

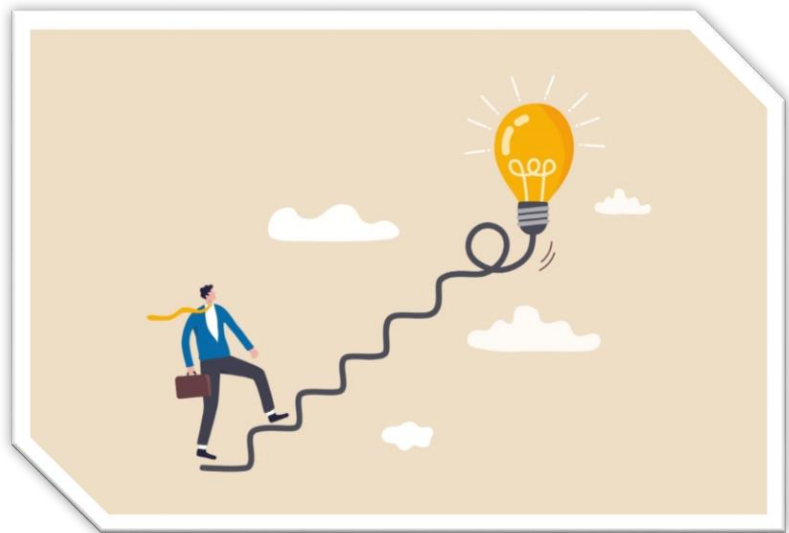
Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (SMEs Division)

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023

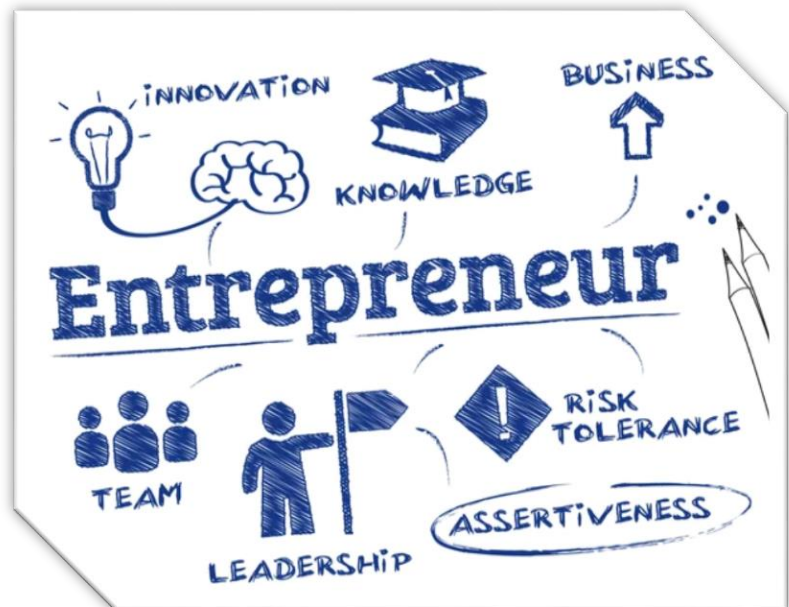
In this Issue

- Statistics on registration of SMEs
- Mid-term review of the 10-year SME Master Plan
- Les Assises de l'Entrepreneuriat
- National Market Fair
- Mini-fruit processing plant
- Events



“At a time when we are still working to sustain the global economic recovery, supporting existing businesses and new ones can spur broad-based growth. I believe that we have unprecedented opportunities to ease access to capital, markets and technology.”

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah



SME Registration Unit



STATISTICS AND OBSERVATIONS

A total of 3,813 SMEs including 109 from Rodrigues have been registered in 2022.

*1128 SMEs made application directly on the Registration Portal which is (27 %) of total applications.

