

PRODUCTIVITY ON THE MOVE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL



NPCC Crowns Its AI AI STARTUPS PROJECT Entrepreneurs



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Welcome

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to this new edition of Productivity on the Move.

In a world that is evolving at an unprecedented pace, the need to continuously improve is no longer optional—it is essential. Whether in public service, private enterprise, or our daily lives, the pursuit of productivity and excellence is what enables us to remain resilient, competitive and forward-looking. Continuous improvement is not just about doing more; it is about doing better, smarter and more sustainably.

We start this edition with an interview of our Executive Director on the Budget Speech 2026-2027, offering his insights on what it means for productivity and the road ahead.

This edition brings together a rich blend of insights, innovations and inspiring stories. We begin on the ground, with dissemination workshops bringing climate research directly to fishing communities along our coast. We celebrate the achievements of Mauritius's emerging tech talent at the inaugural AI StartUps Award Ceremony, and look ahead to Mauritius hosting the Africa Kaizen Annual Conference (AKAC) 2026—a defining moment for the continent's productivity agenda.

Our journey into smart manufacturing continues with the official launch of the NPCC–JICA Kaizen Dissemination Project and the IoT for Productive Enterprises pilot, while Dr Vinaye Ancharaz examines how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the NPCC's strategy in his feature, The NPCC in the Age of AI. We take you to Japan with an insightful piece on transforming public service through lessons from Nakano City Hall, and bring you an international perspective through our interview with Mr. Jaime Arboleda Palacio of Colombia.

Closer to home, a strategic collaboration with Mauritius Telecom highlights our commitment to operational excellence, while InnovEd 2025 shines a light on the next generation of thinkers and creators shaping a smarter Mauritius. We close this edition with a thought-provoking reflection on Mauritius' ranking in the World Happiness Report—prompting us to rethink the link between happiness and productivity.

As always, we hope this edition informs, inspires and motivates you to embrace the journey of continuous improvement in your own sphere.

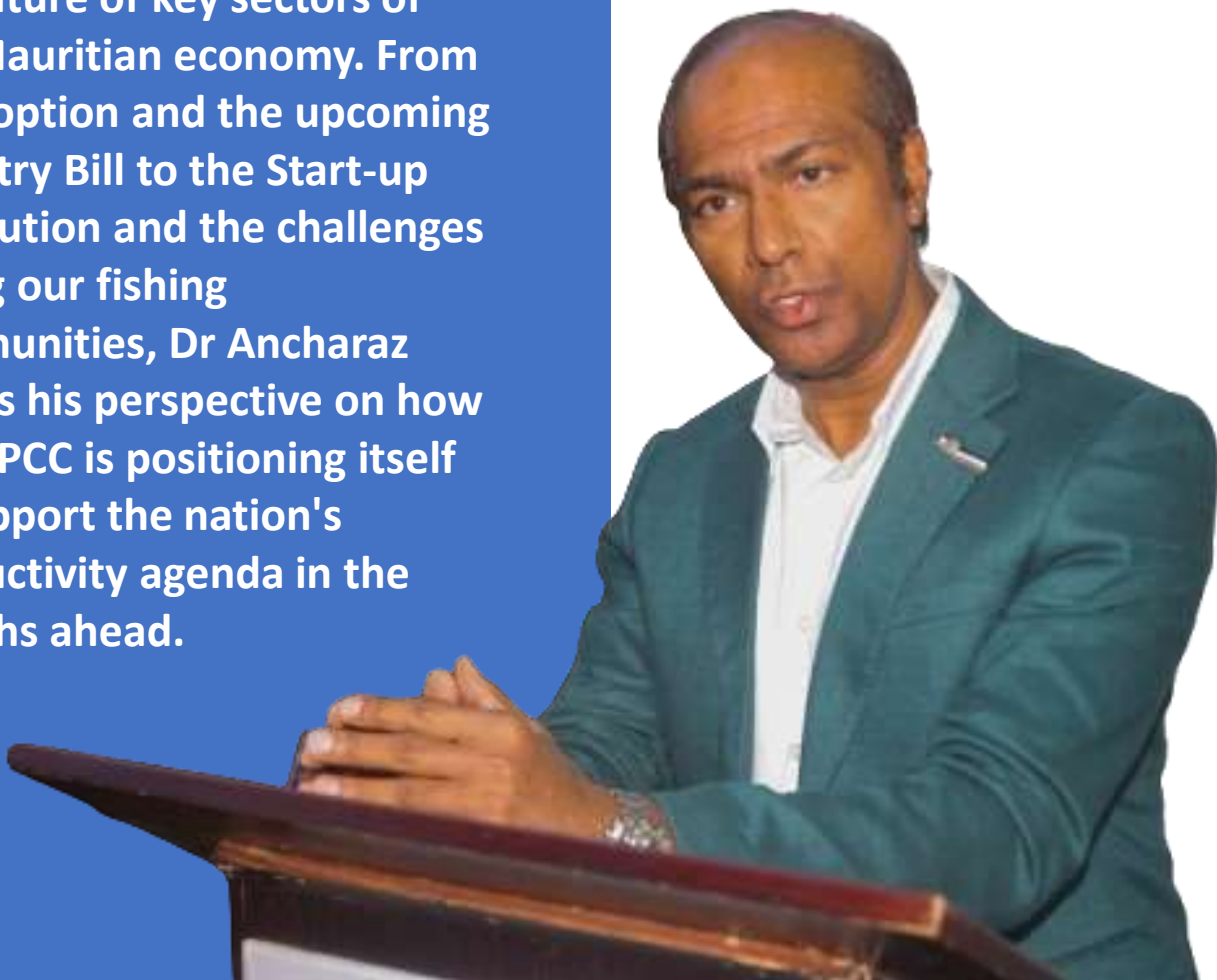
Happy reading!

NPCC Team

Budget 2026-2027

In the wake of the Budget Speech 2026-2027, we sat down with Dr Vinay Ancharaz, Executive Director of the NPCC, to get his reading of the Budget as an economist and to understand what it means for productivity, industrial development and the future of key sectors of the Mauritian economy. From AI adoption and the upcoming Industry Bill to the Start-up Revolution and the challenges facing our fishing communities, Dr Ancharaz shares his perspective on how the NPCC is positioning itself to support the nation's productivity agenda in the months ahead.

"AI is the Way Forward": NPCC's Executive Director on the Budget and the Productivity Imperative



Interview of Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz (Ctnd)

What is your lecture of the budget speech, especially in terms of productivity and its potential impact on different sectors of the economy? The Budget also allocates Rs 200 million for AI tools across the public sector and makes AI proficiency mandatory in higher education curricula, alongside a target to train 50,000 Mauritians in practical AI skills over the next year. From NPCC's vantage point, what needs to happen at enterprise level, particularly among SMEs, to ensure these national AI investments actually translate into measurable productivity gains, rather than remaining a top-down digitisation exercise?

I see this Budget as following on from last year's, which placed a lot of emphasis on AI, research and development, innovation and applied research. Productivity is, in many ways, a by-product of these concepts, and this Budget continues that trend, placing significant emphasis on AI once again — with plans to train around 50,000 citizens in AI, including 5,000 public officers, for a start. This is a commendable measure, because AI is a disruptive technology, and if we do not adapt to it, we will simply fall behind. The government is clearly conscious of the need for Mauritius to be AI-ready, and this Budget lays the foundation for that.

When it comes to productivity specifically, I was hoping the Budget would make mention of the National Productivity Master Plan that we are looking forward to developing in the coming months. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. The good news, however, is that we did receive budget allocation for the Productivity Master Plan.

Going forward, it's important to recognise that there has been a genuine productivity slowdown. For example, total factor productivity (TFP) grew at an anaemic 0.4% per annum for the five years after Covid-19 (i.e. 2020-2024) compared to 1.5% during the five years before the pandemic. In terms of sectors, what is quite revealing is that some of the sectors we have traditionally looked to as drivers of GDP growth — hospitality, real estate, retail and wholesale, and public administration — are among those showing the slowest labour productivity growth.

These are sectors where we urgently need to step up productivity, and I believe AI can help in that process.

