COUNTRY FICHE: IRELAND

PES NAME: Training and Employment Authority (*Foras Àiseanna Saothair,* FÁS)

Basic organisational model

Type of organisation/relation to government

State agency with responsibility for the implementation and delivery of Government employment policy. It also contributes to the development of policy and of relevant initiatives/programmes.

Structure and organisational levels

- Head office in Dublin
- 4 Regions

Management structures and the role of social partners

- Management: The Employment Services Policy Unit (ESPU), based in the head office, has responsibility for supporting policy development, developing and implementing new or improved services for jobseekers and employers, monitoring and reporting nationally on performance. ESPU is managed by a Director, who reports to an Assistant Director General who also has responsibility for Community Services and Services to Business. A Regional Director, reporting to an Assistant Director General-Operations, has responsibility for operational delivery at regional level. Responsibility for operational decisions lies with the regional management teams.
- Supervision: FÁS reports to the Department of Education and Skills. Following a Government decision on organisational restructuring Employment Services report on budget and policy issues to the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The Employment and Community Employment sections of FÁS are due to transfer fully to the Department of Social Protection by the end of 2011. FÁS Training activities will be part of a new state agency 'SOLAS' which will report to the Department of Education and Skills.
- Social partners: Not formally represented but are consulted as appropriate.

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	1.023,7 (100%)	186,4	837,3	953,8 (100%)	174,0	779,8	-7%	-7%	-7%
Social security contributions									
Government and other public funding	656,3 (64.1%)			635,6 (66.6%)					
ESF									
Other EU Funding									
EURES									
PES own revenues	6,7 (0.7%)			3,8 (0.4%)					
Other	360,7 (35.2%)			315,0 (33,0%)					

Note: 'Other' here includes the National Training Fund (NTF) and in EURES programmes. EURES programmes if expressed as a percentage of total budget, amounts to less than 0.1% of total funding. NTF grant includes the channelling of ESF funds to FÁS which are to be recovered from the EU when ESF claims are finalised for the operational programme HCI-OP 2007-2013. The average amount per year over the seven year period is circa EUR 30 million.

Human resources

PES human resources. Date of observation: February 2011

	Number of staff	% directly servicing clients
Total	**572**	69%
Head office	31	52%
Regional offices	541	70%

Note: FÁS has a total of 65 offices, of which 2 (National Contact Centre and ESPU are based under Head Office and remainder of the 63 in the Regions. 95% of call centre staff in the Head Office and of Employment Services officers in regional offices are dedicated to servicing clients directly. This figure falls to 50% for clerical staff in regional offices and to 20% for support and administrative staff in the Head Office. Managers are directly involved with clients as appropriate when need arises, e.g., to deal with unresolved issues.

Integration of employment services and benefit payments

Unemployment and related benefits

- Unemployment benefit claimants can register independently with FÁS or with the DSP. Benefits payments are the responsibility of DSP. All live register clients are referred to FÁS by DSP at 3 months of unemployment or over. Clients must attend at least one guidance interview – further guidance/support is provided in accordance with clients' needs. Client data are transferred on a weekly basis between FÁS and DSP to facilitate monitoring of benefit eligibility.

Other social benefits

- Claimants of disability allowances or one-parent family payments can also register with FÁS, though payments are made by DSP. Referral of these clients to FÁS is not compulsory.

Clients/Customers

Jobseekers. Date of observation: December 2010

	Number	%
Jobseeker client groups		
Total new registrants in 2010	96.969	

Data on new registrants are collated by occupation (management, professional and technical, clerical, skilled/unskilled manual, etc.) and by level of education. Breakdowns used for monitoring purposes include: lone parents, age, disability, refugee status, membership of travelling communities (but not duration of unemployment and ethnicity).

Employers

Employers are not categorised by their characteristics. A vacancy notification and advertising services are offered to all employers. Vacancies may be interrogated on a sectoral basis.

Types and methods of service provision

Services for jobseekers

Needs are assessed and prioritised during a guidance interview and an action plan that is agreed with the client. Clients may be referred to FÁS services or to other organisations when other non-vocational training supports are identified. Additional services include:

- 'Job clubs', i.e. group coaching sessions, for both employed and unemployed jobseekers;
- Career directions, via an online careers assessment tool based on individuals' preferences, qualifications, competencies, etc.;
- Job matching services open to all jobseekers and employers (also facing multiple barriers);
- Vacancy and CV databases, which can be accessed by employers advertising and for jobseekers to post CVs for use by prospective employers;
- Information on all FÁS training and employment programmes and vacancies at kiosks in all local offices and through the dedicated website www.fas.ie;

- Finally, information on job vacancies can be obtained by free-phone by all jobseekers and employers.

Services for employers

- Vacancy advertising-national website and local offices;
- Vacancy matching;
- Labour market information and advice;
- Rapid response team to company closures;
- Work Placement/Internship Programmes.

Job vacancies and market share

Collecting information on job vacancies

Employers voluntarily relay information on vacancies. Regional offices engage with employers in the locality. This may include: presentations; visits to employers and local representative bodies; follow up calls regarding vacancies; follow up on job announcements at national and regional level; and assistance in coordinating recruitment campaigns.

Vacancies and referrals

2010: a total of 34,579 (34,584 vacancies or 69,245 posts were advertised in 2010).

Twice a year a national survey is conducted among employers who have advertised with www.fas.ie. The survey results for July to December 2010 show that: 88% of employers positively rated the overall services; 75% of employers positively rated the website; 85% of employers had their vacancy filled within two months; 55% of vacancies were filled with a FAS referred candidate.

