

THE BusinessBULLETIN

by Business Mauritius

Insights and Innovations for the Local Business Community

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Our 8 Strategic Priorities For 2024-2025

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EDITORIAL

LAUNCH OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE BUSINESS BULLETIN

Dear Readers

We are immensely pleased to unveil the premier edition of *Business Mauritius's* new quarterly E-Newsletter, *The Business Bulletin*. Coming at the end of the busy and memorable year that was 2024, this publication is intended to emphasise our commitment to keeping our members informed and connected with the latest issues and insights impacting on our business community.

In this issue, we first offer a recap of *Business Mauritius's* Strategic Priorities for 2024-2025, outlining the roadmap and the goals we set out to drive growth, catalyse innovation and champion sustainability within our ecosystem.

With our organisation revolving around its three Commissions, namely Economic, Social Capital and Sustainability & Inclusive growth, we also bring you a comprehensive report on each Commission's activities, as well as on our multidisciplinary approach to furthering our common mission of building shared prosperity and a better future for all.

With the year 2024 having been marked by several matters around salaries and employment relations, we talked to Edley Armoogum, IR Consultant at *Business Mauritius*, so that he could shed some light on the ins and outs of Industrial Relations. Edley helped us better understand how the IR team at *Business Mauritius* supports member companies by providing critical advice and guidance, ensuring legal compliance and by participating in ongoing conversations to improve the Mauritian working environment.

"...this publication is intended to emphasise our commitment to keeping our members informed and connected with the latest issues and insights..."



This issue also shares some key figures related to our member companies and the impactful training sessions organised by *Business Mauritius*, highlighting the collective achievements and the continuous learning that fuel our success.

As we embark on this journey together, we invite you to immerse yourself in this first issue of *The Business Bulletin*. Your feedback is invaluable to us and we look forward to your thoughts on how we can continue to enhance and improve this platform towards an even closer partnership with our valued members.

With my best wishes for a joyful festive season and a Happy New Year 2025

Verna Pillay
Head of Communications

"With our organisation revolving around its three Commissions, namely Economic, Social Capital and Sustainability & Inclusive growth..."

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

2024 - 2025

Business Mauritius is more determined than ever to be the catalyst for economic growth on the local front. The strategic roadmap we have laid out for 2024-2025 encompasses 8 strategic priorities, an embodiment of our commitment and dedication to our business community in the ever-evolving global economy. Discover these priorities which reflect our vision and mission to shape a better future:

PRIORITY 1
Developing a Private-Public Sector Vision for the Mauritian Economy

PRIORITY 2
Optimising the Management of our Scarce Resources

PRIORITY 3
Elevating the Mauritian Human Capital Further

PRIORITY 4
Overcoming the Mauritian Environmental Vulnerabilities

PRIORITY 5
Strengthening the Mauritian Governance for Smarter Regulations

PRIORITY 6
Attracting Investors and Talents to Mauritius

PRIORITY 7
Boosting the Mauritian Financial Services

PRIORITY 8
Advancing the Mauritian Research, Development and Innovation

While our strategic priorities lay the foundation for progress, their success relies on the active participation of our members. It is through a collaborative effort that we can drive meaningful change within our business community and turn our shared goals into concrete results.

OUR 3 COMMISSIONS

With more than 50 years of cumulated experience, *Business Mauritius* has been a pillar in providing strategic support and leadership to the local business community.

We remain focused on our 3 core objectives (1) National Economic Collaboration, (2) Social Capital and (3) Sustainability & Inclusive Growth. They have been the engines of progress at *Business Mauritius*, driving key events and activities, aligning with our vision.

BUSINESS MAURITIUS COMMISSIONS



THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Mission

To engage businesses in national collaboration towards economic development.

Functions

- To serve as a platform for dialogue and sharing of experiences on economic strategies and policies.
- To advise on matters of relevance which help to formulate and recommend practical policy measures for the Mauritian economy.



THE SOCIAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

Mission

To champion the development of a strong social capital through business.

Functions

- To create a paradigm shift in employer-employee relations in order to improve competitiveness, attractiveness and business models.
- To offer relevant professional support services, re-engineer corporate culture and human capital development, and to reinforce industrial relations.



SUSTAINABILITY & INCLUSIVE GROWTH COMMISSION

Mission

To empower the Mauritian business community to lead in sustainable and inclusive development through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advocacy.

