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In France, buildings consume more than 40% of final energy. Reducing this consumption is one of the main objectives of French climate change mitigation policies (the "Grenelle" legislative package). This objective represents a major challenge for the construction sector, which needs to be ready to deliver buildings and renovations offering high energy performance.

If current construction and renovation technologies are able to deliver the expected results, they require though specific skills that do not have most of the companies of the building sector. This "skills gap" is a strong obstacle to reach the set objectives.

The project "Employment Centres and Sustainable Development", initiated by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and the association "Alliance Villes Emploi" ("Cities Employment Alliance"), is based upon this assessment. The project launched on 33 local territories an innovative approach to trigger stakeholders' mobilisation in order to better anticipate climate change mitigation policies effects on employment and skills.

Employment Centres ("Maisons de l'Emploi") were created in 2004 by French Government, in the frame of its "Social Cohesion Plan", to federate all local employment and labour market actors within a single structure and around a single local employment promotion strategy. As such, they can act as strong catalysts of stakeholders' mobilisation locally and provide an appropriate frame to find concrete and transversal solutions to fill this skills gap.

On the 33 territories, the project allowed:

- To mobilise and gather all relevant stakeholders from the employment, training and building sectors: more than 1300 persons participated to local participative working groups.
- To create linkages and synergies between actors coming from very different professional sectors;
- To elaborate a common diagnoses of the situation and share common views on employment and skills challenges remaining to develop energy efficiency and renewable energies in buildings;
- To build and implement local action plans through this newly built partnership. These action plans act at three main levels:
  - Awareness raising and information campaigns to communicate on jobs and skills evolutions in that sector, targeting: works contractors, companies and their employees, job seekers and labour market institutions.
  - Adaptation and access to training for these different actors, especially for companies managers and craftsmen;
  - Promotion of local development strategies around new activities to be found in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energies in buildings.

After one year of local mobilisation and shared efforts to develop joint action plans, some lessons can already be shared.

First, this project shows that, in the field of climate change mitigation and sustainable development, national policies can only be effective through local appropriation and implementation by all relevant stakeholders.

Second, stakeholders' mobilization is a key issue for the success of these policies and has to be effectively organised. This can be highly facilitated by the existence, at the local level, of a strong political will and a legitimate organisation able to play this role. French "Employment Centres" proved to be relevant actors to fulfil this mission.