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INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA SÉCURITÉ SOCIALE  
ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LA SEGURIDAD SOCIAL  
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG FÜR SOZIALE SICHERHEIT

## Good Practices in Social Security

Good practice in operation since: 2016

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### **United IT of Belgian administrations for social security**

A good practice of the public social security institutions of Belgium, submitted by the Auxiliary Unemployment Benefits Fund

**Winner, ISSA Good Practice Award – Europe competition 2019**

Auxiliary Unemployment Benefits Fund  
Belgium

## Summary

*Thanks to a huge business re-engineering process involving 3,000 actors in the Belgian social sector, a maximum number of social benefits and subsidiary rights is granted automatically, thus dispensing with the need for citizens and their employers to make any declarations, and drastically reducing the administrative burden for citizens and companies.*

*Based on a common and concerted vision, the actors in the Belgian social sector are taking full advantage of new technologies to improve and re-organize radically their mutual relationships and processes.*

*The electronic data exchange amongst the actors in the social sector and between these actors and the companies and citizens takes place by way of an integrated functional and technical interoperability platform which complies with strict security standards and is based on modern technologies such as service and object orientation, component-based development, multi-channel service provision, open standards, reutilization, cloud computing, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) synergies within social security institutions.*

*The model is seen worldwide as a new paradigm in long-term multi-actor collaboration for an effective and efficient social protection system. It has been replicated by other governmental domains and in other countries.*

## The issue or challenge

*What was the issue or challenge addressed by your good practice? Please provide a short description.*

The Belgian social security sector is maybe one of the oldest and most complex in Europe, and yet it has developed and grown over the years without a harmonized service delivery system. Institutions were investing in information management systems without any long term coordination amongst them.

This historic approach has led to information silos that were:

- of suboptimal use in social protection;
- insufficient for social inclusion;
- highly vulnerable to fraud possibilities;
- of high administrative burden to and costs for citizens, employers and social security institutions;
- inconsistent in service delivery to citizens and enterprises;
- sub-optimal in providing analyses to support social policy making.

## Addressing the challenge

*What were the main objectives of the plan or strategy to resolve the issue or challenge? List and briefly describe the main elements of the plan or*

*strategy, focusing especially on their innovative feature(s) and expected or intended effects.*

There was a clear political will to solve these issues and to evolve to a scientifically designed solution that was based on the creation of the Crossroads Bank, and which included:

- ensuring secure data exchange;
- co-ordinating the re-engineering of business processes;
- enhancing electronic co-operation;
- responding to the digital challenges of the 21st century; and, last but not least,
- meeting the expectations of citizens and companies expectations such as:
  - effective social protection;
  - integrated services across government levels, public services and private bodies;
  - minimal costs and minimal administrative burden;
  - reliable, secure and permanently available services;
  - self-service, multichannel and user-oriented services (online, mobile, etc.);
  - protection of user privacy;
  - personalized and user friendly services that address the citizen's individual situation and which are delivered at key life events e.g., birth, going to school, starting to work, moving, illness, retirement, starting a company, etc.; and
  - automatically granted benefits.

## **Targets to be achieved**

*What were the quantitative and/or qualitative targets or key performance indicators that were set for the plan or strategy? Please describe briefly.*

Targets:

- Secure network for electronic information exchange between all 3,000 social sector actors and the employers and citizens.
- Process optimization resulting in electronic services from application to application, for all 3,000 social sector actors, and employers and citizens (data customers and data providers).
- Unique identification key for every citizen and company.
- Clear assignments inside and outside the social security sector on data collection, validation, information management and electronic storage in authentic data sources.
- Integrated portal website ([www.socialsecurity.be](http://www.socialsecurity.be)) that offers electronic transactions for citizens, employers and professionals; simulation environments; information about the social security system; a harmonized information model and instructions; and a personalized view for each citizen, company and professional.
- Use of online modalities as a preferred channel for communicating with citizens, including personalized electronic transactions ([www.socialsecurity.be/citizen](http://www.socialsecurity.be/citizen)) such as [student@work](mailto:student@work), [interim@work](mailto:interim@work), [horeca@work](mailto:horeca@work).

- Multimodal contact centre and CRM tool for end user support.
- Data warehouse with statistical information on social security and the labour market.

## Evaluating the results

*Has there been an evaluation of the good practice? Please provide data on the impact and outcomes of the good practice by comparing targets vs actual performance, before-and-after indicators, and/or other types of statistics or measurements.*

Business results and impact:

- administrative simplification savings of more than 1 billion euros (EUR) annually for employers;
- transforming 800 paper forms into 220 electronic processes;
- more than 1.1 billion in electronic messages exchanged annually between social security actors, eliminating as many paper exchanges;
- all direct or indirect paper-based information exchanges between social security actors nearly fully abolished;
- 50 social security declaration employer forms abolished, with the 30 remaining declaration forms fully electronic and with the number of fields reduced to one third;
- 220,000 employers making more than 25,000,000 electronic declarations annually, 98 per cent of which are fully automated and made directly from their internal HR applications.

