



**The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme
for Public Employment Services**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Estonia: Peer Country Comments Paper
Input into Peer Review on Integrated multi-channelling

Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

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1. MULTI-CHANNELLING: OVERALL APPROACH AND STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

1.1 *What is the PES's overall strategy and mission in relation to multi-channelling, and in particular, in relation to online services and other related channels?*

According to the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (EUIF) Development Strategy 2010-2012, one of the core values of the EUIF is **innovation**. We aim to be innovative in providing services and finding solutions for our clients. Multi-channelling (using different channels for providing information and services), increasing the use of online services and ICT solutions in PES administration in general are our key activities for improving the quality of client service and making all services more accessible and user-friendly for both job-seekers and employers.

An important starting point is that the clients should not be asked to present on paper any data that can be retrieved automatically from other registers. The principle of the multiple use of data is applied both in developing EUIF information systems and e-services.

The overall strategy is to make available online all the services that do not require personal contact with the PES staff. However, we see e-services and alternative channels as additional ways of communication and client service. We do not aim to substitute face-to-face service with e-services.

1.2 What services are currently offered by which channels?

Job-seekers

	Registration of unemployed	De-registration of Unemployment records	Unemployment Benefit claims	Creation/update of Individual Action Plan	Information on suitable Job Vacancies etc.	Information and guidance (offered by employment advisors only)	Information on employment measures/schemes	Applications/referrals to/for employment programmes	Job/vacancy matching	Other services– please specify
Face-to-face/local office EUIF registers jobseekers and provides employment services since May 2009.	yes	yes	yes (Jan 2003)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Job search workshop, job clubs; information sessions for newly registered clients; career information and counselling, EURES; rapid response service in the event of mass redundancies (face-to-face/enterprise); mobile counselling (face-to-face in remote rural areas)
Call centre	no (law requires registration in person)	no	no	no	no	no	yes (May 2009)	no	no	information about registration, benefits and services; special topics announced (i.e requests about working abroad responded by EURES at announced time)
Internet/online	no	yes (Jan 2011) – it is possible to notify starting a job, own business or any other circumstances that requires deregistration	no, will be possible from autumn 2011	yes (May 2011), action plan can be updated if the client is allowed (during a limited time) to contact PES and report on job search via self-service portal	yes (website May 2009, self-service portal Jan 2011)	yes (May 2011, feedback to <i>job-search diary</i> that clients who are allowed to use self-service portal for reporting are required to fill in)	yes (website May 2009)	no (in development stage)	yes (automatic matching and e-mail alerts June 2010, self-service portal Jan 2011)	Jobseekers can via self-service portal fill in their job-search diary (if allowed), draw up a CV by automatically importing their data from EUIF information system; follow-up of applications and decisions.

Email/SMS	no	no	no	no	yes (June 2010)	no	yes (May 2009)	no	yes (June 2010)	E-mail alerts reminding to contact the adviser or to fill out and send the e-diary. Questions which are sent by e-mail or via website e-form are responded by e-mail.
Social media	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes (2010)	no	no	videos to assist job search

Employers

	Registration/ intake of Job Vacancy	Follow up of PES handling Job Vacancy	Establishment of contacts with jobseekers	Labour market information	Information on employment measures/schemes / subsidies	Data exchange on participant in LMP	Other services– please specify in the text
Face-to-face/local office EUIF provides all these services since 1 May 2009.	yes, but usually over the phone	yes, but usually over the phone	yes, usually in the case of big recruitment projects	no	no	no	on-the-job training arrangements wage subsidy contracts rapid response service in the event of mass redundancies (face-to-face/enterprise)
Call centre	no	no	no	yes (Sept 2009)	yes (Sept 2009)	no	no
Internet/online	yes	yes (Jan 2011)	yes (Jan 2011)	yes (website, May 2009)	yes (website, May 2009)	no	Employers can via self-service portal notify of their vacancies, search for suitable candidates, submit wage subsidy application and apply for redundancy benefit for their employees.
Email/SMS only e-mail is used	yes (May 2009)	yes (May 2009, automatic e-mails June 2010)	yes (May 2009, via self-service portal Jan 2011)	yes, on the request (May 2009)	yes (May 2009)	yes (May 2009)	Employers receive automatic e-mail alerts with CV when a jobseeker applies to the job via self-service portal. Employers and other partners can send digitally signed documents via e-mail.
Social media	no	no	no	yes (2010)	yes (general info), 2010	no	no

1.3 How are job-seekers expected to engage with the various channels and services?

Job-seekers are required by law to register as unemployed in person in the employment office. Regular work-focussed interviews with PES staff are required to take place at least once a month. From 1 May 2011, the legal requirements were changed to allow EUIF to agree individually possibility to report on job-search also via the self-service portal or telephone. This can be agreed with the new clients (for the period of three months) or with clients participating in ALMPs or other measures (i.e social services) aimed at helping them into employment.

