



eCOUNSELLING IS A PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ONLINE TOOL FOR IMPROVING CAREER PLANNING AND JOB SEARCH VIA SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRES RELATED TO PERSONALITY, INTERESTS AND COMPETENCIES, LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION AND ALSO BY IN-DEPTH ADVICE AND GUIDANCE.

eCounselling tool

Publication date: January 2018

SLOVENIA

The eCounselling tool enhances the PES careers counselling service by offering self-assessment questionnaires related to personality, interests and competencies, and by offering in-depth advice and guidance. The outcomes for users is not known because what they do as a result of using the tool is up to them. Anecdotal evidence from PES counsellors suggests that the eCounselling tool helps clients to build self-awareness of their abilities and preferences in respect to the job market, and therefore to aid their decision-making.

Scope of measure (a pilot project or a national reform)	National
Name of the PES	Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) (<i>Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje – ZRSZ</i>)
When was the practice implemented?	Since 2008. Following the first version of the website in 2008, it was redesigned in 2012.
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The driver was internal to the Slovenian PES and was related to improving the overall counselling service to clients.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ESS (Slovenian PES) – the key body responsible for implementation. ▶ IT firm – contracted by ESS to develop the online platform. ▶ A professional public relations firm – contracted by ESS to make the content appealing and accessible, especially to young people. ▶ Questionnaire developers – ESS purchased questionnaires from external firms.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	eCounselling is available to anyone.
What were the practice's main objectives?	<p>The objectives of eCounselling include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To enhance the counselling service for people who need assistance with planning careers and training/education, especially by offering self-assessments for competences and interests. ▶ To improve accessibility of counselling services for the whole population. ▶ To make counselling services more attractive and appealing, especially to young people. ▶ To empower users by providing information and making better informed employment and training choices. ▶ To help users become more pro-active in their job search.
What activities were carried out?	<p>Users can access the eCounselling tool online (https://esvetovanje.ess.gov.si/) and can choose to either work with the content as a guest or as a registered user. Registering means that users can save the results of completed questionnaires, save “favourite” occupations and also create and follow an action plan.</p> <p>Users may be introduced to the eCounselling tool by PES counsellors or by school-based career counsellors. Counsellors are able to refer clients to the tool as a way to support and enhance their service, not as a substitute. Clients may be directed to complete questionnaires using the tool at home or may be supported to do so at the career centre.</p> <p>Other users may come to use the tool independently, perhaps having seen the tool promoted on Facebook or on the main ESS website.</p>

	<p>The eCounselling content is organised into seven parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Personality: Questionnaires to identify personality types (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), work related values and motivation, and work-style in order to help learning and reflection about the most suitable work environments, careers and occupations. ▶ Interests: A questionnaire to identify career interests (the <i>Holland interest inventory</i>), i.e. realistic, explorative, artistic, social, entrepreneurial or conventional, which then helps to identify an appropriate work environment and profession. ▶ Competencies: A competency questionnaire to find areas of strength and weakness (14 competency areas can be self-assessed) that are then matched to occupations; and advice and guidance is given on how to articulate different competencies to employers. ▶ Labour market information: Data on the number of past vacancies for occupations (e.g. there were 20 chef vacancies in a particular locality over the past three years), and also current demand for occupations by area. ▶ Job searching advice and guidance: Including where to search, exploiting the 'hidden' labour market, using social media, and making the most of job fairs. ▶ Job application advice and guidance: Including how to effectively complete application forms, write a CV, and perform well in interviews, and then also how to reflect and learn when things don't go well. ▶ Goal setting: Using the tool's bespoke table, which asks what will be done to achieve goals, and when and how individual steps will be carried out.
<p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p>	<p>The key aspects are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Developing the advice and guidance content. ▶ Managing contractors (IT and PR firms). ▶ Purchasing the questionnaires. ▶ Promoting the tool to PES counsellors via periodic workshops. ▶ Training PES counsellors on the tool and what it can offer. ▶ Ongoing website maintenance and programming. <p>The cost for external contracting was EUR 100 000 for initial development and EUR 80 000 for redesign in 2012. This includes computer programming, site design, user testing, and content development.</p>
<p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p>	<p>Both phases of development of the eCounselling tool were 75 % funded by the European Commission as part of an ESF objective on career guidance tools.</p>
<p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p>	<p>Between the start of January 2017 and end of October 2017 there were 98 724 'unique page views' for eCounselling (with one 'view' indicating a discrete 30-minute session), which can be used as a proxy indicator for the number of different users, although one person may partake in more than one session, so the number of unique users is likely to be lower.</p> <p>As at end of October 2017, there were a total of 61 528 user registrations. There were 700 new user registrations in Oct 2017.</p>
<p>What outcomes have been identified?</p>	<p>The outcomes for users are not known because what action they take as a result of using the tool is up to them. Anecdotal evidence from PES counsellors suggests that the eCounselling tool helps clients to build self-awareness of their abilities and preferences in respect to the job market, and therefore to aid their decision-making. The tool may also be particularly useful for the long-term unemployed and those with motivational difficulties as it can enable them to take more initiative and be more pro-active.</p>

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The following are the lessons learnt and success factors identified:

- ▶ There needs to be careful management and mediation between the IT technicians and the labour market experts to reduce the risk of misunderstanding between the two perspectives.
- ▶ Better promotion of the tool to the public is needed.
- ▶ Time and resources must be allocated to initial training with PES counsellors on how to make use of the tool. Also, ongoing awareness raising and promotion of the tool amongst counsellors is also necessary.
- ▶ The language for the eCounselling tool needs to be accessible and appealing and not over-complicated and in-depth - a public relations firm can add considerable value here. At the same time the PES may also need to ensure that the content is not over-simplified but still articulates the necessary detail.
- ▶ The eCounselling tool should not be seen as a way to save on costs. It is an enhancement of counselling services and takes a considerable investment of time and money.
- ▶ The eCounselling tool is more effective in cases of integrated use with face-to-face counselling.
- ▶ Going forward, more in-depth monitoring and evaluation will be needed in order to measure progress in using the tool.



Contact details for further information

Name: GOGALA, Barbara / Senior Field Consultant

Email: barbara.gogala@ess.gov.si

Telephone: +38 14790940 or +38 656135008