



Enhancing training and professional integration in Congo's forestry, industrial maintenance & ecotourism sectors

Project implemented from: March 2022 to Dec. 2024
 Sectors: Forestry/woodworking, Industrial maintenance, Ecotourism & hospitality
 Agency: Expertise France



Opportunity

The economy of the Republic of Congo has been growing due to both national and international investments, leading to an increase in demand for **local skilled workers**. To foster this growth, VET Toolbox has identified three sectors that can significantly contribute to the country's economy:

Forestry/woodworking sector: Due to **legal regulations** and **emerging occupational profiles**, there is a growing need for skilled local labour to meet new demands in wood processing. Notably, the prohibition by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) on the export of unprocessed timber such as wood logs since 2023 requires business development of the local industry along with new skills needs and job opportunities.

Industrial maintenance sector: There is a shortage of qualified personnel and limited quality training opportunities in the country, resulting in the need

for technicians to receive training overseas and an increase in the **recruitment of foreign workers**. This shortage affects the entire economy since the skills required for industrial maintenance apply to **various sectors** and **value chains**.

Ecotourism & hospitality sector: The Republic of Congo is home to one of the richest and most biologically important natural ecosystems on the planet. This sector requires a skilled workforce to drive the country's economic development while preserving its natural heritage. Recognising its potential, both the European Delegation and the national government advocate for investment in this sector to **diversify** and **strengthen** the country's **economy**.

VET Toolbox aims to capitalise on the potential of these three sectors and unlock local employment opportunities by addressing the skills gap.



Achievements

VET Toolbox collaborates with both public and private partners to reinforce skills development in response to private sector needs in the growing sectors of ecotourism, forestry and industrial maintenance. More specifically, the action has achieved the following:

- Setting up a **public-private dialogue (PPD) platform** engaging public and private partners and VET providers in the discussion on sector-specific challenges in skills development and job creation for youth. After starting with the industrial maintenance sector which faces the most pressing need for skilled labour, the platform now comprises members from the three sectors supported by the project.
- Engaging in **capacity development activities**, upskilling employees from partner private companies, and delivering equipment and training

of trainers of VTIs and companies to deliver high-quality training.

- Developing tailor-made and certified **training programmes** for all **three sectors** (covering 10 trades), including work-based learning opportunities through high private sector involvement and dual VET.
- Facilitating **job placement** and supporting graduates with **entrepreneurship skills** and tools to start up their own businesses.

Key targets



400 people trained
300 graduates employed



Partners' contributions

Private partners

- The **Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture & Trade of Pointe-Noire (CCIAM)** and the employers' association **UNICONGO** (Union Patronale et Interprofessionnelle du Congo) sensitise and mobilise companies to participate in the project and follow up on the training and implementation of the PPD.
- The private sector takes an active part in the co-creation of the training model, delivers work-based learning, provides space, equipment, and support to trainees, and commits to recruiting a percentage of graduates:
 - Industrial maintenance: **ARSENOISE**, **Groupe Froid Moderne (GFM)**, **ROYAL SERVICE**, etc.
 - Forestry: **Industrie forestière de Ouesso (IFO)**, **Congolaise Industrielle des Bois (CIB)**, **Likouala Timber**, **Wenge Bois**, etc.
 - Ecotourism: **Odzala National Park** (Congo Conservation Company for Tour Guiding), **ELAIS Hotel**, **Hotel du Port**, **Guest House Hotel**, etc.
- Companies such as **Wenge Bois**, **Congo Conservation Company/Kambafrica**, **Hotel Elais**, etc. co-finance the training by covering transportation costs, or food costs for trainees.

Public partners

- The **National Employability and Apprenticeship Fund (FONEA)** participates in the PPD to inform members about their training fund and improve their service offer to the benefit of enterprises.
- The **Directorate General for Qualifying Training and Employment (DGFQE)** validates, supervises, and evaluates the trainings, and issues certificates.
- The **Ministry of Youth and Sports, Civic Education, Skills Training and Employment** is backing up the project and participates in the PPD.

VET providers

- The **CEFAs (Education, Training and Apprenticeship Centres)** introduce the new training models in the three sectors, in close collaboration with the private sector.



CCIAM





Key success factors

- The project piloted an **intersectoral PPD** in the three sectors that emerged during public-private collaboration. Thanks to the strong leadership of the private sector and effective communication, the platform attracted new companies and laid the foundation for the other sectors to join up, creating an intersectoral forum with **sector-specific sub-fora** in the countries' growing economies.
- Skills development is **driven by the private sector**, which is highly engaged in the development and implementation of training modules, e.g. through applying dual VET or offering in-company training.
- An **innovative training approach** in eco-tourism and hospitality allows for the launching of the country's first group of national professional Tour Guides for the Odzala-Kokoua National Park.



Upscaling and sustainability

- The project is laying the foundation for the **institutionalisation** of the **piloted training models** by developing quality standards, a certification process and financing models.
- The **piloted PPD platform** has been registered as a **non-governmental organisation** in Congo and is forming an **intersectoral, sustaining structure** that promotes vocational training and employment creation for the youth in the future. Member companies pay a small membership fee to ensure continuation of the platform.



VET Toolbox is a programme developing opportunity-driven skills development initiatives aligned with investments' needs, supporting the private sector with local job creation. For additional information, please visit www.vettoolbox.eu.

A partnership project

Co-funded by
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