

# U.S. Country Commercial Guides



## Mauritius 2018

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## Doing Business in Mauritius

### Market Overview

Mauritius is a small island nation with a population of 1.3 million people. It has one of the most successful and competitive economies in Africa with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$12.4 billion and per capita GDP over \$9,600 in 2017. The economy grew by 3.9 percent in 2017 and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates it will continue to grow at a moderate rate of 3.9 to 4 percent in the medium term. Mauritius consistently does well on the World Bank's Doing Business report and, for the 10th consecutive year, the 2018 report ranks Mauritius first among African economies (25th worldwide) in overall ease of doing business.

The most important sectors of the Mauritian economy are: textiles, tourism, financial and business services, information and communication technology, seafood processing, real estate development, energy, and education/training. The government is emphasizing innovation as the basis for long-term growth. Mauritius claims an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of 2.3 million square kilometers and has aspirations for the ocean economy to play a significant role in its economic development. In addition, the government is undertaking efforts to stimulate economic growth in the following areas: serving as a gateway for investment into Africa; increasing the use of renewable energy; developing smart cities; upgrading and modernizing infrastructure, including public transportation and the port; and developing activities related to artificial intelligence, blockchain technologies, and financial technologies (fintech).

Most bilateral trade between Mauritius and the United States is from Mauritius to the United States, particularly textiles under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). Total two-way trade between Mauritius and the United States was valued at \$349 million in 2017, a 2.7 percent increase from 2016. Mauritian exports to the United States totalled \$229 million in 2017, and the United States is currently the third largest export market for Mauritius after the UK and France, receiving 11.2 percent of total Mauritian exports. Mauritius' main exports to the United States are textiles and apparel, precious stones/jewelry, processed fish, live primates, sunglasses, cane sugar and other processed specialty foods. Mauritius imported \$120 million in goods from the United States in 2017, up from \$97 million in 2016. The principal U.S. exports to Mauritius include industrial/agricultural machinery, liquefied butanes, precious stones/jewelry, medical instruments, almonds, and aircraft parts. Mauritius' main sources of imported goods are China, India, South Africa, and France.

Mauritian exports are eligible for preferential access to markets of: i) the South African Development Community (SADC), ii) the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), iii) the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC – preferences to Madagascar only), iv) Europe (under the EU-East Africa Interim Economic Partnership Agreement), v) the United States (under AGOA), vi) Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United States, and the Customs Union among Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), vii) Turkey under the Mauritius-Turkey Free Trade Agreement, and viii) Pakistan under the Mauritius-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement. Mauritius is currently negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement with India and a Free Trade Agreement with China.

### Market Challenges

There are no legal barriers for U.S. firms entering the Mauritian market, but the small size of the Mauritian market (1.3 million people) and the vast distance (10,000 miles) between Mauritius and the United States makes it a less common market for U.S. products. Additionally, U.S. firms entering the Mauritian market must contend with established European and Asian competitors.

The government controls key utility services, including electricity, water, waste water, postal services, and television broadcasting. The State Trading Corporation controls imports of non-basmati rice, wheat flour, and petroleum products, while the Agricultural Marketing Board controls imports of potatoes, onions, corn, and

some spices that compete with locally grown produce. There are no laws providing a preference for Mauritian goods and services. However, some government tenders require local partners or importers.

### **Market Opportunities**

The best opportunities for U.S. firms are in renewable and clean energy, franchising, energy efficient building design and equipment, medical equipment and healthcare services, drugs/pharmaceuticals, safety/security equipment, the film industry, port handling equipment, ocean-related industries and services, hotel and restaurant equipment, agricultural/industrial machinery, telecommunications and information technology, and consultancy services.

Agricultural and food sector opportunities include wheat, crude vegetable oil, corn/soybean for animal feed, bio-farming technology, and seeds (potato, onion, and other vegetables).

### **Market Entry Strategy**

- Partnering with a locally established agent or distributor is strongly recommended, especially when bidding for large government projects.
- The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section offers a variety of services designed to help U.S. firms develop their market entry strategy and facilitate their export experience in Mauritius. Visit the Embassy website at <https://mu.usembassy.gov/> and click on the Business tab.
- Embassy Port Louis partners with the U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg, South Africa. For a more comprehensive list of commercial services available to U.S. businesses, visit their website at <http://www.buyusa.gov/southafrica/en> and click on "Services to U.S. Businesses."
- Mauritians are bilingual in English and French. Mauritian Creole, a modified form of French, is the mother tongue of most Mauritians.

## **Political Environment**

### **Political Environment**

For background information on the political and economic environment of Mauritius, please click on the link below to the [U.S. Department of State Background Notes](#).

## **Selling U.S. Products & Services**

### **Using an Agent to Sell U.S. Products and Services**

Local agents and distributors represent more than 200 U.S. products or companies in Mauritius. For products that require servicing, qualified personnel and a reasonable supply of parts are essential. The Embassy can help U.S. firms identify an agent or distributor through our International Partner Search or Gold Key Service. Interested parties must apply through the U.S. Commercial Service at the American Consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa. For additional information, please visit our [Embassy website](#) or the [U.S. Commercial Service Sub-Saharan Africa site](#).

### **Establishing an Office**

A company incorporated in Mauritius can be 100 percent foreign-owned with no minimum capital requirement. The [Business Facilitation Act of 2017](#) allows businesses to incorporate a company and register a business with the [Corporate Business Registration Department](#) in less than two hours and to start operations in less than one day. Application for incorporation and registration is available [online](#).

Foreign companies typically organize as a private limited company. After obtaining a certificate of incorporation, foreign companies must register with the [Economic Development Board \(EDB\)](#), the government's business facilitation and investment promotion agency. The EDB can also assist with occupation permits (work and residence permits combined) and offers other services to investors.

### **Franchising**

Franchising in Mauritius is predominantly, but not exclusively, in the fast food sector. American franchises such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and McDonald's have been operating in Mauritius for several years, alongside South African franchises such as Nando's, Steers, Debonair Pizza, Spur, and Ocean Basket. Coca-Cola and Pepsi products are produced locally by Phoenix Beverages and Quality Beverages, respectively. New American franchises that have established operations in Mauritius include Subway and Domino's Pizza. Many of the resorts and hotels present in Mauritius, such as Holiday Inn, Hilton, Marriott International, and Intercontinental, also operate under franchise agreements.

### **Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is limited to a few products. Some companies sell cosmetic, health, and house cleaning products directly to consumers through visits to households or offices. Overseas shopping by mail order and internet is increasingly used by the younger generation and expatriates but is not popular due to the small size of the island and the high cost of shipping goods internationally.

### **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

Joint ventures are used mostly for construction and engineering projects and management of shopping malls. Foreign architects must enter into a joint venture with a Mauritian architect or firm to work on local projects. All contractors and consultants, whether local or foreign, must register with the [Construction Industry Development Board](#) to be able to offer construction services in Mauritius. Local companies manufacture a number of products under license, ranging from beverages to toiletries. The foreign and local firm must negotiate the licensing agreements and royalty arrangements.

### **Selling to the Government**

Major government contracts are handled through an autonomous [Central Procurement Board](#). Government procurement regulations are available online. The Procurement Policy Office runs the [public procurement system](#). The GOM publishes tender notices in the Government Gazette and local media, as well as on the Central



Procurement Board's web site. The Embassy monitors tenders open to foreign participation and forwards them to the U.S. Department of Commerce, which in turn disseminates them to the U.S. business community through U.S. Export Assistance Centers. Successful foreign bidders generally work with local partners in pursuing major contracts. Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks. Please refer to "Project Financing" Section in "Trade and Project Financing" for more information.

### **Distribution & Sales Channels**

Goods are distributed through the standard channels of importers, wholesalers, retailers, and supermarkets. Mauritius has a wide range of retail outlets, ranging from high-end shopping centers to family-run corner stores. Distribution of goods is relatively uncomplicated once goods arrive on the island given Mauritius' size: 42 miles north to south, 28 miles east to west. A four-lane motorway links the airport in the extreme southeast with the capital and principal seaport, Port Louis, on the west coast, before terminating in the extreme north at Grand Baie. Port Louis has a permanent population of only 120,000, but it is the island's business and commercial center. Ebene, a district just south of Port Louis along the four-lane motorway, has developed over the past decade into a major commercial center where a number of global financial institutions have set up regional headquarters. There are four other major towns, stretching south east from Port Louis along the main motorway to the airport and the majority of the country's population lives in this urban area.

