

Profica expands presence in Francophone Africa

Profica's expansion into Francophone Africa has been overseen by French project management expert Thierry Giannone.

The property and construction solutions company recently added the completion of a new office for General Electric in addition to its previously completed fit-out project for Ericsson in Cote d'Ivoire to its growing portfolio of projects in these countries.

Giannone and his team see great potential for development in these countries, with a particular focus on Cote D'Ivoire and Cameroon.

"We first worked in Francophone Africa in 2009 with Ericsson in Dakar, Senegal, so it's not a new area for us. We've delivered successfully on a number of projects in the region and have built experience over 10 years in Africa," says Giannone. "Our local insight and experience is key - we know how Africa works and have a solid understanding of operating there, a vital component of project success. Importantly, we are developing a French-speaking project management team, which will be a huge advantage in Francophone Africa. We are also building our local teams as we continue to focus on skills transfer."



Profica director Thierry Giannone

Enormous growth potential

Cote d'Ivoire is one of the Francophone regions that has been tagged for expansion and the company, which also delivers development origination services for investors, believes that it has enormous growth potential. Project manager Aaron Bigmore, also French-speaking, says that since he started projects there in 2012, development has boomed. "Development has just exploded in Cote D'Ivoire. Abidjan has the potential to be a main hub in Francophone West Africa."

Fortunately, the Cote D'Ivoire government is making it easy for developers to come in, according to Bigmore. Another major success factor is that contractors are very competent in Cote D'Ivoire. "A number of larger construction contractors have an established presence in Cote D'Ivoire, so you can trust in a high level of experience, a strong delivery record and clear standards," says Bigmore. Further to the projects for GE and Ericsson, Profica is involved in the conceptual stages for both new-build and redevelopment projects in the commercial sector in Abidjan.

Dynamic construction

Cameroon is another region where the business environment, a deterrent to investors for many years, is seeing improvements that are making the construction sector more dynamic. Profica was recently appointed as the project managers on a new mixed-use development consisting of 20,000m² GLA shopping centre in Douala. "We have seen the potential for several years and we're expecting rapid development in the country as reforms are implemented," says Giannone.

Profica is expecting a number of other projects to kick off across the Francophone countries in the near future. "New recruits will be deployed over the next few months as we expect considerable growth and opportunity in this region," says Giannone. "We have a well-established network and knowledge base in many of the Francophone countries and are ready to tackle major projects in this hub of opportunity."