Country Report

Belgium - Flanders

Client: European Commission

Rotterdam, London, 15 November 2011

Country Report PES PMS

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Summary

ID	
Country	Belgium – Flanders
Name PES	Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB)
Name researcher	MC, EvN
Additional remarks (e.g. source gaps, problems, challenges)	Country visited

1 Background information

General information PES		Source*
Mission & tasks & targets	VDAB's mission is to ensure, organize and promote job placement services on the one hand and guidance and training on the other hand for employers, jobseekers and employees alike in view of lifelong and sustainable labour market integration of jobseekers and employees. Tasks: 1. To realize a comprehensive approach is its key mission of services for jobseekers; this comprehensive approach is prescribed by the Flemish Government Agreement 2004-2009 (the objective of the comprehensive approach is to offer chances of (re)integration to all jobseekers in order to avoid that they end up in long-term unemployment, and this in conformity with the European employment guidelines); 2. Contribute to the harmonization of supply and demand on the labour market; 3. Conclude cooperation agreements, such as outsourcing agreements, in a dynamic and transparent way with all actors and while adopting a partnership approach, in conformity with the Flemish Government Agreement 2004-2009; 4. Pursue proportionate participation of 'opportunity groups' (i.e. groups with opportunities) on the labour market by its actions; 5. Take the necessary measures to fight every kind of direct or indirect discrimination on the labour market; 6. promote adaptability and employability of jobseekers, employees and employers; 7. Optimize its set of tools by making it more transparent, efficient and effective.	Benchmarking, Management Information Systems Belgium, 2008.
Organisational setup (nr. of central, regional and local offices)	One central office, 13 regional offices (of which 6 include competency centres and ~~6~~ 5 include EURES offices).	VDAB Annual report 2010.
Human resources (nr. of staff if possible fte's) Please mention the year	5,019 staff, 4,274 fte's (2009); 5,013 staff, 4,237 fte's (2010).	VDAB Annual report 2009; VDAB Key figures 2010.
Financial resources (annual budget) Please mention the year	Expenses: € 557 M, revenues: € 563 M, investments: € 16.4 M (2010).	VDAB, Annual report 2010.

Institutional context		Source
How closely linked is the PES to relevant governmental body? (*deconcentration*: is this a part of a ministry, is it a legal form, a separate agency?)	VDAB is supervised by the Flemish Minister of Budget, Finance, Work, Planning, Sport and Heritage. As of 2004, it is an external autonomous agency (extern verzelfstandigd agentschap). This means that VDAB not directly controlled by the minister but is controlled by a Board of Directors. As part of the Flemish government it is accountable to it.	http://vdab.be/vdab/algemeen.shtml.
How much autonomy is given to regional and local level in PES? (*decentralisation*: who designs budget, the strategy etc.)	Objective parameters are laid down by the management agreement with the Flemish government for the 2005-2010 period. A new management agreement – for the 2011 – 2015 period – between the VDAB and the Flemish government was concluded in December 2010. Much more local and regional autonomy, with some able to set their own performance measurement regimes locally or in negotiation with central agencies and ministries.	VDAB Annual report 2009 / VDAB Annual report 2010. DWP, International review 2009.
To what degree are services or tasks outsourced to voluntary or private sector? (*Privatisation*: which services are outsourced and to whom?)	There is outsourcing by tendering.	VDAB Annual report 2009.