We are already seeing AI tools being used in the public service — tools that complement productivity through smart work. Why spend time writing a brief manually when a tool can do it so much faster? That frees up time for other purposes. For me, that is the way forward, and I hope the Budget will give the needed push for AI adoption.

An Industry Bill has been announced to "rebuild the country's industrial and export base" and reposition Mauritius as a globally competitive manufacturing hub, with an export target of doubling goods exports from USD 1.5 billion to USD 3 billion within five years. Given that manufacturing has already been the principal driver of post-pandemic productivity recovery, what role do you see NPCC playing in supporting this Industry Bill's implementation, particularly for export-oriented enterprises?

The Budget does mention the Industry Bill, and its purpose, as you noted, is to rebuild the country's industrial and export base, with a particular focus on exports. There is real concern that exports in Mauritius have, in a way, bottomed out. If you look at recent data, Mauritius imports nearly three times more than it exports, and our trade deficit — the excess of imports over exports — stands at upwards of Rs 200 billion. That is clearly unsustainable, and it shows that Mauritius exports very little, even though we may have significant potential. So the question becomes: how do we get enterprises to produce more for export? There are sectors where export potential is declining — textiles and clothing, for instance, which has traditionally been a major driver of our exports, is often spoken of as a sunset industry. I'm not entirely sure if that's true; I believe there is still some potential, even if it is gradually diminishing.

Interview of Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz (Ctnd)

But there are other sectors with significant export potential: agro-processing, biotechnology and pharmaceutical products, light engineering, and fisheries within the blue economy. These sectors need to be revamped: and we need to look at them critically and ask what isn't working. The Budget attempted to do this – to some extent. For tourism, for example, the government is moving away from the traditional sun-sea-sand approach towards cultural, wellness and eco-tourism. I believe the same kind of thinking can be applied to fisheries and fish exports.

When we talk about fish exports today, it's mainly canned tuna. But there is real potential to export chilled fish — for that, we need to increase production, which means investing in industrial and semi-industrial fishing vessels. Encouraging fish farming is another avenue, and the Budget addresses this directly, with a 30% rebate scheme on aquaculture feed imports to encourage aqua-farming. The objective is to triple fish production to 15,000 tonnes over the coming years, and I believe this is very much feasible with the right investment and incentives. Processing fish into a manufactured product, along with developing agro-processing, biotechnology, and light engineering, holds real potential — and I hope the Industry Bill will help that potential materialise.

As for NPCC's role in supporting the Industry Bill's implementation, I believe this will come mainly through the Manufacturing 4.0 initiative that has been entrusted to us in the Budget. We have been implementing the IoT for Productive Enterprises project, which identifies digitally-ready enterprises to adopt sensors, tablets, and dashboards for real-time production monitoring and enhanced efficiency. We piloted this project and are still rolling it out. Now, having received a significant budget allocation, together with the Manufacturing 4.0 initiative entrusted to NPCC, we will be able to scale up our IoT

project and move further into Manufacturing 4.0 — because that is the future.

The Budget places significant emphasis on a Start-up Revolution and SME potential, including a ten-year tax holiday for start-ups and a new SME Bill. How does NPCC intend to position its productivity and competitiveness tools — including Kaizen, Digital Kaizen, and the Enterprise Go Digital platform — to support this new generation of start-ups and SMEs as they scale?

The Budget talks extensively about the Start-up Revolution. Government will introduce a dedicated Start-up Act and develop a high-tech Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or, alongside a whole set of incentives — including a ten-year income tax holiday for start-ups — to ensure that this revolution takes hold.

NPCC launched its AI Start-Ups project earlier this year, and we have now received a significant budget allocation that will allow us to scale up that project. I believe we have an important role to play in the government's Start-up Revolution, with a particular focus on AI start-ups.

In addition to continuing the AI Start-Ups project into the next financial year, we have received an allocation of close to Rs 5 million to establish and run an AI Start-Up Lab. I see this as the perfect complement to the existing AI project. Through the AI Start-Ups project, we trained young applicants to develop business ideas, refine them into viable business propositions, and pitch them — with the best projects receiving a cash award of Rs 100,000 as seed capital. But in a way, our involvement stopped there. We do have a contract in place to monitor that the funds are used as intended, but it remains, in essence, a gentleman's agreement.

Interview of Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz (Ctnd)

So how do we ensure these start-ups go on to become genuinely successful? I believe the AI Start-Up Lab is the answer, as it picks up exactly where the AI Start-Ups project leaves off. It will serve as an incubator, allowing us to stay with these start-ups and accompany them until they can stand on their own feet — and perhaps fly from there. We are currently considering how best to do this, perhaps in collaboration with the University of Mauritius or other tertiary institutions, such as Polytechnics Mauritius, which already operate incubators. We don't intend to reinvent the wheel or build an incubator entirely from scratch — rather, we want to tap into existing resources and leverage them, while bringing to the table what we are known for: our expertise, our network, our training, and the hand-holding that has become something of a hallmark for us.

Beyond that, when it comes to the Start-up Revolution more broadly, NPCC can leverage its competitiveness tools to help these enterprises become genuinely competitive. I'm referring to Kaizen — we are a Centre of Excellence in Kaizen practices — and Digital Kaizen, particularly the Enterprise Go Digital (EGD) platform, which we are in the process of scaling up and enhancing. My goal is for EGD to become something significant — not just for enterprises, but potentially for parastatals, and even ministries, because I genuinely believe EGD has that potential. Once we enhance the platform and its modules further, it can go a long way.

Government has set an ambitious target of increasing local fish production from 5,000 to 15,000 tonnes over the next three years, alongside major investments in aquaculture, fish farming zones, and a possible new fishing port. Given NPCC's recent research collaboration on decent work in fishing

communities, how do you see productivity improvement and decent work coexisting in this Blue Economy push, particularly for small-scale and artisanal fishers?

Just last week, we held a series of dissemination workshops sharing the findings of a study we undertook with the University of Strathclyde in Scotland. The study looked at decent work in the face of climate change, focusing specifically on its impact on fishing communities. The project spanned the whole island — north, east, south, and west — and the dissemination workshops followed the same pattern, with sessions in Grand Gaube in the north, Trou d'Eau Douce in the east, Tamarin in the west, and Mahebourg in the south.

One might ask why NPCC is involved in a study on climate change and its impact on fishing communities. Fundamentally, it's because climate change is directly impacting fishers' productivity. As a result of climate change, fish catch is declining, and fishers are having to put in considerably more effort to sustain their daily output. Because they can no longer find fish inshore, they are forced to venture into deeper waters — which carries significant risk. So productivity is declining on both fronts: more effort is going in, while output — what matters most in productivity terms — is going down.

So what can be done to increase productivity? This is precisely what the study addressed. Fundamentally, there is a need for adaptation to climate change, and that adaptation can take many forms. One is asking what fishers can do to supplement their income as fish catch shrinks. The other is asking how they can produce more with less effort — and this is where smart work comes in.

Interview of Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz (Ctnd)

Clearly, investment is needed — better, more robust boats, and perhaps semi-industrial fishing vessels that would allow fishers, working as teams or as part of cooperatives, to fish in deeper waters. So, in the face of climate change, maintaining labour productivity will require investment in capital equipment — boats, better fishing techniques, and also knowledge. And here, inevitably, we think of AI, which can help fishers locate fish through GPS technology and similar tools. Naturally, fishers will need to learn how to use these technologies, and I believe government has an important role to play in educating fishers on how to leverage and optimise the tools available to them, as well as in making these technologies accessible to the fishing community.

In the face of climate change, artisanal fishing is coming under real pressure, and it will likely need to evolve — whether through semi-industrial fishing, or through fishers diversifying into related activities such as descaling, cleaning, or processing fish as part of a larger value chain. These are things we need to think about, and things we can develop with the support of global partners. Japan, for instance, has had a significant presence in Mauritius in recent years and has supported our fishing community in many ways. There may be scope to discuss with the Japanese government the idea of a value chain centred on fish refrigeration and processing for export — something that could give our local fishers a more stable source of income beyond fishing itself.

