



- Country:** Mauritius
- Sector:** Agriculture
- Project:** Promoting Sustainable Local Agriculture through Green Retail and Green Hospitality (SUS-AGRI)
- Grantee:** University of Mauritius
- Partner:** Collaborating Center on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)

## 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 *Promoting Sustainable Local Agriculture through Green Retail and Green Hospitality (SUS-AGRI)* 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 University of Mauritius in partnership with the Collaborating Center on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) 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 Carolyne Kilel and Sylvia Munuhe, Africa Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The impact sheet was compiled by UNEP consultants, Sheila Karue and Mercy Mumo. Editing, layout and design was coordinated by Communications Division, UNEP.

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## BACKGROUND

Agriculture contributes to 3.4 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Mauritius and provides employment to about 8.3 percent of the population. Approximately 40 percent of the island is used for agricultural practices. Mauritius imports about 70 percent of the food it consumes which makes the country vulnerable to fluctuations in global food prices, slumps in global food supplies and impacts of climate change on food production.

To increase the country's self-sufficiency and food security, the government has been pushing the agricultural sector to boost food production since the 2008 global food price crisis that had an impact on food security in Mauritius. The Government of Mauritius developed and launched implementation of a standard promoting sustainable agriculture known as Mauritius Good Agricultural Practices (MauriGAP). The standard provides a framework for sustainable crop production, focusing on GAP for food safety, environmental stewardship and farmer and/or worker welfare.

The University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the government of Mauritius, implemented MauriGAP by focusing on the supply and demand of sustainable agricultural products. The grantee addressed the growing concerns for safe and healthy foods, improving the farmers' health and safety, and reducing the adverse environmental risks and impacts associated with production of fruits and vegetables.



## OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the project was to promote sustainable food production and consumption in Mauritius by leveraging on the influence of retail and hotel industry in the agricultural supply chain in the country.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

1. Transfer knowledge and global good practices on green retail and green hospitality in various hotels and restaurants in Mauritius.
2. Enhance integration of sustainable approaches in business strategies, operations, and marketing of retailers, hotels, and restaurants.
3. Foster the adoption of sustainable practices and creation of innovative partnership in the supply chains of agricultural products sold by retailers to hotels and middlemen.
4. Develop the capacity of key stakeholders to educate their clients (hotel guests) on sustainable consumption practices.

5. Develop a guideline for policymakers in greening the retail and hospitality sectors.

## BENEFICIARIES

- Three (3) major retailers namely Food Lovers Market, Shoprite, and Intermart were used to pilot green retailing.
- The hospitality industry that was mainly dependent on foreign suppliers.
- Small farmers and agricultural enterprises supplying local sustainable food to the hotels.

## OUTPUTS

### Improved capacities of business development services to promote SCP practices by MSMEs

### Technical tools developed for scaling up SCP

The grantee incorporated the 'New Mauritius Hotels Group Sustainable Purchasing Policy' which commits to promote sourcing of local products in accordance with the principles of Fair Trade and procurement



of environmentally friendly products and services. The policy also provides for integration of sustainable farming practices which are cost efficient and easy to implement such as replacing disposables with reusables or recyclables. Other aspects promoted by the policy include: support eco-labelling through purchase of products with labels such as MauriGAP, raise staff awareness on the environmental issues affecting procurement, encourage suppliers and contractors to offer environmentally friendly products and services at competitive prices and compliance with all environmental legal and regulatory requirements in the procurement of products and services.

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The University of Mauritius developed the following training manuals:

- **Sustainable procurement module** which provides the criteria for sustainable procurement.
- **Green marketing module** under which two handbooks were developed; the 'green retail handbook' focusing on consumer education and promoting healthy, sustainable and locally produced food and the 'green hospitality handbook' focusing on using agro-tourism for marketing.
- **Hotspot methodology module** which gives the process of assessing the life cycle of agricultural produce (mainly fruits and vegetables).

### Increased networking among green businesses

#### Networking events

The beneficiaries participated in the first and second Switch Africa Green Regional Networking Forum held in **Uganda (2016)** and **Burkina Faso (2018)** as well as the 9th African Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production held in **Uganda (2016)**. The forums created a

platform for networking and exchanging information on opportunities and possible interventions to address challenges and barriers facing the private sector in advancing green business and SCP practices in Africa. The beneficiaries fostered partnerships with different partners implementing SCP projects and various stakeholders involved in green business development.

The project has created linkages with other Switch Africa Green Programme grantees and beneficiaries in Rodrigues to support green business development in the island.

