



European
Commission

A NEW PES UNIT CONSISTING OF COUNSELLORS DEDICATED TO WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS. THIS PRACTICE INVOLVED ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND RE-DEPLOYMENT OF PES STAFF.

Targeted service provision for employers – employer specialist counsellors

Publication date: December 2017

Employers are a critical link for PES effectiveness. The Lithuanian PES wanted to better take employers' perspectives into account in order to cater for employers' needs more effectively. Deploying employer-specialised counsellors increases the PES' competency to work with employers and ensure that their specific needs are met. In particular, the matching service and pre-selection recruitment procedure that draws on the knowledge and expertise of employer-specialised counsellors means that employers are more likely to fill vacancies with suitably qualified and skilled employees.

LITHUANIA

Name of the PES

Lithuanian PES (Lithuanian Labour Exchange – *Lietuvos darbo birža*)

When was the practice implemented?

Since April 2017 (following a pilot phase in three regions in December 2016).

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

Through experience and specific research with employers, the Lithuanian PES saw that employers are a critical link for PES effectiveness. The PES acknowledged that its system needed to take better account of employers' perspectives and adjust PES practices in order to respond more effectively to their needs with a tailored portfolio of services. The PES had also learnt from similar models in Estonia and Germany.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The following organisations were involved:

- ▶ Lithuanian PES – leading the practice through organisational restructuring.
- ▶ National employee sector bodies for transport and logistics, life sciences, construction, and textiles – bringing sectoral labour market information, such as vacancies projections, job competencies, and training requirements.
- ▶ Vocational training providers – to ensure that PES clients can access training and that provision matches employer and labour market requirements.
- ▶ Regional Chambers of Commerce.
- ▶ Ministry of Social Security and Labour.
- ▶ Local municipalities.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The groups targeted by the practice include all jobseekers and employers.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The objective was to engage with and improve services to employers. More specific objectives include the following:

- ▶ To keep in touch with existing employers;
- ▶ To search for new employers in order to increase the market share of PES;
- ▶ To place disadvantaged groups into jobs or training;
- ▶ To assist in recruitment of highly skilled jobseekers;
- ▶ To address challenges related to skills shortages;
- ▶ To better match labour supply and demand through more effective selection processes;
- ▶ To promote sustainable employment of jobseekers;
- ▶ To update the PES e-services platform.

What activities were carried out?

The key change was organisational restructuring and staff re-deployment that saw a new PES unit being set up consisting of counsellors dedicated to working with employers. The PES team was therefore separated between counsellors that work with jobseekers and specialist counsellors that work with employers.

The employer specialists have a case load of around 600 employers, but this depends on the number of employers in a region. PES staff carry out at least two visits to employers per week, although they may carry out more if employers have particular needs, and staff also tend to visit employers that are new to PES services. Staff visiting an employer will often try to gain information about the employer's skills needs and outline to the employer the types of services that the PES can offer.

The PES team now work with all types of employers in the same way rather than distinguishing between 'strategic' employers and other smaller employers.

The main task of the employer specialist counsellors is to match jobseekers with vacancies. To do this, they work with employers to ascertain their needs in terms of skills and competences, and then liaise with work coach colleagues to identify suitable candidates for positions. By sending information about candidates (e.g. CVs) employer specialist counsellors would then agree with employers a pre-selection of jobseekers in order to begin company shortlisting of candidates and start recruitment procedures.

