

Know-How

The noble mission

ATTF – Financial Technology Transfer Agency spearheads the technical assistance offered by Luxembourg to countries with a proven need for the acquisition of financial knowledge.

Why did the State of Luxembourg, the Central Bank, the financial supervisory authority CSSF, The Chamber of Commerce, the Institute for Training in Banking (IFBL), the University of Luxembourg and the Federation of the Professionals of the Financial Sector (PROFIL) get together to set up ATTF back in 1999?

Sharing the expertise that the Luxembourg financial centre has built up over recent decades has long been a goal of the Luxembourg government. The sole purpose of the agency is to deliver training programs to bankers across the world on a

practical expertise in fields such as risk, human resources, training, and compliance. That long list of countries, following ministerial visits or requests from embassies, is the result of due diligence visits that have, in each potential partner country, led us to define who could be the counterparty and what are the training needs of the local institutions.

Evidencing Luxembourg excellence

Working under a not-for-profit model, the budget will exceed € 3 million this year. The Luxembourg government, through the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry

practical expertise in fields such as risk, human resources, training, and compliance.

Training seminars are organised both in Luxembourg and abroad, in the form of seminars, workshops, conferences, coaching, or consulting on banking and financial matters. In 2011 more than 100 training courses will be held, representing well over 400 training days.

More than 40 different topics are on offer but two important trends are worth noting. On one side, the crisis has brought to the forefront topics such as risk manage-

“Sharing the expertise that the Luxembourg financial centre has built up over recent decades has long been a goal of the Luxembourg government”

purely cooperative basis, building on the collective experience and support of the shareholders. The underlying promotion of the financial centre is thus a by-product of the activities.

ATTF cooperates with more than 50 partners - including central banks, Ministries of Finance, bank associations, bank training institutes, universities, and chambers of commerce in 37 countries. Initially focused on some Eastern European countries, the footprint has now expanded to Southern Europe, Central and Eastern Asia, Africa, and Central America.

of Foreign Affairs, provides more than 80% of that sum with other sources, such as multinational institutions, some local partners, and direct participants, covering the remaining part.

Training programs – of 3 to 10 days in duration - are directed at professionals of the local banking sector, whether operating in central, public, or commercial banks and in other financial institutions. Training courses are offered free of charge to the partners and are delivered by expert practitioners. ATTF also call on numerous professional associations of the sector, building on their

ment, asset and liability management, and similar themes resulting from increased regulatory constraints such as Basel II or IFRS. On another side, and perhaps more surprisingly, the Agence have many queries related to the management of human resources, SME lending, and retail banking. One possible explanation is certainly that banks, in the aftermath of the crisis, have decided to go back to the basics of banking and to get closer to their local environment.

A portrait of Patrick Wallerand, a middle-aged man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a dark pinstriped suit, white shirt, and red striped tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a blurred office setting with a colorful abstract painting.

Sharing knowledge

"The feedback received from participants (some 2,500 last year) is very positive even if the long-term impact of the transfer of knowledge is more difficult to assess. What we can really be proud of is to learn that participants recommend our training programs to their colleagues and peers and thank us for the practical approach we use. This is in no small part due to the fact that 90% of the trainers are full-time practitioners and active ambassadors of the Luxembourg financial sector.

Whether helping in the drafting of investment fund circulars in Vietnam, training bank trainers in Laos, coaching a micro-finance institution in Bosnia, introducing Russian students to the realities of our financial centre, training Chinese institutions on best practices techniques in wealth management, or reinforcing the supervisory authority of the Namibian central bank, we participate, thanks to the financial support of the government, in the continuous development of all those markets.

Challenges abound when it comes to building banking expertise in so many countries (and cultures); the crisis has also led many institutions to realize the increasing importance of developing their human capital. In that, all banks, whether in Luxembourg or in the emerging and transition economies, have a more professional approach to training.

It will thus be our own challenge continuously to meet those demands through a constant adaptation of our offering."

By **Patrick Wallerand**

*Patrick Wallerand,
Director of international Programmes at
Agence de Transfert de Technologie Financière*

Practical case

Together with numerous other actors grouped under the Luxembourg Round Table on Microfinance, ATTF's efforts in that area are dedicated to providing technical assistance to microfinance institutions, particularly in the field of risk management. The annual workshops on that theme are now complemented by a coaching exercise including on-site support, monitored by professional risk managers who have been specifically trained to the coaching approach.