### **Express Delivery**

A number of service providers, including DHL, FedEx, and UPS, provide international express delivery services. The Mauritius Post, in which the Government is a majority shareholder, also provides international express courier services through its Expedited Mail Service (EMS). Additionally, Mauritius Post and some smaller companies provide internal pick-up and delivery services.

### **Selling Factors & Techniques**

Effective advertising, competitive pricing, prompt delivery, and reliable after-sales servicing are important for success in the Mauritian market. Companies wishing to introduce new products into the Mauritian market require market research to identify potential customers, buying patterns, and preferences. In general, food products, especially prepared/processed food, must be adapted to local tastes and conditions. Companies should consider local cultural and religious preferences when developing a marketing strategy. To cater to the Muslim community (17 percent of the population), provision should be made for halal processing (slaughtered according to Muslim rites). Many Hindu Mauritians (48 percent of the population) do not eat beef.

### **eCommerce**

E-commerce in Mauritius is limited, but its use is on the rise. The main obstacle is that the speed and bandwidth required for modern e-commerce transactions are lacking in some of the more remote areas. To address this limitation, the country has upgraded to fiber-broadband with speeds between 10MB and 30MB. While many Mauritians use websites more for information gathering than for purchasing, this is expected to change as companies use new online strategies to promote their products. Many Mauritian businesses still do not maintain websites, preferring to use Facebook to reach their target market. Nevertheless, some companies are investing in e-commerce platforms for services such as finding deals on hotels and activities or finding a gardener or housekeeper. Examples include: [marideal.mu](http://marideal.mu), [priceguru.mu](http://priceguru.mu), and [mychauffeur.mu](http://mychauffeur.mu).

Banking is fairly sophisticated and, while cash payments remain the norm, payment by debit/credit cards is popular, gradually replacing cash payment in malls, supermarkets, and restaurants. Internet banking is increasingly used by consumers. According to Bank of Mauritius statistics, internet banking transactions

increased from 199,697 in March 2010 to 410,150 in March 2018. Major banks in Mauritius have been heavily investing in mobile banking since 2011.

### **Trade Promotion & Advertising**

The advertising industry in Mauritius is quite sophisticated and advertising is essential to the successful launch of a product or service. U.S. exporters should be prepared to provide promotional support to their agents and distributors, particularly when introducing a new product to the market. Advertising can be in English, French, or Creole (the local dialect). Companies should consider radio, billboards, print media, and television as part of their campaign. Media deregulation has introduced more competition via three independent radio stations, but the government-run Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation remains the only local television broadcaster. Consumer goods account for most advertising, followed by durables and services (banking, insurance, information technology, education).

There are about 200 advertising agencies in Mauritius. The [Association of Communication Agencies \(ACA\)](#) of Mauritius is a trade group of the 20 largest agencies and accounts for 70 percent of the market. These agencies provide a full range of marketing services, including media planning, market surveys, and creation of advertising materials. Advertising agencies normally obtain a 20 percent commission from any media booking. Multinational companies tend to work on a service fee basis rather than commission. The ACA may be contacted at:

Association of Communication Agencies of Mauritius  
P.O. Box 522, Port Louis, Mauritius  
Tel: +230 286-7330  
Fax: +230 286-7334  
Email: [acamauritiu@intnet.mu](mailto:acamauritiu@intnet.mu)

There are three major daily newspapers and many weeklies. Most are in French but they do carry some articles and advertisements in English. L'Express Weekly and News on Sunday are the only major newspapers entirely in English. Major newspapers and business magazines include:

- [L'Express](#) (daily)
- [Le Mauricien](#) (daily)
- [Le Defi Quotidien](#) (daily)
- [Week-End](#) (weekly)
- [Business Magazine](#) (weekly)
- [Weekly Magazine](#) (weekly)

### **Pricing**

The Mauritian market is generally price sensitive, although middle- and high-income brackets increasingly look for quality. Most prices are market-determined, but the government controls prices and/or markups on certain goods. For example, the government sets maximum prices for petroleum products, cooking gas (for domestic use), wheat flour, non-luxury rice, and bread. Additionally, there are maximum markups permitted (ranging from 17 to 45 percent) for goods such as pharmaceuticals, timber, tires, infant milk, canned fish and meats, and imported fresh fruits. Legislation related to price control can be accessed [here](#). Mauritius applies a 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on all goods and services, except for some basic staple food items, medical and dental services, most pharmaceuticals, and educational and training services.

## **Sales Service/Customer Support**

While Mauritians in general are helpful and friendly, customer service is not up to the standards expected in the United States. However, Mauritian consumers are starting to expect better quality and after-sales service. After-sales servicing and availability of spare parts are essential for successfully marketing certain goods, particularly machinery and equipment. Most importers/distributors of appliances and electronic goods have a workshop for servicing and selling parts. U.S. manufacturers should be prepared to train local staff to provide efficient servicing.

## **Protecting Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are protected in Mauritius by the Patents, Industrial Designs and Trade Marks Act of 2002 and the Copyrights Act 2014. However, to reinforce and expand IPR protections in Mauritius, the government announced it will adopt a new Industrial Property Bill, covering all aspects of IPR. In addition to patents, trademarks, and industrial designs, the Bill is intended to protect plant breeders' rights, geographical indications, and layout designs of integrated circuits and utility models which are not covered by the existing legislation. In his 2016-17 Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance announced that the government will adhere to the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the Hague Convention, and the Madrid Protocol to facilitate the registration of patents, trademarks and industrial designs. The new bill is expected to make provision for Mauritius to join these international treaties.

While IP legislation in Mauritius is consistent with international norms, enforcement is relatively weak. According to a leading IPR law firm, the authorities will normally only take action in cases where the IPR owner has an official representative in Mauritius because the courts require a representative to testify that the products seized are counterfeit or otherwise legally problematic. The Customs Department requires owners or authorized users of patents, industrial designs, collective marks, marks or copyrights to apply in writing to the Director General to suspend clearance of any suspicious goods. Once an application is approved, it remains valid for two years. Further details on the documents required to apply can be obtained on this [link](#).

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective protection of their intellectual property. For background, please link to our article on [Protecting Intellectual Property](#) and [Stopfakes.gov](#) for more resources.

### IP Contact for Mauritius

Smita Bheenick  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rogers House, John Kennedy Street, Port Louis  
Tel: 2024430  
Email: [bheenicks@state.gov](mailto:bheenicks@state.gov)

## **Due Diligence**

The Embassy recommends due diligence before entering into any type of business activity with local companies. The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section can provide valuable background information on Mauritian firms through its [International Company Profile](#) (ICP) service and is always ready to provide more general information to U.S. businesses and investors as needed. Further information can be obtained by visiting our [website](#) or by contacting your local U.S. Export Assistance Center or the [U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg](#).

## Local Professional Services

A number of international accounting and management-consulting firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Deloitte, BDO, and EY are represented in Mauritius. They provide a range of professional services including audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services.

A list of local attorneys is available on the Embassy website at: <https://mu.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/attorneys/>. This list is provided as a courtesy and should not be taken as U.S. government endorsement.

The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section can be contacted via email at [bheenicks@state.gov](mailto:bheenicks@state.gov); phone: +230 202-4430; or fax: +230 208-9534.

Further information on legal resources is available from the Mauritius Bar Association:

### [Mauritius Bar Association](#)

Max City Building (4th Floor)

21 Pope Hennessy Street

Port Louis, Mauritius

Tel: +230 213-9130; Fax: +230 208-8351

Email: [mbarcouncil@yahoo.com](mailto:mbarcouncil@yahoo.com)

## Principle Business Associations

Mauritius Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Contact: Mr. Barlen Pillay, Officer-in-Charge

Address: 6 Adolphe de Plevitz Street

Port Louis, Mauritius

Tel: +230 203 4830

Email: [mcci@mcci.org](mailto:mcci@mcci.org)

[www.mcci.org](http://www.mcci.org)

Business Mauritius

Contact: Mr. Kevin Ramkaloan, CEO

Address: BM-MCCI Building

Rue du Savoir

Ebene Cyber City

Ebene, Mauritius

Tel: + 230 466 3600

Email: [info@businessmauritius.org](mailto:info@businessmauritius.org)

[www.businessmauritius.org](http://www.businessmauritius.org)

Mauritius Bankers Association

Contact: Mr. Daniel Essoo, CEO

Address: Newton Tower (15<sup>th</sup> Floor)

Port Louis, Mauritius

Tel: + 230 213 2390

E-mail: [dbakeroot@mba.mu](mailto:dbakeroot@mba.mu)

[www.mba.org](http://www.mba.org)

Mauritius Export Association  
Contact: Ms. Lilowtee Rajmun-Jooseery, Director  
Address: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Unicorn House, 5 Royal Street  
Port Louis, Mauritius  
Tel: + 230 208 5216  
E-mail: [lilowtee@mexa.intnet.mu](mailto:lilowtee@mexa.intnet.mu)  
[www.mexa.mu](http://www.mexa.mu)

### **Limitations on Selling US Products and Services**

There are no specific limitations on selling U.S. products and services in Mauritius.

