



A PLATFORM FOR PROJECT SHARING ACROSS PES

Project database

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The project database is a web platform for project management and practice sharing within the Austrian PES. Accessible to all employees, the aim is to generate learning and good practice transfer across PES.

The database was set up in 2002 with input from regional offices, as part of the wider systematic implementation of the PDCA-cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act) from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).

The database is used during the internal performance assessment of regional offices to identify solutions to particular challenges and to encourage offices to share good practices.

The success of the database depends on the widespread communication of effective projects and lessons learnt across the organisation.

Name of the PES

Austrian Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice – AMS)

When was the practice implemented?

2002-ongoing.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The database was developed internally by the IT department. Editors and quality coordinators at the local, regional and national levels are responsible for its quality and usability.

Only editors can upload a project for the relevant project manager. This ensures that all projects are described within the given criteria. For example, editors can assess whether a project is innovative since they have an overview of all the projects involved.

Quality coordinators develop the quality assurance, checking that projects in the database meet the criteria set out in the guidelines and monitoring which office is working on which themes. There are also internal assessors who assess the performance of regional branches every three years. They support the organisation in implementing the core concepts of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

Employees at all governance levels can search the database and managers and staff submit their projects via an editor.

Social partners working jointly on projects also have access to the database, but cannot submit a project.

What were the practice's main objectives?

The objective is to further encourage the PES to become a learning organisation. The database ensures that employees throughout Austria are kept informed about projects and can cooperate across offices. It is part of the systematic implementation of the PDCA-cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act) from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The aim is to create transparency around successful projects and lessons learnt across the PES.

Projects cover all aspects of PES performance, including core processes, implementing job market goals and improving Balance Score Card indicators such as customer and employee satisfaction. Projects can be implemented or halted, can call on financial and staff resources and are planned with specific objectives, milestones and outcomes in mind. Approval from the manager in charge is needed to start a project, because of cost and staffing implications.

What activities were carried out?

The project database is used to share information on project management and practices between regional and local offices. Only trained editors at all governance levels can submit projects onto the database. The database provides information on:

- ▶ Type of project (projects can cover one or more aspects of PES performance)
- ▶ Objectives (translated into targets)
- ▶ Resources (staff and financial)
- ▶ Milestones
- ▶ Outcomes (described by an evaluation of the expected targets against actual targets)

Additionally, the database:

- ▶ Lists whether a project has been transferred to another regional or local PES office. A project is marked transferred if there was a level of cooperation (several meetings and support) between two PES offices to implement it.
- ▶ Identifies innovative projects such as those introducing new ways of working.

All PES employees can search the database within certain criteria, such as PES office, outcomes, milestones, project size.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

The project database was developed in-house by the PES IT department.

Editors at all governance levels were trained internally.

Quality Coordinators, often also internal assessors, are trained by the Austrian Foundation for Quality Management.

A jury chooses three projects in the category 'innovative projects' to be recognised at the Austrian PES annual award ceremony. The winning offices receive a non-monetary prize (e.g. a team lunch). The top three projects awarded annually are chosen for their impact on improvement, innovation, relevance to corporate objectives and implementation.

What were the source(s) of funding?

National funds.

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

In total, there are 2 627 projects in the database with 80-90 newly added projects per year. There are training and guidelines for Editors available on how to use the database.

PES internal assessors, often also quality coordinators, use the database for the internal assessment of regional PES offices. They check how many and which projects are submitted by the regional offices or the local offices within the region and assess this in relation to the region's performance. For example, projects from high-performing offices are shared with lesser performing offices as examples of what works. During an internal assessment, a regional office can also agree to transfer a project with another office that focuses on an area in which they want to improve.

What outcomes have been identified?

The project database raises awareness of a good practice, so that information about what works can be shared effectively. This is demonstrated by 723 transferred projects to other offices described in the database. One example of practice sharing concerns the different ways of receiving feedback from employers to increase customer satisfaction. Several offices found it difficult to get feedback from employers. One began to organise meetings with employers that included a keynote speech from an interesting speaker. This significantly increased the provision of employer' feedback and was picked up by other offices to do the same.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

Lessons learnt and success factors of the database:

- ▶ The PES runs the project database on a voluntary basis but offers proactive encouragement and incentives, such as the annual awards.
- ▶ Input from staff during the development of the platform ensured it was fit for purpose.
- ▶ The platform has two functions: project management and practice exchange. Because the database is also used to monitor resources, milestones and targets, keeping projects up-to-date and sharing practice, it is no additional burden to staff.
- ▶ It is essential that the database is easy to use, up-to-date and that the content is filled in properly. Therefore, only editors can submit projects and quality coordinators check it is done properly.
- ▶ The database is not a stand-alone tool, but a component of the PES process of continual improvement. The database provides information on success factors and lessons learnt from projects including those which have successfully been transferred to another context such as to another local office or region. This information is used in internal assessments to improve the performance of PES offices. Quality coordinators and internal assessors advise the PES offices on how to use the database and highlight other offices working on similar issues and those projects suitable for transfer.



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