



# Your Talent Counts

YOUR TALENT COUNTS CONSISTS OF SEVERAL INTERNAL HR PROGRAMMES TO PROMOTE EMPLOYEE COLLABORATION, COMMITMENT AND (SELF) LEADERSHIP.

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## BELGIUM

The Flemish PES (VDAB) aims to address the following internal challenges: (1) increasing the employability of its staff, (2) filling job shortages, (3) developing future-driven competences especially in the field of digital skills (4) strengthening attendance, (5) ensuring VDAB is an inclusive employer.

Name of the PES

VDAB

Scope of measure  
(a pilot project or a national reform)

Regional

When was the practice implemented?

The programme was implemented in 2018.

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

The performance of VDAB strongly depends on its employees. With an ever-tighter labour market, employers and jobseekers expect a lot of help from VDAB. The success of VDAB as an organisation depends, in the first place, on motivated and well-functioning employees, now and in the future. That is why it is important that every colleague feels properly supported and can take control of their career development.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

VDAB

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

All VDAB employees are the target. The exact target group depends on the project e.g. when working on the increase of employability and career resilience, all VDAB-employees are targeted, when developing future-driven competences either all of the employees are targeted (e.g. digital competences) or only a specific function like a mediator, instructor and their team leaders.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice's main objectives are closely linked to the challenges mentioned above.

1. *Increasing employability:* well-functioning and career resilience.
2. *Filling job shortages:* fill existing vacancies at VDAB, give opportunities to employees with hidden talents, and implement learning-on-the-job instead of looking externally.
3. *Developing future-driven competences:* preparing employees to continue participating in a society that is evolving rapidly and where job content changes rapidly. Digital skills are an important part of this.

What activities were carried out?

**1. Increasing employability:**

- ▶ *Future pathways*: a coaching offer for employees focusing on performance was offered whereby both the manager and the employee are supported in order to enhance their performance.
- ▶ *Career house*: in 2020, VDAB set up a virtual career house in order to offer strong support to its employees in their performance and their career, both now and in the future. This digital platform can be deployed by all employees who wish to take the driving seat in their career. Furthermore, it is a support for managers in their role as primary career coaches for team members. The career house includes an open offering of digital tools (by VDAB and the Government of Flanders). In addition, the career house is the best access gate to specialised support and intensive pathways customised to the organisation's needs and to pathways for specific groups of employees.

**2. Filling shortage jobs:**

- ▶ *Talent campus*: A talent campus was set up for shortages of IT programmers and project leaders. It gives the opportunity to internal employees to take a new internal position. Information sessions were organised, as well as screenings and a training path to build up the necessary competences and experience.
- ▶ *Career pathways*: for core functions that demand great professionalism/expertise, individual career development opportunities are offered within the position.

**3. Developing future-driven competences:**

- ▶ *Digital working @ VDAB*: 2020 was the year of "Everybody digi-wise", with the Digiwijs e-learning modules. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about an additional digital acceleration. VDAB invested in a first-class digital training provision and in the digital skills of each employee. Employees who had difficulties attaining the demanded level of competence via the online learning modules were offered an intensive in-person workshop.
- ▶ *Training and supporting paths*: 'Your Talent counts' focuses on the professions of mediator, instructor, manager and expert. VDAB maps the competences expected for these positions. Based on this, the internal support and training provision is adjusted so that employees can follow additional training where necessary. VDAB developed a new training method called 'field coaching' to teach the new conversation methodology.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Apart from its Human Resources Development (HRD) specialists, VDAB has relied on the expertise of external partners for talent campuses.

What were the source(s) of funding?

Only internal sources were used.

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

- ▶ *Future pathways*: 85% of the managers and 81% of employees experienced this pathway as meaningful to extremely meaningful. Around 53% estimate the chance of permanent change to be big or very big.
- ▶ *Career house*: on the basis of users' data and monitoring information a process of growing consciousness amongst the team leaders of their role could be observed.
- ▶ *Talent Campus for project leaders (2020)*: from more than 300 participants of digital info sessions, 155 applied as candidates to participate in online admission tests. 32 employees participated in the online motivation discussion. Ultimately, 12 employees were able to start, of which 4 dropped out during the training.
- ▶ *Talent Campus for I&T-profiles (2019)*: from 176 employees (VDAB and Flemish Government) following one of the infossessions, 60 applied as candidates to participate in the online admission tests. 16 started eventually as either JAVA-developer or functional analyst.
- ▶ *Training and supporting paths*: in 2021, 1 530 counsellors attended an obligatory training and supporting path preparing them for their new career pathway. An extensive development programme was built on a basis of blended learning with e-learning modules, team discussions, individual field coaching (2 927) and conclusive learning.
- ▶ *Everybody digi-wise*: after the launch of the 'Digiwijs' project and until the end of 2020, 3 950 VDAB employees successfully took the test and received the label 'Digi-wise'.

What outcomes have been identified?

Participation in *Future pathways* has been acknowledged as an important element of career development by both managers and employees. The Talent Campus for project leaders has proven to be a successful formula for covering existing vacancies with internal employees. The activities within the 'Everybody Digi-wise' project have shown that most of VDAB's staff have high digital competences.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

In an audit carried out in 2021 a well-managed HR programme with a PDCA-approach and several innovative projects carried out simultaneously with excellent results have been identified as success factors. One major lesson learnt for the future is to focus more on the monitoring of effects rather than on outputs and participation.



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