



THE PROGRAMME PROVIDES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYEES WHO NEED SUPPORT IN CHANGING JOBS OR REMAINING EMPLOYED DUE TO A LACK OF SKILLS OR OUTDATED SKILLS; AND ALSO TO EMPLOYERS TO HELP THEM FIND AND TRAIN A SUITABLY SKILLED WORKFORCE AND RESTRUCTURE THEIR COMPANIES.

“Work and Study” programme for prevention of unemployment

Publication date: August 2018

ESTONIA

The programme provides support to employees who need support in changing jobs or remaining employed due to a lack of skills or outdated skills; and also to employers to help them find and train a suitably skilled workforce and restructure their companies.

Name of the PES	Eesti Töötukassa - Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (Estonian PES)
Scope of measure	National reform
When was the practice implemented?	2017 – ongoing ¹
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	Growing labour shortages, structural unemployment and low labour productivity were the main drivers of the practice. The programme was initiated by the Supervisory Board of the Estonian PES consisting of employer, employee and government representatives on an equal basis.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	The organisations involved included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Estonian Qualification Authority; ▶ Vocational training providers; and ▶ Employer and employee representatives.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	The main groups targeted by the practice include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employees who are at risk of unemployment due to outdated professional skills, language or ICT skills, or employees who are unable to continue at their current job due to a health condition; ▶ Employers recruiting new employees in professions where there are labour shortages and which are considered to be of growing importance in the near future; and ▶ Employers who need to adapt the skills of their employees due to restructuring of the company, changes in technology or qualification requirements.
What were the practice's main objectives?	The main objectives include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prevent unemployment by updating the skills of employees in accordance with future needs; ▶ Reduce structural unemployment and skills mismatch; and ▶ Tackle labour shortages.

¹ The Supervisory Board submitted the proposal for the changes in the Labour Market Programme which was approved by the Government. The legal basis for the Labour Market Programme, so called 'Employment Programme' can be found here: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/506062014001/consolide/current>

What activities were carried out?

The main activities carried out included:

- ▶ A series of analyses were carried out to:
 1. learn from the experiences of other countries;
 2. have an overview of the current activities and measures available and offered by the public sector in Estonia (in order to prevent duplication of target groups and measures);
 3. understand the real needs of the employers (a series of workshops and interviews were carried out to this end);
 4. have an understanding of the probable economic (and labour market) trends in the nearest coming future. For this purpose, studies from the Estonian Qualification Authority were consulted. The Authority carries out studies on the current situation and future perspectives of the different professions in the labour market.
- ▶ Training was organised for PES employees in order to prepare them for the provision of support to the programme and to offer new counselling and support to the clients;
- ▶ An advertising campaign (using various media channels) was organised to inform the general public; leaflets were produced, information sessions (including job fairs) were organised.
- ▶ The new services are as follows:
 - ▶ a degree study allowance for employees, for obtaining a vocational or a professional higher education qualification or a Bachelor's degree in certain study fields;
 - ▶ labour market training in certain fields with a training voucher for employees at risk of unemployment;
 - ▶ support for obtaining qualifications for employees who have completed training with the support of the Unemployment Insurance Fund; and
 - ▶ a training grant for employers to improve the skills and knowledge of their employees at the moment of recruitment or in case of changes in the company.

The employees are required to participate in career counselling prior to the training, so that they make informed training choices and ensure thereby the best possible outcome.

The study fields supported are determined by the sectoral labour force needs studies, conducted by the Estonian's Qualifications Authority.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

All PES staff is involved in the practice, both at national and regional level. No dedicated staff exist in the PES to deal only with preventive measures.

What were the source(s) of funding?

The programme was funded through the PES's own budget.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

In 2017, 312 people received a degree study allowance for obtaining a vocational or a professional higher education qualification or a Bachelor's degree; 20 companies used a training grant and 814 people who were at risk of unemployment took part in labour market training.

What outcomes have been identified?

As the programme started in May 2017, no assessment has been carried out so far, so no information on outcomes is available yet. An evaluation will be carried out in 2019.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

- ▶ To implement a programme like this, it is important to carry out a thorough analysis of:
 - ▶ possible target groups, in order to pick out the ones most in need of support;
 - ▶ already existing measures and analysis of these practices (both within the country and in countries that have similar practices);
 - ▶ the labour market situation and its likely evolution in the future; and
 - ▶ future skill needs in different occupations.
- ▶ In working with employers, a dialogue needs to be established, in order to understand their needs and motivations;
- ▶ Resources and time need to be spent on promoting the programme through the media and by the PES itself in order for the target group(s) to be aware of the existence of the support
- ▶ Detailed and comprehensive studies need to be available on the labour market characteristics of the country and the future skills and competences required.



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