



**Expert evaluation network
delivering policy analysis on the
performance of Cohesion policy 2007-2013
Year 3 – 2013**

**Task 1: Job creation as an indicator of
outcomes in ERDF programmes**

Estonia

Version: Final

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**A report to the European Commission
Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy**

Contents

Executive summary	3
1. The use of the indicator to assess outcomes in policy areas.....	4
2. Definition, methodology, data reporting and wider use of the indicator	5
Definition and methodology.....	5
Content of data.....	5
Wider use of indicator.....	6
3. Cost per job created	6
4. The indicator of job creation in evaluations and AIRs.....	8
5. Looking forward to the 2014-2020 programming period.....	9
6. Further remarks	10
References.....	11
Interviews.....	13
Annex.....	13

List of abbreviations

- AIR Annual Implementation Report
- EC European Commission
- FEI Financial Engineering Instrument
- NSRF National Strategic Reference Framework
- OP Operational Programme
- SPD Single Programming Document

Executive summary

The number of jobs created through the assistance of ERDF is a core indicator set by the EU. No further indicators have been introduced in Estonia and the number of jobs created is not an indicator prioritised to assess the impact of policy interventions.

Two policy areas – enterprise support and territorial development – accounted for 97% of the overall 3,759 jobs created between 2007 and 2011 as reported in the 2011 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs). However, no significant attempts been made to ensure that the definition of the indicator and the reported data are consistent. And jobs created with Financial Engineering Instruments (FEIs) are not reported. Thus, the figure of 3,759 jobs created by end-2011 should be treated with caution.

Hence, the calculation for ‘cost per job created’ remains inaccurate. At present it is EUR 5,770 for the ‘Export marketing programme’ and EUR 73,000 for ‘Technology investments of industrial enterprises’. For subordinated loans, a FEI, the cost per job is EUR 51,800. A high outlier is evident in investment related to ‘Development of local public services’ – EUR 642,100 per created job – but in this policy area the indicator is unsuited to capture the effects.

Generally, limited attention is given to job creation in evaluations, although some recommend to use this indicator more extensively as well as to improve data gathering methods. An evaluation from 2012 assessed the impact, effectiveness and appropriateness of the measures deployed by Enterprise Estonia and KredEx which covered also job creation. Overall, the impact on the job creation has been positive. The cost of each new job created under Enterprise Estonia measures (2007-2010) was EUR 14,561.

Estonian authorities are familiar with the new definition of the common indicator for 2014-2020, but are concerned by the challenge posed by the inability of the indicator to capture the qualitative changes in the economic, innovation and R&D system, as well the time needed, in some cases, for effects to become apparent, as well the increased administrative burden for the beneficiaries.

1. The use of the indicator to assess outcomes in policy areas

Key focus areas of regional development policies in Estonia include development of human resources, a knowledge-based economy and basic infrastructure as well as enhancement of local development (Estonian National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2000-2013 [NSRF 2007], pp. 58-64).

Neither the Operational Programme (OP) for the Development of Economic Environment (2007) nor the OP for the Development of Living Environment (2007) use the number of jobs created as an outcome indicator. Nevertheless, as an EU prescribed core indicator, progress is monitored throughout the programming period and is reported in the AIRs. No final targets have been set.

According to AIRs for the OP for the Development of Economic Environment and for the OP for the Development of Living Environment, 3,759 jobs have been created with the assistance of ERDF as at end 2011. Most have been reported in the policy area related to enterprise support – 3,240 jobs (Annex Table A). Data provided by the Managing Authority (MA) allows for a more nuanced picture (Annex Table B). The ‘Export marketing programme’ (EU contribution EUR 12.9 million, measured by certified eligible expenditure 2007–2011) and ‘Technology investments of industrial enterprises’ (EUR 40.0 million) accounted for 86% of the 3,227 jobs created in this policy area.

