

Developing labour market-relevant skills across 4 key economic sectors in the DRC

Project implemented from: March 2022 to Dec. 2024
 Sectors: Construction & Public Work; Transport & Logistics; Hotel, Restaurant & Catering; Digital
 Agency: Enabel



Opportunity

Access to natural resources remains crucial for the world's economy. In the provinces of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), economic activities are mainly concentrated around the **mining sector**, the driving force in the country's economy, which attracts significant (international) **investments**, and holds a large **potential for employment**.

There are hardly any large-scale mines owned by local or European companies in the country. However, there are huge opportunities for **local employment** in the substantial number of (European) companies investing in the **mining value chain**.

Key economic sectors such as Construction & Public Works; Transport & Logistics; Hotel, Restaurant and Catering, and the Digital sector play a crucial role in delivering services to the mining industry and the local economy. These sectors hold significant potential for creating decent local jobs. However, investors encounter challenges due to a **shortage of skilled local workers**.

VET Toolbox seizes this opportunity to bridge the skill gap by providing **training** in these sectors and facilitating **cross-sectoral dialogue** between public and private stakeholders, thereby enhancing local employment prospects. Improved access to **decent jobs** will ensure greater participation of the local population in the country's economy.



Achievements

Capitalising on the achievements of the bilateral programme between Belgium and the DRC executed by Enabel in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba, VET Toolbox collaborates with public and private partners to create access to local job opportunities in key economic sectors that are contributing to the DRC's economy. Promising achievements include:

- Establishing a **Sector Skills Council** in the targeted sectoral chambers of the local branches of the Congolese Business Federation « FEC » in Haut Katanga, allowing the identification of companies and sectoral skills needs, the definition of job clusters and professional profiles, and the effective mobilisation of private and public (sectoral) TVET stakeholders and companies.
- Developing high-quality **professional training models** responding to market needs and occupational standards within the framework of public-private partnerships, and targeting the four key economic sectors in the mining value chain.

Key targets



400 people trained
280 graduates employed



Private partners

- The **local branches of the Congolese Business Federation « FEC »** in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba host the public-private dialogue and the Sector Skills Council. The FEC takes a leading role in mobilising technicians from private companies to design professional profiles that meet identified skills needs.
- **Congo Equipment CAT** is an exclusive dealer of Caterpillar equipment. Their Congo Equipment Training Centre facilitates the acquisition of skills by young people in driving and maintenance of heavy machinery and offers work placements to trainees.
- **UKAMILI**, an innovation centre in Lubumbashi, facilitates the management of digital challenges in businesses and supports the creation of digital hubs in the region.
- **Connex Africa** is a logistics company that contributes to current and future skills needs identification and supports the insertion of trainees by providing additional customs officers training adapted to companies' needs in DRC.
- **Bags and Sacks Katanga**, a leading bulk bag manufacturer, provides vocational and soft skills training, work placement and employment in the production of bags for mineral export.
- **Accor Hotels**, a multinational hospitality company, assists in defining job profiles for the sector, resulting in improved traineeships and job opportunities.
- **ITOT Africa**, a digital company that encourages digital innovation in the region and supports young people in their apprenticeships, is involved in the training of full-stack web development and digital marketing, and facilitates the work placement of trainees.
- **Lugo Farm**, an agri-food processing company with a need for butchers and cooks, is involved in the training on butchery and cold cuts and offers work placement to trainees.
- **EGMF**, a branch of the European Forrest group, trains young people to drive Caterpillar machines and offers work placements.

Public partners

- The **Belgian-Congolese bilateral cooperation programme** facilitates the project. The former EDUKAT project implemented by Enabel is at the origin of the public-private dialogue in the region.
- The **Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (MINEPST)** is in charge of identifying public training centres to engage in the VET Toolbox project.
- The **Consultation Framework (Cadre de consultation)** is an informal structure that brings together stakeholders from the local TVET ecosystem, such as the **National Institute for Vocational Preparation (INPP)** and the **Resource Centre** as well as other public institutions and ministries, such as the National Employment Office (ONEM), the Fund for the Promotion of Financial Inclusion (FPM), and the Ministry of Labour (MINTRAVAIL).
- The **French-speaking Service for Occupations and Qualifications (SFMQ)**, in cooperation with the **Public Service for Employment and Vocational Training in Wallonia, Belgium (Forem)**, provides capacity building for the definition of job clusters and professional profiles.
- The **Belgian Consulate General** in Lubumbashi is helping to mobilise companies with European capital in the region.



VET providers

- The **Resource Centre** in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba coaches trainees to facilitate their occupational integration in the labour market.
- The **INPP** acts as a public training provider of practical training programmes to prepare graduates for the labour market.
- **Private VET centres** such as Congo Equipment CAT (Construction & Public Works), Franjo Haase Foundation (Transport & Logistics), and UKAMILI Digital City (Digital Innovation) act as training providers in the project.



Key success factors

- The establishment of a **sector skills council** led by the FEC, allows for solution-oriented exchanges in the different sectoral chambers on training and employment-related challenges for the private sector.
- Targeted **support to the Resource Centre**, focusing on **youth insertion** into the labour market based on **companies' skills needs** has proven to be a game-changer. Engaging competent trainers (through agreements with private training centres), providing personal protective equipment (PPE), reimbursing transportation costs for trainees and interns and offering accident insurance was key to a successful insertion.



Upscaling and sustainability

To further extend and embed the opportunity-driven skills development approach, the following activities will be jointly undertaken by the public and private partners:

- An INPP-Resource Centre committee for training methods will support the development of a **competency and training framework** for work placement supervision as well as capacity building for internship supervisors in public and private companies.
- Project leaders will be identified to continue the development of **job clusters** and **occupational standards** in collaboration with both public and private sectors, which upon approval by the Ministry, will be integrated into the Operational Directory of Professions and Occupations.
- The Sector Skills Council will oversee regular updates, define clear roles and responsibilities, and ensure **alignment with market demand**.
- A new **multi-annual 18M EUR EU-funded programme** focusing on VET for decent employment in the DRC will also adopt an opportunity-driven approach to VET, as piloted by VET Toolbox, hence scaling it up to the national level and in different sectors.
- The public and private sectors will be encouraged to **review** the **regulatory framework** for **in-company training** and **work placements** in the DRC. A clear framework will facilitate the access of young people to the world of work and ensure a better transfer of skills for businesses.



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.

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