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1. SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS: OVERALL MISSION, STRATEGY AND PROFILE

1.1. What is the PES's overall mission and strategy in relation to employers?

The Swedish PES's two main objectives are:

- to facilitate the matching process in the labour market; and
- to explore possibilities for job-seekers with special needs.

We consider regular and long-term relations with a broad spectrum of employers to be the basis for the PES, and a prerequisite for reaching the goals set by our government. Our employer contacts ensure that we have a large market share of job-postings, that our staff keep themselves up-dated on the current situation on the labour-market and the demands and possibilities in different sectors. Furthermore, maintaining good contacts with employers is the only way in which we can offer job-seekers with special needs possibilities to establish or re-establish themselves in the labour market, through on-the-job training, wage subsidies or supported employment.

According to recent customer surveys, 72 % of Swedish employers have been in touch with PES during the past year, and of those 80 % are satisfied with the service they have received. However, many employers only have a limited knowledge of the broad scope of services we offer, so in this respect we have more to accomplish.

Traditionally, almost half of all vacancies in Sweden are filled using personal contacts and are never published. Of the other half that is being posted, PES has a market share of 70-80 %. This figure tends to be higher in times of great demand for labour, while it is lower in periods of recession.

By 2012 we aim to offer all employers a company account manager at their local PES, who will take the over-all responsibility for the services we provide and the needs of the company.

1.2 How does the PES view its role vis-à-vis employers?

Role	Importance of the role (scale 1 – 5, 1 is the least important, 5 is the most important)
Labour market advisor	4
Job broker and filler of vacancies	5
Human resource consultant	3
Partner in addressing the needs of jobseekers	5
Other (please specify):	

1.3. Which services are offered only on a chargeable basis?

We do not currently offer any chargeable services.

1.4. Are all services offered in all regions/localities or is there local discretion on what to offer and what not to offer?

In principle, all services are offered on a national basis. Offering a standardised set of services on an equal basis to all customers in Sweden is of great importance to us. However, the needs of employers may of course differ regionally from time to time, for instance, when there are large-scale recruitments or during substantial lay-offs. In these instances, we try to re-allocate resources as quickly as possible in order to give these employers the support they need.

1.5 What services are currently offered to employers?

Type of service	Offered yes or no?	Brief operational description of services	Segmented universal service? or (If segmented, on what basis?)	Service delivered by which PES staff?
Collection and provision of labour market information	Yes	Twice a year we perform a national survey of labour market forecasts. This is partly done by the local PES, who contact employers, and this information is analysed statistically by our national labour market analysts, who also consider other economic indicators.	Universal	General advisors locally, Special analysts nationally
Drafting and posting of vacancies	Yes	This is mainly done digitally, by XML-transfer or by self-registration on our website. A small portion is still registered manually by our staff.	Universal	Mainly digitalised, general advisors
Recruitment services	Yes	We may offer pre-selection of a limited amount of candidates meeting the qualifications set by the employer.	Universal	General advisors
Human resource consultancy	Yes, partly	We give advice on recruitment strategies, support in international recruitment, technical assistance for disabled job seekers/workers, supply of job-seekers in different areas, etc.	Universal	General advisors, in some cases special teams
Information and advice on subsidies and ALMP	Yes	We have a broad scope of ALMP and wage-subsidies to offer employers.	Universal	General advisors, in some cases specialists
Support for the integration of disadvantaged groups and	Yes	We try to find possibilities for the disadvantaged and for the long-term unemployed, by regular	Universal	General advisors, in some cases specialists

long-term unemployed before and/or after employment		contacts with employers locally.		
Rapid response and redeployment for large-scale redundancies	Yes	During large-scale lay-offs, we usually establish special staff directly on the company in question, to be able to provide job-seeking support as soon as possible.	Universal	General advisors
Legal advice and support in relation to employment law	Yes, some	Only concerning rules for job postings.	Universal	Special team
Other service(s)				

1.6 On average, how many employers does the PES work with per year? What share is this of the total number of employers in the country?

We have a market share of about 70 %, which means that we work with some 140 000 companies each year. Of course, we work more intensely with larger companies than with SMEs, or with companies we believe are of strategic importance for us.

1.7 What is the profile of the employers that the PES typically work with?

We have a somewhat larger market-share of larger companies, in the public sector, and in the manufacturing and service sectors. We still have to pick up a higher share of employers in the ITC and media sectors.

1.8 Are there some types of employers who are currently less likely to engage with the PES and why?

Yes, the ICT and media sectors, partly because they believe that we do not have access to the competence they need, partly because the recruitment patterns in these sectors differ from the rest of the labour market. Also, small companies tend to use personal contacts more often when recruiting, thus bypassing the PES.

1.9 What are the services most used by employers and why?

Above all, they use our recruitment services, such as posting vacancies on our website or participating in job-fairs organised by us.

