MAURITIUS

SUMMARY

Mauritius is a constitutional republic with three tiers of government: central, local and village. There is no constitutional provision for local government other than the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Local government in Mauritius is governed by the Local Government Act 2011 (Act No. 36 of 2011). The Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands (MLGOI) is responsible for overseeing local authorities. Local government in Mauritius has two tiers. The first tier comprises urban councils, known as municipalities, and rural authorities (called district councils), while the second tier relates only to those district councils which oversee village councils. Following the 2012 elections, 25.4% of village councillors were women and during the 2016/17 financial year, local government expenditure was 3% of total government expenditure. Municipal and district councils have the following statutory duties: roads, environment and public sanitation, culture, leisure and sport and education. Village councils are not responsible for roads but otherwise overlap in several areas of service delivery.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Mauritius is a constitutional republic with a unicameral parliamentary system.^{25.1a} The head of state is the president, who is indirectly elected by parliament for a five-year term. The parliament of Mauritius, known as the National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale), has 70 members directly elected for a five-year term by universal adult suffrage. Members are elected from 20 three-member constituencies on the island of Mauritius and one two-member constituency on the island of Rodrigues under the first-past-the-post system. Eight further assembly seats are apportioned to the 'best losers'. Following the 2014 national election. 11.6% of members of the national assembly were women.25.1b

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no constitutional provision for local government; however, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is enshrined in the constitution.^{252a}

2.2 Main legislative texts

Local government in Mauritius is legislated by the Local Government Act 2011^{252b} (Act No. 36 of 2011). Local administration in Rodrigues is governed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001.^{252c}

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No known proposed legislative changes.

2.4 National urban policy

There is no national urban policy; however in 2015 the government undertook a review of the urban and housing policy and regulatory framework.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state Local government on the island of Mauritius is divided into urban and rural authorities. In the urban areas there are four municipal councils, and one city council: the capital, Port Louis. In the rural areas there is currently a two-tier system of seven district councils and 130 village councils. The island of Rodrigues has a regional assembly. Municipal and district councils have the same responsibilities but different revenueraising powers. Village councils have a limited range of functions. In contrast, the regional assembly of Rodrigues has extensive local responsibilities.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands^{25.3c} (MLGOI) is responsible for overseeing local authorities. The minister is responsible for issuing guidelines to local authorities for the smooth running of council matters, as well as for seeking input from local authorities to parliamentary matters and informing local authorities of the policy decisions of government. The minister is also responsible for allocating 'grant in aid' and other funds for capital projects and for approving the finances of councils, and has the authority to approve an exemption from paying rates on the grounds of poverty. The permanent secretary is the responsible officer for all chief executives of local authorities. Overall responsibility for Rodrigues administration falls within the remit of the prime minister's office.

3.3 Council types

Local authorities in Mauritius currently consist of four municipal councils for urban areas plus one city council and seven district councils for rural areas, the latter of which oversee a second tier of 130 village councils.



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2016 estimate): 1,263,820

AREA (Stats Maurituis 2016): 1,868.4 sq km

CAPITAL: Port Louis

CURRENCY: Mauritian rupee (MUR)

HEAD OF STATE: Acting President Barlen Vyapoory

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT: Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth

FORM OF GOVERNMENT: parliamentary republic

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: unicameral

STATE STRUCTURE: unitary

LANGUAGES:

English (official); Mauritian Creole, French, Bhojpuri (recognised)

NATIONAL ELECTIONS: last: Dec 2014, turnout: 74.4%; next: 2020

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2014): 11.6%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

municipalities: last: 2015, turnout: 35.6%; next: 2021

villages:

last: 2012, turnout: 50.5%; next: 2018

WOMEN VILLAGE COUNCILLORS: 25.4% (2012)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2016/17: 3.0%