Country information		Source
Sending or receiving country? Please elaborate.	Receiving country (Flanders is a receiving region: both from the Walloon Region and abroad)	Interviews.
Background information: • % of employment; • % of unemployment; • the main challenges on the labour market.	% of employment (Belgium): 62.0 % (2010); % of unemployment (Belgium): 7.4 % (2011M6), (Flanders): 7.21% (2011M7). The Flemish labour market recovered faster from the economic recession than anticipated. In 2010, the VDAB received 20.5% more situations vacant (262,280) than in 2009 (217,588), while the unemployment figures dropped as of September 2010 as well. At the end of 2010, the VDAB had 9.3% fewer jobseekers than at the end of 2009. The high unemployment figures and the general shortage of jobs which were predicted at the start of the crisis, never materialised fortunately enough. Disadvantaged groups include the unskilled, people over 50, migrants, disabled workers and long-term job seekers. 1. Encouraging older people to work and ensuring that restructuring takes place efficiently; 2. Improving the links between education and the	Eurostat. Eurostat, Arvastat. VDAB Key figures 2010. New institutional actors of social dialogue in the

Country information		Source
	labour market and promoting lifelong learning; 3. A comprehensive preventive approach to unemployment and offering opportunities to the long-term unemployed by means of an active labour market policy; 4. Promoting proportional participation of ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups in the labour market; 5. Achieving a flexible combination of work and family.	framework of the European employment strategy. The case of Flanders: Belgium, SERV, 2009.

2 PES performance measurement systems – Design

Purpose		Source
For which purpose was the performance measurement system established and for which level? (check for accountability; management information)	No information on the origin of the PMS is available in the literature. The DWH LM (data warehouse), managed by the Belgian Crossroads for Social Security Bank, was set up in 1999 within the context of a scientific project of the AGORA-programme, launched by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (FSPO). This scientific project originated at the request of a number of social security institutions, the Belgian Crossroads for Social Security Bank itself and some labour market scientists. The objective was to create a database in which a series of social data on individual labour market careers is available, which the social security institutions involved dispose of. The PES PMS is directly linked to the PES mission and targets / priorities. The PMS is adapted to changing targets / priorities and needs for information. The **Balanced scorecard (BSC)** for top management (performance management system) is based on the priorities that are concluded in the five yearly management agreement between the VDAB and the Flemish government. The management agreement translates policy priorities into strategic goals for the VDAB, the means it receives from the government and the targets that are to be reached. It can be viewed as a contract that is to ensure that the VDAB is managed in a way that targets are reached. Information in the Balanced scorecard includes monthly measurements on KSF and KPIs that are aimed at the management but available for all the PES' staff through the intranet. The information can be broken down to the level of provinces and regions. The **Executive Information System (EIS)** is a very detailed PMS (comprising 700 indicators) that is mainly intended for middle and lower management and PES personnel. Most of the information in the system (95%) is updated on a monthly basis (otherwise updated quarterly or biannually). Two years ago the VDAB started the development of third performance measurement system to complement the EIS, called Oracle BI. Data in the data warehouse are updated daily. The daily updates were the main	Hallen, 2004.

Purpose		Source
	reason for developing the system. Monthly updates from the EIS are not frequent enough for some of its users. The Oracle BI system is still being expanded, but already allows users to consult performance information, information from client files, information on vacancies and job seekers. 'Arvastat' labour market information made available by VDAB for external parties (e.g. journalists) is seen as a 4th system by the interviewees.	

Indicators		Source
What types of indicators are used to measure performance? (in terms of: inputs, outputs, results, impacts)	The indicators used are output and result indicators.	Interviews and documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB.
Which (sub-) indicators are used for each type? (if there many, please put them in an annex)	See annex.	Documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB.
Do indicators presuppose causal relationships (input-output; output-results; results-impact)? How?	All the BSC-indicators (see annex) are linked to targets. Many of the results-indicators are linked to output-indicators.	Interviews and documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB.

Targets		Source
Do targets exists, i.e. are indicators quantified? For who are targets set (central office, local offices, individual employees)?	Yes, targets exist. There are partnerships between VDAB and its Walloon and Brussels' counterparts. In the partnership agreements, targets are set. Furthermore, for all the BSC-indicators (see annex) targets are set.	Interviews and documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB.
Are targets SMART?	Yes, targets are SMART.	Interviews and documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB.

