



- Country:** Rodrigues Island, Mauritius
Sector: Manufacturing
Project: Developing capacity among Rodriguans to adopt green businesses through training to key stakeholders and the development of a green business guidebook
Grantee: Department of Environment, Commission for Environment, Forestry, Tourism, Fisheries and Marine Parks
Partner: SMEDA Rodrigues and Ter Mer Rodrigues

Acknowledgements

The SWITCH Africa Green programme was developed by the European Commission to support African countries in their transition to an inclusive green economy, the main objective being to promote sustainable development. This is based on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty.

This impact sheet on 'Developing capacity amongst Rodriguans to adopt green businesses through training to key stakeholders and the development of a green business guidebook' provides a snapshot of results and achievements of the project under the Green Business Development Component of Phase I (2014-2019) of the SWITCH Africa Green programme. This component supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to apply and adopt SCP practices in their business operations.

The project was implemented by the Rodrigues, Commission for Environment, Forestry, Tourism, Fisheries and Marine Parks, in partnership with SMEDA Rodrigues and Ter Mer Rodrigues, with the support of the SWITCH Africa Green National Focal Point, Mrs D. Sin Lan NG, staff of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mrs S. Meeheelaul and Mrs M. Outim, and the National Coordinator, Dr Asha Poonyth-Seeworam, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Mauritius. The grants were managed by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and coordinated by Celia Marquez with support from Mercy Gatobu.

Supervision and coordination for development of the impact sheet was done by Rhoda Wachira and Patrick Mwesigye and programme support was provided by Carolyn Kilel and Sylvia Munuhe, Africa Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The impact sheet was compiled by Sheila Karue consultant, UNEP. Editing, layout and design was coordinated by the communication division, UNEP.

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BACKGROUND

The SWITCH Africa Green supported project was implemented through the Commission for Environment, Forestry, Tourism, Fisheries and Marine Parks, partnered with SMEDA Rodrigues and Ter Mer Rodrigues. The project was developed out of the need for Rodrigues to move towards a green economy and mainly involved training MSMEs in the research and transfer of technology to Rodrigues Island.

Most of the MSMEs in the island are faced with the challenge of a gap in business management skills, poor quality products and low production. The aim of the project was to promote the move towards sustainable business practices by the beneficiary enterprises. This would serve to improve their revenue while safeguarding the well-being of producers and users of their products, as well as environmental health.

Beneficiaries

The project engaged 207 MSMEs in green business development. The MSMEs improved their business practices in hair care, skin care, massage therapy, horticulture, natural soap making, natural candle making, food processing, soft toys and producing compost.



Objectives

The project aimed to contribute to the transition of Rodrigues Island towards an inclusive green economy through:

- Minimizing plastic waste
- Promoting use of locally available materials for value addition
- Facilitating implementation of green business practices
- Ensuring ready access to information on setting up potential green businesses.

Outputs

Improved capacities of Business Development Services (BDS) to promote SCP practices by MSMEs

The project facilitated training of 12 training of trainers (ToT) (six male and six female) on how to build the capacity of MSMEs in greening their businesses. This training included how to carry out energy audits for different enterprises and mechanisms for improving energy efficiency, increasing their share of renewable energy use.

Over 285 participants received training on the 'Managing Your Business' course. The training was offered to enterprises to develop their skills in business management hand in hand with green production processes.

207 MSMEs

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Project beneficiaries established and registered a marketing brand name “Maison des artisans” to help them market their green products collectively. The products marketed under this brand name include five from beneficiaries of this project and products from another SWITCH Africa Green supported project, the Gombava project.

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Improved capacities of workers in green sectors

Twenty-five training sessions were organized and held through the support of this project. Beneficiaries of the training were equipped with skills on how to reduce the use of chemicals in cosmetic products which in turn led to reduced chemical loads in wastewater. They were also trained on the benefits to health through the use of local and natural products.

Twenty-five training sessions were organized and held through the support of this project.

During the various trainings, the growth of green businesses were facilitated in the following areas: waste utilization into soft toys, producing local tea infusions, creation of soaps and candles with medicinal properties from

local ingredients; utilization of local materials for bags, manufacture of skin and hair care using organic local products, making new locally produced food products, organic horticulture including design of exquisite floral arrangements, Banana fibre and handicraft products. About 460 enterprises benefitted from the training sessions.