Functions

- To equip businesses with knowledge, best practices, and training to actively participate in sustainable development and good governance.
- To act as a bridge between businesses and government, promoting the role of businesses in sustainable development solutions and fostering collaboration on community development initiatives.

THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

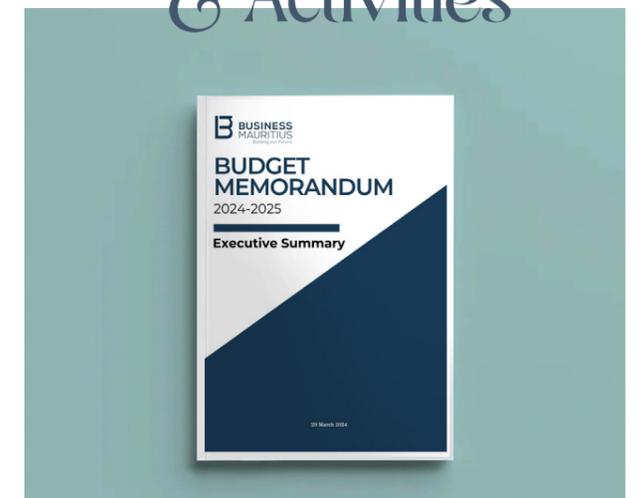
The *Economic Commission* was set up to be a platform for dialogue between the various sectors of the Mauritian economy, with the focus being on nationwide economic strategies and policies. It is made up of several working groups and Sub-Committees focused on various key areas.

RECENT Events & Activities

BUDGET MEMORANDUM 2024-2025

The 2024-25 Budget presents an opportunity for the Government to announce robust measures to foster a sustainable and inclusive economic model. In its Budget Memorandum, *Business Mauritius* has provided a list of recommendations addressing the following themes:

- Sea and Air Connectivity
- Financial and Digital/AI Connectivity
- Coastal Erosion
- Métiers
- Labour Market Reforms
- Energy
- Education
- Healthcare
- Circular Economy
- Water Sector
- Business Facilitation
- Innovation
- Sustainability as a Business Opportunity
- Food Security
- Climate Adaptation
- Construction Sector
- Manufacturing Sector



The development of these recommendations is a thorough process undertaken by the three Commissions of *Business Mauritius*. Each Commission focuses on topics relevant to the business community or the national development, requiring a public-private collaboration.

To view the Budget Memorandum:

MEETINGS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

The Commission met this year, with the main highlights including:

- Conducting budget consultations with various partner members and Sub-Committees/working groups, which were then validated by *Business Mauritius's* Council Members and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.
- Discussing the National Priorities for the Commission, namely : Air & Sea Connectivity and Financial and Digital/AI Connectivity.



SDG IMPACT STANDARDS TRAINING

The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* partnered with *Business Mauritius* in February 2024 for a 3-Day Training on SDG Impact Standards for Enterprises with the aim to equip businesses with the technical skills needed to accelerate the implementation of SDGs in Mauritius by 2030.

The event brought together business leaders, sustainability professionals and stakeholders to engage in discussions that will shape the future of responsible business in Mauritius. It was a joint venture of *Business Mauritius's Economic Commission and Sustainability & Inclusive Development Commission*.

Read more:

Watch the video:



LAUNCH OF THE MAURITIUS CPSD BY THE WORLD BANK

On December 6, 2023, *Business Mauritius* partnered with the *World Bank* to host a launch event for the *World Bank's Country Private Sector Diagnostic (CPSD)* for Mauritius. The event brought together government officials, *World Bank* and *International Finance Corporation (IFC)* representatives, and key figures from Mauritius's public and private sectors.

The CPSD is a tool designed to identify opportunities for growth and recommend actions to strengthen private sector participation in Mauritius's economy. The event showcased the process behind the CPSD, its key findings, and top-level recommendations. Discussions focused on four key sectors with high growth potential: innovation, higher education, renewable energy, and healthcare.

The launch aimed to foster collaboration between the public and private sectors in implementing the CPSD's recommendations. By harnessing private sector expertise in these focus areas, Mauritius can navigate its post-pandemic economic landscape and transition towards a more innovative and sustainable future.

View the CPSD:



BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY

In December 2023, *Business Mauritius*, in collaboration with *Statistics Mauritius* and the UNDP, launched the findings of their 3rd Business Pulse Survey. This survey gathers insights from across all private sector economic sectors.

