



**New Work Culture**

to get equipped for more flexible occupations



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Project number: 2021 - 1 - FR01 - KA220 - VET - 000029506

## DOCUMENTO DE ORIENTACIÓN



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## INTRODUCCIÓN

La pandemia de Covid-19 golpeó a todos los países de la UE y del mundo en 2020. Además de los problemas socio sanitarios, los Estados han dado directivas muy estrictas para limitar la movilidad de los ciudadanos y frenar así la transmisión del virus. Esta situación cogió por sorpresa a todas las organizaciones de los sectores público y privado del mundo, que tuvieron que encontrar algunas soluciones para seguir con sus actividades. Como resultado, el trabajo flexible ha ganado terreno rápidamente en todo el mundo.

El proyecto Nueva Cultura del Trabajo (NWC) tiene como objetivo dotar a los responsables de RRHH y a los proveedores de FP de los conocimientos, habilidades y herramientas adecuados para apoyar a los empleados a adaptarse de forma efectiva a las prácticas de trabajo flexible y abordar los posibles retos que puedan surgir. Por lo tanto, el proyecto pretende involucrar a las entidades identificadas como posibles candidatas a implementar acuerdos de trabajo flexible y a distancia. Estas entidades pertenecen tanto al sector público como al privado, e incluyen administraciones públicas locales, instituciones educativas, empresas, organismos del sector terciario y asociaciones.

Este Documento de Orientación tiene un propósito múltiple con tres objetivos principales:

- 1. Su objetivo es ilustrar la necesidad de una transición hacia prácticas laborales más flexibles.** Mediante la presentación de justificaciones, el documento subraya la importancia de este cambio de paradigma en los entornos laborales modernos.
- 2. Describe las diferentes políticas de trabajo flexible en varios países de la Unión Europea (UE).** Examinando a fondo cada política, arroja luz sobre sus respectivas ventajas e inconvenientes, ofreciendo una comprensión global de su impacto en la dinámica laboral.
- 3. Basándose en las valiosas experiencias y lecciones aprendidas durante el proyecto NWC, el Documento Político aboga por un curso de acción bien informado.**

El documento proporciona recomendaciones prácticas y basadas en pruebas, sintetizando las ideas de una amplia investigación documental, testimonios auténticos de empleados y una perspicaz investigación de campo. Estas recomendaciones son un recurso inspirador que permite a las organizaciones cultivar y aplicar acuerdos eficaces de trabajo a distancia que se ajusten al cambiante panorama laboral.

Sobre la base de estos objetivos, el presente documento resume en primer lugar los elementos cualificadores del proyecto NWC, ilustra a continuación los resultados de la investigación documental y de campo, esboza después las lecciones aprendidas y las recomendaciones relacionadas y, por último, concluye con unas conclusiones generales de carácter prospectivo.



## EL PROYECTO

**NWC - Nueva Cultura del Trabajo** es un proyecto realizado dentro del programa Erasmus Plus y pretende abordar uno de los principales retos a los que se enfrentarán las naciones europeas y el mundo laboral en un futuro próximo: **la necesidad de flexibilidad y adaptabilidad**. NWC quiere ofrecer un espacio de reflexión y un marco formativo/operativo sobre la **nueva forma de trabajar en un entorno "híbrido"**.

## EL CONTEXTO

Los lugares de trabajo son cada vez más flexibles y diversos. En este nuevo mundo laboral de **rápidos avances tecnológicos**, impulsado por la crisis COVID 19, las empresas han tenido que **reajustar sus procedimientos, estructuras e incluso su entorno físico de trabajo**. El trabajo ha dado un nuevo giro con la irrupción del trabajo a distancia.

**Organizaciones, formadores y trabajadores deben plantearse ahora nuevas formas de colaboración en torno a la flexibilidad laboral**. Este proyecto se inscribe en una voluntad común de proporcionar a los profesionales los conocimientos y herramientas necesarios para adaptarse a la construcción de una nueva cultura del trabajo.

## EL OBJETIVO

El objetivo general de NWC es **desarrollar la capacidad de las PYME, los profesionales de FP y los empleados de la Administración Pública para hacer frente a la transformación digital en la organización del trabajo**. El proyecto pretende contribuir al desarrollo de soluciones **innovadoras para la gestión de equipos y personas en un entorno de trabajo híbrido**, poniendo el énfasis en:

- El fortalecimiento de la **interconexión entre todos los actores** que intervienen en una empresa,
- La necesidad de dotar y/o reforzar las **habilidades blandas adecuadas**
- La armonía entre la **vida privada y profesional**.

## LOS PUNTOS CLAVE

- Identificar y reunir las **prácticas europeas** para construir el currículo, las habilidades y los conocimientos necesarios para desarrollar una nueva cultura del trabajo.
- Desarrollar y probar un **marco de formación y herramientas** para mejorar la flexibilidad y las habilidades blandas en el trabajo.
- Difundir los resultados obtenidos con el objetivo de **integrar las buenas prácticas entre las organizaciones de los sectores público y privado**.



## PÚBLICO OBJETIVO

El proyecto NWC está dirigido a **organizaciones, proveedores de FP y trabajadores**, y se basa en la idea de que los **responsables de RRHH, trabajadores, formadores y profesionales** necesitan adquirir conocimientos técnicos y competencias blandas y duras para adaptarse a un mundo laboral en constante cambio, **tanto en el sector público** (administraciones públicas locales, escuelas, etc.) **como en el privado** (empresas, organismos del tercer sector, asociaciones, etc.).

**El personal de las organizaciones participantes** también forma parte de los beneficiarios directos del proyecto.

## LOS RESULTADOS

Este partenariado ha desarrollado los siguientes resultados:

1. **Un marco de formación** para los comités de empresa nacionales, una hoja de ruta metodológica innovadora que incluye planes de estudios, herramientas, métodos y materiales de formación para enseñar/formar a directivos y responsables de recursos humanos.
2. **Guía de NWC** sobre gestión de equipos, incluido el trabajo inteligente
3. **Casos prácticos de NWC**: una recopilación de buenas y malas prácticas en las que inspirarse
4. **NWC e-learning Hub** que incluye los contenidos de los resultados de los proyectos anteriores y la entrega de Open Badges un recurso innovador de gestión de carreras y talentos para el reconocimiento de los aprendizajes
5. **Documento de Orientación de NWC**: plan de acción y recomendaciones para los responsables políticos y las partes interesadas.

## LA EVALUACIÓN Y LA PRUEBA PILOTO

La **evaluación** sirve de brújula que guía a la asociación hacia la mejora, el perfeccionamiento y la validación, garantizando que los esfuerzos se ajustan a las metas y objetivos previstos. Por ello, el consorcio se propuso **arrojar luz sobre las distintas herramientas** diseñadas y utilizadas para medir la utilidad y adecuación de los resultados del proyecto. Estos resultados se sometieron a fases piloto específicas y meditadas con diferentes grupos, con el fin de mejorar y modificar los productos preliminares en caso necesario.

La "**prueba piloto**" tuvo lugar en línea o presencialmente, en función de las preferencias de los socios y participantes, y contó con la participación de un mínimo de 35 formadores/representantes de EFP (5 de cada organización socia) y un mínimo de 70 directivos, empleados y expertos (10 de cada organización socia).



## EL PARTENARIADO

El partenariado de NWC incluye siete organizaciones de siete países europeos:

- **Association de Gestion des Fonds Européens – AGFE** (Francia ) *Coordinador del Proyecto*  
<https://www.agfe95.eu/>
- **Business Development Friesland –BDF** (Holanda)  
[www.bdfriesland.nl](http://www.bdfriesland.nl)
- **Danmar Computers** (Polonia)  
[www.danmar-computers.com.pl](http://www.danmar-computers.com.pl)
- **Emphasys Centre** (Chipre)  
<http://www.emphasyscentre.com/>
- **Forum Citoyens – Burgers asbl – FCB** (Bélgica)  
<https://forumcitoyens.be/>
- **G12 Grupo Empresarial de Servicios – Gdoce** (España)  
<http://www.gdoce.es/>
- **Med.O.R.O. scarl** (Italia)  
[www.medoroscarl.eu](http://www.medoroscarl.eu)

<https://newworkculture.erasmus.site/it/>



## ESTRUCTURA DEL DOCUMENTO

### INVESTIGACIÓN DE ESCRITORIO Y DE CAMPO

Cada socio ha elaborado un **informe nacional** sobre:

- **Buenas prácticas regulatorias, organizativas y relacionales relacionadas con entornos de trabajo** flexibles e híbridos adoptadas en cada país socio.
- Situación actual y tendencias relacionadas con el **papel de los profesionales de la Educación y Formación Profesional (FP)** y sus asociaciones con entidades públicas y privadas destinadas a mantener una fuerza laboral calificada y capacitada.

Cada informe nacional se basa en:

- Una **investigación documental** realizada consultando sitios web especializados y otras publicaciones disponibles con todas las **referencias (textos y sitios web)** utilizadas.
- Una **investigación de campo** basada en los resultados de un cuestionario presentado a su propio **grupo de expertos, trabajadores y profesionales** pertenecientes a los sectores público y privado.

En esta parte sólo se reproducen las **conclusiones finales** de cada informe nacional, mientras que los informes integrales individuales se incluyen en el anexo para su consulta específica.

### LECCIONES APRENDIDAS Y RECOMENDACIONES

Con referencia a los temas más importantes que surgieron tanto de la investigación como de la experiencia del proyecto de cada socio en sus respectivos países, las llamadas "**lecciones aprendidas**" se ilustran y están representadas por:

- Una serie de **buenas y malas prácticas** detectadas en las diversas situaciones de trabajo híbrido consideradas.
- Las **indicaciones** que surgieron tras las pruebas piloto, es decir, las pruebas de verificación y evaluación de las "herramientas" de diseño que cada socio sometió a su propio grupo de "expertos" cualificados en el ámbito de la organización empresarial, la gestión de los recursos humanos y la formación profesional.

A partir de estas "lecciones" se proponen finalmente una serie de **recomendaciones** para lograr la **mayor eficiencia y eficacia del trabajo flexible** de cara a su fuerte desarrollo en un futuro próximo.

### CONCLUSIONES GENERALES

Consideraciones finales sobre el proyecto NWC en la situación actual y en perspectiva futura



## **APÉNDICE**

### **GLOSARIO**

Este glosario tiene como principal objetivo explicar el significado de diversos términos que se encuentran en reglamentos o en artículos o informes y que podrían ser sinónimos aunque no lo sean o cuyo significado no siempre sea unívoco.

### **INFORMES NACIONALES**

Se reproducen los informes nacionales completos relativos a las investigaciones, tanto documentales como de campo, que cada socio ha realizado con referencia a la situación de su país respecto a la experiencia del trabajo híbrido.





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# **DESK AND ON-FIELD RESEARCH / NATIONAL REPORT / *FINAL* *SUMMARIES***



## INFORME NACIONAL

### AGFE - FRANCE

La exploración de las experiencias de trabajo híbrido en el contexto de Francia revela un abanico diverso de percepciones y retos. La adopción de modalidades de trabajo flexibles, en particular durante la pandemia de Covid-19, ha puesto de relieve elementos tanto positivos como negativos. La flexibilidad y la mejora de la conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar destacan como claras ventajas, y se han registrado aumentos de productividad en las tareas administrativas. Sin embargo, también se han señalado retos como la reducción de la comunicación directa, la posible fragmentación del equipo y la dificultad para separar la vida personal de la profesional.

La distribución del contenido de la formación refleja un enfoque centrado en aspectos organizativos, relacionales y técnicos, cada uno de ellos con un énfasis variable. Aunque se ha ofrecido formación, la calificación moderada de 3 en términos de eficacia sugiere un margen de mejora. Un hallazgo notable es la importancia de mantener las conexiones sociales, fomentar la cohesión del equipo y facilitar una comunicación clara para contrarrestar posibles sentimientos de aislamiento.

Las recomendaciones para un rendimiento eficaz en un entorno híbrido incluyen la necesidad de herramientas sólidas de comunicación a distancia, tareas bien definidas comunicadas a través de horarios compartidos e interacciones regulares para mantener los lazos sociales. El marco jurídico francés hace hincapié en la importancia de acuerdos claros y la protección de los derechos de los empleados en entornos de trabajo híbridos. En última instancia, el éxito de un entorno de trabajo híbrido depende de un cuidadoso equilibrio entre flexibilidad, comunicación y adaptación continua para abordar los retos y oportunidades únicos que surjan.



## INFORME NACIONAL

### BDF - HOLANDA

La transformación del panorama laboral se ha visto muy influida por el auge del trabajo flexible y a distancia. En los Países Bajos, este cambio ha sido especialmente pronunciado debido al enfoque progresista del país hacia el equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal y el énfasis en la autonomía de los empleados.

