



MAURITIUS TOWARDS A GREENER ECONOMY

A MUST FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Lessons from other countries

The Caribbean has embraced elements of a green economy for some time through regional initiatives focusing on issues such as climate change, renewable energy and sustainable tourism. More recently, national policies have been developed in several Caribbean countries as leaders and decision makers seek to support sustainable development, sustainable energy and climate resilience.

Regionally, Caribbean GE Action Learning Group (GE ALG), established in 2010, was charged with identifying and promoting ways in which a "a Caribbean green economy" can advance sustainable development in the Caribbean. Green Economy Caribbean Political Advisory Group (GEPAG) formed in 2014 was responsible with the undertaking of research, outreach and capacity building in the public and private sectors in key areas that are needed to support different steps of a green economy transition. Countries like Jamaica has integrated GE strategies into their Vision 2030 National Development Plan, Guyana has come up with a Low-Carbon Development Strategy, Dominica has charted out an Organic Development Policy and Grenada has developed an Alternative Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, just to cite a few examples.

While definitions are useful for interpretation of the green economy concept, there has been an attempt to move beyond simple definitions of the green economy to define a set of guiding principles. These principles help to guide practitioners in the application of the green economy concept. A number of sets of green economy principles were published by a variety of organizations in the lead up to Rio+20. An analysis of eight sets of principles was conducted by the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development that year (UNDESA, 2014). It found that there is a considerable diversity of principles that have been proposed to enhance interpretation and application of the green economy. However, there is also considerable synergy amongst the different sets of principles. The list of the most common green economy principles identified in the review are shown below:

1. The green economy is a means for achieving sustainable development.
2. The green economy should create decent work and green jobs.
3. The green economy is resource and energy efficient.
4. The green economy respects

planetary boundaries or ecological limits or scarcity.

5. The green economy uses integrated decision-making.
6. The green economy measures progress beyond GDP using appropriate indicators/metrics.
7. The green economy is equitable, fair and just – between and within countries and between generations.
8. The green economy protects biodiversity and ecosystems.
9. The green economy delivers poverty reduction, well-being, livelihoods, social protection and access to essential services.
10. The green economy improves governance and the rule of law. It is inclusive; democratic; participatory; accountable; transparent; and stable.
11. The green economy internalizes externalities.

GE principles should be developed to meet the needs and vision of each country and each sector. The goal is not to simply arrive at a list of principles but to engage in discussion with stakeholders about the priorities and approaches to moving towards a green economy. It is high time in Mauritius that stakeholders engage in a concrete and structured way to identify priorities. The Prime Minister, Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, has re-iterated the commitment of the Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by the year 2030 at the 18th Annual Session of l'Institut Francophone de la Régulation Financière (IFREFI) on 4 September 2019.

A recent study conducted by the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), under the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the Civil Service College, Mauritius on Green Economy Learning Assessment for Mauritius, has recommended the setting up of a Green Economy coordination body at the centralised level. It is suggested that such a body be hosted under the Prime Minister's Office, to ensure that all institutions are aware of the importance of GE and to consolidate actions.

The study on Green Economy Learning Assessment for Mauritius concludes that although some awareness on green economy issues and climate change exist among policy-makers, economic and social partners, this is far from being sufficient to allow a systematic shift towards an inclusive, green, and climate resilient economy. The full report can be downloaded at www.cscm.mu/index.php/publications. To allow for the transition to a Green Economy, the following recommendations have been made:

Strategic Vision and Planning



The main areas of competencies, which are most deficient in Mauritius, are the transformational and technical ones. Policy-makers are expected to be fully acquainted with green economy issues and climate change solutions, which can be mainstreamed in development policies. At the transformational level (i.e. ability to set priorities, and define strategic action), the desired competencies would include a clear understanding of the economic, social and environment implications of green economy actions, together with the associated challenges and opportunities that they offer. The Assessment found that transformational competencies of policy-makers in the public sector and corporate managers in the private sector on green economy and climate change issues should be enhanced.

Systematic Approach to Professional/Life-long Learning for Green Economy

Public officers at organisational and operational level are expected to implement green economy measures and policies and assess their economic, social and environmental impacts. The assessment demonstrates that a certain degree of awareness exists on green economy issues, but it is insufficient for public sector officials to effectively conceptualise, implement and monitor green programmes and projects. While green economic actions have to contribute and fit

in to an overall objective of greening the economy, projects in Mauritius are designed and implemented in disconnect and on a rather ad-hoc basis. A more systematic approach to develop competencies of public officials should allow them to continuously and systematically improve their knowledge on best practices around the world, the state-of-the-art solutions to greening and the challenges that could be observed during their implementation. Workshops, conferences and life-long learning/training opportunities that could lead to such transformational competencies are warranted in the rather immediate future.

Common understanding/public consensus on green economy

The assessment reveals that education and training institutions, especially universities, in Mauritius, have a pool of resources and human capacities and are well versed on green economy issues. However, the mechanisms, and most importantly, the financial resources to develop training programmes for public officers are very limited. This is an important gap in the current learning system in Mauritius.

Mauritius has made some significant progress towards a sustainable economy. In fact, the newly elected government has outlined a series of initiatives in its government programme, 'Achieving Meaningful Change' (GoM, 2015). A Green

Assessment in Mauritius study by PAGE (2015) demonstrates that a green economy transition offers Mauritius further opportunities for sustained economic growth, energy and water savings, increased agricultural productivity and green jobs. According to the analysis in the report, green economy investments are expected to generate better economic outcomes than a business-as-usual investment allocation, with GDP 6 per cent higher in the GE case relative to business-as-usual, by 2035. Therefore, the potential for higher income exists under a green economy transition.

Unless we address the shortcomings in our understanding of the Green Economy concept, we will fail towards a smooth transition to achieve green growth. Realising such growth will bring in inclusive growth, encourage innovation, provide decent jobs, create market opportunities and eradicate poverty. Mauritius should also come up with legal frameworks and regulations that encourage improved environmental and economic practices or innovations that could create new sustainable economic opportunities.

Sustainable financing of projects will be perhaps the most daunting task of any government and Mauritius is of no exception. We need a concerted effort of all stakeholders, public, private and the community, so that we understand what a green economy is all about and how we can achieve green growth for a sustainable future.