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Governing labour market policies in the Brussels-Capital Region

The purpose of the chapter is to identify actors and assess the challenges of governing labour market programmes in the Brussels-Capital Region. The chapter first analyses the delivery of active labour market policies (ALMPs) at the regional level. The chapter discusses the way in which responsibility for ALMPs is split between the Brussels-Capital Region government and the Flemish and French Communities, while the local level continues to deliver social policies. The ongoing federal administration of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits is also discussed. In a second part, the chapter turns to the local level, where strengthening institutions may maximise the potential of municipalities and social economy schemes to support vulnerable individuals.

In Brief

Simplifying labour market governance in the Brussels-Capital Region

- **Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are highly decentralised in Belgium.** In comparison to OECD peers, individuals who enter labour market programmes in the Brussels-Capital Region pass through a host of organisations. Regions are responsible for policies bearing on territory, including employment services, while Communities lead human-centred policies, such as those for training. The federal National Employment Office (ONEM) provides out-of-work income maintenance and support.
- **An integrated information exchange and orientation process in public employment services (PES) comparable to other subnational PES does not yet exist.** The regional government's PES, *Actiris*, is the main point of contact for jobseekers and employers. *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding Brussel)* provide jobseeker training in French and Dutch respectively. In other OECD countries with decentralised responsibilities for ALMPs, PES usually manage both employment services and training for jobseekers (e.g. Canada, Denmark, Poland and Spain).
- **In most OECD countries, PES advise individuals on training options though provide limited job seeker training directly.** Most is contracted out to not-for-profit, private or public entities. *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel* orient job seekers through training, while both also provide training directly and contract out training. The region should evaluate the costs and benefits of contracting out more training. *Actiris* and training bodies may also agree on a more integrated counselling process for learners who complete training.
- **Municipal social aid centres (CPAS) face capacity challenges to help minimum income recipients search for work due to growing social needs.** The number of minimum income (*Revenu d'Intégration Sociale – RIS*) recipients as a share of the region's population increased from 2.8% in 2015, to 3.3% in 2019 and to 3.6% in 2022. Based on arrangements in other OECD countries (e.g. Slovenia, the Netherlands), one option may include further increasing the counselling role of *Actiris* for RIS recipients. Alternatively, more structural capacity could be granted to CPAS to deliver employment services. Consultations may also be conducted with CPAS to find ways to reduce the high administrative burden on staff.
- **Complex governance and project-based financing can pose challenges to social economy organisations delivering ALMP programmes.** The social economy is an asset for social inclusion in the region. Schemes provide neighbourhood-level services helping individuals integrate both a job and a community. Social economy schemes such as *Agences Locales pour l'Emploi (ALE)* and *entreprises d'économie sociale d'insertion* are not always linked. Some schemes face the challenge of complex governance structures with many representatives. Project-based financing also poses challenges to provide long-term services.
- **Maisons de l'emploi offer strong prospects to develop into one-stop-shops.** *Maisons de l'emploi* are the only structure systematically bringing together *Actiris*, CPAS and the social economy. Actors, however, are not physically grouped together in all municipalities. *Maisons de l'emploi* are a strategic location to reduce overlap in roles between actors and coordinate approaches. Greater resources for *Maisons de l'emploi* may also help stimulate more joint projects between institutions. In Finland, one-stop-shops for young people (*Ohjaamos*) required agreement at a strategic level between municipalities and PES to progressively deploy centres.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse the role of the actors delivering labour market programmes in the Brussels-Capital Region. Successive reforms of the Belgian State shifted far-reaching responsibilities in employment and skills policies from the federal level to sub-national levels of government. *Actiris*, the regional public employment service (PES), is the main point of contact for jobseekers and employers, while the National Employment Office (ONEM – *Office National de l'Emploi*) administers Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Dedicated public bodies manage jobseeker training. At the local level, municipalities deliver labour market services to those receiving social benefits. For the remainder of the report, municipalities refer to the 19 *communes* in the region. Finally, social economy organisations are a major source of contracted services. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the policy roles of different actors. The table reveals the web of relationships that underpins the delivery of labour market programmes in the region.

Table 3.1. Responsibility for employment and skills policies in the region is spread across different actors

Bodies responsible for administering labour market programmes in the Brussels-Capital Region

Body	Social and benefit policies		Active labour market policies		
	ONEM	CPAS ¹	<i>Actiris</i>	<i>Bruxelles Formation</i>	<i>VDAB Brussel²</i>
Description	Federal PES	Municipal government social aid office	PES of the Brussels-Capital Region	French language vocational training provider	Dutch language vocational training provider
Main public body accountable to	Federal government	<i>Commission Communautaire Commune</i> ("Common Community Commission – COCOM")	Brussels-Capital Region	<i>Commission Communautaire Française</i> ("French Community Commission" – COCOF)	Flemish Government
Labour market and/or social policy role	Out-of-work income maintenance and support, labour protection	Out-of-work means-tested benefits ⁴ , CPAS contract employment incentive ("emplois d'insertion/Article 60"), social services	Public employment services and administration; employment incentives; sheltered and supported employment; job creation; start-up incentives	Labour market and vocation training for jobseekers and workers in French	Labour market and vocational training for jobseekers and workers in Dutch
Social economy partners for contracted services		<i>Agences Locales pour l'Emploi (ALE), Entreprises sociales d'insertion, Entreprises de Travail Adapté (ETA), Lokale Werkwinkels, Missions locales, Organismes d'insertion socio-professionnelle (OISP)</i> ³			

Note: (1) CPAS are responsible for the provision of labour market services to those receiving RIS. (2) Through a commissioning agreement with *Actiris*, *VDAB Brussel (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding Brussel)* also provides a broader set of labour market programmes for jobseekers searching for jobs requiring Dutch. (3) *Missions locales* have the legal status of an OISP. (4) Minimum Income: *Revenu d'Intégration Sociale (RIS)* and equivalent.

Source: Author.

Compared to PES across the OECD, jobseekers in the region navigate through a greater number of organisations to receive labour market programmes. Despite institutional agreements that yield joint projects, a disconnect between employment counselling and training persists. *Actiris* and public training bodies, *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding Brussel)*, share responsibility for jobseeker pathways to the labour market in a relatively unique arrangement in the OECD. In comparison to PES in other OECD countries, training bodies in the region centralise a range of jobseeker training typically contracted out to different public, not-for-profit and private training providers. At the municipal level, social aid centres (*Centres publiques d'action sociale - CPAS*) face capacity challenges. *Maisons de l'emploi* are developing as a one-stop-shop to gather actors in a single location to deliver services. *Maisons de l'emploi* also offer prospects for social economy organisations to strategically coordinate target groups and programming.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section analyses the role of *Actiris*, *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel* and the federal employment office (*Office national de l'emploi – ONEM*). The second section discusses the role of local institutions in local labour market governance, including CPAS, social economy organisations and *Maisons de l'emploi*.

