

MAURITIUS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL (MRIC)

SOCIAL INNOVATION & RESEARCH GRANT SCHEME (SIRGS)

Project Summary

Title of Project: Sustainability and long term environmental conservation through 'ERA crafts'
Mauritian NGO: Ecosystem Restoration Alliance Indian Ocean
Project Leader: Dr Ryszard Oleksy
Team members: Ms. Yogishah Bunsy Mr. Ismaeel Janoo
Technical Abstract
<p>Mauritius is one of 21 world hotspots due to its high endemism and biodiversity. However, over the past centuries Mauritius has lost majority of its forest cover and currently only around 2% of the forest is of a good quality while the remaining 16% is degrading due to presence of highly invasive species such as guava (<i>Psidium cattleianum</i>). Introduced in 18th century, the plant has spread all over Mauritius and is extremely difficult and time demanding to control. On a yearly basis, thousands of guava trees are being cut and left in the forest to decompose, limiting the space for reforestation activities.</p> <p>The project aims to create sellable products made from 100% eco-friendly materials such as invasive wood removed for reforestation purpose and household by-products. The project will target to employ the trainees from the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) to provide more training and jobs. With 6.9% of unemployment among Mauritius youth, this project combines both environmental protection and awareness along with improvement of social-economic status of young Mauritians. The products will be put for sale to establish a self-sufficient project which provides money for the young Mauritians and forest conservation.</p>
Key Words: forest conservation, invasive species, guava, crafts