

WSBI members

follow training courses in Brussels



Participants from Poste Gabon

Since the beginning of the year, two WSBI members, the Caisse Nationale d'Épargne et de Prévoyance (CNEP) of Algeria, and La Poste du Gabon have come to Brussels to follow specialised training courses.



Laurie Dufays

Risk and Credit Risk

Caisse Nationale d'Épargne et de Prévoyance is one of the major players in Algeria as regards the provision of mortgage loans and the financing of public and private real estate projects. In February, CNEP sent six branch managers to the WSBI Headquarters in Brussels to follow a course on risk and credit risk management. Indeed, branch managers have an important, but sometimes overlooked role

in screening applications for loans and deposit accounts. "Branch managers are usually the first contact of the bank customer", says Laurie Dufays, WSBI Deputy Director responsible for Training Services. They have an in-depth knowledge of their customer and at CNEP, their visit to every new business customer before a loan application is critical for the loan approval. The knowledge that the branch manager gains by making a call or paying a visit to a customer goes well beyond the quality offered by any credit-scoring methodology; no matter how sophisticated. The WSBI course on risk and credit risk management was the occasion to update participants' knowledge on credit risk management and procedures. The course in this respect was considered extremely useful by the participants, as it comforted them in their risk practices and provided them with new elements and instruments to mitigate the risk. In addition the course sensitized participants to Basel II regulations and to operational risks. Becoming aware of this type of risks is the first step towards their mitigation; branch managers are also involved and keen to take up this new challenge."

Branch Management

La Poste du Gabon has decided to create a Postbank with a full banking license to be able to offer all banking services including savings, payments, remittances, and credit products to individuals and SMEs.

When the postal bank receives its license it will need to comply with the country's banking regulation and supervision authorities. Since banking and postal services are very different businesses with different risks and challenges, adequate training, rigorous proce-

dures for accounting, credit risk, etc. are absolute necessities.

This is why la Poste du Gabon decided to take advantage of the WSBI training program on branch management and sent six of its best managers to Brussels for a training. The introductory part of the course highlighted the future mission of the bank - to be a bank of trust and proximity in order to provide sustainable banking services to its customers via its large branch network. The program took place over a period of 13 days and combined theory, analysis of business cases, management simulations, working groups, field visits, and preparation of reports. The content focused on marketing to low and medium income earners, the organization of the branch and the distribution network, with visits to several bank branches in Brussels, customer relationship management, risk management and credit risk, and last but not least, the financial simulation of the management of a branch. The main objective of the programme was to encourage participants to pass from a product driven organisation to a customer-centric one and to adapt their policies accordingly. Participants were also particularly sensitive to the operational risks and the role of the branch in generating revenues for the bank.

In the end, the programme presented an opportunity to unite the participants around a common goal for the bank. It created new personal links and a solidarity that is expected to strengthen the team spirit of the staff members when they return to their daily activities.

The next steps will be defined based on the report that the group is currently preparing and which will summarize the benefits of the training, its outcomes and the recommendations that it has generated. Accordingly, WSBI is prepared to continue supporting the new Postbank with the practical implementation of the programme in its daily business environment, notably as regards risk and credit management which are critical business lines for a new bank.

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