Governing the employment and skills system in the Brussels-Capital Region

Labour market institutions in Belgium are highly decentralised. The responsibility for active labour market policies (ALMPs) is with regional government and language Communities. In the Brussels-Capital Region, responsibility for ALMPs is divided between bodies, granting nearly all active labour market programmes to *Actiris* with the important exception of labour market training, which is the remit of the French and Flemish Communities. The section progresses through the role of *Actiris*, *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel*, the federal employment office (ONEM) and assess existing agreements between regional bodies.

The Brussels-Capital Region and its public employment service, Actiris, are primary employment policy actors

Subnational governments have a high degree of autonomy in Belgium compared to most OECD countries. Belgium is divided into three Regions, the Brussels-Capital Region, the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region, and three language Communities based on language, the Flemish (*Vlaamse Gemeenschap*) French (*Communauté française*) and German-speaking (*Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft*) Communities¹. The Communities represent population groups that do not overlap fully with regional divisions². Regional governments are broadly responsible for policies bearing on territory, such as economic development or employment, while Communities lead human-centred policies, such as health care or education and training (Belgian Federal Public Service, 2023^[1]). As a result of the official status of French and Dutch in the region, both the French and Flemish Communities exercise authority, along with the regional government.

Successive reforms transferred competences for employment to regional governments and for training to Community governments. In 1989, reform of the Belgian State transferred a large share of employment policy from the federal PES, the National Employment Office (ONEM), to the Regions (ONEM, 2010^[2]). The 1989 reform created four regional government PES, today *Actiris* in the Brussels-Capital Region, *Le Forem* in the Walloon Region, the *VDAB* in the Flemish Region as well as the *ADG (Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft)* for the German-speaking community in East Belgium. The 1989 reform transferred vocational training and education policy to the three Communities. Subsequent transfers, such as the creation of a legal framework for inter-regional jobseeker mobility in 2005 or the transfer of availability monitoring (*contrôle de disponibilité*) to regional PES in 2016-2017, further grew the role of *Actiris* and its counterparts across Belgium.

***Actiris* is the main point of contact for jobseekers and employers in the Brussels-Capital Region.**

All individuals receiving UI are required to register within *Actiris*. *Actiris* absorbed responsibilities for ALMPs related to job seeker intake, placement and monitoring from ONEM. ALMPs improve access to the labour market and jobs, develop job-related skills and promote more efficient labour markets (OECD, 1994^[3]). Out-of-work income maintenance and support such as UI and early retirement policies are not included in ALMPs and continue to be administered by ONEM³. According to the OECD classification of labour market programmes, *Actiris* is responsible for the majority of ALMPs programme categories, equivalent to national PES in most countries, with the important exception of training, which is the remit of Communities in the region. Table 1.1 visualises this division of competencies among regional, Community and federal actors.

***Actiris* has significant flexibility and autonomy over its approach and programmes.** The Brussels-Capital Region Minister for Employment sets policy orientation over ALMPs. *Actiris* is governed by a 21-member management committee composed of trade unions, employer representatives and two regional government commissioners. The committee sets the five-year management plan and supervises activities. Ten departments lead *Actiris* activities, including teams for jobseekers, employers, job search monitoring, inclusion and partnerships. The *Actiris* regulatory framework and structure offers space for adaptation to changes in the labour market and leeway to adopt programmes, as revealed positively during the COVID-19 crisis (Lauringson and Lüske, 2021^[4]). Local *Actiris* offices deliver frontline services to jobseekers.

***Bruxelles Economie et Emploi (BEE)* exercises regional government responsibility for those in employment.** BEE is one of the six administrations of the Brussels-Capital Region regional public service. BEE has a set of diverse responsibilities in the field of economic development, labour market regulation and migration (Brussels Capital Region, n.d.^[5]). BEE is responsible for providing financial support to SMEs and the social economy as well as work authorisations for non-EU citizens. BEE also administers the *titres services* (labour contracts for domestic workers) system.

Table 3.2. Compared to the rest of Belgium, ALMPs in the Brussels-Capital Region are divided among *Actiris* and Community bodies

Main institutions responsible for labour market programmes across Belgian Regions and Communities

Type of labour market programme	Active labour market policies (ALMPs)						Income-replacement benefits	
OECD classification of targeted labour market programme	Public employment services and administration	Training	Employment incentives	Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation ¹	Direct job creation	Start-up incentives	Out-of-work income maintenance and support	Early retirement
Sub-national entity								
Brussels-Capital Region (French Community)	<i>Actiris</i>	<i>Bruxelles Formation</i>	<i>Actiris</i>					
Brussels-Capital Region (Flemish Community)		<i>VDAB Brussel</i>	<i>Actiris</i>					
Flemish Region/Flemish Community	VDAB						National Employment Office (Office National de l'Emploi - ONEM)	
French Community/Walloon Region	Le Forem							
German-speaking community	ADG							

Note: (1) Although PES provide services to persons with disabilities, the provision of sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation is mainly the remit of Communities in the Brussels-Capital Region through the *Entreprises de Travail Adapté* (ETA) scheme.

Source: Author's elaboration based on *Actiris* and (OECD, 2022^[6]), Coverage and classification of OECD data for public expenditure and participants in labour market programmes, <https://www.oecd.org/els/emp/Coverage-and-classification-of-OECD-data.pdf>.

Bodies distinct from public employment services are responsible for jobseeker training, a relatively unique arrangement within the OECD

Two Community affiliated bodies, *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel*, provide vocational training in the Brussels-Capital Region. The bodies reflect the competence of both the French and Flemish Communities in the capital, distinct from the regional government and *Actiris*. In the Flemish Region, in the Walloon Region and in the German-speaking Community, unlike in the Brussels-Capital Region, all ALMPs – including training – have been grouped within subnational PES, the VDAB, *Le Forem* and the ADG. Table 1.1 highlights this unique institutional “split” of ALMPs in the capital.

Bruxelles Formation provides vocational training (*formation professionnelle*) through a three-part mandate. *Bruxelles Formation* i) operates as a training provider, dispensing its own training courses, ii) certifies francophone training programmes throughout the region⁴ and iii) helps validate skills acquired outside official learning (Brussels Capital Region, Francophones Bruxelles and ESF, 2020^[7]). A directing committee, headed by a Director General, leads *Bruxelles Formation* strategy and operations. Like *Actiris*, a tripartite management committee governs *Bruxelles Formation*. The management committee includes

equal representation from social partners and representatives of the French Community Commission (COCOF).

The COCOF exercises legislative authority in most policy areas on behalf of the French Community in the Brussels-Capital Region. The COCOF and the management committee conclude a management contract every five years which directs the *Bruxelles Formation* strategy (Bruxelles Formation, 2017^[8]). Francophone legislators, ministers and state secretaries within the Brussels-Capital Region Parliament also sit in COCOF representative bodies. For example, during the 2019-24 legislature, the Brussels-Capital Region Minister for Employment also acts as COCOF Minister for Training.

