



EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Practitioner toolkit on strengthening PES
to improve the labour market outcomes
of persons with disabilities



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EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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of persons with disabilities**

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INTRODUCTION

What is this toolkit about?

This toolkit provides a **practical guide**, with concrete examples, for how Public Employment Services (PES) can promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market. The toolkit, as one of the deliverables of the Employment Package, is intended to improve the labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities, contributing to closing the employment gap between people with and without disabilities. Increasing employment rate of persons with disabilities will also help to achieve the ambitious target of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, to have at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 in employment by 2030¹. The toolkit intends to support PES in their role as key agents for the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD), and the flagship initiative on employment within the Strategy for the Rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030, as well as their own ambition to meet the needs of different client groups². The objective of the toolkit is to provide PES with information and advice on strategies and practices to support them in combatting labour market discrimination against persons with disabilities and further their effective labour market participation.

From both a managerial and operational PES perspective, this toolkit provides PES with practice-oriented knowledge to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities, respecting their right to equal participation. The toolkit aims to provide inputs for the development or adaptation of strategies, as well as inspire PES with new practices or ways of implementing them. As PES have different remits regarding their direct responsibilities for providing services in this area, the intention is that the toolkit can be adopted for use by all PES irrespective of their particular operational delivery model. It does this by describing a universal legal context and presenting a wide range of practices relating to six action areas. This toolkit pays particular attention to the concrete experience from different PES but also makes use of insights from other labour market actors and research.

This toolkit has been developed with the support of the **EU PES Network**, established in 2014³ and recently confirmed up to 2027⁴, as well as in collaboration with relevant Commission services⁵. The updated strategy for the PES Network includes a commitment to **partnerships with other labour market actors** to provide better services for more comprehensive support to vulnerable

1 European Commission Communication <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:102:FIN>. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

2 PES Network Strategy, European Network of Public Employment Services, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021.

3 DECISION No 573/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES).

4 DECISION (EU) 2020/1782 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 November 2020 amending Decision No 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES).

5 European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, unit Social Rights and Inclusion

jobseekers⁶. The toolkits are part of a series of actions undertaken by the Network to assist PES in better targeting active labour market policies (ALMPs) and improving the quality of delivery systems to meet the needs of different client groups⁷. Similar toolkits recently published cover evidence-based services, knowledge management, communication and branding, services to employers, career guidance and lifelong learning.

How is this toolkit organised?

The toolkit is organised in three parts:

Section 1, WHY:

'Why support from PES to persons with disabilities is critical', is an introduction to why action is needed in this area. It provides PES with relevant **statistics**, an explanation of the European **policy framework** and an overview of the current situation of **PES** services in this area.

Section 2, WHAT:

'What PES can do', provides useful **tools** grouped under **six areas of action**. Practices mentioned in this section were collected by desk research and a 'call for practices' from the PES Network.

Section 3, HOW:

'How to go from intention to implementation' highlights **five concrete steps** that PES can follow to strengthen their services for persons with disabilities, thereby improving the labour market outcomes for this group.

⁶ DECISION (EU) 2020/1782 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 November 2020 amending Decision No 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services.
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020D1782&from=EN>.

⁷ For more information consult the PES Knowledge Centre and Repository of PES practices on <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&lanqId=en>.

SECTION 1.

WHY support from PES to persons with disabilities is critical



1. Labour market trends show the need for action

Persons with disabilities encounter specific and additional barriers in the labour market

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD) states that "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"⁸.

The focus on **'interaction with various barriers'** is an especially important element of this internationally shared definition of disability. Instead of the **medical or individual model**, which views disability as a feature of the person directly caused by disease, this **social model** of disability sees disability as a socially created problem arising from the interaction between the individual and contextual barriers.

Persons with disabilities represent a significant group within the EU

In 2019 the EU-27 counted some 85 million persons with disabilities, aged 16 and over living in private households. In the working age population, i.e. the 16-64 age group, there were about **32.6 million persons with moderate**

Box 1: UN CRPD definitions⁹

Discrimination on the basis of disability means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation; (Art.2)

Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (Art.2)

Universal design means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. (Art.2)

disabilities and 11.3 million with severe disabilities (European Commission, 2022a). These micro-data stem from the latest results of the main systematic data collection as conducted

⁸ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-per-sons-with-disabilities-2.html>, Article 1.

⁹ For the full text: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html#Fulltext>, On accessibility aspects please consider art.9 of the UNCRPD.

in the framework of the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey. The data on disability in this survey refers to self-evaluation by the respondents¹⁰.

These statistics do not distinguish between different types of persons with health problems and disabilities. However, from other sources the following indications can be derived:

- Persons with health problems and disabilities represent **58% of the "inactive" population** in Europe (PES Network, 2020):
- There are over **30 million blind** and partially sighted persons in Europe; their average unemployment rate is 75% - and even higher among women - often leading to their social exclusion and poverty (ONCE, 2019).
- There are approximately **one million deaf sign language users** in the EU and **51 million hearing-impaired** persons, many of whom are also sign language users whose unemployment is underreported and inadequately researched (Langensiepen, 2021).
- There are approximately **seven million persons with intellectual disabilities** in the EU whose employment level is considerably low. Estimates indicate that across Europe only around 10% of persons on the autism

spectrum are employed, mostly in part-time and low-paid jobs, in under-qualified positions or sheltered settings (Autism-Europe, 2014).

Persons with disabilities have a disadvantaged position in the labour market

Table 1 shows that persons with disabilities are less likely to be active in the labour market and if they are active, they are less likely to be employed and more likely to be unemployed.

Moreover, the situation of women with disabilities is significantly worse than the situation of men with disabilities. 29.2% of women with disabilities are at risk of poverty and social exclusion compared to 27.4% of men with disabilities. Women with severe disabilities are even more impacted with 33.9% of them at risk of poverty and social exclusion, compared to 34.2% of men with severe disabilities. About 49.0 % of women with disabilities, aged 20-64, are employed compared to 53.9 % of men with disabilities of the same age group. Only 20% of women with disabilities are in full time employment, compared to 29% of men with disabilities, 48% of women without disabilities and 64% of men without disabilities¹¹.

Table 1. Main employment indicators for persons with disabilities compared to the total population, EU-27 persons aged 20 - 64, 2019

Indicators	Persons with disabilities (%)	All persons (%)
The employment rate (age 20-64)	51.3	71.5
Unemployment rate (age 20-64)	17.3	9.5
Activity rate (20-64)	62.0	79.0
Very low work intensity. Age 16-59. Work intensity (WI): <20	22.9	9.0
At risk of poverty after social transfers: < 60% of the median national. Age 16+	21.1	16.2
At risk of poverty or exclusion: Persons at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers, severe material deprivation, or very low work intensity. Age 16+.	28.4	20.8

Source: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Grammenos, S., European comparative data on Europe 2020 and persons with disabilities: labour market, education, poverty and health analysis and trends, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/48279>

¹⁰ Their self-evaluation concerns the extent to which they are limited in performing day to day normal activities because of health problems, for at least the last 6 months. The general term disability is used to cover respondents reporting both "strongly limited" and "limited" levels in their activities.

¹¹ European comparative data on Europe 2020 and persons with disabilities, 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0b6a78a6-9916-11ec-8d29-01aa75ed71a1>

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan¹² highlights the **disability employment gap** as a **headline indicator measuring progress in social protection and inclusion**. The disability employment gap measures the percentage point difference between the employment rate of persons with disabilities and the employment rate of persons without disabilities. For the EU-27 the disability employment gap amounted to 24.3 pp. in 2020, which is minimally lower than in 2019 (24.4 pp.) and higher than in all preceding years since 2014¹³.



Box 2: The pandemic and war have posed new challenges

Persons with disabilities have been especially impacted by COVID-19. Many have been 'shielding' forced to stay at home with reduced social contact. **COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing economic, health and social inequalities, amplifying the challenges in tackling discrimination** (UN, 2020).

COVID-19 is predicted to increase the prevalence of disability due to 'Long-COVID' - a chronic illness for part of the infected population (Chung et al, 2021). The surge in healthcare demand following COVID-19 has limited healthcare access and care for persons with disabilities, further distressing their health conditions (European Commission, 2022a).

The war in Ukraine creates the need to support refugees with disabilities. Specific strategies will be necessary for PES to meet this target group, applying an intersectional perspective.

2. The EU is committed to improving labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities

Council Directive 2000/78/EC already establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, highlighting the difference between direct and indirect discrimination and puts obligations on employers to provide reasonable accommodation.¹⁴ The EU furthermore supports the employment of persons with disabilities by regulating the accessibility of products and services, as well as on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.¹⁵

In January 2011 the UN CRPD¹⁶ came into force, to which the EU was already a party in December 2010. In 2021 the EU adopted the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. In the following paragraphs, the elements of this legal framework with specific relevance for PES actions are introduced.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

In **2011** EU Member States and the EU ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and implemented it with **binding force** as an international treaty. Key implications for PES include:

- PES need to increasingly develop **holistic personalised individual support packages** to meet the barriers faced by persons with disabilities identified under the social model for disability.
- PES will need to ensure that their internal and external equality and diversity strategies, and training and awareness packages for staff are sufficient for a **substantive model of equality**: considering the overt and covert forms of discrimination as well as the physical, attitudinal, and legal barriers.

¹² Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr_sp200/default/table?lang=en

¹⁴ Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation. Indirect discrimination occurs where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons having a particular religion or belief, a particular disability, a particular age, or a particular sexual orientation at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.

¹⁵ Directive (EU) 2019/882 of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services and Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

¹⁶ For further analysis on the relationship between EU legislation and CRPD: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/combating-disability-discrimination.pdf>.

- The CRPD develops the **non-discrimination principle** and **reasonable accommodation**. The denial of reasonable accommodation is now officially recognized as a form of discrimination in international law (Waddington & Broderick, 2018). Reasonable accommodation can be divided into two main classes. First, **technical solutions** - these include assistive devices or other adaptations to the workplace. Second, **organisational arrangements** - such as adjustment of working hours and re-distribution of duties, teleworking arrangements, and redeployment to a different job (European Commission, 2016).
- The CRPD focuses on **accessibility** (Art. 9) stating: 'to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas'.
- Finally, CRPD Art. 5 allows for '**specific measures**', therefore positive action involving both temporary and permanent measures should be employed. In this case, positive actions will make a visible contribution to reducing barriers.

The Commission will support Member States in the development of their national strategies and action plans and will undertake further work to implement CRPD at EU level.

The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

In March 2021, the European Commission adopted a new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2021-2030¹⁷.

This new Strategy incorporates elements of the CRPD, notably the diversity of disabilities comprising long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and intersectional discrimination. For PES this can mean a **package of services** catering for the various barriers faced by persons with disabilities. This may in turn require intensifying **cooperation** with partners that can



Box 3: Actions foreseen at EU Level

Evaluation of the European Disability Strategy from 2010-2020 identified employment in the top five policy areas for future action. To improve the labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities, the Commission is developing the Employment Package, seeking cooperation with the PES Network, social partners, and organisations of persons with disabilities, providing **guidance, good practices and support for mutual learning** on the following elements:

1. Strengthening capacities of employment and integration services,
2. Promoting hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combating stereotypes,
3. Ensuring reasonable accommodation at work,
4. Retaining persons with disabilities in employment: preventing disabilities associated with chronic illnesses,
5. Securing vocational rehabilitation schemes in case of chronic diseases or accidents,
6. Exploring quality jobs in sheltered employment, and pathways to the open labour market.

Member States are also invited to use the reinforced Youth Guarantee to support young persons with disabilities.



Box 4: ESF+ funding is available to promote the increased employability of persons with disabilities

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is the European Union's main instrument for investing in people. It provides an important contribution to the EU's employment and skills policies. Several of its priority areas are of direct relevance to supporting the employment of persons with disabilities. These include funding enabling their reskilling and upskilling to take advantage of employment opportunities created by the transition to the green and digital economy. Organisations promoting the increased employability of persons with disabilities can also benefit from ESF+ support directed to capacity building for social partners and civil society organizations. Funding is also available to promote social innovation (including in the field of promoting the employment of persons with disabilities) across the EU through transnational cooperation. New projects can receive the direct support for social innovation available through the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand of ESF+.

17 For the full text: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>.

provide complementary services. Intersectionality and diversity will require reinforced **personalised approaches** offered by PES.

In the Strategy, the Commission announces a package 'to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities', the Employment Package. To this end, the Commission **cooperates with the PES Network**. The Commission also calls upon Member States to 'strengthen the capacities of employment services for persons with disabilities and enhancing work with social partners and organisations of persons with disabilities'.

3. PES are key to improving labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities

A clear and strong role envisaged for PES

PES are on the frontline of the labour market, and it is this position that makes them best placed to help steer a more accessible labour market for persons with disabilities.

The **roles and responsibilities** of PES regarding the employment prospects of persons with disabilities are clear in the Decision establishing the PES Network, extended from 2020 to 2027¹⁸. The amended Decision calls for the modernisation and strengthening of PES to contribute to the implementation of EU employment policies, especially the European Pillar of Social Rights¹⁹. It also calls for PES actions to contribute to goal 8 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all²⁰.

PES and stakeholder partners have significant **scope to adopt measures to combat discrimination** and other barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and help them overcome these barriers and improve their labour market position. Despite different PES contexts and remits, PES play a key role in supporting the labour market inclusion of jobseekers with

disabilities, in most cases, this commitment is **shared with other authorities**, such as municipalities, the ministry for labour, the central rehabilitation agency or the disability insurance agency (PES Network, 2021).

A recent survey featuring 22 PES showed that most PES have a role in supporting job search and protecting jobseekers' rights against labour market discrimination (European Commission, 2022b). Some PES have a detailed and proactive anti-discrimination strategy, some other PES mainstream support for discriminated groups into their overall approach of individualised services, while others focus on labour market vulnerabilities, and tackle discrimination indirectly. Seven of the responding PES have a proactive and elaborate diversity strategy as part of their own internal HR management, for all (BE-Actiris, BE-VDAB, DE, FR, IE and NL) or some discriminated groups (AT for women).



Box 5: Selected examples of strong PES approaches to combat discrimination, including persons with disabilities, in the EU

SI: The Slovenian PES cooperates with the tax authority and the labour inspectorate to identify employers who discriminate their employees or job candidates.

NL: The Dutch PES has implemented a clear accountability process for anyone subject to discrimination (including jobseekers), namely a formal warning, with three formal warnings leading to dismissal.