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Increased networking among green businesses

Joint training workshops on green business development were held with beneficiary MSMEs in the gombava project. All the beneficiary MSMEs were trained on processing fruit and vegetables. The workshops took place on Rodrigues Island, saving time and travel costs for all trainees by not having to travel to Mauritius.

A ‘Green Technology Transfer Forum’ was held in Rodrigues Island. The forum focused on informing entrepreneurs on new ecological technologies with the aim of helping the MSMEs to increase their production capacity. More than 170 participants drawn from international, regional and local entities took part in the forum. The themes addressed during the three-day forum were energy efficiency, packaging and norms, water use, eco-innovation and construction of ecological and sustainable businesses.

Beneficiaries of the project participated in the SWITCH Africa Green networking fora (2016 and 2018) during which they had opportunities to connect with other green businesses.

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Knowledge products developed

A ‘Green Business Guidebook’ was drafted by members of the Ter Mer Rodrigues Association. The guidebook is now a tool for the beneficiaries of the project to continue using when implementing skills learned through the project. The guidebook will also continue being used to build the capacity of other MSMEs on how to green their businesses.



Improved capacities of green businesses to develop bankable projects

By the end of the project period the project beneficiary had organized the MSMEs and helped the association to apply for funds from the bank and grants from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to implement a project to recycle plastic waste on the island.

Outcomes

Uptake of SCP practices by MSMEs

A total of 207 MSMEs reported adoption of SCP practices. They were trained in organic horticulture, use of natural products to make soap; candles; natural food additives; manufacture of toys from textiles, scrap fabric material and cotton wool for filling; compost

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production; papier-mâché; medicinal plants and packaging solutions to reduce the use of plastic.

Improved business performance of MSMEs supported

Beneficiary MSMEs who implemented the project took the opportunity to produce new product lines and provide new types of services for export and local consumption in Rodrigues. As a result, the enterprises reported an increase in their revenue streams.

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Improved energy efficiency

MSMEs were made aware of renewable sources that they could use and used the information received from the training to analyse solar energy systems and propose ways to upgrade or repair them. They have gained skills on how to install renewable energy equipment, and also how to check how energy efficient an establishment is. By the end of the project, some of the MSMEs were undertaking sustainability reporting thereby helping hotels in securing green loans.

Improved capacity on eco-innovation

During the training activity on food processing, the entrepreneurs were taught how to make their own pectin from the peel of passion fruit. They were also taught how to use some local fruits for natural colours, so would not need to rely on chemicals to make their products attractive. Medicinal herbs training highlighted better use of herbs for medicinal purposes as well as their nutritional values.

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Improved environmental awareness

Through their high level of environmental awareness especially in energy efficiency, good waste management principles and good health for the clients, the beneficiaries are now strong advocates for environmental sustainability in Rodrigues and will continue to build awareness in their clients in the long term.





Impacts

Environmental impact

As a result of implementing skills learnt through training less waste was produced. For instance, MSMEs are now making ketchup, tomato jam and tomato sweets from tomatoes that were previously going to waste.

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Economic impact

Beneficiary MSMEs who implemented the SCP practices reported a 3,000 per cent increase in revenue in 2018, from USD68 to USD2,046. The additional revenue is attributed to the production and supply of higher quality products and new green product lines.

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Social impacts

The livelihoods of a total of 120 women drawn from six different villages of Rodrigues were improved as a result of project implementation. They were trained on how to produce bags

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using alternative eco-friendly materials following the ban on plastics.

Lessons learnt

When MSMEs come together collectively as a group, they have more leverage in terms of improved bargaining power and ability for their products to penetrate the market.

In addition to green business and SCP practices, MSMEs need skills to develop bankable proposals for projects.

MSMEs need to develop business management skills, right from developing business plans to ensure that all the factors are considered when undertaking business ventures, to including realistic financing required to improve their businesses.



“Greening businesses leads to improved health!”

Mrs Marie Nicoletta Felicite



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