

# Innovation



IBL's enterprising spirit has always been the foundation of our success. Today, we are building on this legacy by helping teams approach problem-solving with more curiosity, creativity and collaboration. By creating space for experimentation and agility, we are aiming for more than operational improvements; we want to generate bold ideas that keep IBL ahead of the curve and future-ready across its markets.

## Key metrics:



**23**

submissions to the Excellence and Innovation Awards from across IBL



**20**

coaching workshops delivered to participants in the context of the Awards



## Innovation

### I. Driving innovation as an ecosystem and mindset

At IBL, innovation is treated not just as a response to change, but as a catalyst for it. In today's fast-moving world, having the right innovation ecosystem in place is crucial for building our resilience, maintaining our leadership position across our markets, and achieving long-term growth.

Over the past few years, IBL's Innovation team has been progressively embedding innovation as a structured, repeatable discipline that must serve our business objectives, our partners/clients, our people, and our evolving markets. An assessment in 2022 revealed the need to move beyond incremental improvements and focus on sustaining and transformative innovation\*: the kind that powers new business models, drives growth across clusters, and keeps us ahead of the curve. This approach is not only adapted to Mauritius, but also designed to be scalable and applicable beyond borders.

In 2024, this approach was tested in real time. A rapidly evolving economic and regulatory landscape, in particular within the healthcare industry, pushed our teams to act fast and use innovation as a lever for strategic reinvention. It was a clear demonstration that disruption, when anticipated, can become a powerful engine for reinvention.

What we have learned is clear: innovation is a muscle that must be continuously trained, developed and reinforced over time. And like any muscle, it grows stronger with use. This means creating an environment where experimentation is encouraged, diverse perspectives are welcomed, and failure is treated as a learning opportunity. Through new tools, guidance, and shared spaces to experiment, we are laying the groundwork for a more connected, creative, and confident innovation mindset across the Group.




**“Innovation is not an instant switch or quick fix; it’s a culture we build over time. We are seeing incredible energy emerging as people at all levels across the Group contribute ideas that challenge the status quo. When we create the right ecosystem, ideas spark, confidence grows, and together we drive the kind of change that will keep our Group thriving for years to come.”**


**Delphine Lagesse**  
Group Strategic Innovation and Excellence Executive

#### Innovation serves four purposes:


##### Anticipate disruption, in a systematic way, from competitors and market shifts

 Anticipate disruption

##### Enhance competitiveness and existing operations through efficiency and sustaining innovation

 Remain competitive

##### Unlock new growth drivers through exceptional experiences

 Unlock new growth

##### Embed a culture that strengthens collaboration and attracts talent

 Grow talent

### The three types of innovation

#### Efficiency innovation

Improve processes and existing business models, and refine value propositions.

#### Sustaining innovation

Replace and extend existing value propositions to new channels and geographies.

#### Transformative innovation

New business models and entirely new growth engines.

### II. Strengthening the foundations

Now several years into rolling out the innovation blueprint, the focus has been on creating the right conditions for innovation to live organically throughout our organisation. This means helping teams build the reflexes and confidence needed to look beyond their day-to-day tasks and understand the wider trends shaping their sectors, like evolving consumer behaviours and sector disruptions.

This need became clear during early innovation sprints with the Logistics and Seafood segments, where teams found it challenging to generate ideas that looked beyond immediate concerns. To address this, the IBL Innovation team introduced a series of ideation workshops to help teams explore macro trends and translate those insights into sprint boards for innovation. These sessions have made it easier for team members to connect external shifts with their work, and to feed more ambitious ideas into their innovation pipeline.

This is a gradual and continuous process, but innovation is becoming a shared mindset among operations, and seeding a pool of innovators and forward-thinkers across the Group.





## Innovation

### III. Bringing strategy to life

**Rethinking business model through innovation: HealthActiv**

**Strategic objectives addressed**


**Anticipate disruption**


**Grow talent**

In late 2024, HealthActiv found itself at a juncture where external pressures created both the urgency and opportunity for innovation. Regulatory shifts, including anticipated pricing controls and shrinking margins in the healthcare sector, posed a threat to its long-standing business model. With a firm commitment to remain both competitive and purpose-driven, the IBL Innovation team partnered with HealthActiv and MedActiv to reimagine the company's business model.

