Country Report

Ireland

Client: European Commission

Rotterdam, London, 11 November 2011

Country Report PES PMS

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ECORYS

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Summary

ID	
Country	Ireland
Name PES	FÁS (Foras Aiseanna Saothair – Training and Employment Authority)
Name researcher	LS
Additional remarks (e.g. source gaps, problems, challenges)	Most recently available annual report is 2009. Country visited.

1 Background information

General information PES		Source*
Mission & tasks & targets	The following mission and goals were set out for the training and employment authority but by the end of the year (2011/12) this organisation will no longer exist and no statements have yet been made which set out the specific aims of its successor bodies, therefore the following information should be viewed as historic. Primary mandate is to help people to develop their own skills and potential in order to secure employment. Primary target groups, as mandated by Government, are people with low skills or education levels, people on the Live Register for longer periods of time, people up to age 34 years, with a particular emphasis on young people under 25, and those people who have lost jobs in sectors most impacted by the economic downturn. Activity falls into 4 categories: training for employment, training in employment, integration supports and employment schemes. Mission: promoting a more competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy, in collaboration with its stakeholders, by enhancing the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises. Commitment to the achievement of 8 High Priority Goals that reflect and support the need to sustain economic competitiveness, increase productivity levels through up-skilling the workforce, and improve social inclusion and labour market equality for a range of disadvantaged individuals. Goal 1: Entry to the Labour Market - to provide a range of proactive job-related services, supports and programmes, to assist individuals enter/re-enter the active labour market; Goal 2: Workforce Development -to promote workforce development by upgrading the competencies and qualifications of the workforce; and by providing and facilitating targeted training programmes and services to employers and employees, including the continuous development and up-dating of the apprenticeship programme;	Website Statement of Strategy 2006-2009 http://www.fas.ie/en/pubdocs/strategy/SOS_ENG.pdf. No subsequent strategy document has been produced given changes which are in progress. Annual Report 2009. Interviews.

General information PES		Source*
	Goal 3: - Labour Market Policy - to inform and influence labour market policy so that it supports Ireland's economic and social development; Goal 4: National Human Resource and Skills Development Strategy - to advocate the need for, and contribute to the development of, a co-ordinated National Human Resource and Skills Development Strategy for Ireland and ensure FÁS plays its part in delivering the Strategy; Goal 5: Service Excellence - to promote customer service excellence to our clients, as the central focus of all our programmes and services; Goal 6: Social Inclusion, Equality and Diversity - to promote the removal of barriers and provide supports which ensure access to programmes, services and employment for individuals and groups experiencing exclusion, discrimination and labour market disadvantage; Goal 7: Organisational Excellence - to achieve excellence in our staff and work practices in order to deliver the optimum return on resources for the Government and taxpayers; strengthening the partnership ethos as a means of attaining all the High Priority Goals; Goal 8: Communications and Marketing - to improve communications and relationships with all our stakeholders and to communicate proactively with our customers, so that they can make informed choices regarding our range of programmes and services. These goals are further 'fleshed-out' through the development and implementation of annual Business Plans for each Division and Unit. Each Business Plan contains a detailed set of Objectives, Actions and Key Performance Indicators. In 2009, FÁS trained 94,500 persons, over double the number compared to 2008. Unclear what targets are in place.	
Organisational setup (nr. of central, regional and local offices)	Plans to restructure and remandate FÁS into a new skills entity (under remit of Dept of Education and Skills; which will provide training services) and integrate employment services and employment programmes into DSP (Dept of Social Protection) during 2011-12. This was prompted by a government decision to bring together the employment service, the entitlement service (benefits service) and also community welfare services under the remit of one department in order to provide a one-stop-shop service for clients.	http://www.fas.ie/en/About+Us/Home/default.htm. FÁS Action Plan (submitted as part of the Public Service Agreement 2010-14).