### **Web Resources**

[Construction Industry Development Board](#)

[Association of Communication Agencies](#)

[L'Express](#) (daily)

[Le Mauricien](#) (daily)

[Le Defi Quotidien](#) (daily)

[Week-End](#) (weekly)

[Business Magazine](#) (weekly)

[Weekly Magazine](#) (weekly)

[Mauritius Revenue Authority](#)

[U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg, South Africa](#)

[Mauritius Bar Association](#)

[Mauritius Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

[Business Mauritius](#)

[Mauritius Bankers Association](#)

[Mauritius Export Association](#)

## Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

### Agricultural Sectors

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

#### Overview

Mauritius is a net food importer, with an overall self-sufficiency ratio of less than 30 percent. Due to its limited size, the absence of economies of scale, and the comparative advantage of sugarcane in economic terms, Mauritius imports many of its essential food requirements. In 2017, food imports accounted for \$1.2 billion, representing 23 percent of total Mauritian imports. France was the leading source of Mauritian food imports with a market share of 12 percent, followed by Spain (10 percent), Australia (8 percent), South Africa (8 percent) and India (7 percent). Products imported include: meat and fish; certain fruits (e.g., oranges, mandarins and grapes); pulses; milk and dairy products; fresh and frozen vegetables; coffee, tea and spices; cereals; oil; beverages; wheat and food preparations. Mauritius also imports some items for the production of animal feed, such as corn and oil cake and solid residues from soybean oil extraction, mostly from Argentina.

In the 2018-2019 budget speech, the government emphasized import substitution to enhance food security. The government announced it will provide funding to set up 100 sheltered farms on a ready-to-operate basis and that concessional financing as well as tax exemptions will be given to interested “agripreneurs.” A major issue in Mauritius is the excessive use of pesticides by farmers. Over the past few years, the government has been supporting planters in a bid to promote organic farming.

The government is also actively studying the possibilities of using drone technology in agriculture and in June 2018, an Estonian company, REACH-U, came to Mauritius to carry out a series of demonstrations on the use of drone technology for surveying sugarcane fields.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017*	2018 (Estimated)
<b>Total Value of Local Agricultural Production</b>	362,743	380,717	NA	-
<b>Gross Output for Locally Produced Processed Food</b>	550,830	608,697	NA	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	761,707	806,049	828,314	869,730
<b>Total Imports</b>	1,035,750	1,074,103	1,201,158	1,261,216
<b>Imports from the U.S.</b>	6,111	5,984	6,519	6,845
<b>Total Market Size</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Exchange Rates</b>	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources: i) Statistics Mauritius, ii) Embassy Estimates for 2018

\*Data for 2017 not yet available

#### Leading Sub-Sectors

Leading sub-sectors include:

- Wheat

- Crude edible oil
- Corn and soybean residue for animal feed
- Processed foods and inputs for organic farming

## Opportunities

### Wheat

Mauritius traditionally imports wheat from France and Australia. In 2017, Mauritius imported 197,300 metric tons of unmilled wheat valued at \$45 million. Mauritius imported 50,000 metric tons of wheat from the United States for the first time in 2007-8 due to a poor crop in its traditional markets. There may be future opportunities here, but U.S. exporters would need to compete with French and Australian wheat, particularly in terms of price and freight availability. Les Moulins de la Concorde, the only flour mill in Mauritius, has shown interest in U.S. wheat, particularly the Hard Red Spring and Hard White varieties.

### Crude Edible Oil

Mauritius imports 100 percent of its edible oil requirements, traditionally from Argentina and Brazil. In 2017, Mauritius imported 29,656 metric tons of crude soybean oil, crude sunflower oil and palm olein, worth \$24 million. Of this, crude soybean oil accounted for 66 percent, sunflower oil comprised 17 percent and palm olein amounted to 16 percent. There are two refineries for edible oil operating in Mauritius, which supply 90 percent of the market with refined edible oil. The remaining 10 percent is supplied by importers of refined edible oil and sold directly to supermarkets. The local refineries negotiate their purchase with large producers such as Nidera and Dreyfuss on a cash-against documents-basis. To get a share of this market, U.S. suppliers must compete with Argentina and South East Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia on price and freight availability.

### Corn/Soybean Residue for Animal Feed

In 2017, Mauritius imported 109,485 metric tons of corn and 46,871 metric tons of oil-cake and other solid residues resulting from the extraction of soybean oil as inputs for its livestock feed factories. The total grain requirement valued at \$40 million is traditionally imported mainly from Argentina. The two animal feed factories in Mauritius have indicated that they would consider imports from the United States if they were competitive in terms of freight and price. U.S. trade associations, such as the U.S. Grain Council, would need to undertake long-term market development efforts with the local animal feed manufacturers.

### Processed Foods and Inputs for Organic Farming

Food habits of Mauritians have been changing over the past few years with consumers placing more emphasis on quality and food safety. The range of organic products and convenience foods available in supermarkets is expanding. Furthermore, concerns about pesticides are driving consumers to buy branded bio products. This has led to a sharp increase in imports of processed foods. There are thus opportunities for more U.S. processed food products to enter the market if they can compete with imports from South Africa, China, Malaysia and Europe. Prospects also exist for procurement of organic farming inputs in light of incentives offered by Government to promote bio farming.

## Web Resources

[Blueprint for a Sustainable Diversified Agri Food Strategy for Mauritius 2008-2015](#)

[Livestock Feed Ltd](#), Les Guibies, Mauritius. Tel: +230 286 1112; Fax: +230 286 1114; Email: [livestockfeed@food-allied.com](mailto:livestockfeed@food-allied.com)

Mr. Phillipe Lahaussé, Managing Director, [Les Moulins de la Concorde Ltee](#) (flourmill), Cargo Peninsula, Port Louis, Mauritius. Tel: +230 217-9100; Fax: +230 240-8171; Email: plahaussé@food-allied.com.

Mr. Mark Samson, Regional Vice President For the Middle East, East & North Africa, [U.S. Wheat Associates](#), Inc., Cairo, Egypt; Tel: +2 02 2380 3162; FAX: +2 02 2380 3138; Email: msamson@uswheat.org

[Mauritius Oil Refineries Ltd](#), Quay Road, Port Louis, Mauritius. Tel: +230 206-9800; Fax: +230 240-8320; Email: moroil@intnet.mu.

[Meaders Feeds Ltd](#), Riche Terre, Mauritius. Tel: +230 249-3860; Fax: +230 248-1837; Email: meaders@intnet.mu.

[National Export Strategy. Agro-Processing Sector](#)

[Statistics Mauritius - Agriculture](#)

[Government Information Service](#)



## Biotechnology

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

### Overview

The biotech industry in Mauritius is young but growing. Since 2014, five companies have operated at a dedicated BioPark with modern infrastructure for biotechnology research and development. Governmental organizations such as the Mauritius Research Council, the Center for Biomedical & Biomaterials Research, and the Food and Agricultural Research & Extension Institute support the budding biotechnology industry through their research. There are currently 20 companies employing about 800 people in the biotech sector (excluding medical devices and manufacturing of pharmaceuticals). These companies are involved in different types of activities such as clinical trials, breeding of primates for export, production of fish oil and manufacture of biofuels. The table below, updated as of 2018, provides further details on the industry in Mauritius:

Sub-Sector	Number of Companies	Company
<b>Red Biotechnology (Medical)</b>		
Contract Research Organizations (Clinical Trials)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insight Research</li> <li>• Centre International de Developpement Pharmaceutique (CIDP)</li> <li>• CAP Research</li> <li>• Centre D'Etude Clinique</li> </ul>
Breeding for Contract Research	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biosphere</li> <li>• Les Tamariniers</li> <li>• Noveprim</li> <li>• Bioculture</li> </ul>
Analytical Laboratories/Research Laboratories	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratoire International de Bio Analyse</li> <li>• Quantilab</li> <li>• Biolabex</li> <li>• Axonova</li> <li>• Simplissima</li> </ul>
<b>Green Biotechnology (Agro)</b>		
Bio Fertilizers	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aadicon Biotechnologies</li> </ul>
<b>Blue Biotechnology (Marine)</b>		

