

Support from UNDP

During the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Statistics Mauritius encountered difficulties to ensure the continuity of operations of the office. Many operations halted as officers could not access their data from home. The lockdown pointed to the urgency of having a contemporary ICT system in place, which besides improving efficiency and productivity of SM operation will ensure business continuity.

In this context, UNDP is providing technical assistance to Statistics Mauritius in the preparation of an E-business plan under the UNDP Mauritius COVID-19 – Prevention, Response and Early recovery Project (PREP). The TA includes, among others the following tasks/activities:

- Determine information needs
- Review documentation, practices and legislation on existing procedures and processes of SM; take stock of current and forthcoming initiatives such as on-line surveys, GIS, use of new data sources; use of SDMX standard for data exchange, use of Open Data and InfoHighway.
- Benchmark SM system with National Statistics Offices of advanced countries.
- Assess and recommend the most effective and efficient user-friendly technological solutions, infrastructure requirements, project plans, staffing structures, etc.
- Develop a strategy in view of promoting paperless operations and facilitating work from home.
- Recommend how information could be disseminated and communicated in a more effective manner through SM website, extranet and social media.

UNDP is also assisting in the conduct of a “Business Pulse” survey. The survey is conducted by Business Mauritius in partnership with Statistics Mauritius. The main objectives of the survey launched in September 2020 were to:

- Assess the short-term, medium-term and long-term impact of COVID-19 on business performance
- Assess the current and expected impact on employment
- Evaluate the short, medium and long-term needs of businesses
- Analyse the innovative business models that firms have adopted or intend to adopt to build resilience; and
- Identify practical policy recommendations to address vulnerability of firms in building resilience.

RCMPHS results

Together with the World Bank, a series of the Rapid Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey was conducted from May to July 2020 by phone to monitor the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on the lives of Mauritian households.

Information was collected through a questionnaire comprising 7 modules soliciting information about economic activity of individuals aged 16 to 64 years not in full-time education, access to basic goods and services, food insecurity, household income, shocks and coping strategies.

The results of the first round of the RCMPHS, carried out in May 2020, were published on 21 August 2020. A second publication, covering the period May to July 2020, was released on 26 October 2020. Some results:

- About 1 in 5 Mauritian households report to have not been able to purchase basic food items between the start of the lockdown and the month of May.
- About 17 percent of Mauritian households have skipped a meal since the lockdown started and only about 3 percent of households where at least one member had to skip once all the meals of a day.
- Over 71 percent of Mauritian households who require medical treatment have been able to access it since the lockdown started.
- About 85 percent of Mauritian households with children in school age have been able to access home based education since schools were closed.
- Over 1 in 3 Mauritian households posted a reduction in income compared with the 12 months before the lockdown.

The publication can be accessed at

https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/Pages/Statistics/By_Subject/Labour/SB_labour.aspx under Economic and Social Indicators - Labour Force, Employment & Unemployment

Training in IT Security Awareness

The IT Security unit under the aegis of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation conducted training sessions on IT Security Awareness for the benefit of SM officers. Six sessions with around 30 participants were held during the period 19 August 2020 to 31 August 2020. The sessions were each of a duration of 1 hour and included presentations, questions and answers.

Topics covered included:

- Spear Phishing
- Identity Theft
- Ransomware
- Safe Internet Surfing
- Password Management
- Using Email Securely
- Access Control and
- Safe Practices

Training in Advanced statistics for Statistical Officers by University of Mauritius

Congratulations to the forty-one Statistical Officers from SM and Rodrigues Statistics Unit who have successfully completed the Training in Advanced Statistics Course organised by SM in collaboration with University of Mauritius.

SM thanks UOM staff namely Mr N. Auchoybur, Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Economics and Statistics and Mr M. Hosenally, Lecturer in the same Department, for developing and running the course. To note that due to sanitary measures, the training which started in September 2019 continued online during the lockdown and beyond, thus allowing the completion of the training course as scheduled.