Observations:

- The manufacturing sector attracted the highest number of SMEs, representing about 31% of total registered SMEs. However, it is to be noted that most of them are self-employed persons and homebased engaged in manufacture of food, handicraft, garments and pastries.
- The Wholesale and retail trade sector attracted also the significant number of SMEs, representing about 25% of total registered SMEs. This includes retail shops selling foodstuff & non foodstuff, hardware shops, distributor of general merchandise and market traders.
- 9% of the SMEs registered is in construction. They are mainly those registered as Job Contractor other than Grade A, B, C, D or E, engaged in civil works, plumbing and electrical installation works.
- Professional, Technical, Management, consultancy, accounting and other services representing about 6 % of total SMEs.
- SMEs engaged in growing of vegetables represent 7 % of total registration.

Les Assises de l'Entrepreneuriat

KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSALS

“Les Assises de L'Entrepreneuriat” was held on 15 and 16 March 2023 at the Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis. This is the first time that “Les Assises de L'Entrepreneuriat” has been held in Mauritius.

The event was organised by the SMEs Division of the Ministry in collaboration with The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mauritius & Seychelles.



The aim of holding “Les Assises de L'Entrepreneuriat” was to provide a platform for MSMEs and concerned stakeholders to meet, share and discuss over key issues they are facing, take cognizance of their proposals and their expectations from Government and support institutions.

Several themes, namely, access to finance, access to markets, new sectors for SMEs, promoting high-end SMEs, productivity and competitiveness, skills development, technology and innovation/digital transformation of SMEs, and promoting women-led entrepreneurship were discussed during the event.

Over 50 SMEs, from various sectors of activity, have participated in the event.

A Report on the issues raised during the “assises” as well as proposals received and recommendations made has been prepared.

The SMEs Division is exploring the ways and means to act on the recommendations and proposals made.



Diagnostic Study of the Informal Sector

REPORT AT FINALISATION STAGE

A diagnostic study on the informal sector in Mauritius to facilitate post-COVID-19 recovery was commissioned by the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (SMEs Division), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mauritius. The study was conducted with the aim of facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal sector.



The main objectives of the study are to:

- Conduct a diagnostic assessment of the informal sector, its characteristics, distribution, and its specific vulnerabilities;
- Identify the gaps between the formal and informal sectors in terms of needs and capacities;
- Identify the opportunities and challenges for formalisation (drivers and incentives); and
- Propose strategic policy and programmatic interventions to strengthen their ecosystem to facilitate the transition to the formal sector.

The Consultant has submitted the Final Report for the study and various recommendations have been made.

Views/Comments of Ministries/Organisations have been sought and the Report is being finalised.

Government will be apprised of the Report in due course, following which, its implementation will be worked out.

Ornamental Fish Farming Scheme

PROMOTING NEW SECTORS



Ornamental Fish keeping is the second most preferred hobby in the world and the number of hobbyists for ornamental fish keeping is rising day by day. From 2017 to 2018, some 911.9 tonnes of ornamental fish have been imported in Mauritius, implying that there is a high demand on the local market. Decorative fishes are being used for decorative purposes in ponds at hotels, restaurants and even at homes. SMEs can tap into this market. Decorative fish farming could therefore be a potential source of income for SMEs.

The scheme aims at creating new business opportunities for SMEs, reducing dependency on imports, diversifying and increasing the source of income of SMEs through the provision of technical support and financial assistance to SMEs to embark in the decorative fish farming business.

The scheme provides a financial grant of 80 percent of the project cost (up to a maximum of Rs 30, 000) on a first-come first-serve basis. The remaining 20 percent is to be met by the applicant.

A first Invitation to Bid was launched in December 2022 and following the Bid Evaluation exercise, 1 bid is under consideration. An Invitation to Bid launched in April 2022 was, unfortunately, unsuccessful as bid(s) received were not responsive. The Invitation to Bid has been re-launched on 10 October 2022.

Mini Fruit Processing Plants

PROCESSING VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

In December 2019, the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) came up with a Report on the Setting up of Mini Fruit Processing Plant in Mauritius outlining the strategies for enhancing fruit production, techniques for processed and value-added products, processing plant layout and equipment, hygiene in plant and products, packaging materials and import substitution with local products.