SE: Beside ability testing and vocational rehabilitation, the Swedish PES provides mentoring, job preparation, job trials, job coaching and follow-up support. It also collaborates with special needs upper secondary schools to give support to students with special needs in connection to their school leaving, including early exits.

Source: European Commission 2022b

18 DECISION (EU) 2020/1782 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 November 2020 amending Decision No 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES).

19 Data available here: Eurostat <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>.

20 See Sustainable Development Goals - Complete Guide to UN SDGs at <https://www.b1q1.com/contribute-sdgs>.

PES are already working with persons with disabilities

In most Member States, PES already play a central role in the participation of persons with disabilities in the open labour market (Eurofound, 2021). Several PES have already developed specific **strategies** for persons with disabilities. Sometimes these are part of a wider inclusion strategy, sometimes they target persons with disabilities specifically. When implementing the strategy, several PES seek cooperation with other organisations, notably NGOs already working with this target group.

PES **services and measures** are in principle available to all clients, including persons with disabilities. However, some PES also develop specific services and some ALMPs are specifically useful for dealing with the barriers persons with disabilities face. Both supply and demand-side measures are important in this respect.



Box 6: PES supply-side services in different Member States

About **half of PES provide supply-side services and measures** to jobseekers with a disability (ability testing, job coaching, vocational rehabilitation, or job trials). The most common solution is to have specialised caseworkers who refer jobseekers with disabilities to external providers: this is used by PES in Ireland, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Slovakia. Countries that have specialised counsellors, as well as a more limited range of services for jobseekers, include Cyprus, Greece, and Latvia. Poland has no special arrangements for jobseekers with disabilities, while Belgium-VDAB did not specify their approach. Moreover, in some cases (Belgium-ACTIRIS, Germany, Croatia, Iceland and Malta), the PES have a dedicated unit that provides most services in-house. In a few countries (Austria, Estonia and Sweden), these two approaches are combined.

Source: PES Network. (2021)

According to the recent study 'Mapping PES responses against labour market discrimination' (PES Network, 2021), on the supply side, PES ensure access to information and physical location to all jobseekers and inform their counsellors of the obligation to guarantee equal access. PES services for persons with disabilities mainly consist of specialised caseworkers referring to external providers, although in some MS PES provide in-house services through a dedicated unit.

Targeting the demand-side, PES make available ALMPs to jobseekers with disabilities and some PES have also developed specific measures to meet their needs (European Commission, 2016). The main types of ALMP applied when targeting jobseekers with disabilities are sheltered employment, wage subsidies, and supported employment.



Box 7: PES demand-side measures

- **Sheltered employment** is provided by public, private or non-profit companies and mainly targets persons with severe disabilities. It is characterised by placement in a sheltered workshop, with a subsidy to an employer and/or employee. Some on the job training and support is usually provided. This can present a critical transition to open labour market opportunities, whilst offering stable employment even if with the risk of segregation. However, the schemes differ with regards to working conditions, labour rights, career development and facilitation of transition to the open labour market. Consequently, Job Carving and Job Crafting is increasingly cited as a positive alternative (ETF, 2019). Well-designed sheltered employment schemes that ensure adequate working conditions and labour rights for persons with disabilities, and pathways to the open labour market, can be a part of the social economy. Their social goals provide a good framework to make labour markets more open to persons with disabilities.
- **Wage subsidies** are provided by the PES or tax authorities and targets all persons with disabilities. They are characterised by a subsidy to an employer offering employment in the open labour market with subsidy.
- **Supported employment** is offered to assist persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining paid employment in the open labour market. Supportive measures ideally include assistance to the employee and employer before, during, and after the job is obtained (European Commission, 2012).

SECTION 2.

WHAT PES can do

Contents and use of the toolkit

This section presents concrete tools that PES can use to strengthen their approach with persons with disabilities. These tools have been grouped into six areas of action (Figure 1), creating the building blocks for PES inclusion strategies.

An inclusion strategy is the basis for PES to make systematic change to strengthen the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market (section 3). The first area of action contains the tools for promoting the participation of persons with disabilities within the PES itself. The second and third areas of action fall under external policies aimed at persons with disabilities and employers, namely services and active labour market measures. Stemming from external policies, the fifth area of action relates to outreach programmes which identify and contact

persons with disabilities and employers to provide information on how to access jobs and training opportunities. Also under external policies follows the sixth area of action, partnerships to enable the participation of persons with disabilities. In the midpoint between external and internal action areas is the fourth area of action regarding reasonable accommodation which PES and all employers must conform to.

The image below shows the six action areas in six boxes stemming from a seventh box which represents an inclusion strategy. Directly connected with the inclusions are first of all two boxes (action areas) entitled services and active labour market measures are grouped together under a shaded area titled external policies aimed at persons with disabilities and employers. Stemming from this area are two further boxes entitled outreach and partnerships,

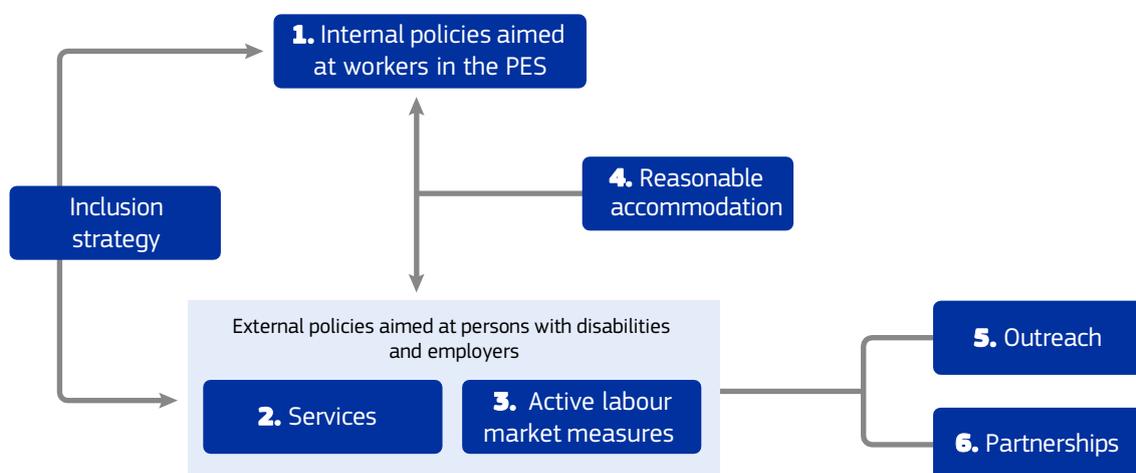


Figure 1. Six areas of action with tools to support participation of persons with disabilities.

showing two key types of measures supporting external policies. Another box stemming directly from inclusion strategies is the one representing internal policies aimed at workers in the PES. A box entitled reasonable accommodation is linked to the internal policies box and external policies shaded area as it is relevant to both.

Throughout this section example practices are provided from Member States, collected through a 'call for practices' from the PES Network 2021/2022. Practices were selected based on criteria that ensure relevance and likely impact (Annex). If an action area or practice has low financial costs, a quick period for delivery, and few geographic limits, they are described as a "quick win". These practices are particularly suitable for PES starting in this area. If an action area or practice has high financial costs, a long-time frame for delivery, and the potential for large outcomes, they are described as a "big play". An extended table of all practices gathered through this survey can be found in Annex. This annex also specifies the selection criteria in more detail.

As stated in the explanation of the CRPD from section 1, persons with disabilities face a variety of barriers to labour market entry and sustained employment. This toolkit focuses on three main types of barriers most relevant to PES in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities. The table below lists these in three distinct groups. These barriers often overlap and so ultimately action across all areas is necessary to create long term improvement. These are not intended as a complete list of all barriers faced by persons of disabilities in their lives, but rather as the most relevant to PES in this toolkit.

1. PES internal policy

Internal policies cover all the actions a PES can take to improve the participation of persons with disabilities in their own organisation. This can be in terms of recruitment at all levels, equal participation in structures and activities of the organisation, and ensuring that offices are fully accessible for staff and clients.

The following internal policies provide a starting point for the development of an inclusion strategy within PES. This includes actions by PES to improve processes and human capital within their organisations to better support the right of persons with disabilities to participate in the labour market.

Training

As part of a continuous training offer to staff, PES can include training sessions about disability. Firstly, this can focus on how to reduce barriers between staff with and staff without disabilities to confront subconscious bias and discrimination within the organisation. Staff can also receive training to reflect upon their service approach to jobseekers with disabilities which challenges any conscious or unconscious biases. This could include the completion of a questionnaire both before and after staff participation in a training event to measure the distance travelled in the perceptions of disability.

Train-a-trainer is an efficient solution for PES to enable a maximum impact with minimum resources. This involves organising specialised training for a

Table 2. Barriers faced by persons with disabilities in relation to PES and the labour market

BARRIERS	Explanation
Attitudinal	Attitudinal barriers refer to any occasion in which prejudiced norms toward disability affect the employment of persons with disabilities. Examples of this include prejudice in employment decisions or acts of micro-aggression in the workplace.
Institutional	An institutional barrier refers to any physical, administrative, legal and bureaucratic obstacle which prevents persons with disabilities from participating in the labour market.
Participatory	A participatory barrier refers to any obstacle to involving persons with disabilities in the design of employment support measures. This includes actively seeking input from persons with disabilities to ensure support materials meet client needs, venues (step free entry) and tools are suitable and physically accessible for use of persons with disabilities, and language is appropriate.



Box 8: AWARENESS-RAISING WORKSHOPS: WHEN BEING DIFFERENT IS NORMAL - MAKING THE UNCRPD A TANGIBLE EXPERIENCE

In Germany, all employees of the Federal Employment Agency are provided with the opportunity to attend train-a-trainer workshops on the topic of inclusion with a focus on disability. It is intended to train staff who can then train entire teams (hence train-a-trainer). To adapt to COVID-19, training is offered virtually. Staff surveys are collected before and after the training to see the distance travelled in participants' knowledge.

The training involves a clear lesson plan, trainer's manual, and transfer manual for participants. The training lasts 8 hours over one full day or two half days.

Outcomes: Participants increase their understanding of disability and reflect on their unconscious biases, prejudices and behaviours. Teams discuss inclusion and consider the significance of inclusive action for their field of work. They reflect on their everyday work approach towards colleagues and customers and identify areas in which they can improve and learn.

Lessons Learned: Due to COVID-19, in-person training was cancelled, and an online virtual alternative was developed in 2021. New participants are trained via online video conference platforms. Participants who have already been trained in-person can take part in an introduction to the online version. After initial scepticism, the online training was found to be a workable alternative to the face-to-face event.

Success factors:

- Support from the board and senior management.
- Motivated participants who can train several teams (train a trainer).
- Well-prepared documents and materials for the participants.
- Regular involvement of participants (600 in 2021).
- Support and coordination at the regional level.
- Software that enables exchange and communication during the session.

Type of barrier addressed: Attitudinal barriers.

Source: German PES



group of staff who can then go back to their teams to train them in turn. Offering the initial specialised training to all levels of staff can also aid morale and inclusion within PES. The low cost and time requirements of this practice, using cascade and multiplier effects, make it a **"quick win"**.

Recruitment policy

Accessible job adverts

PES have an important role to play in ensuring that job adverts for vacancies placed in their own organisation as well as job adverts placed by employers are provided in a format that does not discriminate against or disadvantage applicants with disabilities. Job descriptions should be in clear, sufficiently large fonts. The wording should not include any language which could discourage applications from persons with disabilities. A variety of application formats should be offered e.g., paper-based as an alternative for persons with intellectual impairments which prevents them from making online applications. This should be part of a wider attempt to make PES more digitally inclusive, in accordance with the Web Accessibility Directive ([Directive \(EU\) 2016/2102](#)) for better access to public websites and mobile apps for persons with disabilities.



Box 9: Inclusive job adverts: a checklist

- Offer digital and paper formats of job adverts with clear fonts which are legible to screen readers.
- Limit job requirements to must-have soft and hard skills.
- Highlight your organisations commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Call out the organisation's commitment to reasonable accommodation.
- Confirm participation in a guaranteed interview scheme (explained below).

Type of barrier addressed:
Institutional barriers.



Employers should state clearly that they welcome applications from persons with disabilities, and where the employer has an equal opportunities policy, to refer to this.

Adverts should only describe essential skills and experience required for the post, e.g., not exclude applications from persons with disabilities who can perform tasks to the required standard with an adjustment or state a driving licence is required when this is not necessary for the job.

If people in the company can advise applicants with disabilities of support available this should be included in a job advert. The low cost and time requirements of this practice make it a **"quick win"**.

Guaranteed Interview Schemes

PES can agree to and promote Guaranteed Interview Schemes where candidates with a disability will be put through to the interview stage of a recruitment exercise if they meet essential criteria.

PES should ensure that interview rooms are fully accessible. This may require changes to the arrangement of furniture or lighting. The time allocated for an interview may need to be adjusted. A candidate with disabilities should be offered the use of an adapted computer to take a test if needed. They should also be advised that a support worker can accompany them if required. All employment adjustments under reasonable accommodation (area of action 4) such as flexible working patterns should be described in the application material.

During the interview, persons with disabilities must not be asked supplementary questions concerning their suitability for a position that is different to those which other candidates are asked. Interview arrangements should take full account of any potential accessibility requirement or individual accommodation. The low cost and time requirements of this practice make it a **"quick win"**.

Performance targets

PES can set internal performance targets for the number of persons with disabilities they employ at all levels of the organisation. Such targets need an explicit timeframe with a commitment of resources to reach them. A 'mission' approach can be launched to meet these targets, identifying key areas (e.g., recruitment, promotion, training) and the steps required to get there. This can be followed up by management during the interim

years. This has low financial cost, is relatively low time intensive and can be called a **"quick win"**.

Role models and communications practices

Organisations can promote role modelling to encourage staff with disabilities to realise their potential. Role models in a PES can encourage colleagues with disabilities through examples of how persons with disabilities have risen to challenges and succeeded. Communication teams should be vocal both internally and externally in promoting persons with disabilities as workers, clients and stakeholders. All HR practices should aim to challenge negative self-esteem, stimulate proactive attitudes to self-development, increase the confidence of employees with disabilities in speaking out to draw attention to discriminatory practices, and enhance the solidarity of employees with disabilities. This can include highlighting the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and other related national and international events.



Key considerations

Barriers challenged in internal policies:

- **Attitudinal**, the attitude of staff in an organisation is under review with internal policies;
- **Institutional**, internal policies should remove barriers to entering and progressing within PES;
- **Participatory**, PES employees with disabilities should participate in the creation and implementation of internal policies.