Sub-Sector	Number of Companies	Company
Fish oil extraction & production and extraction of molecules from by-products for different applications	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine Biotechnology Products</li> <li>• Bioenergy</li> <li>• Green Create</li> </ul>
<b>Grey Biotechnology</b>		
Production of landfill gas for energy generation and conversion of organic waste into compost	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sotravic</li> <li>• Solid Waste Recycling</li> </ul>
<b>White Biotechnology (Industrial)</b>		
Production of ethanol	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omnicane</li> </ul>

Leading Sub-Sectors

Leading sub-sectors include:

- Pre-clinical and clinical trials
- Breeding for pre-clinical trials
- Stem cell therapy
- Phytotherapy research and development
- Agro-industry applications
- Marine biotechnolgy

Opportunities

The government has shown a commitment to develop the biotech industry. In January 2017, the Agro-Industry Ministry organised a workshop to discuss how to set up a National Biotechnology Institute, which would help industry tackle challenges like increasing demand for biofuels, food security, and new pests. In February 2017, the government passed regulations to allow experimentation on animals, and in May 2017 the Embassy collaborated with the Mauritius Sugarcane Industry Research Institute to host a two-day workshop to discuss amendments to the Genetically Modified Organisms Act. The GOM also recognizes the importance of intellectual property to biotechnology and announced in 2016 that Mauritius will adhere to the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the Hague Convention, and the Madrid Protocol to facilitate registration of patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. In November 2017, the Embassy collaborated with the Economic Development Board to host a workshop on developing the marine biotechnology sector in Mauritius, which boasts one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the world.

There are opportunities for:

- U.S. companies to export lab supplies and biotechnology equipment

- Setting up pre-clinical and clinical trial labs
- Research and development in plant-based and marine-based pharmaceuticals
- Research and development for agro-industry applications

Web Resources

Economic Development Board: <http://www.investmauritius.com/>

Biotechnology Cluster Staff, Board of Investment, 10th Floor, One Cathedral Square Building, 16, Jules Koenig Street, Port Louis 11328, Tel: + 230 203 3800, Fax: +230 210 8560

## Energy

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country. .

### Overview

The government's energy policy encourages the use of renewable and clean energy to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The government has announced plans to increase use of renewable sources of energy for electricity generation from the current 21 percent to 35 percent by 2025. It aims to do this through wind farms, solar energy, biomass and waste-to-energy projects. While bagasse (sugarcane waste) remains the key source of renewable energy (89 percent), Mauritius derived the remaining renewable electricity generation from hydro, wind, landfill gas, fuelwood, and solar (11 percent).

The Central Electricity Board (CEB), which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, is the sole agency for transmission, distribution, and sale of electricity in Mauritius. CEB currently produces 40 percent of the country's total power requirement from four thermal power stations and eight hydroelectric plants. The remaining 60 percent is purchased from independent power producers, mainly private generators from the sugarcane industry using bagasse and imported coal.

The government seeks international competitive bidding for most of its power projects and favors joint ventures between the local private sector and international firms. However, in 2017, the CEB Act was amended to allow CEB (Green Energy) Co Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the CEB, to participate in power projects without having recourse to public procurement. The aim of CEB (Green Energy) Co Ltd is to promote the development of renewable energy, particularly solar energy.

In his June 2018 budget speech, the Prime Minister announced several measures pertaining to the power sector, including the commissioning of six solar farms, a waste-to-energy project that will generate at least 20 MW of electricity, increased battery storage from 4 to 18 MW, a new scheme for small scale distribution generation (SSDG), and the installation of 25,000 smart meters.

The GOM has also been undertaking legal and institutional reforms in the energy sector. In 2016, the government created the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA) to oversee the development of renewable energy in Mauritius. MARENA is still not fully functional. In 2017, the GOM established a Utility Regulatory Authority (URA) to regulate electricity, water, and wastewater. The URA is still in the process of being set up as of July 2018. An Energy Efficiency Act provides for product labeling and importation of energy efficient equipment, and the Building Control Act of 2011 aims to improve energy efficiency in building design.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	-	-	-	-
Total Exports	-	-	-	-
Total Imports (Equipment - Renewable Energy)	2,260	7,711	3,926	4,319
Imports from the U.S. (Equipment - Renewable Energy)	9	2,794	217	228
Total Market Size	-	-	-	-
Exchange Rates	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources: i) Statistics Mauritius, ii) Embassy Estimates for 2018

#### Leading Sub-Sectors

- Photovoltaic cells and technology
- Solar energy technology for solar water heaters
- Waste-to-energy plant for burning solid waste
- Pumping of cold sea water for air conditioning
- Wind turbines
- Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects
- Green building design services and equipment
- Energy efficiency projects and energy audits

#### Opportunities

**Solar Technology:** Much of Mauritius receives almost year-round, intensive sunlight that makes solar photovoltaic (PV) energy an attractive energy option. To achieve the target of 35 percent renewable energy by 2025, Mauritius plans to commission six more solar farms. As of July 2018, 30 MW solar farms were operational and a further 80 MW were under construction. A U.S. firm won three contracts for a total of 13MW, of which two solar farms of 2 MW each have been completed. The government's Home Solar Project, which includes the installation of 10,000 roof-top solar panels, was inaugurated in May 2018. A loan of \$10 million from the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is being used to implement the Home Solar Project, which will target 2,000 households per year.

**Waste-to-Energy:** Mauritius produces about 500,000 tons of solid waste per year and its only landfill site is close to saturation. Accordingly, in 2016 CEB issued a Request for Proposals for a 24 MW waste-to-energy project. In his June 2018 budget speech, the Prime Minister announced that a waste-to-energy project that will produce at least 20 MW will be implemented. At the time of writing, bids for the project had just been closed.

**Wind and Wave Energy:** The CEB has signed two Energy Supply and Purchase Agreements with two foreign firms for wind farm projects. The first project for 9 MW was completed in 2016 by French company Quadran in joint venture with a local partner. The second project of 29 MW, involving Indian firm Suzlon in joint venture with a local partner, has not yet started. Preliminary research carried out by the Mauritius Research Council (MRC) shows potential for the development of offshore wind farms, as well as wave energy, in the waters of Mauritius and Rodrigues. In November 2015, Australian company Carnegie Wave Energy Ltd. signed a Collaboration Agreement with MRC to explore opportunities for commercial wave energy plants and experiments are ongoing. In October 2016, the Embassy in collaboration with MRC organized a workshop on Offshore Wind Energy with an expert from U.S. company General Electric. In early 2017, MRC issued an Expression of Interest for consultants with experience in the development of offshore wind farms and has, to date, garnered 40 interested bidders. In February 2018, Italy signed a memorandum of understanding to provide up to \$2.3 million to co-finance activities, including the promotion of tidal energy and the establishment of a pilot tidal energy project. It also envisages the use of renewable energy to pump water, reestablishment of the national electricity grid and sustainable waste management under Italy's Small Island Developing States program.

**Energy Efficiency/Green Building:** As part of a general move away from fossil fuel-generated energy, opportunities exist for energy efficiency, audit, management, and advisory projects targeting large energy consumers. The Building Control Act 2011 provides opportunities for consultancy services in designing

“green” buildings and supplying related equipment and materials. Energy efficiency is now one of the main criteria in the design of public buildings and in rental of private buildings.

**Deep Ocean Water Application (DOWA) Project:** Deep Ocean Water Application (DOWA) projects are often known in the United States as “O-tech” or Sea Water Air Conditioning (SWAC). Local company Sotravic, through its subsidiary Urban Cooling Ltd, is developing a project to pump cold sea water from a deep ocean current into downtown Port Louis for air conditioning. Sotravic retained U.S. company Makai Ocean Engineering to carry out the feasibility study and the conceptual design of the project. In October 2016, Sotravic conducted offshore marine surveys that will enable the company to proceed with the design and construction. In addition to air conditioning, Sotravic is considering the next phase of the project, which will involve using the cold ocean water for bottling, aquaculture, seaweed cultivation, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic products.

**Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):** In January 2017, the Ministry of Energy issued an international call for proposals for consultancy services for a feasibility study for liquefied natural gas. The GOM believes that natural gas would provide backup capacity for renewable energy, is less polluting than coal, diesel and heavy fuel oil, and also help with future peak load needs. In April 2018, the Central Electricity Board launched a tender for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power plant. At the time of writing, bids submitted by nine participants were being evaluated.