Bruxelles Formation trains both workers and jobseekers through its centres and contracted providers. In 2021, *Bruxelles Formation* and its contracted providers trained 20 012 learners, including 13 821 jobseekers and 6 191 workers and other individuals. Among jobseekers, 5 862 were trained in *Bruxelles Formation's* eleven centres, 42.4% of the total (Bruxelles Formation, 2022a^[9]). 4 088 were trained by contracted providers, 2 149 received in-work training delivered by employers and 2 020 completed online courses.⁵

VDAB Brussel provides vocational training in Dutch in the Brussels-Capital Region. *VDAB Brussel* runs training in the region through three centres while contracting out a share of training (Bassin EFE, 2022^[10]). Like *Bruxelles Formation*, *VDAB Brussel* also certifies training providers and can facilitate certification of skills learned outside of formal learning. Part of the PES in the Flemish Region, *VDAB Brussel* is accountable to the VDAB Board of Directors, tied to the Flemish Region's Secretary for Work (PES network, 2018^[11]). Social partners sit on the VDAB board. In the region, the *VDAB Brussel* only has a mandate over training activities, without the broader ALMP authority it has in the Flemish Region. Through partnerships, *VDAB Brussel* also provides secondary, bachelor and higher education training for occupations facing labour shortages. *VDAB Brussel* contracts out over 70% of its training.

A commissioning agreement, however, allows VDAB Brussel to carry out labour market programmes for jobseekers in the Brussels-Capital Region. An agreement between the Brussels-Capital Region and Flemish authorities supports the *VDAB Brussel* to carry out activation programmes, such as counselling and matching, of *Actiris* jobseekers into employment requiring Dutch. Jobseekers self-select into VDAB placement support in agreement with their *Actiris* counsellor. For jobseekers entering *VDAB Brussel* through this partnership, *VDAB Brussel* places jobseekers into employment in both the Flemish Region and the Brussels-Capital Region.

Communities complement Bruxelles Formation and VDAB training with adult vocational education. Both French and Flemish Community bodies offer longer-term vocational education tracks for adults, aimed at those in and out of work. The French Community supports the vocational adult education system (*Enseignement de promotion sociale – EPS*) in francophone Belgium. EPS offers distinct qualifications than vocational training (*formation professionnelle*) often tied to secondary or tertiary education, such as the basic education certificate (*Certificat d'études de base – CEB*) or secondary school diplomas (*Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur – CESS*). The *Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs* (VCO) provide adult vocational education in Dutch. *VDAB Brussel* has a strong cooperation in place with the Flemish Education system, in which learners can receive a reimbursement for tuition and other costs.⁶ The skills system is the focus of discussion in Chapter 5.

Extensive teaching and vocational expertise to deliver labour market training in-house is not typically available within PES. In most OECD countries, PES contract out training to organisations such as public vocational schools, tertiary education institutions, the social economy and for-profit training providers. The Finnish PES (*Työ-ja elinkeinotoimisto – TE*) supports jobseekers into shorter labour market training or longer tracks in the education system, each delivered by entities outside TE (OECD, 2023^[12]). Similarly, the German PES (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) contracts out most training, with limited provision of short training such as CV writing. The training bodies in the Brussels-Capital Region receive

jobseekers from *Actiris*, assess their skills and guide them to in-house or contracted training, occupying the combined role of both PES and public vocational schools in most countries. In Denmark, for example, PES guide jobseekers to publicly supported AMU centres (*Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser*) for vocational training.

Training bodies can assess costs and benefits of contracting out a greater share of training. *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel* have developed vocational expertise and teaching capacity due to their longstanding role as providers in the region. The difference in PES organisation and training delivery relative to OECD PES does not necessarily call for change to match institutional arrangements elsewhere. Considering the most common practice in OECD countries, however, the region may evaluate potential training quality benefits and cost efficiencies of contracting out a larger share of training.

The federal National Employment Office provides out-of-work income maintenance and support

As ALMPs decentralised, Belgium reorganised federal institutions to focus on social protection and labour policies. In 2003, the Employment and Labour Ministry became the Federal Department for Employment, Work and Social Dialogue (*Service Public Fédéral Emploi, Travail, Dialogue Social – SPF Emploi*). *SPF Emploi* competences include labour market regulation and out-of-work income maintenance and support, as well as those for labour inspection and workplace wellbeing (Moniteur Belge, 2002^[13]).

The National Employment Office ONEM operates under the authority of *SPF Emploi*. Large shares of ONEM staff transitioned to regional PES as labour market programme competences shifted (ONEM, 2010^[2]). ONEM implements *SPF Emploi* unemployment protection policy, including through institutional oversight, compensation for citizens and administration of specific benefit programmes (ONEM, 2022^[14]). ONEM continues to operate frontline offices for citizen claims regarding unemployment and workplace issues within its competence.

ONEM operates the unemployment insurance system with trade unions. ONEM disburses UI funds from social security to three trade unions (FGTB, CSC, CGSLB) and the auxiliary fund for the payment of UI benefits (*Caisse auxiliaire de paiement des allocations de chômage – CAPAC*).⁷ Unions make payments to unionised individuals, while CAPAC disburses UI to those outside the union system. Trade unions and CAPAC are the first point of contact for workers who become unemployed or are at risk of unemployment. Supported by high unionisation, in 2022 unions processed over 86% of unemployment benefit claims in Belgium (ONEM, 2023^[15])⁸. Unions also provide legal advice to unionised claimants (Faniel, 2010^[16]). Since regional PES became responsible for monitoring the job search of jobseekers, ONEM limits enforcement to fraud and regulatory supervision.

ONEM administers different *SPF Emploi* labour market programmes. ONEM processes claims and disburses compensation for certain programmes such as early retirement schemes, collective dismal allowance, medical and parental career interruption subsidies and job retention schemes (ONEM, 2022^[14]). ONEM retains a limited role in ALMPs with regards to financial compensation for jobseekers, learners and employers, such as funds to support business creation or supplemental allowance to participate in approved training.

Despite agreements between institutions, separation creates a disconnect between employment and training services in the region

Agreements between the Brussels-Capital Region and Flemish authorities encourage *Actiris-VDAB* cooperation for jobseekers to enter jobs requiring Dutch. A 2011 cooperation agreement between the Brussels-Capital Region, the Flemish Region and the Flemish Community enables the transfer of *Actiris* jobseekers to the *VDAB* (Moniteur Belge, 2013^[17])⁹. Since 2015, a collaboration agreement allows *Actiris* to commission *VDAB Brussel* to provide a range of labour market services to jobseekers searching for jobs

requiring Dutch (Actiris, 2017_[18]). In 2021, a new collaboration agreement was signed renewing collaboration for jobseeker mobility, especially concerning automatic exchange of job vacancies (Carpentier et al., 2023_[19]).

The relationship between Actiris and Bruxelles Formation focuses on programmatic cooperation.

In 2012, the Brussels-Capital Region and the COCOF formalised a cooperation agreement on combined “employment-training” policies (“*accord de coopération relatif aux politiques croisées emploi-formation*”) (Moniteur Belge, 2013_[20]). This *politiques croisées* agreement took major steps to articulate services. The text helped embed the *Bruxelles Formation* training offer within the *Actiris* system, creating a single jobseeker file, producing joint data analysis and contracting jointly with third parties. The agreement also facilitated financing mechanisms for training programmes.

Despite cooperation, institutional barriers remain to integrated labour market and training services.