Matching of supply and demand

The FÁS Planning and Research Department monitors vacancy trends on an on-going basis and publishes an annual survey. Sources include notified vacancies from the FÁS Employment Services and privately-owned vacancy databases, such as the Irish Times newspaper and the main Irish on-line vacancy database (www.irishjobs.ie). The vacancy data is augmented by data from a twice yearly survey of recruitment agencies which is carried out by the Department. The Department also monitors job-openings and closures on a daily basis. This data, together with immigration data and data on employment trends, is used by FÁS to assess the employment associated with different occupations and to identify skill and labour shortages.

Market share

N/A. (Research & Planning – ES Market Share Report due out for 09/10)

Active labour market policies

LMP Services

Name of service	Brief description	Delivery
Job Club	It aims to expand awareness and help participants understand how the application of simple techniques can greatly enhance job-seeking skills. Membership may help participants to be more acutely aware of their employable/marketable personal attributes.	Duration is usually 3 to 5 weeks; back-up services are offered for as long as it takes the participant to get a job.
Vocational Guidance	To provide unemployed with guidance and placement services. Also includes EURES advice and guidance.	One-to-one guidance delivered by FAS Officers.
Local employment services	To provide unemployed in disadvantaged areas with intensive guidance and placement services.	One-to-one guidance delivered by LES mediators.
Technical Employment Services Grant	Short training interventions to assist local employment services mediators to provide a range of responses to individuals who are experiencing barriers to progressing to the labour market.	Grant towards the purchase of interventions that cannot be delivered by FÁS and/or within a reasonable time period.
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
Return to Work	2	To provide persons who have been absent from the workforce for a period of time with basic skills and work experience, and to improve motivation and aid progress to further training or employment.	Off-the-job training with FÁS alternated with periods of on-the-job training with employers.
Traineeship	2	An occupational skills development programme which combines formal training with FÁS and workplace coaching with an employer for occupations that entail significant skills requirements.	Off-the-job training with FÁS alternated with periods of on-the-job training with employers.
Local Training Initiative	2	A project-based training and work experience programme run by local community groups.	Community based projects to carry out valuable and necessary work of benefit to communities, while at the same time training participants.
Foundation/Progression	2	To provide early school-leavers with basic skills and work experience, and to improve motivation and aid progress to further training or employment.	Delivered in Community Training Centres, full-time and usually for 1 year.
STP	2	To provide vocational training services to people with disabilities who require additional support during training.	Vocational training provided by Specialist Training Providers usually over a longer duration.
Supported Employment Programme	5	To assist in the integration of people with disabilities who are job-ready into paid employment in the open labour market.	A job coach conducts needs assessment, sources employers and provides support and coaching in the workplace (for employer and employee).
Wage Subsidy Scheme	5	To encourage employers to employ people with disabilities.	Financial subsidy paid at an agreed hourly rate to employ beneficiaries for a minimum of 21 hours per week.
Community Employment	6	To provide temporary work experience and some training within voluntary groups and public sector bodies. Participants must be in receipt of certain Welfare payments and be identified as having difficulty accessing mainstream employment.	Sponsoring organisations are grant aided in respect of sponsoring individual projects that respond to an identified community need.
Work Placement Programme		To facilitate people who are three months or more unemployed to gain valuable work experience. No wage/ salary is paid to participants on this programme but those who are in receipt of social welfare payment can retain same while on the programme.	A 9 month work experience opportunity in the Public/ Private Sector.
JobBridge, National Internship Scheme		The National Internship Scheme provides up to 5,000 unemployed people with an internship opportunity in an organisation. Participants will receive an allowance, which will consist of a €50 per week top up on their existing social welfare entitlements. On completing their internship, participants will have improved their prospects of securing employment.	A 6 or 9 month Internship opportunity in the Public/ Private/ Community and Voluntary Sectors.

Cooperation/partnership

FÁS funds the following external providers to deliver the programmes above:

- Specialist Training Providers for people with disabilities;
- Voluntary organisations and public bodies who sponsor projects for community and public benefit;
- Community Training Centres - independent community-based organisations delivering foundation programmes for early school-leavers;
- Community-based organisations engaged in a wide range of initiatives such as genealogy, environmental, heritage, tourism, theatre, sports, and coaching – delivering Local Training Initiatives.

Evaluation

Operational data are held on all programmes and these are used by management in continuing programme reviews. More detailed follow-up surveys on programme outcomes are carried out at intervals (e.g. surveys of former trainees; surveys of employers using the vacancy-handling service; jobseeker customer service surveys). Full-scale evaluations are commissioned by government at less frequent intervals.

Management logic and performance measurement

Planning process

Key policy priorities are determined by the parent Government Department (DSP). The FÁS Board are responsible for the development of strategy to deliver on policy objectives and priorities. This is set out in annual Business Plans.

Types of objectives and targets

Key areas for Employment Services are:

- On-going support and monitoring of National Employment Activation Plan targets;
- Monitor/report on activation measures and programmes;
- Develop and implement new internship programme;
- Plan and engage proactively in the integration of FÁS employment services with the DSP;
- Increase participation of unemployed individuals in LMPs (particularly priority cohorts);
- Promote and deliver services to employers and jobseekers;
- Support international mobility of labour through EURES.

Monitoring

Monitoring of performance is carried out through monthly reports and analysis of budget and activity (targets and actual), quarterly and mid-year and year-end progress reviews of Business Plans.

Lean management

N/A. Quality improvement processes are in place.