It means that e-services are complementary and do not substitute face-to-face services. There is no obligation to use e-services only. However, we encourage the use of the self-service portal - mainly for looking for vacancies and applying for jobs. If needed, assistance is provided daily in career information offices, as well as in job-search workshops, job clubs and computer skills classes.

We also encourage the use of the call centre and information desks in the local employment office for general information requests. For example, call centre and information desks can also be contacted via Skype.

1.4 To what extent is the profiling and segmentation of job-seekers linked to and achieved through multi-channelling?

Not applied.

1.5 Do you have a kind of 'e-book' whereby jobseekers enter all the activities to be carried out according to the individual action plan? Can this be monitored online by the employment advisor?

The job-seeker who has been allowed to contact the employment adviser via the self-service portal is required to keep an e-diary (job-search diary), answer the set of questions and send it regularly by an agreed deadline to his adviser via the self-service portal or e-mail. The employment advisor can monitor it (as well as monitor the job-search and job applications in the self-service portal), give feedback and allocate new assignments.

1.6 How are employers expected to engage with the various channels and services?

We encourage employers to use the self-service portal to publish their vacancies, look for candidates and apply for redundancy benefit. We promote the online applications at employers' events. However, the employers are free to contact us via the channel they prefer to use.

2 NEW DEVELOPMENTS: SELF-HELP TOOLS

Automatic matching tool

2.1 How does the tool work?

The structured data is used for matching the job offers with CVs and job wishes, and vice versa. This tool is a part of the self-service portal (SSP) of the EUIF.

2.2 Has the tool been targeted and/or promoted at particular client groups? Who are the main users of this tool, either by nature or design?

There are two target groups: employers and jobseekers. The employers can find suitable candidates and invite them to apply for a job. The jobseekers can easily find suitable vacancies either via the self-service portal or ask for automatic notifications by email.

2.3 What levels of client satisfaction have been observed in relation to this tool? Have there been any observed changes in relation to different client groups, and if so, what are the possible reasons behind these changes?

The feedback of the target groups has been observed and analysed during the short three-month period of the existence of the tool. So far, the target groups have welcomed the tool and have given positive feedback. The perceived changes mentioned by the employers are that they can cooperate with the PES more easily and with less human resources.

2.4 Is the success rate of such tool measured (in terms of successful placement outcomes)? If so, what are the results?

The success rate of the tool has been measured since the launch of SSP in January 2011.

Month	Job offers in SSP	Vacancies in SSP	Total vacancies	Tool effect
Feb	549	821	2 227	36,87%
March	887	2060	3 379	60,96%
Apr	958	2251	4 156	54,16%
Total	2394	5132	9762	52,57%

Notes:

- Job offer – employer’s declaration about hiring a certain number of people. One job offer includes one or more vacancies.
- Vacancy – open position for one person. The number of vacancies expresses the actual number of jobs offered.

- Total vacancies – the total number of vacancies brokered by the PES through all channels.
- Tool effect – the proportion of the vacancies managed in SSP out of total vacancies. As of today we can say that more than a half of all vacancies are managed electronically (and therefore more effectively).

2.5 How has the tool been implemented across PES?

The tool is fully integrated into the business processes and the back-end systems of the PES.

2.6 What have been the challenges and success factors for implementation?

The biggest challenge has been related to the structured data usability (different classifications like ISCO or ISCED). Efforts have been made to provide a usable and flexible tool with the ability to collect complicated structured data. The semantics of the data needed for the matching is not obvious for the target groups. So it was necessary to build an extra data layer between the user interface and actual data storages.

