COUNTRY FICHE: BELGIUM

PES NAME: Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepslopleiding*, VDAB)

Basic organisational model

Type of organisation/relation to government

VDAB is the Public Employment Service for Flanders. It is an external and autonomous agency, which does not fall under the direct control of the Flemish Secretary of Work.

Structure and organisational levels

- Head office;
- 19 offices, 5 provinces.

Management structures and the role of social partners

- Management: VDAB is managed by an independent Executive Board. Decision-making is centralised: strategic projects are usually launched centrally, whereas implementation is left to local units. Local branches are also left free to initiate their own projects. Good practices are sometimes copied in other regions or adopted by the entire organisation.
- Supervision: VDAB's performance against the goals and targets set out in Management Contracts and yearly Business plans is assessed every year, possibly leading to financial bonuses or benefits for the Agency and its management on the part of the Flemish government.
- Social partners: the Executive Board is composed of members of the unions and employers' associations and by representatives of the Flemish Government and the VDAB itself**.**

Financing model

PES financing by source, Euro (million)

	Expenditure (EUR million)						Change 2010-2011 (%)		
	2010			2011 (forecast)					
Source of funding (%)	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP
Total	562,9 (100%)			575,7 (100%)			2,3%		
Social security contributions									
Government and other public funding (Flemish and Federal government funding)	465 (82,6%)			472,6 (82,1%)					
ESF (2/3 used for vocational training department of VDAB)	30,7 (5,5%)			37,0 (6,4%)					
Other EU Funding	1,0 (0,2%)								
EURES	1,0 (0, 2%)								
PES own revenues	22,7 (4%)			22,7 (3,9%)					
Other	43,4 (7,7%)			43,4 (7,5%)					

Note: Total budget includes also other expenditure (e.g. investments): EUR 17,7 million in 2010, and EUR 14,3 million in 2011. Percentages labelled as ESF include also expenditure for Leonardo, Progress, Eures and EFRO (all together roughly 5% of total ESF expenditure).

Human resources

PES human resources. Date of observation: December 2010

	Number of staff	% directly servicing clients
Total	**5.013**	69%
Head office	845	25%
Regional offices:	4.186	77%

Note: There are in total 3,436 employees (3225 in the local offices and 211 in the head office) directly servicing clients.

Integration of employment services and benefit payments

Unemployment and related benefits:

- VDAB is in charge of the initial registration of unemployment and for monitoring jobseekers' availability for work. It is also responsible for forwarding formal unemployment benefit applications to the National Employment Office, which in turn pays the benefits and, where necessary, sanctions recipients.

Other social benefits:

- VDAB is in charge of processing and paying compensations for employers to support of employment of disabled persons and allowances for employees participating in vocational training.

Clients/Customers

Jobseekers. Date of observation: December 2010

	Number	%
Jobseeker client groups		
Total		
Unemployed jobseekers	199.834	
Applying for unemployment benefits	152.251	76%
Young jobseekers waiting for benefits	13.592	7%
Freely subscribed jobseekers	18.027	9%
Residual category	15.964	8%
-25 years old	40.867	20%
+50 years old	52.533	26%
Unskilled	101.284	51%
Non-EU ethnicity (immigrants)	46.601	23%
Long-term unemployed	89.090	45%
Unemployed attending vocational training courses (not included in unemployment statistics)	17.516	

Further breakdowns are: gender, age, level of education, duration of unemployment, disability, nationality, ethnicity, career preferences.

Employers.

Employer customers are categorised by size (number of employees) and sector of activity (NACE code). Service needs are grouped into three main categories: 'employable workforce' (services such as publication and distribution of vacancies, pre-selection of candidates, strengthening of skills); 'specific support' (services related to restructuring or collective redundancies, financial incentives); and 'labour market information'.

Date of observation: December 2010

Employer client groups	Numbers	%
Total	30.405	100,0%
Size		
< 5	10.907	36%
5 – 9	4.010	13%
10 – 19	3.227	11%
20 – 49	3.044	10%
50 – 99	1.326	4%
100 – 199	842	3%
200 – 499	606	2%
500 – 999	236	1%
> 1000	195	1%
Sector		
Primary	780	3%
Secondary	8.403	28%
Tertiary	15.940	52%
Quaternary	5.280	17%
Unknown	2	0%

Other clients

- Employees (basic information services, career guidance, training and support, certification of skills and competences);
- Students and teachers, who can access VDAB's training infrastructure;
- Public and private partners are, who can use training facilities, IT systems, make use of services (for example, the unemployed are oriented towards their courses), receive data (for example, vacancies suited for their customers).
- Government bodies, which request and use labour market information collected by VDAB.