Table 25.1a Distribution of councils and population

| Region | District council | Municipal council | Asse- mbly | Villages | Population (2011 Census) | Population (2016 est.) | % rural (2010) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Port Louis | 0 | (city) 1 | 0 | 0 | 118,431 | na | 0 |
| Plaines Wilhems | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 362,292 | na | 1.6 |
| Pamplemousses | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 136,268 | na | 100 |
| Rivière du Rempart | 1 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 106,267 | na | 100 |
| Flacq | 1 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 135,406 | na | 100 |
| Moka | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 82,301 | na | 98.4 |
| Black River | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 76,605 | na | 69.8 |
| Grand Port | 1 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 110,907 | na | 100 |
| Savanne | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 67,906 | na | 100 |
| Rodrigues Island | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 40,434 | 42,396 | 100 |
| Total | 7 | 5 | 1 | 130 | 1,236,817 | 1,263,820 | 59.6 |

Source: 2011 Census^{253a} and population estimates^{253b} Note: Village councils are not sub-divisions of districts. A village whose area falls within more than one district has been listed within the district which includes the largest proportion of its area.

3.3.1 Municipal councils by law must hold monthly meetings for the transaction of general business. There are executive committees to look after permits and procurement. Municipal councils are also empowered to appoint three standing committees with no delegated powers, namely public health, public infrastructure and welfare. Each standing committee shall meet no more than once a month. Mayors are indirectly elected every two years by each city and municipal council. Municipal council activities are organised under seven departments: town clerk, treasury, works, planning, welfare, health and library. Port Louis and Curepipe also have a department for parks and gardens.

3.3.2 District councils also hold monthly meetings for the transaction of general business. There are executive committees to look after permits and procurement. District councils are also empowered to appoint three standing committees with no delegated powers, namely public health, public infrastructure and welfare. Each standing committee shall meet no more than once a month. The chairperson of each district council is indirectly elected every two years. District council activities are organised under six departments: secretariat, treasury, works, planning, health and welfare

3.3.3 Village councils are required to hold meetings at least monthly for general business. They have a part-time chair as leader, indirectly elected every two years in a secret ballot by the nine village councillors.

3.3.4 The Rodrigues Regional Assembly comprises 18 members who are directly elected; 12 representing constituencies and elected by the first-past-the-post system, and six elected by proportional representation. The assembly is required to appoint four standing committees: finance; public health and environment; works, planning and development; and welfare, sports, culture and leisure. There is full discretion to establish other committees. A non-executive president, who does not have to be a member of the assembly, is indirectly elected by assembly members by majority vote for a term of five years. Members of the assembly elect from among their number by majority vote the chief commissioner, a full-time appointment, also for a five-year term. The executive body of the assembly is the executive council, comprising the chief commissioner, the deputy chief commissioner, and not more than five other members appointed by the president on the advice of the chief commissioner. The executive council is responsible to the regional assembly and continues to operate during any period when the assembly is dissolved.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

The last elections took place as follows^{25,4a}:

- municipal elections 2015: turnout 35.6%, down from 44.9% in 2012 and 40.5% in 2005
- village council elections 2012, turnout 50.5%
- district council elections indirectly elected following village council elections.

4.2 Voting system

The Local Government Act 2011 provides for the holding of municipal council and village council elections every six years. District councillors are elected indirectly by secret ballot from members of village councils. Each village council is represented at its respective district council by one or two representatives elected from its councillors, depending on the population of the village.

4.3 Elected representatives

Local government councillors are elected for a six-year term. Members of the national assembly cannot stand for office in the regional assembly or local elections. On the island of Mauritius, all elections for municipal and village councils are conducted via the first-pastthe-post system. Mayors in municipal councils and chairs of district and village councils are elected once every six years by members of their respective councils. There is a ward system for municipal councils, with wards returning three councillors. Village councils are grouped into divisions to elect district councillors by secret ballot from among their number. Municipal and district councils have the following numbers of councillors: Port Louis 32, Beau Bassin/ Rose Hill 24, Quatre Bornes 20, Curepipe 20, Vacoas/Phoenix 24, Pamplemousses 21, Rivière du Rempart 22, Moka 17, Flacq 26, Grand Port 28, Savanne 19 and Black River 14. District councils are represented on each of their subsidiary village councils by district councillors, and village councils consist of nine elected members each. Where the number of elected councillors falls below nine. nominations are made from a reserve list submitted by groups at the time of the elections.

