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Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities
Water Resources Commission

Water Resources and Related Policies in Mauritius

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Where the rain goes: the water balance of Mauritius

1,865 km²

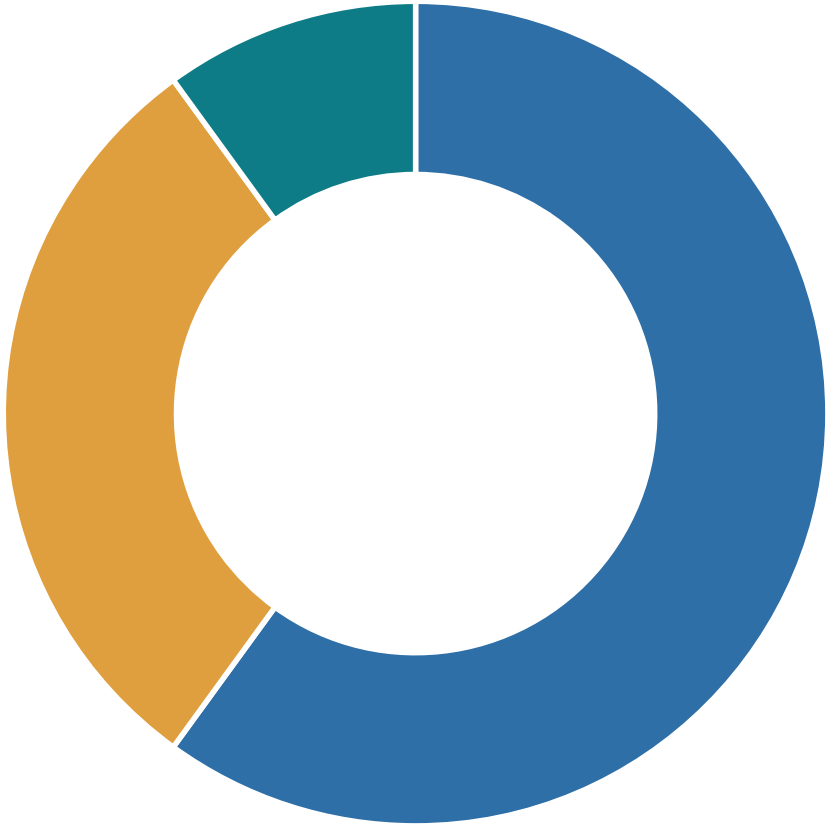
Area of the island

2,000 mm

Average annual rainfall

3,700 Mm³

Annual volume of raw water



60% **Surface runoff**

Flows to rivers and the sea; part is captured by reservoirs and river intakes