Types and methods of service provision

Services for jobseekers

- Guidance is provided according to the needs of the jobseeker (individual or collective mediation, intensive counselling, and e-guidance).
- The offer of training is wide (basic and job-related skills in different sectors according to labour market needs, different providers/locations, web-based and long-distance learning facilities).
- Registration, matching services and individual and collective mediation are offered by VDAB to all jobseekers.
- More specific support, such as intensive guidance and counselling, re-orientation and training services, is offered to those with specific needs and provided partly by VDAB and partly by external providers (PrEAs, training bodies, and so on).
- Finally, certification of competences and skills assessment are offered by VDAB both to jobseekers and to employers.

Services for employers

- Registration of job vacancies;
- Support to matching;
- CV-database;
- Pre-recruitment services.

Job vacancies and market share

Collecting information on job vacancies

Information on job vacancies is collected in two main ways. On the one hand, vacancy notices can be registered, on a

voluntary basis, by employers via phone or e-mail, by uploading them directly onto the VDAB website, or during visits from VDAB counsellors. On the other hand, vacancies may be advertised by other partners, such as PrEAs, jobsites (Stepstone, Jobat, Jobscareer), 'Jobkanaal' publicising vacancies for weaker groups (migrants, the disabled, older jobseekers), EURES services for interregional and cross-country mobility purposes.

Vacancies and referrals

N/A

Matching of supply and demand

N/A

Market share

There are no specific estimates available on market shares in terms of filled vacancies. In 2009, 51.2% of employers declared they placed their vacancies on PES jobsites (like VDAB's) and 33.1% asked to be helped by PES consultants in their search for candidates.

Active labour market policies

LMP Services

Name of service	Brief description	Delivery
Comprehensive approach	Provide each jobseeker with a suitable offer in time, for the shortest way to sustainable employment	VDAB, part of guidance outsourced to private partners and social welfare
Youth Action Plan	Provide each jobseeker younger than 25 years with a suitable offer from the start of unemployment.	VDAB, part of guidance outsourced to private partners
Action Plan 50+	Provide each jobseeker between 50 and 55 years with a suitable offer (guidance, mediation or specialized 50+clubs)	VDAB
Curative approach	Offer guidance to every long-term unemployed person who has not received any offer (guidance, training...) from VDAB during the past 2 years.	VDAB, part of guidance outsourced to private partners and social welfare
Screening and guidance MMPP	(Long-term-) Unemployment due to problems not related to the labour market (medical, mental, psychic, and psychiatric problems): screening and guidance by specialized organisations	External providers for social welfare
Intensive support	Rapid response mechanisms, offering integrated guidance and counselling in case of planned restructuring and group dismissals.	

LMP Measures

Name of measure	Category	Brief description	Delivery
Employment Services	4	Set of employment measures to stimulate the employer to recruit an employee out of the less-favoured groups: youngsters, elderly, disabled, long-term…	VDAB
Supported employment	5	Job-coaching, counselling in the workplace, especially for less-favoured groups	VDAB and partners
Vocational training	2	Second, third and no-profit sector (complimentary to the needs of the labour market), personal skills training, job application training,… in VDAB training centre, on-the-job learning (collective, individual, …), open and distance learning, web learning, etc.	VDAB and partners

Cooperation/partnership

N/A.

Evaluation

N/A.

Management logic and performance measurement

Planning process

Strategic and operational goals are established by the Flemish Government and the VDAB Executive Board. These goals, and the financial means allocated by the Government in order to reach them, are written down in five-year Management

Contracts. More specific targets are laid out in yearly Business Plans, taking into account the most recent labour market developments. Financial bonuses or penalties are apportioned to VDAB and its management on the basis of annual appraisals of results. Each year the most important stakeholders (regional representatives of unions and employers, representatives of several vulnerable groups on the labour market and representatives of the economic sectors) as well as the regional branches of the VDAB are asked for suggestions and recommendations. A selection of this input, together with the new political priorities, feeds into the annual Business Plans.

Types of objectives and targets

The main strategic goals are set first (the new Management Contract 2011-2015 contains 5). These are then divided into several operational goals, most of which contain a quantifiable target. In the management contract 2011-2015 these targets can be divided into three categories:

- Job-placement of a given share of a specific group of unemployed within a certain time limit (6 or 12 months of becoming unemployed);
- Customer satisfaction;
- Participation in training of specific groups (job seekers, employees, students).

Monitoring

Balance Scorecards provide information on whether the VDAB and its regional branches achieve the targets of both the management contract and annual business plan. An extensive Executive Information System contains more detail and charts on all different aspects of our operations, ranging from labour market statistics to the actions of individual employees. Monitoring reports are published on whether goals and targets are achieved and providing explanation and evaluation. These reports are presented to the Executive Board quarterly. A larger yearly study on the achievements of the VDAB is presented to the Flemish Government.

Lean management

No mention is made of lean management processes. VDAB is said to take ‘several measures’ to increase efficiency and effectiveness.