

Assessment programme of *PM2.V* (Marshall Plan 2.Green, *Plan Marshall 2.Vert*)

Executive summary

THEMATIC ASSESSMENT 9 - QUALIFICATION TRAINING FOR SOUGHT-AFTER TRADES

The Walloon public authorities are facing the following paradox: **the existence of many unfulfilled job offers and a significant number of unemployed people**. Much work, in particular within the *FOREM* (employment public service, *Service public wallon de l'emploi et de la formation*), has involved the identification of in-demand trades and the causes of these difficulties of matching them on the labour market. The main ones are:

- A mismatch between the skills required by companies and the skills acquired by jobseekers;
- The “bad” image of certain sectors and trades among jobseekers;
- An absence of clear and robust project on the part of jobseekers;
- The difficult working conditions of certain trades (shift work, physical, etc.).

In order to address the first three causes, the Walloon Government has set up a series of actions which are enshrined in *PM2.V* (Marshall Plan 2.Green, *Plan Marshall 2.Vert*) and which relay certain measures that are already implemented or initiated in the context of *PM1.0* (Marshall Plan 1.0, *Plan Marshall 1.0*). In addition to certain transversal actions (for example: Individualized addressing of job offers, analysis of jobseekers' skills), the policy covers activities which specifically target in-demand trades.

Among those **activities**, the ones that are **assessed** in the context of this report are:

- Vocational training courses;
- Awareness-raising campaigns of the trades run by the Carrefours Emploi Formation (CEFo) and
- Practical guidance actions (commonly called Trade-Trials).

The assessment question addressed about them by the Walloon Government is the following:

“To what extent do the actions of *PM2.V* (Marshall Plan 2.Green, *Plan Marshall 2.Vert*) facilitate recruitment in training and professional insertion?”

The first stage of the assessment work concerned an analysis of the policy and, the contents of the actions under review, and the reconstitution of the logic model (rationale underlying those measures). That consisted of the identification of the problematic situation, the resulting political priority, the resources mobilized around a choice of activities, assumptions on the effects and causalities, the expected results (including recruitment in training and professional insertion) and the external factors which influence the policy and its results.

The two parts of the question, each relating to one of the expected results, have been addressed on the basis of a distinct methodology; a qualitative approach by case study in order to analyse the contribution of the actions of the CEFos and the Trade-Trials on recruitment in training, and an econometric quantitative approach in order to study the causal effect of the training courses on professional insertion.

These various pieces of work have led to a series of **observations**, the main ones of which are included here.

The first shows that, given the diversity of the development and concretization stages of the professional plans of the CEFO's visitors, the latter contribute to the concretization of various stages that can lead to recruitment in training, but without this being *de facto* immediate or relating only to in-demand trades.

The second observation relates to the difficulties encountered in implementing the trades' collective information sessions. These difficulties result from the sometimes contradictory nature of those sessions' objectives: on the one hand, to raise the awareness of a significant number of jobseekers in respect of the trades, and on the other, to deliver information that can be appropriated by those jobseekers. These awareness-raising campaigns can nevertheless spark inklings of professional plans for jobseekers who until then had no plan in mind.

The third observation relates to the hooking, via Trade-Trials, of a different audience - younger and more male – from that of other guidance measures. The practical dimension and the environment similar to that of the training courses are essential components supporting this result.

The fourth observation puts forward the effectiveness of Trial-Trades as a guidance process, allowing the development of a professional plan or the consolidation of an existing one. However, for certain jobseekers who have a clear plan, the Trade-Trial constitutes more of a doorway into training, a required passage, in order to facilitate access to the desired vocational training.

The fifth observation brought to light by the collected material is the existence of levers and brakes to the recruitment in training which are specific to the training system itself: the system of recognition of the skills acquired in training is for example a factor of motivation for a commitment to training, whereas the lack of operational information on the training course entry dates or the overly long training courses are so many brakes.

The sixth observation relates to the positive effect of the training on access to employment, whatever the persons' gender or level of education. Overall, for jobseekers over the age of 25 years who had begun an episode of unemployment in 2008 and who have followed a training course, the residual median unemployment duration is reduced by at least 19 weeks (compared to the duration obtained in the absence of training).

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the training courses embarked upon more belatedly in the unemployment episode have a higher relative effect for most people: men, whatever their level of diploma, and women with few qualifications.

Lastly, in the perspective of *PM2.V* (Marshall Plan 2.Green, *Plan Marshall 2.Vert*), which seeks to adapt the supply of vocational training in order to meet the market demand as effectively as possible, one observes that, 18 months after the beginning of their training, not only for vocational training courses for in-demand trades, but also for other vocational training courses, the proportion of the trained individuals who are still unemployed is reduced by a third (compared to what would have occurred if those same individuals had not been trained). Let us note that as in-demand trade vocational training courses are on average longer than the rest of the vocational training courses, the effect on the residual median duration of unemployment is less than for other vocational training courses.

At the conclusion of this work, several **recommendations** can be formulated from the point of view of an improvement of the policy of jobseeker information, guidance and training in order to facilitate their professional insertion and to reduce the difficulties of matching on the labour market.

At the level of the CEFOs :

- Entrust a mission of information, equipped by external experts, rather than one of promotion;
- Capitalise on the results of the adaptations of the implementation.

At the level of the Trade-Trials:

- Reinforce the Trade-Trial as a process of practical guidance rather than a doorway into training.

At the level of the training system:

- Systematise the recognition of the skills acquired in training;
- Develop the training-related information system.

At a transversal level :

- Develop individual indicators that provide information about the development stage of the jobseeker's professional plan and about its level of concretization;
- Continue the analysis work on the tensions and on the assessment of the implemented actions.