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growth, but, in many cases, for its mere survival. This pressure is pre-occupying economies of all sizes and capacity: ranging from the leading American, going through the rapidly growing Chinese, the opening Indian and finally to the emerging African economies. No country is sitting on its laurels, but is striving hard to live up to international pressures of globalisation and liberalisation to enhance the quality of life and standard of living of its people.

Mauritius is no exception. Classified as a middle-income country with a per capita income of US \$5140 (2005 estimates), we have already embarked on this journey. Mauritius started with a mono-crop agriculture based economy and over time diversified into tourism and textile. Today, with the emergence of the financial services and ICT sector, Mauritius is thriving to ascertain its position in the K-economy. The need for sustainability and growth together, has been the driving force behind this diversification and adaptation to the changing international economic climate. And, more is to be done...

At the heart of this diversification and adaptation, is INNOVATION. That technological advances have shrunk the whole world into a global village is no new statement I am making here. But, the ingredients to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of people in the global village, or shall we term it 'global E-economy', are certainly different from what they were a couple of decades ago. Among the most important ones is innovation. When viewed from a holistic perspective, and supported with accompanying measures at individual, organisational or national level, innovation leads to productivity and competitiveness while acting as a catalyst to entrepreneurship. These dynamics contribute to the enhancement of international competitiveness of Mauritius.

An organisation that is committed to creative collaboration will ride the wave of the future. They will go beyond the realm of assumptive thinking and welcome the dawn of innovation... Ask yourself "To what extent am I, as a manager, a maintenance engineer working on the present or an architect designing the future?"

I would, here, want to stress the importance of innovation and would advocate for a shift from the traditional organisational paradigm to that of a learning organisation which stands on the pillars of empowerment, creativity, learning, knowledge management, entrepreneurship and leadership – factors imperative for creating an environment conducive to innovation. Since its inception in 1999, NPCC has been proung a culture of innovation, productivity and entrepreneurship at individual, organisational and national levels through various initiatives such as the Computer Proficiency Project (CPP), Social Empowerment – Civic Action Teams (CATs), Muda Free Campaign, just to name a few. Some of these have also been run in Rodrigues. These projects have yielded very positive results and are still running to achieve continual productivity.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank all stakeholders who have helped us successfully drive these projects.

Further driven by our guiding principles "Empowerment through Education for Employability and Entrepreneurship", we have prepared an action plan, for the current and next year, with the following focal points:

- Networking and Clustering
- Benchmarking
- Promoting ICT and reducing the Digital Divide
- Promoting IT-enabled services
- Social Empowerment
- Innovation
- Productivity Improvement
- Green Productivity

Collaboration and synergy amongst stakeholders are the key to success for these projects and we, at NPCC, rely on such support to make it happen.

I would like to end with a simple question: "Is there a way I can execute my job cycle differently and bring more value?"

You can talk to us.

Avinash Ramtohul.
Chairman NPCC ■

Chairman's Message



Mr Avinash Ramtohul, the new NPCC Chairman

"I am priviledged to address this first message to all readers of the NPCC Newsletter and on behalf of all Council Members and NPCC staff, I would like to thank all readers for the interest shown in our newsletter."

Innovation: A Key Economic Driver

At the turn of this new millennium, one would be hard-pressed to find a single organisation or country that is not facing the challenges of today's evolving economy, not just for sustained

NPCC Council

The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council has been reconstituted. Mr. Avinash Ramtohol is the new chairman. Having served at management level in different institutions both in Mauritius and the UK, Mr. Ramtohol is presently a consultant for the Eastern and Southern African region for Oracle Corporation, a US based large IT organisation. Mr. Arif Currimjee remains the vice-chairman. Members representing the interests of the government are Ms. Amrita N. J. Maulloo, Mr. Prem Hans Jhugroo, and Mr. Ramjit Imrit. Messrs. José Poncini, Mukesh Gopal and Azad Jeetun will represent the employers while the trade unions will be represented by Messrs. Yusuf Sooklall, Radhakrisna Sadien and Nurdeo Luchmun-Roy. Messrs. S. Govindasamy Pillay, Roland Dubois, Jay Komarduth Hurry, Suresh Chandra Bhuruth, Sanjay Mungar, Vijay Sookaree, Vivek Gupta Ramnarain and Mrs. J P Selvam Poonosamy and Jeanine Yeung Ching Yung will represent industry associations, consumer organisations, professionals and academia. ■

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Waste for an Innovative Mauritius