On Rodrigues the regional assembly has 18 members, 12 of whom are local regional members: two from each of the six local regions, and the remaining six island-wide members returned under proportional representation. To qualify for an island-wide seat, political parties must secure a minimum of 10% of votes. Each voter thus has three votes: two for candidates in the local region and one for a registered political party for islandwide seats according to the list system.

4.4 Women's representation

Legislation stipulates that at least onethird of candidates standing for local elections should be of a different sex.^{25,4c} This has resulted in women winning over a quarter (25.4%) of local council seats, up from 9.1% when the new legislation was first introduced in 2005, and 2.8% in 1997 and 1.0% in 1992, prior to the passing of the legislation (see Table 25.1b).

9.2 Locally raised revenue Municipal and district councils are empowered to raise revenues in the following areas: building and land use permits, trading licences, markets, cemeteries, traffic fees and advertisements. In addition, municipal councils can also raise revenue through a general (property) rate. The tenants' tax

was abolished in 2012.

each local authority.

No information is available.

9.5 Local authority staff

The annual 'grant in aid' for all local authorities is voted in as part of the budget of the MLGOI at the beginning of the financial year. This amount is

distributed in monthly instalments to

Local government councillors and

officers are paid by their respective

local authorities from council funds.

chairpersons, in municipal authorities

Non-executive mayors and council

allowance, the amount of which is

determined by the Minister for Local

Local Government Service Commission

Government and Outer Islands. The

(LGSC), established under the Local

1975, can hire, promote, discipline

Pay Research Bureau reviewed

and dismiss staff. The national-level

organisational structures following the

and grading between the municipal

and district councils. Employees of

authorities are required to appoint

a chief executive as the accounting

has been created, which is chaired

by the permanent secretary of the

MLGOI and comprises representatives

Government Act 2011, a unified Local Government Service Board

head. Under Section 68 of the Local

passing of this Act, and harmonised pay

village councils are deemed employees

of the overseeing district council. Local

Government Service Commission Act

and district/village authorities

respectively, receive a monthly

9.3 Transfers

9.4 Loans

Table 25.1b Women village councillors and chairpersons following 1992-2012 elections

| Election | 1992 | | 19 | 97 | 2005 | | 2012 | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Village councillors | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Female village councillors | 14 | 1.0 | 41 | 2.8 | 139 | 9.1 | 297 | 25.4 |
| Male village councillors | 1,378 | 99.0 | 1,435 | 97.2 | 1,390 | 90.9 | 873 | 74.6 |
| Total village councillors | 1,392 | 100.0 | 1,476 | 100.0 | 1,529 | 100.0 | 1,170 | 100.0 |
| Chairpersons | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Female chairpersons | na |
| Male chairpersons | na |
| Total chairpersons | na | 100.0 | na | 100.0 | na | 100.0 | na | 100.0 |

The majority of villages have two or three female councillors out of nine, although 19 councils have only one. Following the 2012 elections, there were six village councils with no female councillor.^{25.4c}

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement The Local Government Act 2011

specifically provides for formal consultation processes with civil society.

5.2 Implementation

In Mauritius, council, but not committee, meetings are open to the public. Ordinary or special meetings of the regional assembly in Rodrigues are open to the public.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

The ministry, in collaboration with local authorities, set up an e-government portal for local authorities in 2012.25.5 Members of the public are able to access information, make applications and enquiries and file complaints via the portal. Citizens will also be able, in the future, to make payments to the council through internet banking via the portal.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are currently two associations: the Association of Urban Authorities^{25.6a} and the Association of District Councils.^{25.6b}

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

On the island of Mauritius any local authority (municipal, district or village) may establish joint committees between two or more authorities in their common interest. In Rodrigues, the chief commissioner is required to forward to the Minister for Rodrigues an annual report reviewing the activities of the assembly for tabling in the national assembly. The chief commissioner may be asked to attend meetings of the cabinet, where (s)he may share decisions taken by the regional assembly and represent the interests of the island on pertinent matters.