Tools		Source
Does the PES PMS includes a Data Warehouse (DWH) and to which other administrations is this DWH linked?	The PES PMS includes a DWH which is currently not linked to data sources from other administrations. In the near future this should change.	Interviews.
Is a tool (e.g. Balanced Scorecard) for presenting management information available?	Yes, a BSC is available.	Interviews and documents on the BSC.

Quality assurance		Source
Is quality of client satisfaction measured? How and frequency?	Quality of service is measured through service satisfaction surveys amongst clients (employers, job seekers, employees and partners). Surveys are conducted throughout the year and reported on biannually. Figures about satisfaction of job seekers, employers and employees are available online.	Interviews, and documents on the PMS provided by the VDAB. http://vdab.be/vdab/cijfers.shtml.

Management and support		Source
What are the main data sources of the PMS?	The main data sources of the PMS are process generated data and data from various VDAB departments including the studies department.	Interviews.
How is data collected and updated?	Most data are process generated data that are extracted and further processed by the studies department (EIS and BSC, recurring, monthly). The Oracle BI data are automatically processed and taken from the system (system/database which job counsellors use to e.g. track information on job seekers and record information on actions. This is a continuous process). The surveys take place throughout the year and are reported on biannually.	Interviews.
Who has access to the data generated by the PMS?	The BSC is intended for top management, the EIS and Oracle BI systems are intended to be used by the lower echelons (e.g. job counsellors) who have access to the systems through the VDAB intranet. The PMSs are regularly adjusted/tailored to the needs of the users and to keep the systems efficient (e.g. simplified in case this is necessary).	Interviews.

Tagging customers		Source
Are customers willing to work abroad or willing to hire foreigners especially tagged in the system?	Yes, jobseekers willing to work abroad in Europe or other parts of the world.	Interviews. Ecorys Websurvey.

Tracking customers		Source
Is contact maintained with clients to ascertain the results of activity/support provided? For example, are any follow-up surveys undertaken?	Information is available on whether or not a client finds lasting work (e.g. measurement after a number of months) but this is currently not used as there is not yet a definition adopted on what is "sustainable". There is a shift from output based monitoring to results based monitoring. Therefore in the future the VDAB intents to also ascertain results on a longer term (e.g. follow up on placement after 6 months).	Interviews.

Influence PES resources on PMS		Source
In which ways and to what extent is the PES PMS influenced by the PES resources, business models and national priorities?	As the VDAB attaches a high priority to monitoring and evaluation tools, changes in PES resources would not directly impact these, as stated during the interview. National priorities do impact on the PMS. Changes in national / PES priorities lead to changes in the PMS. Larger changes in priorities only take place five yearly – when the management agreement is renewed – while smaller changes can be made in the annual plan.	Interviews.

3 PES performance measurement systems - Use

Performance management areas		Source
Is performance measurement being used for the operational, tactical or strategic level? By whom?	It is used, at strategic, tactical and operational levels by management and by job counsellors: The EIM and Oracle BI PMSs provide line managers and job counsellors with information on the relative performance of units and individuals. Using this information line managers can manage their units and job counsellors can manage themselves (e.g. direct more time and effort.to certain activities when they are lagging behind in some respects). The BSC is intended for tactical and strategic use by higher management.	Interviews.
At which level(s) of the organisation is performance management practiced?	It is used by job counsellors and line managers at local branches and centrally by e.g. higher management.	Interviews.
In which management areas (Human resources, Financial resources, Quality management, and Strategy development) are the findings of performance measurement used?	Not available.	

PES mission and target setting		Source
Please describe the target-setting process: actors involved, frequency, etc.	The PES PMS is directly linked to the PES mission and targets / priorities. The PMS is adapted to changing targets / priorities and needs for information. The BSC for top management is based on the priorities that are concluded in the five yearly management agreement between the VDAB and the Flemish government. The management agreement translates policy priorities into strategic goals for the VDAB, the means it receives from the government and the targets that are to be reached.	Interviews.

Benchmarking		Source
Are sub national PES offices benchmarked?	Yes.	Interviews.