The Report highlighted the following –

- Total area under fruit crop in Mauritius is 1351 hectares
- Annual local fruit productions stood at around 29,000 tonnes
- Main fruit crops, namely pineapple (around 7,300 tonnes) and banana (around 10,000 tonnes), occupy around 500 hectares each.
- Approximately 1/3 of the fruit and vegetables production are lost due to lack of storage and post-harvest processing facilities.
- Currently, around 5% of the total fruit production is processed locally.
- Through Government Policy, Mauritius has reached closed to self-sufficiency in fresh demand.
- Further increase in fruit production may be achieved with increase in export of fresh as well as processed fruit products and expanding market for locally processed fruit products.



This project is in line with our Import Substitution Strategy to boost up local production and decrease the import of consumables. Under the project, SMEs/Cooperative Societies are being encouraged to reduce wastage of seasonal fruits and develop value-added activities.

The Project has been introduced as a Budgetary Measure and an amount of Rs 4 million has been provided in the National Resilience Fund for Financial Year 2022/2023.

Following the launching of an Expression of Interest, a Letter of Intent has been issued to one bidder on 05 December 2022. A monitoring exercise is being carried out by the SMEs Division to confirm progress prior to the signing of the contract for onward disbursement of a grant up to a maximum of Rs1 million to the bidder.

A further Expression of Interest has been launched for enlistment of three additional potential beneficiaries of the project.

Mid-Term Review of 10-Year SME Master Plan

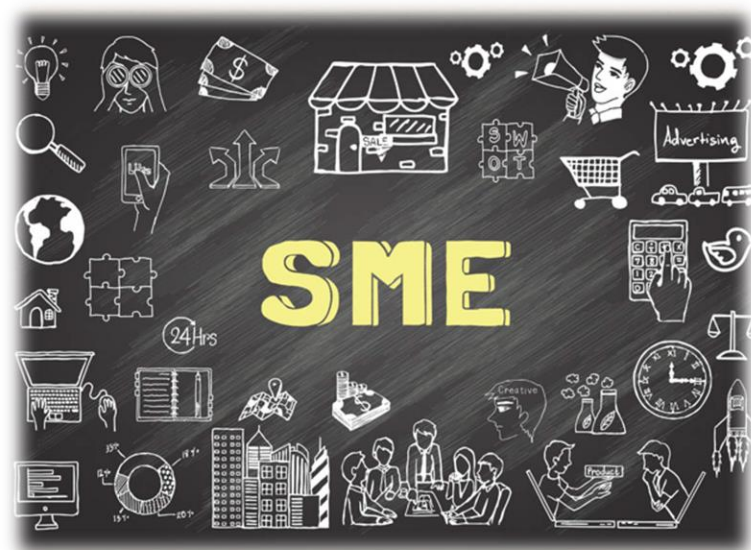
EFFICIENTLY SHAPING THE SME SECTOR

The 10-Year SME Master Plan was developed and launched by the SMEs Division of my Ministry in 2017 with the objective to address the challenges faced by SMEs through its recommendations in order to reshape the SME Sector with targets to be reached by 2026. Five years down, a Mid-Term review of the 10-Year Master Plan was necessary to be conducted in order to quantify the progress made, to identify bottlenecks hindering smooth implementation and to actualize the recommendations in-tune with new market realities as well as new Government priorities.

As such, the 10-Year SME Master Plan, after review, contains 45 Key Actions, 26 Sectoral Actions and 12 Thematic Actions all adding up to 233 main activities. As at end of September 2022, **44%** of the recommendations have been implemented and completed, **51%** have been initiated and are ongoing and **5%** are yet to be initiated.

All the recommended actions for improving the Institutional and Regulatory Framework for SMEs have been completely implemented and are ongoing. The overall actions for instilling an Entrepreneurial Attitude and reinforcing Human Capital and Skills Development have been implemented at **80%**. Implementation of actions for encouraging Innovation, Technology Transfer and Greening of SMEs and for improving Access to Finance and Equity Participation stand at **60%** while only **40%** of the actions for improving Marketing and Regional Exports Capacity have been implemented.