“There are other sectors with significant export potential: agro-processing, biotechnology and pharmaceutical products, light engineering, and fisheries within the Blue Economy. These sectors need to be revamped, and we need to look at them critically and ask what isn't working. I think that is precisely what the Budget attempts to do. For tourism, for example, the government is moving away from the traditional sun-sea-sand approach towards cultural, wellness and eco-tourism. I believe the same kind of thinking can be applied to fisheries and fish exports.”

BRINGING RESEARCH TO THE SHORE: DISSEMINATION WORKSHOPS ENGAGE FISHING COMMUNITIES



The NPCC organised a series of dissemination workshops on the theme "*Decent Work in the Face of Climate Change: Understanding the Experiences of Fishing Communities*," held across four coastal regions of Mauritius during the week of 15 to 18 June 2026. The workshops took place on Monday 15 June at Grand Gaube, Tuesday 16 June at Trou d'Eau Douce, Wednesday 17 June at Tamarin and Thursday 18 June at Mahebourg, bringing together fishermen from each respective region.

These sessions marked an important milestone in a research initiative led by the NPCC in collaboration with the University of Strathclyde, and funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). Presentations of the research findings were delivered by Dr Pratima Sambajee of the University of Strathclyde.

A Platform for Fishermen's Voices

Each workshop provided a meaningful space for participants to discuss the challenges they face as climate change increasingly affects their work and livelihoods. Through open and constructive exchanges, fishermen shared their observations, concerns and firsthand experiences, offering valuable insights into the realities confronting coastal fishing communities across the island. Beyond facilitating dialogue, the workshops also served as a platform to present and discuss the study's findings, encourage exchange among stakeholders, and gather feedback that will contribute to developing practical recommendations for a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive fishing sector.

BRINGING RESEARCH TO THE SHORE: DISSEMINATION WORKSHOPS ENGAGE FISHING COMMUNITIES (Cntd)



About the Research

The research project, conducted between August 2024 and July 2026, examined the lived experiences of small-scale fishers (SSF) in two fishing-dependent contexts — Mauritius and Goa, India — using the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. In Mauritius, the NPCC facilitated the interview of 50 small-scale fishers across coastal communities including Cap Malheureux, Grand Gaube, Trou d'Eau Douce, Mahebourg, Tamarin, and La Gaulette, through qualitative interviews capturing their experiences with climate change, working conditions, income challenges, and labour protection.

Key Findings

The research findings, shared with participants during the workshops, painted a vivid picture of the realities facing Mauritian fishing communities:

Climate change is reshaping life at sea.

Fishermen reported that sea temperatures are rising, cyclones and bad weather are becoming more frequent, and in some areas the sea itself appears to be receding. As a direct consequence, fish stocks have declined, forcing fishers to venture further out to sea — often without adequate equipment — to secure a catch. Many described daily life as increasingly difficult, with insufficient income to sustain their households.

Labour protection remains a pressing concern. Participants highlighted a lack of adequate protection in their line of work, compounded

by limited safety equipment for venturing into more distant and riskier waters. Many felt they had insufficient voice in decisions affecting their livelihoods, and that relevant authorities were not sufficiently engaged with the fishing community to address these gaps.

Tensions around regulation and changing policy. Fishermen voiced concerns that they are often blamed for environmental and resource challenges, while other factors — such as the growing tourism industry's impact on fishing grounds — receive less scrutiny. Discussions also touched on the limits of current support measures: while fishing cards are sometimes withheld from those not actively fishing, compensation schemes encouraging older fishers to surrender their licences were also raised as a point of concern, alongside the broader issue of insufficient surveillance at sea. Experiences vary across regions and fisher types. A recurring theme across the workshops was that no single narrative captures the fishing experience in Mauritius — challenges and adaptive strategies differ from one coastal community to another, and across different categories of fishers.

Towards Evidence-Based Policy

These findings will feed into two case studies and two policy briefs, to be shared with local authorities, fishing communities, and stakeholders, with the aim of informing evidence-based policy responses, strengthening labour protections, and supporting climate adaptation strategies within the fishing sector.

ProSparks Project

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY LEADERS: NPCC LAUNCHES PROSPARKS WITH PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL CITY COUNCIL



The NPCC is taking community-driven innovation to the next level with the launch of the ProSparks Project, a rebranded version of the National Leadership Engine initiative, implemented in collaboration with the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. The project aims to develop leadership capabilities and foster social innovation through community-driven initiatives.

As part of the preparatory phase, five trainers were selected and underwent a specialised Training-of-Trainers programme on 18 April 2026. The training introduced participants to the project framework, implementation timeline, and the Design Thinking methodology adapted for social innovation projects.

Registration for the programme was launched on 20 April. Trainers are coaching and supporting participants in completing the online leadership development

programme available on the NPCC Innovation platform.

The project is scheduled to run from June to September 2026, beginning with an official launch in June followed by a three-part Bootcamp series held on 6, 13 and 20 June 2026 at the Gorah Issac Hall. The bootcamp sessions will equip participants with the knowledge and tools required to identify community challenges and develop innovative solutions.

Following the bootcamp phase, participants will work in teams to design and develop innovative community projects addressing priorities identified by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. The projects will be guided by the principles of leadership, collaboration and social innovation, with the objective of generating sustainable and impactful outcomes for the community.

AI StartUps Project

NPCC CROWNS ITS AI ENTREPRENEURS



The NPCC hosted its first AI StartUps Award Ceremony at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation in May. The event celebrated the achievements of aspiring entrepreneurs who transformed innovative AI concepts into business ventures, highlighting the growing role of artificial intelligence in driving productivity, innovation and economic diversification in Mauritius.



The event brought together government ministers, industry leaders, coaches and 19 teams of young entrepreneurs who had spent months turning AI-powered ideas into viable business ventures. The programme, launched in October 2025, far exceeded expectations. Against an initial target of 100 participants, 157 entrepreneurs registered. Of these, 94 completed Design Thinking training, 34 prototypes were built at the AI Sprint hosted with the University of Mauritius, and 19 teams pitched full business plans to an industry panel in March 2026. Five were ultimately chosen to receive Rs 100,000 in seed funding each, along with incubation support to bring their solutions to market.

"AI is already making an impact on productivity across the Mauritian economy. In particular, since 2021, we note an encouraging reversal in the downward trend in capital productivity. In the manufacturing sector, capital productivity grew at an impressive 7.4% during 2021-2024. This performance can partly be credited to the adoption of Industry 4.0 practices, especially by the larger firms. AI and IoT applications, such as predictive maintenance algorithms that can cut machine downtime by as much as 50%, and computer vision tools that significantly reduce defect rates, are helping strengthen our export competitiveness. AI can also foster productivity improvements in other key sectors of the Mauritian economy, notably financial services, IT-enabled services, tourism and agro-business."

— Dr Vinay Ancharaz, Executive Director, NPCC

The ceremony was attended by Hon Aadil Ameer Meea, Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives and Dr the Hon Avinash Ramtohol, Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. Both ministers highlighted the national significance of the initiative, pointing to the Government's Rs 25 million AI Innovation Programme and the recently launched FAIR Guidelines — Fairness, Accountability, Inclusivity and Responsibility — as pillars of Mauritius's ambition to become a regional AI hub.

NPCC Chairperson Mr Arshad Duymun underscored the broader economic purpose of the initiative: *"This contributes directly to the creation of higher value-added activities and the emergence of new growth sectors. Such initiatives are crucial to keeping our economy agile, competitive and resilient."*

The five winning startups will now enter a monitoring and evaluation phase to ensure their ventures scale in line with the FAIR framework. The AI StartUps initiative is set to remain a cornerstone of the NPCC's Strategic Plan 2025-2029, with the council committed to deepening Mauritius's digital transformation year on year.

Meet the Startups

KOMAI – by Nigel Chevathyan

An advanced AI-powered platform revolutionising digital content creation by giving users full control over generated visuals.

Mo Karyer – by Mohammad Muzzammil Panchoo, Muhammad Ahsan Raza Panchoo & Mungroo Irshaad

A WhatsApp-based career guidance chatbot helping secondary and tertiary students explore career pathways and opportunities.

