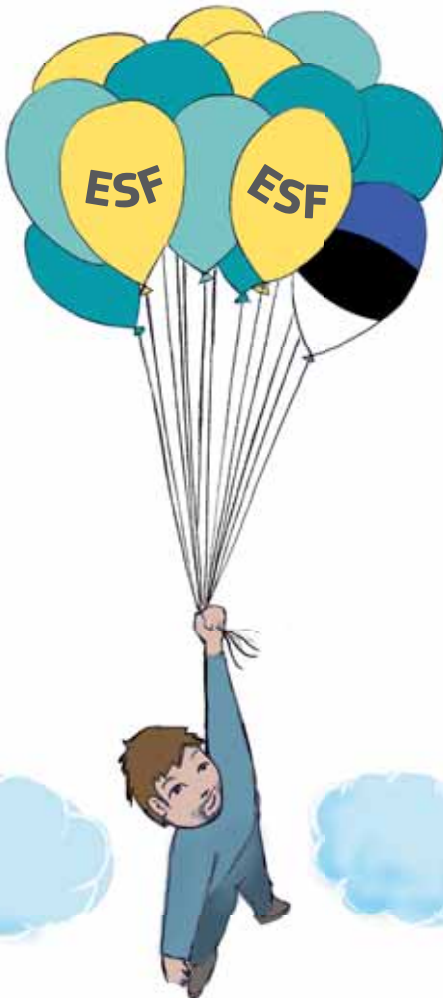




European
Commission



ESTONIA

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Estonia is nurturing high-technology and knowledge-based industries and services that need new workers – with the skills and know-how to ensure success and growth. So ESF funding is helping Estonian workers join in and drive this transformation – by offering opportunities for training and life-long learning, updating the education system for young people, and ensuring everyone – from all social groups – has the chance to embrace change.

*Social
Europe*

ESTONIA

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ESTONIA

As its economy converges with the rest of the EU, Estonia is strongly promoting the international competitiveness of its enterprises – and the size and skills of the workforce is at the heart of this effort and the main driver for ESF spending. Giving workers new skills and creating more jobs is also helping Estonia to overcome some longer-term employment challenges and ensure growth is sustained.

The Estonian workforce is ageing – 100 000 fewer workers are forecast for 2020. So, to maintain growth, the employment rate must rise, which is why Estonia is targeting a 76% employment rate by 2020 as part of its European commitments. To achieve this, more jobs are needed, in particular for young people and the long-term unemployed. With ESF help, Estonia aims to become a country of high employment.

Higher productivity has driven economic growth since it joined the EU, and Estonia wants to build on this success. One way to do this is to help workers become more efficient and effective in their jobs through improving their skills.

“Boosting professional education and training”

This is being done by encouraging more young people to complete their school education, increasing the number of graduates, doubling participation in lifelong learning, and boosting professional education and training. Meeting these targets will help Estonian workers, and in turn Estonian enterprises, to compete even better on global markets.

ESF spending in Estonia

Each Member State manages its ESF funding according to the challenges it faces. For 2007-2013, Estonia is receiving over EUR 391 million of ESF funds. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to over EUR 461 million. Estonia has one ESF Operational Programme with seven priorities that deal with raising employment, improving skills and promoting entrepreneurship. Improving employment services and ESF administration are also targeted.



ESTONIA'S ESF PRIORITIES

More jobs for more workers

ESF projects are focusing on getting more people into work. For example, sharing employment costs with companies that take on and train new workers is helping many thousands of unemployed people back to work. Other activities include encouraging vocational training drop-outs to complete their education and improve their job prospects. The ESF is also helping specific, disadvantaged groups get jobs or stay in work – for example, through childcare support for families with disabled children, which helps the breadwinners stay in work; or helping ex-offenders overcome obstacles and get back to work. And young people seeking their first job are in line for help as well, such as in the 'Launch Pad' internet portal where they can collect their qualifications and work experiences in one place – a virtual CV widely available to employers. And, using EU know-how, for the first time children with special educational needs have tailored teaching materials to boost their learning, keep them in school, and give them better chances in the job market.

Better jobs for more skilled workers

Lifelong learning is a key to better jobs and career development, and ESF projects are creating the support structures it needs,

such as training materials and accreditation systems. Some 10,9% of adults are taking part in ongoing learning to improve their job prospects – twice as many as in earlier years. The ESF is also boosting Estonia's R&D and higher education systems – to support job creation and help develop key sectors such as biotechnology and information technologies. And harnessing good practice from abroad is also helping – for example, by sending telecentre staff to tour established teleworking sites in Spain, to benefit from their know-how and launch the first centres in Estonia.

“Offering fresh approaches”

The ESF is helping workers and businesses add more value to products and services in many ways. Finance for external consultants has helped improve production management and boost productivity by 50% in some companies. The innovative 'Creative Estonia' programme is encouraging artists to get involved in businesses and offer fresh approaches, for example in design management and new ideas for tourism. And in a successful business-mentoring project for new entrepreneurs, over 90% of them increased their sales and 70% boosted profits.

THE ESF IN ESTONIA: SOME EXAMPLES

Women who mean business

In Tamsalu, as elsewhere in Europe, women with small children find it difficult to get jobs. So the 'Young enterprising women for job creation' project launched training courses to encourage a more entrepreneurial spirit among mothers and women in the region. Over 60 of them studied topics such as IT skills and business accountancy – with mentoring by local businesswomen. The project resulted in new companies for some – in jewellery and handicrafts – and a return to higher education for others.

Back in school

The Estonian Ministry of Education is offering a second chance to people to get better jobs and change careers. The 'KUTSE' programme lets those who have dropped out of vocational studies to take them up again and complete their training and improve their qualifications – thus giving them better job prospects. The programme started in 2010 and participation has grown since. The success has led to more flexible entry requirements to allow lower-qualified people to participate. Also, the programme has been extended to older people seeking new qualifications or a career change.

Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Estonia?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

Then visit the ESF website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/estonia>