Rewards		Source
Is target-realisation rewarded? How?	No.	

4 EURES

Information about EURES		Source
General information about EURES (number fte's, cooperation with PES)	There is a specialised level of cooperation of EURES with other counsellors of the PES (doing the basic services for EURES), in particular with vacancy counsellors and sector staff. The EURES unit is also cooperating with communication experts and Europass colleagues regarding promotional activities. Currently 7 FTE are employed as EURES Advisor at VDAB.	Interviews.
Most important stages and tools	EURES services (i.a. information and referrals, vacancy handling actions) for (mobile) jobseekers and employers are (supposed to be) registered in the VDAB Jobseekers and (Master)vac systems, by the EURES advisors (EA) and by (all) counsellors. The VDAB has three channels to provide EURES and other information: the call centre/service line, www.vdab.be (werken in het buitenland), human resources (EA, counsellors). EURES manager and EA have access to the EURES community. The update of information on these sites is a continuing action point.	Interviews.
Assessment of the tools: what works well and why and what needs some improvement.	The cooperation of the network for EURES job days/jobfairs and/or other EURES events works rather well. The EURES target groups, expected role of the network and estimated output should be defined in a clearer way though. (Periodical, operational, updated) Surveys on EU labour markets/surpluses, information on skills shortages by sector remains an important tool for detecting complementarity between countries/regions and for doing bi-or trilateral placement projects.	Interviews.
Which factors facilitate or hinder cross-national placement of individuals by EURES. Describe short their impact.	The main factors that hinder cross-national placement – in the opinion of the interviewee – are: • the fact that living and working conditions of the home country remain not applicable in case of a accepting a job abroad related to a transnational labour contract; • Prejudices of (some) employers, to recruit by preference national employees; • Language obstacles (which is in particular the case for Belgium / Flanders); • It is often the case that (in particular young) people express their interest for a job abroad,	Interviews.

Information about EURES		Source
	but once presented with a concrete job opportunity job seekers are reluctant or unwilling to accept the job after all; • Relations with family, friends, other relatives in the home country. Factors that facilitate placement by EURES are: • Personal contacts within the network and with the public, for (pre)selected vacancies, in particular also during European jobfairs/job days; • Bilateral cooperation projects arranged by agreement between PES EURES.	
Opinion on the current way/form of reporting in the EA Monthly reports? What works well what does not.	A negative aspect of the EA Monthly reports is that it is a periodical, manual reporting system with high risk of errors, especially when it is used by a large number of people in the EURES network. Also the contents of the reports must be reconsidered. For example, is it important to measure the number of contacts? Having a contact is a means to realise placement and not a result.	Interviews.
Alternative ways for measuring the performance of EURES (describe shortly)	The interviewee would suggest to consider the development of an automatic system that measures performance quantitatively.	Interviews.
What other data is available for measuring the performance of EURES (other than that included in the monthly reports)?	EURES conversations are registered as such in the system. Data is available concerning European vacancies in treatment by our counsellors.	Interviews.
In your opinion, what are (or could be) the best indicators for measuring the impact of EURES on geographical mobility?	In theory, the measuring system should be straightforward. For sending countries, the number of placements of (mobile) jobseekers should be measured. For receiving countries fulfilment of vacancies by jobseekers from abroad should be measured. Such a country distinction should also avoid the problem of double counting. In practice, we can only give information on direct contacts at PES level. At other levels, we can use data from e.g. social security to give global figures on mobility.	Interviews.