**Partnering with Mauritian Firms in Africa:** Several Mauritian firms are currently involved in or investigating renewable energy projects, particularly hydropower and PV solar farms, in Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Madagascar, and Ghana. U.S. firms could partner with Mauritian companies to implement energy projects on mainland Africa with the support of Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Ex-Im Bank, U.S. Trade and Development Agency and Power Africa. Launched in 2013, Power Africa is a market-driven, U.S. Government-led public-private partnership to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. It offers private sector entities tools and resources to facilitate doing business in Africa’s power sector. In 2016, the Electrify Africa Act institutionalized Power Africa. Learn more about the full [Power Africa toolbox](#) or [other opportunities offered by Power Africa](#).

Web Resources

[Ministry of Energy & Public Utilities – Energy Sector](#)

[Statistics Mauritius – Energy and Water](#)

[Central Electricity Board](#)

[Energy Efficiency Management Office](#)

[Economic Development Board - Energy](#)

[U.S. Commercial Service, Johannesburg, South Africa](#)

[Power Africa](#)

## Film Production

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

### Overview

The Government of Mauritius is actively promoting the development of a film-making industry. Mauritius offers reliably good weather, a variety of natural, urban and rural locations, and a population composed of several ethnicities, including people of Indian, African, Chinese and European descent. Most Mauritians are multilingual and English, French, Creole and Asian languages are commonly used. The government offers a competitive incentive program to film producers that includes a production cash rebate of up to 40 percent on local qualifying production expenditures. The rebate applies to a wide variety of projects including feature films, television dramas, documentaries and high-end commercials. A smart city project currently being developed in the south of the island by private company Omnicane includes a film city as well as a film training facility.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
<b>Total Local Production</b>	885	5,111	33,258	34,920
<b>Total Exports</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Imports</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Imports from the U.S.</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Market Size</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Exchange Rates</b>	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Source: Economic Development Board Mauritius

### Leading Sub-Sectors

- Film production
- Film production equipment
- Visual effects
- Digital cinema and 3D animation
- Completion bond/insurance

### Opportunities

Mauritius has already attracted many film producers from both Hollywood and Bollywood. Since introducing the Film Rebate Scheme in 2012, the Economic Development Board has approved 105 film projects, out of which 73 have been completed. These include feature films, TV commercials, documentaries, TV series, reality TV programs, and dubbing projects. The cash rebate scheme has thus far attracted some \$56 million spending in Mauritius by film producers.

*Serenity*, the \$25 million mystery-thriller produced by IM Global Guy Heeley and Greg Shapiro, is the first major Hollywood feature to shoot in Mauritius, starring Matthew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway. Another U.S. producer, Milan Selassie, completed *Singleholic* in 2018 and a third movie *Maya Lord* has been approved for production by local authorities. India is the leading film producer using Mauritius as a film-shooting destination, followed by South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Film producers have expressed the need for more production equipment, post-production companies, and gear equipment companies. There are also investment opportunities in post-production activities such as visual effects, digital cinema, and 3D animation, the fastest growing segments in the film industry.

#### Web Resources

[Economic Development Board](#)



## Medical Equipment

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country. .

### Overview

Public hospitals are free in Mauritius, but there are also several private clinics. Mauritius' healthcare infrastructure includes five major public hospitals, six specialized public hospitals, 18 private multi-specialty clinics, 11 private specialized clinics, and 28 medical laboratories. There are more than 4,500 beds in both public and private hospitals. In 2017, Mauritius imported close to \$24 million worth of medical equipment, mainly from Germany (16 percent), United States (12 percent), South Africa (11 percent), India (9 percent) and Japan (8 percent). In 2017, there were seven medical device manufacturers in Mauritius, employing about 600 people. The vast majority of local production is exported to France (57 percent), India (18 percent) and the United States (9 percent).

<b>Unit: USD Thousands</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018 (Estimated)</b>
<b>Total Local Production</b>	14,882	NA	24,079	25,300
<b>Total Exports</b>	21,028	29,408	25,870	28,457
<b>Total Imports</b>	24,751	27,812	23,812	26,193
<b>Imports from the U.S.</b>	2,533	3,954	2,951	3,246
<b>Total Market Size</b>	18,605	-	22,021	23,036
<b>Exchange Rates</b>	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Source: i) Statistics Mauritius, ii) Economic Development Board

### Leading Sub-Sectors

- Cancer Center Equipment
- Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) Hospital Equipment
- Eye Hospital Equipment
- Medical Imaging (MRI, CT and X-Ray) and Diagnostic Equipment
- Surgical Equipment
- Orthopedics Supplies and Artificial Parts of the Body
- Dialysis Equipment
- Laboratory Equipment
- Dental Surgery and Dentofacial Orthopedics
- Healthcare IT Solutions

### Opportunities

Mauritius has a well-developed health system. About 73 percent of the health needs of the population are catered by public health institutions and 27 percent by the private sector. Non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases account for 80 percent of total mortality in Mauritius every year.

A new cancer center as well as a new ear-nose and throat (ENT) hospital are currently under construction with financial assistance from India. Bids for linear accelerators and other equipment for the cancer center are expected to be issued this fiscal year. In the 2018-19 budget speech, the Prime Minister announced the construction of (i) a new teaching hospital to be financed by the Kuwait Fund and funding from the Saudi government, (ii) a modern eye hospital, (iii) a new National Health Laboratory Services Center, and (iv) a central warehouse for medical products. The government budget also made provision for an e-health project. This project will be financed by India and will include the computerization of medical records, nursing management, patient management, and pharmacy services. All these projects will generate demand for a range of medical equipment and software.

In the past few years, the government of Mauritius has promoted shifts in the healthcare sector to develop high-value activities like hi-tech medicine, medical tourism, and medical education. Several global companies have invested in “centers of excellence” to cater for growing healthcare needs of both national and international patients. In 2017, Mauritius attracted more than 11,500 foreign patients for treatment in specialty areas such as cosmetic surgery and procedures, orthopedics, cardiology, fertility treatment, and ophthalmology. The main source countries are France, Madagascar, and Seychelles.

There are potential opportunities for establishing:

- Specialized diabetes research and treatment centers;
- Specialized centers for elderly care and rehabilitative medicine;
- Specialized centers for novel treatments stem-cell therapies;
- Plastic reconstructive surgery clinics;
- Clinics for dental surgery and dentofacial orthopedics; and
- Convalescence and pain clinics providing specialized care to patients suffering from acute and chronic conditions.

The medical device manufacturing industry has also seen sustained growth over the last few years. Due to the preferential market access that Mauritius enjoys with the EU, leading medical devices manufacturers (mostly from France and Germany) have established operations here. They produce high-precision medical devices such as catheters/stents; cardiovascular, orthopedic, and ophthalmic equipment; dental implants; artificial skin; and biomedical products. In order to attract more medical device manufacturing companies, the government offers a number of incentives, including tax holidays for eight years, air and sea freight rebate for exports, and customs duty exemption on raw materials.

Web Resources

[Economic Development Board](#)

[Government Information Service](#)

[Ministry of Health and Quality of Life](#)

[National Export Strategy, Medical Devices Sector](#)

[Public Procurement Portal](#)



## Pharmaceuticals

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

### Overview

As of July 2018, there were 371 registered private drugstores and 38 registered pharmaceutical wholesalers in Mauritius. Pharmaceutical products can only be imported by wholesalers licensed by the Pharmacy Board, which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. Of the \$114 million of pharmaceuticals imported in 2017, the Health Ministry accounted for 25 percent of the import value. The government purchases mostly generic medications through tenders issued throughout the year according to an established annual procurement plan. The private hospitals and drug stores tend to buy branded products through local wholesalers. In 2017, India remained the main supplier of pharmaceuticals to Mauritius, with 26 percent of the market, followed by France (18 percent), Germany (7 percent), South Africa (7 percent) and Switzerland (5 percent). Imports from the United States in 2017 were 1.4 percent of the total, but some European imports originate from U.S. subsidiaries. Ajanta Pharma, an Indian company, is currently the only pharmaceutical-manufacturing company in Mauritius.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
<b>Total Local Production</b>	6,000	-	4,731	4,967
<b>Total Exports</b>	5,171	32,228	32,192	33,802
<b>Total Imports</b>	121,800	114,289	113,574	119,253
<b>Imports from the U.S.</b>	1,685	1,470	1,620	1,701
<b>Total Market Size</b>	122,629	-	150,497	158,022
<b>Exchange Rates</b>	35.00	36.00	35.30	35.30

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Source: i) Statistics Mauritius, ii) Economic Development Board

### Leading Sub-Sectors

The main categories of pharmaceutical products imported into Mauritius:

- Non-antibiotic medicines
- Vaccines (human and veterinarian)
- Antibiotics
- Anti-infective, antiretroviral and antihypertensive drugs
- Cardiovascular drugs
- Cytotoxic drugs
- Antidiabetics
- Renal drugs
- Opioids, antituberculosis, ophthalmic, dermatological and NICU drugs

### Opportunities

Since Mauritius imports the vast majority of its pharmaceuticals, there are opportunities for U.S. products to increase their share of the market. The private pharmaceutical wholesalers represent the best export opportunities since they import about 75 percent of the total pharmaceutical products in Mauritius. Government procurement tends to favor generic medicines. Some private clinics occasionally do their own procurement.

