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The pilot provided information, in one online location¹, on job opportunities in short-term working and self-employment offered by the digital job mediation platforms and invoicing services. It also provided information on the implications for unemployment benefits.

Pilot of new forms of work and entrepreneurship

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The overall goal of the pilot was to meet the needs of the labour market more effectively, specifically through the promotion of short-term and self-employment opportunities. It aimed to address labour market needs that emerged from a study undertaken on the topic of self-employment and the sharing economy which outlined new forms of self-employment and the changing nature of the labour market.²

Information on short-term working/self-employment possibilities for jobseekers was placed on the digital jobs market platform (www.tyomarkkinatori.fi) and integrated into this platform under the title "self-employment". This jobs market platform was developed to serve as a one-stop service through which jobseekers and employers can find all services they need including information on what happens to unemployment benefits when a jobseeker takes on this type of work. By collaborating with other stakeholders, the Finnish PES managed to launch an innovative project to approach new forms of employment.

A key lesson learnt from the pilot project is the importance of providing an information package on new forms of work and entrepreneurship in one website; the site is also useful for Finnish PES staff as it disseminates information on new forms of work and entrepreneurship.

Name of the PES

Finnish PES (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (MEAE))

Scope of measure

National

When was the practice implemented?

May 2017- March 2018

What was the driver for introducing the practice?
Was it internal or external?

The initiative for this pilot project came from the Finnish PES. A study³ on self-employment and the sharing economy in the changing working life, carried out in February 2017 by the Ministry, revealed interesting changes and trends in the Finnish labour market regarding self-employment. Specifically, it was found that new, emerging forms of self-employment challenge traditional working schemes and the existing national legislation on the benefits system. More and more self-employees use service providers such as invoicing companies⁴ and digital job platforms. Through this study self-employed people had the opportunity to share their proposals and recommendations for the improvement of legislation and public, business and employment services. One of these proposals resulted in the launch of a pilot project concerning the online provision of information on new forms of work and entrepreneurship in May 2017.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

Finnish PES's Administrative and Development Centre of the Employment Offices (KEHA Centres); Uusimaa ELY Centre (unemployment benefit unit); the National Customer Service Centre of the Finnish PES (TE); and 13 private service providers (such as digital jobs mediation platforms and invoicing companies).

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The pilot project targeted jobseekers and PES employees:

- ▶ Jobseekers - in order to offer them new, short-term opportunities for work and self-employment;
- ▶ All Finnish PES staff - it was important for PES staff to know about the new forms of work and entrepreneurship the pilot was offering, how this type of work affects unemployment benefits, how the digital information service operates and guide jobseekers to use it.

¹ www.tyomarkkinatori.fi

² The study is available (in Finnish) at: <http://julkaisut.valtionneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/79272>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Self-employed people can issue an invoice for their work by using invoicing companies/billing services, without being registered as a company. See <http://tyomarkkinatori.fi/en/self-employment/service-providers/>

What were the practice's main objectives?

The overall goal of the pilot was to improve the ability of the Finnish PES to meet the needs of the labour market, specifically to promote short-term and self-employment opportunities.

The pilot project had two main objectives:

- ▶ Facilitate job-seeking and provide related information to jobseekers interested in new, short-term working and entrepreneurship opportunities provided by the invoicing companies and digital job mediation platforms; and
- ▶ Provide training to all PES staff so that they are up-to-date regarding labour market trends and new forms of work and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, the pilot project was linked to a wider goal to digitalise public services under the government's project to reform Finnish PES activities to support employment. Specifically, the pilot project contributed to building the national digital jobs market platform which was under construction.

What activities were carried out?

Information about job opportunities in short-term working/self-employment/entrepreneurship was placed on the digital jobs market platform (www.tyomarkkinatori.fi), developed and maintained by KEHA Centre. The jobs market platform has been developed to serve as a one-stop service through which jobseekers and employers can find all services they need. In addition to the jobs notified to the Finnish PES, the jobs market platform also gathers together opportunities offered by private digital service providers, including jobs, training opportunities and different kinds of information regarding labour market. The pilot project supported the development work being carried out on the jobs market platform.

Finnish PES staff that were interested in the topic were offered a self-training programme on the types of new work and entrepreneurship available and/or self-employment concepts. The objective was that before the pilot's launch, Finnish PES staff would know about the pilot. The training was available on the Finnish PES extranet⁵ and included an informational leaflet explaining the phenomenon of new forms of work and entrepreneurship/self-employment and a video.

Meetings with the service providers were held before, during and after the pilot in order to get them involved from the beginning and agree on cooperation criteria. After the pilot's implementation, a meeting was organised to discuss next steps and future involvement.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

The pilot project on new forms of employment and self-employment was an initiative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, which was in charge of steering the development work of the pilot.

