



Flexible employment and training opportunities in companies with varying/inconstant activity intensity

Гъвкави възможности за заетост и обучения в предприятия с променлив интензитет на дейността



Bulgaria

1 DESCRIPTION

Timespan 2017 - present

Stage FULLY OPERATIONAL

Focus area



MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET

2 FOUNDATIONS

Policy Area



ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

The overall objective of the procedure is to provide an opportunity for increasing skills matching of inactive and unemployed people. It aims to create conditions for increasing the labour productivity for more sustainable employment, and better job placement by overcoming the gap between the demand and supply in the labour market (skills mismatch).

Policy Goal

The programme attempts to address the problem of relatively high personnel turnover and job vacancies in the three targeted sectors, which is caused by the inconstant intensity of activity of companies in these sectors, resulting in skills mismatch. The policy goal is to: increase skills matching; and provide better and more sustainable job placements, leading to higher and better-quality employment. A full subsidy (100%) is given to employers of three sectors with inconstant activity intensity (Manufacturing, Construction, Accommodation and food service activities) to train unemployed and inactive persons, and re-train employed persons in skills that match to their business needs, which will be done in less busy work periods; and to provide scholarships for trainees (unemployed and inactive people).

Mismatch

PART OF BROADER PROGRAMME, YET WITH EXPLICIT FOCUS

It falls under an overarching programme (HRD OP 2014-2020), which in general aims to raise employability; training and skills matching are means to this end.

Aim of policy instrument



UPSkill AND MATCH SKILLS OF UNEMPLOYED



UPSkill EMPLOYED ADULTS



FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS



ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES

Legal basis

MINISTERIAL ORDER

Administrative level

NATIONAL

Main responsible body

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP is the Managing Authority of the HRD OP 2014-2020 through DG 'European Funds, International Programmes and Projects'). The MLSP is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the HRD OP.

Stakeholders



GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)

The National Employment Agency (contracting authority in its capacity of Intermediate Body for OP HRD OP): performs governing, coordinating and organisational functions; allocates the necessary funds and controls the implementation. Regional Employment Services Directorates: coordinating functions at regional level; monitoring and controls functions at regional level. The Monitoring Committee (MC) of the HRD OP, a collective body established on the principle of partnership, which monitors the implementation of the Operational Programme, comprised of all stakeholders in the area. VET Centres - project partners.

Funding

The total subsidy budget is BGN 30m (€15.34m), of which: 85% ESF and 15% national co-financing. For a single project: minimum size of the subsidy - BGN 20,000 (€10,226); maximum - BGN 391 166 (€200,000).

Intended beneficiaries

Employers from 3 specific sectors: Manufacturing, Construction and Accommodation and food service activities Unemployed and inactive persons, and employed, including self-employed people. Eligible Partners: Employers from the 3 specific sectors and VET centres (only if 100% owned by the applicant).

3 PROCESSES

Use of labour market intelligence



INFORM JOB-SEARCH DECISIONS OF UNEMPLOYED



ENABLE STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISIONS

Curricula are selected to provide training for unemployed and inactive people to find employment in the three targeted sectors that have skills shortages; and re-training of employed persons to achieve better skills matching.

Financial schemes

Subsidies (100%), based on calls for proposals, are provided to employers from 3 specific sectors to train unemployed and/or inactive people, and re-train employed persons, aiming at increasing sustainable employment and improving skills matching in these sectors. The funds are for vocational training for attaining qualifications and key competencies; and involvement of inactive/unemployed persons in non-subsidised employment with the employer (compulsory). The employer should ensure employment for a minimum of 25% of the trained unemployed/inactive persons for at least 3 months after the projects end.

Frequency of updates

Progress reports on the programme's implementation are submitted annually, including progress on concrete operations; Monitoring Committee (the body approving any changes) holds sessions twice a year.

Development

No adaptation/adjustment so far.

Barriers

No barriers are identified so far, as the procedure has just started being operational.

Success factors

No own co-financing is needed (100% subsidy). Flexibility for employers is provided to choose the periods, in which their future employees will be trained; and the periods, in which their employees will be able to apply their newly acquired or advanced skills and qualifications. This enables employers to train an appropriate labour force in the less busy months of the year, and allows them to use them in periods with more intense workload.

Monitoring

The Annual Reports on the Implementation of HRD OP provide regular information about the progress of the operation, including reporting data on the specific outcome and result indicators, as well as on the financial resources spent. Planned indicators: unemployed and inactive participants - at least 5,000; employed persons - at least 2,100. Result indicators: 4,500 unemployed/inactive persons acquired qualification; 2,500 persons in jobs; 1,900 participants acquired qualification at operation's exit. For the new programming period, the ISUN 2020 information system for management and monitoring the EU funds in Bulgaria was developed (according to Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013) and applied in Bulgaria, improving the monitoring systems of the OPs (beneficiaries report electronically).

Innovativeness

SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE

Flexibility of employers in choosing the appropriate time for the training of unemployed/inactive persons, and re-training of employees is innovative in itself. Identifying skills gaps by collaborating with industries is quite an innovative approach too, a good example of the skills mismatch identification policies in the country. Provision of relevant training to boost skills in specific sectors, through provision of scholarships to unemployed/inactive persons and re-training of employees, is a fairly straightforward instrument and as such, not innovative. Albeit, for those sectors, which have high demand, without such training, the impacts of future mismatch is potentially high.

4 SUSTAINABILITY

Evidence of effectiveness

The scheme is operational since 2017, but already 47 contracts have been signed (as per August 2017). Projects have just started implementation, which means that unemployed/inactive persons and employed persons are benefiting from vocational trainings.

Engagement of stakeholders

The Monitoring Committee of the HRD OP (comprising of different types of stakeholders, including representatives of employers' organisations, academia and VET providers etc) holds meetings biannually.

Transferability

EASILY TRANSFERABLE

The principle of providing training to unemployed and inactive people/re-training of employed in skills acquisition is quite transferable in itself, if funding is available, and if skills mismatch exists in similar sectors with varying activity intensity.

Sustainability

At present, it is not clear whether the 'Flexible employment and training opportunities in companies ' operation will have further calls for proposals in the coming years of the present programming period. Thus, its future is uncertain, as the operation relies heavily on ESF funds (85% of funds).