Study Hive – by Yukta Ranjeet Emrith & Arokium Sheikh Waajid Hussein

An intelligent education ecosystem connecting students, teachers and parents through smart automation and real-time collaboration.

Vidante – by Kevin Ikuzwe, Olivier Ishimwe & Keza Rukundo Stephy

An assessment platform designed to reduce teachers' administrative workload while enhancing the quality of student feedback.

ZilNutri Ltd – NutriRoute – by Bhavna Seedam & Ejaz Allymamode

A nutrition and meal-planning platform helping users better manage their health and dietary needs.

MAURITIUS TO HOST THE AFRICA KAIZEN ANNUAL CONFERENCE (AKAC) 2026



AUDA-NEPAD
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



PAPA
Pan-African Productivity Association

mauritius
telecom

Mauritius is set to take centre stage on the African continent as host of the Africa Kaizen Annual Conference (AKAC) 2026, scheduled for 26 – 27 October 2026. The Conference is organised under the framework of the Africa Kaizen Initiative (AKI), a joint platform of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

This year's edition carries the theme "*Sustainable Kaizen for a Competitive and Prosperous Africa*," with the sub-theme "*Advancing productivity and quality for resilient, inclusive and green growth*." AKAC 2026 positions itself as a strategic driver of productivity, resilience, and green transformation across the continent — connecting ongoing productivity improvements with environmental sustainability, social

inclusion, and long-term economic resilience.

A Decade of Impact

Since its launch in 2017, the AKI has built the capacity of productivity organisations, supported enterprise-level Kaizen implementation, and fostered peer learning across Africa through AKAC and the Africa Kaizen Award (AKA). Today, the initiative engages 17 countries and 24 Kaizen-promoting institutions, with continued expansion underway. AKAC 2026 will also mark the tenth anniversary of the AKI, with a dedicated awareness and outreach initiative celebrating its journey and achievements while charting an ambitious new phase ahead.

MAURITIUS TO HOST THE AFRICA KAIZEN ANNUAL CONFERENCE (AKAC) 2026 (Ctnd)

- **Waste reduction and resource efficiency (environmental sustainability)**
- **Respect for people, participation, and safe workplaces (social sustainability)**
- **Continuous learning and adaptability (economic resilience)**
- Promote human-centred productivity, including skills, decent work, safety and wellbeing
- Strengthen regional cooperation under the Africa Kaizen Initiative
- Contribute to Africa's resilient, inclusive and green growth trajectory

Mauritius — a Small Island Developing State and one of the earliest adopters of Kaizen on the continent, since 2001 — offers a fitting backdrop for this year's Conference, demonstrating how productivity improvement, institutional reform, and sustainability can reinforce one another.

What to Expect

AKAC 2026 will expand Kaizen beyond an enterprise tool into a shared mindset supporting competitive and climate-resilient MSMEs, strong productivity institutions, improved public sector performance, and policy leadership that embeds continuous improvement into national and regional systems. The Conference will also explore Kaizen 4.0 — integrating continuous improvement with digital and Industry 4.0 technologies.

- **Objectives of AKAC 2026:**
 - Reposition Kaizen as a driver of sustainable development in Africa
- Showcase best practices in Sustainable Kaizen

Who Are Attending?

The Conference will bring together national productivity and quality institutions, Kaizen and Business Development Service (BDS) practitioners, ministries and public institutions, AKA Winners, as well as private sector leaders, academics, and development partners.

Conference at a Glance

Dates: 26 – 27 October 2026

Venue: The Ravenala Attitude Hotel, Mauritius

Format: Hybrid

Capacity Enhancement Programme for AKI members: 28 – 29 October 2026 (onsite)

The Conference is hosted by the Republic of Mauritius, co-organised by AUDA-NEPAD, PAPA, and JICA, and supported by the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives and the NPCC, with Mauritius Telecom as Lead Sponsor.

INAUGURAL JOINT COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MARKS OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NPCC–JICA KAIZEN



The first Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) meeting of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Mauritius Project took place on 21 May 2026, officially marking the start of a three-year bilateral initiative to spread the Kaizen approach across Mauritius and neighbouring countries. The meeting brought together representatives of the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, JICA, the Japan Productivity Centre (JPC), and the NPCC to formalise the project's strategic direction and endorse its core objectives.

Operating under the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, the NPCC is implementing the project "*Dissemination of the Kaizen Approach in the Republic of Mauritius and Neighbouring Countries*" in partnership with JICA, running from February 2026 to February 2029. The initiative pursues two key objectives: strengthening the NPCC's institutional capacity to disseminate the Kaizen approach within Mauritius and across the region, and enhancing the capability of neighbouring countries to implement Kaizen, while consolidating the NPCC's role as a Centre of Excellence.

Project Objectives

- I. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the NPCC to disseminate the Kaizen approach within Mauritius and across neighbouring countries.
- II. Enhance the capability of neighbouring countries to implement the Kaizen approach, consolidating the NPCC's standing as a Centre of Excellence.

The JCC serves as the project's principal decision-making body, bringing together all key stakeholders to review activity reports and shape strategic planning. During this inaugural session, the project framework was formally presented, with consensus reached on its core objectives and upcoming milestones. The meeting concluded with a formal agreement among all parties to ensure the project's successful implementation over the coming three years.

Looking ahead, all partners have reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the practice of Kaizen within Mauritius and the wider region — fostering a lasting culture of continuous improvement.

IOT For Productive Enterprises NPCC DRIVES SMART MANUFACTURING WITH LAUNCH OF IOT PILOT PROJECT



The NPCC has taken a bold step towards participating and contributing in Mauritius' industrial transformation with the launch of its *"IoT for Productive Enterprises Project"* on 5 March 2026. The initiative signals a strong commitment to accelerating the adoption of smart manufacturing practices and embracing Industry 4.0 across the local manufacturing sector.

NPCC DRIVES SMART MANUFACTURING WITH LAUNCH OF IOT PILOT PROJECT (Ctnd)

The project was officially introduced during a workshop that brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from manufacturing enterprises and international partners such as the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) of South Africa, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The workshop provided a dynamic platform for participants to explore how Internet of Things (IoT) technologies can enhance productivity, streamline operations and improve competitiveness in an increasingly digital global economy.

Designed as a pilot initiative, the project will support five selected small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMEs) in adopting IoT-based solutions tailored to their operational needs. Participating companies will be able to track key production metrics in real time, including output levels, quality indicators, energy consumption and equipment performance. This transition from traditional to data-driven management is expected to enable more informed decision-making and foster continuous improvement.

The project will unfold over five structured phases, beginning with assessment and planning, followed by solution design, installation and integration of IoT systems, training and capacity building and finally monitoring and evaluation. Each phase is carefully designed to ensure that participating enterprises not only implement the technology effectively but also build the internal capabilities needed to sustain long-term gains.

Speaking at the launch, the Executive Director of the NPCC, Dr Vinaye Ancharaz, emphasised the strategic importance of the initiative, highlighting that productivity in today's environment must be driven by data and innovation. He noted that the project will provide enterprises with practical tools to enhance efficiency, reduce operational costs, and strengthen their competitive positioning.

Aligned with Mauritius' broader vision of Manufacturing 4.0 and smart factories, the IoT for Productive Enterprises project is expected to serve as a catalyst for wider digital transformation across the sector. By demonstrating tangible results at the SME level, the NPCC aims to create scalable models that can be replicated across industries.

Manufacturing SMEs interested in participating in the project are encouraged to submit their Expression of Interest through the NPCC website.

With this initiative, the NPCC continues to play a leading role in fostering a culture of innovation, productivity, and excellence in Mauritius. More information on the IoT for Productive Enterprises project is available on the NPCC's website: www.npccmauritius.org

THE NPCC IN THE AGE OF AI



LEVERAGING INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES FOR PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION



Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz
Executive Director

This paper examines how Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things are reshaping the productivity landscape in Mauritius. Against a backdrop of declining labour and capital productivity growth, Dr Ancharaz makes a compelling case for AI as a transformative third lever of economic growth — and outlines the concrete steps the NPCC is taking to position Mauritius at the forefront of this intelligent revolution.