General information PES		Source*
	Currently operates throughout Ireland, divided into 8 regions (recently changed to 4 employment regions). Has a regional network of 66 offices and 20 training centres. May be some changes as a result of the restructure – not yet clear what one-stop-shop concept will mean (could mean use of a unified branding but no change in number of centres or some merger/rationalization of local offices given that benefits service also have local offices).	Interviews.
Human resources (nr. of staff if possible fte's) Please mention the year	2,300 staff in 2005 (cannot find this information for subsequent years).	Statement of Strategy 2006-2009.
Financial resources (annual budget) Please mention the year	Total FÁS expenditure in 2009 amounted to €1,056m, a reduction of 4.2% on 2008. One interviewee mentioned that FÁS was lucky to have had a very high budget but would now have to face significant cuts like everyone else.	Interviews.

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?)	At present FÁS is directly accountable to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in respect of performance. The Department is represented on the Board of FÁS. FÁS was an independent body which had influence. This is expected to change with the restructure meaning that the employment service is now not in a position to set its own aims and objectives and will instead have them handed down from government. Established in 1988 under the Labour Services Act 1987. The principal functions of FÁS as laid down by the Act are:- • Training and re-training; • Designated Apprenticeships; • Recruitment Service; • Employment Programmes; • Placement and Guidance Service; • Assistance to Community Groups; • Advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU. FÁS is also mandated to collate and publish information relating to the labour market. FÁS also provides research and analytical support to Expert Group on Future Skills Needs which advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's enterprise and employment growth.	http://www.fas.ie/en/About+Us/News/5th+July+2010.htm. Interviews.

Institutional context		Source
How much autonomy is given to regional and local level in PES? (decentralisation: who designs budget, the strategy etc.)	Strategy developed at national level although the business planning system means that regions and local offices can tailor their approach to local labour market conditions.	
To what degree are services or tasks outsourced to voluntary or private sector? (Privatisation: which services are outsourced and to whom?)	Services are generally delivered by FÁS although some (usually more specialist) training provision is provided by contractors.	

Country information		Source
Sending or receiving country?	Historically Ireland has been a sending country although during the period in which the economy was growing rapidly there was also a requirement to import labour: receiving country.	Interviews, Ecorys.
Background information: • % of employment; • % of unemployment; • the main challenges on the labour market.	Labour market headlines: The unemployment rate is forecast to average 13.4% in 2010 before falling modestly to 13.1% in 2011, although the level of long-term unemployment is expected to continue to increase; Average employment is estimated to have fallen by 87,000 this year. A further smaller fall of 22,000 is expected for 2011; Vacancies notified to FÁS are up 16% year-to-date, but still remain low by pre-recession standards. Equally, redundancies have dropped from last year but are still relatively high compared with 2008 and earlier years; Following a period of significant growth (in which FÁS was successful in driving down long-term unemployment) the economic crisis hit Ireland hard resulting in a return to high unemployment levels.	Website. Interviews.

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)	Rationale: organisations providing services directly to customers need to know how well they are doing. Through the use of appropriate Performance Measurement Indicators, an organisation can answer this and provide information to benchmark itself against national and international best practice. Focus placed on quality of service as recognise that they are a client facing organisation.	Statement of Strategy 2006-2009. Interviews.

Indicators		Source
What types of indicators are used to measure performance? (in terms of: inputs, outputs, results, impacts)	The indicators used to measure performance are: • Annual budget, budget year-to-date spend against targets. This is broken down by programme, overhead and staff costs. The analysis is provided through SAP; • Number of jobseekers registered this month and year to date; • Analysis of jobseekers registered with reference to unemployment status, type of social welfare payment (if applicable), age, location, FÁS office/region; • Detailed data on clients who are referred to FÁS for assistance under the National Employment Action Plan. Such clients are referred when they are approaching three months on the Live Register. Data includes: number of clients referred for interview, number who attended for interview, number who dropped out of the process/declined an intervention, number placed in employment/training/education, etc.; • Number of registrants placed in employment is obtained through externally conducted follow-up surveys. Management Information Systems capture: • Number of job vacancies notified- this week, month, year-to-date, by office/region; • Number of vacancies filled is obtained through regular surveys; • Number of registrants placed in training, number of clients who completed training and number of clients placed in employment following training (the latter is also obtained through follow-up surveys);	PES Benchmarking Project – MIS Questionnaire (2008).