A project group was established to follow the development work of the pilot. The project group included experts closely connected to the pilot from the Ministry, KEHA Centre and TE Customer Service Centre.

A follow-up study was undertaken by an external research organisation and a steering group, consisting of experts working closely with the pilot, was established for the study in order to assess the effectiveness of the pilot. The Ministry led the study.

KEHA Centre was in charge of the operational development of the pilot project and specifically were responsible for:

- ▶ maintaining the platform;
- ▶ integrating the pilot to the digital jobs market platform;
- ▶ furthering the development of the website; and
- ▶ carrying out the training of Finnish PES staff.

The unemployment benefit unit of Uusimaa ELY Centre was involved in drawing up the text for the pilot project on short-term working/self-employment possibilities for jobseekers integrated into the digital platform regarding the unemployment benefits while the National Customer Service Centre of the TE Services was involved by providing telephone services to answer questions regarding unemployment benefits⁶.

The external private partners (digital job mediation platforms and invoicing companies) offered the services to jobseekers⁷.

What were the source(s) of funding?

The pilot project funding was part of the government's reform of employment service activities to support employment and renew digitalising PES e-services.

The monitoring study received financial support from the MEAE research funds.

5 An intranet that can be partially accessed by authorised outside users, enabling businesses to exchange information over the Internet in a secure way. While intranets embrace employees within a company, extranets extend outwards to offer similar functions to those working closely with the business but separate from it.

6 Available at: <http://tyomarkkinatori.fi/en/self-employment/unemployment-security-faq/>

7 See <http://tyomarkkinatori.fi/en/self-employment/service-providers/>

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

The pilot project reached a lower number of jobseekers than expected while service providers did not attract new customers. Around 20 000 users visited the pilot during the period May 2017 – March 2018. 63 % of them were unemployed.

A comprehensive section on what happens to unemployment benefits when a jobseeker takes on short-term employment or self-employment through the pilot, was available for jobseekers and Finnish PES staff.⁸ 25 % of visitors to the digital jobs market platform (www.tyomarkkinatori.fi) were looking for this kind of information.

An informational leaflet and a video were produced for the Finnish PES staff's training. No information is available on the number of PES staff that were trained as part of the pilot project. In addition to the basic training, advanced training has been provided (from the pilot phase until autumn 2018) for Finnish PES staff on different entrepreneurial tools in the customer guidance.

What outcomes have been identified?

As a part of the monitoring study, jobseekers, Finnish PES staff and service providers expressed proposals and ideas on further developments that could improve the website (including technical improvements) and labour market services (e.g. providing more information on unemployment benefits and on different forms of self-employment).

The pilot project has been integrated into the digital job mediation platform under the title "self-employment" and the improvement proposals will be taken into account in the development work.

In the future, other stakeholders and more jobseekers could use the pilot project and benefit from it. For instance, the One-Stop-Guidance Centres (Ohjaamo⁹) could use the service to attract young people. The customers of One-Stop-Guidance Centres are young people who are looking for work and for them, a short-term working opportunity provided by one of the service providers in the pilot project, could be a feasible path to entering the labour market. Additionally, young people are those who are mostly using digital job mediation applications for instance.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

By collaborating with other stakeholders, the Finnish PES managed to launch an innovative project to approach new forms of employment. Feedback was collected from the service providers and joint meetings were organised with them: Service providers would like to maintain cooperation after the pilot project period.

It is important for the Finnish PES to provide an information package on new forms of work and entrepreneurship in one website; the site is also useful for Finnish PES staff as it disseminates information on new forms of work and entrepreneurship.

The pilot project did not bring new customers to the service providers, but all of the service providers want to be involved in the future development of the website. They also commented that the pilot project should be developed so that the service providers benefit from it. The website should be more customer-friendly and more information should be provided: for instance, different self-employment case studies could be added to the site. Service providers were also interested to know about the future direction of the websites development.

However, the launching of the pilot project should have taken place only after the launch of the job board of the digital jobs market platform given that this was the platform in which the pilot project was integrated, and it was still under construction. As a result, it was not possible to carry out proper marketing and media campaigns.

The pilot also demonstrated that the biggest stumbling block in customer guidance regarding self-employment is the uncertainty around what will happen to a person's unemployment benefits.

Even though the pilot project did not have the expected results in terms of the number of jobseeker visitors, it has been integrated into the digital job mediation platform under the title "Self-employment" and further development is on-going.

⁸ Internet: <http://tyomarkkinatori.fi/en/self-employment/unemployment-security-faq/>

⁹ Read more about Ohjaamo here: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19409&langId=en>



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