1. Introduction: The productivity imperative in a digital era

The Mauritian economy stands at a structural inflection point. Analysis of long-term productivity trends reveals a worrying decline: economy-wide labour productivity growth, which averaged 4.2 percent in the 1990s, slowed to just 2.5 percent during the 2011–2019 period (*Ancharaz, 2025*). More critically, capital productivity – a measure of how efficiently investment translates into output – has been on a long-term decline across the broader economy, only registering a modest 3.3% recovery in the 2021–2024 period after years of negative growth, probably reflecting the post-pandemic bounce-back effect.

These figures point to a classic middle-income trap scenario, where traditional sources of growth – labour reallocation from agriculture to services and capital deepening – have exhausted their potential. In response, the Government’s 2025–2026 Budget has articulated a clear pivot toward a new economic model driven by research and innovation, digital transformation, and strategic investment in human capital. Central to this pivot is the recognition that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are foundational enablers of productivity-led growth. This article examines the role of the NPCC in harnessing these technologies to reverse the productivity slowdown and secure long-term competitiveness for Mauritius.

2. AI resetting the productivity frontier

To appreciate the NPCC’s strategy, one must first understand the economic mechanism through which AI alters the productivity function. Historically, productivity gains were driven by either capital deepening (increasing the capital-to-labour ratio) or labour reallocation (moving workers from low- to high-productivity sectors). As a mature upper-middle-income economy, Mauritius has largely exhausted the gains from labour reallocation, with sectoral productivity levels converging to an economy-wide average.

AI, that is, process innovation at the microeconomic level, represents a potential third lever. Unlike previous generations of information technology that merely digitised existing processes, generative AI and machine learning enable the automation of cognitive tasks, predictive maintenance, and dynamic resource allocation. Goldman Sachs (2023) estimates that widespread adoption of generative AI could raise global GDP by 7% over a decade, driven primarily by labour productivity gains in advanced and emerging economies alike.

For a small, open island economy like Mauritius, the implications are profound. AI reduces the fixed costs of export competitiveness, lowers information asymmetries in supply chains, and enables SMEs to operate with the efficiency of much larger firms. Key productivity-boosting AI tools relevant to the Mauritian context include:

Robotic process automation (RPA): Software tools (e.g., UiPath, Microsoft Power Automate) that automate repetitive, rule-based tasks such as data entry, invoice processing, and report generation, thereby freeing human capital for higher-value activities.

Generative AI for service delivery: Large language models (LLMs) enable 24/7 multilingual customer service, automated content creation, and intelligent document processing, which are particularly relevant for Mauritius’ tourism and financial services sectors.

Predictive analytics for manufacturing: Machine learning algorithms that analyse sensor data to forecast equipment failure, optimise maintenance schedules, and reduce unplanned downtime – a major constraint on capital productivity in the manufacturing sector.

Computer vision for quality control: AI-powered visual inspection systems that detect defects in production lines with greater speed and accuracy than the human eye, reducing waste and improving product quality.

3. Policy Enablers: AI-related measures in recent Budgets

The 2025-2026 Budget Speech laid the essential groundwork for Mauritius' AI transformation, establishing institutional and policy foundations. It created the National Research and Innovation Institute, launched a Public Sector AI Programme with a Rs 25 million allocation, and mandated AI as a compulsory module in all public higher education curricula. It also introduced an AI Innovation Start-Up Programme, tax deductions for MSMEs investing in AI technologies, and began integrating AI into schools through National AI Policy Guidelines and educator training. These measures focused on readiness, governance, and early adoption.

The 2026-2027 Budget significantly scales up and operationalises these foundations, moving from preparation to mass implementation and economic mainstreaming. It sets a bold target of training or enabling 50,000 Mauritians in practical AI skills over the next year, including all 8,000 secondary school teachers, 12,000 Grade 9 students, 5,000 public officers, and 25,000 professionals and entrepreneurs. It establishes a National AI Learning Platform with Rs 25 million in funding and launches a "Champion of AI" Programme in partnership with India.

Critically, the new budget expands the strategic vision beyond domestic adoption: it positions Mauritius as a trusted regional AI hub through engagement with major American and European AI companies, participation in Google's America-India Connect Initiative, and the creation of a high-tech Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or. Following on the Rs150,000 tax deduction on AI investments announced last year, a new 15% investment tax credit over three years on AI solutions further incentivises private sector investment.

Taken together, the 2026-2027 measures build directly on the previous year's foundations by expanding scale, strengthening infrastructure, deepening international partnerships, and creating stronger investment incentives – transforming AI from a nascent policy area into a central pillar of Mauritius' economic growth

strategy and embedding AI into the national productivity agenda.

4. Sectoral impact: Real-world examples of AI-driven productivity gains

The impact of AI on productivity is already observable across key sectors of the Mauritian economy.

Manufacturing and Export-Oriented Enterprises (EOEs): The manufacturing sector has emerged as the principal driver of the post-pandemic productivity recovery, with labour productivity growth accelerating to 6.9 percent in 2021–2024 and capital productivity growth reaching 7.4 percent. AI and IoT technologies are critical to sustaining this momentum. For example, predictive maintenance algorithms can reduce machine downtime by up to 50 percent, directly improving capital utilisation (*Nati, 2025*). Computer vision systems for quality control can reduce defect rates by over 30 percent, enhancing export competitiveness (*UNIDO, 2025*).

Financial services and IT-Enabled Services (ITES): The financial services sector has demonstrated strengthening capital productivity, rising from -0.4 percent in 2012–2015 to 4.8 percent in 2021–2023. AI-powered fraud detection, algorithmic trading, and automated customer onboarding are further enhancing efficiency. In the ITES sector, generative AI tools are automating routine call centre interactions and document processing, allowing firms to shift toward higher-value advisory services.

Agriculture and food security: The agriculture sector recorded a remarkable turnaround in capital productivity, from -2.6 percent in 2012–2015 to 10.6 percent in 2021–2023 (*ibid.*). The Government's new Food Resilience Scheme incentivises controlled environment agriculture, including vertical farming and indoor climate-controlled production, both of which rely heavily on AI-driven environmental monitoring and resource optimisation (*Budget Speech, 2025, para. 72*).

Tourism: The accommodation and food services sector experienced a surge in capital productivity to 72.4 percent in 2021–2023, driven by the post-pandemic rebound. To sustain this, AI-powered dynamic pricing algorithms, personalised recommendation engines, and automated check-in systems are being deployed to increase tourism revenue and improve the visitor experience.

5. NPCC's strategic initiatives in AI and IoT

In alignment with the Government's policy direction, NPCC has operationalised a suite of AI and IoT-focused programmes designed to translate national strategy into enterprise-level impact.

The 'AI Start-Ups' project: Building a pipeline of AI entrepreneurs

The 'AI Start-Ups' project, now awaiting its second iteration, targets recent university graduates in the ICT sector. The first cohort successfully generated a range of bankable AI-driven business ideas, from which five awardees have been selected. These awardees may be onboarded onto the MRIC's incubation programme, with the NPCC providing ongoing monitoring to ensure business viability.

Building on this experience, NPCC is eyeing a strategic partnership with local tertiary education institutions and the Matsuo-Iwasawa Laboratory at the University of Tokyo, a world-leading research centre in deep learning and AI, for the next edition of the project.

In the future, applicants will be required to complete the lab's free online AI course as a precondition for selection. This requirement ensures that participants possess a foundational understanding of AI before entering the intensive bootcamp

and hackathon phases, thereby raising the technical rigour of the programme.

IoT for Productive Enterprises: From data to decision

The 'IoT for Productive Enterprises' project, currently being implemented as a pilot in selected manufacturing SMEs, involves the installation of low-cost IoT sensors in plants to monitor key performance indicators, such as machine downtime, electricity consumption, and production output, in real time. The project benefits from technical assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and leverages the experience of South African experts in smart manufacturing.

The expected long-term impacts of this initiative include a reduction in unplanned downtime, a decrease in energy intensity per unit of output, and the development of a data-driven decision-making culture within participating enterprises. The pilot phase will generate lessons of experience and case studies that can facilitate nationwide scaling.