The Mid-Term review of the 10-Year SME Master plan confirms that the SME Development Framework is functional and is efficiently shaping the SME sector. It also highlights the activities on which effort must be emphasized and thus provides the Ministry elements on which to focus for the next 5 years.



SMEs e-Directory

ONLINE PLATFORM AND MARKETING TOOL

The Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, Hon. Soomilduth Bholah has officially launched the SME e-Directory on Tuesday 27 September 2022 at the SME Registration Unit.



It is a marketing tool for all SMEs to promote the products and services they offer and provides an easy-to-access platform for business facilitation to SMEs free of charge.

As at date, 7520 SMEs have been uploaded on the online platform.

The data are classified into districts and according to the services they provide.

The SME e-Directory can be viewed on the link <https://smesdb.govmu.org> and on the Ministry's website.

National Market Fair

PROMOTION OF LOCALLY MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS

All three Divisions of the Ministry have joined hands to promote the “savoir faire” of Mauritian enterprises and give enhanced visibility to local entrepreneurs and locally manufactured products through the holding of “La Grande Foire de l’Indépendance”.

The event was held from 03 to 05 March 2023 at La Place Taxi, Central Flacq.

The Trade Fair attracted enterprises across various segments of the manufacturing sector, comprising small, medium and large enterprises, as well as cooperative societies.



In the context of the National Market Fair, the following activities have been organised:

- A Rally (march) regrouping staff of the Ministry and support institutions, members from public and private sector organisations.
- A Fashion Show conceptualised by the Academy of Design and Innovation.
- A Cultural Programme by local artists.
- A Food Fair organised by socio-cultural groups under the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage.





Business Transformation Scheme & SME MU Mobile App

IMPROVING RESILIENCE AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

An official ceremony has been organized by SME Mauritius Ltd for the launching of both the mobile App and the Business Transformation Scheme on Monday 27th February 2023.



The Business Transformation Scheme (BTS) consolidates SMEs' internal capabilities by improving their resilience. Under this scheme, SMEs may choose to access

professional input in any area(s) of their value chain or any such technical support that enhances their overall competitiveness.

The SME MU mobile App is designed especially for Entrepreneurs and Aspiring Entrepreneurs with a view of facilitating access to information relevant to their businesses and entrepreneurship in general. The SME MU mobile App includes the latest SME news, Business tips, Events organized by SME Mauritius Ltd and Trainings/Schemes application.



Site Visit – Hydroponic Farm

UTILITY CONNECTION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Hon. Minister Bholah effected a site visit at a hydroponic farm managed by Mrs Harikshana Gokhool, a duly registered planter and SME since June 2021. At first, she invested more than Rs 2 million as capital in this business. The main activity consists of producing fresh vegetables under sheltered farming.



Harikshana Gokhool has opted for a sheltered farming system as this will enable her to mitigate the effects of adverse climatic conditions, and improve production capacity and produce quality.



In order to be fully operational, with the necessary CEB connections and benefitted from the Utility Connection Assistance grant from SME Mauritius. She purchased a water tank together with water pump at the operation site. In this region, there is a shortage of water and this support from SME Mauritius greatly help the business woman to curb this problem.

Independence Day Celebrations

To mark the 55th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Mauritius, a gathering was held at the Ministry.



Changes in posting at the Ministry

In March 2023

Mr. Medha Gunputh, Senior Chief Executive at the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was posted to this Ministry.

Mr. Jean Daniel Philippe Labonne, was assigned the duties of Permanent Secretary and was posted to the Ministry of Tourism.

Mr. Rajesh Humath from the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, was assigned the duties of Deputy Permanent Secretary, and was posted to this Ministry.

Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

SMEs Division

16th Floor, Newton Tower

Sir William Newton Street

Port-Louis

Tel: (+230) 405 3100

Fax: (+230) 213 9176

Email: mbe@govmu.org