1.10 What financial resources are allocated to the services for employers compared to services for jobseekers?

Since our advisors are expected to work with both job-seekers and employers, we do not allocate our resources on the basis of the two client groups. However, we currently estimate that we use some 25-30 % of our personnel resources for direct work with employers - a share that we need to increase.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

2.1 Does the PES have specialist staff who provide services to employers?

Our overall policy is that all our advisors should work with both employers and job-seekers, albeit to different degrees. However, in reality this objective has not yet been reached, in some places we still have small groups of advisers specialising in employer services and working exclusively with this group, while their colleagues focus solely on job-seekers. Preferably, the local PES should organise their work-force in work-teams mirroring the local market, thus ensuring that they maintain an up-dated competence on the companies, skills and the current situation in different sectors. During 2012 we aim to establish national networks of PES advisors in strategic sectors, to further facilitate our overall objective.

For some specific tasks we have organised special groups providing employer services on a national scale, for instance support and monitoring of job-postings on our website, or a special team working with large companies on a national scale and/or co-operation in the CSR field (corporate social responsibility).

2.2 Does the PES have generalist staff to work with employers?

Managing employer contacts is part of our introductory courses for new employees. Furthermore, we offer local PES up-skilling courses according to their needs. Advisors may also participate in seminars we offer about the current developments in different sectors. But we believe that the competence needed for professional work is mainly maintained by regular contacts with employers and work with matching services.

2.3 What partnership arrangements does the PES have in place to deliver the service to employers? What type of partner organisations and with what purpose?

We co-operate with employers on a regular basis in sector councils, both on national and regional levels. On the local level we work with them in local labour market councils and the PES often participate in activities and partnerships with sector organisations.

3. CONTACTING AND ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS

3.1 How does the PES identify, target and make initial contact with employers that could potentially benefit from the PES services?

Our policy is to base our activities on a local market plan, that is up-dated annually and where the agreed strategies are transformed into clear and measurable operative goals that are followed up on a regular basis. We often work with a local segmentation of potential employers, in this way deciding how to ensure that all employers receive adequate services while at the same time enabling us to make the best use of our resources. For instance, we may place employers in three categories, the first containing companies that we have an established and long-term relationship with, the second containing new companies we consider of strategic importance for the future, and the third category containing small companies in the retail and service sectors where we can offer more generalised services.

3.2 What tools, approaches and communication channels are used to develop a sustained contact and relationship with the employer and how effective are they? In particular, what is the most effective channel for initial contact?

We primarily base our long-term employer relationships on face-to-face contacts, at least in the initial phase, after which we make an agreement on how to co-operate on a regular basis and through which channels. The face-to-face meetings are usually best for discussions on long-term needs, prospects for the future, possibilities of offering job-openings for job-seekers with special needs, and large-scale or difficult recruitment needs. Otherwise, our services on the web or our call centre services often suffice for day-to-day business. All local PES have their own hot-line for employers, which is backed-up by our call centres, in order to ensure rapid service to employers.

4. WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS: RECRUITMENT AND FINDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS

4.1 Is the reporting of vacancies compulsory?

The PES offers computerised 'matching' services, with a database of job vacancies throughout Sweden. It is no longer compulsory for employers to report their vacancies to the PES. Still, one third of all vacancies are being posted in the PES database.

4.2. What types of vacancies are most reported?

Due to the relatively high share of vacancies reported to the PES, a variety of jobs can be found in the PES database. In quantitative terms, temporary jobs, low skilled jobs and occupations where the turnover is high dominate.

One problem is that temporary work agencies (TWA) often repeat the same add several times in order for it to show up in the database as 'recent vacancies'. There are also indications that some TWAs place adds for vacancies that do not exist in order to fill their own databases of potential candidates for other jobs.

4.3. What specific tools and systems do the staff use in their work with employers and which ones are particularly effective for recruitment and vacancy filling?

A principal objective of the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) is to ensure that the human resources available in the country come to their best use. This requires paying particular attention to the competence found in groups that typically have greater difficulties entering the labour market or finding a job at the level matching their skills and education.

To achieve this, unconventional methods are required. Working with newly arrived immigrants, we have discovered two keys to success: the documentation of job seeker skills in a manner that has credibility among employers, and the arranging of physical meetings between employers and jobseekers, rather than the mere sending of CVs and cover letters.

The formal education of the jobseeker, if from another country, is validated by the authority responsible for the level of education in question. If the jobseeker has a university degree it is the National Agency for Higher Education and if they have vocational training it is National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. Recently, these validations have changed in character to become more labour market focused, rather than purely intra-academic.

Another tool, which can be used at all levels of skills and education – from jobseekers with vocational skills acquired informally to university graduates – is evaluation of professional skills carried out in an actual workplace by a real employer who has expressed an interest in hiring staff in the category in question. The evaluation (trial period) takes up to three weeks and results in an evaluation of the jobseekers skills issued by the employer describing what they can contribute and if there is any need for additional training. The employer is paid a compensation for their participation. The most common result is that the jobseeker obtains a job with the employer who carried out the evaluation, with or without additional subsidies. Earlier, this type of evaluation was carried out by companies that provide education and training, rather than by employers. Many times, however, these evaluations lacked legitimacy and credibility among employers.