El trabajo flexible, caracterizado por ajustes en los horarios de trabajo tradicionales, y el trabajo a distancia, que permite a los empleados trabajar fuera de los límites de la oficina, han ofrecido innumerables ventajas. Los empleados han destacado la mejora del equilibrio entre vida laboral y personal, la autonomía, la reducción de los tiempos de desplazamiento y la flexibilidad general que ofrecen estos modelos. Al mismo tiempo, las empresas se han beneficiado de la reducción de los costes operativos y de una mayor satisfacción de los empleados. Sin embargo, persisten los retos, especialmente a la hora de mantener la cohesión de los equipos, la seguridad de los datos y la supervisión eficaz del rendimiento. Estadísticas recientes revelan la arraigada integración del trabajo híbrido en la cultura laboral neerlandesa. El notable aumento de las horas de trabajo en casa después de COVID-19, la tradición neerlandesa de trabajo a tiempo parcial y el deseo constante de los empleados de mantener cierto grado de trabajo a distancia dan fe de su importancia.

El marco jurídico de los Países Bajos ha evolucionado para abordar este cambio. Aunque no existe un derecho legal para que los empleados trabajen desde casa, los recientes movimientos legislativos sugieren una inclinación hacia el reconocimiento de los derechos del trabajo a distancia. A pesar de ello, el sentimiento sigue dividido, ya que una parte significativa de los encuestados cree que tales decisiones deben ser acordadas mutuamente por empresarios y empleados, en lugar de ser obligatorias por ley.

En el enfoque neerlandés del trabajo flexible y a distancia son fundamentales los profesionales de la Formación Profesional. Su colaboración con entidades de los sectores público y privado subraya el compromiso del país de adaptar la educación a la evolución de las demandas del mercado laboral. El énfasis en el aprendizaje permanente, la digitalización y los itinerarios de aprendizaje personalizados acentúa aún más la importancia de los profesionales de la FP.



La investigación sobre el terreno revela que, si bien la mayoría ha experimentado un entorno híbrido continuo, la adopción del trabajo flexible se aceleró principalmente debido a la pandemia. A pesar de las dificultades, como la reducción de las interacciones informales y los problemas de cohesión del equipo, las ventajas, como la reducción de los desplazamientos y la flexibilidad horaria, parecen compensarlas.

La legislación y las políticas han desempeñado un papel fundamental en la configuración del panorama del trabajo flexible. La Ley de Trabajo Flexible, el énfasis en el trabajo a tiempo parcial, la introducción de herramientas digitales y los horarios flexibles de entrada y salida han contribuido a ello. Además, las consideraciones de seguridad y ergonomía para los trabajadores a distancia siguen siendo primordiales.

Ante la evolución de la dinámica laboral, los Países Bajos destacan como una nación progresista, que se adapta con rapidez y eficacia a las exigencias de la era moderna. El paso a un modelo de trabajo híbrido no es una mera reacción a la pandemia, sino que representa un cambio profundo en la ética laboral holandesa, que hace hincapié en la eficiencia, la flexibilidad y un estilo de vida equilibrado.



## INFORME NACIONAL

### DANMAR - POLONIA

El trabajo híbrido en Polonia ha sido testigo de importantes avances y retos compartidos en los últimos años. A medida que se acelera la digitalización de los lugares de trabajo, se ha despertado el interés y la intriga tanto de empresarios como de empleados, lo que ha llevado a explorar nuevos paradigmas laborales. Este resumen pretende ofrecer una visión general del panorama del trabajo híbrido en Polonia, profundizando en sus tendencias emergentes, beneficios y obstáculos a los que se enfrentan empresas y particulares.

Al examinar su impacto en la productividad, el equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal y la satisfacción de los empleados, este análisis pretende arrojar luz sobre el potencial del trabajo híbrido como solución innovadora para las necesidades cambiantes de la población activa polaca. El trabajo híbrido está ganando popularidad en Polonia, tanto en el sector público como en el privado.

Las empresas introducen cada vez más modelos de trabajo flexible, que permiten a los empleados combinar el trabajo a distancia con el trabajo en la oficina. El trabajo híbrido conlleva tanto beneficios, como un mejor equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal y una mayor flexibilidad, como retos, como el aislamiento social, las dificultades de comunicación y la supervisión del trabajo a distancia.

La pandemia de coronavirus ha acelerado enormemente la adopción del trabajo híbrido. En 2020, muchas empresas tuvieron que pasar al trabajo a distancia, lo que hizo que muchas flexibilizaran su modelo de trabajo. Muchas empresas han introducido un modelo híbrido, en el que los empleados tienen la opción de trabajar tanto en la oficina como a distancia. Esto permite una mayor flexibilidad y personalización del trabajo según la naturaleza de las tareas.



## INFORME NACIONAL

### ENPHASYS - CHIPRE

Chipre adopta progresivamente las prácticas laborales flexibles, con el apoyo de un marco jurídico que abarca los sectores público y privado. El marco jurídico del sector público ofrece a los funcionarios varias opciones de trabajo flexible, centradas en la promoción del equilibrio entre la vida laboral y familiar y la adaptación a las responsabilidades personales.

En cambio, el sector privado permite a empresarios y empleados negociar acuerdos laborales flexibles en condiciones mutuamente convenidas, promoviendo diversos enfoques laborales innovadores. Sin embargo, la adopción de prácticas laborales flexibles puede variar según los sectores y las organizaciones: las grandes empresas son más receptivas debido a sus recursos y capacidad, mientras que las PYME pueden enfrentarse a dificultades de aplicación.

Además, los profesionales de la FP desempeñan un papel fundamental en la mejora de las cualificaciones de la mano de obra, y cada vez son más frecuentes las asociaciones y colaboraciones entre estos expertos y entidades de ambos sectores. Estas colaboraciones crean una situación beneficiosa para ambas partes, ya que permiten a las organizaciones alinear la formación con sus objetivos, cultura y prácticas laborales flexibles, mientras que los empleados adquieren valiosas habilidades para aumentar su productividad y adaptabilidad.

Por último, la encuesta de investigación sobre el terreno arroja luz sobre las experiencias y percepciones de los empleados que trabajan en un entorno híbrido en Chipre. Los participantes destacaron tanto los aspectos positivos como los negativos del trabajo flexible, con una mayor concentración, productividad y ahorro de tiempo entre los beneficios. Sin embargo, se mencionaron como inconvenientes la sensación de aislamiento, la menor interacción social y las dificultades técnicas.

Los resultados subrayan la importancia de proporcionar formación y apoyo a los empleados en entornos de trabajo híbridos y de aplicar procedimientos claros y una supervisión eficaz para garantizar el éxito de la adaptación a este modelo de trabajo.



## INFORME NACIONAL

### FCB - BÉLGICA

Antes de la crisis de COVID, la práctica del trabajo híbrido era marginal en Bélgica, sobre todo en el sector privado. Todavía afectaba a un pequeño porcentaje de trabajadores y se limitaba generalmente a una parte restringida de su tiempo de trabajo. Poco a poco, sin embargo, empezamos a oír hablar de una creciente demanda de teletrabajo entre los trabajadores, en nombre de una mejor conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar, pero de empresas que en su mayoría seguían siendo bastante reticentes.

En sólo tres años, el trabajo ha cambiado radicalmente. En Bélgica, combinando la naturaleza del trabajo realizado (la profesión) y el sector de actividad del establecimiento, varios estudios recientes han estimado que casi la mitad de los empleos asalariados situados en la Región de Bruselas (la capital) podrían verse afectados por la aplicación del trabajo híbrido.

Cabe señalar que la experiencia de los participantes en este estudio demuestra que la llegada del trabajo híbrido es una experiencia relativamente joven en Bélgica, arraigada en las prácticas post-COVID y que los participantes en el curso de formación profesional aún no perciben como una organización sostenible o adquirida, aunque destaquen una mejor calidad del trabajo en general, que les permite conciliar su vida profesional y privada.

También hay que señalar que las necesidades de los participantes no parecen situarse en el plano técnico, sino que reflejan más bien una necesidad de comprender mejor las nuevas tecnologías.

# INFORME NACIONAL

## GDOCE - SPAIN

El concepto de entorno de trabajo híbrido se ha popularizado en España especialmente a raíz de la pandemia del COVID-19. Antes de marzo de 2020, el trabajo a distancia era relativamente limitado, pero la crisis provocó un cambio sustancial, y alrededor de un tercio de la población activa española pasó a trabajar a distancia. Aunque el volumen de horas de trabajo a distancia disminuyó un año después, el impacto en los individuos fue profundo, lo que llevó a una preferencia por esta modalidad de trabajo (como indica el 83,7% que expresó una fuerte inclinación por ella).

El Gobierno español se vio empujado a ponerse al día con esta nueva realidad y a regular esta "nueva cultura del trabajo". El objetivo era establecer un marco cohesionado para todo el territorio, equilibrando al mismo tiempo las ventajas de las nuevas modalidades de empleo tanto para las empresas como para los trabajadores. Como se ha descrito anteriormente, la legislación fomenta la adopción de modelos de trabajo innovadores al tiempo que defiende un amplio conjunto de derechos que protegen principios esenciales. Sin embargo, el sector público sigue esperando su legislación específica en este sentido.

En cuanto a la formación, existe un reconocimiento unánime entre las empresas, los agentes sociales y los gobiernos centrales y regionales sobre la importancia de mejorar la cualificación de la mano de obra en un amplio espectro de competencias. Los datos disponibles muestran que la formación aumenta continuamente, alcanzando a 5,3 millones de trabajadores. Predominantemente, el enfoque habitual consiste en ofrecer cursos de gestión y administración, a menudo impartidos internamente y de forma presencial. Por último, cabe destacar la inversión total de 888,6 millones de euros para facilitar la formación de los trabajadores por parte de las empresas.

El panorama de las prácticas de trabajo flexible en España es diverso y amplio, por lo que resulta difícil abarcar todo el espectro en la lista que se ofrece. La recopilación, aunque selectiva, pretende captar una mezcla de enfoques tanto habituales como vanguardistas. En un extremo, prácticas como el teletrabajo y el trabajo inteligente han sido las opciones número uno y dos asumidas por la mayoría de las organizaciones. En el otro extremo, prácticas como los bancos de horas y el trabajo compartido son ejemplos perfectos de estrategias innovadoras para mejorar tanto la productividad como el bienestar de los empleados. Este amplio abanico de prácticas muestra los esfuerzos de las organizaciones por mantener una productividad y eficiencia óptimas, sin menoscabo de la motivación y el equilibrio entre vida laboral y personal de sus trabajadores.

La investigación sobre el terreno sirvió para validar en la práctica casi todos los elementos anteriormente expuestos. Estas percepciones pusieron de relieve que la formulación de acuerdos laborales híbridos surgió de una mezcla de negociaciones internas informales y del marco de las legislaciones nacionales y regionales. Los participantes han valorado muy positivamente numerosos aspectos, aunque es importante no perder de vista las posibles mejoras. La sensación general es que los encuestados están satisfechos con esta modalidad, aunque algunas de las empresas para las que



trabajan podrían no mantenerla en un futuro próximo. Por último, a diferencia de los estudios presentados anteriormente, la formación fue realmente escasa en la muestra elegida.

## INFORME NACIONAL

### MEDORO - ITALY

El sistema normativo en Italia se refiere al "trabajo inteligente" y es, en conjunto, bastante racionalizado y también eficaz desde el punto de vista operativo.

De hecho, para el sector privado solo existe una "ley madre" de 2017 (actualizada solo en 2022), por lo tanto ya existente antes de la pandemia, que se centra especialmente en la protección de los derechos y la seguridad de los trabajadores y en la "reserva" para las personas desfavorecidas (por motivos de salud o familiares), mientras que la definición concreta de las condiciones y los métodos para llevar a cabo el trabajo inteligente se ha confiado a un Memorando de Entendimiento firmado por el Estado con las organizaciones sindicales.

También para la administración pública existe sólo una ley de referencia que en cambio fue aprobada en 2020, precisamente con ocasión de la pandemia, y un documento del Ministerio que indica una serie de directrices de carácter operativo que se refieren también a los acuerdos individuales con los empleados.

Tanto para el sector privado como para el público, el principio básico es el de la adhesión voluntaria al smart working por parte de los trabajadores: en nuestra opinión, este principio, si por un lado salvaguarda la libertad de elección del trabajador (quizás influenciado por su propia configuración de vida) por otro, sin embargo, podría dificultar mucho una organización eficiente y eficaz del trabajo, sobre todo si se basa en pequeños grupos que trabajan por objetivos con un nivel de cohesión adecuado.