Between November 2024 and March 2025, we worked closely with the teams to apply the innovation approach and drive focused ideation. The ambition was clear: to reimagine the business through a future-facing lens and identify new pathways to resilience. In February 2025, over 30 team members from across HealthActiv came together for an intensive Strategic Management Review to expose their work and align around emerging opportunities.

Rather than rely on top-down answers, the process was co-designed with HealthActiv's teams. Everyone, from sales and marketing to logistics and support functions, was invited to contribute. Dozens of ideas were brought to the table and were mapped across two broad categories:

**Known and actionable:** Projects with clear scope and low uncertainty, ready to execute.

**Unknown and exploratory:** Concepts with potential, but requiring testing, validation, and iteration.

From this came HealthActiv's first Innovation Portfolio - a structured roadmap to explore, de-risk, and scale new ideas. With a portfolio of promising ideas in hand, HealthActiv is now setting the stage for Phase 2: moving from ideas to action through structured innovation sprints. As the company sharpens its innovation governance, defines clear ownership, and aligns decision-making criteria, it is building the discipline and confidence to make innovation a continuous driver of resilience and relevance.

**Outcomes**

**+40**  
new high-potential ideas emerged from the co-creation process.

**An innovation portfolio** now tracks, categorises, and prioritises ideas by uncertainty and impact.

**Cross-functional alignment** around strategy and execution.

**Increased ownership** from teams, who now feel empowered to drive innovation forward.

“By integrating innovation into its strategic review process, HA aims to become a more agile and resilient business, while simultaneously identifying new growth opportunities.”


**Alvinesh Jugun**  
IBL Innovation Manager


“The workshop was truly a marathon. It gave us valuable time and space to pause, deeply reflect on our challenges, and co-create a clear and actionable plan with the team.”


**Neelofar Ghannoo**  
Category Manager - HealthActiv

**Unlocking human ingenuity: the IBL Excellence & Innovation Awards**

**Strategic objectives addressed**


**Anticipate disruption**


**Remain competitive**


**Unlock new growth**

Since its launch in 2021, the IBL Excellence & Innovation Awards (IBLEIA) has been a cornerstone of the Group's innovation ecosystem. This flagship event invites IBL's businesses to contribute bold ideas and showcase their entrepreneurial spirit. Since its inception, the event has sparked innovations that have not only enhanced customer experiences and operational excellence across the Group, but also generated new business models.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> edition in 2024, the IBL Innovation team enhanced its support to participants to help them better frame and present their ideas, while strengthening their innovation capabilities. Five workshops were conducted, spanning Customer Discovery, Business Modelling, Testing Business Ideas, Sustainability, and Pitching, along with other practical tools designed to coach teams sharpen their proposals and gain confidence in telling their story.

The response was immediate: the 4<sup>th</sup> edition drew a record 23 submissions from 12 companies across the Group. Of those, nine projects made it to the finals, where an independent distinguished jury recognised three standout projects:

**Winners by Category**

- **Operational Excellence:** *OptiFlow* by MBP, streamlining operations, from warehousing to loading, to maximise productivity.
- **Customer Experience:** *GlamActiv* by BrandActiv, focused on creating a digital beauty adviser powered by AI.
- **Business Innovation:** *L'Eau Kal* by Phoenix Beverages, promoting circular economy by manufacturing beverages from locally-sourced ingredients.

This past year, the focus went beyond the competition itself, or winning. It marked a shift in culture. Teams approached innovation with more structure, curiosity, and discipline, generating ideas that deliver real business impact. And for many participants, the tools and feedback received during the journey are already shaping other projects and fostering personal growth.

**Outcomes**

**23**  
impactful submissions, a record high.

**Ideas to action:**  
A clear evolution from incremental innovation to strategic innovation, with ideas increasingly aligned with Group priorities.

**Cross-cluster engagement:**  
Exposure to new contexts and collaboration across entities, fostering synergies and shared learning.

**Culture uptick:**  
Increased confidence in employees to pitch and lead projects, contributing to a stronger innovation mindset across the Group.

“The workshops were a game-changer. They introduced us to practical tools on how to develop a powerful narrative hook and present our ideas with more impact and persuasion. The sessions helped us not only excel at the Awards, but they had a lasting impact on our confidence and capabilities as effective communicators.”