The AIR of the OP for the Development of Living Environment reported 502 new jobs created (Annex Table A), although data provided by the MA reported 443 jobs (Annex Table B); the reasons behind the difference remain unclear. Most job creations was related to territorial development. It accounted for 339 jobs created and was dominated by two measures – ‘Development of local public services’ (EUR 97.2 million) and ‘Strengthening of the competitiveness of regions’ (EUR 50 million).

These two policy areas – enterprise support and territorial development – accounted for 97% of the jobs created 2007-2011. These are also policy fields with important allocations (Annex Table B).

Estonia participates in European territorial cooperation programmes and Estonia – Latvia 2007-2013 programme is managed by Estonia. However, the OP of Estonia – Latvia Programme 2007-2013 (2007) does not prioritise the creation of jobs, although the focus of the programme is on improving the enterprise environment (31% of the programme budget) so that a job creation indicator would have been relevant. Overall, the indicators chosen reflect programme operations but were not appropriate for identifying outcomes and effects (see Kalvet 2012, Kalvet 2011). The indicator job creation is not addressed by either of the relevant evaluations (see Deabaltica 2007; Evaluation of the Estonia – Latvia... 2010).

2. Definition, methodology, data reporting and wider use of the indicator

Definition and methodology

The definition of the core indicator 'jobs created' and the methodology used for data gathering are not documented in the AIRs. The only note provided in the AIR for the OP for the Development of Economic Environment (2012) states that data is provided cumulatively and on the bases of finished projects (p. 109).

The MA – Ministry of Finance – relies upon the provision of the information (1) on the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications that leads the implementation of the OP for the Development of the Economic Environment and which is also the 1st level intermediate body for structural assistance, and (2) on the Ministry of the Interior that leads the implementation of the areas of the OP for the Development of the Economic Environment where additional jobs have been generated. Data collection is directly carried out by two 2nd level intermediate bodies that organise assistance, applications and communicate directly with the recipients of the structural assistance, Enterprise Estonia and KredEx. Interviews revealed that although a brief guidance document from 2009 exists on how to measure jobs created in projects supported (*Projekti mõju tööhõivele*, 2009), no significant attempts had been made to ensure consistency of the definition of the indicator and the data reported.

Content of data

As no guidelines have been enforced, data collection by 2nd level intermediate bodies lacks coherence. While data on new jobs is collected in the application phase (and in the case of Enterprise Estonia in the final reports), the forms used are brief and lack explanatory notes. As a result it is not possible to know precisely what is meant by the indicator because it is unclear whether it is in full-time equivalent terms or whether it is permanent. There is no information on the duration of the jobs, etc (Table 1).

Table 1 - Data gathering by intermediate bodies on the number of jobs created

	Enterprise Estonia	KredEx
Is the indicator defined in full-time equivalent terms?	no	no
Is any distinction made in the data reported between temporary and 'permanent' jobs?	no	no
Are jobs created during the construction stage of a project included in the data reported?	no	no
Does the data reported relate to actual outcomes, as distinct from expected or planned outcomes?	yes	no
Does the data reported include jobs created indirectly due to the expenditures carried out?	no	no
What efforts are made, if any, to avoid double-counting?	none	none
What efforts are made, if any, to capture the quality of jobs?	none	none
Are jobs created distinguished from jobs safeguarded or maintained?	No – data may cover both	no – data may cover both
Is a distinction made between the jobs created by the ERDF and those created by the ESF?	yes	yes

Source: Author based on interviews.

As no significant attempts been made to ensure consistency of the indicator and as jobs created with FEIs are not included in the AIR at all (but have been nevertheless reported to the European Commission (EC) in separate forms), the figure of 3,759 jobs created by end-2011, should be treated with caution.

Wider use of indicator

The number of jobs created is neither a highly prioritised indicator to assess the impact of Community funded interventions nor is such an indicator used to monitor or assess the outcomes of national programmes. Thus, no reliability checks are carried out on the data reported in AIRs.