Los pocos datos que hemos aportado son suficientes para mostrar que, en lo que respecta al sector privado (básicamente el de las empresas), incluso después de la crisis pandémica, sólo las grandes empresas mantienen un porcentaje muy elevado de trabajadores en smart working y han conseguido organizar un entorno de trabajo híbrido medianamente eficiente de forma permanente. Las medianas, pequeñas y microempresas, en cambio, siguen sufriendo un retraso fundamentalmente cultural, que luego se traduce en dificultades organizativas, técnicas y de formación. Incluso en la administración pública, los márgenes de mejora siguen siendo considerables y los retrasos y dificultades señalados para las pequeñas empresas son aún más evidentes.

El papel de la formación en el acompañamiento de este proceso de necesaria adaptación a la nueva forma híbrida de trabajar parece por tanto absolutamente esencial, como lo demuestran la buena calidad y los halagüeños resultados encontrados con ocasión de las escasas experiencias de formación encontradas.

Tanto por parte de los trabajadores como de los empresarios, las ventajas del smart working se sustentan en un mayor bienestar organizacional con el consiguiente aumento de la productividad, así



como en una mayor calidad de vida especialmente en términos de equilibrio entre la vida laboral y privada. Los aspectos críticos, en cambio, se encuentran principalmente desde el punto de vista relacional y mental y muy a menudo también en el ámbito tecnológico.

Como consecuencia de lo que ha surgido, la mejor perspectiva de una organización del trabajo que prevea cada vez más métodos flexibles e "híbridos" se confía a la capacidad de:

- Disponer de herramientas digitales adecuadas y de competencias adecuadas para su uso rentable.
- Definir organizativamente normas precisas y métodos verificables.
- Adoptar un enfoque de trabajo basado en objetivos y en el trabajo en equipo.
- Tener una mentalidad flexible y adaptable (de jefes a colaboradores).
- Acompañar la transición "híbrida" con intervenciones de formación adecuadas y sistemáticas.
- Gestionar mejor el tiempo, sobre todo para optimizar el equilibrio entre la vida profesional y privada



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## LECCIONES APRENDIDAS Y RECOMENDACIONES



## INTRODUCCIÓN

This chapter consists of two parts.

In the first one - **lessons learned** – you can find :

- the experiences related to work in a hybrid environment are summarized, in terms of **good and bad practices, advantages and disadvantages**, as found both through the 51 questionnaires submitted to qualified responders representing various private and public realities and through the 35 case studies elaborated. These experiences have been selected and traced back to **four areas**:
  - **organization/management**
  - **technological tools**
  - **personal well-being/work-life balance**
  - **training**
- the indications that emerged following the **pilot actions** , i.e. the **verification and evaluation tests of the design "tools"** that each partner subjected to its own group of qualified "experts" in the field of business organization , human resources management and professional training

The second part summarizes the **recommendations**, i.e. precise indications of direction which will then be practically implemented by each entity in different ways and with different tools, also resulting from feedback on field (questionnaires and case studies) . These recommendations are summarized in **five "power ideas"**, one general and the others more or less corresponding to the 4 areas indicated above for the lessons learned : for each of them there are some contents or method specifications.

In this chapter **the course of action for the foreseeable future** proposed by the project to assure or at least facilitate **the best efficiency and effectiveness of flexible working** is described.

From a territorial point of view, there is obviously no subdivision here but the data refer overall to **the territory of the entire partnership**. To find the details for individual countries, just consult the complete national reports contained in the appendix.



## 1 – LECCIONES APRENDIDAS

### 1.1 Ventajas y prácticas positivas constatadas sobre el terreno

#### Organización/Gestión

##### Ventajas

- ❖ La flexibilidad en el trabajo facilita:
  - Mejores resultados y desempeño.
  - Incremento de la productividad.
  - Desarrollo de la iniciativa de empleo.
  - Reclutamiento más allá de la distancia geográfica.
- ❖ El factor de éxito del trabajo híbrido se basa únicamente en los resultados, aunque sea necesaria cierta coordinación con el jefe y el equipo.

##### Prácticas positivas

- ❖ El Departamento de Recursos Humanos (para grandes empresas o administraciones públicas) o el propietario de la empresa y/o 1-2 gerentes (para pequeñas empresas o microempresas) son los responsables:
  - Desarrollar y comunicar políticas relacionadas con acuerdos de trabajo flexible.
  - Formar a directivos y empleados sobre cómo gestionar y trabajar eficazmente en un entorno remoto o flexible, cómo utilizar las herramientas tecnológicas y cómo mantener una comunicación eficaz con los compañeros mientras se trabaja a distancia.
- ❖ Puesta en común inicial y posterior de un sistema de trabajo híbrido o un programa FlexWork, con las aportaciones de empleados, directivos y profesionales de RR.HH., mediante:
  - Acuerdo de teletrabajo en el que se expongan las condiciones del trabajo a distancia, incluidos los criterios de admisibilidad, el horario de trabajo y el lugar de trabajo a distancia.
  - Directrices sobre comunicación que fomenten los contactos regulares entre los empleados y sus jefes cuando trabajen a distancia.
  - Comunicación interna que tiene lugar a través de correos electrónicos, reuniones generales, reuniones de departamento y reuniones de equipo, y también reuniones individuales celebradas con cada empleado. information on flexibility available on the intranet, to which everyone has Access.
  - Encuestas y grupos de discusión con los empleados para conocer mejor sus necesidades y preferencias, utilizando esta información como base para desarrollar.



- ❖ Comprobación periódica de un programa FlexWork midiendo (normalmente una vez al año) sus beneficios mediante encuestas (bienestar, satisfacción, productividad, clima laboral, etc.).
- ❖ Listas de prioridades para las actividades dentro y fuera de la oficina con el fin de optimizar los horarios para el trabajo híbrido.
- ❖ Diferentes formas de distribuir el trabajo híbrido entre los empleados:
  - Dos o tres días a la semana, con un requisito mínimo de presencia in situ del 40% en un periodo de quince días;
  - Dar a los empleados la flexibilidad de seguir trabajando desde casa como parte del trabajo combinado, con la expectativa de que las personas pasen una media del 40-60% de su tiempo ubicadas con sus colegas, ya sea en las oficinas o en las sedes de los clientes;
  - El empleado elige y decide por sí mismo esta proporción, siempre que esté presente en la oficina al menos el 30% del tiempo de trabajo.
- ❖ Una vez al mes, los empleados votan si quieren trabajar por la mañana o participar en una actividad de unión con sus compañeros.
- ❖ En el caso del trabajo compartido, el proceso suele comenzar cuando un empleado, que quiere trabajar con un horario reducido y conoce a otra persona en una situación similar, es decir, con deseos y aptitudes compatibles, solicita un acuerdo de trabajo compartido.
- ❖ Las reuniones entre padres y profesores tienen lugar sólo a distancia; esto mejora la gestión del tiempo y la participación de los padres. (Para las escuelas).

### Herramientas tecnológicas

#### Ventajas

- ❖ Aumento general de las competencias técnicas de trabajadores y profesores (para la escuela)

#### Prácticas positivas

- ❖ Invertir en nuevas tecnologías y herramientas digitales que permitan el trabajo a distancia, como videoconferencias, herramientas de colaboración y plataformas basadas en la nube para que los empleados permanezcan conectados.
- ❖ Suministro de dispositivos digitales que permitan a los empleados trabajar a distancia, como sillas de escritorio ergonómicas, ordenadores portátiles, monitores, cámaras y auriculares.
- ❖ Suministro de equipos gratuitos (por ejemplo, ratones, teclados o auriculares), así como una asignación a los teletrabajadores para que puedan adquirir los equipos tecnológicos necesarios.



### **Bienestar personal y conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar.**

#### **Ventajas**

- ❖ Ahorro de tiempo en desplazamientos por la mañana y por la tarde, reducción del estrés, los costes y el tiempo perdido en transporte.
- ❖ La simple comodidad de trabajar desde casa, reduciendo el estrés relacionado con los desplazamientos y creando un entorno de trabajo que se adapte a sus propias preferencias y necesidades.
- ❖ Tener la oportunidad de dormir más y, sobre todo, disponer de más tiempo para dedicarse a intereses personales, completar las tareas domésticas, tener relaciones sociales y hacer otras que normalmente se acumularían para el fin de semana.
- ❖ La libertad de organizar y dividir tu propio tiempo y la confianza en terminar tus propias tareas.

#### **Prácticas positivas**

- ❖ Ley relativa al derecho a la desconexión (en Francia, por ejemplo)
- ❖ Semana comprimida (4 días con un horario más largo, por ejemplo)
- ❖ Los teletrabajadores recibirán un presupuesto para la instalación del despacho en casa y tendrán la opción de recibir vales de comida para los días de teletrabajo.
- ❖ Recursos virtuales de salud mental a disposición de los empleados, como evaluaciones de salud mental en línea y herramientas de autoayuda.
- ❖ Directrices sobre conciliación de la vida laboral y personal que subrayan la importancia de establecer límites entre el trabajo y la vida personal.
- ❖ Un horario de trabajo flexible y establecer su propio calendario de acuerdo con sus necesidades familiares o personales, incluidos los acuerdos de trabajo a tiempo parcial.
- ❖ Las mujeres embarazadas pueden beneficiarse de una reducción de la jornada laboral o quedarse en casa con su bebé durante más tiempo después del parto.
- ❖ Mediante diversos concursos y retos diarios en línea, la empresa pretende ofrecer una vía de comunicación entre los empleados para temas no relacionados con el trabajo.

### **Formación**

#### **Prácticas positivas**

- ❖ Una formación específica para directivos basada en cómo apoyar la salud mental y el bienestar de los empleados en un entorno de trabajo a distancia.



- ❖ Un sistema de aprendizaje y formación personal en línea con dos opciones:
  - El uso de plataformas de e-conferencia como Meet y Zoom para impartir formación en línea.
  - Para temas complejos, plataformas de e-learning utilizadas para mejorar la estructura y los resultados.
- ❖ Programas de formación sólo para supervisores, como gerentes y altos directivos.
- ❖ Buscar, consultar y utilizar los resultados de algunos proyectos europeos, principalmente concedidos por el programa Erasmus+ (como WF4, Netiquette+, Stratagame, Future for Education) en relación con las habilidades interpersonales, el uso correcto de las redes sociales, la formación en línea, especialmente para seguir desarrollando competencias en algunos temas importantes (mejor trabajador; conciliación de la vida privada y laboral; automotivación; ejercicios de formación, etc.).

## 1.2 Disadvantages and negative practices found on field

### Organización/Gestión

#### Desventajas

- ❖ Fallos y problemas de comunicación como:
  - Falta de comunicación directa y de herramientas de intercambio en tiempo real.
  - Falta de información sobre lo que hacen los demás miembros del equipo, cuáles son sus prioridades y si necesitan ayuda.
  - Fragmentación de los equipos y distanciamiento profesional entre colegas.
  - Retrasos en el intercambio de información.
  - Ausencia de reuniones periódicas en línea
  - Ausencia de reuniones presenciales.
  - Demasiadas reuniones en línea, de modo que al estar "siempre conectados" los trabajadores pueden verse abocados a descuidar su trabajo esencial, lo que les hace perder productividad y estrés.
  - Sustitución de las conversaciones normales de despacho por correos electrónicos o mensajes en aplicaciones de comunicación, lo que a veces provoca retrasos y confusión.
- ❖ Falta de motivación (como consecuencia del punto anterior).
- ❖ Largo tiempo de adaptación.
- ❖ Complejidad en la definición de los horarios de trabajo.
- ❖ El aislamiento debido a la pandemia ha producido diversos problemas en las habilidades relacionales de los individuos, la población más joven es la que más lo sufre, siendo necesario introducir la figura del Psicólogo de Instituto. (Para las escuelas)





### Prácticas negativas

- ❖ Falta de un control claro de las horas de trabajo, problemas para llevar un registro de las horas extra y trabajar más horas.
- ❖ Falta de políticas y directrices en el contexto del trabajo a distancia.
- ❖ Los objetivos a largo plazo no están claramente definidos.
- ❖ No hay herramientas estructuradas para gestionar los proyectos y hacer un seguimiento de los progresos.
- ❖ Sin conexión telemática funcional, sin relación profesional con los compañeros, eliminación casi total del trabajo inteligente tras la pandemia (principalmente para el sector público).

### Herramientas tecnológicas

#### Prácticas negativas

- ❖ Traslado de equipos entre el domicilio y la oficina.
- ❖ Dificultades técnicas durante las reuniones en línea, especialmente con la conexión.
- ❖ Problemas de compatibilidad entre distintas tecnologías.
- ❖ Los sistemas de llamada no funcionan eficazmente.
- ❖ Sin acceso a los equipos de la oficina.
- ❖ Las plataformas no funcionaban adecuadamente: se bloqueaban constantemente por sobrecargas, las aplicaciones cliente se perdían con frecuencia, dificultad para cargar documentos, etc.