**Rebecca Coralie Tolbize**  
Research and Development Assistant - MBP

“Reflecting on the evolution of the IBL Innovation Awards since 2021, what stands out is the nature of submissions. There's been a shift from borrowed ideas to the creation of original intellectual property. Projects like **L'Eau Kal** and **Effihatch** have impressed us not just for their execution, but for being genuinely homegrown innovations that could put Mauritius on the global innovation map.”

**James van der Westhuizen**  
Founder of PeoplePower and jury member at the IBL Excellence & Innovation Awards

# Innovation Roundtable discussion

This roundtable dives into how innovation is being driven from the ground up across operations, supported by the IBL's innovation team at the Head Office. Participants share insights and lessons learned on how the Innovation blueprint is helping teams stay aligned. More than a framework, the blueprint illustrates what kind of innovation ecosystem we need to establish at IBL and how to do it. Its objective is to enable the group's companies to explore new business ideas in a structured, repeatable, and economically efficient way. Appointed innovation ambassadors are playing a key role in bridging silos and embedding a culture of forward-thinking, all in support of IBL's broader ambition to grow stronger *together*.

**Participants:**

**Gauthier Ledesma** - Research & Development and Innovation Manager, UBP Group

**Camille Maigrot** - Project Executive, IBL Logistics

**Arasen Moodelly** - Quality Manager, Research & Development, and Sales Representative, MBP



**What made innovation such an urgent focus in your BU?**

"In our case, it started with a clear need for operational excellence. We had gaps in visibility and consistency across our daily processes that were holding us back. So innovation wasn't just about chasing trends, it was a real opportunity to tighten the way we work and produce better outcomes. At the same time, the logistics space in Mauritius was shifting fast. Competition was picking up, costs were rising and our margins were under pressure. We couldn't afford to stay reactive; we had to think ahead, beyond the day-to-day." — **Camille**

"In construction, we've often approached innovation through a very technical lens. Traditionally, engineers would develop a solution internally, perfect it, then push it to the market; but often, the market wasn't ready or the real need wasn't there. That approach was no longer sustainable. So we restructured and started with understanding what the market needs. We also realised that innovation can't just be a side activity. We need a team fully dedicated to future-readiness, while others manage day-to-day operations. That's how we position ourselves to anticipate, and not just react." — **Gauthier**

"At MBP, we approached innovation back in 2015. We introduced the concept of 'marginal gains', focusing on small, continuous improvements. That mindset really took root across our teams. But as tuna quotas became more constrained, we realised that efficiency alone wasn't enough. We had to rethink our model. How do we create new value from the resources we already have? How do we do more with less? So when the push for more innovation came from the Group, we were already culturally prepared and ready to go further. We were the first BU to pilot the Innovation Blueprint. It was our chance to push beyond incremental improvements and learn how to take on bolder, riskier ideas." — **Arasen**

**How are you structuring innovation within your BU?**

"One of the most impactful elements has been the Innovation Ambassador's Forum. It's a bi-monthly space where project managers and operational teams share tools and techniques that we can apply in our respective businesses. As a project manager, that kind of exchange is gold. We get to learn from what's worked in other clusters, adapt it to our context, and build collective intelligence. Over time, our ambition is to set up a dedicated innovation team with a lead and a regular rhythm of engagement. Right now, innovation happens within projects and forums, but we're laying the foundation for it to become a standing capability." — **Camille**

"We created a dedicated Transformation & Innovation team that focuses on anticipating change, defining the enablers, and driving adaptation to make the Group future-ready. Our team brings together expertise from

R&D, innovation, sustainability, digital transformation and project management. We've made innovation more transversal and cross-functional to approach challenges from multiple angles. Innovation is also now part of the induction process for new hires, helping build a common language and mindset around innovation from day one. We're also putting in place better feedback loops between the field and our innovation team, so we're solving real needs. Internally, we want to decentralise innovation, so it lives in the business units, not just at HQ." — **Gauthier**