The theme of the 2023 survey was “Assessing Business Recovery and Resilience in Mauritius” and its objective was to gauge the current business environment, including key trends, challenges, and opportunities. It also captures business forecasts for the coming year. The launch event provided a valuable platform for sharing perspectives among various economic sectors, helping the business community gain insights for navigating Mauritius’s economic landscape.

Learn more:

UPCOMING Events & Activities

More details will be communicated on the below initiatives during the year. Stay connected with us.

- Participation on the National AI Campaign.
- Collaboration with the UNDP on the SDG Investment Brokering project.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The *International Monetary Fund’s (IMF)* latest World Economic Outlook, released in July 2024, paints a picture of a global economy in a holding pattern. While growth projections remain steady at 3.2% for 2024 and 3.3% for 2025, there are some key areas of concern. Disinflation is proving slower than anticipated, particularly in the services sector, which could lead to central banks raising interest rates for longer than expected. This, coupled with rising trade tensions and policy uncertainty, creates a complex landscape for businesses in Mauritius to navigate.

See the full July 2024 report:

GENERAL ELECTIONS AND CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

In the final quarter of the year, following the general elections and the change in Government, the National Economic Collaboration team has been working to renew and reorient several subcommittees under the Economic Commission.

Our objective remains to continue representing and pushing forward the business community’s priorities, both ongoing and new, towards the common goal of national development.

SOCIAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

The *Social Capital Commission* develops proposals for businesses to create a real paradigm shift in the employee-employer relationship in terms of competitiveness, attractiveness and business models. It also offers relevant and professional support services to members.

RECENT Events & Activities



GENDER STUDY IN THE WORKPLACE

Business Mauritius in collaboration with the *Agence Française de Développement (AFD)* conducted a gender situational and organisational analysis, within the private sector in Mauritius, on the maintenance of women in the labour market and their access to the labour market after having an interruption. A specific focus on the Covid-19 context and its impact on women and men was also explored.

In this context, *Business Mauritius* also published the results of a Gender study in November 2023. The study which was conducted by *Kantar* has shed light on the ongoing gender disparities in Mauritius’s workforce and it highlights the pay gap realities, sexist behaviours and pressures beyond work such as household chores and childcare issues.

The full study is available here:

INTERNAL POLICY ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Business Mauritius with the support of the AFD is now working towards providing support to Mauritian companies in creating and implementing an internal policy aimed at combating Gender-Based Violence in the workplace and offering aid to the victims. This initiative will also contribute to the promotion of gender equality in the workplace.

Three Companies have been identified for the pilot project and through its outcomes, achievements, and guidance, this pilot project will establish itself as a replicable and instructive case study for other entities, whether they belong to the public or private sector.

PUBLICATION OF WORK-LIFE TOOLKIT

As 'Remote Work' has become an integral part of the operating model for many Mauritian companies in the post-pandemic era, *Business Mauritius* has identified the need to support businesses in implementing flexible work arrangements.

With this in mind, our team has developed the *Work-Life Toolkit*, a set of tools designed to provide a framework for boosting employee satisfaction and enhancing overall company performance. The comprehensive toolkit is structured around three main themes:



FLEXIBILITY



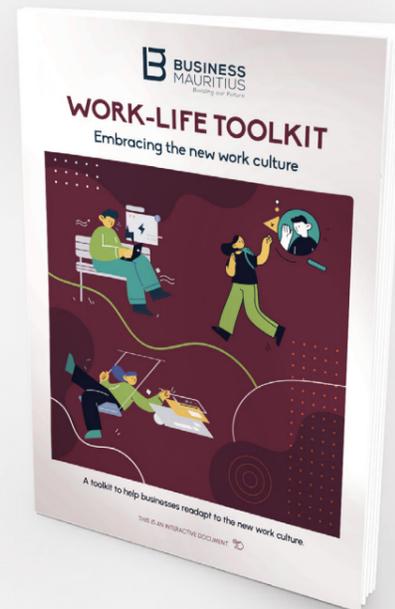
WORK & FAMILY LIFE



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

It reflects the growing trend among businesses to adopt flexible work policies, including 'Flexitime' and 'Work from Home' options, to accommodate the diverse needs of their workforce.