5 Geographical labour mobility

5.1 Design

Specific to geographical mobility		Source
Is the performance of geographical mobility activities other than EURES assessed?	Performance of geographical mobility is assessed between the regions (Walloon and Flemish region, and Brussels) for which indicators are in place. International mobility is not measured by the PES, but we have figures from social security system and a survey on employees on the national level (Belgium). These provide insight on commuter mobility only. The law on privacy hinders this, but the fact that stimulating international mobility is not one of the PES' objectives (at least not beyond the EURES unit's objectives) is a main reason for not including indicators on international labour mobility. Some data on cross-border mobility are collected, but only in cases where there are partnership agreements (e.g. between the south-west of Flanders and France).	VDAB Annual report 2009. Interview.
Do indicators related to geographical mobility activity exist within the PES performance measurement system?	Yes, they do. There are partnerships between VDAB and its Walloon and Brussels' counterparts. In the partnership agreements, targets are set.	Interviews.
Are targets in place?	Performance of geographical mobility is assessed between the regions (Walloon and Flemish region, and Brussels) for which indicators are in place.	Interviews.
Does the PES collect any (other) data on geographical mobility activity (i.e. which is not included in the performance measurement system)?	No, only data on mobility between the regions are measured as part of the PMS by the PES studies department. Data on mobility between the provinces are not collected by the PES, but are published by an external organisation (Steunpunt WSE). Data on international mobility are not measured at all by the PES. Data on commuter mobility exists, but only fragmented and incomplete (due to legislation on privacy employers are not required to divulge information on the nationality of employees and due to the fact that this legislation prohibits the VDAB or any other organisation access to e.g. the tax office database. (VDAB could ask employers to provide data on nationality for vacancies in which they mediate, but this would not provide a complete picture with regard to mobility; VDAB job counsellors have the possibility to record the nationality of a job seeker in their system, but not all job counsellors do so, so this number only amounts to some 200 foreign	Interviews.

Specific to geographical mobility		Source
	job seekers a year, a large underestimation as most foreign job seekers do not register at VDAB).	
Does the PES also monitor geographical labour mobility on the basis of data provided by another organisation (e.g. statistical office)? Which indicators are used?	Yes. We use information from the national employee survey and information from the social security system to have a view on commuting. For regional mobility the PES collects data itself (EIS) but also makes use of its partners in the other regions (Forem, Actiris).	Interviews.
Where in the PES is data collected and processed?	Not applicable as data is not collected.	Interviews.
How is quality of service/client satisfaction related to geographical labour mobility activities measured?	Quality of service/client satisfaction related to geographical labour mobility activities is not measured.	Interviews.
Is contact maintained with clients to ascertain the results of services related to geographical labour mobility provided? For example, are any follow-up surveys undertaken?	No, we use national data available. In general we do not use follow up surveys in general, same for other PES objectives.	Interviews.

5.2 Use

Specific to geographical mobility		Source
At what organisational level (strategic, operational, etc.) and frequency is the effectiveness of services related geographical mobility monitored?	The effectiveness of services related to international geographical mobility services is not measured as stimulating international mobility is not one of the PES' objectives – at least not beyond the EURES unit's objectives and mobility between border regions where partnerships exist. is measured, but only in cases where there are partnership agreements.	Interviews.
Is monitoring information or data used to inform future activity/resource allocation?	No.	Interviews.
Are good practices identified and shared? By whom?	No.	Interviews.
Where and when is information on geographical mobility and associated activity used? Is it shared with cross-border/trans-national partners?	The information on cross-border mobility – the only information on geographic mobility collected by the PES – is collected by and shared bilaterally (or trilaterally) between VDAB and its cross-border partners; UWV Werkbedrijf (Meuse-Rhine, Scheldemond) and Pôle emploi and Le Forem (Nord Pas de Calais).	Interviews.

Annex I

Used sources
• Interviews; • Benchmarking project, Management Information Systems Belgium, 2008; • Department for Work and Pensions (2009). International review of Performance Management; • Eurostat and Arvastat statistics; • VDAB Annual report 2009; • VDAB Annual report 2010 • VDAB Key figures 2010; • VDAB website: http://vdab.be/vdab/algemeen.shtml; • Systems in Public Employment Services. Research summary no 616. (DWP, International review 2009; • SERV (2009) New institutional actors of social dialogue in the framework of the European employment strategy. The case of Flanders: Belgium; • Hallen, van der, P., (2004) Data Warehouse (DWH) Monitoring in the Public Employment Service (PES) Statements and Comments (Hallen, 2004) (STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES of the Belgian DWH.

