tourism Authority and **REEF Conservation** on the capacity building of 200 operators on the preservation of the marine eco-system. This training shall be called to start now in October 2020.



WTTC Recognised Sanitary Protocols

Mauritius imposed strict hygiene protocols and other measures to overcome the battle with the COVID-19 pandemic. **SIM** was part of the team that designed the protocols in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the WHO and field experts. The project supported the process that led to the recognition of the local sanitary protocols by the World Travel and Tourism Council in May 2020, thereby sending a positive signal to the world about the effectiveness with which Mauritius is handling the situation.



Sanitary Measures for the Tourism Sector

The Tourism Authority has had the responsibility to design and implement Sanitary Measures for the Tourism Sector. **SIM** has supported to have three comprehensive videos to show the measures, endorsed by the #wttc. We extend our thanks to our partners for making these happen! [Watch them now!](#)



Training And Capacity Building In Rodrigues

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly, in collaboration with **SIM** has empowered the Rodrigues Tourism Training Center (VATEL) to organise a 24-hour training course for tourism professionals in Rodrigues. The training has so far benefitted more than **500 tourism operators in Rodrigues and is expected to cover around 1000 trainees by the end of 2020**. The purpose of the training is to strengthen local capacities in line with international standards and highlight the importance of sustainable best practices.

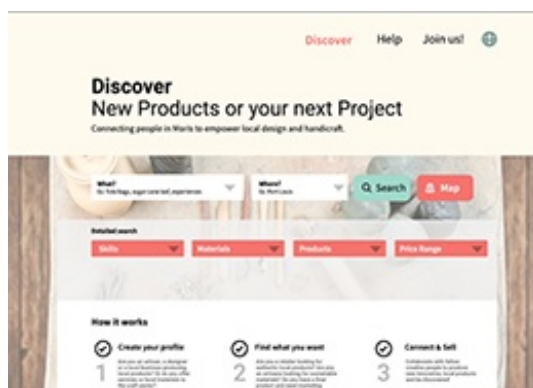


Certificate In Tour Guiding

Around 30 students have been enrolled on the second round of training for the Certificate in Tour Guiding, offered by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. **SIM** sponsors 50% of the training fees, while the difference is funded by the employer. Around 10 operators have agreed to sponsor their staff's participation in the training.

The Handicraft Sector

The handicraft sector is one of the pillars of the Mauritian economy. Stakeholders from the handicraft sector are joining hands towards strengthening the tourism industry in sustainable ways. Multiple meetings were held among the various stakeholders to re-define the future of the handicraft sector. Among the collected ideas in various brainstorming sessions, the following concepts are in progress:



1. B2B Platform

The development of a B2B platform for artisans, designers and their stakeholders in collaboration with MCCI and SME Mauritius. Currently a tender process is underway to select the company that will be responsible for developing the portal and the pilot cases. The platform will connect potential buyers with the sellers, while at the same time building a network to co-develop innovative local products.



2. Creative Guide Book

The **SIM** creative team is working on a Creative Guide Book with step by step resources for local artisans, design entrepreneurs, and SMEs to create successful sustainable products.



3. Workshops

Further workshops on stakeholder engagement and capacity building to be organised as soon as international traveling restarts and the meeting formats are safe to be held.



SIM joined the **Switch Africa Green** Regional Meeting held in Uganda in February 2020.

The Meeting had these main objectives:

- To enhance regional efforts in scaling up green and circular business approaches
- Inspire national level policy making and implementation
- Prepare an Africa-wide strategy to harmonise policies for advancing green business and circular economy in Africa for policy makers and private sector
- Policies to promote sustainable tourism
- Enhance demand for green products through certification and Standards

SWITCH Africa Green programme is designed to support 7 African countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda) to achieve sustainable development by engaging in the transition towards an inclusive green economy, based on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns. The **SIM** Project is funded by the EU under the SWITCH Africa Green umbrella.



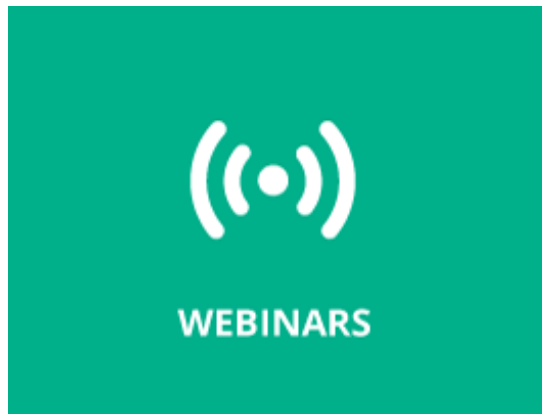
Zero Emission Lagoon Vision

Following a meeting in December 2019 with boat constructors, boat houses, boat operators, and working groups on the topic of **Lagoon Pollution, Service Pontoons Design and New Innovative Activities**, a position paper has been shared with the Ministry of Tourism in order to inform upcoming policy decisions. The **SIM** project is supporting the transitioning from petrol to electric propulsion motors for pleasure craft operators. This will help reduce emissions, pollution and marine disturbance as well as improve the tourists' experience within the project's **Zero Emission Lagoon Vision**.



SIM Webinar at the digital ITB 2020

Watch the [ITBdigital webinar](#) recording to find out how the **Sustainable Island Mauritius project** is supporting Mauritius to become a 'Green Destination' by working with tourism operators to green their supply chains, strengthening local communities, and restoring and preserving biodiversity.



Webinars

SIM participates regularly in international webinars as part of its experience-sharing and mutual-learning processes. Local operators are invited to take part in these webinars, which are posted regularly on the project's social media accounts: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [website](#).

Meet your market needs, stakeholder priorities and generate more positive impact on the society, environment, culture and economy through tourism.

By joining SIM Network, you can

- Learn how to make your current tourism offer more sustainable and profitable
- Learn how to develop and refine your products with better positive impacts
- Learn how to better market and communicate your sustainable actions and products
- Learn how you can join the project trainings and good practice showcase events
- Learn how you can apply for our award with your sustainable tourism products or ideas
- Share your best practices

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