

INTEGRATION THROUGH WORK  
PROVIDES SUPPORT TO FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE JOBBEERS WITH A  
MIGRATION BACKGROUND FOR FASTER  
AND MORE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION  
INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

# Integration Through Work

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## BELGIUM

Integration Through Work aims to provide support to jobseekers with a migration background, in order to help them integrate the labour market. This is done by providing services that are adapted to the skills and profiles of each of these jobseekers.

Name of the PES	Flemish PES (VDAB – Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding)
Scope of measure	Regional level (reform of Flemish PES (VDAB) services)
When was the practice implemented?	Since April 2016 – ongoing
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The main driver of the practice was the low employment rate among people with a migration background and non-native speakers. In response to the slow and ineffective process to integrate this group into the labour market, it was decided that something was needed.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	Various actors, other than the PES itself, were involved in the design and implementation of the practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► The Diversity Commission of the Socio-Economic Board Flanders, (the advising body of the Flemish employers and employees organisations<sup>1</sup>).</li> <li>► Flemish Ministry for Work, Economy, Innovation and Sport.</li> <li>► Flemish Ministry of Education.</li> <li>► Flemish Ministry for Welfare, Public Health and Family.</li> <li>► Belgian Federal Ministry for Social Integration.</li> <li>► Agency for Integration and Civic Integration within the same Ministry.</li> <li>► Federal Agency for the reception of asylum Seekers, Fedasil<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>► Association of Flemish cities and municipalities, VVSG<sup>3</sup>.</li> </ul>
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	Refugees, asylum seekers, individuals with subsidiary protection, third country nationals (EU and non-EU born) and non-native Dutch speaking individuals (with a migration background).
What were the practice's main objectives?	Integration Through Work aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Provide individuals from the target group with the right professional-oriented language skills, technical skills and soft skills that they need in order to access the labour market; and</li> <li>► Integrate individuals from the target group faster into the labour market, and at the level that best corresponds to their skills and educational qualifications.</li> </ul>

1 Internet: <http://www.serv.be/diversiteit/pagina/wat-doen-we>

2 Internet: [www.Fedasil.be](http://www.Fedasil.be)

3 Internet: [www.VVSG.be](http://www.VVSG.be)

<p>What activities were carried out?</p>	<p>In the context of Integration Through Work, the process is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A first screening of the person's distance from the labour market is carried out (screening of the competences and skills they possess; assessment of their skills and capabilities). The assessment of competencies is done through different tests carried out at the Flemish PES or in a working environment (if possible with the support of an employer). For instance, technical assessments are carried out; in case the person does not speak Dutch – either an interpreter is used or a particular type of test requiring a minimum vocabulary is carried out.</li> <li>▶ Depending on the results of the screening, jobseekers are then assigned to one of four trajectories, and different PES services are provided accordingly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Quick mediation</i>: the individual enters the labour market straight away and classes can be provided on the side by PES and other institutions (e.g. language classes in the evening);</li> <li>• <i>Integrated pathways</i>: simultaneous actions are taken by the Flemish PES; e.g. training on the job and language classes or training at the workplace to improve soft skills;</li> <li>• <i>Combined pathways</i>: in this case the actions are not integrated, for instance: language classes in the morning and job orientation in the afternoon;</li> <li>• <i>Linear pathways</i>: the person follows education or language classes first, usually for a longer period, and then job orientation/training is provided.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Individuals can move from one trajectory to another, if the originally assigned trajectory is found not to be suitable (for instance, if their learning abilities are different than expected).</p> <p>The Flemish PES also provide support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Training at the workplace is provided by the Flemish PES, including professional internships and individual vocational training programmes.</li> <li>▶ Training is provided to Flemish PES staff, including job coaching, mentoring, language support and trauma counselling.</li> <li>▶ Support is provided to employers that are willing to hire foreign language jobseekers. The support includes information on the relevant legislation, providing practical support in the hiring process, and organising informative sessions with employers.</li> <li>▶ Cooperation agreements are concluded with other Ministries, agencies, employers and vocational training providers.</li> </ul>
<p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p>	<p>The funding comes from the Flemish PES funds. Other organisations involved include representatives from the Agency for Integration and Civic Integration of the Flemish Ministry of Integration.</p>
<p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p>	<p>Flemish PES funds</p>
<p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p>	<p>The main outputs – recorded in July 2017, for the period 2015-2016 – were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Number of people that consulted the Flemish PES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 179 in 2015; of these 43.1% were low-skilled individuals; 33.9% had a secondary education; 23% were highly qualified. 86.5% of the people consulting the PES in 2015 were between 25 and 54 years old;</li> <li>• 8 053 in 2016; of which 44.7% were low-skilled individuals; 31.7% had a secondary education; 23.7% were highly qualified.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Both in 2015 and 2016: around 90% of jobseekers taking part in the Integration Through Work practice attended a guidance programme and/or mediation to work. In 2015 32.8% of jobseekers enrolled in a training or workplace learning programme; 16.6% did so in 2016.</li> </ul> <p>This data is constantly updated, hence the outcomes of this practice will change over time.</p>

**What outcomes have been identified?**

A fundamental change was made in the way the Flemish PES works: before the start of the Integration Through Work practice, it was not possible to access Flemish PES services for individuals with no knowledge of the Dutch language. However, it is not necessary to have any previous knowledge of Dutch to access the Integration Through Work service, since learning Dutch is now integral to the practice. Results from 2015 reveal that after registration to PES:

- ▶ 26.7% of jobseekers participating in the practice found a job after 6 months.
- ▶ 37.3% after one year;
- ▶ 42.1% after 18 months; and
- ▶ 45.2% after two years.

Results from 2016 showed that:

- ▶ 22.8% found a job after 6 months;
- ▶ 37.1% after one year;
- ▶ 44.5% after 18 months; and
- ▶ 47.7% after two years.

**What are the lessons learnt and success factors?**

Key lessons and success factors are as follows:

- ▶ The importance of involving the right stakeholders and actors from the beginning, at the stage of designing the practice. These stakeholders included representatives of employers and employees; relevant Ministries (mainly, depending on the competencies, the Ministries for Employment, Education, Economy, Welfare and Public Health). Also, public agencies can provide support in the implementation.
- ▶ The importance of agreeing on common objectives with aforementioned actors.
- ▶ The importance of concluding specific agreements with all the organisations that are involved in the implementation, and translating these agreements into sound operations.



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