

Foreign workers are required in order to keep our economy going in Mauritius. In the construction sector, they are needed to fill in skills and knowledge gaps or take on job roles that are experiencing labour shortages. Two companies in the construction sector share how they leverage foreign employees to support their business operations.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR:

Foreign Manpower brought to fill skills gap

Jenna Ramoo

ANWAR RAMDIN, CEO OF HYVEC CONSTRUCTION:

“Foreign manpower is versatile whereas local manpower is reluctant to move out of their comfort zones”

Founded in 1993 by Nawaz Khan Chady, HYVEC PARTNERS LTD is a leading construction company. It forms part of the Hyvec group. The group itself consists of five economic pillars namely Construction and Property Development, Retail and Distribution, Investment and Finance, Leisure and Hospitality and Food. However, construction and land development remain the core activities of Hyvec group, which can boast of being among the largest real estate developers on the island, specifically with nearly two million square feet constructed over the last years. More so, Hyvec Partners Ltd is now registered as a ‘Grade Large Contractor’ with the Construction Industry Development Board, the regulator of the Construction Industry in Mauritius.

With an impressive track record as well as a team of dedicated and experienced workforce of around 500



construction professionals including 350 foreign workers, the company can undertake any size of construction project in Mauritius, indicates Anwar Ramdin, the CEO of Hyvec Construction. “Our solid reputation has attracted international attention leading to several joint-ventures including with Stefanutti Stocks, one of South Africa’s leading engineering and construction group listed in



South Africa since 2007 with a turnover in excess of MUR 25 Bn (\$715 Mio),” he says.

As for the vision of the company, Anwar Ramdin states it aims to be the leader in the construction industry and top of the mind real estate property developer in Mauritius, namely by delivering value added products that continually exceed Hyvec Group customers’ expectations through innovation, vertical integration and expert market knowledge while developing optimum return for its shareholders. Its mission remains to provide all the stakeholders with value creation, expert advice as well as efficiency through professionalism, integrity and teamwork, besides continuous improvement.

Why chose foreign manpower? “The main reason is to fill the skill gap as the

local construction sector has difficulties in attracting young people who would be interested to work in that industry. Foreign worker’s mindset is that they have come to Mauritius to work. So, they are present on site every day to perform their set tasks, leading to efficient productivity on the different construction sites. Unfortunately, there is a high degree of absenteeism on sites where the workers are from the local manpower,” utters the CEO of Hyvec Construction. The latter indeed points out that unfortunately there is a high degree of absenteeism on sites where the workers are from the local manpower. He avers that foreign manpower has a versatility in carrying out tasks on sites whereas local manpower is reluctant to move out of their comfort zones. “In short, Mauritians are not willing in labour

intensive sectors. In a way we are becoming victims of our own success,” he states.

In regards to the advantages of foreign manpower, Anwar Ramdin indicates that there are low absenteeism, it caters for skills which is no longer available in the island and there is the adaptability of foreign employees to work in any sections of work on site. “They are more disciplined on sites”, he says. As for the inconveniences of such manpower, he mentions that they are the high Turn Over of workers as all of them are on a contract basis as well as the organising of dormitories for the works, the ongoing training of workers due to high turnover which costs a lot in terms of time and money.

Regarding the nationalities of foreign workers at Hyvec, he indicates that they are mainly Bangladeshis and Indians. They

Hyvec Construction’s completed projects:

- Melrose Prison, contract value of MUR 2.2 Billion
- High-rise office buildings (Hyvec Business park and The Axis at Ebène)
- Luxurious villas (Anahita, Les Salines)
- University campus (Montagne-Blanche and Pamplemousses)
- Schools (SSS Beau-Bassin and Ebène)
- Apartments (Mango Village Project in Beau-Plan)

Its upcoming projects:

- Opposite to the new Supreme Court, Hyvec Construction will begin the construction of a 14-storey building of 10,500 m² at Edith Cavell Street in Port-Louis.
- Excel Tower in Ebène.
- A huge showroom on the highway at Pailles amongst others.