### Bienestar personal y conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar

#### Desventajas

- ❖ Aislamiento mental y dificultad para separar el trabajo de la vida personal.
- ❖ Confusión entre el trabajo y la vida privada o posible aumento de la carga de trabajo.

#### Prácticas negativas



- ❖ Ausencia de "derecho de desconexión" o expectativa implícita de disponibilidad en todo momento con el consiguiente equilibrio precario entre la vida laboral y personal.
- ❖ Falta de separación física entre el espacio doméstico y el lugar de trabajo.

### Formación

En general, no se impartió formación planificada y específica para empresarios y trabajadores, con algunas excepciones.

## **1.3 Resultados de pruebas piloto**

Las acciones piloto permitieron a "expertos" cualificados, tanto empleados como profesionales, adquirir una serie de valiosas indicaciones para una mayor eficacia formativa y consultiva de las herramientas creadas, aportando también sugerencias operativas y de comportamiento para mejorar la aplicación práctica de las diversas formas de trabajo flexible. He aquí un resumen de las recomendaciones que surgieron :

1. **Coherencia en el diseño y claridad en los objetivos:** Estandarizar los elementos de diseño en todos los módulos y proporcionar descripciones concisas de los objetivos de las actividades para mejorar la experiencia y la comprensión del usuario.
2. **Incorporación de ejercicios prácticos y consejos clave:** Incluir más ejercicios prácticos y destacar consejos clave dentro de la guía para atender a los diversos estilos de aprendizaje y reforzar los conceptos clave.
3. **Especificación del grupo destinatario y presencia del facilitador:** Especifique claramente los grupos destinatarios para adaptar los materiales de formación en consecuencia y fomente la presencia de facilitadores para mejorar la eficacia de la formación.
4. **Continuación de la formación en línea y mejora de la presentación:** Seguir desarrollando las habilidades de gestión de equipos mediante formación en línea, mejorar la legibilidad del contenido de la guía y explorar proyectos para maximizar su utilidad.
5. **Mejora de la interactividad de la plataforma y optimización del diseño:** Mejorar la interactividad y la navegación de la plataforma para aumentar la participación del usuario y la facilidad de uso, y condensar los módulos largos para una mejor transferencia de conocimientos.
6. **Navegación por la guía y claridad de las actividades:** Simplificar la navegación por la guía, aclarar las instrucciones y los objetivos de las actividades, integrar las actividades en el contenido de los módulos e incluir más ejemplos prácticos.
7. **Integración de elementos interactivos y personalización de contenidos:** Incorporar más elementos interactivos dentro de la guía, optimizar la navegación, ofrecer opciones para la personalización del contenido e implementar el seguimiento y la evaluación continuos.



Las ideas y recomendaciones colectivas derivadas de las sesiones piloto mundiales subrayan el compromiso compartido de avanzar en las prácticas de gestión de equipos en la era digital.

Sintetizando diversas perspectivas y abordando retos multifacéticos, las herramientas del NWC pueden perfeccionarse aún más para apoyar mejor a los trabajadores remotos, los profesionales de RRHH, los directivos y los formadores de todo el mundo.

## 2 –RECOMENDACIONES

### 2.1 - Garantizar la puesta en común completa y general de los principales fundamentos de un programa FlexWork, de arriba abajo.

- ❖ Enfoque de trabajo **basado en los resultados**
- ❖ Mentalidad **flexible y adaptable**.



## **2.2 - Adoptar una gobernanza adecuada del sistema en un entorno híbrido, especialmente en términos de comunicación, división de tareas y control de procesos y resultados.**

- ❖ **Recoger periódicamente las opiniones de los empleados y evaluar la eficacia del modelo de trabajo** híbrido para ayudar a las organizaciones a mejorar continuamente su planteamiento y abordar los retos que puedan surgir (mediante sesiones de brainstorming, ideas de caja, etc.).
- ❖ Definir **objetivos cualitativos y cuantitativos claros**, fijar **normas precisas** y **revisarlos periódicamente sobre la base de KPI** (indicadores clave de rendimiento) **adecuados**.
- ❖ Planificar y llevar a cabo **reuniones virtuales regulares y reuniones presenciales periódicas** entre colegas y/o directivos, **ni demasiado escasas**, para fomentar la "potenciación" del trabajo en equipo, **ni demasiado frecuentes**, para evitar el riesgo de no dejar a los colaboradores tiempo suficiente para llevar a cabo las actividades previstas.
- ❖ Desarrollar las **relaciones humanas/afinidades** entre las personas, facilitando el proceso para conocer mejor a las personas (federarse, desarrollar la creatividad, realizar algunas actividades "recreativas" al menos una vez al año en un entorno no formal, etc.)
- ❖ Establecer **procedimientos fijos para las tareas organizativas** con plazos internos claros y procesos de revisión.
- ❖ **Divida la carga de trabajo** en función del **entorno laboral** (oficina o domicilio) y prevea una **programación detallada** del trabajo en el contexto de **cada empleado**, en la medida de lo posible.
- ❖ Prestar atención a los numerosos **cambios en la legislación laboral** y a los problemas relacionados con los **métodos de contratación en línea, la evaluación y motivación del personal** y los **riesgos psicosociales** asociados (para responsables de RRHH o propietarios de pequeñas empresas o microempresas).

## **2.3 - Garantizar las herramientas tecnológicas adecuadas a todos los colaboradores**

- ❖ La organización debe disponer de **herramientas de comunicación a distancia fiables y funcionales**. (ej. plataforma que también pueda utilizarse para la comunicación "interna" entre compañeros/dirección, sistemas en la nube, etc.).



- ❖ Asegúrese de que los empleados disponen de una **conexión a Internet fiable** en casa.
- ❖ Asegúrate de que todo el mundo dispone de **equipos de alto rendimiento y adecuados** para el trabajo híbrido.

## **2.4 - Cuidar mejor del bienestar personal (indicación para empresarios y trabajadores)**

- ❖ **Mantener una separación adecuada entre el trabajo y la vida privada**, también desde el punto de vista logístico (por ejemplo, disponer de un espacio reservado para el trabajo en casa).
- ❖ Defender, es más, aumentar los espacios propios para la **familia, otras relaciones sociales, intereses culturales, deportivos, etc.**
- ❖ Garantizar un **tiempo efectivo de desconexión** a todos los colaboradores.
- ❖ Ofrecer una **compensación por los gastos** asociados al trabajo a distancia.

## **2.5 - Acompañar y apoyar el proceso de adaptación al trabajo híbrido**

- ❖ Proporcionar **formación para el uso de herramientas digitales y una transición fluida** a condiciones de trabajo híbridas (netiqueta, GDrive, etc.).
- ❖ **Apoyo/formación para la conciliación de la vida laboral y familiar** (gestión del tiempo, configuración logística, relaciones familiares, elección de alimentos, etc.).
- ❖ Ofrecer **formación** periódica no sólo sobre los aspectos técnicos, sino también sobre los **aspectos organizativos y de motivación** (actividades de creación de equipos en línea y fuera de línea, habilidades interpersonales, etc.).
- ❖ **Valorizar las competencias adquiridas**: sistema de reconocimiento no formal (insignias) y/o formal.



## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

La experiencia global del proyecto NWC adquirida sobre todo a través de las investigaciones sobre el terreno, los primeros experimentos de las herramientas creadas (necesariamente breves y concisas) y la retroalimentación correspondiente, así como lo que se desprende del informe sobre el impacto del proyecto previsto a corto y medio plazo, nos dicen que **las perspectivas del trabajo flexible en Europa son prometedoras**, gracias también al marco jurídico que respalda tanto al sector público como al privado, y que la experimentación de procesos de trabajo flexible en distintos países se ve intensificada por los **cambios en la cultura laboral**, especialmente entre las **generaciones X, Y y Z post-Covid**, y pone de relieve el **potencial transformador de estas nuevas formas de trabajar** en un entorno híbrido.

Parece oportuno hacer una **breve mención especial al sector público**, dada su gran importancia en el panorama laboral de una nación pero también su peculiaridad, caracterizada por una mayor dificultad para implantar el cambio, tanto en términos de mentalidad como de procesos organizativos consolidados. Las organizaciones públicas deben realizar los cambios lo antes posible para no quedar apartadas/desconectadas del mundo en movimiento. Así, para las administraciones públicas un **buen sistema de trabajo flexible** puede y debe ser una **oportunidad para implantar un cambio profundo**, centrado en el **trabajo por objetivos y en una digitalización inteligente de las actividades**. Este cambio de época consiste en pasar **de una gestión tradicional**, orientada hacia el presentismo y el control de las obligaciones, a **una nueva que tiene principios profundamente diferentes**, como la superación de la cultura de la sospecha y el formalismo en favor de una **confianza medida y controlada en el trabajador**, la importancia de la **colaboración**, la **capacidad de responsabilidad de la persona**, la **meritocracia**, la **apertura y la flexibilidad**. Por lo tanto, para aumentar la eficacia de las prácticas de trabajo flexible en el sector público, es crucial **abordar los posibles obstáculos y promover la inclusividad**, mediante políticas que tengan en cuenta las diversas necesidades de los funcionarios, fomentando un entorno de trabajo que se adapte a las distintas preferencias y requisitos.

Resulta evidente que el éxito de la adopción del trabajo flexible está estrechamente ligado a la **colaboración entre los profesionales de la Educación y Formación Profesional (FP) y las entidades de los sectores público y privado**. Los profesionales de la FP, como defensores del desarrollo de competencias y la adaptabilidad, desempeñan un papel vital en el diseño y la aplicación de programas de formación adaptados a las necesidades de los empleados y los empresarios.

Las asociaciones establecidas entre estos profesionales y las organizaciones deben tener como objetivo la personalización de las **iniciativas de formación** en consonancia con los objetivos organizativos, la cultura y el panorama cambiante de las prácticas de trabajo flexibles, y para ello deben ser **continuas y "leales"**, de modo que el compromiso de los profesionales de la formación garantice que los **programas de formación sean pertinentes, tengan impacto y respondan a las necesidades dinámicas de la mano de obra**.



Por lo tanto, todas las recomendaciones ilustradas en este documento e identificadas como necesarias para maximizar la eficacia de la adopción de sistemas de trabajo flexibles, deben apoyarse constantemente en tres indicaciones básicas:

- **Reconocimiento de los cambios culturales**, es decir, reconocer la evolución de la cultura del trabajo, especialmente entre las nuevas generaciones, y adaptar las prácticas de trabajo flexible para que se ajusten a estos cambios culturales.
- **Proceso de evaluación continua**, es decir, realizar evaluaciones continuas del impacto de las prácticas de trabajo flexible, teniendo en cuenta la evolución de las tendencias sociales, para garantizar la pertinencia y la capacidad de respuesta.
- **Observación constante de las mejores prácticas internacionales**, es decir, aprender de la experimentación de las mejores prácticas europeas e incluso no europeas en la formalización y ampliación de los procesos de trabajo flexible, adaptándolas al propio contexto local.

Esperamos que el proyecto NWC haya contribuido a facilitar y estimular un **esfuerzo de colaboración** entre todos los componentes que gravitan sobre el mundo del trabajo, como paso fundamental hacia la promoción de la **innovación y la mejora continua del entorno laboral**, a través del acompañamiento provechoso hacia una **flexibilidad** que pueda combinar una **mayor eficiencia y eficacia** de los procesos con una **mejor calidad de vida**.



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# APPENDIX

## GLOSSARY

## NATIONAL REPORTS





# GLOSSARY

## **FLEXIBLE WORK**

With the expression **flexible work** we can characterize all forms of work that are outside the traditional constraints of time, place, mode of action and performance evaluation. All the forms of work defined below therefore fall, more or less, into the category of flexible work.

### **Hybrid work**

Hybrid work can be defined as a working arrangement where some staff will work on-site, some will work off-site via telecommuting or remote working, and others will have the freedom to work on-site on some days and off-site on others, based on circumstances, objectives, and personal preferences. In a hybrid work model, employees can work remotely from anywhere, work from home, or physically attend the workplace environment every couple of days, as companies maintain their physical spaces. Hybrid work brings the most outstanding levels of productivity when following a schedule where people work on-site two to three times a week and the rest are spent in a remote location.