Efficiency gains – Services are delivered at a lower total cost, due to:

- unique identification keys;
- single information collection, common information model and administrative instructions;
- electronic information exchange instead of re-encoding;
- functional task sharing on information management, data validation and application development;
- less administrative burden.

More services are delivered and are available anytime, anywhere on several devices, and with integrated delivery following the logic of the user.

Services are delivered faster. Benefits are allocated sooner because information is available faster, with less waiting and travel time; and there is direct interaction with real-time feedback between users and social security institutions.

- Effectiveness gains: better social protection.
- Service quality: higher quality standards at equal cost and equal time.
- New types of services: automation of benefit grants, active take-up monitoring using data warehousing, and personalized information management.
- Better policy support.

- Increased capability to fight social fraud.
- Better inclusion through automatic grants of conditional benefits.

Key performance indicators:

- electronic services are available 24/7, reaching 99.98 per cent in measured availability;
- 99.88 per cent of online services are processed in less than 1 second; 99.87 per cent in less than 2 seconds;
- more than 1 million online messages per day;
- 99.87 per cent of services in batch files are processed in less than four calendar days;
- periodical dashboards with indicators published for all operational services; they are delivered to the concerned actors, and serve as basis for monitoring and improving the services.

## Lessons learned

*Based on the organization's experience, name up to three factors which you consider as indispensable to replicate this good practice. Name up to three risks that arose/could arise in implementing this good practice. Please explain these factors and/or risks briefly.*

Critical success factors:

- Common vision, trust and co-operation:
  - common vision on electronic service delivery, information management and information security for all stakeholder;
  - trust of all stakeholders based on mutual respect, mutual agreement, transparency;
  - access to and support of policymakers at the highest level;
  - focus on more efficient, effective service delivery, and on cost control;
  - reasoning in terms of added value for citizens and companies rather than in terms of legal functionalities;
  - respect for legal segregation of functions of actors;
  - co-operation based on task sharing rather than centralization;
  - continuous detection of opportunities for synergy;
- Creation of an institution that acts as a driving force:
  - multidisciplinary approach;
  - re-engineering of business processes within and across actors;
  - enabling all social security actors to use and to offer effective and efficient electronic services in the best conditions;
  - being a mediator and enabler that sets out a long term roadmap for e-services;
  - proactively looking for opportunities in technology and innovation to benefit citizens and enterprises;
  - ensuring continuous delivery of shared ICT services and the retention of crucial skills;

- program and project management;
- co-operative governance.
- Solid ICT architecture and permanent innovation:
  - service oriented architecture;
  - common hybrid cloud services for all actors: the G-Cloud:
    - initiative of all actors to share ICT infrastructure, platforms, applications and expertise in order to reduce costs, increase reliability and speed up time to market
    - hybrid cloud model combining public cloud for non-sensitive information and applications, with a community cloud designed and managed by the public sector
    - large use of Infrastructure Services (IaaS) and Platform Services (PaaS);
  - technology watch:
    - each year, multiple studies on cases of new technologies, their impact and use within the social sector are published, and information sessions are organised;
    - latest subjects of investigation are blockchain, chatboxes, and artificial intelligence in the social sector;
    - crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS) follows the evolution of laws and politics in the fields of social security, new technologies and cyber security, and is recognized as the pioneer in legislation on new technologies, and in implementing new projects based on these technologies.

#### Risks and how to manage risks:

- Inappropriate corporate culture:
  - need for radical cultural change within, e.g.,
    - from hierarchy to participation and team work,
    - meeting the needs of the customer, not the needs of government nor the social security institutions,
    - empowering rather than serving,
    - rewarding entrepreneurship,
    - ex-post evaluation of output, not ex-ante control of every input;
  - appropriate balance between efficiency, on the one hand, and information security and privacy protection, on the other;
  - quick wins combined with long term vision;
  - adaptability to an ever changing societal and legal environment.
- Non-availability of financial means, skills and knowledge:
  - sufficient financial means for innovation: agreeing to re-invest efficiency gains into innovation means sufficient financial means for permanent change and innovation
  - create an association that hires ICT-specialists at normal market conditions and puts them at the disposal of the actors in the social sector.

- Loss of confidence due to information security incidents:
  - security, availability, integrity and confidentiality of information is ensured by integrated structural, institutional, organizational, HR, technical and other security measures according to agreed policies;
  - basic principles of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are met;
  - a Parliament-designated Information Security Committee grants access authorization to personal information after verifying compliance with access conditions;
  - access authorizations are public;
  - every actual electronic exchange of personal information go through an independent trusted third party (TTP) that preventively checks compliance with existing access authorizations;
  - every actual electronic exchange of personal information is logged, making it possible to trace abuse afterwards;
  - every actor in the social sector has an information security officer who is responsible for advisory, security, documentary and control tasks.