

# Speech of Hon. Deepak Balgobin Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

Site Visit at Pro-Design Group: Pro-design Facilities Ltd/ Pro-Design  
Engineering Consultants Ltd / Pro-Design Innovation Ltd / Pro-design Software  
Ltd

- Development of an Aeroponic Indoor Urban vertical farm using an advanced micro-controlled environment.
- The Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) for the improvement of the construction industry.
- Online Marketplace using Big Data and AI analytics to improve procurement process for construction projects.

Thursday, 17th November 2022 at 14 00hrs  
Valentina Industrial Estate, Phoenix

- **Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Chairperson of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council,**
- **Mr Vikramsing Bhujun, Managing Director of Prodesign Group,**
- **Staff of Pro-Design Group,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good afternoon to you all.

It's really a pleasure to be here in person at Pro-Design Group of companies.

Much has happened over the past few years, and I have been following your work with the MRIC with great interest.

As the saying goes, "Adapt or Perish" ... I think that it is more apposite to say, "Innovate or Perish" in the modern world.

And it is clear from your portfolio of projects that Innovation is at the very heart of your business models, be it in modern farming techniques or the application of emerging technologies in the construction industry as we have seen a few minutes ago.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Without any doubt, Covid-19 was a severe threat to the construction sector in Mauritius and around the world.

However, at the same time, it speeded up some novel trends as the industry responded to this difficult period with an increased focus on innovation.

In fact, even before the pandemic, there were many signs that digitalisation is a must in construction.

Covid-19 only accelerated this shift, forcing the industry to adopt such technologies as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) or Drones to improve productivity, increase worksite safety and create more environmentally-friendly buildings. And surely, this will only grow in the coming years!

As one of the main objectives of the MRIC is to enhance private sector participation in **Research and Development and Innovation**, Prodesign Group is the recipient of three schemes through the Pole of Innovation Grant Scheme, Fast Track Innovation Scheme and Proof-of-Concept Scheme.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is innovation that leads the way to a better future.

Through the **Mauritius Research and Innovation Council**, the **Government** is now investing in anticipatory innovation so that we can enable and support those willing to innovate in their business to explore solutions and better meet the current and future challenges of our economy.

With a view to accelerate the innovation momentum, we have, since the last few months, started to showcase projects which have benefitted from the various schemes operated by the MRIC and we will not stop here.

I am, accordingly, pleased to announce that the MRIC is planning to organise a showcase event in the coming weeks with the objective of raising awareness on these schemes so that the public is aware of how innovative ideas and projects can benefit from the funding, support and guidance of the MRIC.

This event, will also mark the 30 years of existence of the Council in the promotion of **Research, Development and Innovation** in the country.

The MRIC implements several schemes that cater for the Research and Innovation needs of its stakeholders, namely the:

- 1. National SME Incubator Scheme**
- 2. Proof of Concept Scheme**

3. **Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant Scheme**
4. **Research and Innovation Bridges**
5. **Social Innovation Research Grant Scheme**
6. **Pole of Innovation Grant Scheme**
7. **Intellectual Property Promotion Scheme**
8. **Rodrigues Research and Innovation Grant Scheme**

We want the public to take full advantages of these schemes so that we can continue to nurture our innovation ecosystems to transform the landscape of the Mauritian economy.

Last year, we conducted a **National Campaign** on Innovation and also organized a **National Innovation Challenge** with the objective of uncovering and fostering local innovations created by Mauritians.

This Government, with the vision of our Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, strongly believes in the potential of **Research and Innovation** to take our economy to the next level of development and the foundations of innovation have already been laid down.

Together with the relevant institutional changes to drive innovation, this Government has earmarked special funds under the **National Innovation Program** to fund innovative projects.

The funds ranging from Rs 125 million to Rs 150 million have been earmarked in the annual Budget since 2016 and have been used to a great extent to fund the measures outlined in the **National Innovation Framework** for the period 2018-2030.

**Dear Friends,**

As the saying goes: “**Nothing changes if nothing changes**”.

It means that the evolution of Science, Technology and Innovation has improved the quality of our life and has made it easier.

Our country is poised for progress and we measure progress by the success of our people.

By the jobs they can find and the quality of life those jobs offer.

By the prospects of a small business owners who dream of turning a good idea into a thriving enterprise.

By the opportunities for a better life that we pass on to our children.

This, again shows the commitment of this Government, under the prime ministership of the Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, to work in collaboration with the private sector for an ever-better quality of life of our people.

If we want to become highly competitive in the present innovation era, we have to keep promoting an influential innovation eco-system.

It is my Ministry's and the MRIC's endeavour to design, develop and implement relevant strategies and initiatives to cater for all sections of the society, as we believe innovation cannot be restricted.

We are proud to see that **ProDesign Group** of companies is working in that direction.

I wish to congratulate you for your ambitions and I wish you success in the creation of innovative solutions for the benefit of the citizens of our country.

**Thank you for your attention.**