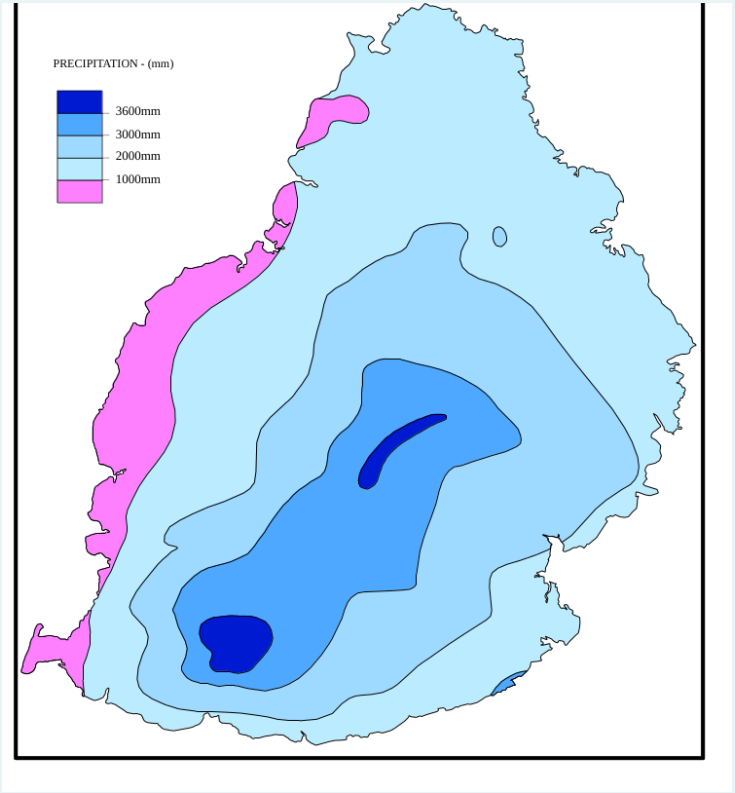
30% **Evapotranspiration**

Returns to the atmosphere from land, water bodies and vegetation

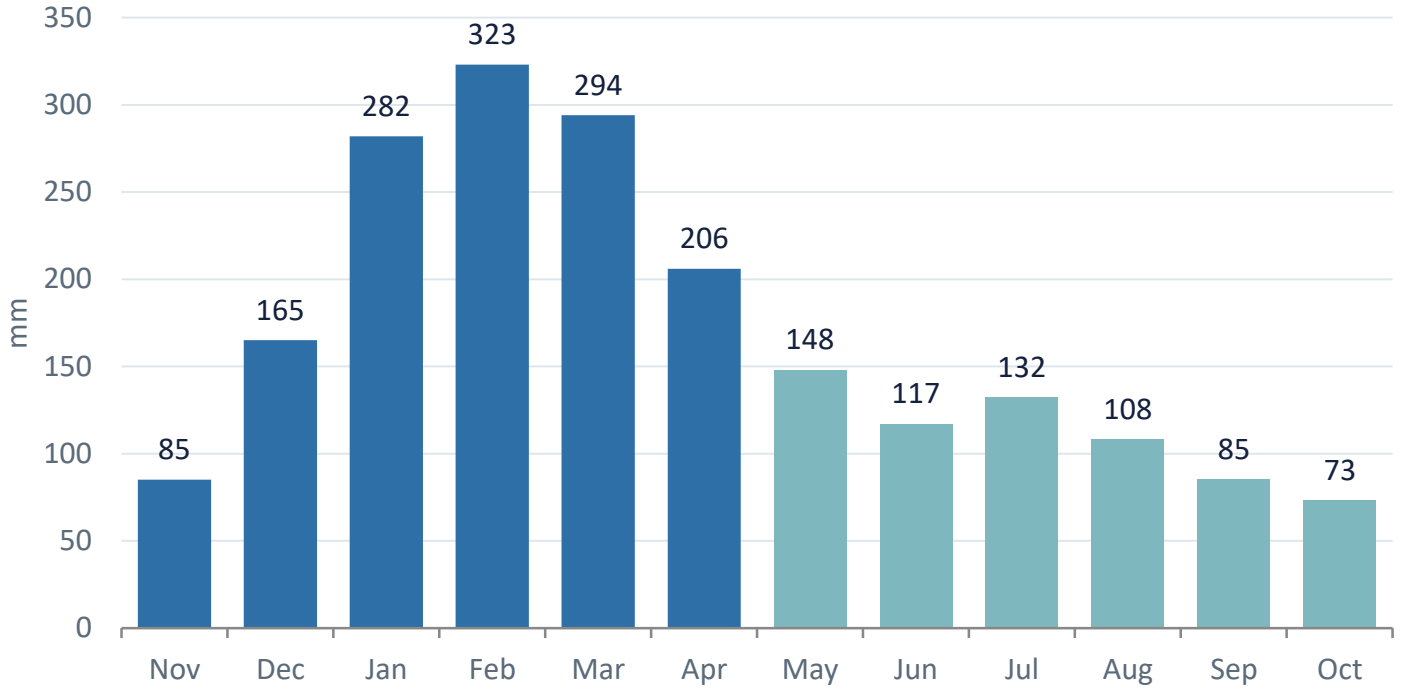
10% **Aquifer recharge**

Infiltrates to the aquifers that feed boreholes and springs

Two-thirds of the rain falls in the six summer months



Mean annual precipitation: under 1,000 mm on the west coast, over 3,600 mm on the central uplands



1,355 mm

Summer, Nov–Apr (67%)

663 mm

Winter, May–Oct (33%)

2,018 mm

Annual long-term mean (1991 – 2020)

