

# Accompanying local suppliers in transforming their farming practices in Mauritius

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## Quick facts



Type of procurement:  
**local fresh vegetables**



Year of inception: **2017**



Type of business: **Hotel**



Organisation name:  
**Attitude Hospitality Ltd**



Number of staff: **1,500**



Country/region: **Mauritius**

## Background information

Although Mauritius is considered as a net-food importing country by the World Trade Organization, the agriculture sector with some 9,000 small- scale farmers<sup>1</sup> is involved in vegetable and fruit production of about 115,000 tonnes of food crops in Mauritius annually.

The introduction of the Use of Pesticides Bill<sup>2</sup> in 2018 was a landmark in the agricultural sector in Mauritius, as it is the first legislation to control the use of pesticides in agricultural practices. The Bill aims at regulating, controlling and monitoring the importation and use of pesticides in or on certain fresh fruits, plants, seeds or vegetables with a view to, inter alia, minimise risks to human health and the environment.

## The challenge

With respect to its environment policy and the Travelife Certification<sup>3</sup> awarded to its 9 hotels, the Attitude Group decided to procure local fresh produce, grown in accordance with sustainable practices, rather than importing food. While reducing its environmental impacts, offering safe, healthy and high-quality food to guests remains of utmost importance to Attitude Group.

## The strategy

In 2017, Attitude Group launched its sustainable procurement strategy, involving the sustainability, procurement and operations departments. The strategy is articulated around the following initiatives:

- ➔ Decision was made to source part of its vegetables and fruits from the supplier MP Green Life Ltd, **a local farm within 10-15 miles from two Attitude hotels, growing a mix of hydroponic<sup>4</sup> and traditional farming methods with controlled pesticide use.**
- ➔ Since 2017, **awareness sessions have been delivered** by the Responsible of CSR & Sustainability Development to approximately 50 suppliers including vegetable and fruit farmers suppliers, in order to inform them and raise awareness on Attitude's vision and sustainable approach;
- ➔ **Monitoring visits to suppliers** are conducted by the Attitude Food Hygiene Officer from the Risk & Compliance department in collaboration with the Procurement department;
- ➔ In March 2017, Attitude participated in the Switch Africa Green programme (Promoting Sustainable Local Agriculture through Green Retail and Green Hospitality)<sup>5</sup> (SUS-AGRI). Its objective is to promote sustainable local food by transferring good practices and experiences of green retail & green hotel business to Mauritius to drive sustainable food consumption and production, add value to local food and improve the livelihood of small farmers. **In this context, local farmers currently supplying Attitude Group are assisted in obtaining the MauriGap standard.** MauriGap Standards<sup>6</sup> is a framework for good agricultural practices on local farms and is adapted from international standards; it covers efficient use of resources, adoption of environmentally sound practices for natural resources, biodiversity preservation, pre and postharvest best practices, workers' health and safety; and agricultural waste recycling.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.switchafricagreen.org/MA/index.php/k2/item/226-promoting-sustainable-local-agriculture-through-green-retail-and-green-hospitality>

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://mauritiusassembly.govmu.org/English/bills/Documents/intro/2018/bill0618.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> More information available at: <https://hotels-attitude.com/en/travelife-gold-award/>

<sup>4</sup> Hydroponic farming is the process of growing plants or crops in water without the use of soil. Hydroponic plant cultivation is widely considered more sustainable than regular farming as it uses around 90% less water and has minimal footprint.

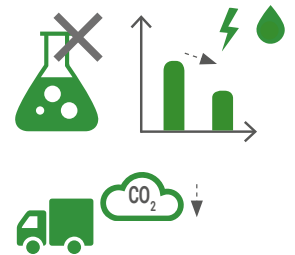
<sup>5</sup> More information available at: <http://www.switchafricagreen.org/MA/index.php/k2/item/226-promoting-sustainable-local-agriculture-through-green-retail-and-green-hospitality>

<sup>6</sup> More information available at: [http://www.govmu.org/English/News/Pages/Agro-Industry-Minister-launches-National-campaign-on-MauriGAP-Standard-\(MS-1842015\)-Level-1-.aspx](http://www.govmu.org/English/News/Pages/Agro-Industry-Minister-launches-National-campaign-on-MauriGAP-Standard-(MS-1842015)-Level-1-.aspx)

# Impacts



- ➡ In a period of four months, between September and December 2017, the volume of procurement from MP Green Life Ltd. has tripled compared to the same period in 2016 (14,905 USD in 2016 vs. 42,826 USD in 2017).
- ➡ **The hydroponic farming practice is free from pesticides and chemical fertilizers** and the drip irrigation enables **water and energy savings**;
- ➡ MP Green Life Ltd is based 10-15 miles from two hotels wherein fresh produce are supplied, thus **reducing the transportation carbon footprint**;
- ➡ Choosing vegetables grown according to hydroponic practices did not generate additional costs: MP Green Life Ltd and Attitude agreed on prices equal to traditionally-grown vegetables, against a commitment to increase volumes procured by Attitude.



**"Our farming activity is growing thanks to Attitude group, which acts as a facilitator in our sustainable approach".**

**- Mr Mayeven Poinen, farmer, MP Green Life Ltd**



Tomato Plant in greenhouse, grown by farmer, MP Green Life Ltd.



## Lessons learned

- ✓ To address the lack of certified farmers in the vicinity of hotels and resorts in Mauritius, **it is critical to engage with local farmers and suppliers and accompany them in adopting more sustainable practices.** For example, Attitude encouraged local suppliers to attend the training delivered by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) and to obtain the MauriGap certification.
- ✓ Sustainable products such as hydroponic-grown vegetables can imply higher costs; engaging in a partnership with the supplier based on a win-win agreement, whereby prices are capped against the commitment of increased volumes of purchases by the hotel has proven successful.

### For further information

- <https://hotels-attitude.com/en/green-attitude-foundation/>
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