

**Press release Paris  
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## **Corsica Sole and ProVanille inaugurate their first photovoltaic shade structures specially designed for vanilla cultivation in Réunion.**

**A technical innovation serving local agriculture, presented on Thursday, April 25, in Bras Panon, at the Bellevue site.**

### **A global challenge to move towards ever greater energy**

**independence** Because energy production and electricity grid management are major challenges on island territories, it is important to find solutions to move towards greater energy independence. Solar energy production is part of this drive.

*“Unlike mainland Europe, Réunion is not an interconnected territory where energy flows across borders. We want to provide solutions to help move towards ever greater energy independence. We believe that the ecological transition must be carried out in consultation with the territories, favoring regional players and dialogue with local experts”* says **Paul ANTONIOTTI, president and co-founder of CORSICA SOLE.**

It is with this in mind that Corsica Sole has joined forces with ProVanille, the cooperative of vanilla producers in Réunion, to develop this project of shade structures specially designed for the optimal development of vanilla plants.

### **Technical specifications, to best suit vanilla production**

The installation of greenhouses equipped with photovoltaic panels was designed to recreate the light and humidity conditions of the undergrowth where vanilla plants like to grow:

- Shade: 75% shade under the shade cloth, with only 25% of light filtering through the panels
- The right temperature: between 25 and 32 degrees Celsius
- Regular irrigation: rainwater is collected and then used to irrigate the plants

*“This collaboration is interesting because it allows farmers to expand their growing area, which is usually limited to undergrowth areas. In addition, rainwater collection and the reduction of harmful insects in shade house greenhouses are assets for our plantations”* says **Willy BOYER, president of PRO VANILLE.**

Indeed, the nets installed on the sides of the greenhouses and the shade houses placed on top form a physical barrier around the vanilla plants. Fewer harmful insects attack the vanilla plants, greatly reducing the use of pesticides.

Finally, the shade structures were designed to withstand the extreme weather conditions that we can experience on our island (cyclones, heavy rains, strong winds, excessive heat, etc.). When Cyclone Belal hit last January, many vanilla plants on the island were damaged or destroyed. However, none of the shade structures were damaged and all the vanilla plants underneath them were completely unharmed.

Six shade structures have been installed in Réunion based on this model: three in Sainte-Rose, one in Bras Panon, one in Saint-André, and one in Sainte-Suzanne. At the Bellevue site in Bras Panon, 222 photovoltaic panels deliver 100 kWp of electricity.

## Energy storage: the additional equipment that makes all the difference

As renewable energy production is lost if it is not consumed immediately, Corsica Sole has also set up a storage unit in Réunion, which, as its name suggests, stores the green electricity produced each day by renewable energy sources.

Fed back into the local electricity grid by EDF SEI teams, this “standby” electricity helps to supply electricity during evening peak consumption periods. It also helps to compensate for fluctuations and power surges, and to provide sufficient electricity for the growing population of our island. This facility thus contributes to the regulation of Réunion's electricity grid.

### About CORSICA

SOLE CORSICA SOLE is an independent solar energy producer and a leader in energy storage in Europe. The rapidly growing company currently has more than 125 MWp of photovoltaic power plants and more than 160 MWh of energy storage facilities in operation. It is developing a portfolio of solar projects totaling more than 3 GW. Corsica Sole is also expanding into the field of renewable hydrogen production. A specialist in island areas since 2009, Corsica Sole develops, builds, finances, and operates its own projects in France and Europe. Corsica Sole deploys its expertise to provide, through renewable energies and technological innovation, a relevant response to the energy transition to combat climate change.

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## **About PROVANILLE**

Founded in 1968, the Bras Panon vanilla cooperative offers visitors the chance to discover Réunion's famous vanilla and learn about the different stages involved in its production. Vanilla is grown in the most beautiful forests of Reunion Island, on natural volcanic flows. The Provanille cooperative now brings together around 100 vanilla producers from the east of Reunion Island, from Sainte-Suzanne to Saint-Joseph. The cooperative provides technical support, coordination, and development for the industry. It purchases, collects, processes, and markets the production of its member producers. Ninety percent of production is carried out using extensive cultivation methods, i.e., in the undergrowth. The average area per farm is approximately 1.7 hectares.