**InnovAction: a collaborative platform to put ideas into practice**

With the online platform ‘InnovAction’, French PES (Pôle Emploi) introduces a new form of dialogue on innovation between senior management and job counsellors. The method has proved very successful with 70% of all PES employees already involved.

Local, regional and national PES managers launch PES ‘challenges’ on the platform, which PES employees engage with by suggesting new ideas and sharing good practices.

Regional and national PES management then decide which ideas to test out on a small-scale for three months. Each idea tested is evaluated to determine if it will then be implemented as a regional or national practice.

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<th>Name of the PES</th>
<th>French Employment Agency (Pôle Emploi)</th>
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<td>When was the practice implemented?</td>
<td>2014 – on-going</td>
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<td>Which organisation was involved in its implementation?</td>
<td>The Department for Innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility is responsible for the collaborative platform.</td>
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<td>Local, regional and national PES managers launch ‘challenges’ within PES. At regional level, 26 ‘moderators’ are responsible for promoting the platform and ensuring its quality, while a pool of experts is involved in testing, evaluating and assessing whether ideas should be put into practice. PES employees take part in the innovation by sharing, voting and commenting on ideas and practices.</td>
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<td>Which groups were targeted by the practice?</td>
<td>The platform ‘InnovAction’ allows all PES employee at any governance level to participate in innovation. All employees can submit, comment and vote on ideas and practices. They can also follow the progress of an idea from launch to implementation at regional or national level.</td>
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<td>What were the practice’s main objectives?</td>
<td>The aim of the platform is to encourage employee participation to generate innovation that improves PES performance. Ideas and practices can cover any aspect of PES, such as technological, social, operational and managerial developments. The collaborative platform aims to:</td>
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<td>▶ Encourage participation from all employees through ‘challenges’ that PES might face, which can include any PES services and operations.</td>
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<td>▶ Provide one location where all employees can respond to challenges and share ideas and practices.</td>
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<td>▶ Process ideas and practices transparently to engage employees in the development of employment services.</td>
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<td>What activities were carried out?</td>
<td>PES employees submit new ideas (not implemented) and practices (implemented) onto the platform. ‘InnovAction’ then enables the next steps towards innovation:</td>
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<td>1. Ideas and practices are posted in two ways:</td>
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<td>▶ Local, regional and national PES managers put forward ‘challenges’ and ask employees for solutions. Depending on the issue, managers can address employees in one local office, in one region or all PES employees.</td>
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<td>▶ PES employees can also post ideas and practices that address issues they have identified themselves. A regional ‘moderator’ checks that the idea or practice is complete and suggests next steps (for example, to test an idea directly or integrate it into a process or service if its impact is obvious and does not require testing).</td>
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### What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

The platform is managed nationally and implemented at all governance levels, demanding staff resources. At regional level, there are 26 ‘moderators’ in each region responsible for promoting the platform and ensuring its quality. The management of every region has a budget for testing ideas. They have a pool of experts who review the ideas and practices. Each region has a team of evaluators who are supported by the national team responsible for evaluation. It is also the job of regional management to encourage participation.

There is one project manager at the Department for Innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility at the national office. Another person in this department helps the regions to test ideas, supports the evaluation and collects evidence of the evaluations at national level. The platform was developed by an external provider and new functions are continually added by PES and the provider.

### What were the source(s) of funding?

National

### What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

**Products:**

In January 2016, there were 3,700 ideas and 1,284 practices. A committee made up of all national managing directors publishes a report every two months that lists which ideas will be tested at national level and which practices qualify as national practices. Regional managers also inform their staff about regional innovation. The form and frequency depends on regional management.

There are also guidelines available to experts, regional ‘moderators’ and regional management on how to test an idea and evaluate the outcomes.

### What outcomes have been identified?

‘InnovAction’ successfully encourages employees to participate in innovation to improve overall PES performance. Since its introduction in 2014, 70% of all 54,000 employees have accessed the platform to submit an idea or practice, to comment or vote. In January 2016, 21% of all practices were regionally or nationally implemented.

Examples of successful ideas which have been put into practice include:

- Workshops and individual advice to train jobseekers how to do well in job interviews. This is done in partnership with companies as part of their corporate social responsibility policy.
- An automatic sign language translator to translate gestures and spoken language between job counsellor and jobseeker.
- An algorithm-based website that searches companies looking to hire individual jobseekers within the next six months. Jobseekers can then use this information to send speculative applications.
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

A culture of mutual respect, encouragement and experimentation is needed to inspire every employee to participate. The following aspects help implement this:

▶ Before its implementation, the platform was tested by 1,200 people in 45 local offices. This generated ‘agents of change’ who promoted the use of the platform.

▶ The platform engenders a new type of dialogue between job counsellors and top management. By asking employees for their ideas to tackle ‘challenges’ managers demonstrate that they value their opinions. The managing director showed strong support for the platform by making it clear that bottom-up innovation is central to PES.

▶ All ideas on the platform remain on the platform. In this way, managers can monitor the importance of each idea at different times and identify which employees would be interested in being involved in its implementation.

▶ To be open to experimentation and risk. Innovation also depends on the willingness of the organisation to try something new, bearing in mind it may fail.

Further development:

▶ In 2016, ‘moderators’ will revise ideas to make them more accessible (avoiding abbreviations and local terminology, using standard terms). This will make semantic search possible so that an employee can search for people who have proposed similar ideas and complement them.

▶ Once ideas become more accessible, the platform will be opened up to external partners such as employers and trade unions thus enabling innovation from stakeholder cooperation.

▶ A limit on the amount of votes per employee will be launched. In this way, employees can support ideas they want to see tested. If an idea is then chosen to be tested, they receive bonus points in their profile.

Contact details for further information

Name: CHAPUIS, Reynald

Email: reynald.chapuis@pole-emploi.fr