In other OECD countries with decentralised responsibilities for ALMPs, as in the Flemish and Walloon Regions, subnational PES usually manage both jobseeker placement and training (e.g. Canada, Denmark, Poland, and Spain), while national government sets policy orientation and administers UI benefits. In the Basque Country, Spain, for example, the regional PES, *Lanbide*, onboards jobseekers, recommends them to labour market programmes and orients them to training (OECD, 2020_[21]). In 2020, the Basque Country merged its adult vocational training body, *Hobetuz*, with regional PES. When integrated, employment and training counselling may help jobseekers conduct a job search more in line with both occupational preferences and job opportunities.

Jobseekers can shift between organisations and counsellors throughout their journey.

The *politiques croisées* agreement took major steps to create areas of collaboration. An integrated and unified registration and orientation process of jobseekers comparable to processes in other subnational PES, however, does not yet exist. *VDAB Brussel* policies are less interlocked with those of *Actiris* and *Bruxelles Formation*, leaving room for closer integration of programmes (Dumont, Franssen and Tojerow, 2021_[22]). The differentiated governance of services may also create a disconnect at the strategic level regarding the approach taken to labour market services. Despite efforts to tighten links, in particular between *Actiris* and *Bruxelles Formation*, management contracts which embed objectives may continue to take different approaches to labour market policy.

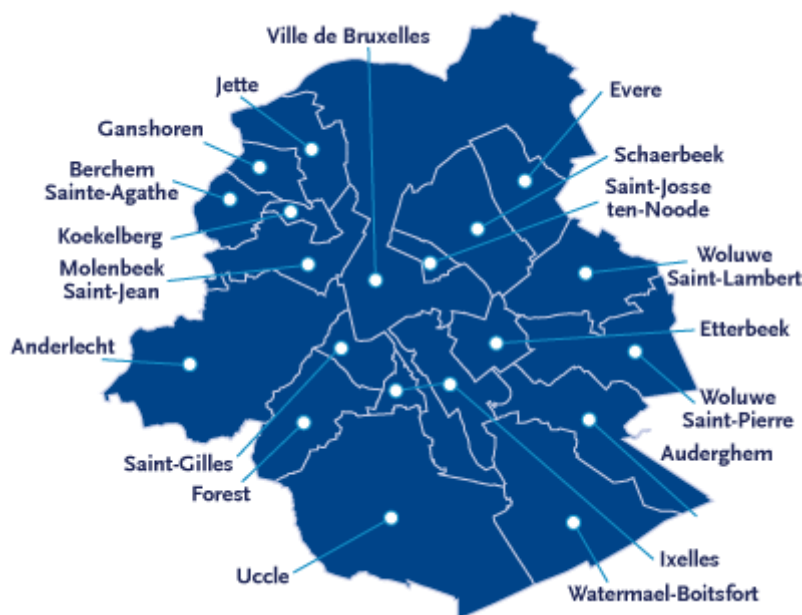
Less formal channels of cooperation yield specific projects and initiatives. *Actiris* and the training bodies introduced the *Cité des métiers – Beroepenpunt.Brussels*, a centre where all individuals can receive advice from counsellors on job opportunities, training or education. The initiative is based on centres in France. Although the centre lowers barriers to entry for services, staff present are not able to validate administrative procedures such as entitlement or registration for training. Follow-up with the users is also not possible, the take up of the *Cité des métiers – Beroepenpunt.Brussels* is anonymous. *Actiris*, *Bruxelles Formation*, *VDAB Brussel* and employer bodies also jointly operate the sector-specific Employment Training Hubs (*Pôles Formation Emploi – PFE*), which are growing as a provider of training and labour market placement in the region.

Gaps in local governance may hold back the provision of labour market services to the most vulnerable

Successive reforms of the Belgian State have shifted far-reaching responsibilities in employment and skills from the federal level to lower levels of government. This process created new structures, without always reforming legacy entities. Through their social aid centres (*Centres public d'action sociale* – CPAS), the 19 municipal governments in the region are responsible for social policy as well as labour market services of vulnerable individuals. Figure 3.1 visualises the 19 municipalities (*communes*) in the region. Both *Actiris*, the training bodies and CPAS contract out services to a highly developed system of social economy organisations to meet the needs of vulnerable people. Language communities, municipalities and regional government are involved in the governance and financing of different social economy schemes. *Actiris* has supported the development of *Maisons de l'emploi* to help coordinate local labour market services. Table 3.3 illustrates the roles and governance of different bodies. The section first presents CPAS, before turning to social economy organisations and *Maisons de l'emploi*.

Figure 3.1. CPAS and social economy schemes provide services within the 19 municipalities (*communes*) of the Brussels-Capital Region

Map of the 19 municipalities (*communes*) of the Brussels-Capital Region



Source: Brussels-Capital Region website, <https://be.brussels/a-propos-de-la-region/les-communes-de-la-region-de-bruxelles-capitale/carte-des-communes/view>.

Table 3.3. CPAS and the social economy support inclusion in the region's labour market

Main characteristics of CPAS and social economy bodies listed by policy role, legal form and target group

Body	<i>Centres Publics d'Action Sociale (CPAS)</i>	<i>Agences locales pour l'emploi (ALE)</i>	<i>Entreprises de Travail Adapté (ETA)</i>	<i>Missions locales/Lokale Werkwinkel</i>	<i>Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle (OISP)</i>	<i>Work integration social enterprises (entreprises sociales d'insertion)</i>
Main policy role	Social benefits, social and labour market activation	Part-time employment during job search	Supported employment (disability)	Social activation and labour market counselling	Labour market training, specific labour market services	In-work training, hiring incentive
Legal form	Public municipal body	Not-for-profit organisations or associations (ASBL – <i>Associations sans but lucratif</i>)				Private (ASBL or business) or public legal entities ¹
Target group	Individuals receiving social benefits	Long-term unemployed jobseekers, individuals receiving minimum income	Jobseekers with disability	Long-term unemployed jobseekers, other jobseekers	Jobseekers and individuals receiving minimum income	Youth, long-term unemployed jobseekers, individuals receiving minimum income

Note: (1) Work integration social enterprises that take the form of public entities are usually CPAS offering tailored labour market integration services.

Source: Author's elaboration.

CPAS face capacity challenges to provide social assistance and help vulnerable individuals into jobs

Municipal governments are responsible for social policy in the Brussels-Capital Region. Municipalities' social aid centres (*Centre Public d'Action Sociale – CPAS*) are municipal bodies responsible for social policy.¹⁰ Each of the 19 municipalities in the region houses a CPAS. CPAS administer different types of social programmes, including social benefits, material support, medical help, and legal assistance (CPAS, 2023^[23]). A major competence of CPAS includes administering the means-tested minimum income scheme, Social Integration Revenue (*Revenu d'Intégration Sociale – RIS*), alongside other social benefits, such as Emergency Medical Aid (*Aide Médicale Urgente – AMU*). The municipal responsibility for social benefits is comparable to many other OECD countries.