The indicator 'new (gross) jobs created at project closure' was given prominence – the only result indicator regarding RTDI measures – for the 2004-2006 period (see Estonian National Development Plan 2005, p. 19). However, the “analytical basis for this figure is missing and there is no explanation on which of the various programmes within the measure will contribute to the target” (Reid and Walendowski 2005, p. 15). And, more importantly, “this single indicator in itself, while important in a context of high unemployment and a need to increase technology intensity of jobs, is a very crude proxy for the more subtle and longer-term structuring effects the Single Programming Document (SPD) RTDI measure could be hoped to have on the national innovation system” (ibid, p. 26). So, this merits more appropriate indicators. Also, behavioural additionalities were strongly emphasized by beneficiaries in the impact assessment of the enterprise support measures, published in 2007 (see Kuusk and Jürgenson, 2007).

This has influenced the policy makers' approach to use alternative indicators instead (e.g. value-added increase per employee of recipient companies, share of revenue from sales of new products and services) to better relate the measurement of impacts against the policy goals (restructuring of the economy, shift towards higher value-added jobs, creating better linkages within national innovation system, etc).

3. Cost per job created

There is variation in the cost per job created, of the four EU-funded policy instruments that contribute most to job creation, from EUR 5,770 to EUR 642,100 calculated on the basis of data collected for the AIRs (Table 2). However, one has to take into account the problems in data gathering and the multiple objectives pursued by the measures.

Table 2 - Cost per job created, 2007-2011

Policy measure	Jobs created	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007-2011, EU contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007-2011, Estonian public contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, EU and Estonian public contribution/jobs created (EUR)
<i>OP for the Development of Economic Environment</i>				
Export marketing programme	2,241	12,930,078	0	5,770
Technology investments of industrial enterprises	548	39,994,838	0	72,983
<i>OP for the Development of Living Environment</i>				
Development of local public services	193	97,231,490	26,533,316	642,100
Strengthening of the competitiveness of regions	132	50,012,716	8,005,278	441,201

Source: Ministry of Finance 2013.

The '**Export marketing programme**' operated by Enterprise Estonia created 2,241 jobs, accounting for 61% of the overall jobs created with the EU assistance (Annex Table B). The Programme objective is to increase the competitiveness of Estonian companies on foreign markets. This grant-based scheme supports the implementation of a marketing plan. Entrepreneurs could apply for support for export marketing with a duration of 12-24 months into a new market. Support covers product conformity to export markets' requirements, preparation of product samples, elaboration of product or service brands and registration of foreign trademarks. The maximum grant amount is EUR 160,000, up to 50% of expenditures. The largest eligible expenditures are generally related to participation in major international trade fairs or visits to foreign markets (Eksporditurunduse toetamise tingimused ja kord, 2008; Enterprise Estonia 2009).

At the end of 2011, support had been provided to 181 projects with a total public cost of EUR 12.9 million leading to a public contribution per job created of EUR 5,770 (Table 2). This measure is most directly related to job creation and is, in principle, a suitable indicator. There are however problems in data gathering which means that the figure should be treated with some caution.

The second most important measure for ERDF co-financed job creation is Enterprise Estonia's **support to technology investments of industrial enterprises**. The measure is aimed at supporting investment projects by companies in industry. More specifically, it assists with the acquisition of machinery and equipment, and intangible assets required for their use. In the case of large industrial enterprises, up to 20% of eligible costs are compensated, and in the case of SMEs up to 40%. (Tööstusettevõtja tehnoloogiainvesteeringu, 2008). In the period 2009-2010, a total of 130 projects have been funded.

In sum, 548 jobs have been created (Table 2) at a cost of EUR 73,000 per job. However, the main goals of the measure are only indirectly related to the creation of new jobs. "The objective of the support is to promote technology investments that help increase the competitiveness of industrial enterprises in international markets, by increasing their productivity and export potential, the added value of products, find new ways for marketing and relocate employees to positions with higher added value" (Tööstusettevõtja tehnoloogiainvesteeringu, 2008). A recent evaluation also concludes that the main results of this intervention the increase of turnover,

exports and value-added. The number of jobs in the sample of companies actually decreased (see section 4 for more details).