Enterprise Go Digital (EGD) and Digital Kaizen

Armed with its newly acquired status as a Kaizen Centre of Excellence under the Africa Kaizen Initiative (AKI), NPCC is expanding its Digital Kaizen initiative.

The Enterprise Go Digital (EGD) platform is being revamped to integrate RPA solutions, enabling SMEs to automate repetitive administrative tasks such as purchase order generation and invoice processing. NPCC is collaborating with universities in Mauritius to develop customised training modules on practical AI, applied data analytics and smart sensing systems to empower SMEs to interpret their digital data and make evidence-based strategic decisions.

6. The National Productivity Master Plan: AI as an agent of governance

The NPCC Strategic Plan 2025–2029 proposes the development, coordination and implementation of a National Productivity Master Plan (NPMP). The NPMP is envisioned as an AI-native governance mechanism that recognises that, to escape the middle-income trap, Mauritius must move beyond siloed interventions towards a system where technology serves at the core of the economy.

The NPP leverages AI in three distinct ways to disseminate a productivity mindset.

First, as a diagnostic tool. Traditional productivity assessments are retrospective. The NPP, through its proposed central data hub and the *Mauritius Productivity & Competitiveness Outlook* (a new platform analyzing productivity trends and their implications for policy), will use AI to track sectoral performance in real time. This effectively shifts policymaking from firefighting to proactive management.

Second, as a vector for scale. The human trainer is becoming an increasingly scarce resource in Mauritius. To overcome this constraint, the NPMP envisions integrating generative AI and large language models in its training modules with a view to delivering them to a broader audience of SMEs than is currently possible due to space and budget limitations.

Third, as a means for inclusion. The National Productivity Fund may help co-finance AI adoption for small enterprises, thus lowering the barrier to entry for technologies like predictive maintenance and RPA.

Ultimately, the NPP leverages AI to

democratize productivity – making best practices accessible, measurable, and sustainable. It is how we construct a nation that is not just built on productivity, but driven to compete.

7. Conclusion

The productivity slowdown that has characterised the Mauritian economy over the past decade can be reversed in the future – and the resurgence of the manufacturing sector in recent years points in that direction. The Government’s 2025–2026 Budget has provided the policy and fiscal foundation for an AI-driven productivity transformation.

NPCC, through its AI Start-Ups project, IoT for Productive Enterprises initiative, revamped EGD platform, and proposed National Productivity Master Plan, is positioning itself as the operational engine of this transformation. By moving beyond traditional productivity consciousness toward the active deployment of intelligent technologies, NPCC aims to equip Mauritian enterprises and citizens with the tools and skills they need to compete in an increasingly automated and data-driven global economy.

The challenge ahead is one of scale and coordination. Individual pilot projects, however successful, will not shift national aggregates. What is required is a sustained, whole-of-economy commitment to embedding AI into the daily operations of firms, the curricula of educational institutions, and the decision-making processes of government. NPCC stands ready to lead this effort through a National Productivity Master Plan – as a catalyst for intelligent competitiveness.

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Transforming Public Service

INSIGHTS FROM NAKANO CITY HALL, JAPAN



Nakano City Hall

From 19–23 January 2026, the Executive Director of NPCC, Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz and the Head of Business Development and Consultancy, Françoise Marechal-Charlotte, participated in the onsite Cross Functional Working Group meeting in Tokyo, Japan.

As part of this programme, they had the opportunity to visit the new Nakano City Hall in Nakano, an experience that provided valuable insights into forward-thinking municipal governance. The visit proved both informative and inspiring, showcasing how infrastructure, culture, and digital transformation can converge to redefine public service delivery.



**Françoise Marechal
Charlotte**
Head Business
Development and
Consultancy



Presentation to the Cross Functional Working Group, January 2026

A Hub for Connection and Innovation

The new City Hall, is more than just a municipal office building. It is a space designed to foster collaboration, enhance service delivery, and create opportunities for residents to engage directly with their local government.

Site area: Approx. 8,500 m²

Total floor area: Approx. 47,200 m²

Floors: 2 basement levels and 11 above-ground floors

Employee capacity: Approximately 1,400 employees

Nakano City's New City Hall and Vision for the Future

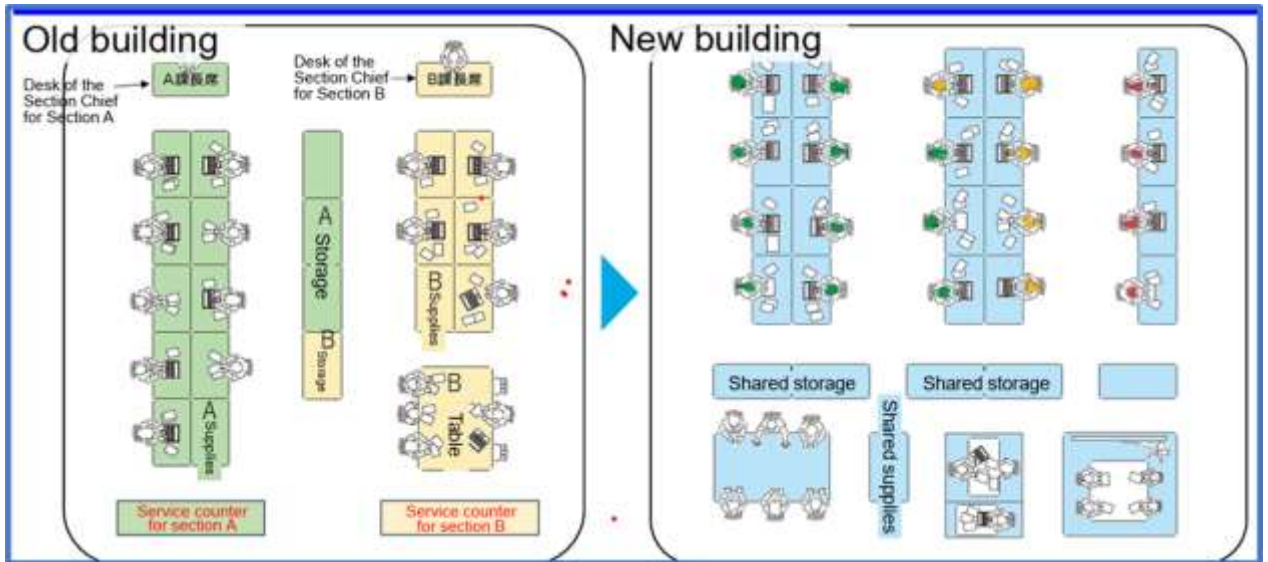
In May 2024, Nakano City marked a significant milestone with the grand opening of its state-of-the-art City Hall, which serves as the administrative heart of the city. The building, designed with the concept of "connecting" in mind, aims to strengthen relationships between residents, public officials, and city departments. As part of Nakano's vision for a vibrant, sustainable, and forward-thinking community, the new City Hall serves as a living embodiment of these values.

Reflecting Nakano City's goals of fostering a connected, safe, and sustainable community, the new City Hall offers a variety of features that aim to improve both employee and resident experiences.

Nakano City's development plans revolve around the theme of "connections." This vision includes:

1. A community where people connect with each other, generating new vitality.
2. A community where everyone supports the growth of children, helping them move toward a bright future.
3. A community where everyone can live securely throughout their lives, remaining true to themselves.
4. A safe, secure, and sustainable community that people are proud to call home.

These guiding principles are not just abstract ideals, they are visible in the building's design and operational practices, which prioritise openness, accessibility, and innovation.



A Dynamic Space for Residents and Employees

The first floor of Nakano City Hall has been designed as a community-centric space where residents can engage with municipal services and participate in community activities. The large multipurpose event space available for rent encourages interaction and collaboration between residents and government officials. Additionally, the café and workshop areas foster an environment of informal engagement and creativity.



ナカノバ 一週間予定表

イベント → イベント開催団体利用予約

※空席は「空席」です。

※面談予約は、先着順となります。

曜日	時間帯	9:00~12:00	12:30~14:30	15:00~17:00	18:00~
21	今日	イベント	イベント	イベント	イ
22	木	イベント		イベント	イ
23	金	イベント	イベント	イベント	イ
24	土	イベント	イベント	イベント	イ
25	日	イベント	イベント		イベント



Free-address workplace for Managers

Multipurpose event space that residents can rent following formal bookings

A Bold Approach to Office Organisation: Activity-Based Working (ABW)

Nakano City Hall also stands out for its innovative approach to office organisation. It is the first municipal government building in Japan to consolidate office spaces for various departments, introducing shared service counters to improve accessibility and efficiency.