Source of data: Mauritius Meteorological Services

Seven reservoirs form the backbone of surface water supply

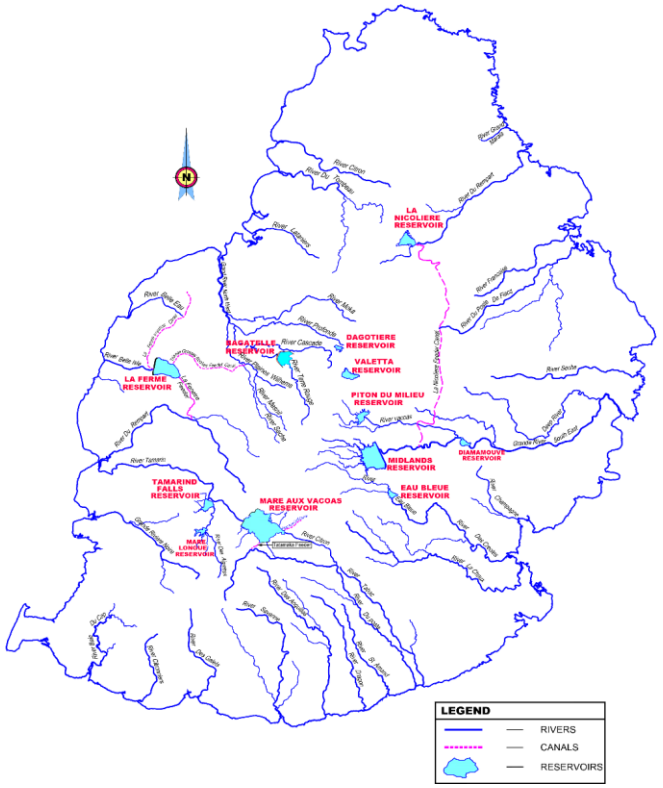
92.2 Mm³
Total storage capacity

162 Mm³
Annual yield

7
Water treatment plants

3
Major river abstractions

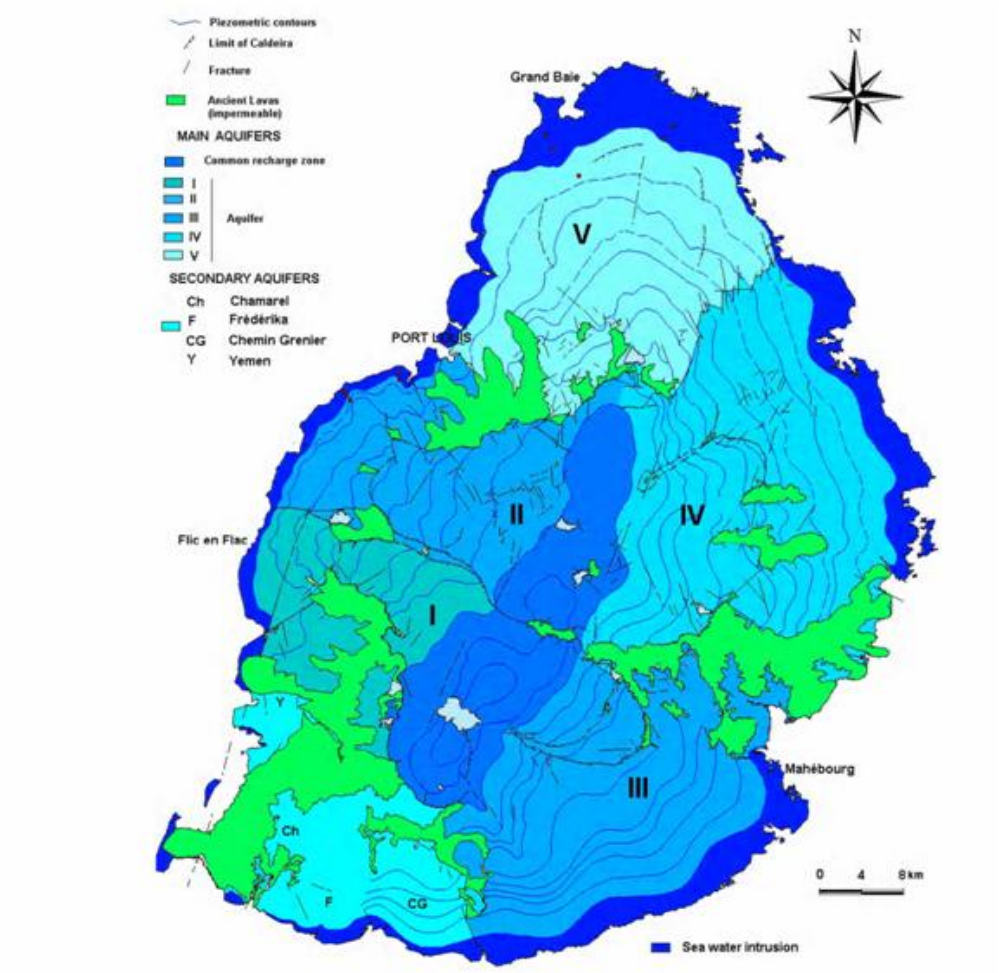
Reservoir	Capacity (Mm³)	Built	Purpose
Mare aux Vacoas	25.89	1885	Domestic
La Ferme	11.52	1914	Irrigation
La Nicolière	5.26	1929	Domestic and irrigation
Mare Longue	6.28	1948	Domestic
Piton du Milieu	2.99	1952	Domestic
Midlands Dam	25.50	2002	Domestic and irrigation
Bagatelle Dam	14.76	2017	Domestic