Regarding EU co-financed financial instruments, **subordinated loans** (a measure implemented since 2011) are issued by KredEx. Earlier, similar FEIs included capital loans and subordinated loans with success-based interest rates for exporters¹, both receiving finance from the ERDF - EUR 6.7 million (Ettevõtjate laenu riiklike, 2011) and EUR 25.6 million (Ettevõtjate laenukapitali, 2011) respectively. The loans were intended to help sustainable companies to expand their activities, but which could not receive finance from banks due to insufficient self-financing capacity and/or collateral assets. KredEx would provide loans in a range from EUR 64,000 to EUR 1.1 million, but not more than the enterprise's equity capital and for a period of 3 to 5 years but not more than 10 years.

Subordinated loans with success-based interest rates were implemented from April 2009 until March 2011. The result indicators of the programme included value-added per employee, turnover and exports, the number of employees, private sector co-investments into machines and equipment. However, for none of the result indicators have performance targets been set. (Allutatud laenu programm, 2011)

Altogether 22 projects were financed in the amount of EUR 11.0 million. The number of planned new jobs (as opposed to actual outcomes, see section two for details) were 213, and the cost per job was estimated to EUR 51,800, according to KredEx. A recent evaluation concluded that the main results of this intervention were to increase of profits and the number of additional jobs (see section 4 for more details).

The highest cost per jobs created resulted from support to the **development of local public services** aimed at increasing the quality of public services in local centres and improving effective use of infrastructure related to local public services in rural areas. Grant can be requested by local government units, non-profit associations and foundations. The maximum grant rate is 85% and the minimum amount of grant is EUR 319,559 per project.

The very high cost per job created – EUR 642,100 (Table 2) – reflects the inappropriateness of the job creation indicator to measure the outcomes of the investment. In many cases support aimed at increasing the quality of public services (e.g. in education, culture or sport) does not create additional jobs. In other terms, the indicator is not meaningful in this context.

4. The indicator of job creation in evaluations and AIRs

Overall, very narrow attention is paid in evaluations to the job creation indicator (e.g., 'Evaluation of the selection criteria of Structural Funds' from 2010). Influenced by the economic crisis, the safeguarding and creation of new jobs emerged as an important theme as raised in the evaluation of the OPs on the use of Structural Funds (2009). The suggestion was to allocate additional funds to measures supporting enterprises.

The mid-term evaluation (2011) covers all OPs at the national level and focuses on indicators, results and impact as well as on implementation. The recommendations from it proposed to

¹ Loan interest rate consisted of two components: fixed interest and result-based interest. The latter was higher for the companies that achieved better financial results.

include result indicators, such as job creation more systematically, and to measure the impacts sometime after project closure to capture “lagged” effects as well as to improve data gathering methods.

The **Impact assessment of enterprise support measures** by National Audit Office (2010) addressed the issue in a more specific way. The audit used counterfactual analysis and surveyed companies that had received support from 2004 to 2009 to ascertain whether productivity and value-added had increased more quickly than for companies without support; and whether overall competitive strength of Estonia had been affected. As such, it was focused on job creation in areas with highest value-added and export potential.

Job creation has been more thoroughly addressed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in its **Evaluation of the Estonian Enterprise and Innovation Policy** (Jaaksoo et al. 2012). The objective was to assess the measures used, their impact and effectiveness and their appropriateness as utilised by Enterprise Estonia and KredEx. The analysis focussed on the financial services of KredEx and the grants and services offered by Enterprise Estonia for the period 2004-2010. It covered the effects on beneficiary companies of grants or services and the structural changes that were induced.