Key Benefits of Office Consolidation and Shared Service Counters:

Enhanced security: Streamlined spaces improve overall safety for both residents and employees.

Improved comfort: The open, flexible design increases comfort for all users.

Efficient use of floor space: Maximising space through shared areas boosts overall operational efficiency.

Increased work efficiency: The introduction of Activity-Based Working (ABW) allows employees to choose workspaces best suited to their tasks, promoting greater productivity and flexibility.

In this new setup, employees no longer have fixed desks, and department heads share open workspaces, rotating seating daily. This free-address system encourages collaboration, adaptability, and a sense of unity across departments.

A Focus on Digital Transformation and Paperless Operations

As part of Nakano City's ongoing push toward efficiency and sustainability, the new City Hall has implemented several forward-thinking measures, including a comprehensive paperless initiative.

By digitising key documents, such as accounting records, ledgers, and contracts, the city has significantly reduced physical storage needs and improved document retrieval speed.

Key measures include:

- **Thorough paperless operations:** Personal documents per employee have been reduced to under 20 cm (equivalent to one A4 stack), and organisational documents have been reduced by 66%.
- **Seamless visitor experiences:** High-volume areas use ticket machines for smoother visitor flow, while less-visited areas operate through digital communication, such as Teams-based call systems.

Additionally, employees are now empowered to work remotely or on business trips more easily, with landline phones replaced by Teams Calling and mobile devices becoming the norm for work-related communications.

Building a More Responsive, Resident-Centric Government

One of the City Hall's standout features is the Nakano Smart Service Counter, which ensures that visitors receive all necessary services without moving between different departments. This one-stop service approach reduces confusion and improves the overall experience for residents seeking assistance. Moreover, the City Hall's commitment to accessibility extends beyond business hours, with certain public services available until 9 p.m., making it easier for working residents to engage with municipal services outside of traditional office hours.

Results: Efficiency, Productivity, and Employee Satisfaction

The shift to this new work model has had tangible benefits. Since implementing the Activity-Based Working system, overtime hours have decreased by an average of 2,400 hours (18%) compared to the previous year, showcasing improved work-life balance for employees. Additionally, customer satisfaction has surged, with reports indicating a satisfaction rate exceeding 80%.

Furthermore, the City Hall's dedication to continuous improvement through Kaizen initiatives has led to measurable efficiencies across all levels of operation, particularly in terms of digitisation, service delivery, and internal collaboration.

Looking Ahead: Nakano City's Continued Commitment to Innovation

The new Nakano City Hall is more than just a modern building; it is a reflection of Nakano City's ongoing commitment to creating a connected, innovative, and sustainable community. By embracing new technologies, flexible work arrangements, and a resident-first approach, the City Hall is setting a new standard for municipal governance in Japan—and beyond.

With its focus on collaboration, innovation, and digital transformation, Nakano City is poised to continue growing as a model of modern local government.

Interview

Mr. Jaime Arboleda Palacio

From Potential to Performance: Driving the Next Leap in Productivity



During his visit to Mauritius in March, Mr. Jaime Arboleda Palacio, Sub Director and Director Area Organisation de Valor at the Centro de Ciencia y Tecnología de Antioquia (CTA) in Colombia, shared insights on productivity and digital transformation during the launch of the IoT for Productive Enterprises Project. He noted that while Mauritian enterprises are open to innovation, many lack real-time process visibility, limiting data-driven decision-making. Speaking to our Communications Specialist, Debesh Beedasy, he highlighted the importance of building a data-driven culture and described Mauritius as being well positioned to boost productivity through technology and collaboration.

What are your overall impressions of the productivity of Mauritian enterprises?

My overall impression is that Mauritius has a strong foundation to advance in productivity. I observed enterprises with solid organisational practices, committed teams, and a clear openness to change.

However, many companies are still operating with limited real time visibility of their processes, which constrains their ability to make data driven decisions and optimise performance.

This is precisely why the timing of initiatives like the NPCC's *IoT for Productive Enterprises Project* is so relevant. Mauritius is at a turning point, where it can transition from reactive management models to more predictive and data-driven operations, which are essential for the next leap in productivity.

What were your key takeaways from the workshop?

The workshop confirmed that the interest in IoT is real, but the main challenge is not technological, it is about mindset.

What I found particularly valuable in the NPCC programme is its structured approach: it does not focus only on deploying technology, but combines diagnostics, solution design, implementation, capacity building, and impact measurement. This is critical to ensure that IoT becomes a tool for productivity rather than an end in itself.

From my perspective, three key takeaways stand out:

First, **IoT must be anchored in concrete use cases**, such as reducing downtime, improving quality, or optimizing energy consumption.

Second, **the real transformation happens when organisations shift toward a data driven culture**. Without this change in mindset, technology alone does not generate sustainable impact.

And third, **the role of institutions like the**

NPCC is fundamental in orchestrating the ecosystem and reducing uncertainty for enterprises.

How critical is IoT for improving productivity and competitiveness in SMEs?

IoT is highly critical but it should be understood as an accelerator, not a starting point.

At CTA, we have developed a digital transformation methodology based on three pillars: strategic alignment, mindset transformation, and technology adoption. This integrated approach is what truly drives results.

We have applied this methodology in more than 200 companies in Colombia and internationally, and the evidence is consistent: when technology is implemented without aligning strategy and culture, the impact is limited.

IoT provides something fundamental, real-time visibility. But its real value emerges when that data is used systematically to improve processes and decision making.

This aligns with broader evidence from Colombia, where digital adoption among SMEs is still evolving, with thousands of firms progressing gradually in their adoption journey, highlighting both the opportunity and the gap that still needs to be addressed.

IoT is highly critical but it should be understood as an accelerator, not a starting point.



Mauritius has important advantages: strong institutional stability, a relatively small and manageable ecosystem, and a clear national intention to move forward.

How does Mauritius compare with other countries in Industry 4.0 adoption?

Mauritius is at an intermediate stage, but with important advantages.

Compared to countries in Latin America and even some in Africa, Mauritius has important advantages: strong institutional stability, a relatively small and manageable ecosystem, and a clear national intention to move forward. Its size becomes a strategic asset, as it allows for faster coordination among stakeholders, more agile decision making, and quicker scaling of initiatives such as the one led by the NPCC.

That said, the challenge is similar across many regions: the barrier is not access to technology, but the speed of adoption and the cultural transformation within organisations. This is also evident in countries like Colombia, where studies show that Industry 4.0 adoption in SMEs remains uneven and constrained by organisational and capability gaps, despite clear awareness of its importance.

The good news is that Mauritius already shows a clear awareness that digitalisation is not optional, it is a key enabler of competitiveness.

What impact can this project have on the local manufacturing ecosystem?

This initiative has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for industrial transformation. Its strength lies in its practical, pilot-based approach working directly with SMEs to implement real-time monitoring systems and demonstrate measurable productivity gains. Equally important is its structured methodology, which includes diagnostics,

implementation, training and evaluation. This ensures that the project is not just about technology deployment but about building long term capabilities within enterprises. If successful, it can create a strong demonstration effect, reducing perceived risk and accelerating adoption across the broader manufacturing ecosystem.

Can you share examples from Colombia?

In Colombia, we have worked extensively with companies in the food industry and agro-industrial sector, where the combination of continuous improvement methodologies and digital technologies has delivered tangible results.

For instance, in food processing companies, the implementation of sensors to monitor critical production variables in real time has led to significant reductions in waste, improvements in quality, and better energy efficiency.

In agro-industry, data-driven approaches have improved traceability, optimised production processes, and enhanced operational efficiency.

However, the key lesson is that these results are not driven by technology alone. They come from integrating technology with structured methodologies such as Kaizen and problem-solving approaches, and most importantly, from changing how decisions are made within the organisation.



