Mauritius has transformed into an upper middle-income diversified economy, with high levels of human development, in the span of several decades. Yet, rapid economic development has come at a cost: coastal ecosystems are under threat and income inequality, unemployment and global competitiveness remain a concern. As a small island developing country, Mauritius is also on the front line of climate change.

The Mauritian government has been consistent in its commitment to developing a forward-looking agenda, with strategies and policies to transform Mauritius into an environmentally sustainable, inclusive, economically vibrant and innovative country.

To contribute to these objectives, PAGE has worked with the government and the private sector, providing support for a green economy assessment, policy development, and targeted technical assistance in the areas of budget tracking, industrial waste and green finance.

PAGE’s support is focusing on Mauritius’ contribution to SDGs 1, 8, 9, 13, and 17, as well as its efforts to transition towards a low-carbon development path, as expressed in the countries National Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement.

Supporting policy analysis and national policy development
As part of its overarching Vision 2030, Mauritius aims to transition into a high-income country by 2030. To support this transition, the country has laid out its medium-term goals in the Three Year Strategic Plan of Mauritius (2017/18-2019/20), which highlights green economy as an approach for implementing low-carbon growth and renewable energy strategies in important sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing waste management and tourism. A key element in this transition is the country’s commitment to improve inclusiveness, reduce poverty and promote job creation. In this regard, PAGE has directly supported the development of the Marshall Plan Against Poverty and Exclusion, launched with the 2016-17 national budget, and the drafting of targeted policy measures to prevent extreme poverty. Its most important proposal—the Marshall Plan Social Contract, which came into operation in November 2016—provides financial assistance to households found eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius for families in poverty.

Sectoral and thematic policy action and reform
PAGE’s work in Mauritius builds upon an earlier UN Environment-led green economy assessment, which identified seven economic sectors (agriculture, energy, transport, manufacturing, tourism, and waste and water management) and provided the underlying analysis for wide stakeholder engagement and follow-up action. For example, SWITCH Africa Green drew upon this analysis to design its technical support to enterprises in three of the analysed sectors. The government also committed funding to organic agriculture—one of the recommendations of the green economy assessment—in the 2018 Budget Speech. Additional policy documents, such as the 10-Year Master Plan for the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Sector, launched in 2017, recommended the greening of SMEs as one of its strategic objectives, building on the findings of the green economy assessment.

PAGE has also worked with national stakeholders to leverage private and public finance to support the green economy transition in Mauritius. The Public Environment Expenditure Review (PEER), supported by PAGE, sparked interest in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to introduce climate finance tracking tools within the budget process and the Treasury.
Accounting System. PAGE assisted the Ministry to develop a methodology and comprehensive training programme enabling policy officials to conduct an annual computation of total public-sector expenditure on the environment. Going forward, this will facilitate the integration of climate change measures into the national budget process. An annual publication of a separate appendix in the countries' budget document is also envisaged.

Additionally, with support from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and PAGE, the Stock Exchange of Mauritius initiated the development of a Mauritius Green Bonds Market, inspired by the Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative, a UN partnership promoting responsible investment. Drawing on the expertise of the UNEP Finance Initiative, issuers, verifiers, investors and government official received technical training on green bonds development. These stakeholders subsequently requested technical assistance to further enhance understanding of climate-related financial risks and opportunities in Mauritius.

Greening industry is another priority for Mauritius, which PAGE has supported through an Industrial Waste Assessment serving as a strategic guide for national policymakers. Developed in partnership with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection and Business Mauritius (an umbrella organization for the country's private sector), the assessment quantified the amount and main categories of industrial waste currently being generated in major selected industries. It also identified opportunities for reuse and recycling of industrial waste within and across industrial sectors, giving immediate guidance for the development of a sustainable manufacturing process in the country. This provided the ground work for subsequent resource efficiency opportunities in Mauritius and was followed through by the SWITCH Africa Green project on Industrial Symbioses, which established about ten industrial symbioses among industries, with more to come.

**Building individual and institutional capacity**

To guide capacity and skills development of civil servants and the broader work force in Mauritius’ transition to a green economy, PAGE supported a Green Economy Learning Needs Assessment, conducted by the Civil Service College Mauritius (CSCM). By highlighting the learning needs of civil servants as well as entrepreneurs and workers in strategic economic sectors (agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and climate change adaptation), it provides a basis for national training and education institutions to design courses that meet the needs of both public and private sectors. As part of this work, PAGE has trained civil servants to design and deliver effective e-learning programmes, aiming to leverage the full potential of e-learning platforms for high-quality education on green economy. Discussions between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the CSCM are also underway to integrate a training on tracking climate expenditure as part of the green economy-related courses that the CSCM will deliver to public officials.

Raising awareness and providing platforms for stakeholder exchange and inter-ministerial discussion has been another key element of PAGE's work in Mauritius. A recent Green Economy Forum in May 2018, supported by PAGE, brought different Ministries together with actors from the private sector, educational institutions and civil society to discuss how to accelerate inclusive and green economic growth in the country. Under the overarching theme of unlocking green economy, discussion centred around policy frameworks, SDG linkages, and the skills, business, industry, and financial markets needed to support the transition.

**LOOKING FORWARD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Recent green policies, strategies and initiatives implemented in Mauritius clearly show the determination and commitment of policymakers and stakeholders to make a successful transition towards a green economy. More investment has been shifted into sectors such as green agriculture, energy efficient enterprises, renewable energy, low-carbon transport and improved water management. To ensure an economic strategy with a focus on addressing unemployment, alleviating poverty and fostering sustainable development, green projects and actions must be supported by a well-defined set of skills and competencies. Applied knowledge and learning will drive the transition towards an inclusive green economy both in the private and public sectors.

Going forward, a coordination body to drive the sustainable agenda in the country through policy coherence would be crucial to the ensure the long-term sustainability of the results already achieved.