Containerized Pressure Filters

Around 75 CPFs installed around the island for a daily treated total water volume of around 187,500 m³

Groundwater provides about half of the potable water supply



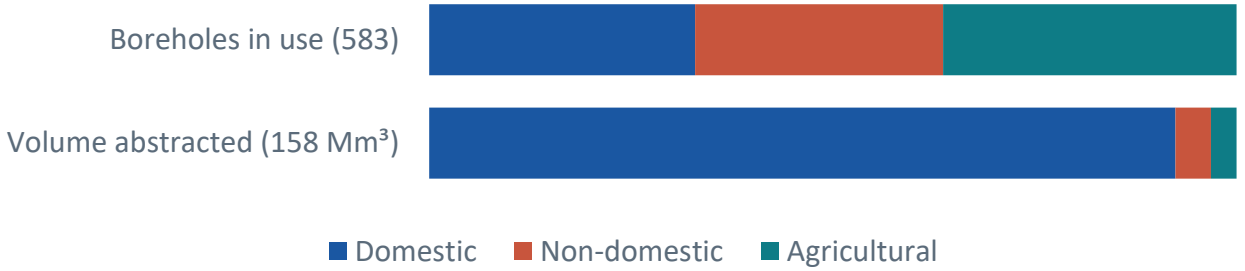
≈ 50%
Of potable supply, on average

5
Main aquifers

172 m
Maximum depth

8,400
m³/day maximum yield

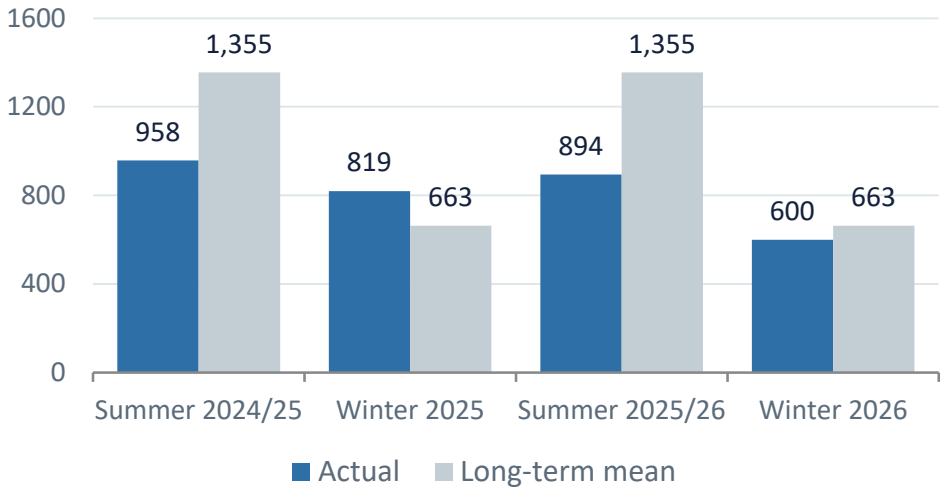
One-third of the boreholes, over 90% of the volume