### **Telecommuting**

Telecommuting is the practice of working from outside of the employer's office or physical workplace. Often it will mean working from home, but it could equally mean working from a public library, co-working space, coffee shop, or anywhere else with public wi-fi, depending on the devices available and the individual company policy. Workers in telecommuting may still need to attend the workplace on occasions, such as for meetings or catch-up sessions. For this reason, telecommuting typically describes off-site work for people who live nearby.

### **Remote work = Flexible location (1)**

A remote work arrangement allows employees to perform their tasks beyond the traditional workplace environment too. The terms remote work and telecommuting are often used interchangeably, and there are no strict definitions separating the two concepts. However, remote work can differ from telecommuting in terms of whether physical attendance is ever required and whether employees need to live in close proximity to the workplace. Remote workers are not usually required to attend team-building sessions or office-based meetings, although they may participate through video conferencing



### **Part-time work**

Part-time work means you work a smaller number of hours per week (less than full-time). The number of days you work in a week and the number of hours you work in an average day are generally considered “part-time” if they are less than 30 hours. Part-time employees receive the same employment benefits as full-time employees, with benefits prorated based on hours worked. For employers, part-time positions can be useful, allowing them to employ people to carry out work that will not take up sufficient time to justify a full-time position. For employees, part-time work can often be desirable, allowing them to earn money alongside other responsibilities, such as studying or raising children.

### **Flexitime = flexible schedule = flexible job**

As a basic definition, flexitime – also known as flexitime – refers to flexible working arrangements where employees are given the freedom to select when their working day begins and ends, as long as they work their contracted number of hours. Most commonly, this means simply adjusting precisely when their daily working hours take place. This lets employees customise their own working schedules and is especially beneficial for companies whose team members have very different sets of personal commitments and responsibilities.

### **Job sharing**

Job sharing is another flexible work arrangement, where two people are employed on a part-time basis, combining to carry out the work that would otherwise be done by one person employed on a full-time basis-----for workers who need to juggle their professional lives with family obligations, are pursuing an education, or simply want to lighten their workload without having to quit a role entirely. It's great for retaining top talent who may otherwise resign because they aren't able to handle their full responsibilities at the moment. It's also worth it to consider job-sharing as your company scales. Certain roles may generate more work than one person can reasonably complete, but not enough to warrant hiring a second full-time role. By dividing those responsibilities among two people sharing the same position, each one will be able to focus on their individual tasks without feeling overwhelmed.

### **Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE)**

ROWE is a management strategy that favours performance over presence. Employees are evaluated by their quality of work and results instead of the number of hours worked or their attendance. The ROWE system prides itself on creating a culture of opportunity and shifts the focus to employee autonomy and creating an accountability-first mindset.

### **Smart working**



The term "smart working" is essentially used in Italy, both in English and translated into Italian (which is found above all in the regulatory field). These two words indicate a precise work model based on three essential elements: technology, work flexibility (of time and place) and equal economic treatment with permanent workers on site. Smart working is distinguished from flexible working and remote working and is perhaps closer to hybrid working but its meaning still remains broad and complex as its objectives must also be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

### Compressed workweek

A condensed workweek, also known as a compressed workweek, is an arrangement where the standard full-time working hours are still worked, but they are condensed down into fewer days than normal. Most often, this will result in a four-day working week rather than a five-day working week, although the exact arrangement may vary. employees working four, 10-hour days instead of the usual five. Compressed work-weeks are often beneficial for companies with heavy workloads throughout the year and is most popular in industries such as retail, utilities, mining, healthcare services, and manufacturing.

### Shift Work

Shift work describes an arrangement where the working day is divided into different shifts, which are then allocated to employees, meaning different groups of workers will be carrying out their duties at different times of the day. It is an especially common approach for employers who operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

### Phased retirement

Retirement can be a stressful transition for employees and the company as a whole. The employee has to reconfigure their daily schedule without the structure of the job, and your company loses a valuable resource with years of hard-wired knowledge, skills, and abilities. As a result, phased retirement plans are becoming increasingly popular. During phased retirement, employees slowly reduce their working hours until their actual retirement date. During their stay in the company before retirement they will support the new employees destined to take on their role, working together on the same activities and projects and transferring their precious know-how to them.

- (1) **Freelance work:** Many people think that remote work and freelance work are the same things. But they're not. Remote work is a permanent job or contract. Freelance work is project-based and ends when the project is completed.



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# **DESK AND ON-FIELD RESEARCH NATIONAL REPORTS - COMPLETE VERSIONS**



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# NATIONAL REPORT

## AGFE - FRANCE



## I/ Desk research

This national desk research focuses on remote work in France, examining the legal and regulatory framework in both the public and private sectors (A). Additionally, we will analyse the current situation and trends related to the role of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals and their partnerships with public and private entities aimed at maintaining a skilled and trained workforce (B). Finally, we will explore the existing policies and practices surrounding flexible work in public and private organizations, highlighting their respective advantages and disadvantages (C).

### **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors**

- a) In France, in the private sector, the practice of remote work is governed by regulatory and contractual measures. The current legal framework for remote work consists of both regulatory provisions and agreements. A national inter-professional agreement (ANI) was signed on July 19, 2005, well before the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2012, the law introduced provisions on remote work into the Labour Code, partially incorporating the initial agreements and setting forth employers' obligations and the employment conditions for teleworkers.
- Ordinance No. 2017-1387 of September 22, 2017, concerning predictability and security in labour relations, and the ratification law of March 2018, have redefined the legal framework of remote work and its implementation methods.
- The current legal provisions regarding remote work are found in Articles L.1222-9 to L.1222-11 of the Labour Code and are complemented by the contractual provisions of the new ANI "for a successful implementation of remote work," signed in November 2020. Extended by decree in April 2021, this agreement became mandatory in the commercial sector.  
**The legal definition of remote work:** It is a specific mode of work organization defined by the Labour Code. Remote work refers to "any form of work organization in which an employee performs tasks, which could also be done on the employer's premises, voluntarily outside those premises using information and communication technologies." Any employee who voluntarily carries out remote work, either from the beginning of their employment or at a later stage, is considered a remote worker.

The current legal definition covers three forms of remote work:

1. Regular remote work,
2. Occasional remote work,
3. Remote work in exceptional circumstances or force majeure: in this case, remote work may be imposed by the employer due to the circumstances (Article L.1222-11).



Remote work must involve tasks that could have been performed on the company's offices. Employees whose nature of work requires non-sedentary presence in the company's premises are not considered remote workers; they are known as "nomadic" or "distance" workers. This remote work can be carried out in a location different from the company's premises, typically at the employee's home, but it may also occur at third-party locations with the employer's consent.

- b) In the public sector : the implementation procedures for remote work across the civil service are defined by Article L430-1 of the General Code of Civil Service (which incorporates the provisions initially outlined in Article 133 of Law No. 2012-347 of March 12, 2012), the Decree No. 2016-151 of February 11, 2016 (which has been amended by Decree No. 2019-637 of June 25, 2019, Decree No. 2020-524 of May 5, 2020, and Decree No. 2021-1725 of December 21, 2021), and the agreement of July 13, 2021, concerning the implementation of remote work in the civil service.

The agreement of July 13, 2021 outlines specific criteria that differentiate remote work from other forms of working remotely:

- The employee engaged in remote work has received authorization to perform some of their work at one or more remote locations, which they could have otherwise done on-site.
- This arrangement involves alternating between a minimum amount of time spent working on-site and a portion of their work conducted remotely.
- The use of information and communication technologies is an integral part of this remote work arrangement.

## **B - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees.**

The role of vocational training is crucial in integrating remote work as a new form of employment, it aims to develop workers' skills and knowledge to meet the evolving needs of the job market.

In France, since the 1980s, the State has initiated a decentralisation operation of responsibilities that strengthens the role of local authorities. The municipality, department, and region participate in the functioning of the public education service. The region adopts the regional plan for the anticipated provision of education and training in middle schools, high schools, and establishments for special education. In conjunction with the central power, it defines and implements the regional public service for lifelong career guidance. It organizes the regional public service for lifelong career guidance, ensuring, in particular, the networking of all services, structures, and programmes that contribute within its territory to the implementation of this public service.

The region is responsible for the regional policy on vocational training for young people and adults seeking employment or a new career path. Additionally, it develops the regional contract for the development of vocational training and career guidance.



In response to the evolving job market and the need to address unemployment, investing in workforce training and skills development becomes essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. The **Skills Investment Plan** reflects the government's commitment to expand training opportunities for those facing employment challenges and to explore innovative approaches to education.

Since the Covid-19 crisis, which emphasized the urgency of digitalization and hybridization in education, a comprehensive transformation and digitalization plan with a budget of 300 million euros was launched as part of the **France Reliance Plan**. The goal is to drive education into a new era of transformation. Led by the High Commissioner for Skills, the Transformation and Digitalization Plan for Education demonstrates the government's determination to integrate digital, immersive, and cognitive science advancements into the learning process.

This initiative is based on a well-structured action plan, informed by extensive consultations with stakeholders, experimentation, and working groups, and is further supported by two surveys conducted among training organizations and CFA (Apprenticeship Training Centres) to assess their tools and requirements for accelerating the digitalization and hybridization of education

A comprehensive approach based on consultation, active involvement of stakeholders, and a "test & learn" strategy is employed. The consultation process aims to identify key strategies for the transformation plan while establishing a reliable and effective methodology.

- This includes conducting bilateral meetings with approximately fifty stakeholders from both public and private sectors between late 2020 and early 2021.
- Organizing workshops to explore specific themes during the spring and summer of 2021.
- Additionally, a consultation cycle facilitated by the FFFOD (French Forum for Open Training) in May-June 2022, with support from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Inclusion, is focused on crafting a "Framework for Supporting Training Organizations and Apprenticeship Training Centres in Hybridization of Education."

This framework is collaboratively shared among various stakeholders within the education ecosystem.

## **C - The existing policies/ practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with the respective advantages and disadvantages**

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a spectacular rise in remote work in France, disrupting traditional modes of work organization for both public and private entities. The CNIL (National Commission on Informatics and Liberty) reminds about the rules to be followed and provides advice for employers and employees.

If the conditions for implementing remote work have gradually become more flexible over the years its implementation requires an agreement with the employer, formalized through collective or individual agreements, or even through a charter (Article L. 1222-9 of the Labor Code). However, in certain exceptional cases, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, an agreement was not necessary, and remote work could be imposed on employees by the employer.





Certain implementation modalities are legally regulated:

- The employer may monitor the employees' activities if it does not go upon their rights and freedoms and adheres to specific rules. As remote work is merely a method of organizing work, the employer retains the authority, just as when work is performed on-site, to supervise and control the tasks assigned to their employees.

Nevertheless, the courts have consistently emphasized that this authority must not be exercised excessively. Article L. 1121-1 of the Labour Code stipulates that "No one may go upon the rights and individual and collective liberties of persons with unjustified restrictions, which are not proportionate to the intended purpose."

- It is forbidden to use continuous surveillance tools: like any processing of personal data, a system for monitoring working hours or activities, whether remote or on-site, must, in particular:
  - Have a clearly defined objective and not be used for other purposes.
  - Be proportionate and appropriate to that objective.
  - Require prior information to the individuals concerned.
- The regulation on personal data protection requires that the level of security and confidentiality of processed personal data remains the same, regardless of the equipment used. The employer remains responsible for the security of personal data within the company, even when stored on devices over which the employer has no physical or legal control, but has authorized their use to access the company's IT resources. The adoption of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) is a decision that should be made after weighing the advantages and disadvantages presented by this practice, which blurs the boundary between personal and professional life.
- Activating cameras during a video conference can enhance communication flow and contribute to the meeting's conviviality. However, it involves the processing of personal data under the GDPR, which may lead to the disclosure of intimate information. When possible, the use of video conferencing from employees' homes should not lead to the revelation of more personal information than during a meeting at their workplace. Therefore, the CNIL encourages employers to prioritize video conferencing solutions that allow users to blur the background, enabling participants to avoid displaying images of their homes (which may reveal private information) or any third parties passing through the camera's field of vision." However, in specific cases (such as an HR interview, a meeting with external clients, or the introduction of new team members, etc.), the employer may require the activation of the camera. When feasible, it is preferable to have informed the employee(s) in advance, allowing them to make necessary arrangements (such as choosing an appropriate room, etc.).

*The reference texts are as follows:*

- *Articles L. 1222-9 and subsequent articles of the Labour Code (articles related to remote work).*
- *Law No. 2012-347 of March 12, 2012, concerning access to permanent employment and improvement of employment conditions for contractual employees in the public service, specifically Article 133.*
- *Decree No. 2016-151 of February 11, 2016, regarding the conditions and procedures for implementing remote work in the public service and judiciary.*
- *Ordinance No. 2017-1387 of September 22, 2017, concerning predictability and security of employment relationships.*



## II/ On field research

"Hybrid Work Environment Experience" questionnaire : in France, six participants from various sectors, including public administration, micro-enterprises, and third-sector entities participated to the survey. These participants hold diverse roles, ranging from intermediate and senior management to entrepreneurs, independent consultants, and executive leaders.