Indicators		Source
	• Number of marginalised or socially excluded clients who registered, placed in employment or on a FÁS programme. Also monitor inflows and outflows – inflows estimated through new registrations and also DSP data on welfare entitlements. Outflows are based on FAS exit data including participation in work schemes, etc. There are a good range of indicators but no clear framework (i.e. information is available on inputs, outputs and results but not part of an integrated system).	
Which (sub-) indicators are used for each type? (if there many, please put them in an annex)	Further analysis can be undertaken by geography (regional, local) and also by demographics (at registration advisers collect information on a range of social inclusion indicators e.g. disability, gypsy/travellers, etc.).	Interviews.
Do indicators presuppose causal relationships (input-output; output-results; results-impact)? How?	No assumed causal relationship.	Interviews.

Targets		Source
Do targets exists, i.e. are indicators quantified? For who are targets set (central office, local offices, individual employees)?	Previously targets were proposed by FÁS as part of their business planning process. At present targets are being provided by the Ministry on a project by project basis.	Interviews.
Are targets SMART?	Yes, targets are specific and include a time element.	Interviews.

Tools		Source
Does the PES PMS includes a Data Warehouse (DWH) and to which other administrations is this DWH linked?	No. At present the PES had a different system to the social security administration although these are likely to be linked when the PES is integrated into the DSP.	Interviews.
Is a tool (e.g. Balanced Scorecard) for presenting management information available?	No.	Interviews.

Quality assurance		Source
Is quality of client satisfaction measured? How and frequency?	Quality/satisfaction is measured through follow-up surveys. The National Contact Centre in Edenderry conducts regular monthly telephone surveys of companies that notified FÁS of vacancies two months previously. The companies are selected randomly and are asked to rate their satisfaction with the service provided, their success in filling the vacancy and other questions. Reports are produced twice yearly. In 2009 two follow-up participant surveys were undertaken. The first is a sample survey of participants on FÁS training or employment programmes and the second is a survey of participants on FÁS Specialist Training Programmes for people with disabilities. The findings relate to employment outcomes, the perceived usefulness of the programme, certification, and satisfaction with the programmes.	Website. Interviews.

Management and support		Source
What are the main data sources of the PMS?	The client record database is the main source of data for the PMS.	Interviews.
How is data collected and updated?	Data provided through client record database. Also through follow up surveys which are undertaken at intervals by research and planning team. Information collected via client record database and analysis produced centrally. Continuous collection of information through client database. Surveys undertaken periodically but on a recurring basis.	Interviews.
Who has access to the data generated by the PMS?	All staff have access to the client record database.	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; Yes, employers willing to recruit foreign workers from abroad.	Ecorys Web survey.

Tracking customers		Source
Is contact maintained with clients to ascertain the results of activity/support provided? For example, are any follow-up surveys undertaken?	Follow-up surveys are undertaken with a sample of clients – these explore the achievement of employment outcomes (both whether they are in employment at the time of the survey and whether they have been in employment at any time since they finished the programme) and whether FÁS support helped them to secure this employment.	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?	Data is captured by a combination of existing client database/records system and follow-up surveys. Use of surveys reflects the organisational focus on maintaining a high quality of service.	Interviews.

3 PES performance measurement systems - Use

Performance management areas		Source
Is performance measurement being use for the operational, tactical or strategic level? By whom?	Previously performance information was used at the strategic and operational levels. A new board has recently been put in place but have not yet set out any plans.	Interviews.
At which level(s) of the organisation is performance management practiced?	Mainly at national and management levels.	Interviews.
In which management areas (Human resources, Financial resources, Quality management, and Strategy development) are the findings of performance measurement used?	Findings are particularly important in relation to quality management.	Interviews.