### Improved capacities of workers in green sectors

#### Training on SCP practices

The project supported capacity development of 65 participants on MauriGAP through 4 training workshops on sustainable procurement and green marketing. Participants who benefited from the training were mainly marketing and procurement managers from the hotel(5) and retail (4) sectors. Several tools were developed and implemented to promote



sustainable practices in the hospitality industry. The tools developed are: hotspot analysis tool, sustainable supply chain management, green marketing guidelines. Implementation of the tools led to an increase in the total number of hotel guests (mainly tourists) consuming locally and sustainably produced food.

Through 8 training sessions, the capacity of beneficiaries was developed on the appropriate use and application of organic pesticides in their farms. The sessions included training on pesticide legislation, integrated pest management, protective equipment, various types of sprayers used and basic sprayer maintenance.

Additional courses on crop variety and protection, organic fertilizers, produce handling, irrigation, and waste pollution management was offered to the beneficiaries and community members.

Technical support to smallholder farmers: In the first year of the project's implementation, less than 10 percent of the farmers had obtained MauriGAP certification. The grantee collaborated with the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) to provide capacity development to smallholder farmers in implementing good agricultural practices and in pesticide application. By the close of the project in December 2018, all farmers in the pilot had been trained on the implementation of good agricultural practices. The proposed 'Pesticide Use Bill' makes it mandatory for all farmers to be trained on improved pesticides application.

## Training programmes developed

Agri-Food Value Chain Analysis: A module on 'Agri-food value chain analysis' was developed and offered for the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Technology at the University of Mauritius. Over 30 students in the University of Mauritius were given a lecture on sustainable procurement, hotspot analysis and green marketing. The students also received hands-on training on the application of the hotspot analysis tool in cutting flowers, milk production, purchase of piglets, and pineapple growing and distribution.

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## OUTCOMES

### Uptake of SCP practices by MSMEs

#### Sustainability standards certification

Over 89 farmers received MauriGAP certification for their produce (mainly fruits and vegetables) and about 71 farmers were on the waiting list of the Mauritius Agricultural Certification Body (MACB). Of the total certified farmers, 23 were supplying different companies that had been involved in the pilot project.



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Four (4) young agricultural graduates were recruited as quality assurance officers by SKC Surat & Co. Ltd one of the companies engaged to pilot the project. The quality assurance officers assisted outgrowers of the company in farm compliance for certification.



## IMPACTS

### Environmental impacts

#### Reduction in greenhouses gas (GHG) emissions

Over 200 farmers from SKC Surat & Co. Ltd adopted sustainable pesticide application that provided easy and inexpensive solutions to control weeds and pests. The project beneficiaries implemented appropriate means of handling, transporting, storing and managing pesticides. This led to a 24 percent reduction of greenhouses gases from transportation and a 7 percent reduction in GHG emissions from the use of on-farm fuel for irrigation and spillage.

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Through implementation of the project, there was a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 0.13Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. There was a 37 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emission from the efficient application of pesticides.

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### Economic impacts

#### Reduction in production costs

The results of the hotspot analysis conducted at A. Chinatamby Co. Ltd, one of the companies engaged, especially on cabbage and lettuce production, demonstrated a reduction in the use of water, fertilizers and pesticides. The company experienced a reduction in their total production costs by about 20 to 25 percent.

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### Social impacts

#### Improved health and safety of workers

The health and safety of farmers and workers was enhanced by the implementation of improved pesticide application practices and use of organic fertilizers. The grantee raised awareness on the impacts on health of pesticide

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residue in fruits and vegetables to about 88 percent of the consumers. As a result of project implementation, consumers had

access to safer quality produce and availability of agricultural produce in the market that had traceability. The project also provided a sustainable supply chain for agri-produce and access to new markets.

### The project

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### LESSONS LEARNED

- There is need for MauriGAP-certified produce to fetch a premium price in the market to stimulate demand for certification.
- More market players are needed to increase demand for MauriGAP-certified produce. By the end of the project, SKC Surat Co. Ltd was the main buyer of MauriGAP-certified produce.
- Adoption of a differentiation strategy makes it possible for consumers to identify certified products in the market as was demonstrated by SKC Surat Co. Ltd who created and maintained a crate-colouring scheme that differentiated the MauriGAP certified and non-certified fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Industry needs to commit resources in developing management systems that promote sustainable procurement supply chain systems. The hotels involved in the pilot were found to have limited resources for this which hindered implementation of sustainable management systems.

“Customers have shown a positive response in purchasing the certified fresh fruits and vegetables and this led to an increase in production since sales were very encouraging! Through Switch Africa Green and the University of Mauritius, SKC Surat Co Ltd. has developed separate stalls for its display and distribution of MauriGAP-certified fresh fruits and vegetables. Moreover, the customers can now see the MauriGAP certificates of the farmers displayed in the stalls and this increased the consumers’ purchasing power,”

Mr. Jaunkeersad, Trou aux cerfs, who was among the first to receive MAURIGAP certification.



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