Their insights shape recommendations that redefine the roles of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals and adapt legal frameworks to align with emerging work practices. Thank you for contributing your experiences to this transformative initiative.

### I/ Understanding different regulatory tools: State Laws, Local Rules, and Internal Regulations

In the course of this study, respondents reported experiencing hybrid work environments across diverse professional contexts. Participants indicated encountering hybrid setups within the public administration, micro-enterprises with fewer than ten employees as well as within the purview of third-sector entities, such as cooperatives, associations, and foundations.

- Most participants – 5 out of 6 – declared experiencing continuously the hybrid experience. In the context of flexible work adoption in France, the basis of legislation varies from one answer to another :
  - National law: 2 respondents mentioned this.
  - Regional/local law: 1 respondent indicated this.
  - Formal internal agreements: 2 respondents cited these agreements.
  - Informal internal agreements: 1 respondent pointed out the influence of such agreements.
  - No regulations: In one instance, a decision made by management without specific regulations was mentioned.
    - ☑ The formal internal agreements supporting flexible work arrangements in France include local telecommuting agreements and company-level agreements integrated into the Internal Regulations.
    - ☑ The informal internal agreements supporting flexible work in this context involve personalized daily organization for a specific group of employees and a temporary hybrid work option resulting from Covid-19 related travel restrictions.
- The adoption of flexible forms of work was experienced differently among the respondents:
  - 5 respondents indicated that the introduction of flexible work arrangements took place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - 1 respondent mentioned that flexible work arrangements were already present in their working context before the pandemic.
- the flexible working arrangements that have been adopted in your work environment to create a "hybrid" setup:
  - "Video conference meetings, communication via email and phone, webinars."
  - "Case studies or study case-by-case."
  - "Permanent telecommuting/Video conferencing."
  - "Based on availability."



- "Regular online team meetings, in particular."

These responses indicate that the hybrid work environment involves a mix of video conference meetings, communication through various digital channels, permanent telecommuting with video conferencing, case-by-case considerations, and regular online team meetings.

## II/ Details of training: Sources, Contents, and Methods.

Responses regarding training opportunities in the hybrid work setting reveal a mix of experiences, with a majority of five participants indicating no exposure to such training, while one respondent affirmed receiving training in adapting to this new work environment." Among those who received training in the hybrid work environment, two individuals reported that the training was facilitated using internal resources and solutions.

This suggests that the organization developed and delivered the training materials, possibly drawing on its own expertise and knowledge to provide guidance on navigating the intricacies of hybrid work. We can note that training session was occasionally proposed for one respondent and more systematically for the other one. One answered that it was intense sessions when it is more light for the other one, involving direct instructions and case studies.

All respondents who received training on adapting to the hybrid work environment provided a consistent rating of 3 on the evaluation scale. This indicates a neutral stance in their assessment of the training results, suggesting that the effectiveness and impact of the training were perceived as moderate by all participants.

- The training content for adapting to the hybrid work environment was divided into several categories. The respondents' feedback indicated the following distribution:
  1. Organizational Content:
    - One respondent allocated 10% of the training content to functional and logistical profiles required by the hybrid work environment.
    - Another respondent allocated a larger portion, 40%, to this aspect.
  2. Relational Content:
    - Both respondents allocated 10% of the training content to addressing interaction dynamics between 'bosses' and collaborators, as well as among collaborators themselves.
  3. Technical Content:
    - One respondent attributed 10% of the training content to teaching about the usage of digital tools.
    - The second respondent allocated a more substantial portion, 30%, to this category.
  4. Other Content:



- The final respondent assigned 20% of the training content to a category labeled as 'Other,' which suggests that this respondent considered additional or unique content relevant to adapting to the hybrid work environment.

In summary, the distribution of training content percentages varied among the respondents. The categories of organizational content, relational content, and technical content received differing emphasis. Additionally, one respondent included a separate category for other content, indicating individualized aspects considered important for training in the context of hybrid work adaptation.

For most respondents of the survey, the training content will be strengthened at least a little bit.

### III/ Personal reflections: assessing individual experiences.

- The main negative elements of the experience in a hybrid work environment based on the provided responses are as follow :
  1. Lack of direct communication and real-time exchange tools.
  2. Fragmentation of teams and professional distancing among colleagues.
  3. Lack of sharing with the team.
  4. Isolation and difficulty separating work and personal life.
  5. The human factor in general – meaning that being away from work and from management supervision can generate a lack of motivation.

In summary, the negative aspects of the hybrid work experience include challenges with communication, team cohesion, work-life balance, and a concern for the human aspect, although one respondent did not report any negative experiences.

- The main positive elements of the experience in a hybrid work environment based on the provided responses:
  1. Flexibility and improved productivity in administrative tasks.
  2. Work flexibility and the development of employee initiative.
  3. Personal and professional organisation.
  4. Time saved on commuting in the mornings and evenings.
  5. Reduced stress and time wasted in transportation.
  6. Enhanced adaptability and a less stressful combination of work and family life for some individuals.
  7. Skilled employees were recruited despite geographic distance, allowing them to be physically present at the workplace only twice a week.

In summary, the positive aspects of the hybrid work experience include increased flexibility, productivity improvements, enhanced work-life balance, and the ability to attract skilled talent regardless of geographical distance.



Summary of the recommendations for effective performance in a hybrid working environment, based on the provided responses:

1. The organization should have reliable and functional remote communication tools.
2. Clear tasks should be communicated through shared schedules for better tracking.
3. Social connections should be maintained through regular scheduled interactions.
4. Establish clear guidelines and rules of engagement.
5. Embrace work flexibility while maintaining structure.
6. Implement mandatory weekly in-person attendance days.
7. Ensure a rigorous CRM update, daily phone calls with colleagues, and clear qualitative and quantitative objectives.
8. Organize and provide a framework for telecommuting.
9. Incorporate intermittent breaks.
10. Increase video interactions among colleagues to maintain a human dimension, empathy, and motivation.
11. Recommend a mix of in-person and remote work rather than 100% hybrid.
12. Arrange regular online meetings to foster connection.
13. Despite distance, employees should have opportunities to meet online or in person to establish relationships that enhance communication.
14. In a hybrid or fully remote setting, employees' organizational abilities and their alignment with central communication are vital for team cohesion. This should be emphasized during recruitment or when integrating new team members.

In summary, the recommendations include optimizing communication tools, establishing clear guidelines, balancing flexibility with structure, prioritizing social connections, and fostering effective organizational skills for a successful hybrid work environment.

### III/ Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of hybrid work experiences within the context of France reveals a diverse range of insights and challenges. The adoption of flexible work arrangements, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, has brought both positive and negative elements to the forefront. Flexibility and improved work-life balance stand out as clear advantages, with productivity gains reported in administrative tasks. However, challenges such as reduced direct communication, potential team fragmentation, and difficulty separating personal and professional lives have also been noted.

The distribution of training content reflects a focus on organizational, relational, and technical aspects, each varying in emphasis. While training has been offered, the moderate rating of 3 in terms of effectiveness suggests room for improvement. A notable finding is the importance of maintaining social connections, fostering team cohesion, and facilitating clear communication to counteract potential feelings of isolation.

Recommendations for effective performance in a hybrid environment include the need for robust remote communication tools, well-defined tasks communicated through shared schedules, and regular interactions to sustain social ties. The legal framework in France emphasizes the significance of clear agreements and the protection of employees' rights in hybrid work settings. Ultimately, a successful hybrid work environment hinges on a careful balance of flexibility, communication, and continuous adaptation to address the unique challenges and opportunities that arise.



## IV /References:

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# NATIONAL REPORT

## BDF - THE NETHERLANDS



## I/ Desk research

Flexible and remote working has transformed the landscape of traditional employment, providing employees with the freedom to balance their personal and professional lives while maintaining productivity. In the context of the Netherlands, this practice has gained considerable traction due to its progressive approach to work-life balance.

Flexible working involves adjusting the traditional 9-to-5 work hours to accommodate employees' needs and preferences. This can include options like flexitime, compressed workweeks, and job sharing. Remote working, on the other hand, allows employees to carry out their tasks from locations outside the office, often from their homes or other remote setups.

Within this overview, it's important to highlight the benefits and challenges associated with flexible and remote working. Employees appreciate the improved work-life balance, reduced commute time, and increased autonomy over their schedules. Employers can benefit from increased employee satisfaction, lower overhead costs, and the potential to tap into a wider talent pool. However, challenges like maintaining team cohesion, ensuring data security, and monitoring employee performance must also be addressed.

Some statistics on hybrid working in the Netherlands:

1. The average number of hours worked from home are expected to increase from 3.8 hours per week before the COVID-19 crisis to 8 hours per week after<sup>1</sup>. The pandemic situation intensified the shift towards more working from home, and at its peak, around 50% of the Dutch working population was working from home, according to CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek).
2. Flexibility in Work Hours: The Netherlands has a long-standing tradition of part-time work. Since at least from 2017 onwards, CBS reported that nearly half of the working population (between 47 and 49%) was employed part-time<sup>2</sup>, making the transition to a flexible hybrid model smoother than in countries with a more rigid work culture.
3. Employee Preference: After COVID employees would like to work on average 9 hours per week at home, which is just 1 hour more than they expected to work from home<sup>3</sup>. In 2021 88% of the employees indicated that they would like to keep working from home to some degree, and now, in 2023 this number remained the same, 85%. Only 15% of the employees want to go to the office all the time<sup>4</sup>.

This move towards a hybrid working model is not just about adapting to a post-pandemic world. It reflects a deeper shift in the Dutch work ethos, prioritizing efficiency, flexibility, and a balanced lifestyle. Organizations and employees alike are recognizing the benefits of this approach, which include reduced commuting times, decreased office overheads, and a better work-life balance.

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In conclusion, hybrid working is more than just a fleeting trend in the Netherlands—it's a transformative approach that's reshaping the very fabric of its work culture.

## **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors.**

In principal, it is the employer which decides to allow or not working from home, there is no specific law for that. You can request to work from home, but it is the employer that decides (no legal right). In 2022 a law has been agreed by the Tweede Kamer, which states that an employer should accept a request for working from home, in principal. However, it has not been approved yet by the Eerste Kamer.

Employees are also divided about a law that is stating the right to work from home. 41% of the respondents in this research<sup>5</sup> agrees that it should become easier to facilitate working from home for employees, but 42% does not agree with that. They believe that this should be arranged by employers and employees together, not by the government. The entrepreneurs/business owners in the research are fully against a law like this, 85%.

In the Netherlands, the legal framework governing flexible and remote work is robust and comprehensive. This framework prioritizes the rights of employees while also considering the needs of employers and the overall business environment. Key laws and regulations that are pertinent to this framework include:

### **Working Hours Act (Arbeidstijdenwet)**

The Working Hours Act establishes rules regarding the maximum length of the workweek, rest breaks, and daily rest periods. It also includes provisions for night work and overtime. This act ensures that employees are not overworked and have time to rest and recharge, whether they are working in the office or remotely<sup>6</sup>.

### **Working Conditions Act (Arbeidsomstandighedenwet)**

The Working Conditions Act focuses on creating a safe and healthy work environment, regardless of where work is performed. It mandates that employers ensure their employees have the necessary tools, training, and support to carry out their tasks safely. This includes providing ergonomic equipment for remote work setups to prevent health issues caused by prolonged sitting or poor posture.

### **Collective Labor Agreements (Collectieve Arbeidsovereenkomst or CAO)**

Collective Labour Agreements are industry-specific agreements negotiated between employers and trade unions. These agreements often address flexible work arrangements, working hours, and

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<sup>5</sup>

<sup>6</sup>



compensation. They play a crucial role in shaping the terms and conditions of employment in various sectors.

### **Right to Request Flexible Working Hours**

The Netherlands also grants employees the legal right to request flexible working hours, regardless of their reason. While employers have the right to decline these requests based on valid business reasons, this legislation demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting work-life balance and employee autonomy.

Studying these laws in depth provides a solid foundation for understanding the legal parameters that shape flexible and remote working arrangements in the Netherlands. It also highlights the country's commitment to fostering a healthy work environment that prioritizes employee well-being and rights.

In conclusion, by beginning with an overview of flexible and remote working and delving into the Netherlands' legal framework, researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This understanding paves the way for exploring regulations, safety considerations, and implications for both employees and employers. Furthermore, it underscores the Netherlands' progressive approach to adapting to the evolving landscape of work in the digital age.