U.S. companies could also consider manufacturing pharmaceuticals in Mauritius for the African market. As a member of SADC and COMESA, exports from Mauritius to members of these organizations benefit from duty-free access, provided the rules of origin are met. Moreover, the government offers a tax holiday of eight years as well as air- and sea-freight rebate on exports to new companies involved in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. In his 2018-19 budget speech, the Prime Minister announced the construction of a Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Park to boost manufacturing and other activities in these areas.

#### Web Resources

[Economic Development Board: http://www.edbmauritius.org/](http://www.edbmauritius.org/)

Public Procurement Portal: <http://publicprocurement.govmu.org/>

Statistics Mauritius: <http://statsmauritius.govmu.org/English/StatsbySubj/Pages/default.aspx>

[Ministry of Health and Quality of Life](#)

## Port Expansion and Bunkering

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

### Overview

As the country's sole maritime gateway, Port Louis harbor plays a vital role in the national economy. It handles about 99.5 percent of the total volume of external trade, equivalent to 7.5 million tons of cargo annually, and directly contributes 2 percent to Mauritius' GDP. The Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) regulates and controls the port sector and also provides port infrastructure, related facilities, and equipment. The Cargo Handling Corporation (CHC) Ltd is responsible for the management of all port handling operations pertaining to containers and general cargo.

The government actively promotes the ocean economy and sees the Port as a potential container transshipment hub in the region. Since commencing operations in 1999, the container terminal has experienced steady growth in container trade as well as a moderate growth in transshipment trade. In October 2017, the new container terminal with an extended quay length of 800 meters and a dredged depth of 16.5 meters was inaugurated. As a result of the extension works, the capacity of the terminal increased from 550,000 TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit) to around 1 million TEUs. Port Louis is now one of the deepest ports in the southwest Indian Ocean, capable of handling container vessels with a draft of about 15.0 meters and a capacity of 12,000 TEUs.

To cater for container traffic beyond 2025, MPA has proposed the development of an island container terminal with a capacity of 1.5 Million TEUs. The project would, in effect, require the building of a manmade island just off the current container terminal. The MPA also plans to construct a breakwater structure to create a tranquil basin at the container terminal. The total cost of both projects is estimated at \$783 million. At the time of writing, the tender for geotechnical site investigations for the island terminal and breakwater structure at Port Louis Harbor was still open.

Port handling equipment is imported. Five gantry cranes were supplied by South Korea and the United Arab Emirates, and most of the forklifts, lifts, and skip hoists were imported from China, the United States, and France. In March 2016, the Cargo Handling Corporation issued an expression of interest for consultancy services for the procurement of two post panamax ship-to-shore cranes, six rubber-tire gantry cranes, and associated equipment. This equipment was acquired from China in 2017. The Cargo Handling Corporation has also recently upgraded the NAVIS operating system currently used for container handling and has invested heavily in security around the terminal.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
<b>Total Local Production</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	-	-	1,771	1,860
<b>Total Imports</b>	9,920	7,365	37,098	8,102
<b>Imports from the U.S.</b>	106	98	539	103
<b>Total Market Size</b>	9,920	7,365	35,327	8,500
<b>Exchange Rates</b>	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Sources: i) Statistics Mauritius, ii) Embassy Estimates for 2018

## Leading Sub-Sectors

- Gantry cranes
- Forklifts/trucks with handling equipment
- Loading and unloading machinery
- Land reclamation equipment and services
- Onshore and offshore bunkering
- Construction of an island container terminal and breakwater
- Container terminal technology

## Opportunities

### Island Container Terminal and Breakwater Structure

The Mauritius Ports Authority has commissioned a techno-economic feasibility study on the construction of an island container terminal opposite the existing container terminal in order to cater for container traffic beyond 2025. In 2018, port operations were stopped for a total of 24 days because of cyclones and swells at berth. This caused losses amounting to about \$68 million for the trading community. The Mauritius Ports Authority looks to resolve this issue by constructing a breakwater structure. At the time of writing, the tender for geotechnical site investigations for the island terminal and breakwater structure at Port Louis Harbor was still open.

### Construction of Petroleum Jetty and Supply of Bunker Fuel

Mauritius is strategically located on the east-west route in the Indian Ocean, linking Africa and Asia, as well as Pacific Ocean shipping reached via the southern route around South Africa. This presents opportunities for offering bunkering services. A significant liberalisation of the Mauritian bunker market was undertaken in 2014 with government incentives provided through reduction and removal of charges and duties and an improved process for issuing of licenses and import permits. Since then, imports of bunker fuel have increased considerably from 286,000 metric tons in 2014 to 456,000 metric tons in 2017. Deliveries by barges have also increased from 273 in 2016 to 800 in 2017. Bunkering services are carried out year round by six local suppliers, namely: Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd, Vivo Energy Mauritius Ltd, Total Mauritius Ltd, Engen (Mauritius) Ltd, Taylor Smith Bunkering, and Bomin (Mauritius) Ltd. Three grades of bunker fuel, namely MGO (DMA), IFO 180 cst (RME), and IFO 380 cst are currently available in Port Louis.

The Government plans to develop Mauritius into a petroleum and bunkering hub and it has been announced that a petroleum jetty will be built in the north western part of the island. This will require the construction of tanks with a total storage capacity of 500,000 metric tons and a jetty of a total length of 600 meters with a draft of 20 meters.

## Web Resources

[Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping, and Outer Islands](#)

[Mauritius Ports Authority](#)

[Mauritius Freeport Portal](#)

[Mauritius Freeport Development](#)

[Mauritius Trade Easy](#)

[Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd](#)



## Safety and Security Equipment

This is a best prospect industry sector for this country.

### Overview

Public concern about safety and crime has risen in recent years, resulting in an increasing demand for security services. With tourism being one of the major pillars of the Mauritian economy, the government seeks to safeguard Mauritius' reputation as a safe tourist destination. The government is installing closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance systems in major tourist zones as well as in urban areas, and has plans to extend the network to other high-risk areas. China, South Africa, Portugal, Thailand, Israel, and the United States were the main suppliers of security and safety equipment to Mauritius in 2017.

Unit: USD Thousands	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	-	-	-	-
Total Exports	-	-	839	
Total Imports	11,290	10,496	10,322	11,354
Imports from the U.S.	1,700	603	224	300
Total Market Size	11,290	10,496	9,483	11,354
Exchange Rates	35.00	36.00	35.30	34.45

(total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports)

Data Source: i) Statistics Mauritius

### Leading Sub-Sectors

- CCTV, integrated surveillance systems
- Alarm and intruder detection
- Access control systems
- Security locks and digital safe for hotel rooms
- Safety glass
- ID management
- Radar/navigational aids
- Scanning devices
- Forensic Laboratory equipment
- Security services

### Opportunities

The government aims to reduce the crime rate from 4.8 per thousand population in 2016 to 4.5 by 2020 and to less than 4.0 in 2030. The key security challenges faced in Mauritian society include proliferation of drugs, crime, frequent road accidents, illegal maritime activities in the exclusive economic zone, and natural disasters such as flash floods. The government's 2018-19 budget provides substantial funding to equip and train police and other public safety departments. The Police Department plans to install CCTV and audio recording systems in all police stations. The Department plans to acquire 18 light armored personnel carriers to reinforce

capability in emergency and disaster situations. The Customs Department will procure hand-held non-intrusive scanning devices such as Buster contraband detectors, mini z scanners, wireless fiberscopes, and narcotics analyzers. The Forensic Science Laboratory will be equipped with new equipment to enhance the quality and timeliness of reports. The National Coast Guard will acquire a new multi-purpose offshore patrol vessel for coastal surveillance.