To consider:

- Changing the internal attitude of any organisation takes time and perseverance;
- There can be a reluctance to change from staff;
- Internal policies have **a relatively low financial cost** compared to other measures making them **"quick wins"**.
- Time to develop short to medium.

Effective internal measures require:

- Strong backing from management;
- Consistent communication within the PES to ensure that staff are aware of the approach;
- Sourcing the voices of internal staff (especially those with disabilities) for their opinions and feedback.

2. Services

Labour market services, including PES information, guidance and job placement, are all services and activities undertaken by the PES together with services provided by other public agencies or any other bodies contracted under public finance, which facilitate the participation of unemployed and other jobseekers in the labour market, or which assist employers in recruiting and selecting staff.

PES information, guidance and placement services are the fundamental services PES offer to all their clients. Tools in this compartment assist in reforming these services for persons with disabilities by improving their accessibility and inclusiveness, while taking into account individual needs. This can include online job portals, counselling; information about supported employment and, for the clients who need it, alternative transition employment models, such as quality sheltered employment aiming at the transition to the open labour market, or work enclaves.

Provision of information, guidance, and job placement services are core services for PES. They are therefore especially relevant to any attempt to improve the employment gap for persons with disabilities. As noted in the previous section, the service offering to persons with disabilities, delivery mandate and remit varies widely among European PES. This compartment, therefore, includes a variety of practices to accommodate a range of starting positions.

PES information campaigns

Information campaigns can address negative perceptions and stereotypes about persons with disabilities. Negative perceptions held by employers, and the public more widely, represent an attitudinal barrier to persons with disabilities accessing and continuing in the labour market.

Practices that seek to address negative perceptions shift the focus onto persons with disabilities' competences away from barriers. These can include attempts to shift perceptions of disability through, information events, campaigns, employment tools, and Corporate Social Responsibility. Campaigns often use a multimedia approach for maximum impact. Increasingly social media is used to reach a targeted and large audience.



Box 10: SE KRAFTEN! (SEE THE POTENTIAL!) & GÖR PLATS! (MAKE SPACE!)

The Swedish PES has launched two information campaigns on the topic of labour market rights for persons with disabilities: Se Kraften! (See the Potential!) in 2010 and Gör Plats! (Make Space) in 2019 which used a larger multimedia approach to target employers to challenge their prejudices. Both campaigns included TV ads, radio, letters and brochures to employers followed-up by personal contact from advisors. The second campaign utilised social media for the first time to maximise reach.

The TV commercial for the second campaign features persons with disabilities facing daily challenges (e.g., taking the bus, waiting for the lift), who then arrive at work where they are shown to be doing highly skilled tasks. Link to media here <https://lebureau.se/uppdrag/gor-plats/>.

Outcomes: Both campaigns had a substantial impact on the public realm. For the second campaign, a survey both before and after found a significant increase in positive attitudes towards employing persons with disabilities from employers, this trend was strongest in younger employers. There was a significant increase (around 50%) in employers contacting the PES to employ persons with disabilities.

Lessons Learned: Information campaigns should cause a debate in the country, which PES should be aware of and plan a response to. Future campaigns could tie together a focus on the ability of persons with disabilities with the expectation that private organisations can adapt exclusionary workspaces to become more inclusive. The campaign was focused on 'look what they can do' rather than 'look what you can do.'

Success factors: Cooperation with NGOs representing persons with disabilities and businesses to discuss the campaign helped make it a more relevant and targeted campaign. The PES talked to businesses to identify the kinds of prejudices they held to tackle them in the campaign. NGOs provided input on how persons with disabilities should be presented.

Type of barrier addressed: Attitudinal barriers

Source: Swedish PES



Awareness campaigns can furthermore serve to raise the awareness of available measures. As Eurofound (2021) points out, high levels of accessibility and visibility and the targeting of every potential beneficiary are important factors in a successful policy to promote the participation of persons with disabilities.

Inclusive career guidance - Specialist Disability Employment Counsellors

Specialist advisors can support persons with disabilities to find and sustain employment. These counsellors can assist in several ways, including offers of vocational profiling to enable a person with a disability to identify career goals and develop an Individualised Learning Plan.

The role of specialist counsellors should include conducting profiling and disability and employment assessments. In addition to the usual profiling, these should also establish the nature of an individual's barriers to participation and assist them in identifying the type of employment best suited for their abilities and aspirations.

Following profiling and assessment, clients should discuss and agree on an Individualised Employment Plan. This should be a living document updated and reviewed through dialogue between a client and their PES counsellor to monitor progress against agreed milestones.

Online Job portals

The availability of an accessible online option is of great benefit to persons with disabilities who may face substantial travel barriers. This has become even more relevant due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic in which many persons with disabilities have been forced to 'shield' at home. This is also part of the need for PES to improve their digital offering. Offering online services such as meetings can be achieved at a low to medium cost using widely available software.



Box 11: CASE MANAGEMENT

Lithuania has adapted its case management offer to mainstream service provision to people with limited employment opportunities (such as persons with disabilities). This approach integrates services designed to increase employment for those with complex barriers in a coordinated manner. Case management ensures a more supported search process, with extra attention to finding work opportunities that fit the needs of the jobseeker on a long-term basis.

During case management, an individual employment activity plan is drawn up. This plan provides for an individual "programme" - measures to achieve the employability goal. The case manager also conducts motivational interviews and activities that develop social skills. They can use contacts with other partners that help the person to access the labour market, for example, psychological help and motivational courses through third parties.

Outcomes: During the case management, a connection is established between the client and the PES. The case manager then assesses the client's needs and their employability, creating contact with a potential or existing employer.

9 344 persons with disabilities were registered in 2021. Of this 5 886 found employment. 702 persons with disabilities found employment with subsidies, 149 were provided with Vocational Educational Training, and 5 internships were created.

Lessons Learned? -A larger number of case managers (due to the relatively high workload) is needed, and their competences need to be constantly developed.

Success factors:

- Motivation of the job seeker to participate in case management and follow the planned plan.
- Organisational and communication skills of the case manager.
- Wider scope of capable NGOs or other social partners to provide additional support for the job seekers with multiple barriers.

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barrier, this practice helps persons with disabilities more easily access PES support for finding a job.

Source: Lithuanian PES



Box 12: CO-CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE

The Greek PES launched a new, user-friendly website for persons with disabilities in 2021 with help from the University of Athens. This was designed based on the WCAG 2.1 AAA international web accessibility standard²¹ to improve the PES' website accessibility. This also fits into the Web Accessibility Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/2102), which provides persons with disabilities with better access to websites and mobile apps of public services.

The PES' new website is specially adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. It is the first Greek digital platform whose design was based on the WCAG 2.1 AAA international web accessibility standard.

Outcomes: An easily navigable website that promotes the use by marginalised groups that would otherwise be excluded.

Lessons Learned? - Due to COVID-19, digital delivery of services has become crucial, and an easy-to-use website for the PES has helped in this context.

Success factors: During the website's development, a technical evaluation report on its accessibility was conducted by the Voice and Accessibility Laboratory of the Department of Informatics and Telecommunications of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. This aimed to identify errors in design, programming or content to be brought in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 AA international accessibility standard. This helped the new digital platform comply with the higher WCAG 2.1 AAA standard.

The website: <https://prosvasis.dypa.gov.gr>

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barriers.

Source: Greek PES



Box 13: MY VIDEO APPOINTMENT

Counselling by video "My Video Appointment" is an online communication format developed by the German PES in 2020. It is designed to be modern and user-friendly with clients entering the virtual counselling room with just a few clicks. This easy-to-use design is done on purpose to be accessible to persons with disabilities and older people.

Communication takes place in real-time with video and enables the sharing of digital content (for example the job portal) as well as the joint editing of work plans.

Video counselling is a workable substitute for face-to-face counselling. It can be carried out regardless of location. This is especially useful for persons with disabilities, (e.g., due to the type of disability, vulnerability, mobility restrictions, and easy participation of third parties in conversations).

The video counselling is provided via a web app platform (i.e., not a cloud-based solution) and can also be used by employees in their home offices.

Outcomes: Since its introduction, a total of about 100,000 counselling sessions have been conducted nationwide via video. The operation of video communication is stable. The recommendation rate is around 95% for job seekers.

Success factors:

- Evaluation to be released here: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/videotermin>.

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barriers.

Source: German PES

21 <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>



Key considerations

Barriers challenged in PES information, guidance, and job placement measures are:

- **Attitudinal**, through information campaigns PES can challenge negative employer preconceptions concerning hiring persons with disabilities as well as those of the wider public;
- **Institutional**, this relates to improving access to the PES service offering namely, through increasing the ease with which persons with disabilities can access PES services by removing barriers (enhanced access to appointments, increased understanding by staff, etc.).

To consider:

- As part of the core service offering of PES, information, guidance, and job placement are key areas where improvements should be sought to promote the right of persons with disabilities to participate in the labour market;
- In the era of digitalisation, the need for an accessible digital option is essential;
- Due to financial cost and time considerations practices in this area can be considered both **"Quick wins"** and **"Big plays"**.

Effective efforts to improve information, guidance and job placements require:

- Reaching out to persons with disabilities to better understand how barriers could be removed by the PES.

target employees and jobseekers with disabilities, employers and, to a lesser extent, the institutional environment.

In general, actions undertaken in the framework of active labour market measures include training, employment incentives such as incentives for recruitment or employment maintenance, direct job creation, start-up incentives, and sheltered and supported employment and (vocational) rehabilitation. The last category is more typically used for assisting persons with disabilities, but others, such as training, can equally be part of the support offered by PES. As pointed out by the Eurofound (2021) report, it is important that PES assure that all active labour market measures they employ have a disability participation perspective. In this respect it is also worth noting the opportunities for persons with disabilities provided by the social economy and the role public authorities can play by incorporating social and employment criteria in public procurement processes.

Supported employment is particularly suitable for persons with disabilities who want to work in the regular labour market. This type of action is discussed below in more detail, along with specific approaches to accompany them. A special case in this respect is the support to become self-employed. Sheltered employment is provided in a protected work environment aiming, in particular, at persons with more severe disabilities and/or further away from the labour market. This is not discussed here further, nor are measures supporting transitions from sheltered employment or education to the open labour market. All Member States except Denmark, Finland, Latvia and Sweden have quota systems and these can be reinforced with supported employment (Eurofound, 2021).

3. Active labour market measures

Labour market measures cover a range of interventions designed to help jobseekers prepare for work, find a job and maintain their job.

A detailed overview of policy measures in Member States can be found in the Eurofound (2021) report "Disability and labour market integration: Policy trends and support in EU Member States". The most common measures are workplace adaptations and assistance, all-encompassing individual support and bundles of measures; incentives for employers, matching services and placements, and quotas. The measures identified

Supported employment

Supported employment aims to support persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining paid employment in the open labour market. Supportive measures include assistance to the employee and employer before, during, and after the job is obtained. The measure typically includes a single PES point of contact for employer and employee, coaching, guidance for job carving/crafting (see below), workplace adaptation and subsidies.

Supported employment is typically facilitated by PES or NGOs and can be targeted at jobseekers

with disabilities with all levels of disability. Its main elements are individualised vocational rehabilitation and job preparation (e.g., trials, job coaching, and follow up support). The eventual aim is for permanent employment in the open labour market. Supported employment can also be provided by companies specifically established for this, such as Samhall, a Swedish state-owned company. All its employees are referred to them by the Swedish PES and have some form of disability, as well as the capacity to work. The company aims for 1500 employees to leave the company each year to go and work for other employers.

Supported employment in the form of 'job carving' can particularly increase the possibility of participation into the primary open labour market. Carving involves PES partners working with specialist NGOs to advise employers how their task/job role distribution could be altered through reallocating some routine elements from employees to create new jobs for people with limited work capability. This can increase productivity by enabling skilled staff to concentrate on core functions enhancing their output whilst creating open labour market opportunities for jobseekers who may otherwise be limited to sheltered and/or subsidised employment.

Personalised support for those facing more complex barriers

More intensive personalised support is needed for persons facing complex barriers to their participation in the labour market. To address this, PES should consider designing specific Intensive Personalised Support Packages for persons with disabilities. Personalised individual support packages enable persons with a disability to direct the planning process, making their own choices about the nature of support best suited to meet their needs and aspirations. An individual support worker can act as a facilitator to ensure that a full range of support from different agencies can be combined and coordinated to optimise the impact of a person with disabilities in participating in the labour market.

Mainstreaming service support offers for persons with limited employment opportunities can be an effective way of overcoming barriers to employment faced by persons with disabilities. The example from PES Lithuania provides a good example of the potential to offer personalised holistic support through case management (see practice on page 14).



Box 14: JOB CARVING FOR JOBSEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

The Maltese Public Employment Service (Jobsplus) partnered with the Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF), a not-for-profit organisation specialising in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities, to deliver a high-quality job carving programme.

Before 'carving' takes place, the LSF and PES worked together to offer training and work schemes for the jobseeker to upskill. Carving is then determined by matching the skills/competencies of the person with a disability(s) with the enterprises' needs. Carving examines occupations within enterprises and identifies areas in which an enterprise can develop a new job profile, which may constitute features/tasks from other jobs/workplaces.

To deliver the programme, LSF established a corporate relations unit. This unit includes **corporate relations executives**, who identify existing occupations within an enterprise which are potentially suitable for jobseekers with disabilities.

Outcomes: As of April 2018, 278 suitable jobs had been created for jobseekers with disabilities using the job-carving approach in Malta.

Lessons Learned? - The corporate relations executives found the process of identifying suitable jobs for persons with disabilities a challenge due to the complexity of many jobs in the open labour market.

Success factors: Corporate relations executives took time to analyse the needs of businesses to identify areas in which tasks from existing jobs could be incorporated into a new "carved" job that could be done by a person with disabilities.

The enforcement of a minimum 2% employment quota for persons with disabilities in Maltese enterprises motivated many enterprises to actively seek persons with disabilities in their teams.

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barriers.

Source: Maltese PES





Box 15: WAGE SUBSIDY SCHEME

In Ireland, the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) provides financial incentives to private sector employers to hire persons with disabilities for 21 - 39 hours per week under an employment contract. The Irish PES' role in this scheme is to find suitable candidates to refer to the scheme.

Able-bodied productivity norms in the labour market can be a barrier to entry for persons with disabilities. In cases where this results in a loss of productivity for the employer of 20% or more, the WSS allows the employer to claim a wage subsidy.

