

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

National Initiatives on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance

Mauritius

1. Blue economy is seen as a key driver of future growth for small island states like Mauritius, which has a huge maritime zone of some 2.3 million square kilometres in addition to 396 000 square kilometres Joint Management Area with Seychelles .
2. Presently, blue economy contributes to 10% of the country's GDP. The Government's vision is to double the blue GDP to 20 % in the medium term, while realizing an equitable socio-economic development and protection of the environment.
3. The Mauritius blue economy is currently represented by established sectors namely coastal tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, seafood processing and seaport activities that are also considered as traditional ocean activities.
4. The main strategy would be to work on the consolidation of traditional activities but also develop emerging ones such as aquaculture, marine renewable energy, maritime services, marine biotechnology, and oil & gas exploration.
5. The Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping is the driving Ministry to look into the development of the Blue Economy sector.
6. **Guiding documents for the development of Blue Economy**
 - a) Ocean Economy Roadmap 2013.
 - b) The Ocean Economy in Mauritius: making it happen, making it last (World Bank, 2017).
 - c) Blue Economy Policy, Implementation Assessment and Action Plan for Acceleration (African Development Bank, 2020).

7. National Initiatives in the Blue Economy and Ocean Governance

- a) Development of a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP), whose aim is to organize the various uses of maritime zones and to ensure the sustainable development of its resources. The MSP process is being spearheaded by the Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration, which falls under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office. An MSP Committee and sub-committees have been set up with relevant stakeholders to look into the various aspects of MSP. An online GIS Ocean Observatory Platform has been established which acts as repository for collection of coastal and marine baseline data.
- b) With a view to promote aquaculture the government has taken measures through new regulations in 2015 to increase the existing number of prescribed sites for large and small scale fish farming. Moreover, new offshore fish farming zones have been selected.
- c) An Aquaculture framework policy is being finalized so as to further develop the aquaculture sector for increased fish production of high valued species;
- d) Increase in the local fishing fleets in the semi-industrial and tuna fisheries so as to develop our fishing industry.
- e) Training courses for the empowerment of the fishermen community.
- f) Mangrove propagation in appropriate coastal areas, in order build resilience against coastal erosion and increase nursery and feeding grounds for juvenile fish and allow fish stocks to replenish.
- g) Coral and seagrass restoration projects.
- h) Coastal protection and rehabilitation works at eroded beaches to maintain the tourism industry.
- i) Banning of the single use plastic bags.

8. Challenges to Blue Economy Growth

- a) Lack of technical capacity to access resources, develop and implement viable projects which complement the blue economy effectively.
- b) Limited access to concessional finance coupled with insufficient financial mechanisms such as blue bonds.

- c) Limited access to, and exchanges of, ocean knowledge and innovative technologies.
 - d) Difficulties to acquire relevant expertise and sophisticated equipment for the development of its marine biotechnology as well soil and gas exploration.
 - e) Accentuating impacts of climate change on the lagoon ecosystems and coastal infrastructure are posing serious challenge to the tourism industry.
 - f) Marine pollution, including marine litter.
9. The realization of the full potential of the Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy vision requires the effective and successful partnerships and cooperation with friendly countries, which are well advanced in the blue economy.