For those interested in embracing and leveraging this new work culture, the *Work-Life Toolkit* is available for download here:



HRBP PROGRAMME

The *Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP)* programme was designed to provide HR Professionals with a competitive edge. This MQA Approved workshop is tailor-made for those seeking growth and success in today's dynamic business landscape, by propelling their career to new heights.

The participants are gaining knowledge from the best and acquiring valuable insights from industry leaders. The programme, launched on 19 March 2024, ran until 30 July 2024 on Tuesdays. The duration of the course was 58 hours.

UPCOMING Events & Activities

TRAINING CALENDAR 2025

February 2025

- Management Skills Development Programme
- Payroll Management: Mastering Statutory Obligations and Calculations
- The Essentials of Employment Relations
- People Management Principles & Practice for Line Managers & Supervisors

March 2025

- Stock Handling and Recording
- Fire Prevention & Emergency Preparedness
- Building a Resilient Workforce: Strategies for Onboarding, Engaging, Transforming and Retaining Talent
- Human Resources Business Partner Programme

April 2025

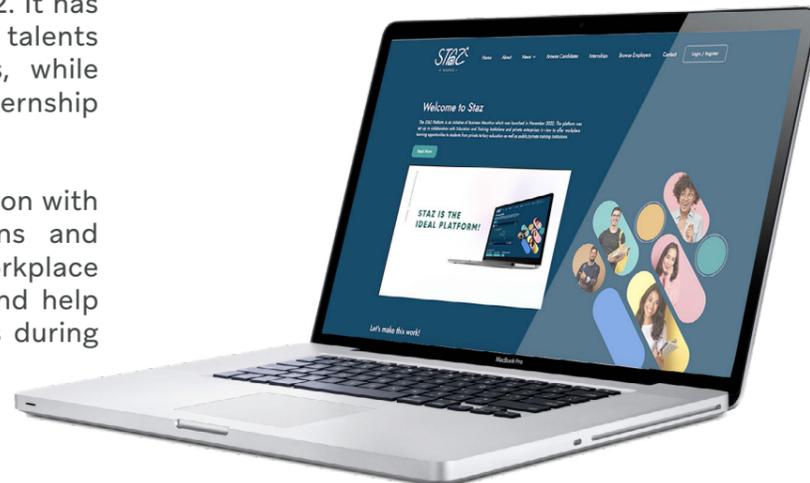
- Pathways To Customer Service Excellence
- Navigating Workplace Challenges: Managing and Preventing Violence at Work
- Mastering Continuous Improvement: Empowering Line-Managers For Operational Excellence

RELAUNCH OF STAZ

The STAZ platform is an initiative of *Business Mauritius* launched in November 2022. It has enabled recruiters to discover new talents and connect with potential interns, while also helping students to find internship opportunities.

The platform was set up in collaboration with educational and training institutions and private enterprises in order to offer workplace learning opportunities to students and help them acquire on-the-job experiences during their studies.

Discover STAZ here:



GBV LEARNING EXCHANGE IN JOHANNESBURG, SA

Dhiruj Ramluggun, Head of Social Capital, and Manisha Foolessur, Training Manager & Skills Development Administrator, along with Shanjana Canakiah, Inclusive Development Coordinator, attended a transformative Learning Exchange in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This initiative, organised by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), focused on building a business network against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) by learning from South Africa's strides in combating workplace violence.

SUSTAINABILITY & INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The *Sustainability & Inclusive Growth Commission* advocates for increased member engagement in community development, as it believes that sustainability and inclusive growth are key to business success. Through *Business Mauritius's* community-led initiative, *SigneNatir*, we are contributing to an inclusive and sustainable Mauritius.

Sustainability Initiatives

WATER STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES & FORUM

In November 2023, *Business Mauritius* launched its first *Water Stewardship Forum* where it also officially launched *SigneNatir's* new "Water Stewardship Guidelines", marking a pivotal step towards sustainable water management.

The "Water Stewardship Guidelines" provide 20 distinct business actions for better management of water resources, which can be implemented across economic sectors through 5 categories:

- Assessment and Management
- Efficiency and Technology
- Quality and Circularity
- Water-Related Ecosystems
- Collective Action

For more information:





The *Water Stewardship Forum* has united industry leaders, experts and stakeholders to unveil comprehensive guidelines for responsible water stewardship. A second Forum followed in February 2024 where industry experts led insightful discussions on tackling water challenges, showcasing case studies.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY CLUB

In March 2024, *Business Mauritius* held its last *Club des Entrepreneurs de l'Économie Circulaire* at *UBP Group's* offices in Trianon. The main objectives of the event were to:

- Update participants on the *Ministry of Environment's* Circular Economy roadmap, outlining future goals
- Share concrete initiatives in the circular economy through innovative and inspiring projects.