Because of their policy role, CPAS are interlocutors for many of the individuals furthest from the labour market. Individuals often face multiple difficulties that prevent them from finding or holding a steady job, such as housing precariousness, poverty, childcare, acute indebtedness, mental or physical illness and low levels of skills. To meet the multidimensional needs of those receiving benefits, CPAS provide individuals with a host of social services through their different departments, such as those for elderly care, housing or socio-professional integration (*intégration socio-professionnelle*). The social and professional integration approach pairs labour market services with social activation. Through involvement in cultural, educational, social and sporting programmes, social activation aims to help excluded individuals build a life as part of a community and strengthen individual social skills, resilience and autonomy (Marx, 2021^[24]).

CPAS provide minimum income recipients with different social and labour market activation measures. Although each municipality in the Brussels-Capital Region can adopt a slightly different approach, CPAS employment or training departments provide services such as job counselling, skills profiling and workshops centred on job search skills (Schaerbeek Commune, 2020^[25]). In Schaerbeek, the

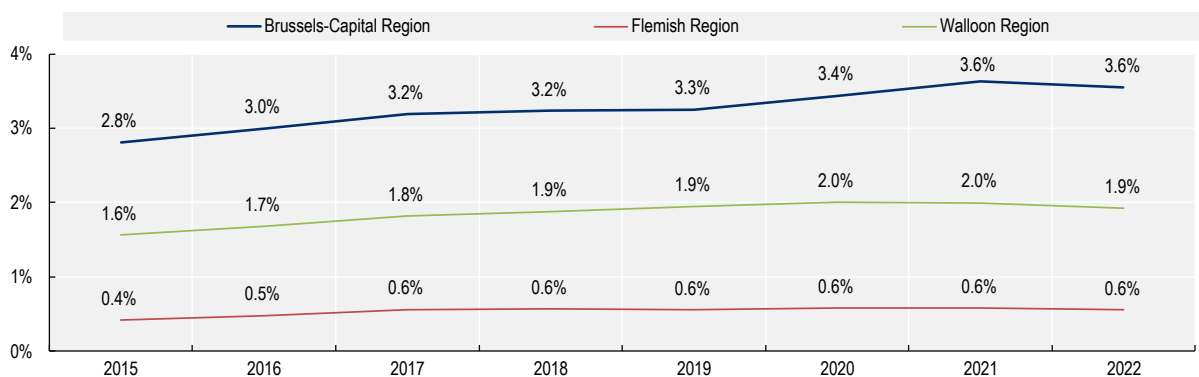
CPAS runs French and Dutch language courses, skills evaluation and financial support for training among a host of programmes (CPAS de Schaerbeek, 2020^[26]) The Brussels City (“Bruxelles 1000”) municipality of the capital has an employment and social economy department with staff that provide job coaching services (CPAS de la Ville de Bruxelles, 2023^[27]).

Part of CPAS remit over labour market services originates in their power to deliver “Article 60” employment incentives in the local community. “Article 60” or “CPAS law” (1976 *Loi organique des centres publics d’action sociale*), updated in 1996, enables CPAS to provide financial incentives for hiring in public entities (i.e. school, hospital), not-for-profit entities or private enterprises to hire social benefit recipients in the form of CPAS contracts (*Emplois d’insertion*). CPAS contracts aim to provide individuals with work experience and workplace skills¹¹. Hiring employers benefit from a complete waiver of social security contributions (Eurostat, 2019^[28]). CPAS contracts automatically end when the entitlement conditions with respect to working time duration to obtain UI benefits has been fulfilled.¹² Those who benefit from this scheme who do not find employed afterwards register with *Actiris* as UI-receiving jobseekers.

CPAS face the challenge of growing social needs in the Brussels-Capital Region. Interviews with CPAS staff revealed that counsellors face increasing difficulties to provide labour market services to all claimants and to meet their different social needs. The number of RIS recipients as a share of the total regional population increased from 2.8% of the population in 2015, to 3.3% in 2019 and to 3.6% in 2022 (Figure 3.2). This represents an increase from under 33 000 recipients in 2015 to over 44 000 in 2022.

Figure 3.2. Minimum income (RIS) recipients as a share of the total population in the Brussels-Capital Region increased by 0.8 percentage points between 2015 and 2022

Share of RIS recipients as proportion of total population, annual average, Belgian regions, 2015-2022



Note: (1) Statistics can change as CPAS can rectify preliminary data. (2) 2015-2021 obtained from IBSA, 2022 RIS data obtained from Federal Planning Bureau. (3) A regulatory change in eligibility for RIS in 2016 allowed those previously receiving subsidiary protection (*protection subsidiaire*) to benefit from RIS, this accounts for part of the change in 2016-2017.

Source: For RIS : Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d’Analyse (IBSA) and Bureau fédéral du Plan ; For population: Statbel, Population par lieu de résidence, nationalité (Belge/non-Belge), état civil, âge et sexe, <https://bestat.statbel.fgov.be/bestat/crosstable.xhtml?view=7de30ad3-0871-46ad-af5a-aad2f51969c3>.

CPAS collaborate with Actiris to provide labour market services jointly to a share of RIS recipients.

A 2014 federal ministerial circular calls for CPAS counsellors to ensure minimum income recipients that are not exempt for health or others reasons at the discretion of CPAS (i.e. childcare, disability) to register with PES (SPP IS, 2014^[29]).¹³ The 2022-2027 agreement between *Actiris* and Brussels-Capital Region CPAS further articulates collaboration around young people receiving social benefits subject to job search requirements. The agreement also delimits case handling roles for specific circumstances in which individuals receive certain types of social benefits from CPAS and UI (*Actiris*, 2022^[30]). In June 2023, over

15 500 CPAS minimum income recipients were enrolled in *Actiris* out of over 87 000 total jobseekers, or 21.7% of the total. Lack of clarity in the CPAS-*Actiris* relationship, however, may subsist regarding areas such as service entryways for different benefit recipients, differences in counselling methods or ultimate responsibility for labour market integration (Dumont, Franssen and Tojerow, 2021^[22]).

Different options exist to activate a higher number of those receiving minimum income. A first policy direction involves granting further responsibility and access to PES services for the most job-ready minimum income recipients. In Slovenia, minimum income recipients register with PES for active labour market programmes, while municipalities only administer social benefits (OECD, 2016^[31]). Generally, only people receiving means tested benefits that are assessed as unable to work are exempt from PES registration. Reforms announced in 2023 as part of the “France Travail” reform in France propose to register a greater share of individuals receiving French means-tested minimum income (*Revenu de solidarité active* – RSA) in the French PES for labour market counselling (Ministère du Travail, du Plein emploi et de l'Insertion, 2023^[32]). Advantages of growing PES responsibility for minimum income recipients include access to a larger array of labour market programmes, such as digital job matching, employment incentives and proximity to employer services.

A second relevant arrangement in OECD countries involves strong municipal structural capacity to deliver labour market services to those receiving means-tested benefits. In the Netherlands, for example, municipalities are uniquely responsible for the delivery of labour market services to those receiving means-tested benefits (OECD, 2023^[33]). The Dutch model involves strong delimiting of roles and minimal referral to PES for this group. In Denmark, reforms have transferred labour market services for all jobseekers to municipal services. These models require strong municipal financial, regulatory and staff capacity to deliver. Advantages of this model include delivery of labour market services more closely linked to the point of provision of social services and the specific policy expertise of counsellors, such as childcare, immigration services or psycho-social support. No one-size-fits-all model exists to alleviate capacity challenges, though examples expanded in Box 3.1 may offer ideas for the region.