In cases where the need for additional training is identified, the approach is to target the training as closely as possible to the needs of the individual – for example,

through offering parts of a training programme rather than the whole programme – in order to minimise the time the individual has to spend in training and to make efficient use of PES resources. In cases where an employer makes employing the jobseeker conditional upon the jobseeker receiving additional training, the PES enter into negotiations with the employer to divide the costs and responsibility for this.

After signals from the PES, the Ministry of Education has asked universities to cooperate more closely with the PES in meeting the needs of newly arrived immigrants. The idea is to use the method – evaluation of professional skills – described above, to identify what additional education foreign university graduates need to be able to practice their profession in Sweden so that universities can tailor courses to meet these needs. One example is training foreign engineers in Swedish building standards and regulations, which is a de facto requirement for many engineering jobs, in particular in the public sector.

4.4. What tools and approaches are used to incentivise employers to take on disadvantaged individuals and the long-term unemployed and which ones are most effective?

In Sweden, there are general reductions of pay-roll taxes available for any employer that hires young people or newly arrived immigrants. In addition, the PES can grant subsidised employment on an individual basis when an employer recruits a disabled or long-term unemployed individual.

The PES has a special responsibility for disabled people, to give them extra support to establish themselves in the labour market. This is mainly done by on-the-job training, wage subsidies and supported employment. Recently, we have intensified our efforts to increase the willingness of employers to employ disabled people, trying to convince them that disabled individuals can make a valuable contribution in the work place. The campaign is called 'See the force', i.e. identify the skills rather than focusing on the handicap. The campaign includes TV-ads, radio-spots, letters and brochures to employers followed-up by personal contacts from advisors. So far (December 2011), this campaign has been very well received by employers.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 What systems are in place for performance measurement and evaluation?

The Swedish Public Employment Service works with a system for performance measurement called the balanced score card. In relation to employers, the score card contains quantitative goals regarding an employer's satisfaction with PES services (see below 5.2).

5.2 What are the main indicators used in evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the services to employers? Aside from measuring the number or duration of vacancies filled, what other indicators are used? What have been the main evaluation results in recent years?

The local PES is responsible for the follow-up of advertised vacancies. The local PES contacts employers and asks whether they have received suitable candidates and if they need any further assistance.

In addition, the PES carries out customer surveys on a sample of employers, who are asked 18 questions about the number and quality of applicants, whether they managed to find a suitable candidate and to what extent they are satisfied by the services offered by the PES.

5.3 What have been the satisfaction levels and feedback of employers to the services offered?

Employers that have been in contact with the Swedish PES express a high level of satisfaction. In surveys, 85-90 % indicated that they are satisfied with the service they received. A slightly lower share of employers indicated that they have managed to find a suitable candidate.

5.4. Is there a system in place to feed evaluation results into service development?

The above mentioned surveys provide important information for the development of PES services.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1. What do you see as the main challenges in relation to delivering effective services to employers?

- overcoming employers' scepticism of disadvantaged groups like newly arrived immigrants, the disabled and young people without secondary education;
- individual PES officers must understand the importance of contacts with employers, not only with job seekers. Employment subsidies and other measures to promote the employment of long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups require close contacts with employers;

- becoming better at requiring that employers who do not find suitable candidates articulate their needs with the aim of using that information to tailor for example, vocational training or trainee programmes;
- expanding and broadening our contacts with companies, especially SMEs and employers in the ICT and media sectors;
- intensifying our support for international recruitment, when employers cannot find the competence they need in Sweden.

6.2. What are your conclusions on what works best in relation to delivery of effective services to employers?

- make sure that the local PES, which often tends to focus on jobseekers, in particular in times of high unemployment, see working with employers as a natural part of their task;
- actively market categories of jobseekers that employers often do not consider, e.g. newly arrived immigrants;
- ensure that the active labour market programs, for example, vocational training, are tailored to the actual needs of employers that need to recruit;
- engage in dialogue with employers to identify needs that they have and that are not captured by traditional definitions of existing professions. This can then be used to create new training programs and job opportunities for disadvantaged groups. For instance, in Sweden a new project will try to turn tasks in the horse racing industry that currently are done by volunteers and part-timers into well-defined full-time jobs for young people or newly arrived immigrants with little formal education.

6.3. In the Peer Review discussions, on which of the following issues would you most like to focus and what three things would you most like to learn from others?

Role	Importance of the focus (scale 1 – 5, 1 is the least important and 5 is the most)	What would you most like to learn from others in the area(s) you are most interested in?
PES organisation and staffing	2	Do all PES officers and PES offices work actively with employers or are there specialised PES officers and PES offices? Advantages/disadvantages?
Contacting and engaging with employers	4	What untraditional means of contacting employers and methods to ensure that employers and jobseekers meet, are used (speed-dating, onsite recruitment, job fairs)?
Recruitment and finding job opportunities for disadvantaged individuals	5	What kinds of subsidised employments, supported employments or other forms of compensation to employers are offered to employers who hire disadvantaged groups?
Monitoring and evaluation	3	How can the number and quality of contacts with employers be measured on individual PES officer level?