There were over sixty participants, including representatives from the private sector, *Agence Française de Développement (AFD)*, the *European Union (EU)*, and NGOs, highlighting the diversity and richness of perspectives on circular economy.

The final meeting of the *Club de l'économie circulaire* was held on December 12th, in partnership with the *Association of Mauritian Manufacturers*.



SDG IMPACT STANDARDS TRAINING

The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* partnered with *Business Mauritius* in February 2024 for a 3-Day Training on *SDG Impact Standards for Enterprises* with the aim to equip businesses with the technical skills needed to accelerate the implementation of *SDGs* in Mauritius by 2030.

The event brought together business leaders, sustainability professionals and stakeholders to engage in discussions that will shape the future of responsible business in Mauritius. It was a joint venture of *Business Mauritius's* *Economic Commission and Sustainability & Inclusive Development Commission*.

Read more:

Watch the video:



SUSTAINABILITY FOR BUSINESS GALA CELEBRATION

In March 2024, *Business Mauritius* held an Award Event for the first cohort of the *Sustainability for Business Training Programme*. The 2 best projects were awarded on this occasion.

From learning to implementing, the training programme has been a game-changer for our participants, equipping them with various tools to make a difference. Together, they have learnt how to use sustainability as a driving force within their organisation.

STUDIES BY SUNREF MAURITIUS

Business Mauritius, through the *SUNREF* programme has published two recent studies:

Agrivoltaics Study

Released in March 2024, this study explores the potential of agrivoltaics as a multifaceted solution to address Mauritius's challenges stemming from climate change, particularly focusing on increased extreme weather events, rising sea levels and declining agricultural productivity.

Study on EU Green Deal's Impact

In April 2024, *Business Mauritius* hosted an event to present the findings of *SUNREF's* study on the impact of the *European Union's Green Deal (EGD)* on the Mauritian economy. The study aims to inform various stakeholders in the Mauritian economy about the policies and directives of the *European Green Deal*.



The event was attended by representatives from the *French Embassy*, *AFD*, *Business Mauritius* and its partner members, study participants, as well as ministry representatives.

View all studies:

Inclusive Development Initiatives



LAUNCH OF BUSINESS MAURITIUS'S DEI CHARTER

Last October, the National Committee on Corporate Governance (NCCG) officially announced the national *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Charter*. Along with a coalition of 16 signatory organisations, the NCCG made a powerful commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive and sustainable business community and society in Mauritius. Based on the NCCG's DEI Charter, *Business Mauritius* developed its own Diversity, Equality & Inclusivity Guidelines, aimed at ensuring that the principles set out in the DEI Charter are systematically applied and adhered to within *Business Mauritius*.

View Business Mauritius's DEI Guidelines:



MEET THE FACILITATORS

Business Mauritius held four "Meet the Facilitators" sessions – a platform for service providers in inclusive development, including NGOs, public bodies and individuals with relevant skills and tools to support adopters in implementing inclusive guidelines within their organisations.

Among the topics discussed were corporate employee volunteering in NGOs, sexual education at work, educational social enterprises and mental health in corporate employment.



INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT RECOGNITION AWARDS

In September 2024, the Sustainability & Inclusive Growth Commission held the inaugural Inclusive Development Recognition Awards at the House of Digital Art in Port-Louis. The event was organised to recognise and honour adopters of the Inclusive Development Guidelines for their accomplishments across seven respective categories.

COP 29

Amandine Hardowar de Rosnay, Head of Sustainability and Inclusive Growth, was part of the delegation representing Mauritius at this year's COP Convention in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The plight of island states was a focal point in several conversations, highlighting that while islands contribute the least to climate change, they face its worst effects.

UPCOMING Events & Activities

More details will be communicated on the below initiatives during the year. Stay connected with us.

- **Club des Entrepreneurs de la Transition Énergétique**
New meeting will take place in the next quarter
- **Water Stewardship Forum**
The third forum will be held within the next few months

TRAINING CALENDAR 2025

- Sustainability for Business Training Programme

CARBON MARKETS

In collaboration with our partners at SUNREF and the Agence Française de Développement, *Business Mauritius* participated in the launch of an EU-financed study on Carbon Markets for Mauritius.

