
The Journey of Mauritian Sugar Producers Towards Geographical Indication Recognition

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Résumé

- **Introduction**

Sugarcane was introduced in Mauritius from Java in 1639. Since then, the island has developed a long tradition in sugarcane farming and sugar manufacturing. In more recent times, faced with global market and price uncertainties, as well as threats to product authenticity, the Mauritian cane sugar industry embarked on a journey to achieve GI recognition.

- **A United Effort**

There is in Mauritius a long history of collaboration & partnership between sugar producers, including planters & millers grouped under the umbrella of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate (MSS) set up in 1919, the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, the Mauritius Sugar cane Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) & extension services. Realising the potential benefits of GI recognition, these stakeholders pooled their resources and knowledge with the support of experts, and, in 2024, assembled a comprehensive dossier.

- **Pooling Expertise**

While marketing and sustainability experts, producers and research specialists came together to craft compelling narratives highlighting the distinctiveness of Mauritius Unrefined Sugar and its unique qualities and providing critical insights into the cultivation practices adapted to the singularities of the geographical zone, extension services helped reaching out to thousands of farmers.

- **The Role of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate**

The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate (MSS) played a pivotal role in the GI application process. As the central body representing all the island's sugar cane farmers & millers, MSS was instrumental in coordinating efforts and ensuring that the application met all necessary criteria.

- **Building the Dossier**

*Intervenant

The process of compiling the dossier was a testament to the power of leadership & teamwork, with stakeholders bringing their unique perspectives to the table, thus ensuring that the application was thorough and well-rounded. The code of practice & control system developed during this phase became a cornerstone of the application, demonstrating the specificity of " Mauritius Unrefined Sugar " .

- **Reaching Out to Farmers**

Once the dossier was ready, the next challenge was to onboard thousands of cane farmers. This was no small feat, but the united team approached it with determination & creativity.

- **Valorising the Work of Farmers and Millers**

Achieving GI recognition is not just a technical accomplishment; it is a profound acknowledgment of the hard work & dedication of farmers & millers. This recognition valorises their efforts.

- **The Human Dimension**

At the heart of this journey were the people who made it possible. The planters & millers who shared their generations-old knowledge, the researchers who provided scientific evidence and validation, the extension officers who bridged the gap between theory and practice & the marketing experts who told the story to the world.

- **Collaboration with Public Institutions**

The journey was further supported by close collaboration with public institutions and foreign experts who played a crucial role, providing guidance and support throughout the process.

- **Conclusion**

This project is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation. It highlights how a united effort, driven by a shared vision and the pooling of diverse expertise, can help achieve remarkable outcomes and pave the way for sustainable development.

Mots-Clés: bringing together diverse stakeholders and leveraging their collective expertise to drive sustainable innovation