Pathways for people receiving RIS through occupational training may also be reinforced in current arrangements. Foundational skills paired with occupation-specific training is an opportunity for the most vulnerable individuals to gain qualifications that tighten their attachment to the labour market. *Bruxelles Formation* and *VDAB Brussel* competence over training means the current agreement between *Actiris* and CPAS only covers training pathways partially. CPAS often refer individuals interested in basic skills training to social economy organisations such as *Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle* (OISP). Pathways to higher levels of training available may be less utilised.

Streamlining certain time-consuming administrative processes may also be an opportunity to raise capacity in CPAS. A 2014 study found that a greater share of counsellor working time was spent on administrative procedures (41%) compared to case work (21%), a greater share than other comparable social services in Belgium (SPP IS/Probis, 2014^[34])¹⁴. Interviews conducted for this study of CPAS employment department caseworkers in 2022 suggest challenges related to lengthy administrative processes that reduce time dedicated to casework continue. Consultations may be conducted with staff to find ways to reduce administrative burden that do not require federal regulatory changes.

Box 3.1. Activation policies for minimum income recipients in other OECD countries offer options for supporting CPAS capacity in the Brussels-Capital Region

In Slovenia, the PES supports the job search of individuals who receive means-tested minimum income, while municipalities dedicate resources to social services

Individuals who qualify for means-tested minimum income in Slovenia register with the PES. Financial Social Assistance (FSA) is a cash transfer in Slovenia granted to individuals to cover minimum subsistence needs. Municipal Centres for Social Work (CSW) administer FSA along with a host of social services. FSA claimants are required to register first with the Slovenian PES (Employment Service of Slovenia – ESS) before CSW validate FSA claims. In the Slovenian system, ESS is the point of contact regarding employment services and labour market programmes for people who receive FSA. CSW have little to no labour market competence. FSA recipients agree to an Individual Action Plan (IAP) with PES counsellors to guide their job search, like unemployment insurance recipients. CSW continue assisting individuals with social services.

Slovenia’s PES transfers jobseekers who are not able to work, including FSA recipients, fully to municipal CSW. A share of registered jobseekers are not able to work due to health reasons, addiction or other social or personal circumstance. As ESS does not have social policy competence, CSW and PES can jointly assess whether jobseekers are capable of working, whether they receive FSA or UI. Since 2012, a “provisional non-employability” commission composed of a CSW social worker, a PES counsellor, a rehabilitation advisor and, in some cases, additional experts assess an individual’s ability to work. CSW become responsible for individuals who cannot enter the labour market. This group is exempt of job search obligations. PES continue to assist those able to work.

Dutch municipalities have responsibility and strong capacity to deliver labour market programmes to long-term unemployed and economically inactive people

Unlike Slovenia, municipalities in the Netherlands are responsible for the job search of individuals receiving means-test social assistance benefits. The national PES (*Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen – UWV*) administers UI and active labour market programming for people unemployed for short periods of time and people facing incapacity due to illness or disability. Since 2015, however, municipalities have labour market policy responsibility for individuals facing long-term unemployment or economic inactivity. This group includes individuals who are eligible for means-tested social assistance benefits. In addition to seeking cost-efficiencies, the Netherlands also granted greater labour market powers to the municipal level due to their proximity to local labour market needs.

Dutch municipalities have dedicated financial, staff and regulatory powers to deliver active labour market policy (ALMP) to vulnerable people. Municipalities receive funding for labour market programming for the long-term unemployed and economically inactive through an unconditioned “Municipalities Fund”. Municipal labour market services include a host of labour market programmes, including job search counselling, matching, training, start-up support and employment incentive programmes. In cities such as Amsterdam, municipalities have developed specialised departments for the labour market integration of certain groups with dedicated programming, such as young people or the elderly. In many municipalities, labour market programming needs have led local administrations to hire specialised workers or contractors to assist with complex needs facing individuals.

Source: OECD (OECD, 2016^[31]), *Connecting People with Jobs: The Labour Market, Activation Policies and Disadvantaged Workers in Slovenia*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265349-en>; (OECD, 2023^[33]), *Policy Options for Labour Market Challenges in Amsterdam and Other Dutch Cities*, OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/181c0fff-en>.

The social economy is an asset to deliver services to vulnerable individuals, though schemes face governance challenges

Social economy organisations are highly active in delivering labour market services to minimum income recipients and people facing long-term unemployment in the region.¹⁵ Providers that can deliver these services in the Brussels-Capital Region are defined as organisations that perform social and professional integration (Brussels Capital Region, 2011^[35]). Contracting out labour market programmes to social economy organisations can help PES deliver services targeted to the needs of certain groups, stimulate socially innovative solutions to unemployment or inactivity, deliver services linked to local services and communities and support efficiency through lower costs and additional revenue (i.e. sales, donations, volunteering, sponsorship) (OECD, 2018^[36]; OECD, 2023 forthcoming^[37]). Services can range from job counselling and training to in-work placements and community engagement.

Social economy organisation involved in labour market services in the Brussels-Capital Region operate in different schemes. These schemes were usually developed prior to the decentralisation of labour market policies to the regional level in a significantly different institutional environment. They include work integration social enterprises (*entreprises d'économie sociale d'insertion*), led by the Brussels-Capital Region through *Bruxelles Economie Emploi* (BEE) in collaboration with *Actiris*. They also include a group of organisations operating at the neighbourhood or municipal level focused on labour market and social activation programmes for vulnerable groups. These include *Agences Locales pour l'Emploi* (ALE), *Missions locales/Lokale Werkwinkels* and *Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle* (OISP).

- ***Agences locales pour l'emploi (ALE)*** are not-for-profit associations (ASBL) that provide part-time jobs for *Actiris* long-term unemployed jobseekers as they search for work. Each municipality houses an ALE. ALE placements aim to help jobseekers gain initial work experience they may not be able to obtain on the open labour market due to low skill levels or other disadvantage, while providing extra income in addition to unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. Employers that take in ALE jobseekers can include other ASBL, public institutions such as schools and private individuals for domestic work. ALE payment works through a cheque system¹⁶. The 19 ALE in the region are governed by management committees composed of an equal number of members appointed by the municipal council and social partners.
- ***Entreprises de Travail Adapté (ETA)*** are not-for-profit associations (ASBL) that provide sheltered or supported employment to those with a mental or physical disability (FEBRAP, n.d.^[38]). Individuals with disabilities working in ETA work under a Belgian labour contract. ETA adapt workplaces to those with disability. The COCOF certifies and provides financial compensation to ETA for the individuals with disability they hire.
- ***Entreprises d'économie sociale d'insertion***, or work integration social enterprises, provide individuals with work experience and skills as a pathway to the labour market or a non-subsidised job within the social enterprise.¹⁷ The scheme works as an employment incentive. BEE certifies entities and provide a maximum of EUR 46 000 per year for four full-time employees to EUR 218 500 for thirty-two full-time employees (BEE, n.d.^[39]). Subsidies cover both a part of wages and operating costs (BEE and *Actiris*, 2023^[40]). Social enterprises for work integration include entities such as not-for-profit associations (ASBL) and CPAS. Subsidies can last between two and five years. Intaking organisations develop an upskilling and labour market integration plan for each individual from the target group. Eligible individuals include young people along with a list of target groups defined by *Actiris*.¹⁸ Work integration social enterprises can also take on individuals receiving minimum income through CPAS contracts.¹⁹ Work integration social enterprises go through a two-level certification process involving BEE and *Actiris*, first as social enterprises, and second, as social enterprises certified to take on individuals for labour market integration.
- ***Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle (OISP)*** and ***Socioprofessionele Inschakeling (SPI)*** are not-for-profit associations (ASBL) that provide basic training services or specific labour