A multi-method approach was used, combining quantitative (including econometrics) as well as qualitative research methods. A database covering 622 clients from Enterprise Estonia and 751 from KredEx was created. Changes in sales revenue, export revenue, labour costs, number of employees, profit and value-added of the company were observed. An online questionnaire was sent out to which over half of Enterprise Estonia’s clients and 14.5% of KredEx’s clients responded. In addition, 82 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries.

In contrast to the reference group, the companies who had received support from Enterprise Estonia had higher growth in the number of employees, labour costs, sales revenue and export revenue indicators. The cost of each new job created was EUR 14,561 (p. 57).

The economic performance of the companies that received service from KredEx was also compared to the Estonian average and the results showed that the former had exceeded the Estonian average.

In sum, estimations of net (rather than gross) job creations do not exist. Job creation has been more thoroughly addressed in Evaluation of the Estonian Enterprise and Innovation Policy (Jaaksoo et al. 2012); the findings have not (yet) been integrated in the AIRs. The study on Enterprise Estonia support measures seems to support the indicators regarding new job creation in the AIR. However, the same study revealed that additional jobs have been created with the use of KredEx instruments, but these instruments are not accounted for in the calculations of the new jobs referred to in the AIR. It was not possible to propose a more precise figure of the KredEx’s beneficiaries in the study due to a small sample size (on the level of individual instrument).

5. Looking forward to the 2014-2020 programming period

Estonian authorities are familiar with the new definition of the common indicator for 2014-2020 (as proposed in EC, 2012, p. 20 and 22). However, interviews revealed that (1) the indicator does not capture the qualitative changes in the economic, innovation and R&D system,

which is currently the main goal of interventions for enterprise support and R&D measures, (2) there is a time lag, in some cases, until the effects are revealed (especially for R&D intensive activities) and thus more meaningful results will be obtained after a certain time has elapsed, and (3) the implementation of the indicator as proposed would raise the administrative burden of the companies as more indirect sources cannot be used (as opposed to, e.g., measuring value added which can be done on the basis of the annual reports).

6. Further remarks

The study revealed several important weaknesses of the indicator in general, at one level its inability to measure qualitative changes in the economic, innovation and R&D systems and more specifically at the country level, in the Estonian context. One of the main challenges of the efforts in Estonian business sector relates to productivity-increasing investment and the technological modernisation of businesses. An analogous concern persists in the public R&D system, the ratio of researchers to overall population is comparable to other EU countries, but their performance in qualitative terms is weaker. The lesson drawn from the Estonian case is that the use of job creation as an indicator of outcomes is more suitable for some measures (e.g. related directly to increase the exports of companies), while other interventions have multiple goals (that could support or negate job creation). Due to interventions with multiple goals, it has diminished the use of the indicator in the current programming period in Estonia.

In a similar vein, job creation related material presented in the AIRs is presented without any commentary. And it has not received treatment as an indicator for monitoring programme performance, but rather included to comply with the EC requirements.

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Annex

Tables

Annex Table A – Jobs created by priority axes, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<i>OP for the Development of Economic Environment</i>					
Innovation and growth capacities of enterprises	0	0	184	1,324	3,240
Enhancing the competitive ability of Estonian R&D through research programmes and modernisation of higher education and research institutions	0	0	0	0	12
Transport investments of strategic importance	0	0	0	0	0
Development of regional transport infrastructure	0	0	0	5	5
Promotion of information society	0	0	0	0	0
Total for OP	0	0	184	1,329	3,257
<i>OP for the Development of Living Environment</i>					
Total for OP	0	0	100	171	502
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>284</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>3,759</i>

Sources: AIR for the OP for the Development of Economic Environment 2012; AIR for the OP for the Development of Living Environment 2012; Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy 2013.