"The Innovation Blueprint gave us a real structure. It helped us move from seeing innovation as an 'aha' moment of inspiration to treating it as a clear, step-by-step process. During the pilot phase, we tested three projects: two sustaining, one transformative. Even though none moved forward, it taught us how to identify the right ideas, test assumptions early, and make confident decisions on what to pursue, or kill. Today, innovation is part of our daily rhythm. We hold bi-weekly technical meetings across departments, including R&D, production, HR, finance, to explore ideas beyond operations. From these sessions, we've defined four 'hunting zones' with dedicated champions, each focusing on specific areas we want to grow. It's helped us give structure and ownership to innovation without needing a separate team." — **Arasen**

**What early results or changes have you seen from your innovation efforts?**

"We've moved from firefighting to long-term thinking. At Logidis, a lot of our time was spent reacting to urgent issues. Now, teams are thinking more strategically, and conversations across departments are becoming more forward-looking. Weekly check-ins and management meetings have created regular space to step back, reflect, and align, so collaboration feels more natural, not forced. So far, our innovation efforts have centered on exploitation - improving existing systems and boosting service levels. But we've reached a maturity level where we're ready for exploration: new clients, markets, and business models. It's still early to measure business impact, but the mindset shift is a major win." — **Camille**

"This past year was a turning point. We saw over ten innovation projects submitted for the IBL Excellence & Innovation Awards. Three made it to the finals, and two won awards. That alone showed us that innovation is alive across the Group, and not just a top-down initiative. We're still actively developing one of the winning projects, Project (G)OLD, focusing on the circular economy. It tackles construction waste by transforming demolition materials like concrete into new products. We've already sold over 150,000 paving blocks made from recycled aggregates, and diverted approximately 8,000 tonnes of waste from landfill. This is a strong example of how innovation is serving our sustainability goals. This project is being funded

by Cap Business Océan Indien, with support from The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), as part of their Call for Projects towards fairer, more resilient and sustainable regional economic development. Our job now is to build on this momentum. We're currently developing a blueprint for innovation to scale this energy into a lasting model. — **Gauthier**

"One of the biggest changes has been our ability to test and validate ideas in a real, controlled environment. We work in a highly technical industry, so theory alone doesn't cut it. We need to prototype, simulate, and assess feasibility hands-on. That's why we built a dedicated pet food shed, separate from our main operations, to safely run trials without risk of cross-contamination. Thanks to this, we're now entering the pet food market for the first time - something completely outside our core business. It's a major step for us. We've also seen people grow through this process: one of our former production managers is now leading product development, after gaining deep experience through innovation projects. And because we now have a proper pipeline in place, ideation doesn't stop. Teams are already thinking about what's next." — **Arasen**

#### **What personal lessons or new perspectives have you gained through your innovation journey?**

"For me, it's been incredibly eye-opening. I've learned practical techniques you can't find in books, especially in a world that changes so fast. Anticipating change is really where competitive advantage lies. Innovation pushed me to step back, challenge my assumptions, and look at the company, and the world, through a new lens. Even when business seems solid, asking 'What could go wrong?' and 'How can I prepare?' has become a habit.

I used to think innovation was only about big, radical inventions. But the blueprint we use doesn't hand you answers; it guides you to explore ideas safely and reduce risks without disrupting daily operations. It's taught me to stay curious and open because nothing is fixed or set in stone." — **Camille**

"Innovation means different things to different people, so one key lesson has been the need for a shared language and understanding across the Group. We've taken the initiative to train ourselves in design thinking, which encourages testing early, failing fast, and pivoting quickly. Working on Project (G)OLD was a major confidence boost. Having external funding took away some of the usual hesitation around costs, and made innovation feel like a real investment, and not a risk.

Another big shift is we now start any innovation process with desirability - making sure we design the right thing, before designing the thing right. Some of our earlier innovations were sometimes ahead of their time or not human-centered enough. Part of our role is preparing the market for what's coming by having deeper conversations, sharing insights earlier, and anticipating what people will need next." — **Gauthier**

"We've learned that failure is part of the process - but what matters is understanding why something didn't work. We didn't just kill those three pilot ideas randomly. In each case, we had solid, fact-based reasons. Whether it was lack of raw materials, market readiness, or high infrastructure costs, we were clear on why each idea wasn't viable, and we used that information to move forward smarter. Another big lesson is how crucial leadership support is when you're pushing outside your comfort zone. Without that, it's hard to take real risks. We're lucky to have that backing at MBP, and it's made all the difference in how far we've been able to go." — **Arasen**