Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Passport for Work

Key facts

Passport for Work (PfW) is a three-year urban innovation project. The project is led by the city of Eindhoven and aims to increase the labour participation and ensure its regional labour market remains competitive as well as inclusive through developing an inter-sectoral skills passport with a gamified skills assessment.

Timeframe and funding	Timeframe: 01/11/2018 – 31/10/2022
	EUR 4.9 million funded by Urban Innovative Actions (UIA). UIA is an Initiative of the European Union promoting pilot projects in the field of sustainable urban development.
City and county population	235 691 inhabitants
Governing body	The City of Eindhoven
Link	https://uia-initiative.eu/fr/uia-cities/eindhoven
	https://uia-initiative.eu/en/operational-challenges/uia-green-jobs-case-study-eindhoven https://uia-initiative.eu/en/operational-challenges/uia-green-%20%20jobs-case-study-eindhoven%20%20%20%20
	https://www.passportforwork.nl/#/landing
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LmKiM9wA-k
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-xgKSdKU4w

Main objectives

In the Eindhoven region, there is an apparent growth paradox: the local high-tech industry is flourishing and home to many key international players, but a growing number of citizens are not suited for today and tomorrow's jobs. The project therefore aims to increase labour participation and ensure the regional labour market remains competitive as well as inclusive. The project aims to achieve this by:

- Developing an inter-sectoral skills passport with a gamified assessment that can be used in several sectors of the labour market
- Creating tailor-made and restructured eLearning education programmes for skills improvement

- Reducing the time for reintegrating jobseekers and ensuring more sustainable labour market outcomes

Ensuring a better and more transparent connection between employers and employees by contributing to the creation of a common "skills language".

Content and mode of delivery

The centrepiece of Passport for Work is an online platform, which allows individuals to develop their skill-based passport for work by means of gamified assessment and allows employers to find suitably skilled staff. In March 2022, a prototype of the platform was launched which is GDPR-proof (a significant hurdle in the project). Jobseekers and employers using this tool are guided in the identification and articulation of, respectively, their skillsets and their skill needs. Jobseekers engage in several gamified assessments to build their "passport for work", an overview of their skills and other professional attributes. Employers are guided in the creation of skill-based job vacancies. This information is used for algorithm-based matchmaking. In case of a small skills gap targeted eLearning and training modules are offered directly within the platform. The main advantages are that, first, by gamifying th¬¬¬e assessments, the platform caters to the motivation of job seekers; second, it presents a broad picture of employees' skills; and third, it reduces bias in human decision making, since the algorithm compares occupational requirements with someone's skills in a purely objective manner.

Passport for Work also contributes to a national skills language. Occupational skill needs were identified for 25 occupations in the health care, technical, and construction industry (representing the initial scope of the project), validated by questionnaires among thousands of Dutch employers and workers. Together, they provided input on the relevance, as well as the appropriate mastery level for over 100 skills, for each of the 25 occupations.

Until October 2022, the prototype will be subjected to a longitudinal study by Tilburg University, to assess its actual impact on both jobseekers and employers. By monitoring a group of 150 job seekers over a period of 6 months (as well as a randomised control group of the same amount), it will be ascertained whether the platform's theoretical promise materializes. The research is based on administrative data, surveys as well as interviews. Result indicators include the time to find a job, the quality and sustainability of a job match, as well as the perceived efficiency by job employers.

Stakeholders

The project consortium comprises ten organisations:

- Municipality of Eindhoven
- Province North-Brabant – Province
- WIJeindhoven – Foundation for temporary support
- GRWRE – Foundation for labour participation
- UWV – Employee insurance agency
- Transvorm – business support organisation for care and welfare sector
- MKB Eindhoven – business support organisation for SME's
- Tilburg University – Higher education and research institute

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Key challenges, success factors & transferability 🚀

Challenges

- Lack of transparency in the labour market. Due to the heterogeneous nature of both jobs and job seekers, and a lack of structural information, both companies and job seekers spend a lot of time and resources on finding either the right candidate or the right job.

- Lack of structural information on people and jobs hinders proactive upskilling and reskilling activities. Many job seekers may not be readily available for a job, but for targeted upskilling and reskilling training to take place, the skills gap needs are identified.

- Complying with GDPR legislation was a major challenge for the storing and using of personal information in the platform for matching purposes. This proved to be extremely complex with a lot of intricacies related to the management, distribution, and of storing of various subsets of skills and other personal traits. As such, external expertise was sought to ultimately develop a GDPR-compliant platform, in which ownership of data belongs to the job seeker, and potential discriminatory effects are avoided.

Success factors

- A parallel strategy involving the development of a service, its online platform, and the management of its broader environment. Early engagement with regulating labour market players, employers, and other stakeholders has boosted the possibility of successful upscaling and reduced a previously fragmented environment.

- High performance expectations. Although it is a regional project, its scope includes the whole Dutch labour market. Consequently, it has contributed to a national push toward a skills-based economy, benefitting the common good long after the initiative ends.

- Throughout its life cycle, the project has pushed itself to validate its assumptions through prototyping and experimentation. As a result, the platform has undergone a few major changes. For example, tests were built for each of the 103 skills included in one of the initial prototypes. With time, it became clear that the time necessary for individuals to complete the exams would approach a hundred hours, and that employers would be unable to make sense of all of the data. Therefore, the assessment model used a clustering approach.

Lessons learned

- Strong incentive systems encourage individuals to disclose information on their skills and other relevant attributes.

- A "passport for work" that is selective and structured by nature in terms of its contents ensures efficient matching procedures.

- Maintaining acceptable levels of validity and reliability of data on skills (to prevent matching on false grounds).

Going forward, the passport should be part of a larger platform that connects all job seekers, companies, and educational institutions into a single, easily accessible ecosystem.

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