Source: MLGOI Gender Policy^{25.4c}

The chief commissioner is also required to keep the prime minister informed of the activities of the executive council. The executive council must submit to the prime minister policy statements on matters relating to the development of Rodrigues and may refer specific matters to the prime minister for consideration by the cabinet.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

According to the Local Government Act 2011 financial estimates for local authorities have to be approved by the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Disbursement, withdrawal, reallocation of funds and writing-off of bad debts require the approval of the minister. Local authorities must submit a monthly monitoring report of actual revenue and expenditure to the finance section of the MLGOI. The annual accounts of the local authorities have to be submitted to the Director of Audit within four months of the end of the financial year. Each local authority has an internal control unit headed by a professionally qualified internal auditor who is responsible for ensuring that independent appraisals are effected regularly.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure In the 2016/17 financial year, local government expenditure was 3.0% of total government expenditure, up from

of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Civil 2.6% in 2015/16 but down from 3.1% in Service and Administrative Reforms 2014 (Table 25.2b). and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial

Table 25.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for local government 2013/14

| Income | MUR m | Expenditure | MUR m |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Centre-local transfers | | Administration | |
| Grant from national government | 2,681.043 | Staff | 2,271.817 |
| Locally raised revenue | 1,299.384 | Services | 1,877.243 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 3,980.427 | TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 4,149.06 |

Source: MLGOI in communication with CLGF



Table 25.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2014–2017

| | 2014 actual MURm | 2015/16 est. MURm | 2016/17 est. MURm |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Total government expenditure | 107,047.6 | 120,645.0 | 132,164.0 |
| Total local government expenditure | 3,329.2 | 3,181.0 | 4,006.5 |
| Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure | 3.1% | 2.6% | 3.0% |

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Estimates 2015-2016 and 2016-2017

Relations and Employment. The board is vested with certain powers previously held by the LGSC, with regard to redeployment of staff and temporary vacancies in particular. However, the main duty of recruitment of new employees still rests with the LGSC. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is required to appoint a chief executive, who is formally appointed by the prime minister after consultation with the chief commissioner.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY 10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

The statutory duties of municipal and district councils include: cleansing and lighting of all public roads; collection and disposal of waste; provision of public libraries; exhibition halls and art galleries, theatres and places of public entertainment; playing fields; cemeteries and cremation grounds; nurseries for infants; and pre-primary schools. They are also tasked with control of pollution and hawkers. Village councils have a duty to organise welfare, sports and cultural activities alongside the running of preprimary schools and sewing classes. They also maintain cremation grounds and other public health facilities as well as carrying out public works to promote the sanitation and cleanliness of the village. A village council may carry out any other duties assigned to municipal and district councils.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

No information is available.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In June 2017 the Office of the Prime Minister, in collaboration with the EU mission to Mauritius, organised a debate to help raise awareness of the importance of adopting the UN SDGs, particularly in relation to addressing climate change.^{25,10} At the same time, the government has focused especially on SDG 5 - women's empowerment – and to this end the MLGOI has developed a sector-based gender policy. The policy makes a number of recommendations:

- to ensure that appropriate tools and equipment are provided to enable women employees to perform their duties effectively
- to encourage local authorities to develop and consolidate genderdisaggregated data within all spheres of their activities
- to encourage local authorities and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service to work out their own gender policies and implementable plans on gender equality
- to encourage local authorities to ensure that infrastructural investments and resource allocations for development projects are gender-equitable
- to encourage local authorities, while preparing their budgetary allocations, to enlist the participation of women in their areas and take their priorities into consideration
- to encourage local authorities to conduct training courses for staff on gender issues, collect data and develop gender assessment tools, reshape gender policies and facilitate contacts among councillors and women in their areas
- to encourage local authorities to participate, through their local mechanisms, in the government vision to make small and mediumsized enterprises a strong pillar of the economy by facilitating and encouraging women entrepreneurs to start a business.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 25.1a Government of Mauritius www.govmu.org
- 25.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 25.2a Constitution of Mauritius http://mauritiusassembly.govmu. org/English/constitution