Minister Dharam Gokhool unveiling the brochure of the Innovators Mauritius Award

The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council kick started its 2006 activities with the launching on 19th January 2006 of the second edition of the Innovators Mauritius Award whose theme this year is "Green M: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Waste". The objective of the award is to develop a culture of innovation among our citizens and enterprises so that they can thrive and succeed in this competitive and globalised economy. Innovation is being increasingly recognized not only in advanced countries but also in developing countries as being one of the most important contributors to economic growth. Mauritius is facing tough times with economic growth stagnating at 3% in 2005. The dismantling of preferential trade agreements which have for so long protected Mauritius in its traditional markets has resulted in a situation where our local enterprises can no

longer compete with exports of basic low cost commodity. They have to perpetually innovate to develop new value-added products which appeal to consumers by their uniqueness and differentiation. It is only by developing such niche markets that Mauritius can compete with the South-East Asian countries. It is their quest for new product development to meet shorter product life cycle and which fulfills and even exceeds customer expectations that will ensure local businesses their economic survival.

In this context, the theme chosen for the second edition of the Innovators Mauritius Award is an opportunity for our firms to develop niche products and services that can respond to the growing environmentally consciousness of the global consumer. The market potential for organic food, organic clothing and green tourism is growing and represents an opportunity for our firms to tap. "Green M" is also a call on Mauritians to be more environmentally responsible. Each Mauritian, whether a student at school, a housewife, an employee in his or her workplace, is capable of influencing the amount of waste that is thrown into our small land surface or our sea. Everyone has the creative potential to propose practical solutions that can make Mauritius Greener.

The theme of "Green M" should more than ever find its place on the agenda of a small island economy that is finding it more and more difficult to keep up with the soaring prices of non-renewable energy such as petrol. The theme combines two of NPCC agenda items, namely innovation and green productivity. Through green productivity, NPCC wants to develop a strategy that pursues productivity increases and environmental protection simultaneously. With this year's theme, we want Mauritians to question their rapidly changing consumption patterns whereby each one produces one kilo of waste every day. Each citizen, either individually or in a team, should think creatively on how he can reduce, reuse and recycle waste for a cleaner, safer and more attractive island to live in, work in and to visit.

To learn more about the conditions and regulations about the Innovators Mauritius Award, please visit (<http://www.npccmauritus.com/innovationaward/>).

In line with the Innovators Mauritius Award, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council is organizing a series of talks on innovation and on topics related to the theme of the award. Interested parties wishing to attend the different talks can download the programme on: (<http://www.npccmauritus.com/workshops.pdf>) and return it to us. ■

"The innovation point is the pivotal moment when talented and motivated people seek the opportunity to act on their ideas and dreams."

W. Arthur Porter

Forging New Orientations for Mauritius?

Since the Competitiveness Foresight exercise one year ago, the economy has deteriorated as revealed by the economic indicators. If Mauritius wants to remain on the upward curve of development, it cannot stick to its old development paradigm, but has to look for new solutions. It has to create the climate to attract investors and the brains to ensure a rapid transfer of technology. Otherwise, Mauritius will face an economic and financial crisis worse than the 1981-1982 one. The views expressed during the Competitiveness Foresight exercise identified openness as a key factor that could enable Mauritius to remain competitive in the global economy. What does it entail to become more open? According to Percy Mistry, Chairman

"Unlike Sudan, Zambia or Zimbabwe, Mauritius has enough human capital genetic pool with all the Indians - Creoles - Chinese it has to turn around and adapt faster than anyone can imagine to meet the challenges of the global economy."

Percy Mistry

of Oxford International Associates, who acted as facilitator and catalyst for the Competitiveness Foresight and who animated the Follow-up Workshop on the Competitiveness Foresight last November, the most user-friendly platform should be created so as to attract any business from anywhere in the world to come, invest and operate in Mauritius. Barriers to flow of talent, ideas, capital and capacity of people should be removed. We should be prepared to attract a flow of immigrants that have the financial resources, knowledge, skills and competencies that are missing in Mauritius. The economy will have to be deregulated so as to attract investment in the ratio of 30-35% of GDP. Appropriate measures should be taken to attract wealthy Europeans to have secondary houses in Mauritius where they could spend their winters. Public expenditures should be reduced by downsizing, shutdowns and sales of state owned enterprises. ■

NPCC Exports Muda Free to the Southern African Region

During one whole week from 30th January to 3rd February 2006, NPCC, together with the Kaizen Institute, assisted the Botswana Public Service to re-engineer the business processes of various government departments. This programme is part of the Botswana Public Service reforms aimed at transforming its public sector to face the challenges of globalisation. NPCC had drawn from its experience gathered over 3 years in implementing the Muda Free Public Service programme in Mauritius to offer this consultancy programme to the Botswana Public Service.