market services to jobseekers and minimum income recipients. The COCOF and *Bruxelles Formation* jointly certify OISP that provide training, often in the form of basic skills training, while *Actiris* certifies those responsible for other labour market and social activation programmes (COCOF, 1995^[41]). *Actiris* and VDAB Brussel finance SPI, the Dutch-language counterpart to OISP. OISP and SPI are responsible for a share of modules offered by the training bodies as contracted providers. Different types of OISP/SPI operate in the region, such as *Ateliers de Formation par le travail* (AFT) and *Missions locales* on the francophone side, although the latter have a distinct administrative and institutional position.

- ***Missions locales* and *Lokale Werkwinkels*** are not-for-profit associations (ASBL) with a specific status in Brussels-Capital Region legislation as they accompany individuals through the entirety of their job search; including counselling, training and other labour market services (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, 2008^[42]). *Missions locales* and *Lokale Werkwinkels* provide services in French and Dutch respectively. These organisations tend to be embedded in a local network of community actors and municipal services. *Missions locales* also collaborate with *Bruxelles Formation*, offering training for individuals facing particularly difficulties or vulnerability (Bruxelles Formation, n.d.^[43]). Nine *Missions Locales* and one *Lokale Werkwinkel* operate in the Brussels-Capital Region. Unlike other OISP, public authorities and social partners are involved in their governance. Their boards (*conseils d'administration*) include employer representatives, private members, worker representatives and one or multiple municipalities based on location. *Actiris* helps finance them.

Creating more links between social economy schemes may minimise overlap and encourage greater critical size for financing. *Entreprises d'économie sociale d'insertion* and ALE, for example, both offer work-based labour market programmes, although ALE deliver programmes to those still searching for work. A policy bridge between these two schemes may help individuals transition from ALE into a job in a social enterprise when ready. Joint programming between OISP and *entreprises d'économie sociale d'insertion* may help social enterprises fulfil their upskilling mandate in OISP over individuals hired. The very small scale of certain organisations, such as some OISP, may also limit their capacity to reach critical staff for project-based financing. Structural collaboration among and between *Missions Locales/Lokale Werkwinkel* and other OISP may help organisations pool resources to develop proposals.

Complex governance structures and project-based financing can pose challenges. Each of the nine *Missions Locales*, for example, balances priorities set by representatives of *Actiris*, employers, municipal leadership and trade unions. ALE may also be under competing priorities from different stakeholders. One option discussed in the region involves creating a single governing structure for all *Missions locales/Lokale Werkwinkels* (Ciccia, 2018^[44]). While maintaining the involvement of historic stakeholders, this option would reduce the number of representatives in local organisations and favour greater scale. Such a reform should be sensitive to ways for local entities to maintain a degree of programmatic autonomy, vital to their neighbourhood-based approach. OISP representatives express difficulty due to partial reliance on project-based financing, which is not always tailored to the ongoing needs of the individuals they provide ongoing services to (FeBiSP, 2019^[45]). Governance reforms may also decide a long-term funding strategy for OISP and *Missions locales/Lokale Werkwinkels* that considers both structural and project-based financing.

***Maisons de l'emploi* offer strong prospects to develop into wrap-around service delivery points**

Taking stock of a high number of policy actors, the region created *Maisons de l'emploi* as “one-stop-shops” to further integrate employment, social and training services. Local *Actiris* offices deliver frontline services to jobseekers within *Maisons de l'emploi* in most municipalities. *Maisons de l'emploi* group together frontline *Actiris* offices with local employment actors within a single structure. Each *Maisons de l'emploi* includes a set of legally mandated members, including the *Actiris* local office, which onboards jobseekers, the CPAS as well as *Missions locales* and *Lokale Werkwinkel*. *Maisons de l'emploi* can also

house ALE, *Bruxelles Formation* offices, OISP, *VDAB Brussel* offices and other actors. A coordination committee composed of its members leads its activities.

***Maisons de l'emploi* may not have deployed their full potential to foster local service integration.**

Countries deliver integrated services when public authorities deliver multiple services across policy areas, levels of government and providers in a combined way (OECD, 2023^[46]). Integrated delivery aims to meet the holistic needs of individuals. In the Brussels-Capital Region, *Maisons de l'emploi* are currently the only systematic structure bringing together *Actiris* and local actors across municipalities. Evaluation of the *Actiris* 2017-2022 management contract highlights the opportunity offered by *Maisons de l'emploi* to evolve into a single-entry point for all jobseekers (Dumont, Franssen and Tojerow, 2021^[22]). In some municipalities, however, services are not operating in a single premise, and actors such as *Bruxelles Formation*, *VDAB Brussel* and Employment Training Hubs (*Pôles Formation Emploi* - PFE) are not systematically associated.

Further integration of services within *Maisons de l'emploi* will require the region to address obstacles faced elsewhere in the OECD.

Some of the actors involved in *Maisons de l'emploi* already have bilateral relationships codified in regional legislation, such as that between *Actiris* and *Bruxelles Formation*. Social economy schemes in the region already involve a host of actors in their governance. Based on practice occurring across the OECD, governance questions will need to be resolved through clear and innovative ways of delimiting responsibilities, incentives and mechanisms to deliver services (OECD, 2023^[46]). Collaboration at the strategic level, for example between regional and municipal employment policies, may also be needed. Other challenges, such as responsibility for financing, differences in professional cultures and IT/data sharing can also be discussed at the strategic level before further steps are taken.

Strengthened *Maisons de l'emploi* may offer an opportunity to deliver wrap-around services with a more effective triage to the most adequate service.

Such “one-stop-shops” exist in different forms in municipalities or publicly supported not-for-profit in countries such as Finland (Box 3.2). Wrap around service development can begin by piloting a comprehensive service approach for a specific group, such as young people. *Maisons de l'emploi* also offer an opportunity to clarify the roles of different actors. For example, as done by the ASBL *Infor Jeunes Bruxelles* for young people, no organisation has the distinct role of reaching out to adults outside social services about their eligibility.²⁰ The non-take up of benefits is a challenge in the region (Bouckaert and Schokkaert, 2011^[47]) (COCOM, 2017^[48]). Finally, further empowering *Maisons de l'emploi* may also improve services for individuals followed by both *Actiris* and CPAS by bringing counsellors together in a single space to discuss and resolve difficulties jointly.