### **Understand Regulations for Remote Work**

Remote work has become a prominent aspect of modern work dynamics, and the legal framework in the Netherlands recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of remote workers. Here are the key aspects to consider:

#### **Ergonomic Requirements**

The Working Conditions Act extends to remote work, mandating that employers provide ergonomic equipment and resources to remote employees. This includes ergonomic chairs, proper lighting, and equipment that supports healthy posture. By adhering to these regulations, employers ensure that remote workers are protected from musculoskeletal issues and other health concerns associated with prolonged sitting and inadequate work setups.

#### **Safety Considerations**

Employers are responsible for maintaining a safe remote work environment, just as they would in a traditional office setting. This involves conducting risk assessments of remote workspaces, identifying potential hazards, and taking appropriate measures to mitigate them. Adequate training on emergency protocols, data security, and proper use of equipment is essential to ensure the well-being of remote employees.



## **B - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees.**

Vocational Education and Training (VET, often referred to as MBO in the Netherlands, which stands for "Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs") plays a pivotal role in the Dutch labour market and educational system. With the rise of hybrid working, where employees operate both on-site and remotely, vocational education can play a crucial role in preparing students for this new work environment.

The role of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals in the Netherlands, particularly within the context of partnerships and collaborations with public and private entities, is evolving.

Current situation:

1. **Integral Role of VET Professionals:** VET professionals in the Netherlands play a central role in connecting theoretical knowledge with practical skills, ensuring that students are well-equipped to enter the job market upon graduation.
2. **Public-Private Partnerships:** The Dutch VET system is characterized by strong public-private partnerships. Sectors and companies are involved in defining qualifications and standards for training, ensuring that curricula stay relevant to the evolving needs of the job market.
3. **Work-based Learning:** A hallmark of Dutch VET is the dual system, which combines classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Most VET students in the Netherlands undertake internships or apprenticeships, facilitated by collaborations between educational institutions and employers.

Trends:

1. **Increasing emphasis on Lifelong Learning:** There's a growing recognition that learning doesn't stop after formal education. This has led to an increasing role for VET professionals in offering post-initial training and courses for adults, ensuring that the workforce remains up-to-date with the latest skills and knowledge.
2. **Digitalization:** With the increasing role of technology in the workplace, VET institutions are placing more emphasis on digital skills. This includes not only technical know-how but also the soft skills required to navigate a digital workplace effectively.
3. **Customized Learning Pathways:** Recognizing that learners have diverse needs, there's a move towards offering more customized learning pathways. This involves close collaboration between VET professionals and industry stakeholders to ensure that training is tailored to the needs of individual sectors or even specific companies.



4. **Internationalization:** Given the globalized nature of the job market, there's a trend towards internationalizing VET curricula. This includes offering students opportunities for international internships and exchanges and ensuring that qualifications are recognized beyond the Netherlands.
5. **Collaborative Platforms:** Various platforms and networks have been set up to facilitate collaboration between VET institutions and industry. These platforms play a pivotal role in knowledge exchange, best practice sharing, and ensuring alignment between education and industry needs.
6. **Green and Sustainable Training:** As sustainability becomes a key concern across industries, there's a growing emphasis on training students in green skills. This involves preparing them for jobs in the green economy and ensuring that they're aware of sustainable practices regardless of their field.

In conclusion, VET professionals in the Netherlands are at the forefront of bridging the gap between education and the job market. Their role, particularly in collaboration with public and private sector entities, is vital in ensuring a skilled, knowledgeable, and adaptive workforce. Given the rapid pace of change in the job market, these collaborations are only expected to become more integral in the future.

## **C - The existing policies/ practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with the respective advantages and disadvantages**

Flexible work has gained significant traction in the Netherlands, both in the public and private sectors. The adoption of flexible work policies has been influenced by cultural factors, technological advancements, and legal provisions. Here's an overview of some of the existing policies and practices for flexible work in the Netherlands.

### **1. Flexible Working Act (Wet flexibel werken):**

- **Public & Private Entities:** Both sectors are influenced by the Flexible Working Act introduced in 2016. This act allows employees (after a minimum period of employment) to request changes to their work hours, location, and times.
- **Advantages:** Empowers employees to maintain a work-life balance and can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Disadvantages:** Can pose logistical challenges for employers, especially for those who may not have the infrastructure in place for remote work.

### **2. Part-time Work:**

- **Public & Private Entities:** The Netherlands is known for its high percentage of part-time workers. Both sectors facilitate part-time work options.
- **Advantages:** Increases employee satisfaction, allows for greater flexibility, and attracts talent who might not be available for full-time positions.



- Disadvantages: Coordination between part-time employees can be challenging, and some roles might not be suited for part-time hours.

### 3. Remote Work & Digital Tools:

- Public & Private Entities: With technological advancements, there's a trend toward facilitating remote work using digital tools.
- Advantages: Offers flexibility to employees, reduces commuting, and can lead to a wider talent pool for employers.
- Disadvantages: Potential for feelings of isolation among employees, challenges in team coordination, and potential cybersecurity risks.

### 4. Flexible Start and Finish Times:

- Public & Private Entities: Instead of the traditional 9-to-5, many organizations allow for variable starting and finishing times.
- Advantages: Reduces rush-hour congestion and allows employees to adapt work hours to personal circumstances.
- Disadvantages: Might lead to potential overlaps or gaps in employee availability.

#### Additional Points:

**Culture:** The Dutch working culture values work-life balance, which naturally inclines businesses and public entities to consider flexible working arrangements.

**Infrastructure:** The Netherlands' robust digital infrastructure supports the shift toward more flexible and remote work.

**COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic accelerated the adoption of flexible and remote work practices, pushing organizations to adapt quickly.

In conclusion, while flexible working policies in the Netherlands provide numerous advantages in terms of employee well-being, engagement, and even productivity, they do pose challenges that organizations, both public and private, must navigate. Effective communication, robust infrastructure, and clear policies are essential for reaping the benefits while minimizing the drawbacks.

To get insight into the implementation and impact of flexible work arrangements in different contexts, we have asked input from experts by means of a survey. Below you will find the results of this survey.

#### *General*

In the research in the Netherlands 5 participants have completed the survey. Three of them worked for an SME, 1 in a third sector body and 1 in a micro-enterprise. Two respondents held support roles, 1 was in middle management, 1 was an individual contributor without leadership roles and 1 with leadership roles.



## *Experience with hybrid environment*

Four out of the five respondents indicated that they have experienced a hybrid environment continuously, and only one of them intermittently.

For three of the respondents the flexible work was introduced on the occasion of COVID-19, for 1 respondent flexible work was already present and for the last one flexible work was already somewhat present, but reinforced after COVID-19.

Regarding the hybrid workplace, three respondents believe that it will remain to the same extent in the future. One respondent believed that they will return to only face-to-face working methods and 1 respondent was unsure.

We have also asked about the main positive and main negative elements of the experience in a hybrid environment. You can find them in table below.

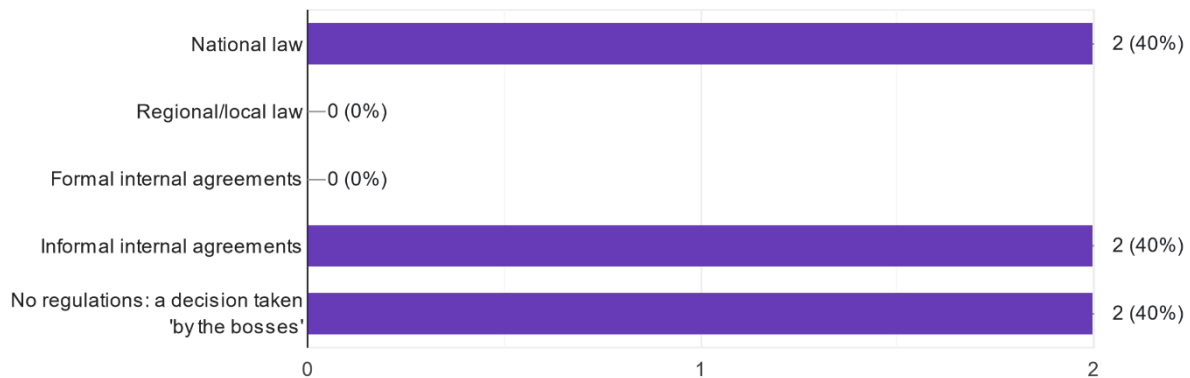
Main negative elements	Main positive elements
Less informal interaction between coworkers	For some people less time to spend on travelling
Don't see your colleagues, it's difficult to track what someone is doing	Less time to travel to work
No clear control of working hours. The call system did not work efficiently.	Allowed workers to work from home for small home errands.
When teams were changed, it was difficult to get to know the new team and colleagues on a more personal basis. Which makes it also more difficult to build a team feeling.	The freedom of organizing and dividing your own time and the trust in you finishing your own tasks.
Less bonding between colleagues	Flexible work hours

## *Legislation and policies*

Then the respondents have been asked on the basis of what type of legislation the forms of flexible work have been adopted in their working context (multiple options possible). Below you can find an overview of the results.

On the basis of what type of legislation have forms of flexible work been adopted in your working context? (multiple options)

5 antwoorden



As can be seen in the figure, flexible work has never been adopted based on regional/local law or by formal internal agreements according to the participants. It has been either adopted by national law, or informal internal agreement, or no regulations at all.

Examples of informal internal agreements that have been made as basis for flexible working:

- Working from home partially, no formal rules on how many days at home/in the office
- Flexible start- and finish times, as long as tasks are being completed and you participate in the start of the day at 9 AM.
- Regular online coffee breaks
- Office visits were allowed but not obligatory.

60% of the respondents have indicated that flexible forms of work were introduced on the occasion of COVID-19, and 40% indicated that it was already present (20% of it indicated 'somewhat' present).

We have also asked the experts about which flexible working arrangements have been adopted in their work environment to make it hybrid:

- Allowed/encouraged to work partially from home (if the nature of the job allows it)
- Budget for workplace at home
- Office closes after 6 PM (so everyone who needs to work after 6 PM has to work from home)
- Every day an online start-of-the-day
- Weekly online meetings to discuss work-related matters
- Regular online coffee breaks for informal chats

### *Trainings regarding hybrid working environments*

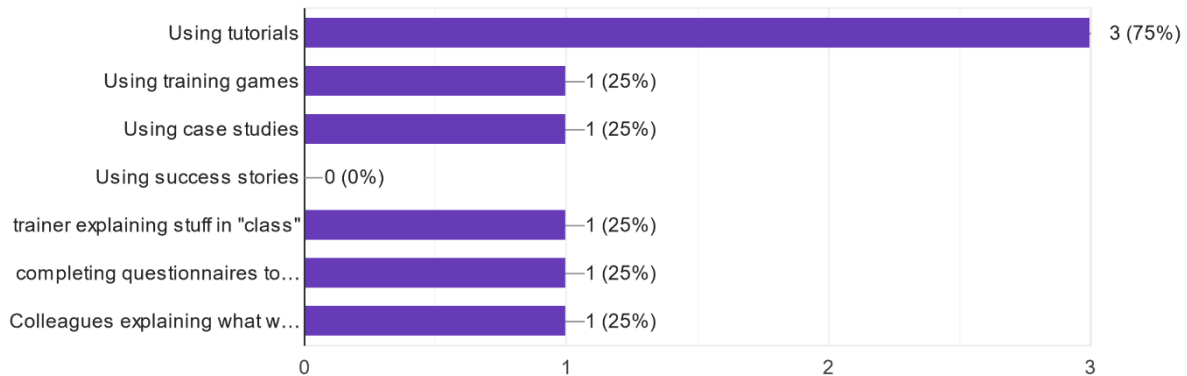
The majority of the experts (80%) indicated that there has been offered training(s) to learn about how to work in the hybrid work environment. In the majority of the cases this training had been made with internal solutions, in 1 case it was by external specialized bodies.

In all cases the training was occasional, so no systematic trainings have been offered. Half of the trainings were held in a few very intense sessions and half of them indicated that the training has been held in more numerous but lighter sessions.