The government plans to implement a Safe City Project, with the installation of 4,000 intelligent surveillance cameras in major public areas and along main roads and motorways, pedestrian walkways, and principal traffic centers. It will also acquire 4,500 trunking smart handsets, 500 trunking vehicle radios and an emergency response system for use by several governmental departments.

Mauritius has seen remarkable growth in property development in recent years, following the offer of government fiscal incentives under the Property Development Scheme. These projects have resulted in a number of luxury villas integrated with commercial, sports, and wellness facilities; hotel construction; office blocks; and several large shopping malls. Moreover, several major smart city projects are currently being implemented by the private sector. These projects will generate significant demand for security equipment and services, including CCTV and security alarm systems. Additionally, with tourism being one of the major pillars of the Mauritian economy, the government requires all hotels to provide electronic security locks and in-room digital safes, as well as access control systems in secured areas.

#### Web Resources

The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis, Mauritius can be contacted via email at: [bheenicks@state.gov](mailto:bheenicks@state.gov); +230 202-4464; Fax: +230 208-9534 or visit our website <https://mu.usembassy.gov/>

## Customs, Regulations & Standards

### Trade Barriers

There is no known tariff or non-tariff discrimination against U.S. companies.

For more information and help with trade barriers please contact:

International Trade Administration  
Enforcement and Compliance  
(202) 482-0063  
[ECCcommunications@trade.gov](mailto:ECCcommunications@trade.gov)

### Import Tariff

Mauritius has a relatively streamlined trade regime and over the past several years, the government has taken steps to liberalize trade by significantly lowering import tariffs over a wide range of products. The tariff rates currently range from zero to 30 percent, while the number of tariff bands currently stands at five (zero, five, 10, 15, and 30 percent). Customs Duties are normally imposed on the CIF (Cost, Insurance, and Freight) value of imported goods. Vehicles, petroleum, alcoholic drinks, and cigarettes are subject to excise duties. With some exceptions, goods imported into Mauritius are also subject to a 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT). The tariff rates for different types of goods are listed in the [Customs Tariff Schedule](#).

### Import Requirements & Documentation

Importers must submit the following documents:

- Bill of lading/airway bill
- Bill of entry
- Invoice
- Packing list
- Insurance certificate (if applicable)
- Certificate of origin (if applicable)
- Other relevant documents/permits that may be required by government agencies (such as health, agriculture, veterinary services)

Exporters are required to submit the following documents:

- Bill of lading
- Bill of entry
- Invoice
- Packing list
- Insurance certificate (if applicable)
- Export permit (if applicable)
- Certificates of origin for exports to the European Union, United States (under AGOA), countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

Guidelines for submission of applications for import permits as well as a list of goods subject to import permits are posted at the [Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection's web site](#).

### **Labeling/Marking Requirements**

Labeling and marking requirements are governed by the [Legal Metrology Act](#).

### **U.S. Export Controls**

A list that consolidates eleven export-screening lists of the Departments of Commerce, State and the Treasury into a single search as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of potential parties to regulated transactions is [available here](#).

### **Temporary Entry**

The Mauritius Customs Department may authorize the temporary entry of goods for a period of six months where the importer furnishes adequate security to cover the duty and other taxes (if applicable) which would otherwise be payable. The importer may be exempted from furnishing security if the goods are covered by documents for temporary entry issued under a recognized international convention. For example, the ATA Carnet, an internationally recognized document for the temporary admission of goods under the Istanbul Convention, is administered by the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. ATA Carnets do not cover perishable goods or goods for processing or repair. Additional information on the ATA Carnet system can be obtained from the [Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#).

### **Prohibited & Restricted Imports**

Prohibited goods include ivory, tortoise shells and other endangered animal products, underwater fishing guns, second-hand motor vehicle parts and accessories, appliances containing chlorofluorocarbons, asbestos fibers, and publications/films/playable media of obscene character. A [detailed list of prohibited goods](#) is available online.

Restricted/controlled goods subject to an import permit include syringes, drugs and psychotropic substances, arms and ammunition, and second-hand motor vehicles. A [detailed list of restricted imports](#) is available online.

### **Customs Regulations**

[Customs regulations for Mauritius](#) can be downloaded online.

Contact information for the Mauritius Customs Office: The Director, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Customs, New Customs House, Mer Rouge, Port Louis, Mauritius, Phone: +230 202-0500, Fax: +230 216-9567, E-mail: [customs@mra.mu](mailto:customs@mra.mu).

### **Standards for Trade**

#### Overview

The Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB) is the national body that develops standards for the manufacturing and service sectors, while the Mauritius Accreditation Service is the sole agency for providing accreditation to certification bodies in Mauritius. Accreditation in Mauritius is a voluntary process. Mauritius is open to internationally recognized best practices and collaborates with regional bodies such as COMESA and SADC, international bodies such as the OECD and UN, as well as developed economies like the United States, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and the European Union to develop and adopt standard best practices.

#### Standards

The MSB is mandated to develop standards, provide metrology, calibration, testing, and quality assurance services to the manufacturing and service sectors. It publishes a work program of its standards development

activities in January and July of each year. The website for the Mauritius Standards Bureau is <http://msb.intnet.mu/English/Pages/default.aspx>.

#### Testing, inspection and certification

The Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) is the sole authority in Mauritius for granting accreditation to conformity assessment bodies involved in calibration, testing, inspection, and certification. MAURITAS benchmarks its level of services with international guidelines and standards.

The MSB is currently the sole product certification body in Mauritius. MSB certification enables companies to use the MSB mark to demonstrate that their products and processes meet Mauritian standards. The license for use of the mark for products and processes is valid for two years (renewable), during which the MSB conducts regular surveillance visits. Mauritius has signed a Mutual Multilateral Recognition Agreement with the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Accreditation in Mauritius is voluntary. A list of accredited entities in Mauritius is available at <http://www.mauritas.org/entities.php>.

#### Publication of technical regulations

Draft standards are published in the Government Gazette and a 60-day period is allocated for public comments. The Minister in charge of industry may, by public notice, transform a standard into a technical regulation after consideration of any written objection filed with the MSB. Contact information for the MSB is provided below.

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to notify the WTO on proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that could affect trade. Notify U.S. ([www.nist.gov/notifyus](http://www.nist.gov/notifyus)) is a free, web-based e-mail registration service that captures and makes available for review and comment key information on draft regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Users receive customized e-mail alerts when new notifications are added by selected country(ies) and industry sector(s) of interest, and can also request full texts of regulations. This service and its associated website are managed and operated by the USA WTO TBT Inquiry Point housed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

#### Contact Information

Mauritius Standards Bureau, Villa Road, Moka, Mauritius, contact: Acting Director, Tel: +230 433-3648, Fax: +230 433-5051, Email: [msb@intnet.mu](mailto:msb@intnet.mu)

[Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection](#), 8th floor, Air Mauritius Center, Port Louis, Mauritius, contact: The Permanent Secretary, Tel: +230 201-1068, Fax: +230 201-3289.

[The Embassy's Economic/Commercial Section in Port Louis](#), Mauritius can be contacted via email at: [bheenicks@state.gov](mailto:bheenicks@state.gov); Phone: +230 202-4464 or +230 202-4465; Fax: +230 208-9534

#### Trade Agreements

Mauritius is a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) offered by Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United States, and the customs union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Mauritius is a Free Trade Agreement member of the Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) groups Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles together to promote diplomatic, economic and commercial ties between the islands. At present, only products traded between Mauritius and Madagascar and which meet the IOC Rules of Origin enjoy duty free access. Mauritius has a free trade agreement with Turkey and a Preferential Trade Agreement with Pakistan. Mauritius has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1995.

The United States and Mauritius signed a [Trade and Investment Framework Agreement](#) (TIFA) in September 2006. This provides a formal mechanism to address bilateral trade issues and helps to strengthen and expand trade and investment relations between the two countries.

Mauritius is eligible for trade benefits under the [African Growth and Opportunity Act](#) (AGOA), which provides duty and quota free access to the U.S. market for over 6,000 products from eligible Sub-Saharan African countries. Additional information on AGOA can be obtained online. Export of apparel from Mauritius to the United States made from fabric imported from any country is duty free under the AGOA Third Country Fabric Provision. In 2015, the United States renewed AGOA until September 30, 2025.

Mauritius is currently negotiating free trade agreements with China and India. In March 2018, Mauritius signed the agreement establishing the Continental Free Trade Agreement, which will enter into force when 22 countries out of the 55 African Union member states ratify the agreement.