PES mission and target setting		Source
Please describe the target-setting process: actors involved, frequency, etc.	Targets are set at all levels as part of the business planning process (although it is not clear if this will continue once organisational restructuring is completed).	Interviews.

Benchmarking		Source
Are sub national PES offices benchmarked?	It is possible to benchmark at local and regional level.	Interviews.

Rewards		Source
Is target-realisation rewarded? How?	This information is used as part of the performance management process.	Interviews.

4 EURES

Information about EURES		Source
General information about EURES (number fte's, cooperation with PES)	EURES in Ireland is based on a traditional structure with a coordinating office at PES headquarters and 15 advisers placed strategically in local offices throughout the country (usually the main office in the region). Annual planning meeting forms the basis of a proposal to the Irish government for funding (from the FAS budget). In high unemployment areas advisers work closely with the PES to encourage people to take up jobs abroad. There is good cooperation with PES at local level but feel that at national level there is a lack of appreciation of EURES services.	Interviews.
Most important stages and tools	The team works actively with employers with skills shortages and employers elsewhere in Europe which are looking for Irish workers. Job fairs are run/attended on an ad hoc basis. Advisers are active with employers and employers groups in their area and also work with migrants/provide advice to foreign workers already in Ireland. Ireland has a proactive programme to help the integration of foreign workers which provides a platform for work with a range of agencies (there are no indicators attached to this programme yet but there are plans to develop some). Advisers also encourage use of the EURES website and also their own website.	Interviews.
Assessment of the tools: what works well and why and what needs some improvement.	Advisers are flexible and respond to the needs of the area (which determines whether the focus is on job seekers/outward migration or employers/inward migration). As a result they have been successful at responding quickly to the economic situation and encouraging migrants to come to Ireland to address skills shortages.	Interviews.
Which factors facilitate or hinder cross-national placement of individuals by EURES. Describe short their impact.	Language is a barrier but is becoming less of a problem.	Interviews.
Opinion on the current way/form of reporting in the EA Monthly reports? What works well what does not.	Monthly reports go direct to the EC and so are only seen by the EURES manager after they have been submitted. Information collected is very general, somewhat meaningless and open to abuse as there is no way to check some of the outputs. There is also no quality control.	Interviews.
Alternative ways for measuring the performance of EURES (describe shortly)	The EURES Manager commented on the 'total absence of meaningful performance indicators' for EURES at the national level which implies that EURES is not considered to be core activity.	Interviews.

Information about EURES		Source
	At every event evaluation/ feedback forms are distributed. Companies are asked if the event helped to solve their recruitment problems. Do not collect data on placement outcomes as it is difficult to get this information.	
What other data is available for measuring the performance of EURES (other than that included in the monthly reports)?	FAS operates a business planning system which includes performance indicators and cascades down to the individual adviser level. For EURES, advisers base their business plans on local intelligence and focus on activities/outputs (e.g. host x events in Germany with y attendees and z exhibitors). At the national level the expected results become KPIs. This forms the basis of the funding request and is used to performance manage advisers.	Interviews.
In your opinion, what are (or could be) the best indicators for measuring the impact of EURES on geographical mobility?	The EC needs to set meaningful performance indicators to be monitored at national and EC level in order to give EURES value (i.e. indicators to show the advantages of having a mobile workforce). Headcount measures can lead to double-counting so should be avoided. Survey approaches are better as a sample can be taken and findings reported as a % of the relevant population. Need to collect data to measure impact of EURES on geographical mobility –qualitative measures may be best which could then be converted to a quantitative measure, e.g. surveys to record whether vacancies have been filled by PES activity could be aggregated to estimate the % of vacancies filled by the PES overall.	Interviews.