At the end of October 2005, NPCC participated in a regional conference on capacity building for the SADC - East African region national productivity organisations and presented a case study on the national Muda free campaign in Mauritius which started in 2001. Following this conference, a number of organisations approached NPCC to assist them in conducting similar programmes in their countries. The Directorate of the Public Service Management of Botswana took the lead in making it happen.

Fifty-one Performance Improvement Coordinators (PICs), change agents posted at different ministries were involved in the re-engineering process related to the:

- issue of driving license and transport permits by the Department of Road Transport and Safety
- issue of passports by the Passport and Immigration Office at the Gaborone Passport Office of the Department of Immigration
- issue of National ID at Gaborone counters of the Civil and National Registration Office, Gaborone Civil Office, and
- through-put-time reduction for medical supplies at the Central Medical stores.

Applying the Kaizen principles, the reforms focused on the 3 Ps, namely improving the Processes through Muda elimination, improving the Physical environment by applying 5S for physical work place improvements, and improving the way People (employees) are empowered to perform the change. This approach yielded immediate tangible results. Waiting time for obtaining driving license was reduced by 50%, the passport issuing process was reviewed resulting in the waiting period for obtaining a passport being reduced from sixteen to two days, and the utilisation of colour coding and directional arrows at Customer Counters to eliminate the muda of searching.

This successful collaboration between the two countries can be used as stepping stones to pave the way to a "Muda Free SADC Civil Service", where a more hassle free effective and efficient public service will positively impact on the quality of life of the population. ■



'Dump' room transformed into an appropriate Records Office to facilitate information retrieval

Networking Policy for Better Enterprise Collaboration and Clustering

Productivity improvement at enterprise level is the sine qua non condition for any improvement in competitiveness. But however, all the productivity gains that can be made in an enterprise cannot guarantee enhanced competitiveness of the sector / industry if the business environment does not respond to new challenges.

In a number of countries, enterprise networking and clustering has proved to be an effective manner to address market failures, institutional gaps, and other weaknesses in the business environment, preventing enterprises to become more competitive. The NPCC has set up, in April 2001, a Productivity Implementation Committee (PIC) on Clusters-Incubators-Science Parks to provide a platform for institutions, academia and enterprises to adopt clustering as a strategy to enhance competitiveness. Pilot projects have been initiated since then among textile enterprises, footwear sector, and women entrepreneurs. Other private sector driven initiatives (e.g. knitwear cluster, freight cluster) have also been launched and are quite successful.

The interest in clusters and networks is fuelled by the potential and perceived benefits, such as rapid innovation and growth, that are envisaged by those embarking on cluster development approaches. The following benefits have been experienced in high performing clusters and networks:

- better access to suppliers and flexibility;
- access to specialised information through personal relationships;
- joint marketing;
- local rivalry and peer pressure to enhance performance;
- innovation through having information on new markets and technological advances;
- development of complementary products (e.g. tourist attractions);
- enhanced reputation of an area;
- access to a pool of experienced labour;
- access to institutions and public goods;
- overall environment conducive to attracting new businesses.

At the level of a network, many improvements can be brought about by small measures, and experts believe that cluster development initiatives should start with such small measures (e.g. les plus petits éléments d'intérêts communs). However, sustainable long-term cluster development may require larger investments in areas such as infrastructure, collective branding and marketing, or investment promotion. If there

is a market failure in industry support provision for such activities to happen and enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, it has to be addressed at policy level. The move towards a cluster-based competitiveness strategy requires a review of approaches, instruments, and roles of the various actors involved.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has agreed to finance a Network Development Programme for Mauritius. The programme has two components:

1. Development of a National Networking Policy and Strategy (8th-9th March 2006)
2. Training in Network facilitation (end of March 2006)

Objectives

The objective of the training is to build local capacity in managing enterprise networks, and developing projects that would enhance the competitiveness of the network. The training targets representatives of enterprise associations, entrepreneurs active at the level of formal and informal networks, support institutions as well as private sector operators providing support services to various operators.

Coupled with the training of network facilitators, a Networking Policy and Strategy will be prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat to address weaknesses related to the business environment and help create an enabling environment for enterprise network to emerge and thrive. The National Networking Policy and Strategy will be prepared by seeking the inputs of all stakeholders involved in policy decisions, providing institutional support, funding agencies as well as networks already operational in Mauritius.

Messrs. John Edgar and Joseph Vella Bonnici will be the resource persons for this project. For more information, kindly contact Mr. Ram Jutliah at NPCC on telephone 2118118 or email at natpro@intnet.mu ■

Applying Productivity Improvement Techniques at the Ministry of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives

The Ministry of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives is targeting to reduce its expenses on utilities and overtime payment by 10%. In this endeavour, it has approached the NPCC to know more about productivity improvement techniques. The NPCC has responded by proposing ■■■

■■■ a customised programme based on classroom training and learning by doing. The training programme, scheduled over three half-days for twenty-four staff members of the Ministry, started with an exposé by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry on the vision of the Ministry with this project and the deliverables expected from the staff training.