Strand 1 provides a basic rate of subsidy of €5.30 (€6.30 from Jan 2022) per hour, with a maximum of €10 748 per annum based on a 39-hour week.

The strand 2 subsidy is payable when an employer employs three or more persons with disabilities who are supported by the WSS Strand 1 payment. Strand 2 is intended to cover the additional supervisory, management and work-based costs relating to employees receiving the subsidy. This top-up payment is a percentage of the Strand 1 subsidy and is based on the overall number of employees with a disability employed under Strand 1. It ranges from an additional 10% of wage subsidy for 3 to 6 employees with a disability to a maximum of 50% of wage subsidy for 23+ employees with a disability.

When an employer has 23 or more Wage Subsidy Scheme employees, a 50% top-up is applied to the hourly rate to help with costs of administration.

The strand 3 subsidy enables employers who employ 25 or more workers with a disability on the WSS to be eligible for a grant of up to €30 000 per year towards the expense of employing an Employment Assistance Officer.

Outcomes: The WSS is a demand-led scheme and (as of 30 November 2021) there were 1 588 private sector employers participating in the scheme in respect of 2 492 participant employees.

Lessons Learned? - A review of the subsidy will be carried out in 2022. This will evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme and decide what further improvements can be made.

Success factors: Participation levels have steadily increased in the decade from 2011 to 2020 with 499 active employers at end of 2011 increasing to 1 588 at end of 2021 (a 218% increase).

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barriers.

Source: Irish PES



Customised employment support for persons with disabilities

Customised employment support is an approach for assisting jobseekers with disabilities (Wehman et al, 2018). It does not begin by focussing on job vacancies but emphasises what the person with a disability has to offer the labour market (LEAD Centre, 2015). Customised support is targeted and proactive and involves both the jobseeker and employer in shaping a job opportunity and creating a specific job description to match the requirements of both (Citron et al, 2008). Identifying an individual's strengths, interests, and preferences drives the identification of employment opportunities where job descriptions have been created that match both an employer's and employees' needs and interests. Customised employment can include a range of strategies, including:

- Job carving: crafting a job out of some elements or tasks of a job description but not all (see Malta PES example page 17).
- Job creation: A new job description is created from unmet business needs identified during discussions with the employer (usually led by an employment specialist).
- Job sharing: Two or more people sharing the same job.
- Self-employment: creation and operation of a self-owned business (or micro-enterprise) with or without paid support.
- Supporting employers in developing reasonable accommodation. (See the example from the Netherlands Inclusive redesign of work processes in the Annex).
- Specifically trained PES staff. (See the German practice Awareness-raising workshops: When being different is normal - making the UN CRPD a tangible experience page 11).

Self-employment and entrepreneurship

Start-up incentives help unemployed jobseekers to become self-employed or start their own business. For persons with disabilities self-employment can be attractive, as they may have difficulties finding a traditional job but also because when self-employed they determine their own working hours, arrange their own workplace, and generally achieve a relatively high level of control and independence.

Start-up incentives as a minimum provide financial support through income support, loans, and subsidies such as those provided to employers.

According to Eurofound (2021), however, most Member States provide more comprehensive support, e.g. support for developing a business plan or a mentor scheme featuring established entrepreneurs. The ONCE Foundation in Spain is one of the PES that delivers ESF+ funded programmes in this area²².



Key considerations

Barriers challenged with active labour market measures:

- **Institutional**, supported employment forms part of access to employment in the open labour market; increasing the ease with which persons with disabilities can access job options and the extent to which barriers to employment are removed.

To consider:

- These practices can require investment in **large programmes requiring a significant investment of resources and time**. Due to this, practices in this area can be considered "**big plays**";
- Supported employment can involve extensive partnering with employers requiring ongoing engagement.

Effective efforts to improve supported employment require:

- A committed programme with long term financial support is required for effective delivery of supported employment practices;
- **Partnerships** with on-the-ground organisations, such as LSF in Malta which is already helping persons with disabilities to access employment, can be a useful intermediary for developing supported employment opportunities.

4. Reasonable accommodation and accessibility

Reasonable accommodation refers to any necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments which do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market

(UN CRPD, Art.2). This can include flexible working conditions, coaching/mentoring at the workplace, digital platforms with information, or hotlines for employers. Reasonable accommodation is an obligation under the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78.

Supporting reasonable accommodation in companies

PES can advise employers on several reasonable accommodation measures to support job candidates with disabilities and existing employees. Several adjustments require little financial investment but can assist persons with disabilities by removing barriers to their securing a job or progressing once employed. Adaptations that can further persons with disabilities' employment prospects include:

Introducing flexible working hours

Not everyone can commit to rigid hours, so providing flexible hours whereby workers commit to delivering on projects rather than specific attendance patterns or offering very flexible and changeable working time agreements can remove an important barrier for persons with disabilities. In many jobs where a daily fixed output is less necessary, flexible hours can be easily implemented and represent a "quick win". Working from home enables persons with disabilities to arrange their working hours as well as being suitable for those that experience transportation related barriers.

Providing bespoke training and mentoring schemes

Persons with disabilities may benefit from mentoring schemes which offer support from other persons with disabilities in the sector to provide direction and advice on developing their career paths. Bespoke training on specific programmes or software which enhance accessibility can also foster inclusion.

Altering workplaces so that they are disability-friendly

The physical arrangements of any workspace can be a huge barrier to a person with a mental, intellectual, sensory or physical disability. Material

22 <https://www.fundaciononce.es/es/convocatorias-de-ayudas/para-personas/convocatorias-emprendimiento>

workplace adaptations include the provision of work aids, assistants and workplace adjustments. A full assessment should be undertaken to identify any physical barriers in a workplace and how these can be overcome.

Ensuring that all workplace materials are available in accessible formats

In recent years huge progress has been made in ensuring that documents are made available in accessible formats (e.g., to be read by screen readers). Including in mainstream IT applications and options that increases the size of text or converts this to sound and producing documents in audio and braille formats are inclusive steps. This can be done at an extremely low cost and is as such a "quick win".

Adjusting or obtaining equipment enabling workers with disabilities to perform tasks

Both physical and software infrastructure can be acquired to remove barriers to persons with disabilities from performing tasks. Software advances in Assistive Technologies such as eye gaze devices and many other aides to overcoming hearing and motor skills impairments are now available and can revolutionise task management.

Accessibility in PES

PES offices should provide a welcoming environment for both PES employees and clients with disabilities, this will require offices to be accessible. Accessibility is about the prevention, identification and removal of the most common barriers that persons with disabilities face. When accessibility is included early in the design of products, services and infrastructures, they are easily done and represents very small cost. It is about preparedness to welcome persons with disabilities. Accessibility is a precondition for participation. The joint provision of accessibility together with reasonable accommodation results in access for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. As highlighted in Section 3, the French PES have made this a significant component of their disability strategy.

This ideally involves taking a holistic approach, where one should consider the whole building. For example, offices should have marked persons with disabilities' parking bays and a ramp access. Lifts should have enough room to easily accommodate a wheelchair and where possible automatic doors



Box 16: INCLUSIVE REDESIGN OF WORK PROCESSES

This practice developed in the Netherlands identifies options for reorganising the workplace and/or work processes to create jobs suitable for persons with disabilities. This is especially suited to the inclusion of persons with mental health conditions or a learning disability. The Dutch PES supports this project by recruiting suitable candidates.

The Inclusive Redesign of Work Processes (Inclusief Herontwerp van Werk, or IHW) project was first piloted with 100 young persons with disabilities who were hired to work in Slotervaart Hospital between 2010 and 2013. The IHW has developed a 4-step process for designing inclusive work processes:

1. Exploration - A business consultant gathers information on the company and the state of the labour market.
2. Preparation - The organisation's management commits to a plan of action to allow the consultant to conduct a work analysis. This is communicated widely to employees. A work analysis takes place; interviews, job mapping, observations and company document reviews from all departments are enacted. The consultant identifies the tasks most suitable for redesign to include persons with disabilities. Management then commits to a plan of implementation.
3. Implementation - An inclusive HRM policy is created for the inclusion of new and current employees. This should then be continually monitored.
4. Consolidation - The new workplace arrangements are then consolidated.

Outcomes: Over the past few years this approach to job creation was successfully implemented in a variety of organisations, with support from the national network of consultants of the Dutch PES in recruitment.

Type of barrier addressed: Institutional barriers.

Source: Dutch PES



that open inwards which will help ensure simple access. Podotactile floor guides, braille and large signs and free-of-obstacle rooms and corridors are as well needed for persons with visual disabilities.

Open-plan spaces are more convenient for clients with restricted mobility. The absence of doors, fixed desks, and booths means that moving through an open office is easier for people with limited mobility. The aim should be to create work and

interview spaces that are easily adaptable, such as height adaptable desks that everyone can use.

Circular meeting room tables are more accessible than rectangular ones because communication, including lip-reading, is easier where everyone faces each other.

There are European technical standards, resulting from mandates of the European Commission that further describe accessibility to the built environment, Information and communication technologies and Design for all organisations and processes to achieve accessible outcomes²³.

PES should encourage feedback from staff and clients on the inclusivity of office space and take this feedback into account when reviewing accessibility.



Key considerations

Barriers faced by persons with disabilities must be challenged through ensuring accessibility and applying reasonable accommodation through individualised measures:

- **Institutional**, accessibility and reasonable accommodation is part of ensuring access to employment in the open labour market; increasing the ease with which persons with disabilities can access job options and accommodate individual needs.

To consider:

- This area involves practices requiring both **large** and **small resource commitments** and investment of time by PES. This means that they involve both "**quick wins**" and "**big plays**";
- This can involve extensive partnering with employers requiring ongoing engagement.

Effective efforts to implement reasonable accommodation require:

- Long term building of partnerships with organisations and attitudinal change.

5. Outreach programmes

Outreach programmes enable PES to identify and contact persons with disabilities and employers to provide information on how to access jobs and training opportunities.

Targeted job fairs and insight days

PES can launch specialised job fairs targeting employers who are actively seeking to hire more persons with disabilities. This can be achieved through developing partnerships with key companies that are motivated to commit to this agenda. These jobs fairs should be as accessible as possible, this can involve online participation in addition to the provision of physically accessible venues.

Insight days are another effective means of opening up workplaces to persons with disabilities so that they can explore potential opportunities. They also encourage employers to think differently about their workplace and work processes and consider how barriers can be removed to incorporate persons with disabilities. PES can partner with employers to provide participants who match recruitment criteria.

Specialised disability advisory services expert teams

PES can create their own expert disability advice teams to launch effective outreach programmes. By developing a team of staff who are specialists in equal access to employment, particularly in the field of disability, PES can directly help organisations to contribute to persons with disabilities exercising their rights to full labour market participation.

²³ Mandate 376 resulting in -EN 301 549 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services. Mandate 473 resulting in EN17161:2019 Design for All - Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services - Extending the range of users. Mandate 420 resulting in EN 17210 Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Functional requirements.



Box 17: DUODAY

In France, DuoDays partner a person with a disability with an employee for the day (a duo). On DuoDays the enterprise receives a person with a disability into the workplace and partners them with an experienced employee for them to discover more about the occupation and sector for potential future careers. DuoDays take place in the framework of the EDEW (European Disability Employment Week) and involve:

- A dedicated daylong event to enable enterprises to open their doors to persons with disabilities;
- An online platform on which enterprises post offers and candidates can apply;
- A public campaign raised by the Ministry and PES to encourage both companies and eligible persons to participate;
- A day which is integrated into PES guidance pathways for persons with disabilities;
- A website with information, toolkits and articles to help enterprises prepare visitors;
- Another publicity campaign to promote success stories and benefits to all involved.

Outcomes from 2020:

- 12 404 employers registered places on the duoday.fr platform.
- 9 113 persons with disabilities registered on the platform.
- Almost 10 000 duos were set up, including 7 147 duos registered on the duoday.fr platform.
- 2 900 supporting organisations were involved (including Pôle Emploi, Cap Emploi, local organisations, companies, training providers, sports federations, student federations, and employment associations).
- Qualitative findings point to many positive testimonies including, breaking down stereotypes, encouraging new career pathways and an overall win-win experience.

Lessons Learned? -DuoDay responds to a real need on the part of companies since an increasing number of them are signing up on the platform. There are now more offers than demands on the platform.

A large-scale mobilisation and communication strategy are required to encourage the registration of persons with disabilities now the project has grown.

Success: In 2020: Almost 20 000 people took part, with 10% of participants with disabilities offered some form of work (internship, training, apprenticeship, employment, etc.). Companies are increasingly enthusiastic to attend, with many placement offers on the platform. Posting a detailed placement with occupation and career potential helped to boost participants. The event was an opportunity for many to submit a CV directly to participating enterprises and be recruited in a way that evaluates their proven skills during the day.

Type of barrier addressed: Participation to policy and services process barriers.

Source: French PES



Box 18: Diversity Plans for Employers in Belgium

The Brussels PES (Actiris) has a diversity unit that provides a free advisory service for employers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The main goal of this advisory work is to co-develop together with employers and trade unions a diversity plan.

The agreed diversity plan is adapted to every organisation with the aim to increase diversity and inclusion within the organisation by formulating concrete actions. The diversity plan focuses on 6 key topics / target groups: gender, origin/nationality, education level, youth, experienced employees, and disability.

Actiris encourages companies to:

- Expand recruitment options and develop a culture of sending vacancies directly to organisations that assist persons with disabilities in employment;
- Provide information such as employment measures for the recruitment of persons with disabilities;
- Adapt job offer descriptions: add a passionate statement about diversity and inclusion;
- Note that reasonable adjustments are possible during the recruitment process;
- Reflect on job requirements and the option to adapt this to the needs of persons with disabilities (job carving and job crafting);
- Organise training and awareness-raising on disability for recruiters, managers, and all colleagues;
- Participate in the Belgian Duoday campaign.

Outcomes: Actiris puts organisations in contact with specialised organisations that guide persons with disabilities towards employment and support them in retaining jobs. The Diversity Service has developed a network of more than 50 specialised partners to help this.

Success: The service is part of a network of partners working on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market and plays an intermediary role between the offers of these partners and the questions of employers. They disseminate information and encourage employers to participate in events organised by these partners, such as job days and awareness-raising workshops.

Type of barrier addressed: Attitudinal barriers & institutional barriers.

Source: Brussels PES





Key considerations

Barriers challenged through outreach programmes:

- **Institutional**, this enhances access to employment in the open labour market; increasing the ease with which persons with disabilities can access job opportunities;
- **Attitudinal**, outreach programmes can shift the culture of the target audience, including persons with disabilities themselves, the general public, and employers.