### **Licensing Requirements for Professional Services**

Professionals are required to register with appropriate bodies before they can practice in Mauritius. The list below provides links that detail the licensing requirements for certain professional services:

1. Medical Practitioners: <https://www.medicalcouncilmu.org/regist.html>
2. Accountants: <http://mipa.mu/application-forms/>
3. Engineers: <http://www.crpemauritius.com/files/index.php>
4. Architects: As per the [Professional Architects' Council Act 2011](#)
5. Quantity Surveyors: <http://www.pqsc.mu/>
6. Law Practitioners: Requirements stipulated in the [Law Practitioners Act](#)

### **Web Resources**

[Mauritius Revenue Authority](#)

[Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection](#)

[Trade.gov](#)

[Mauritius Standards Bureau](#)

[Mauritius Accreditation Service](#)

[Office of the United States Trade Representative](#)

## **Investment Climate Statement**

The U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statements, prepared annually by U.S. embassies and diplomatic missions abroad, provide country-specific information and assessments of the investment climate in foreign markets. Topics include market barriers, business risk, the legal and regulatory system, dispute resolution, corruption, political violence, labor issues, and intellectual property rights. The statement for Mauritius is available at <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/>.

## **Trade & Project Financing**

### **Methods of Payment**

Mauritius has a well-developed financial system. Payments for import transactions are generally made through letters of credit, depending on the exporter's payment experience with the buyer. The terms of payment as well as the currency of payment should be clearly specified. An open account can be a convenient method of payment if the buyer is well established and has a favorable payment record. For new customers, it is advisable to do a credit check through the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Company Profile service. To apply for this service, interested U.S. firms should contact their nearest [Export Assistance Center](#). More information can be found online.

### **Banking Systems**

Banks in Mauritius provide a wide range of services. Besides traditional banking facilities, they also offer card-based payment services, such as credit and debit cards, internet banking and phone banking facilities. Banks also offer specialized services such as fund administration, custodial services, trusteeship, structured lending, structured trade finance, international portfolio management, investment banking, private client activities, treasury and specialized finance. The international banks offer a wide range of global banking and financial services to corporate, institutional and private clients.

A list of banks operating in Mauritius, including their profiles and the latest edition of the Code of Ethics and Banking Practice, is available at the website of the [Mauritius Bankers Association](#).

### **Foreign Exchange Controls**

There are no foreign exchange controls in Mauritius.

### **US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks**

There are no U.S. banks in Mauritius, although several of the leading banks have a large network of correspondent banks based in major cities around the world, including New York.

### **Project Financing**

Most major infrastructure projects are financed by institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, the French Agence Française de Développement, the Kuwait Fund, and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa. Some are funded through bilateral assistance from France, India, China, Germany, and Japan. These sources fund a broad portfolio of projects, including port and airport upgrades, sewage treatment, road, bridge and dam construction, energy, telecommunications, hospital and housing construction, and sports facilities. Mauritius is eligible for the programs of both the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank). The U.S. Trade and Development Agency also provides grant funding for feasibility studies spanning a wide variety of sectors.

*U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (African Development Bank, World Bank)*

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries for projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help American businesses learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects, and advocate on behalf of American bidders. Learn more by contacting the [Commercial Liaison Offices to the African Development Bank](#) and the [World Bank](#).

## **Financing Web Resources**

[Commercial Liaison Office to the African Development Bank](#)

[Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

Trade Finance Guide: A Quick Reference for U.S. Exporters, published by the [International Trade Administration's Industry & Analysis team](#)

[Ex-Im Bank of the United States](#)

[Ex-Im's Country Limitation Schedule](#)

[OPIC](#)

[Trade and Development Agency](#)

[SBA's Office of International Trade](#)

[USDA Commodity Credit Corporation](#)

[U.S. Agency for International Development](#)



## **Business Travel**

### **Business Customs**

Business customs are similar to those in Europe and the United States. For men, normal business wear is suit and tie. The coastal areas are warmer than the central plateau region year-round. During the cooler months – June through September – an additional layer may be needed if travelling in the center of the country. Humidity can be quite high during summer – November through April – especially in the capital city and the coastal areas. Lunches and cocktail receptions are common business functions.

### **Travel Advisory**

For the latest travel advisory on Mauritius, please click [here](#).

### **Visa Requirements**

Visas are not required for U.S. citizens, but travelers must have an onward or return ticket. Immunization certificates are not required unless the traveler arrives from an infected area. Mauritians traveling to the United States require visas. Visa applicants should go to the following links:

- [State Department Website](#)
- [U.S. Embassy Port Louis Consular Section](#)

U.S. companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be aware that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process and therefore cannot be rushed in most circumstances. Visa applicants should visit the [website](#).

### **Currency**

The currency in Mauritius is the Mauritian rupee – Rs or MUR.

1Rupee = 100 cents

The exchange rate (on July 30, 2018): U.S. \$1 = Rs 34.82 (Source: Bank of Mauritius)

Most businesses accept credit and debit cards such as Mastercard and Visa. Banks around the country can exchange currency. Money changers are also available in the cities. ATMs on the Cirrus network are available in banks and most shopping centers. Money wiring services such as Western Union and Moneygram are also available.

### **Telecommunications/Electronics**

Mauritius' telecommunications infrastructure has not kept pace with recent technological advances, but reliable international mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, and internet services are available and are generally more reliable than the rest of the region. Speed and bandwidth of internet connectivity, though improving, are currently inadequate for many modern commercial requirements. However, Mauritius is planning to install a new submarine cable and is increasing the number of free Wi-Fi hotspots from 15 to 350. The government has announced a goal of providing full broadband fiber optic connectivity across the entire island by the end of 2018.

The power supply is 220-240 volts and the plug types used are type C, E, F and G (British).

## **Transportation**

Direct flights connect Mauritius to several international destinations. Regular flights serve France, the UK, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, India, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Seychelles. In March 2016, Air Mauritius and Singapore Changi Airport inaugurated an air corridor that links Africa and Asia via hubs in Mauritius and Singapore. There are no direct flights between Mauritius and the United States. U.S. travelers typically transit Paris, London, Johannesburg or Dubai. It is also relatively easy to travel around the island by taxi or rental car. In general, taxi fares must be negotiated before setting out. Traffic drives on the left. Port Louis is a 50-minute drive from the airport and easily accessible from other parts of the country except during the morning and evening rush hours, when traffic can be slow.

## **Language**

The official language is English, but French and Mauritian Creole are used in everyday life. Most business executives are bilingual in English and French. A number of Asian languages (Hindi, Urdu, and Mandarin) are also spoken, but usually at religious or cultural events.

## **Health**

Mauritius has no major health hazards. It is considered malaria-free. Vaccination is not required unless the traveler arrives from an infected area. While hospitals and clinics within the public health system are adequate and free, foreign visitors must pay out-of-pocket for their health needs and are advised to secure health coverage before traveling here. There are a number of private clinics which are relatively expensive such as Wellkin Hospital and Fortis Darne.

## **Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays**

Local Time and Business Hours: Local time is four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and nine hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Business hours are as follows:

- Government Offices open 0900-1600, Monday through Friday
- Banks open 0900-1500, Monday through Friday and some banks remain open until 1700 on Fridays
- Businesses open 0830-1630 Monday through Friday and usually 0900-1300 Saturday

There are 15 Mauritian public holidays. The following are fixed: New Years, January 1 and 2; Independence Day, March 12; Labor Day, May 1; Assumption, August 15; Arrival of Indentured Labor, November 2; and Christmas, December 25. The remaining holidays are religious festivals whose dates vary. The American Embassy is closed on American and local holidays.

## **Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings**

No duty is levied on apparel and personal effects of a passenger arriving in Mauritius. Articles that are in excess of the concessions and allowances listed below are liable for duty. A passenger 18 years of age or over may bring the following goods, free of customs duty: tobacco (including cigars and cigarettes) not exceeding 250 grams, spirits not exceeding 1 liter; wine, ale, or beer not exceeding 2 liters total.

In addition to allowances and concessions above, a tourist may bring with him/her the following goods free of customs duty:

- One portable musical instrument
- One portable sound and/or image recorder
- One portable radio receiver

- One portable video camera
- One camera
- One sporting firearm with not more than 50 cartridges (police permit is required before importation)
- One non-powered bicycle
- One windsurfer and up to three assorted sails
- One surf board
- Fishing equipment, excluding any type of underwater fishing gun.

[Information on customs formalities](#) is available online.

### **Travel Related Web Resources**

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

U.S. Embassy Consular Section: [http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/consular\\_section.html](http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/consular_section.html)

Mauritius Revenue Authority: <http://www.mra.mu/index.php/import-export-others/travellers>