Annex Table B – Jobs created, EU commitments and certified eligible expenditure, 2007-2011

Policy measure	Jobs created, 2007-2011	Allocations, 2007-2013, ERDF and Cohesion Fund contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, EU contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, Estonian public contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, Estonian private contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, EU and Estonian public contribution / jobs created (EUR)
<i>OP for the Development of Economic Environment</i>						
Export marketing programme	2,241	22,898,308	12,930,078		13,052,049	5,770
Technology investments of industrial enterprises	548	75,609,980	39,994,838		82,290,030	72,983
Tourism product development	101	8,426,904	3,267,298		3,565,531	32,349
Innovation vouchers	77	2,876,024	1,842,117		6,287	23,924
Support to R&D projects	65	62,257,296	24,649,198	745,899	18,529,572	390,694
Tourism marketing support	64	3,040,405	790,077		790,481	12,345
Assistance for international events and conferences	50	2,132,093	1,052,567	218,179	294,866	25,415
Assistance for export development	39	11,509,888	1,230,850		1,212,966	31,560
Support for conferences	21	2,714,717	2,210,332	6,005	2,204,326	
Assistance for base funding of knowledge and technology transfer	13	5,432,490	2,758,531			
Development of laboratories	6	2,545,465	1,245,639	549,548	612,582	
Tourism info networks & centres	1	3,195,582	976,393	36,438	15,584	
Marketing assistance of tourism for the public and third sector	1	3,081,500	1,441,397	147,359	470,394	
<i>Total for enterprises support, with jobs created</i>	<i>3,227</i>	<i>205,720,652</i>	<i>94,389,315</i>	<i>1,703,428</i>	<i>123,044,669</i>	
<i>Total for enterprises support (incl. measures without jobs created)</i>		<i>424,309,434</i>	<i>240,235,477</i>	<i>31,069,524</i>	<i>144,745,494</i>	
Improvement of research environment and higher education study environment	12	115,182,212	42,882,545	25,681,237		
Transport infrastructure (ERDF)	5	110,523,613	77,402,144	1,652,219		
<i>Total for OP</i>	<i>3,244</i>	<i>1,434,489,794</i>	<i>616,877,351</i>	<i>102,255,863</i>	<i>147,561,727</i>	
<i>OP for the Development of Living Environment</i>						
Development of local public services	193	144,056,856	97,231,490	26,533,316	3,639,393	642,100
Strengthening of the competitiveness of regions	132	93,785,595	50,012,716	8,005,278	1,520,377	441,201
Development of cultural and tourism facilities of national importance	13	62,158,827	17,724,453	2,522,299	3,489,304	
Development of urban regions	2	56,625,721	20,266,403	3,628,549	25,436	

Policy measure	Jobs created, 2007-2011	Allocations, 2007-2013, ERDF and Cohesion Fund contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, EU contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, Estonian public contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, 2007 - 2011, Estonian private contribution (EUR)	Certified eligible expenditure, EU and Estonian public contribution / jobs created (EUR)
<i>Total for territorial development with jobs created</i>	339	356,626,999	185,235,063	40,689,442	8,674,510	
<i>Total for territorial development (incl. measures without jobs created)</i>		388,582,823	185,489,151	40,725,576	8,683,312	
Modernisation of open youth centres, information and counselling centres and hobby schools	40	20,199,277	13,708,345	1,177,729	77,168	
Modernisation of the study environment of vocational schools	24	166,980,686	82,231,065	138,012		
Better quality and accessibility of nursing and care services	14	27,558,703	8,433,910	13,724	4,768,478	
Development of waste collection, sorting and recovery	15	39,625,222	4,429,035	989,667	2,367,804	
Improvement of the quality of the study environment of schools intended for students with special educational needs	9	25,585,750	4,528,063	231,147		
Closure of inadequate waste dumps	1	40,264,339	12,781,459	1,391,601	48,188	
<i>Total for OP</i>	443	1,520,345,762	536,146,472	123,329,835	20,517,404	
<i>Grand total for both OPs</i>	3,687	2,954,835,556	1,153,023,822	225,585,698	168,079,130	

Source: Ministry of Finance 2013.