Mr. Arboleda discussing with the Executive Director of the NPCC, Dr. Vinaye Ancharaz about the role of Mauritius as a Centre of Excellence in Kaizen in the region.

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NPCC AND MAURITIUS TELECOM JOIN FORCES TO DRIVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



A new chapter in public-private collaboration has been opened with the signing of a strategic partnership between the NPCC and Mauritius Telecom (MT), aimed at strengthening operational excellence and fostering a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), signed on 13 March at Telecom Tower, marks a significant milestone in advancing productivity and digital transformation within MT, one of Mauritius' leading companies. The ceremony was attended by key stakeholders, including the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, Honourable Aadil Ameer Meea, alongside senior representatives from both institutions.

At the heart of this collaboration is the implementation of Kaizen projects within MT, designed to empower employees at all levels to identify challenges, analyse processes and implement practical solutions. The initiative aims to embed a culture where continuous improvement becomes an integral part of daily operations, driving efficiency, innovation



Three Kaizen projects have already been identified to improve customer experience. These include the "Convenient Bill Payment" initiative to promote seamless digital payments, "Tailored Solutions" to enable call centre teams to offer personalised services, and the "Smart Service Initiative," where technical teams will deliver customised, proactive solutions while reducing recurring service issues.

NPCC AND MAURITIUS TELECOM JOIN FORCES TO DRIVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE (Ctnd)

The partnership also extends beyond internal transformation. MT will also act as a strategic partner and sponsor for major productivity and quality initiatives, including the Africa Kaizen Annual Conference 2026, reinforcing its commitment to supporting national, regional and international platforms dedicated to excellence.

Speaking at the event, MT's CEO, Mr. Vimal Gungadeen, highlighted that innovation and excellence are central to delivering superior customer experiences. He emphasised that the collaboration with the NPCC will further strengthen the company's continuous improvement culture and enhance its capacity to address operational challenges proactively.

MT is no stranger to continuous improvement. Over the years, the company has integrated Kaizen principles into its operations, resulting in enhanced productivity, reduced inefficiencies and accelerated digitalisation. Initiatives such as AI-powered services, digital customer platforms and the launch of innovative telecom solutions have positioned the company as a leader in organisational performance.

Its achievements have also been recognised internationally, including a top distinction at the Africa Kaizen Awards and multiple accolades at the TM Forum Open Innovation Catalyst Awards, showcasing its commitment to leveraging technology and innovation.

For the NPCC, this collaboration further reinforces its long-standing mandate to promote productivity and quality across all sectors of the Mauritian economy. From pioneering initiatives such as the "MUDA Free Mauritius" campaign to its designation as a Centre of Excellence in Kaizen by the

Africa Kaizen Initiative, the Council continues to play a pivotal role in embedding a culture of continuous improvement nationwide.

This strategic alliance between NPCC and MT stands as a strong example of how collaboration can drive sustainable performance, innovation and competitiveness — paving the way for a more productive and digitally advanced Mauritius.

The NPCC's Executive Director, Dr. Vinay Ancharaz, underlined that sustainable competitiveness is built through collaboration. He noted that the agreement reflects a broader vision where government institutions, private enterprises, employees and international partners work together to create an ecosystem driven by innovation and performance.

InnovEd 2025

IGNITING A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATORS FOR A SMARTER MAURITIUS



The spirit of innovation was alive and vibrant in Moka on 19 February 2026 as the NPCC celebrated the achievements of young innovators at the InnovEd 2025 Award Ceremony—an event that also marked the official launch of InnovEd 2026. The ceremony brought together key national stakeholders, including Hon Aadir Ameer Meea, Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives; Dr. Hon Mahend Gungapersad, Minister of Education and Human Resource; the Chairman of the NPCC, Mr. Arshad Duymun; council members; as well as students and facilitators from more than 30 secondary schools across the island.



IGNITING A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATORS FOR A SMARTER MAURITIUS (Ctnd)

A Journey of Creativity and Impact

InnovEd 2025 was not just a competition—it was a challenging and enriching journey. From mid-April to June 2025, student teams immersed themselves in six thematic areas: Interactive Media, Cultural Heritage, Performing Arts, Visual Arts & Crafts, Design, and Languages & Publishing. Their projects addressed pressing contemporary issues such as waste management, sustainability through gaming, healthier lifestyles, AI-powered music composition and employability preparedness.

Throughout the development phase, the NPCC provided continuous mentorship and guidance, reinforcing its commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation from the classroom upward. After the submission deadline on 20 June 2025, projects underwent a rigorous two-tier evaluation process assessing creativity, feasibility, market viability and scalability.

Shortlisted teams then participated in an intensive CREATHon from 20 to 24 June 2025, refining their concepts with the support of industry experts. The competition culminated in early July, where 34 outstanding teams showcased their ideas in the final assessment round—demonstrating not only ingenuity but also a deep awareness of real-world challenges.



Celebrating the Winners

This year's winners reflected the remarkable diversity of talent across Mauritius:

Cultural Heritage:

Winner: Quatre Bornes SSS – Culture Quest: The Wellness Edition

Runner-up: Imperial College – Heritage Nature

Languages & Publishing:

Winner: Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd – Smart Career Navigator

Runner-up: Simadree Virahsawmy SSS – Environmental Awareness Game

Design:

Winner: Le Bocage International School – Scrap Canvas

Runner-up: Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd – 7-day Social Media Detox

Performing Arts:

Winner: Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd – MELVA-AI

Runner-up: Le Bocage International School – Performing for a Change

Interactive Media:

Winner: Ramsoondar Prayag SSS – MoCarriere

Runner-up: Rabindranath Tagore Secondary School – Managing Stress for a Better Life

Visual Arts & Crafts:

Winner: Ananias Andre Le Chou College – A kinetic junk sculpture representing earth and sea

Runner-up: Doha Secondary School – FabArt

World Happiness Report 2026

MAURITIUS AT 72ND POSITION

RETHINKING HAPPINESS THROUGH PRODUCTIVITY

Mauritius has been ranked 72nd in the world in the latest World Happiness Report—a position that tells a story far deeper than a number on a global table. It reflects how Mauritians perceive their lives today, measured through a simple but powerful question: how close is your life to the best possible one?

With a happiness score of approximately 5.8 out of 10, Mauritius stands above the global average, signaling a relatively positive level of life satisfaction among its population. Over the years, the country's happiness score has shown resilience, rising gradually from lower levels in the early 2010s and stabilising around the 5.8 mark in recent years.

What does this mean for Mauritius today?

Happiness, as defined by the report, is not simply about wealth. It is shaped by a combination of factors: economic stability, social support, health, freedom to make life choices, generosity and trust in institutions. These dimensions align closely with the broader vision of national development—one where productivity and well-being go hand in hand.

For the NPCC, this ranking offers both encouragement and direction. The data suggests that while Mauritius has built a relatively solid foundation for well-being, there remains significant room for improvement.

A ranking of 72 is not a limitation—it is an opportunity to reflect on how productivity initiatives can directly enhance quality of life.

Across organisations in Mauritius, there is a growing recognition that productivity is no longer just about efficiency or output. It is

about creating workplaces where people feel valued, empowered and motivated. When employees are engaged, when processes are streamlined and when innovation is encouraged, productivity naturally translates into greater satisfaction—not only at work, but in everyday life.

The steady improvement in Mauritius' happiness score also highlights an important truth: progress does not always come in leaps.

Sometimes, it is the result of small, consistent changes—better management practices, improved working conditions, stronger collaboration and a culture that values continuous improvement.

As Mauritius looks ahead, the challenge is clear: to transform productivity gains into tangible improvements in people's lives. This means reducing inefficiencies, fostering innovation, strengthening institutions and placing people at the centre of development.

Because ultimately, the success of a nation is not measured solely by its economic growth—but by how its people feel. And in that journey, every step towards greater productivity is also a step towards a happier Mauritius.



PRODUCTIVITY
**ON THE
MOVE**

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL



3rd Floor, The Catalyst
Silicon Avenue, Cybercity
Ebene 72201, Mauritius
contact@npccmauritius.com
www.npccmauritius.org
Tel: 467 7700
Fax: 467 3838