Use	Boreholes	Volume (Mm³)	Share of volume
Domestic	**192**	**146**	**92%**
Non-domestic	179	7	4%
Agricultural	212	5	3%
Total	**583**	**158**	

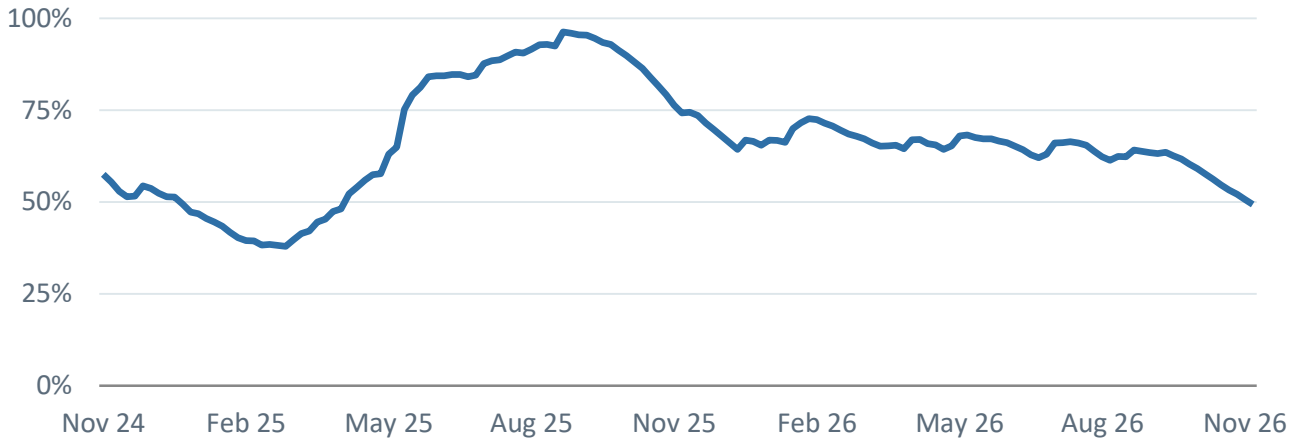
Two deficient summers, two very different winters

Island rainfall by season (mm)



	Summer 2024/25	Winter 2025	Summer 2025/26	Winter 2026
% of LTM	71%	124%	66%	90%

Total storage in the seven reservoirs (% of capacity)



38%
24 Feb 2025, lowest

97%
22 Aug 2025, peak

68%
1 May 2026

48%
13 Nov 2026

Winter 2026 month by month (% of LTM): only two months out of six above normal

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
78%	136%	44%	127%	92%	71%

69% of LTM over the other four months (304 mm against 438 mm), setting June and August aside

Reliable water statistics turn monitoring into policy



Measure

Rainfall, river flows, reservoir levels and groundwater levels across the island



Manage

Quality-controlled, digitised records kept in consistent long-term series



Analyse

Long-term means, water balance, seasonal comparisons and storage projections



Decide

Allocation, drought response, investment planning and policy review

30 years

of rainfall records behind every long-term mean (1991–2020)

7 reservoirs

with storage recorded every day

583 boreholes

whose use and yield are monitored and regulated

POLICY AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

Six pressures on water security



Climate variability

Longer dry spells, intense rainfall and flash floods; seawater-intrusion risk in coastal aquifers



Growing demand

Domestic, tourism, industrial and agricultural needs compete for finite resources



System losses and ageing assets

Conveyance and distribution losses reduce the value of water already mobilised



Fragmented responsibilities

Overlapping mandates have made integrated planning and enforcement harder



Allocation, efficiency and conservation

Water must be shared sustainably while encouraging efficient use



Quality, infrastructure and finance

Protecting quality and maintaining assets require sustained investment

Key institutional arrangement in the water sector



Note: The Land Drainage Authority is responsible mainly for coordinating the construction, upgrading and expansion of drainage networks among implementing agencies.