To consider:

- This practice is at the lower end of cost and time constraints, meaning that it can be seen as a **"quick win"**. However, in the long term, opening up workplaces to remove barriers to persons with disabilities may require more extensive planning and a reciprocal rise in costs and time involved.

Effective efforts to improve outreach programmes require:

- Outreach programmes which offer genuine opportunities within organisations to maintain the trust of persons with disabilities. In the longer term, organisations need to adopt a strategic approach to ensure that equality programmes increase the number of employees with disabilities;
- Partnerships with organisations can range from one-of projects to multi-year relationships

6. Partnerships for effective services

Partnerships involve developing and delivering services through collaborations between PES and organisations from the public and private sector, as well as organisations that represent persons with disabilities. European PES have been exploring and testing the potential of partnerships in various areas in recent years and are well placed to apply it in this context too. Partnerships are desirable given the multi-disciplinary response required to improve the labour market situation of persons with disabilities, however 'there is room for improvement as regards the involvement of different actors, who often operate in silos'²⁴.

Potential benefits

Partnerships can bring benefits such as enabling the input in the design of measures from NGOs specialised in disability or increasing the effectiveness of labour market measures and placement services by cooperation with companies. Considering that persons with disabilities may have more confidence working with NGOs with whom they have already developed a trusting relationship, NGOs can play an important role in outreach activities. When developing personalised and holistic support packages for clients with disabilities as Estonia has done with its Workability reform, partnerships with stakeholders gain importance.

Partnership models

Partnerships may be established for very specific services but may also involve the design and or delivery of services in a coordinated manner or offering persons with disabilities a clear one-stop access point. Through effective partnership work PES can influence both the supply and demand side of the labour market to increase awareness of the needs of jobseekers with disabilities, and the support required by employers to develop an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce.

European PES are in a good position to take advantage of a growing ecosystem of partnerships between state, private and civil sector organisations. The traditional 'top-down' relationship between PES, their clients, and other stakeholders, is increasingly being replaced by an employment system in which PES work with partners to provide agile specialist services that can offer complementary support, providing persons with disabilities with a choice of options. PES can also take advantage of ESF+ funds in this area by partnering with organisations to initiate small scale pilot projects which foster social innovation and experimentation in the field of support for persons with disabilities. These can include providing employability programmes training participants in digital skills for work in sectors including the green economy and youth employment.

Partnerships are an opportunity for PES to practice social innovation through 'co-creation': enabling a better understanding of how services can meet the needs of persons with disabilities through input by clients into programme design.



Box 19: THE WORKABILITY REFORM

Before this initiative, very few persons with disabilities in Estonia registered with the PES as jobseekers. The Workability Reform encompasses a broad set of measures aimed to register more persons with disabilities with the PES for greater 'activation' (employment) of this group. Feedback from jobseekers with disabilities at the time also raised the need to fight negative attitudes which create a barrier to greater employment opportunities.

To enable this, part of the Workability Reform involved the Estonian PES partnering with NGOs which work in the field of disability rights to help design services and delivery. NGOs are also sub-contracted to run services such as job counselling and encourage registration with the PES. This makes the practice an innovative area of coproduction.

Outcomes: After 12 months of registration, 44% of newly registered jobseekers with reduced work ability found a job. The partnership has volume targets for the numbers of clients to become active in the labour market, and formal agreements have been put in place to monitor them.

Lessons Learned? - Partners often bring innovative ideas to the table and add value. They are best placed to understand the needs and expectations of the target groups. Trust is important in any partnership; sub-contracted organisations need to feel trusted in their capability.

Success factors:

- Transparent roles for PES and partners.
- Partnerships are client needs focused.
- Robust evaluation and monitoring.
- Specific employment measures and schemes for activation.
- Counselling services are measured against a twice-yearly review of outcomes, satisfaction surveys with clients, and regular discussions with NGOs and disability rights organisations.

Type of barrier addressed: Participation in policy and services process barriers.

Source: Estonian PES



There is a special link between health and employment issues when working with jobseekers with disabilities. Job loss, retrenchment or unexpected loss of income can cause distress and hardship. This became particularly relevant in the light of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities. PES should seek to make appropriate connections with health service providers to deliver holistic support packages.



Box 20: Holistic support links with health services in Belgium

In Belgium (Flanders), GTB is an NGO that is contracted by the PES to provide employment support to PES clients with disabilities. In 2021, GTB is adapting the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) methodology for the Flemish labour market to start applying this approach to PES clients with mental health issues. IPS focuses on rapid job search (face-to-face contact with an employer in 30 days), combines employment support with mental health services, and aims at regular jobs in the primary labour market.

The programme offers intensive case management and return-to-work support to clients with at least 40 days of sick leave. The initiative aims to reach people on sick leave before they reach the 40-day threshold and prevent job loss and transition to long-term unemployment.



Key considerations

Barriers challenged through partnership working:

- **Institutional**, partnerships reformulate the service offering of PES to make use of external expertise and provide a clear entry point for persons with disabilities (such as an NGO).

To consider:

- **Partnerships** can involve a long-term commitment to developing a truly productive relationship. This involves extensive discussions with employers and disability rights organisations and requires investment in developing positive and trusted links between staff from participating organizations.

Effective efforts to implement partnerships require:

- Partnerships require a culture of openness, commitment, and transparency. This needs a clear set of objectives to be agreed upon from the start with subsequent regular monitoring to ensure that these are being met.

SECTION 3.

HOW to go from intention to implementation

Steps for PES to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities

In this section, five concrete steps are suggested that PES can follow to strengthen their services for persons with disabilities, thereby improving the labour market outcomes for this group. The first three steps are taken consecutively to create a new service offer and delivery from PES to persons with disabilities. The first step is to ensure that PES have all the necessary information to decide on an inclusion strategy. The preparation of the strategy (second step) produces the driving force for all further activities. The third step ensures its translation into concrete and traceable actions. The fourth step concerns measures for monitoring and evaluation, allowing the strategy and its implementation to be improved on a continuous basis.

Finally, successful implementation of the strategy also depends on the cooperation and support from PES staff and other stakeholders. Therefore,

it is useful to consider how their commitment can be furthered and already take this into account when going through the first three steps.

The above is visualised in the image below. It depicts a workflow with text inside arrows. This starts with a first line with arrows entitled one, 'map the existing situation', two, 'develop or update a PES inclusion strategy', and three, 'formulate implementation plan'. In the middle of the second line the, fourth arrow reads 'ensure continuous review and improvement', Finally on the third line a fifth arrow, this time extending to the full width of the page, represents 'create commitment for delivery'.

The activities a PES needs to undertake here depend on whether such a strategy already exists, be it as a separate document or as part of a wider strategic document. However, to a greater or lesser extent the activities described in these steps are relevant whether developing a strategy from scratch or when expanding or revising an existing one.



Figure 2. Steps to take for furthering participation of persons with disabilities.

1. Map the existing situation

Before a strategy can be developed to support the participation of persons with disabilities, some preparatory work is required. A mapping and review of the legal and policy framework, the current situation of persons with disabilities and their labour market position, as well as initiatives already in place and other stakeholders in the field is required.

A logical starting point is a review of the legal and policy framework regarding persons with disabilities, including specific regulations and policies as well as the wider framework dealing with discrimination and vulnerable groups. The legal framework establishing the employment rights of persons with disabilities and the responsibilities of service providers and employers to counter discrimination in the labour market.

In providing employment support services that comply with the requirements of anti-discrimination and equality legislation, PES must be particularly mindful of how discrimination and disability are defined. They should consider what service adjustments are deemed reasonable to provide the extra support that workers with disabilities can receive so that they are not disadvantaged. The international and European legal framework (see Section 1) provides a starting point for this process and a structure within which PES can also consider their domestic legal obligations. Obviously, PES need to take into account the way international and EU legislation has been transposed in their country. In this phase, accessibility plans to identify removable barriers should begin.

An inclusion strategy furthermore benefits from a review of the current situation. It can start by mapping persons with (various) disabilities, their (non) participation with the PES, PES activities and companies. The mapping exercise can continue with the policies and initiatives already supporting them, as well as an overview of relevant institutions and stakeholders in this area.

2. Develop or review and update a PES inclusion strategy

An inclusion strategy for persons with disabilities provides an overarching approach that PES can take to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the PES and the labour market. Inclusion strategies can focus on one or multiple groups facing particular difficulties on the labour market. They can be developed internally by the PES e.g. by a HR department or a unit dedicated to inclusion. PES can also contract out parts of the work. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a useful tool to consult at this stage.

Scope and contents

An inclusion strategy can have a broader or a narrower scope. In its most comprehensive form it covers both the PES itself and the services and measures it offers to its clients. The strategy can focus on persons with disabilities, persons with a specific disability or facing a specific barrier, or a wider population of vulnerable groups or groups facing discrimination.

Regardless of their scope, inclusion strategies should formulate objectives and targets, and identify specific areas of action, including all those from Section 2, both internally and externally, to achieve these ambitions. The previous section provides many suggestions in this respect. PES management can decide on a set of measures that are aimed at achieving objectives set for these actions within a set time, including an allotted date for review.

The inclusion strategy also includes an assessment of the support needs of different groups of people with disabilities, identifying different target groups, taking into account different impairments and different barriers faced. PES can refer to their national regulative frameworks to identify persons with disabilities and design specific measures to support their participation in the labour market.

The two text boxes provide detailed examples of inclusion strategies developed by the German and French PES.



Box 21: German PES Inclusion Action Plan

The German PES launched its Inclusion Action Plan in June 2020, with a progress report published in spring 2022. Developed by the Inclusion Coordination Office at the German PES, the plan states that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is intrinsic to the way the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) sees itself. In accordance with the UN CRPD, the German PES is working towards ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate in the PES and labour market in a self-determined manner.

The plan covers four fields of action, 'Awareness raising and qualification', 'Accessibility', 'Participation and consultation' and 'Inclusive participation in working life'. The Inclusion Action Plan sets out goals to be achieved with the dual perspective of employer and service provider in the labour market. A catalogue of measures contains both internal and external measures to initiate concrete action. The plan ensures the PES has a clear, comprehensible and verifiable commitment to persons with disabilities. It contains both a Workforce and Employer strategy:

The Workforce Strategy includes:

- Defining concrete approaches to implementing the Inclusion Agreement and tracking implementation;
- Strengthening representatives for persons with severe disabilities;
- Creating platforms for exchange with inclusion representatives and representatives of persons with severe disabilities;
- Giving greater consideration to inclusive businesses in tenders;
- Providing occupational health management for persons with disabilities.

The Employer Strategy includes:

- Utilising the potential of persons with disabilities to secure jobs and skilled workers;
- Making digitalisation work for inclusion by expanding digital services;
- Attracting employers to the PES;
- Improving the transition from school to work for persons with disabilities;
- Reducing long-term unemployment and the need for assistance for persons with disabilities.

Outcomes: As an employer itself, the German PES was able to create a role-model status from which other companies can share best practices. The PES has received an increase in enquiries from employers into their inclusion policy which the PES sees as a particular strength.

Success factors: The strategy is successful in aiming to demonstrate the PES' commitment to inclusion to customers, citizens, companies, institutions, self-advocacy organisations and politicians, and at the same time to serve as a strategic orientation for employees. The action plan makes inclusion in the PES and the PES' efforts toward inclusion in the labour market visible, comprehensible and verifiable. Persons with disabilities were included in planning and implementation which continues to this day. Cross-departmental exchange and transparency of regional data helped inform a more detailed strategy.

Source: German PES

Document: https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/datei/aktionsplan-inklusion-doppelseitenansicht_ba146541.pdf



Box 22: FRENCH PES STRATEGY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The French PES' strategy for promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market is embedded in its 2019-2022 strategic plan. This strategy is structured around 2 main axes: (1) simplifying the pathway for persons with disabilities by eliminating the silo effects linked to the previous sharing of support between Pôle Emploi and Cap Emploi (an organisation specialised in support towards and employment for persons with disabilities); (2) increasing accessibility to all services for users with disabilities (job seekers and companies), whether or not they have administrative recognition to guarantee equal access to services.

The strategy includes the following measures:

- Developing the skills of PES counsellors working with persons with disabilities through dedicated training and the cross-fertilisation of expertise with Cap Emploi counsellors;
- Enhancing the diagnosis of disability at the time of registration and the use of expertise by one or other of the operators at key moments in the process;
- Mobilising partners at national, regional and local levels: Cap Emploi as well as Agefph (An association managing the professional participation of persons with disabilities) and Fiphfp (The Fund for the Integration of Disabled People into the Civil Service);
- Integrating accessibility into all projects.

Outcomes: One concrete outcome is the implementation of a single information system for counsellors of both networks in order to share the same service history. After a pilot phase that began in 2020 and an extension phase in 2021, the Cap Emploi / Pôle Emploi merger is in the process of being generalised.

As of the beginning of 2022, 70% of agencies are Single Support Points where jobseekers with disabilities can be supported by their referral counsellor, whether a Pôle Emploi or Cap Emploi counsellor. The first visible results for users are very encouraging according to the French PES.

Between December 2020 and 2021, satisfaction from jobseekers with disabilities increased by 1.3 points regarding the ease of obtaining an answer from the PES. The satisfaction of jobseekers with disabilities with their support increased by 3.2 points.

Lessons learned: In 2022, following the success of the strategy, the PES has adopted a dedicated roadmap including several extended ambitions such as a digital accessibility guarantee for all services, and a more inclusive reception in branches by adapting the organisation of spaces and premises, particularly for persons with physical and visual disabilities.

Success factors: 90% of counsellors believe that the merger of the two agencies improves the return to employment of persons with disabilities. 93% of counsellors believe that the merger enables them to offer a common and inclusive service to jobseekers with disabilities and employers. The sharing of professional knowledge is also created by the time spent together in the single reception premise. 100% of PES branches are now accessible to persons with reduced mobility.

Source: French PES

Website: <http://plmpl.fr/c/1M3v4>

Box 23: A further selection of country strategies

In **Norway**, in response to an increasing trend of persons leaving the labour market to take disability pensions and the continued disability employment gap, the Ministry of Labour launched a wide-ranging jobs strategy involving the PES. This involved the merging of the National Insurance Service and the Public Employment Service into one new central government agency. Inclusive Workplace Support Centres now include specialist labour market coaches in this area who work with employers and persons with disabilities. Special county coordinators oversee the work and help disseminate information on the job's strategy. Organisations representing persons with disabilities work closely with the Ministry and PES to deliver a successful communications campaign.

