

Eni – The Eni Foundation social health project

Eni Foundation, set up by Eni to promote and safeguard the rights of children and elderly people through initiatives of social welfare, has initiated a project aimed at enhancing infant healthcare in Congo's rural areas. The project follows the signing in 2007 of an agreement with Congolese Health, Population and Family Ministry and local NGO foundation Congo Assistance. The overall investment for the project, which is expected to be completed in 2011, amounts to approximately 8.5 million euros.

The project will implement several vaccination programs aimed at reducing the incidence of the most widespread infant diseases (tuberculosis, measles, chickenpox, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, yellow fever). These programs will be carried out involving more than 200,000 children aged between 0 and 5 years (corresponding to about 30% of children in Congo). The initiative also aims to raise the population's awareness of disease prevention and improve the skills of local healthcare staff. The project involves the remote rural districts of Niari, Cuvette and Koilou, where it is envisaged that the foundation will completely redevelop 30 Peripheral Healthcare Centres central to the initiative. In the case of particularly remote communities mobile road units are expected to operate. In the Cuvette region, river-sailing equipped boats will be also used.

The project was initiated in March 2008 in the Koilou region thanks to the development of a Coordination Centre and logistics headquarters in Pointe Noire, as well as the complete restructuring of two peripheral healthcare centres (M'Boukou and N'Kola), which will vaccinate the infant population in the area, equating to approximately 7,000 children aged between 0 and 5. Three immunization missions have already been carried out and will lead to the vaccination of 270 children against the most widespread infant diseases. Thanks to the redevelopment of the two peripheral healthcare centres, more than 900 pregnant women were vaccinated against tetanus.

Over 2008 the facilities and operations will be extended to the Niari and Cuvette districts through the development of logistics and operational headquarters in Dolisie and Oyo respectively. The program will also upgrade other healthcare centres and by the end of 2008 more than 30% of facilities associated with the project are expected to be operational.