Box 3.2. An expanded pilot for one-stop-shops in Finland may offer policy ideas for the Brussels-Capital Region to further integrate the local delivery of services

After initial piloting, Finland is rolling out the *Ohjaamo* one-stop-shops for young people

Piloted since 2014 in Finland, *Ohjaamo* are free-of-charge integrated one-stop-shops for all individuals under the age of 30. *Ohjaamo* gather employment, social and community services in single office spaces across Finnish municipalities. The Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health founded “*Ohjaamo*” one-stop guidance centres. The Finnish public employment service (PES) administers *Ohjaamo* jointly with municipalities. In 2022, Finland operated 70 *Ohjaamo*.

The combined delivery of services aims to meet the challenges faced by young people. Young people may struggle to enter education or training, take-up income support, find affordable housing, access mental or physical health care or establish themselves in a community. Counsellors from different public administrations, social economy organisations and private providers housed in *Ohjaamo* provide social and professional guidance to young people. *Ohjaamo* membership can vary significantly based on services implanted and needs present in a municipality. *Ohjaamo* adopt a “low threshold” approach involving universal access, no registration requirements and face-to-face services meant to reach many young people who would otherwise struggle to find different services.

***Ohjaamo* require coordination between national and local authorities.** The PES assist young people to look for work and enter education or training, social workers provide assistance with services such as housing while nurses on-site can assist young people with their health needs. Social economy organisations or private providers can provide additional services for youth based on location, such as recreational activities or temporary employment. Finland created a national coordination authority to help set standards and guidance across centres.

Results from early roll out of *Ohjaamo* are encouraging though data is still limited. In 2017 alone, *Ohjaamo* received nearly 120 000 visits from young people. Data on the pathways of young people from a small set of centres from 2017 suggests *Ohjaamo* may have a positive impact. According to this data, 22% of young people transitioned into open labour market jobs, 32% began or applied for training and 7% obtained a place to live, though data is not available on those who did not make transitions. Survey data from 2018 from 409 respondents in 26 centres suggests young people have had a very positive experience within *Ohjaamo*: those surveyed gave centres a 9.25 rating for the quality guidance (scale of four to ten).

Source: (European Commission, 2018^[49]), *One-Stop-Shop Guidance Centres for young people* (*Ohjaamo*), [https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162148/OneStopGuidance.pdf?sequence=5](https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/Määttä, 2018^[50]), “One-Stop Guidance Center – Ready to offer multi-agency services for the young”, <i>Kohtaamo</i> (ESF), <i>ELY-Centre Central Finland</i>, <a href=).; (OECD, 2019^[51]), *Investing in Youth: Finland, Investing in Youth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1251a123-en>.

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Notes

¹ The French Community is also known as the Brussels-Wallonia Federation (FWB - *Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*).

² Regions related to the geographic areas of the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region. Communities are linked to the official languages spoken in Belgium, Dutch, French and German, which do not correspond fully to regional boundaries. The French Community (*Communauté française*) has competence over the French-speaking areas of both The Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region, while the Flemish Community (*Vlaamse Gemeenschap*) exercises its authority over the Dutch speaking population in The Flemish Region and the Brussels-Capital Region. The German-speaking community is concentrated in the east of The Walloon Region. Both Regions and communities are accountable to elected legislatures, though the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region have merged institutions into a single Parliament.

³ A detailed classification of ALMPs and out-of-work income maintenance and support according to the OECD is available at: (OECD, 2022^[6]), Coverage and classification of OECD data for public expenditure and participants in labour market programmes, <https://www.oecd.org/els/emp/Coverage-and-classification-of-OECD-data-2015.pdf>.

⁴ FR: *régisseur de l'offre de formation*.

⁵ Available data does not indicate whether online courses were provided by Bruxelles Formation or contracted providers.

⁶ *VDAB Brussel* cooperates with the Flemish education system in two ways: (1) Unemployed people can get a diploma (secondary/bachelor/master) if *VDAB* agrees that this trajectory is the best way to find a job. *VDAB* pays the entrance/tuition fee, the learning material, transport costs and childcare cost. List of possible education options is decided upon by the *VDAB* Board (mainly bottleneck professions) and (2) Many language courses (e.g. Dutch) are organised by schools (*Centra voor volwassenenonderwijs*) on request of and recognised by *VDAB*. The courses are free for the unemployed. *VDAB* pays the learning material, transport costs and childcare cost.

⁷ *FGTB (Fédération générale du travail de Belgique)*, *CSC (Confédération des syndicats chrétiens)*, *CGSLB (Centrale générale des syndicats libéraux de Belgique)*.

⁸ Shares include UI as well as activation benefits (*allocations d'activation*) and in-work benefits (*primes*).

⁹ The Flemish Region and the Flemish Community have merged their competences.

¹⁰ A bi-lingual Common Community Commission (*COCOM*) has responsibility over *CPAS*. Created in 1989, the *COCOM* is composed of all Brussels-Capital Region parliamentarians, including both French and Dutch speakers. Its executive body, the College, is composed of two francophone and two Dutch-speaking Brussels-Capital Region ministers. *CPAS* come under the authority of the *COCOM* due to the bilingual status of Brussels-Capital Region municipalities and their involvement in health and social assistance.

¹¹ Nomenclature based on Article 60§7 of the *CPAS* law of 1976.

¹² Probationary period of 312 days for those under 36 years old (21 month reference period), 468 days for those between 36 and 49 years 468 days (33 months reference period) and 624 days for those over 50 years old (42 month reference period) (OECD, 2022^[52]).

¹³ Text from the 2014 circular: « *C'est pourquoi, je vous demande de veiller à ce que tous leurs bénéficiaires (revenu d'intégration et aide sociale équivalente) s'inscrivent comme demandeurs d'emploi auprès du service régional pour l'emploi à l'exception des bénéficiaires qui ne sont pas aptes à travailler pour des raisons de santé ou d'équité. Le cas échéant, je vous demande d'apporter de l'aide aux bénéficiaires dans leur démarche d'inscription.* »

¹⁴ Administration is defined by the study as all paper or digital operations conducted by CPAS case workers, such as file organisation, data checks with the social security administration, completing forms or databases or research in archives. See (SPP IS/Probis, 2014^[34]) for methodological details.

¹⁵ Social economy organisations traditionally refer to the set of associations, co-operatives, mutual organisations, and foundations whose activity is driven by values of solidarity, the primacy of people over capital, and democratic and participative governance (OECD, 2020^[54]).

¹⁶ ALE payment occurs through a cheque to the different parties involved. Each ALE determines the value of the cheque to be used by local employers. In 2023, those working in ALE received EUR 4.10 per hour, net from tax, across the Region, for a maximum of 45 to 70 hours of monthly employment. Other actors, such as CPAS, trade unions and Actiris receive shares of the income generated from the ALE cheque.

¹⁷ There are two levels of certification. First, as a “social enterprise”, and second as a “work integration social enterprise” if the social enterprise helps individuals into jobs.

¹⁸ See for a full list of criteria: <https://www.actiris.brussels/fr/citoyens/emploi-d-insertion-en-economie-sociale/>.

¹⁹ CPAS/OCMW who place people receiving minimum income in these jobs receive a subsidy supplement.

²⁰ See <https://ijbxi.be/a-propos/> for more information on Infor Jeunes Bruxelles.



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