5 Geographical labour mobility

5.1 Design

Specific to geographical mobility		Source
Is the performance of geographical mobility activities other than EURES assessed?	No.	Interviews.
Do indicators related to geographical mobility activity exist within the PES performance measurement system?	No.	Interviews.
Are targets in place?	The EURES funding agreement sets out a series of output targets but there is no consideration of results.	Interviews.
Does the PES collect any (other) data on geographical mobility activity (i.e. which is not included in the performance measurement system)?	No further data on geographical mobility activity is collected by the PES.	Interviews.
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?	Not actively – are aware of data on migration produced by central statistical office but are not monitoring this. Use reports on Ireland's labour market and can ask colleagues in FAS for more information if needed. Know how many people enter and leave Ireland through welfare records (also nationality, age, gender, education/ occupation and employment status). For cross-border commuting there are some estimates from surveys but work is underway to improve these estimates (the cross-border partnership has commissioned a study to estimate flows).	Interviews.
Where in the PES is data collected and processed?	See above.	Interviews.
How is quality of service/client satisfaction related to geographical labour mobility activities measured?	Feedback forms are handed out at EURES events as part of the evaluation process (and this feedback is used to inform future events).	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?	It is possible that EURES clients will be picked up in a PES client survey but they will not be specifically tagged as such. It is felt that information on job outcomes would be too time consuming to collect from individuals and/or employers, also there is concern that employers would become annoyed by repeated requests for this information.	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?	Effectiveness/results are not systematically monitored.	Interviews.
Is monitoring information or data used to inform future activity/resource allocation?	Planned activity is set out in the funding request document and if this is not undertaken then funding can be adjusted. The activity set out in the funding request is the sum of the activity contained in the business plans prepared by each individual EURES advisor. Planned activity is based on local intelligence. The expected activity/results become KPIs.	Interviews.
Are good practices identified and shared? By whom?	The EURES team has an annual business planning day which can be used to share experiences and plan future activity.	Interviews.
Where and when is information on geographical mobility and associated activity used? Is it shared with cross-border/trans-national partners?	Data on migration is not used explicitly for planning activity as this is mostly based on local intelligence.	Interviews.

Annex

Used sources

http://www.fas.ie/NR/rdonlyres/D6D274E3-3336-4DEB-AB0C-C621FE3E7471/0/EURESIrelandNewsletter_Issue1.pdf - Irish EURES network produced first newsletter in January 2011.

Interviews:

Kevin Quinn – Manager International Employment Services;

Ann Gilton – Manager Employment Services Policy Unit;

Roshin Sen – Senior Researcher, Research and Planning Department;

Shay Conway – Senior Researcher, Research and Planning Department.

List of indicators

The indicators used to measure performance are:

- Annual budget, budget year- to- date spend against targets. This is broken down by programme, overhead and staff costs. The analysis is provided through SAP;
- Number of jobseekers registered this month and year to date;
- Analysis of jobseekers registered with reference to unemployment status, type of social welfare payment (if applicable), age, location, FÁS office/region;
- Detailed data on clients who are referred to FÁS for assistance under the National Employment Action Plan. Such clients are referred when they are approaching three months on the Live Register. Data includes: number of clients referred for interview, number who attended for interview, number who dropped out of the process/declined an intervention, number placed in employment/training/education, etc.;
- Number of registrants placed in employment is obtained through externally conducted follow-up surveys.

Management Information Systems capture:

- Number of job vacancies notified- this week, month, year-to-date, by office/region;
- Number of vacancies filled is obtained through regular surveys;
- Number of registrants placed in training, number of clients who completed training and number of clients placed in employment following training (the latter is also obtained through follow-up surveys);
- Number of marginalised or socially excluded clients who registered, placed in employment or on a FÁS programme.

Also monitor inflows and outflows – inflows estimated through new registrations and also DSP data on welfare entitlements. Outflows are based on FAS exit data including participation in work schemes, etc.

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