

# Mauritius: the gateway to Africa



The African continent is undoubtedly the continent with the most latent opportunities and represents an essential link for any organization wishing to extend its activities to the planetary level. But this continent, although rich in opportunities and unmatched potential, is also difficult to understand and latch on to.

It is important to be accompanied and advised at all critical points of your project. This is the case, first of all, to help you understand and control risks. It is then important at the time of implementation, in the choice of local partners, during the divestments, mergers or possible acquisitions, and also in anticipation of a withdrawal from the continent.

At four hours from Johannesburg and Nairobi, the Republic of Mauritius inspires confidence, respect and admiration, as it has maintained its role as leader and mentor of the economic development of the continent. Mauritius is the secure platform at the gates of Africa, which boasts laws with strong and upright institutions, an arbitration centre of excellence, and a professional ecosystem with the highest ratio of accounting experts, lawyers and doctors per capita in the world.

Hermès Advisory is a partner in your African projects and we mainly use the tools offered by the Mauritian financial centre to help you structure your business in the best conditions.

As a member of the African Union, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the ACP and the Commonwealth, Mauritius has always been able to assert its presence on the African scene. Mauritian bilingualism, its ethnic multiplicity and its geographical positioning are the bases of its African recognition.

Mauritius is an undisputed leader in business facilitation in Africa, with a constant focus on good governance and transparency. It uses its extensive network of double taxation treaties and investment protection treaties to protect investments from political and fiscal risks.

Mauritius' stability enables it to house a number of regional organizations today, including the IMF's Regional Training Institute and AFRITAC, which is the IMF's training centre for Africa.

The African operational strategy is based on 3 axes:

- ☞ **Free movement of goods.** Mauritius is a member of the Regional Economic Communities, including SADC, COMESA, and EAC, and has bilateral trade agreements with countries such as Kenya and Madagascar. This makes it possible to facilitate the transit of goods within the region, but also to feed the Mauritian Freeport which serves as a logistical, processing and warehousing base between Africa and the rest of the world. In terms of freight, traffic is very high between the port of Mauritius and the ports of Durban, Cape Town, Mombasa and Dar Es Salaam. The port of Mauritius is one of the most secure and efficient in the region. A commodities exchange (Bourse Africa) is also present in Mauritius.
- ☞ **Free movement of capital.** Interestingly, there is no exchange control in Mauritius. It is possible for any investor to open a bank account in the currency of their choice. The international and local banks that are present in Mauritius offer a first-rate, modern service. The Mauritius Stock Exchange is open to foreigners and is a dynamic tool for investing or raising funds. The financial services sector in Mauritius regulates over 25,000 international companies and more than 1,000 funds.
- ☞ **Free movement of people.** Almost all nationals of sub-Saharan African countries can enter and leave Mauritius without visas. There are no visas for EU countries or for most Asian countries. This makes Mauritius an unbeatable platform for setting up headquarters, for holding boards of directors or for organizing working meetings. Mauritius offers scholarships annually for African nationals.

Hermès Advisory has a competitive advantage on its competitors, first and foremost because of its knowledge of the African business environment and institutional decision-makers. It is also at an advantage due to the active involvement of our founder in the elaboration of the Mauritius-Africa strategy whilst Special Advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius.

If you think Africa, think Hermès Advisory!