ISCO, ISCED and the other classifications are used for the matching. However, the classifications are meant for specialists and these are not obvious for clients. We cannot ask employers or jobseekers to choose the correct classifications. Hence, we developed a user interface and back-office process that determines the necessary classifications for the job offers, CVs and other documents in a convenient way for the SSP users. As a result, employers and job seekers are able to manage their job offers, CVs and job wishes independently. Usability leads to more job offers and CVs in SSP. Correct use of the classifications at the same time results in better matching.

Job-search diary (JSD)

How does the tool work?

According to the changes in the law as of May 1st 2011, some of the job-seekers are allowed to report to the PES indirectly via electronic channels like telephone or self-service portal. The tool allows reporting via the SSP. Essentially, it is a questionnaire that can be filled in by the job-seeker at required time and sent to PES. The consultant can evaluate the “diary record” and decide if it is satisfactory. Filling in the diary is a substitute to the face-to-face meeting in certain circumstances.

Has the tool been targeted and/or promoted at particular client groups? Who are the main users of this tool, either by nature or design?

The target group of the tool is newly registered jobseeker during the limited period of time or participants in ALMPs.

What levels of client satisfaction have been observed in relation to this tool? Have there been any observed changes in relation to different client groups, and if so, what are the possible reasons behind these changes?

The tool has been implemented only as of May 1st, so it is too early to say about the changes.

Is the success rate of such tool measured (in terms of successful placement outcomes)? If so, what are the results?

Not yet.

How was the tool implemented across PES (or only in certain regions/for certain client groups)?

The tool is fully integrated into the business processes and backend systems of PES.

What have been the challenges and success factors for implementation?

Too early to say. No technical challenges.

3 NEW DEVELOPMENTS: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 What types of social media have been used in PES?

Facebook, YouTube, blogspot.com, vimeo.com, www.ustream.tv

3.2 Has the usage of social media been targeted and/or promoted at particular client groups? Who are the main users, either by nature or design?

The use of social media is targeted at and mainly used by younger clients. EUIF uses social media to inform people about events and services, and to publish advice and tips on job-hunting (i.e video clips, useful links).

3.3 Is the success rate of such social media being measured (in terms of access to information, activation of job search etc.)? If so, what are the results?

We measure only user statistics at the moment. Since November 2010, we have had 16 000-22 000 visits per month.

3.4 What levels of client satisfaction have been observed in relation to social media? Have there been any observed changes in relation to different client groups, and if so, what are the possible reasons behind these changes?

We have not yet measured client satisfaction in relation to social media.

3.5 How has the use of social media implemented across PES?

The use of social media is not integrated into the EUIF processes. They are an additional means of communicating with clients. Selected spokespersons (ca 20) in the EUIF can generate messages in our social media channels – this is being coordinated by the public relations department in the head office.

3.6 What have been the challenges and success factors for implementation?

The challenge is how to increase the awareness inside the organisation and to create interaction between social media users and our staff.

4 IMPACT OF MULTI-CHANNELLING APPROACHES

4.1 Are indicators being used to monitor the usage of the different channels in relation to the different services and types of user? If so, what are they?

We monitor the usage of webpage, self-service portal and call centre. We also monitor the number of answered questions sent via e-channels (e-form, e-mail).

4.2 What are the quantitative and qualitative results of this monitoring? Are there any other relevant results, for example, from specific evaluations?

The EUIF webpage had 556,464 unique visitors in 2010, 37,762 calls answered by call centre and 3,663 requests responded via e-channels. The self-service portal had 134,491 visitors since its launch on 31 January 2011.

4.3 How are the various channels promoted and how effective is this promotion?

All our publications have information on different channels (webpage, call center, FB page etc). Multi-channelling is promoted at EUIF events for employers, and at other events (fairs, seminars etc) and occasions.

4.4 How has the introduction and evolution of multi-channelling affected the organisational structures, working practices and culture of PES?

The call centre (introduced in September 2009) and information desks in regional offices (introduced in May 2009) to handle first-hand information requests have clearly freed up advisers time for face-to-face counselling of the jobseekers. IT systems that support the client service have also reduced the time spent on processes. EUIF changed fundamentally the principles and organisation of the provision of employment services since taking over the functions of the former PES in May 2009. Changes in organisational structures, working practices and culture were made foremost as a result of institutional reform. However, evolution of multi-channelling and wider use of IT solutions was also envisaged and taken into account when setting up new organisation and recruiting staff.