Ireland uses an external provider in the form of EmployAbility, a service to refer jobseekers with disabilities. The Irish PES Intreo conducts the first interview in one of its offices before deciding on a referral. The EmployAbility Service is operated by NGOs under a contract model funded by the Department of Social Protection. EmployAbility offers career advice, planning, skills identification, and job search

support. Persons with disabilities are also offered job vacancies, job application support, and work experience in addition to information on employment benefit entitlements. Follow up support is provided for up to 18 months to help participants maintain employment.

Sweden has a specialised strategy for vulnerable jobseekers providing the framework within which its approach to services for persons with disabilities is developed. The PES defines disability as based on a medical certificate issued by a public authority. This assessment also includes a workability assessment, identifying opportunities and any limitations within distinct types of work. The PES has specialised counsellors across regions who work with jobseekers with disabilities. These counsellors can provide specialised mentoring, job preparation, job trials, job coaching and follow-up support. They can also refer jobseekers to private providers who are further specialised in supporting jobseekers with disabilities. Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and social consultants can support in assessing jobseekers' needs regarding special working conditions and in adapting these.



Considering delivery issues

Finally, an inclusion strategy should contain a review procedure. An important consideration here is the degree to which PES want to outsource activities or conduct them in partnership with other actors (see also action area 6 under section 2).

The analysis and definition of target groups within the wider group of persons with disabilities provides important input for the choices PES make regarding the delivery of their services. Whilst e.g. many adjustments can be made available as part of a standard support offer, no two people are the same. It may therefore be important that certain or even all target groups of the strategy receive personalised assessments of their needs so that they can be provided with the specific menu of support best suited to supporting their participation in the labour market. Choices can be made regarding the use of specific Intensive Personalised Support Packages for persons with disabilities.

PES may also decide to prioritise early interventions, especially when individuals have recently been affected by mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments where interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society. Early intervention makes it possible to take actions supporting a person to remain in their job or create timely opportunities for other employment. Conversely, failure to identify, or act to address client needs, at an early stage can demotivate a jobseeker and reduce the benefits of a subsequent intervention.

3. Formulate an implementation plan

Implementation planning is the counterpart of a strategic plan. While the strategic plan describes in detail what strategies the PES will use to achieve a particular goal, the implementation plan is the step-by-step guide to how those goals will be achieved. The implementation plan facilitates the execution of the inclusion strategy by breaking down the implementation process into smaller steps while defining interim goals and a timeline with milestones. It specifies and allocates financial and other resources. The implementation plan also defines roles and responsibilities and assigns

Box 24: An early intervention in Austria



Fit2Work in Austria is a programme funded and steered jointly by the health insurance fund, the PES, the Ministry of Social Affairs and social partners since 2013.

The programme offers intensive case management and return-to-work support to clients with at least 40 days of sick leave. The initiative aims to reach people on sick leave before they reach the 40-day threshold and prevent job loss and transit to long-term unemployment. Clients are in part reached through contact with employers (Fit2Work also provides consultancy to companies), but a large share of them enter Fit2Work through referral by general practitioners or the PES. The results of an impact evaluation by Statistik Austria (2015) suggests that, on average, participants of the programme spent 15 days more in employment, 90 days after the end of the case management than their peers in the control group and these positive results hold for 180 and 360 days too.

Box 25: An early intervention in the Netherlands



A protocol in the Netherlands obliges employers and employees on sick leave to develop a return-to-work plan within eight weeks of absence and continue efforts until the worker can resume work. The introduction of the protocol resulted in an immediate drop in the incidence of disability insurance awards (from 1.4 % of the insured population in 2001 to 0.8 % in 2004).

tasks within the PES and between PES and partner organisations. Ideally, it includes a risks analysis to identify potential bottlenecks and prepare for them. A Gantt chart can be used to summarise key elements of the plan.

For internal measures line managers have a crucial role in ensuring that individual staff with disabilities can work in an accessible environment and be provided with reasonable accommodation. Some employees with disabilities require practical support, workplace adjustments, or guidance to ensure that they have equal access to opportunities. Checklists can help line

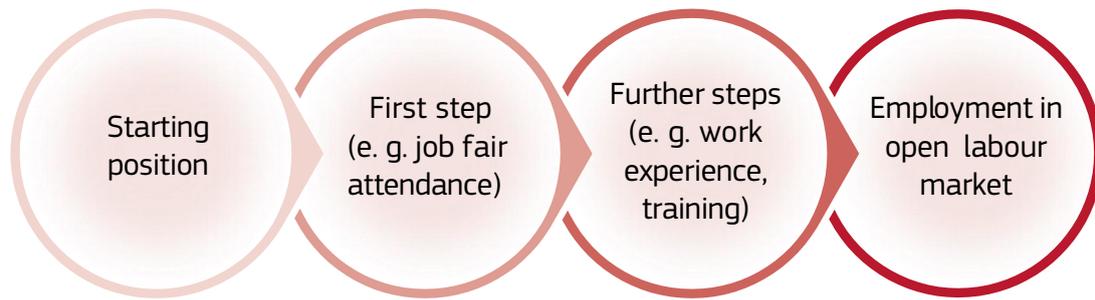


Figure 3. Distance travelled measures.

managers and their staff receive the assistance required²⁵. These can cover all aspects of, recruitment, induction, training, communication needs, provision of appropriate office equipment, and professional and personal development. Most importantly, workers with disabilities must be included in all such consultations and plans (see also section 5 below).

Externally, the preparation of an implementation plan also provides a good opportunity to reach and formalise agreements with partner organisations and prepare for contracting out services if the inclusion strategy foresees this.

4. Review and improvement

As PES gather greater volumes of labour market **information and data** about clients with disabilities and their labour market progress, they can further **develop measures** to foster the rights of persons with disabilities in participating in the labour market. To this end they can revise or expand their monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as their performance indicators and targets to incorporate the inclusion strategy for persons with disabilities. Outcomes of the strategy not only relate to employment and job creation. Equally important are those related to the development of skills and competences and the improvement of workplace practices, job quality and sustained employment in companies (see also Eurofound 2021).

For groups with relatively strong barriers to overcome some specific methodological provisions

might be useful to consider. Two of these are discussed here.

Targets incorporating distance travelled (towards employment) measures

Government targets for increasing labour market participation for persons with disabilities provide a basis for PES strategies and plans which elaborate on how the PES will contribute to the attainment of government equality objectives. PES, therefore, need to establish performance measures, milestones, and goals for assessing progress and achievement in their contribution to these objectives.

So-called 'soft outcomes' or distance travelled measures can offer PES and their delivery partners an assessment of the progress that a person with disabilities has made towards employment. This can assist advisors and their clients in demonstrating that an individual is ready to move onto the next phase of a (re) participation programme and offer unambiguous evidence of progress and the positive impact of an employment intervention.

The following image shows four points of measurement for measuring distance travelled. They are visualised as four circles in a row with arrows pointing to the next one. It starts with starting position, then first step (e.g., job fair attendance), then further steps (e.g., work experience or training), then finally employment in the open labour market.

Distance travelled tools can capture the benefits of supportive interventions to assist persons with disabilities which can be missed if only

"hard" employment outcomes are used. These measures can provide an evidence base for use in evaluating the added value of programmes delivered by PES and their partners to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. They also encourage clients by recognising their progress and promoting behaviours acknowledging support provided for clients furthest from participation. Such systems credit organisations for assessing the needs of persons with disabilities and discourage the "parking" of clients with more complex needs which can occur when performance systems are focussed on the volume of employment outcomes.

Supporting employers to report on disability and mental health

Open review and reporting on progress in increasing the proportion of employees with disabilities in a company can help build a consensus encouraging inclusive employment policies. PES can assist employers in improving their data collection and reporting. An annual report on the number of persons with disabilities in the organisation, what level in the organisation they are found and any pay gap, provides transparent data to base strategies and measures.

Finally, PES can make use of the benchlearning process which provides opportunities for services focused on jobseekers with disabilities to be systematically reviewed and good practices to be shared as part of mutual learning within the PES Network²⁶.

5. Create commitment for delivery

PES will only be successful in their endeavours in this area if all those involved in the implementation are committed to the objectives and actions defined in it and persons with disabilities are involved throughout. When organising the design of the inclusion strategy it is important to realise that inclusion strategies benefit from inputs from partners with specific expertise, as well as from current staff and service users with disabilities.

A starting point to increase the likelihood that the strategy is relevant and will be met with support is by positioning PES activities in wider strategies and contributing to their implementation.

The strongest way to generate commitment for the strategy is to involve internal and external stakeholders in its development. Not only will this involvement create commitment, but it is also likely to increase the quality and hence the effectiveness of the plan. Similarly, a good way to know if an implementation plan is effective is to give it to someone outside your team and see if that person can understand the project as a whole. Inputs and feedback can be organised on an ad-hoc and individual basis or take a more structural form. PES can form internal working groups or external advisory groups for the strategy development and even for the monitoring of its eventual implementation.

Another way to increase commitment is to carefully design information activities about the strategy for PES staff and stakeholders, include organisations representing persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves.

²⁶ PES Network Benchlearning Manual. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/44626fc3-4769-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (UNCRPD). **PES play a key role in realising the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in the labour market** tackling attitudinal, institutional, and participatory barriers.
2. In the process of implementation of the UNCRPD, PES are asked to adopt **a universal or holistic approach** to service provision to persons with disabilities. This approach integrates services designed to increase employment for those with complex problems in a coordinated manner addressing intersectionality, not specifically targeted only at persons with disabilities.
3. Disabilities can affect people in diverse ways, even when one person has the same impairment as another, the impact upon individuals can vary considerably. PES should seek to ensure that support services include **personalised, tailor-made actions** following an in-depth assessment of individual client requirements.
4. PES will need to adapt their regular services and measures to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. In addition, specific services and measures as well as organisational conditions are required to adequately provide for this group. The extent of the changes to be made depends on the already existing framework, but also on the **overall approach to the delivery of services**. A number of PES apply a fully individual approach of their job seeking clients instead of working with target groups. This may facilitate the application of personalised services for persons with disabilities, but group specific objectives and approaches may be more difficult to accommodate.
5. Reviewing the PES offer and its delivery for persons with disabilities once again underlines and supports the need for PES to **work in partnership** with other actors in the labour market, in particular employers, organisations representing persons with disabilities and NGOs. Partnerships help PES to deliver a holistic approach and personalised approach and complement the expertise required to service this target group.
6. To develop successful measures and services to support and facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market, PES must promote the **active involvement of PES clients with disabilities**, expert stakeholders, representative organisations and possibly employers in all phases of the service design process.
7. Implementing a universal approach to services provision and specific tailor-made approaches allows PES significant opportunities for **organisational learning**. PES should **evaluate and review services and programmes** to retain and transfer knowledge within their organisations, PES should enhance their internal policies and strategies as part of the logic of learning- by-doing. There is a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of anti-discrimination measures. This issue would in future need to be addressed by PES to provide a stronger empirical basis for implementing practices known to be successful.
8. PES can build on their experience, as well as the extensive experience from their peers in

other European countries. The benchmarking and mutual learning activities organised in recent years by the Network of European PES are very useful, notably with regard to:

- building partnerships (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&intPageId=3447&langId=en>),
- personalised services (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&intPageId=3449&langId=en>),
- approaching and working with employers (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&intPageId=3455&langId=en>), and
- services for vulnerable groups (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&intPageId%20=3459&langId=en>).

Useful information is also to be found in the European Disability Expertise project, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1532&langId=en>, and in particular: DOTCOM: The Disability Online Tool of the Commission, with under section F information on legislation, PES services and existing employment measures. <https://www.disability-europe.net/dotcom>

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ANNEX I.

Practices

I. Criteria and process for practices selection

In response to the call for practices launched for the preparation of this toolkit, PES submitted a large number of relevant and interesting practices. A review of these practices provided important insights into the many objectives, methodologies, barriers and success factors which were taken into account when developing the toolkit. Unfortunately, not all submitted practices could fit, so a selection of practices was chosen based on those that best fit the following criteria. Details of practices included in the toolkit are presented in section II below, with a list of all other practices received included in section III.

Criteria	Explanation
Financial cost	<p>The financial cost of an intervention has a substantial impact on feasibility. Practices cover a broad range of financial costs ranging from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost (multimillion € project) • Medium cost (100 000 - 999 000€) • Low cost "Quick Win" (10 000 - 100 000€) <p>These costs are only indicative and will vary depending on the size of the country, PES, economic environment and the duration of the project.</p>
Time	<p>Time is measured here as the time taken to implement a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High time commitment (multiple years) • Medium time commitment (around 1 year) • Low time commitment (less than a year)
Geography	Practices broadly cover the geographic range of the PES Network.
Evaluation availability	Evaluated practices were prioritised to provide a proven track record.
Outcomes	Practices that have produced the most positive outcomes in terms of supporting the rights of persons with disabilities to enter the labour market were included.
Partnerships	Practices that include partnerships, or have the potential to, were sought after. This builds on previous work from the PES Network in this area.
"Quick wins"	If an action area or practice has low financial costs, a quick period for delivery, and few geographic limits, they are described as a "quick win" . These practices are particularly suitable for PES starting in this area.
"Big plays"	If an action area or practice has high financial costs, a long-time frame for delivery, and the potential for large outcomes, they are described as a "big play" . These practices might be better suited to PES with more experience in this area.