Associated activities and tasks include the following:

- ▶ Organising employment mediation services, including job fairs and career days held at employer sites.
- ▶ Arranging introductory visits to employers for jobseekers, and particularly for target groups such as young people.
- ▶ Organising vocational training with local providers to help employers meet their skills requirements.
- ▶ Addressing skills shortages in particular occupations (e.g. lorry drivers).
- ▶ Placing target groups in ALMPs.
- ▶ Promoting the use of the PES e-services platform, whereby employers can upload information on vacancies and can receive information about candidate jobseekers in order to assist with pre-selection. Also, jobseekers can submit online applications, register for ALMPs, and deposit relevant permits and official documents.
- ▶ Signing cooperation agreements with employers, which involves specific concrete goals and actions. This is usually done to maintain employer engagement in cases where an employer may be at risk of dropping out from the PES services.
- ▶ Use of the Recommendation for Employment certificate, which is a PES procedure for validating the best jobseeker candidates following pre-selection procedures at PES. This consists of information about a candidate's experience and skills and also their training and development needs.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Existing PES work coaches were retrained to take up the new positions as employer specialist counsellors. The two-day training was delivered to around 120 staff and covered things such as communicating and engaging with employers and ascertaining employers' needs.

The PES recruited some new work coaches to replace those that were re-deployed, but fewer were needed as a result of a broader PES restructuring taking place and the development of the e-services platform.

The new targeted service provision for employers was linked to a broader development of PES e-services.

What were the source(s) of funding?

National PES budget.

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

The following are the key achievements:

- ▶ In 2016, the PES cooperated with 73 % of the companies operating in Lithuania and established contacts with 1 000 employers that were new to PES services.
- ▶ 1 000 strategic employers signed agreements on targeted programmes providing them with qualified employees. These employers have registered 124 500 job vacancies and 57 % of those vacant jobs were registered using e-services.
- ▶ In 2016, 4 000 employers registered for e-services. 142 000 job vacancies were posted on the e-services platform and 86 600 work offers were generated through it.
- ▶ By the end of 2016, 45 % of employers using PES services were using e-services.
- ▶ By the end of 2016, 171 988 people gained employment through PES services and 69.1 % registered job vacancies were filled.
- ▶ European Employers' Days were held in April 2016 in order to establish contacts with as many employers as possible, to promote dialogue between PES and employers, and to look at employment problems.

What outcomes have been identified?

Since the new targeted service provision for employers only began in April 2017, it is still early for identification of outcomes, but the following are emerging:

- ▶ Employer specialist counsellors ensure that the PES is more competent in working with employers and ensuring that their specific needs are met.
- ▶ The matching service and pre-selection recruitment procedure at PES, that draws on the knowledge and expertise of employer specialist counsellors means that employers are more likely to fill vacancies with suitably qualified and skilled employees.
- ▶ The PES e-services platform provides greater efficiency and speed for PES working practices.
- ▶ A network of employee bodies and vocational training institutions has developed in collaboration with PES. This has helped to develop new vocational training programmes to meet employer skills gaps.
- ▶ Employers are generally more satisfied with PES services.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The key lessons learnt and success factors include the following:

- ▶ It is important that there is a PES specialist working with employers who is a labour market and business expert and can do the following:
 - » properly ascertain and know employers' needs and interests;
 - » provide employers with relevant quality information on time;
 - » offer tailor-made solutions, matching the current needs of an employer; and
 - » communicate the benefits of cooperation between PES and employers.
- ▶ Information provided to employers must be well designed and distributed; specifically it should be accessible, timely, accurate, comprehensive, clear, well presented and useful.
- ▶ Good quality, mutual communication can help to build trust with employers, and build lasting relationships. This means taking feedback and listening to complaints in order to take appropriate action in response.
- ▶ PES can acquire necessary information from employers and social partners, which helps to achieve long-lasting relationships and constructive cooperation with employers, which improves PES image. In particular, PES specialists can contribute to this. PES needs to emphasise identifying the personnel needs of employers in order to effectively select the right candidates for vacancies.
- ▶ Employers should be constantly reminded about PES e-services (individual consultations/presentations), and training provided where necessary. Also, new employers should receive a practical demonstration of it.
- ▶ Vocational training institutions were motivated to get involved and work together with PES and employee bodies in order to improve their service offerings.



Contact details for further information

Name: BALNANOSIENE, Inga – Vilnius territorial office director

Email: inga.balnanosiene@ldb.lt

Telephone: +37065508329