

DECP and African employers' organisations. Mission to prepare concrete work plans for the coming years

The DECP country manager for Africa, Mr Arnout de Koster, visited in two weeks the employers organisations of 4 countries (Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) to finalise the work plans for partnership with DECP. These work plans provide for a double approach: for some themes, so-called cross cutting activities (1) are organised, which cover all countries, and which reply to a knowledge and exchange need on topical issues which are common to all countries; next to this, DECP also has per country (2) national work plans to support each organisation in their specific issues.

Having a transversal look at the organisational needs for development, we see a common picture, which is translated in the contents of the crosscutting and national work plans. Most organisations are medium representative for the private sector, often more representing bigger than small companies. Logically because the latter are often in the more informal segments of the economy. Due to the slow growth in membership, the work plans hence concentrate often on ways to ensure membership growth, especially amongst SMEs.

The creation of a better investment and business environment climate is a central goal of all organisations, but the implementation practice differs per country. Quite a number need support in better research and direct lobbying with the government. Many are interested in exploring the possibilities of social dialogue as a policy influencing model. The Dutch experiences with the “poldermodel” are raising lots of interest. Contents wise, the important themes are labour law, social security, and skills development for better matching demand and offer. Quite some themes in the work plans relate to the aforementioned subjects.

Finally, the service role of many organisations still also appears often in their requests for support. Many organisations are heavily involved in services for members (labour law training, HR training, HR consultancy, dispute resolution services etc.) and require support for better management or new ideas to develop further.

Once the work plans are finalised, the real work can start!