The trainees were briefed on the concepts of productivity and the benefits of improving productivity. They had to brainstorm on the characteristics of a good organisation. The ideas that came out were:

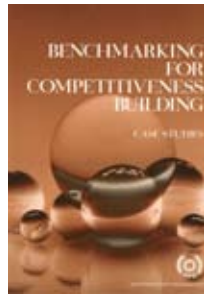
- Good structure - defined roles and functions, responsibilities
- Good communication
- Clear objectives
- Good working environment – good interpersonal skills
- Good competencies
- Participative management
- Work methods and tools
- Positive work culture
- Good leadership
- Meritocracy
- Recognition
- Relevant training
- Career development
- Motivation
- Good remuneration
- High productivity
- Customer and market focus
- Good monitoring
- Innovation
- Research and development

The participants were also trained in problem-solving techniques, such as identifying and defining a problem based on facts, data collection and analysis, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, prioritising using Pareto analysis and process mapping. They were afterwards grouped into four teams where each team had to identify a problem and, by applying the techniques they have learned, they had to propose solutions. The problems identified were:

- Doubling of telephone expenses in one year, especially for the PABX
- Increase in overtime payment for drivers and office attendants
- High paper wastage during photocopying and printing processes
- High level of debtors for one specific service

With the assistance of the NPCC facilitators, the solutions proposed were refined for proper implementation according to a specific time frame. ■

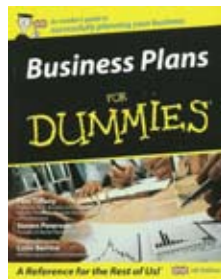
Recent Additions to the Knowledge Centre



Benchmarking for competitiveness building: case studies.

Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization, 2001. 187p., ill., tables. ISBN: 9283322703

Benchmarking is an approach to productivity improvement that has become one of the most popular and widely practiced. It has been defined as a systematic and continuous process of searching, learning, adapting, and implementing best practices from within the same organization or from other organisations for achieving superior performance. The focus is not on results but on systems and processes. The challenge for an organisation undertaking benchmarking is to convert the knowledge gained into a competitive advantage. The Asian Productivity Organisation organised a number of programmes to help member countries develop benchmarking capabilities. They included a survey in 1998 to study the issues, problems, and success factors in implementing benchmarking. This publication is a compilation of the case study reports.



TIFFANY, Paul; PETERSON, Steven D.: **Business plans for dummies.** Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2004. 396p., ill.. ISBN: 0764570269

Whether your company is a one-man operation or a large corporation, creating a great business plan is the first and most vital step to true business success. In fact, a clear, precise, and well-research business plan can be the big difference between finding funds and investors for your venture, or falling flat on your face.

The book guides wannabe entrepreneurs in the right direction by covering every step of business plan creation, from doing the initial market research, to crunching the numbers, to preparing for the competition, including: pinpointing company goals and objectives, creating a clear, simple mission statement, identifying customers and understanding their needs, differentiating your business from the competition and understanding budgeting and finances.

With the latest tips and advice to help you launch your venture with confidence, the guide covers it all: why the business plan is vital

Charting a proper course for the business
Understanding markets and business environments
Knowing customers and competition
Forecasting and budgeting
Thinking strategically
Managing change and business growth
Putting the business plan into action
What you should never put in your business plan.



GOUPILLE, Philippe: **Creating jobs... Mauritian entrepreneurs tell you how they did it!** Port Louis: Spirit of Enterprise, 2005. 63p. ISBN: 9990382115

For a nation to develop, it has to rely on the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens. This book highlights the dreams, experiences and obstacles that a few colourful and interesting Mauritian entrepreneurs operating in sectors as varied as pastry, textiles, computers, beauty care and catering have encountered in building their respective businesses.



Asian Productivity Organization: **Green productivity: in pursuit of better quality of life.** Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization, 1997. 570p., ill., ref., tables. ISBN: 9283322118

Green productivity aims at the pursuit of economic and productivity growth while protecting the environment. This publication is a compilation of papers presented at the APO World Conference on Green Productivity. The presentations cover topics such as sustainable industrial and agricultural development, ISO 14000 Environmental Management System, human resources development and environment, ecobusiness opportunities, and global cooperation in technology transfer and information sharing. The final declaration adopted at the closing session of the conference appealed to the world for action to make the green productivity movement a sound strategy for realising a better quality of life. ■



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