The main objective was to ensure that Mauritius can productively embrace the carbon market and continue its efforts towards combating climate change.

IN Conversation WITH EDLEY ARMOOGUM

IR CONSULTANT AT BUSINESS MAURITIUS

NAVIGATING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In the dynamic landscape of Industrial Relations (IR), *Business Mauritius* stands out as a cornerstone in fostering harmonious work environments for the Mauritian workforce.

As we delve into a conversation with Edley Armoogum, we aim to uncover how *Business Mauritius* guides member companies with Labour Legislations and we explore the multifaceted IR services offered by *Business Mauritius*.



“We support over 1,200 companies, in navigating Labour Legislations... Essentially, by doing so, we help ensure a healthy workplace within the private sector.”

CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THE ROLE OF THE IR DEPARTMENT WITHIN BUSINESS MAURITIUS?

The IR Department at *Business Mauritius* plays a pivotal role in supporting member companies in Industrial Relations. We support over 1,200 companies, in navigating Labour Legislations and we ensure that our member companies are kept updated on any amendment to Labour legislations in a prompt manner through circulars and in-house training. Essentially, by doing so, we help ensure a healthy workplace within the private sector.

WHAT SPECIFIC SERVICES DOES THE IR DEPARTMENT OFFER?

We offer a comprehensive range of IR services to members, including many SMEs. Here are some key aspects of our services:

- **Advice and Assistance**
We provide expert guidance to members so that they can stay informed on Labour Legislations and IR Laws.
- **Contract Vetting**
We meticulously review employment contracts, employee handbooks, procedural and collective agreements between employers and employee unions to ensure legal compliance.
- **Advocacy and Negotiation**
We actively promote member interests on sensitive IR and Human Resource Management (HRM) issues, engaging in skilled negotiations.
- **Involvement in Collective Bargaining**
We facilitate negotiations between management and employee unions.

◦ **Expatriate Employment**

We assist member companies in handling procedures for recruiting and employing foreigners.

◦ **Organisation of Training**

We offer in-house programmes and tailor-made workshops related to IR and HR. As an example, we are currently conducting a training entitled "The Essentials of Employee Relations."

3

HOW DOES THE IR DEPARTMENT HELP RESOLVE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES FOR MEMBER COMPANIES?

Often, member companies seek our assistance with Collective Bargaining – a negotiation process between employers and employees (usually represented by a union). Our role is to help these members develop their collective agreement, which serves as the legal document binding the employer and the union.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU ADVOCATE FOR MEMBERS' INTERESTS ON SENSITIVE IR AND HRM ISSUES?

4

We actively represent our members' interests in various forums and institutions. These include:

◦ **Tripartite Institutions**

Business Mauritius engages regularly with the Ministry of Labour to negotiate fair treatment, especially regarding salary compensation and the National Minimum Wage.

◦ **Key Bodies**

The IR Department participates in institutions such as the Commission of Conciliation and Mediation, Permanent Relations Tribunal, National Remuneration Board and Redundancy Board.

◦ **Experienced Third Parties**

External experts take directives from the IR Department on policy matters and represent *Business Mauritius* in forums to shape policy direction.

5

HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO LABOUR LEGISLATIONS THAT PROMOTE COMPETITIVENESS AND FLEXIBILITY?

At *Business Mauritius*, we collaborate with relevant authorities to influence policies that impact the private sector and our member companies. As the representative body for the private sector, we carefully balance safeguarding Employee Rights with maintaining business viability. While advocating for competitive salaries, we also recognise the financial constraints faced by member companies.

As we champion the interests of our members, we strive to create an environment where fair wages, flexibility and competitiveness coexist harmoniously. By fostering positive employee-employer relationships, *Business Mauritius* contributes to the overall well-being of the Mauritian workforce and economy.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

LOÏK PAYET

Economic Development Consultant

An experienced consultant in economic development and strategic planning, Loïk brings valuable insights to Business Mauritius.



JEEVISHA RAMDIN

Administrative Assistant

Jeevisha brings her expertise in administrative support to Business Mauritius, ensuring smooth operations.



...AT THE END OF AN EVENTFUL 2024...

BUSINESS MAURITIUS END-OF-YEAR PARTY



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Building our Future

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Partner Members



Other Members



Affiliates

