

Skills Development DECP expands network

DECP has identified the complex landscape of Skills Development as one of the key issues for next programme period. One of the focus area's will be the French speaking countries of West Africa. Earlier this year desk research has been conducted and fact-finding missions to Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast have been undertaken. Furthermore, meetings have been taken place with board members of most of the countries involved during the ILO Conference in Geneva last June. To complete the preparations, DECP decided to get to know major French organisations acting in the West African region. AFD (Agence Française de Développement) is one of them. AFD has been established in 1942 by general De Gaulle with the aim to support the reconstruction of Europe after the war. Nowadays, AFD is a global player as an investment bank at one hand and as a centre of expertise in the field of development projects at the other hand. Human Development is a major issue. 50% of the investments and activities of AFD are done in the African continent. During the meeting at the AFD offices in Paris the activities and qualities of AFD were explained. It became clear that complementarity can be found in the different approaches of social dialogue between the northern European countries and France, which is quite similar to the approach of the French speaking countries in West Africa. Skills Development becomes more and more important in social dialogue, both for Employers' Associations as well as for trade unions and governments. AFD gave some useful suggestions for expanding the network with regard to Skills Development, which will be followed up shortly. Strengthening the network is perceived by AFD and DECP as a condition to upscale projects, and to mutual success of which all parties in partner-countries benefit.