II. List of example practices in full of PES supporting persons with disabilities

Practice Title	Awareness-raising workshops: <i>When being different is normal - making the UNCRPD a tangible experience.</i>
Country	Germany
Time frame	2019-2022
Lead Organisation	German Public Employment Service
Brief Description	All employees of the Federal Employment Agency are provided with the opportunity to attend train-a-trainer workshops on the topic of inclusion with a focus on disability. The workshop lasts 8 hours. It is intended to train staff who can then train entire teams (hence train-a-trainer). To adapt to COVID-19, training is offered virtually. Staff surveys are collected before and after the training to see the distance travelled in participants' knowledge.
Main outputs (products, services)	Simple lesson plan, trainer's manual, transfer manual for participants and media for: The training of multipliers: 8 hours in presence or online or awareness workshop for teams: 8 hours in presence or online. Interactive, varied offer with 8 steps: 1. Training introduction 2. Interesting facts about inclusion 3. Inclusion in practice at the Federal Employment Agency 4. You are not "disabled," you are a person with a disability 5. Bringing the UNCRPD to life 6. Delivering change 7. Accessibility 8. How can inclusion succeed in the long term?
Outcomes	Participants increase their understanding of disability, and reflect on their unconscious biases, prejudices and behaviours. Teams discuss inclusion and consider the significance of inclusive action for their field of work. They reflect on their everyday work approach towards colleagues and customers and identify areas in which they can improve and learn.
Lessons learned	Due to COVID-19, in-person training was cancelled, and an online virtual alternative was developed in 2021. New participants are trained online. Participants who have already been trained in person can take part in an introduction to the online version. After initial scepticism, the online training is a workable alternative to the face-to-face event.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	Support from the board and senior management Motivated participants who can train several teams (train a trainer). Well-prepared documents and media for the participants Regular involvement of participants (600 in 2021) by the Support and coordination at the regional level Good internet connection Software that enables exchange and communication
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Attitudinal barriers

Practice Title	Co-creating an Accessible Website
Country	Greece
Time frame	2021
Lead Organisation	Public Employment Service with local university input
Brief Description	The Greek PES (DYPA) launched a new, user-friendly digital platform for persons with disabilities (https://prosvasis.dypa.gov.gr) in 2021 with help from the University of Athens. This was designed based on the WCAG 2.1 AAA international web accessibility standard to improve the DYPA website content's accessibility.
Main outputs (products, services)	DYPA's new website is specially adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. It is the first Greek digital platform whose design was based on the WCAG 2.1 AAA international web accessibility standard.
Outcomes	An easily navigable website that promotes use by marginalised groups.
Lessons learned	Due to COVID-19, digital delivery of services has become crucial, an easy-to-use website for the PES has helped in this context.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	During the website's development, a technical evaluation report on its accessibility was conducted by the Voice and Accessibility Laboratory of the Department of Informatics and Telecommunications of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. This aimed to identify errors in design, programming or content to be brought in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 AA international accessibility standard. This helped the new digital platform comply with the higher WCAG 2.1 AAA standard.
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Participation in policy and services process barriers & institutional barriers.

Practice Title	Se Kraften! (See the potential!) & Gör Plats! (Make space!)
Country	Sweden
Time frame	2011 - Present
Lead Organisation	Swedish Public Employment Service
Brief Description	The Swedish PES has launched two information campaigns on the topic of labour market rights for persons with disabilities. In 2010 the Swedish PES launched a campaign called Se Kraften! (See the Potential!), to encourage employers to focus on the skills rather than the disabilities of jobseekers. This was followed by an even larger campaign Gor Plats! (Make Space) in 2019 which used a multimedia approach to target employers to challenge their prejudices of persons with disabilities.
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>Both campaigns included TV ads, radio spots, letters and brochures to employers followed-up by personal contact from advisors. The Second utilised social media for the first time to maximise reach.</p>  <p>"Without diversity, everything would be uniform"</p> <p>"ULLA-KARIN LAGERKVIST is visually impaired since birth. She works as a telephone operator in the police authority in Stockholm. To help her, she has, among other things, a screen reading program which converts written text into Braille and speech."</p>  <p>Above, Gor Plats Campaign, photo of models used in multimedia output.</p> <p>In the TV commercial for the second campaign, you can see persons with disabilities facing daily challenges of living with a disability (e.g., taking the bus, waiting for the lift) who then arrive at work where they are shown to be doing highly skilled tasks. Link to media here https://lebureau.se/uppdrag/gor-plats/</p>

Outcomes	Both campaigns had a significant impact on the public realm. For the second campaign, a survey was used before and after to measure the distance travelled in employers' attitudes. It noted a significant increase in positive attitudes towards employing persons with disabilities, this trend was strongest in younger employers. There was a substantial increase (c.50%) in employers contacting the PES to employ persons with disabilities. The campaign also correlated with an increase in the employment rate of persons with disabilities (although causation cannot be proven). The PES also received many private messages of support for the campaign, a first for the organisation.
Lessons learned	<p>Information campaigns will cause a debate in the country, which PES should be aware of and plan a response to. One advert in the second campaign caused some controversy for allegedly removing references to a person's disability. The PES reacted quickly to this criticism and removed the advert.</p> <p>Future campaigns could tie together a focus on the ability of persons with disabilities with the expectation that private organisations can adapt exclusionary workspaces to become more inclusive. The campaign was focused on 'look what they can do' rather than 'look what you can do.'</p>
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>From inception, cooperation with NGOs and businesses to discuss the campaign helped make a more relevant and targeted campaign. The PES talked to businesses to identify the kinds of prejudices they held to tackle them in the campaign. NGOs provided input on how persons with disabilities should be presented.</p> <p>A conscious decision was made not to present persons with disabilities as 'superheroes' as many campaigns do. Instead, the focus was maintained on persons with disabilities as members of a general public who are skilled workers with the ability to be successful at work.</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Attitudinal barriers

Practice Title	Case Management
Country	Lithuania
Time frame	2018 - Present
Lead Organisation	Lithuanian Public Employment Service
Brief Description	Lithuania has adapted its case management offer to provide services to people with limited employment opportunities (such as persons with disabilities). This approach integrates services designed to increase employment for those with complex problems in a coordinated manner. Case management ensures a more supported search process, with extra attention to finding work opportunities that fit the needs of the jobseeker on a long-term basis.
Main outputs (products, services)	During case management, an individual employment activity plan is drawn up, after the manager evaluates the client's motivation, opportunities and needs. This plan provides for an individual "program" - measures to achieve the goal. The case manager also conducts motivational interviews, activities that develop social skills, contacts with other institutions that would help the person to access the labour market, takes care of indirect measures - psychological help, motivational courses, etc. through third parties. It also helps in communication with career or other counsellors, mediates between the employer and the jobseeker.
Outcomes	During the case management, a connection is established between the client and the institutions (and the employer), and the case manager assesses the client's needs and his / her employability, maintains contact with a potential or existing employer. 9344 persons with disabilities were registered in 2021. Of this 5886 found employment. 702 persons with disabilities found employment with subsidies, 149 were provided with Vocational Educational Training, and 5 internships were created.
Lessons learned	A larger number of case managers (due to relatively high workload) is needed, and their competencies need to be constantly developed.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	Success factors include: motivation of the jobseeker to participate in case management and follow the planned plan; the organisational skills of the case manager, his / her communication skills with vulnerable persons; a reduced workload to ensure adequate time to be allocated to better identify the problem of the client and to ensure planning and implementation of services and measures based on individual needs; a wider scope of capable NGOs or other social partners to provide additional support for the jobseekers with multiple problems (especially in the regions).
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Participation in policy and services process barriers & institutional barriers

Practice Title	My Video Appointment
Country	Germany
Time frame	2020 - Present
Lead Organisation	Public Employment Service in conjunction with third parties
Brief Description	<p>Counselling by video "My Video Appointment" is an online communication format. It is designed to be modern and user-friendly with clients entering the virtual counselling room with just a few clicks. This easy-to-use design is done on purpose to be accessible to persons with disabilities and older people.</p> <p>Communication takes place in real-time with video and enables the sharing of digital content (for example job portal) as well as the joint editing of work plans.</p> <p>Video counselling is almost equivalent to face-to-face counselling. It can be carried out regardless of location. This is especially useful for persons with disabilities, (e.g., due to the types of disabilities, vulnerability, mobility restrictions, easy participation of third parties in conversations).</p> <p>Since October 2021, the video appointment can be planned and carried out with additional internal and external participants - such as sign language interpreters for people with hearing impairments.</p>
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>The video counselling is provided via a web app (i.e., not a cloud-based solution) that can also be used by employees in their home offices.</p> <p>The licences (access for scheduling and counselling) are controlled via the video channel manager (VKM). The calls are made with the good video quality.</p> <p>Training courses and working aids have been designed to enable staff to use the system.</p>
Outcomes	Since its introduction, a total of about 100,000 counselling sessions have been conducted nationwide via video. The operation of video communication is stable. The recommendation rate is around 95% by clients.
Lessons learned	The technical requirements were continuously developed according to the needs.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>Evaluation is yet to be released</p> <p>Link here https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/videotermin</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Institutional barriers

Practice Title	Job Carving for jobseekers with disabilities
Country	Malta
Time frame	2017 - Present
Lead Organisation	Malta Public Employment Service with the Spiteri Foundation and enterprises
Brief Description	<p>The Maltese Public Employment Service (Jobsplus) partnered with the Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF), an organisation specialised in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities to enter the labour market, to deliver a high-quality job carving programme.</p> <p>Before "Carving" takes place, the LSF and PES will work together to offer training and work schemes for the jobseeker to upskill. Carving is then determined by matching the skills/competencies of the person with a disability(s) with the enterprises' needs. Carving examines occupations within enterprises and identifies areas in which an enterprise can develop a new job profile, which may constitute features/tasks from other jobs/workplaces.</p>
Main outputs (products, services)	To deliver the programme, LSF established a corporate relations unit to recruit persons with disabilities for other companies. This unit includes corporate relations executives, who identify existing occupations within the enterprise that are potentially suitable for jobseekers with disabilities.
Outcomes	As of April 2018, 278 suitable jobs had been created for jobseekers with disabilities using the job-carving approach.
Lessons learned	The corporate relations executives found the process of identifying suitable jobs for persons with disabilities a challenging process due to the complexity of many jobs in the open labour market.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>Corporate relations executives took time to analyse the needs of businesses to identify areas in which tasks from existing jobs could be incorporated into a new "carved" job that could be done by a person with disabilities.</p> <p>The enforcement of a minimum 2% employment quota for persons with disabilities in Maltese enterprises motivated many enterprises to actively seek persons with disabilities in their teams.</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Institutional barriers

Practice Title	Wage Subsidy scheme
Country	Ireland
Time frame	2008 - Present
Lead Organisation	Irish Public Employment Service
Brief Description	The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) provides financial incentives to private-sector employers to hire people with a disability for 21 - 39 hours per week under an employment contract. Able-bodied productivity norms in the labour market can be a barrier to entry for persons with disabilities. In cases where this results in a loss of productivity for the employer of 20% or more, the WSS allows the employer to claim a wage subsidy.
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>Strand I provide a basic rate of subsidy at €5.30 (€6.30 from Jan 2022) per hour, with a maximum of €10,748 per annum based on a 39-hour week.</p> <p>The strand II subsidy is payable when an employer employs three or more persons with disabilities who are supported by the WSS Strand I payment. Strand II is intended to cover the additional supervisory, management and work-based costs relating to employees receiving the subsidy. This top-up payment is a percentage of the Strand I subsidy and is based on the overall number of employees with a disability employed under Strand I. It ranges from an additional 10% of wage subsidy for 3 to 6 employees with a disability to a maximum of 50% of wage subsidy for 23+ employees with a disability.</p> <p>When an employer has 23 or more Wage Subsidy Scheme employees, a 50% top-up is applied to the hourly rate to help with costs.</p> <p>Strand III subsidy enables employers who employ 25 or more workers with a disability on the WSS to be eligible for a grant of up to €30,000 per year towards the expense of employing an Employment Assistance Officer.</p> <p>The estimated WSS expenditure in 2021 is €26 million.</p>
Outcomes	The WSS is a demand-led scheme and (on 30 November 2021) 1,588 private sector employers were participating in the scheme in respect of 2,492 participant employees.
Lessons learned	<p>As the WSS is a demand-led scheme, promotion of the scheme among private-sector employers has increased uptake.</p> <p>A review of the subsidy will be carried out in 2022. This will evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme and decide what further improvements could be made.</p>
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>WSS success may be measured by the level of scheme uptake by private sector employers and employees with a disability.</p> <p>Participation levels have steadily increased in the decade from 2011 to 2020 with 499 active employers at end of 2011 increasing to 1,595 at end of 2020 (a 219.6% increase).</p> <p>There were 869 active employees at the end of 2011 which had increased to 2,610 at the end of 2020 (a 200% increase).</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Institutional barriers

Practice Title	Inclusive redesign of work processes (IHW)
Country	Netherlands
Time frame	2010 - Present
Lead Organisation	Centre of Expertise for Inclusive Organisations with Dutch Public Employment Service
Brief Description	This practice, in partnership with employers, identifies options for reorganising the workplace and/or work processes to create jobs suitable for people with a disability. This is especially suited to the inclusion of persons with a chronic mental illness, psychological disorder, developmental disorder or a learning disability.
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>The Inclusive Redesign of Work Processes (Inclusief Herontwerp van Werk, or IHW) project was first piloted with 100 young persons with disabilities who worked in Slotervaart Hospital between 2010 and 2013. A qualitative evaluation showed that the IHW method was efficient in creating job positions for youth with disabilities. A cost-benefit analysis found that bringing in persons with disabilities to new positions can be cost-effective for the organisation.</p> <p>The IHW has developed a 4-step process for designing inclusive work processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration - A business consultant gathers information on the company and state of the labour market • Preparation - The organisation's management committed to a plan of action to allow the consultant to conduct a work analysis. This is communicated widely to employees. A work analysis takes place; interviews, job mapping, observations and company document reviews from all departments are enacted. The consultant identifies the tasks most suitable for redesign to include persons with disabilities. Management then commits to a plan of implementation. • Implementation - An inclusive HRM policy is created for the inclusion of new and current employees. This should then be continually monitored. • Consolidation - The new workplace arrangements are then consolidated.
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	Over the past few years, this approach of job creation was successfully implemented in a variety of organisations, with support from the national network of consultants of the Dutch PES.
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Institutional barriers

Practice Title	The Workability reform
Country	Estonia
Time frame	2016 - Present
Lead Organisation	Estonian Public Employment Service and NGOs
Brief Description	<p>Before this initiative, very few persons with disabilities in Estonia registered with the PES as jobseekers. The Workability Reform encompasses a broad set of measures aimed to register more persons with disabilities with the PES for greater 'activation' of this group. Feedback from jobseekers with disabilities at the time also raised the need to fight negative attitudes which create a barrier to greater employment opportunities.</p> <p>To enable this, part of the Workability Reform involved the Estonian PES partnering with NGOs which work in the field of disability rights to help design service and delivery. NGOs are also sub-contracted to run services such as job counselling and encourage registration with the PES. This makes the practice an innovative area of coproduction.</p>
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>The services were designed in collaboration and negotiation with expert NGOs, harnessing their experience and understanding of the needs and expectations of persons with disabilities to access services.</p> <p>The partners (NGOs) were also charged with various service delivery, through sub-contracted agreements to meet objectives determined by PES. For example, a competitive bid process was launched to select an NGO which could run peer counselling services. Clients are then referred to the NGO by the unemployment insurance fund. The PES pays for each counselling session through funds secured by the European Social Fund and Unemployment Insurance Fund. The partnership creates greater flexibility than the in-house provision of inclusion services and builds on the superior trust that persons with disabilities often have in NGOs with whom they may already have a working relationship.</p>
Outcomes	<p>After 12 months of registration, 44% of newly registered jobseekers with reduced workability find a job.</p> <p>The partnership has volume targets for numbers of clients becoming active in the labour market, and formal agreements have been put in place to monitor them.</p>
Lessons learned	<p>Partners often bring innovative ideas to the table and add value. They are best placed to understand the needs and expectations of the target groups.</p> <p>Trust is important in any partnership, where the sub-contracted NGOs need to feel trusted in their capability.</p>
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>Transparent roles for PES and partners</p> <p>Partnerships are client need focused</p> <p>Robust evaluation and monitoring</p> <p>Specific employment measures and schemes for activation.</p> <p>Counselling services are a success through; a twice-yearly review of outcomes, satisfaction surveys with clients, regular discussions with NGOs and disability rights organisations.</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Participation in policy and services process barriers