4.5 How has the introduction and evolution of multi-channelling affected PES resources?

This has required investments, but we believe these will deliver better quality and efficiency. We have not been able to measure yet efficiency gains. However, we see the results in terms of the increased number and market share of vacancies mediated by PES (the latter being around 45%), as well as the increased volume of provision of active measures, timely processing of benefit claims etc.

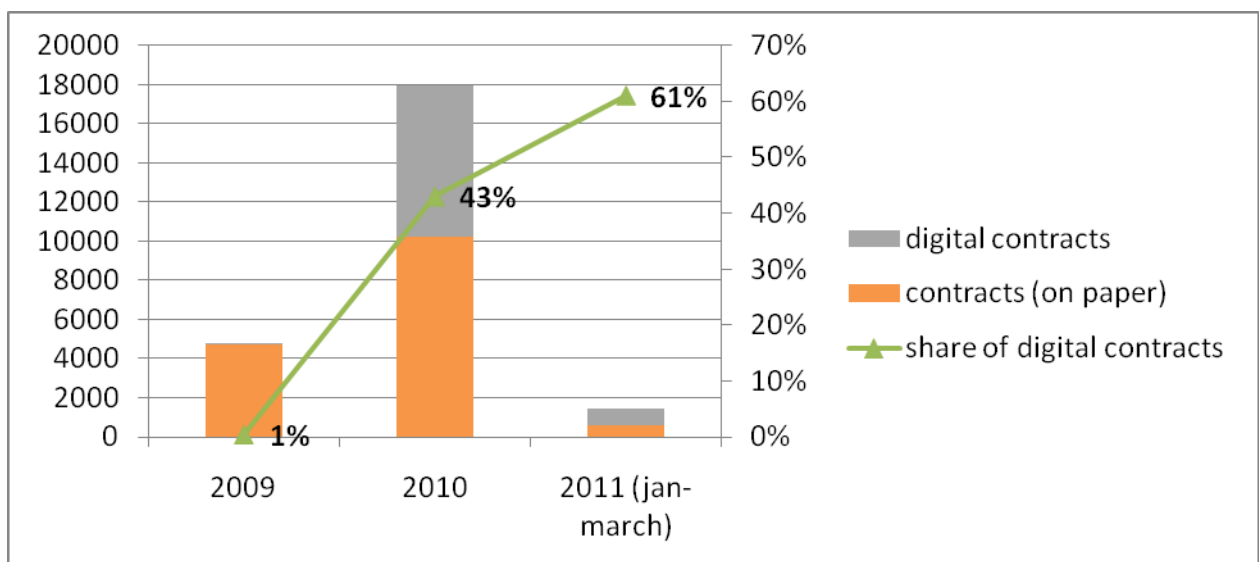
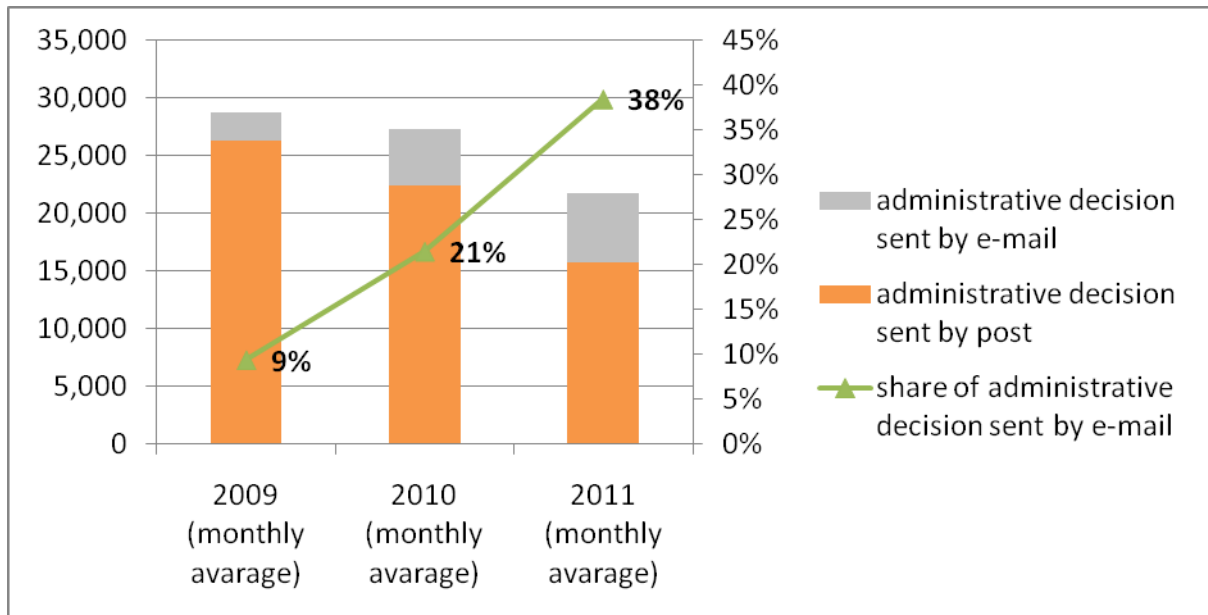
4.6 What has been the impact of multi-channelling on staffing and staff training?