Policy and strategy till date



STRATEGY

Water Resources Master Plan

Water mobilisation options and review of water rights

POLICY

National Water Policy

Equity, safe supply, conservation and regulation

LAW

Water Resources Act

Legal framework in force since 1 November 2024

DELIVERY

Policy review and Integrated Master Plan

Integrated water, sanitation, rainwater and drainage, SDGs and Paris Agreement

A consistent sequence: assess the resource, set the policy, legislate, then plan the whole water sector together

Water Resources Act 2024: a shift to integrated regulation

12 Jul 2024
Bill adopted by Parliament

26 Oct 2024
Act proclaimed

1 Nov 2024
Act effective; not all sections have yet been proclaimed

All water bodies
Surface water, groundwater, springs and watercourses

Water-use permits
Permits and administration of right to use water

Dam safety
Protection and buffer-zone controls

Conservation and Protection
Water-use efficiency and pollution enforcement

Water services
Licensing and regulation of service providers

Clear institutional setup
Clearer arrangements through the WRC

Ten strategies for water resources management and development

01

Legal framework

Review and improve the laws governing the sector

02

Water mobilisation

Mobilise additional resources where needed

03

Non-revenue water

Reduce losses in conveyance and distribution. Priority financing for PRP (ILOC & AFD)

04

Demand management

Promote conservation and water-saving measures

05

Water quality

Preserve quality and protect the resource

06

Sustainable allocation

Improve allocation and use, valuing water

07

Infrastructure

Keep assets sustainable through maintenance

08

Climate adaptation

Build adaptation into planning and decisions

09

Access to water

Universal, equitable and affordable access

10

Gender

Gender-responsive and socially inclusive policy

Implementation of MARSHALL PLAN

1. **Groundwater Development through drilling of boreholes campaigns**
2. **Surface Water Expansion/Use of tailrace water through installation of CPFs on watercourses**
3. **Reuse of treated effluent**
4. **Construction of Mini-dams/ Diversion Weirs**
5. **Desalination**
6. **Construction of Riviere des Anguilles Dam, Water Treatment Plant and Downstream Works**

Two decades of major investment in water resources mobilisation

2002	2003–04	2008	2012	2014	2017
Midlands Dam 25.5 Mm³ storage, 41 Mm³ annual yield	**Feeder canals** Trianon–Grosses Roches and La Nicolière rehabilitated	**South Mauritius** Water supply project feasibility study e.g. Riviere des Anguilles Dam	**Master Plan** Update of the Master Plan on Water Resources	**Arnaud Dam** Completed (~ 10 Mm³ per year)	**Bagatelle Dam** 14.76 Mm³ storage, 25 Mm³ annual yield

Every year: borehole drilling campaigns and rehabilitation and maintenance works
A total of 30 Boreholes were drilled for domestic water supply from 2021 to 2025 with a total yield of 90,670 m3/day (i.e., about 33 Mm3/year)

Ongoing and proposed mobilisation projects

ONGOING

Rivière des Anguilles Dam

12.5 Mm³

Planned storage; 47 Mm³ annual yield for about 50,000 households

Design review completed; evaluation ongoing

La Ferme Dam rehabilitation

11.5 → 14.1 Mm³

target storage capacity

Works to start in Financial Year 2027/28

La Nicolière enlargement

5.3 → 33 Mm³

possible increase under study; feeder canal rehabilitation in parallel

Feasibility study completed. Detailed Design to start

LONG-TERM PROPOSALS

- Rehabilitation of Piton du Milieu Dam, with possible increase in capacity
- Dam on Rivière Françoise at Constance
- Dam on Grand River South East at Deux Frères
- Dam on River Calebasses at Calebasses
- Dam on River Rempart at Mon Vallon

Alongside new storage: island-wide borehole drilling, addressing non-revenue water, rainwater harvesting, safe reuse of treated wastewater, and assessment of desalination

Key messages

01

The resource is finite and seasonal

Two-thirds of the rain falls in six months, and total storage is about 92 Mm^3.

02

Data must drive decisions

Reliable water statistics underpin allocation, drought response and investment.

03

Climate variability is already here

The deficient summers in a row; only one was rescued by the winter that followed.

04

The framework is in place

The Water Resources Act 2024, the Policy Review and the Master Plan guide the response for a water secure Mauritius.

Thank you