Practice Title	DuoDAY
Country	France
Time frame	2018 - present
Lead Organisation	French Public Employment Service and enterprises
Brief Description	<p>DuoDays partner a person with a disability with an employee from an enterprise for the day (a duo). On DuoDays the enterprise will receive a person with a disability into the workplace and partner them with an experienced employee in order for them to discover more about the occupation and sector for potential future careers.</p> <p>DuoDays take place in the framework of the EDEW (European Disability Employment Week).</p>
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>A dedicated daylong event to enable enterprises to open their doors to persons with disabilities</p> <p>An online platform is created on which enterprises post offers and candidates can apply</p> <p>Publicity raised by the Ministry and PES to encourage both companies and eligible persons to participate</p> <p>PES integrate the day into their guidance pathways for persons with disabilities</p> <p>A website with information, toolkits and articles to help enterprises prepare visitors</p> <p>Another publicity campaign to promote success stories and benefits to all involved</p>
Outcomes	<p>From 2020</p> <p>12,404 employers registered on the duoday.fr platform.</p> <p>9,113 persons with disabilities registered.</p> <p>Almost 10,000 duos set up, including 7,147 duos registered on the duoday.fr platform.</p> <p>2,900 supporting organisations were involved (including Pôle Emploi, Cap Emploi, local organisations, companies, training providers, sports federations, student federations, employment associations).</p> <p>Qualitative findings point to many positive testimonies including, breaking down stereotypes, encouraging new career pathways and an overall win-win experience.</p>
Lessons learned	<p>DuoDay responds to a real need on the part of companies since an increasing number of them are signing up on the platform. There are now more offers than demands on the platform</p> <p>A large-scale mobilisation and communication are required to encourage the registration of persons with disabilities now the project has grown.</p>
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>In 2020: almost 20,000 people took part, with 10% of persons with disabilities offered some form of work (internship, training, apprenticeship, employment, etc.)</p> <p>Companies are increasingly enthusiastic to attend with many placements offers on the platform. Posting a detailed placement with occupation and career potential helped to boost participants. The event was an opportunity for many to submit a CV directly to participating enterprises and be recruited in a way that evaluates their proven skills during the day.</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Attitudinal barriers & institutional barriers

Practice Title	Diversity plans for employers
Country	Belgium
Time frame	2007 - Present
Lead Organisation	Brussels Public Employment Service
Brief Description	<p>The Brussels PES (Actiris) has a diversity unit that provides a free advisory service for employers from the public, private and non-profit sectors. The main goal of this advisory work is to co-develop together with employers and trade unions a diversity plan, The agreed diversity plan is adapted to every organisation with the aim to increase diversity and inclusion within the organisation by formulating concrete actions.</p> <p>The diversity plan focuses on 6 key topics / target groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gender. 2. origin/nationality. 3. education level. 4. age (consists of 2 target groups, i.e., young employees (-26 years). 5. experienced employees (+45 years). 6. disability. <p>During the design of a diversity plan, organisations are invited to discuss the theme of disability and are systematically sensitised about the diversity of profiles that are hidden under this heading (in addition to physical and sensory disabilities, mental disabilities, chronic or degenerative diseases and mental health).</p>
Main outputs (products, services)	<p>Actiris encourages companies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand recruitment options and develop a culture of sending vacancies directly to organisations that assist persons with disabilities into employment. • Provide information such as employment measures for the recruitment of persons with disabilities. • Adapt job offer descriptions: add a passionate statement about diversity and inclusion. • Note that reasonable adjustments are possible during the recruitment process, explain all functions and tasks clearly and add a specific competence form so that persons with disabilities can evaluate for themselves whether they have the right competencies for the function. • Reflect on job requirements and the option to adapt this to the needs of persons with disabilities (job carving and job crafting). • Organise training and awareness-raising on disability for recruiters, managers, and all colleagues. • Participate in the national DuoDay campaign.
Outcomes	<p>Actiris puts organisations in contact with specialised organisations that guide persons with disabilities towards employment and supports them in retaining jobs. The Diversity Service has developed a network of more than 50 specialised partners to help this.</p> <p>Actiris informs companies about anti-discrimination legislation in Belgium, particularly the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation. Organisations are then referred to Unia, the Inter-federal Equal Opportunities Centre and their online tool eDiv, which provides a clear overview of anti-discrimination legislation with e-learning and good practices.</p>
Success factors (including any evaluative evidence)	<p>The service is part of a network of partners working on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market and plays an intermediary role between the offers of these partners and the questions of employers. They disseminate information and encourage employers to participate in events organised by these partners, such as job days, awareness-raising workshops, etc.</p>
Type of barrier(s) addressed	Attitudinal barriers & institutional barriers

III. List of other practices

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
Specialist Counsellors	Austria	PES	In Austria, there are around 112 specialist counsellors for persons with disabilities. They have extra training, and fewer people to deal with in order to have more time for counselling. In customer surveys, this offer is appreciated among the clients.
Fit2Work	Austria	Steered jointly by the health insurance fund, the PES, the Ministry of Social Affairs and by social partners	ft2work accompanies people into healthy working life and helps companies to maintain their employees' ability to work.
Partnerships with experts association in the disability sector for recruitment of persons with disabilities as PES staff	Belgium (Brussels)	PES	We aim to present our PES as a welcoming employer offering a safe place for all of our employees.
Support for job seekers with disabilities facing discrimination in the recruitment process	Belgium (Brussels)	PES	Actiris Inclusive, the anti-discrimination unit, is particularly sensitive to the issue of the socio-professional integration of job seekers with disabilities. In general, the department has developed several areas of expertise, including disability, with the recruitment of a counsellor dedicated to this issue.
Vocational (Professional) Rehabilitation of unemployed persons with disabilities	Croatia	PES	Vocational rehabilitation is a multidisciplinary field that consists of various activities focused on vocational and work training, employment and work of persons with disabilities.
Work training program for persons with disabilities in sheltered workplaces within protective and integrative workshops in the Republic of Croatia	Croatia	PES	The Institute for Expertise, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (ZOSI) has initiated a pilot project entitled "Work training program for persons with disabilities in sheltered workplaces within protective and integrative workshops in the Republic of Croatia".
Individualized Counselling Approach	Cyprus	PES	Individualised/targeted Counselling Approach for Vulnerable Groups.
Subsidy Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2021)	Cyprus	PES in partnership with a third party	Subsidy Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2021)

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
A more inclusive labour market (Trial with screening for disability among the newly unemployed)	Denmark	PES	The project 'A more inclusive labour market' is being implemented in 8 municipalities. In the participating job centres, all unemployment benefit recipients and cash benefit recipients are asked via a digital form whether they have a disability that may have an impact on their job opportunities.
Trial with compensation card for Persons with disabilities	Denmark	PES	The project is testing a compensation card for persons with disabilities. The purpose of the compensation card is to clarify which possible compensation needs may be needed, as well as what support options are available.
Work ability programme	Finland	PES	In Finland, around 65 000 people with partial work ability, who are currently outside the labour market, estimate that they have the capacity to work and they would like to work. The work ability programme seeks solutions to the acknowledged problems in the employment of persons with partial work ability.
Rapprochement between Pôle emploi and Cap Emploi (specialised placement organisations for those with a disability)	France	PES in partnership with a third party	The rapprochement between Pôle emploi and Cap Emploi consists in the creation of a "Single place for guidance" (LUA - Lieu Unique d'Accompagnement) which enables jobseekers with disabilities to benefit from information on the labour market, on their compensation and on the assistance to which they are entitled, and which gives them access to guidance according to the appropriate level of guidance and support.
Pôle emploi internal measures to foster the inclusion of Persons with a disability	France	PES	Pôle emploi adopts and deploys a national policy for persons with disabilities. Measures have been put in place to enable staff to better support persons with disabilities.
Information on Easy Language and Chatbot Easy Language on www.arbeitsagentur.de	Germany	PES	The Federal Employment Agency has set itself the goal of offering its services for its customers on the internet in a way that is as accessible as possible, including services in easy language. In order to act in the spirit of a modern, digitalised public authority, a chatbot in easy language was developed with the active participation of persons with learning difficulties.
Special employer subsidy programme for 2,000 new jobs for unemployed persons with disabilities	Greece	PES	DYPA provides strong incentives for employing persons with disabilities. More particularly, DYPA subsidizes 90% of the cost for each full-time or part-time job.

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
Subsidy Programme aimed at providing ergonomic workspace arrangements for Persons with disabilities.	Greece	PES	DYPA covers 90% of the cost required for ergonomic workspace arrangements (specially adapted auxiliary technological facilities, workspace arrangements, special equipment, software for persons with disabilities etc.) up to the amount of €2,500.
Recruitment with support	Iceland	PES	The employment rate of those who do not have full working capacity is much lower than others. In this project, we are trying to increase the opportunities in the labour market for young persons with disabilities graduating from upper secondary school in Iceland.
EmployAbility service	Ireland	Department of Social Protection (DSP), Ireland with third party	The EmployAbility service is delivered under a contract arrangement on behalf of the Department of Social Protection. There are currently 24 EmployAbility contracts in place with service providers nationwide.
DSP Intreo PES Service	Ireland	PES	DSP manages the State's Public Employment Service (PES) through its nationwide network of Intreo centres and contractors delivering services on its behalf, for example, Local Employment (LES) and EmployAbility Services. DSP's Intreo Service is a single point of contact for all employment and income support in the State.
Job Club	Italy	Regional PES	Job Club offers job-search assistance to people falling under the provisions of the so-called "Collocamento mirato", the "Mandatory placement" of persons with disabilities ruled by the Law 68/99 (Regulation on the right to work of persons with disabilities).
Job Speed Date	Italy	Regional PES	It aims at giving persons with disabilities the opportunity to experience the dynamic of a job interview. Two or more companies looking for employees run an interview (maximum 10 minutes for each person) with candidates, selected according to their professional profile, which has to match with the company needs.
Assisted employment service (as part of Labour market services)	Lithuania	PES in partnership with a third party	Assisted employment services are provided to persons with disabilities in order to provide them with individual assistance in finding employment and / or establishing themselves in the workplace. These assistance procedures consist of assistance with employment and accompanying assistance after employment.

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
Vocational rehabilitation	Lithuania	PES in partnership with a third party	The aim of vocational rehabilitation is to help persons with disabilities to integrate into the labour market by restoring their ability to work and acquire new professional competencies, as well as to seek self-employment or participate in employment programs.
Job coaching for persons with disabilities and mentoring for vulnerable groups	Malta	PES	In order to increase the employment opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, job coaching and mentoring services were created in addition to work exposure placements and financial incentives.
Individual placement and support (IPS)	Netherlands	PES in partnership with a third party	UWV has funded Individual Placement and Support activities since 2017 on the basis of a subsidy scheme. The recipients are the Public Health Organisations (PHO's, in Dutch GGZ) who execute the IPS activities. UWV distributes the subsidies, performs basic controlling duties and conducts a study based on the results of the scheme.
The scope of support provided to Persons with disabilities	Poland	PES	List of service offering to persons with disabilities.
Service for deaf, hard of hearing and persons with disabilities - on the example of the Regional Labour Office in Warsaw	Poland	PES	The Regional Labour Office in Warsaw provides services supporting communication of the deaf or hard of hearing (in accordance with the act on sign language and other means of communication).
The Employment and Qualification Program for persons with disabilities	Portugal	PES	The Employment and Qualification Program for persons with disabilities (which includes a wide range of measures) provides an integrated set of measures aimed at supporting the qualification and employment of persons with disabilities, who have difficulties in achieving labour market integration.
Supported Employment in Open Labour Market	Portugal	PES	Supported Employment in Open Labour Market is aimed at persons with disabilities whose activity limitations and participation restrictions significantly hinder their access to employment in a normal work regime and whose working capacity is neither less than 30% nor more than 90% of the normal work capacity of another worker in the same professional functions.

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
Allowance for the establishment of a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace	Slovakia	PES	The allowance is aimed at supporting the employment of citizens with disabilities. It is provided to cover part of the costs of creating a job for a citizen with a disability in a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace. The costs of creating a job are considered to be the costs that are necessary to ensure the performance of work by a citizen with a disability and are related to the creation of job.
Allowance for the activity of work assistant	Slovakia	PES	Through this instrument, the indirect support of employment or self-employment of citizens with disabilities, who need assistance in carrying out work/self-employed activity, is provided. The assistance is ensured through work assistants who help citizens with disabilities in the workplace and who carry out, on behalf of citizens with disabilities, those activities which they themselves are not able to perform due to their disability.
Reserve quota and alternative measures	Spain	PES	Publicly and privately-owned companies with over fifty employees must have a minimum of two per cent with disabilities. If there is a collective bargaining agreement or the employer prefers not to fulfil this obligation, the company must take alternative measures.
Special Employment Centres	Spain	PES in partnership with a third party	The primary purpose of Special Employment Centres is to produce goods and services while operating in the market like regular businesses. They aim to provide paid employment for persons with disabilities while also providing inclusion for as many such people as possible within the ordinary employment system.
Supported employment in the ordinary labour market	Spain	PES in partnership with a third party	Guidance actions and personalised workplace mentoring provided by specialised job coaches. This is intended to enable the social and workplace adaptation of workers with disabilities with particular labour difficulties in companies in the ordinary labour market under conditions similar to those of other workers performing equivalent jobs.

Title	Country	Lead Organisation(s)	Short description
Supported Employment	Sweden	PES	The method is part of the basic job search service. The support is individual and is given by a support person. The method includes both preparation and follow-up support. The method provides support to both the jobseeker or employee and to the workplace.

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