It has had relevant impact on staffing and staff training. Computer skills, adaptability and learning skills have become more relevant while recruiting staff. We also need to plan training for each innovation to make sure that our staff is ready to implement it.

5 COMBINATION OF MULTI-CHANNELLING APPROACHES

5.1 What are the main advantages in introducing multi-channelling approaches?

- reduced paper trail for both clients and staff
- reduced time spent on processes – more time available for counselling
- improved quality and cost-effectiveness through automated processing of claims



5.2 What are the main challenges in introducing successful multi-channelling approaches and how have they been addressed?

- Training the PES staff to be able to assist clients in using different channels. We have organised information and training sessions for the staff.
- Ensuring equal opportunities to access (including teaching skills) e-services. We organise teaching in computer skills and skills to use the Internet, ID-card and e-services. Assistance is also available in the career information rooms and via the call centre.
- Effective monitoring of active job-search if face-to-face contacts are reduced. The EUIF is implementing work-focussed interviews regardless the use of channel.
- Designing user-friendly e-solutions. The EUIF self service portal operations were tested with real users.

5.3 What are the main (potential) pitfalls of multi-channelling approaches?

Danger of excluding certain client groups could occur when we use only one channel or make using e-services mandatory.

5.4 How do you avoid the exclusion of certain groups if you offer increasingly digitalised services?

The call centre offers support for users of the self-service portal (which can be reached also via Skype). Assistance is provided daily in the career information offices, as well as in job-search workshops, job clubs and computer skills classes.

5.5 What works best in relation to multi-channelling (in relation to serving different client groups and in relation to the services being provided)?

Giving the clients, where appropriate, the choice of channel and possibility to change channels.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 *What is most effective in terms of digitalising PES services?*

From the very beginning, the EUIF has aimed to provide IT-based service provision. Our information and processing systems are developed to support daily client services, decide on benefits and manage referrals to ALMPs, enable quality data collection and analysis. The unemployment insurance information system (TKIS) and employment services information system (EMPIS) are fully integrated with all the business processes, i.e. with document management and accounting IT-systems. This along with multiple-use of data from other registers has reduced the paper trail (i.e. decisions and services contracts are signed digitally using ID-card infrastructure and, if possible, automatically sent via the system on the clients e-mail). Furthermore, it has significantly reduced the time spent on processes for both customers and staff and enabled us to devote more time to counselling and helping clients (particularly the ones with multiple barriers) back to work.

The full integration of IT-solutions also means that our 'virtual office' is built on the infrastructure of the benefit and services information systems – it means, for example, that registered jobseekers can compile their CV by using the data inserted in the PES information system, and the jobseeker's actions in the self-service portal are, in turn, reflected in the PES information system (as tasks for the adviser etc).

6.2 *What are the main challenges in relation to digitalising PES services?*

- Training the PES staff to be able to assist clients in using different channels
- Ensuring equal opportunities to access (including teaching skills) e-services
- Effective monitoring of active job-search if face-to-face contacts are reduced

6.3 *What would you most like to learn in the exchange with other countries?*

- User-friendliness of e-services: how to design e-services in a way that they are simple to use and do not require extensive instructions and guidance?
- E-coaching: what do other countries mean by e-coaching, what are the practices and experiences?
- Failures: we are interested to hear if other countries have experience with launching e-service that did not work in practice and why.