Annex II

Indicators Balanced Scorecard (BSC)				
Key success factor	**Key performance indicator**	**Indicator / item**	**Target**	**Frequency**
1. Basic services	1. Client satisfaction job seekers	Contact services	70% < x < 75%	Biannual
1. Basic services	1. Client satisfaction job seekers	Service line	85% < x < 90%	Biannual
1. Basic services	1. Client satisfaction job seekers	Online services	75% < x < 80%	Biannual
1. Basic services	2. Satisfaction of clients and employees of LWW's (local 'workshop')	-	-	-
1. Basic services	3. Employee satisfaction	Contact services	70% < x < 75%	Biannual
1. Basic services	3. Employee satisfaction	Online services	75% < x < 80%	Biannual
1. Basic services	4. Vacancy range		17%	Monthly
1. Basic services	5. Job supply and transparency of supply of vacancies	Registered vacancies	120,000 – 165,000	Monthly
1. Basic services	5. Job supply and transparency of supply of vacancies	Share of SME's	60%	Monthly
1. Basic services	6. Fulfilment of vacancies	Percentage	82%	Monthly
1. Basic services	6. Fulfilment of vacancies	Time	42 days	Monthly
1. Basic services	6. Fulfilment of vacancies	Percentage for hard to fill vacancies	-	Monthly
1. Basic services	7. Employer satisfaction	Contact services	70% < x < 75%	Biannual
1. Basic services	7. Employer satisfaction	Service line	85% < x < 90%	Biannual
1. Basic services	7. Employer satisfaction	Online services	75% < x < 80%	Biannual
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	1. Share of target groups	Low educated	49.6%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	1. Share of target groups	Disabled	10.5%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	1. Share of target groups	Immigrants	19.7%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	1. Share of target groups	Older workers	-	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	2. Preventative target group	Job seekers under 25	100%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	2. Preventative target group	Job seekers aged 25 and above	100%	Monthly

Indicators Balanced Scorecard (BSC)				
Key success factor	**Key performance indicator**	**Indicator / item**	**Target**	**Frequency**
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	3. Curative target group	-	'norm=result'	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	4. Activation percentage for long term job seekers		16.5%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	All unemployed job seekers	63%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Low educated	56%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Older workers	44%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Immigrants	52%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Disabled	52%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Long term unemployed	59%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	5. Outflow from unemployment after counselling	Short distance to labour market	70%	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	All unemployed job seekers	51	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Low educated	45	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Older workers	36	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Immigrants	41	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Disabled	38	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Long term unemployed	45	Monthly
2. Comprehensive approach job seekers	6. Outflow into work after counselling	Short distance to labour market	-	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	1. Yield of courses in competence centres	Number of persons	40,000	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	1. Yield of courses in competence centres	Number of hours	12,000,000	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	1. Yield of courses in competence centres	Target groups reached	-	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	2. Yield of work-based vocational training (ibo)	Number of started training courses	16,000	Monthly

Indicators Balanced Scorecard (BSC)				
Key success factor	**Key performance indicator**	**Indicator / item**	**Target**	**Frequency**
3. Service provision in competence centres	2. Yield of work-based vocational training (ibo)	Percentage of discontinued courses for adverse reasons	17.6%	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	2. Yield of work-based vocational training (ibo)	Number of started 'interim' training courses	Not applicable	Monthly
3. Service provision in competence centres	2. Yield of work-based vocational training (ibo)	Success percentage of 'interim' training courses	Not applicable	Monthly
4. Innovation and product development	1. Investments in innovation activities	-	5%	Annually
5. VDAB as employer	1. Target groups as a share of newly hired staff	Immigrants	10%	Monthly
5. VDAB as employer	1. Target groups as a share of newly hired staff	Disabled	4%	Monthly

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