- 25.2b Local Government Act 2011 http://electoral.govmu.org/English/ Registration/Documents/36of2011.pdf
- 25.2c Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 20013c http://aceproject.org/ero-en/ regions/africa/MU/Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001.pdf
- 25.3a 2011 Census http://nada.statsmauritius.govmu. org/index.php/catalog/46
- 25.3b Population estimates 2016 http://statsmauritius.govmu.org/ English/Pages/POPULATION--And-VITAL-STATISTICS.aspx
- 25.3c Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands www.gov.mu/portal/ site/mlge/menuitem
- 25.4a Electoral Commissioner's Office http://electoral.govmu.org
- 25.4b Elected councillors by village 2012 http://electoral.govmu.org/ English/electionresult/village/ Pages/Elected-Candidates.aspx
- 25.4c MLGOI Gender Policy page 11/12 and 14/15 http://localgovernment. govmu.org/English/AboutUs/ Documents/Final%20Gender%20 Policy%20Document%20for%20 Local%20Government.pdf
- 25.5 Portal of local authorities http://la.govmu.org
- 25.6a Association of Urban Authorities no website available
- 25.6b Association of District Councils http://aodc.mu
- 25.7 No reference for this section
- 25.8 No reference for this section
- 25.9 Table 2.1 and Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Estimates 2015-2016 http:// mof.govmu.org/English/ Pages/BudgetEstimates2016. aspx and Estimates 2016-2017 http://budget.mof. govmu.org/budget2017-18/ V_00_112017_18ExpbyVotes.pdf
- 25.10 Debate on the SDGs and climate change www.govmu.org/English/ News/Pages/Raising-publicawareness-in-favour-of-sustainabledevelopment-goals.aspx
- 25.11a UN statistics surface area http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ demographic/products/dyb/ dyb2006/Table03.pdf
- 25.11b Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub www.clgf.org.uk/ resource-centre/knowledge-hub
- 25.11c UNDP HDR Mauritius country profile http://hdr.undp.org/en/ countries/profiles/MUS

Annex 25a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Mauritius

| | | | Local gove | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------|-------------|--|
| Services | National government | Rodrigues Regional Assembly | Municipalities | Villages | Remarks | |
| GENERAL ADMINISTRATION | | | | | | |
| Police | | | | | | |
| Fire protection | | | | | | |
| Civil protection | | | | | | |
| Criminal justice | | | | | | |
| Civil status register | | | | | | |
| Statistical office | | | | | | |
| Electoral register | | | | | | |
| EDUCATION | - | | | | | |
| Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery) | | | - | | | |
| Primary | | | • | | | |
| Secondary | | | | | | |
| • | | | _ | _ | | |
| /ocational and technical | | | • | | | |
| Higher education | • | | | | | |
| Adult education | | | | | | |
| SOCIAL WELFARE | | | | | | |
| Family welfare services | | | | | | |
| Welfare homes | | | | | | |
| Social security | | | | | | |
| PUBLIC HEALTH | | | | | | |
| Primary care | • | | | | | |
| Hospitals | • | | | | | |
| Health protection | | | | | | |
| HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING | | | | | | |
| Housing | • | | | | | |
| Town planning | | | | | | |
| Regional planning | | | | | | |
| TRANSPORT | | | | | | |
| Roads | | | | | | |
| Transport | | | | | | |
| Urban roads | | | | | | |
| Urban rail | | | | | | |
| Ports | | | | | | |
| Airports | | | | | | |
| ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION | | | | | | |
| Water and sanitation | | | | | | |
| Refuse collection and disposal | | | | | | |
| Cemeteries and crematoria | | - | | | | |
| Slaughterhouses | | - | - | — | | |
| Environmental protection | | | | | | |
| Consumer protection | | | | | | |
| CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS | - | | | | | |
| Theatres and concerts | | | | | | |
| Museums and libraries | | | | | | |
| Parks and open spaces | - | | - | | | |
| Sports and leisure facilities | | | - | - 2 | | |
| Religious facilities | _ | _ | - | | | |
| JTILITIES | - | | | | | |
| | _ | | | | | |
| Cas services | | | | | | |
| District heating | — | | | | | |
| Nater supply | • | | | | | |
| Electricity | | | | | | |
| ECONOMIC | | | | | | |
| Agriculture, forests and fisheries | | | | | | |
| ocal economic development/promotion | | | | | | |
| Trade and industry | | | | | | |
| Tourism | | | | | | |

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service

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