In the following table you can find more information about the training materials used:

If training has been offered, please give some extra information:

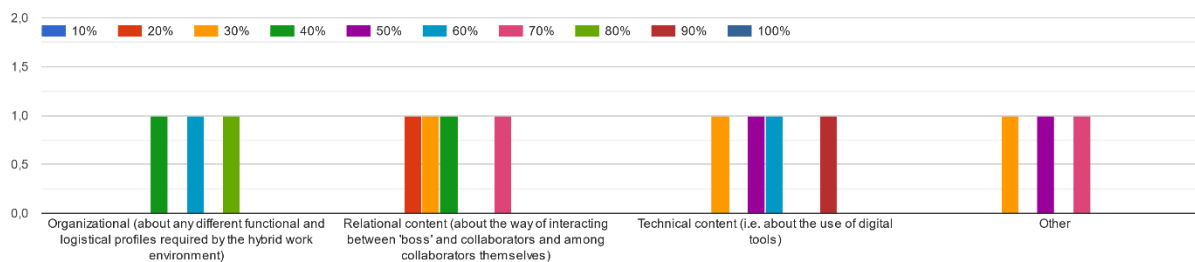
4 antwoorden



In general participants have experienced the training results as positive: in 75% they rated it a 4 (out of 5 where 5 is very positive) and in 25% a 5 (out of 5).

In the next figure you will find the distribution of content in percentages. On average the organizational content and technical content have been discussed more than the relational content.

If training has been offered, please indicate the distribution of content in percentages:



### *Future of hybrid workplace*

In the last part of the survey we have asked the experts about the future of the hybrid workplace. 60% of the experts indicate that the hybrid workplace will stay in the future, in the same extent as now. One person indicated that they will return to only face-to-face working methods and one person indicated that he/she does not know.

### ***Recommendations for the most effective performance in a hybrid working environment***





And then lastly, we have asked each respondent for three recommendations for the most effective performance of a 'hybrid' working environment concerning their organization, also in comparison with colleagues/friends working in other context. We have also asked if they could indicate the category of human resources they are more focused on, if deemed useful.

The following recommendations were given:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. clear communication</li><li>2. involve all 'levels' of the hierarchy, if that's applicable (not only decide top-down)</li><li>3. make sure that everyone has the right hardware for hybrid working</li></ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. make sure to keep in touch with your team by for example daily online meetings to start the day.</li><li>2. arrange right equipment for a home office</li><li>3. stay in contact with your employees, in the sense that also issues/problems with hybrid working come to your ear.</li></ol>
<p>In my company we have quite a hierarchical company, in which the managers prefer to have control of what their staff is doing. The "hybrid" working lacks the control and has in some cases proven to result in personal not working at all. Comparing this to others, it quite depends on the person, but I believe this is not always a good working environment for those who have the ability to take responsibility. While working together in the office has as a benefit that people see what you are doing, working from home gives people with some tasks more time to focus without being "disturbed" by colleagues.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have an online working environment, with the camera on, so that you see if somebody is working.</li><li>2. As some parts of the job are done with a lot of phone calls. If the calling system from home would be more efficient, those working from home would more likely be calling more.</li><li>3. A more clear path on working from home would be more beneficiary, making those who can take responsibility more able to enjoy their work.</li></ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Communicate clearly. Let the employees know what is expected from them and what they can expect from the organization. And ensure that everyone knows what the agreements among the team are.</li><li>2. Involve all team members. When working from home, some people tend to turn to the background. Make agreements on everyone turning their cameras on, and also talk on a regular basis one to one with employees. Moreover, I found the regular coffee breaks very useful to have informal chats with the colleagues, especially when you are in a new team. I would recommend to do this in rather small groups then with the entire team, to prevent the same people always talking.</li><li>3. Make sure the team manager/ boss is both approachable and accessible. It is important for teams to know they can reach their manager without any hesitation, whether that is in the office or online.</li></ol>



### III/ Conclusion

The transformation of the work landscape has been significantly influenced by the rise of flexible and remote working. In the Netherlands, this shift has been particularly pronounced due to the country's progressive approach towards work-life balance and an emphasis on employee autonomy.

Flexible working, characterized by adjustments in traditional work hours, and remote working, which allows employees to operate outside office confines, have offered myriad benefits. Employees have noted the improved work-life balance, autonomy, reduced commuting times, and the general flexibility that these models afford. Simultaneously, employers have benefited from reduced operational costs and improved employee satisfaction. However, challenges persist, especially in maintaining team cohesion, data security, and effective performance monitoring.

Recent statistics reveal the deep-rooted integration of hybrid working in the Dutch work culture. A notable surge in home working hours post-COVID-19, the Netherlands' tradition of part-time work, and the consistent desire among employees to retain a degree of remote working all testify to its significance.

The legal framework in the Netherlands has evolved to address this change. While there's no legal right for employees to work from home, recent legislative movements suggest a tilt towards recognizing remote work rights. Despite this, the sentiment remains divided, with a significant portion of respondents believing that such decisions should be mutually agreed upon by employers and employees, rather than mandated by law.

Central to the Dutch approach towards flexible and remote work are Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals. Their collaborations with public and private sector entities underscore the nation's commitment to aligning education with the evolving

demands of the job market. The emphasis on lifelong learning, digitalization, and customized learning pathways further accentuates the significance of VET professionals.

On-field research reveals that while the majority have experienced a continuous hybrid environment, the adoption of flexible work primarily accelerated due to the pandemic. Despite the challenges, including reduced informal interactions and challenges in team cohesion, the benefits like reduced commute and flexible hours seem to outweigh them.

Legislation and policies have played a pivotal role in shaping the flexible work landscape. The Flexible Working Act, emphasis on part-time work, introduction of digital tools, and flexible start and finish times have all contributed. Moreover, safety and ergonomic considerations for remote workers remain paramount.

In the face of evolving work dynamics, the Netherlands stands out as a progressive nation, adapting swiftly and efficiently to the demands of the modern age. The move towards a hybrid working model



isn't merely a reaction to the pandemic; it represents a profound shift in the Dutch work ethos, emphasizing efficiency, flexibility, and a balanced lifestyle.

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# **NATIONAL REPORT**

## **DANMAR - POLAND**



## I/ Desk research

Since the appearance of the Internet several decades ago, the way we work, learn, play, spend leisure time, communicate, and gather information has changed significantly.

Remote work, also known as telecommuting or teleworking, has been growing in popularity worldwide, including in Poland. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work was not as common in Poland as in some other countries, but it was still present in various industries. The pandemic, however, significantly accelerated the adoption of remote work due to lockdowns and social distancing measures.

### **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors.**

In Poland, the most important act regulating the rights and obligations of both employees and employers is the Labour Code which, despite all the changes that have taken place in Poland, has been modified to a greater or lesser extent, is still in force.

"Labour is under the protection of the Republic of Poland. The State shall exercise supervision over the conditions under which work is performed". - reads Article 24. of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997. Detailed rules applicable in the world of work, however, can be found in regulations, and above all in the Labour Code.

The Act of 18 July 2002 on the provision of electronic services (Journal of Laws No. 144, item 1204 as amended) defined the notion of electronic telecommunications and teleworkers. A teleworker is an employee who performs telework and communicates the results of the work to the employer by means of electronic communication.

On August 24, 2007, an amendment to the Labour Code was enacted, introducing detailed regulations for telecommuting. At that time, telework and teleworker were defined in detail. This was very important because previously a teleworker was considered a person who performs work outside the workplace, but is not a teleworker. According to the Code's definition, **telecommuting** is work performed regularly outside the workplace, using electronic communications. **A teleworker**, in contrast, is an employee who performs telework and communicates the results of the work to the employer via electronic communication means. The regulations also include guarantees to treat a teleworker like other employees - working in traditional forms of employment on the same or similar work - with regard to the establishment and termination of the employment relationship, terms, and conditions of employment, promotion, and access to training. The employee could not be discriminated against for taking up telecommuting as well as for refusing to do so.



Telework has not gained much popularity in the Polish labour market, most likely due to the low flexibility of telework and the need to establish its principles in the form of intra-company regulations. Remote work, outside of the telecommuting regime, should also be performed with the employee's

consent. Quite often, moreover, intra-company regulations provide for incidental remote work at the request of the employee, with the approval of the supervisor. To introduce such remote work, there was no need for regulations. Shortly after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the Polish legislature decided to introduce regulations on remote work performed at the behest of the employer. This was aimed, first and foremost, at limiting as widely as possible the accumulation of workers in workplaces. As a result, where remote work is possible, it has made it easier for employers to comply with recommendations for organizing work during a pandemic, if only to ensure distance between employees. In many cases, the presence of the entire workforce in a small office space would make it essentially impossible to provide social distance. In 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic broke out, the possibility of remote work was introduced in the Law on Special Arrangements Related to the Prevention, Prevention, and Control of COVID-19. The Law of 2.03.2020. on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction, and suppression of COVID-19, other infectious diseases, and emergencies caused by them (Journal of Laws, item 374, as amended), these rules were temporary and could only be applied during an epidemic emergency, an epidemic state declared due to COVID-19 and for three months after they were revoked. After the end of the epidemic, we did not return to stationary work as fully as before the pandemic, and remote work has entered the Polish labor market on a much wider scale.

As a result, the Polish government has decided to regulate remote work in a more comprehensive way than telework.

The Act of December 1, 2022, amending the Labour Code and certain other acts (Journal of Laws 2023, item 240) introduced remote work into the Labour Code while repealing the provisions on telework. The new regulations governing remote work came into force on April 7, 2023, when a new definition of remote work was introduced.

**Remote work** consists of performing work completely or partially at a location designated by the employee (including the employee's home address) and agreed upon with the employer in each case. The Labour Code provides for both total remote work and hybrid remote work (partly at home, partly at the company), according to the needs of the specific employee and employer. Remote work is divided into two parts. The first can be fully or partially performed at a location agreed upon between the employee and the employer. It can be laboriously referred to as permanent remote work. The second type is remote work at the request of the employee, or occasional remote.



## **B - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees.**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a key component of lifelong learning, equipping young people with the competencies and useful experience required for particular professions.

The initial Vocational Education and Training (I-VET) usually takes place within the framework of a second-level secondary school, prior to students entering vocational activities. It takes place at the school and in a work environment, such as a training centre or company. Countries use different systems, depending on the national system and economic structure.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) management system in Poland comprises three levels: national (relevant departments), regional (school curators, mainly as part of pedagogical supervision), and local (cities and county governments, which run the vast majority of schools). The Ministry of National Education conducts educational policy on vocational education in the educational system, with the support of other ministries responsible for specific professions. In turn, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education is responsible for policy on VET in higher education. The social partners also play an advisory role in VET.

In Poland, a worrying trend can be observed in the labour market: despite unemployment among young people, employers invariably indicate that they cannot find people with the qualifications they expect. Surveys of employers' needs clearly show that skilled manual workers are the most sought-after. The pioneer of dual education in Poland is craftsmanship. At the same time, companies such as Solaris, Volkswagen Poznań, and many others have also started practical vocational training at the workplace. Cooperation between employers and vocational schools most often takes place in an informal way and is definitely insufficient. In countries with a dual education system, the unemployment rate among young people is definitely the benefits of the dual education method that have been discussed for many years. To meet these expectations, the Polish Government in July 2023 adopted a draft amendment to the Law on Education, which provides for the formation of a national network of branch skill centres (**BCU**). This is a completely new project in the Polish education system linking schools, universities, leading bodies, and individual industries. - The combination of vocational schools, the bodies that run these schools, most often local governments, but not exclusively, as well as industries that are relevant and particularly important to particular regions and higher vocational-technical schools will create centres for the development of vocational education in Poland.

These are nationwide education, training, and examination centres available to students, undergraduates, doctoral students, industry workers, and other learners. BCUs are expected to conduct education and training activities. They will also integrate education with business and disseminate innovations and new technologies in a given industry. In addition, BCUs will conduct theoretical retraining courses for young workers, as well as other courses that enable them to obtain



and supplement their knowledge, skills, and professional qualifications, and change their qualifications. Local governments, individuals, and legal entities (including professional organizations), as well as government departments (including agriculture, environment, internal affairs, and health, among others), will become the governing body of the BCU. In order to establish a BCU, it will become necessary to reach an agreement with an industry organization specific to the professional field. Work on the establishment of BCUs had already been underway since September 2022. For the first three years, the project is to be financed under the National Reconstruction Plan; by the end of 2024, 120 such centres are to be established.

BCUs are to prepare staff for entry into specific industries but in cooperation with their representatives. During education at the centres, it will be possible to upgrade and change knowledge and professional qualifications. They will make it easier for schools and universities to cooperate with employers. They will support career counselling for students and career activation of students, Ph.D. students, and graduates.

## **C - The existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with their respective advantages and disadvantages.**

Nowadays, so-called flexible forms of employment are gaining popularity. They can attract new employees to the employer offering them and help them maintain a work-life balance

In Poland, as in other countries, flexible forms of work are gaining popularity in both the public and private sectors.

Although the Labour Law does not use or define the concept of flexible working time in practice, the concept does appear. Flexible working time, or moving working hours, is introduced by Article 140 of the Labour Code. It reads that the working time schedule may provide for different starting times on days that, according to the schedule, are working days for employees. The working time schedule may provide for an interval in which the employee decides the time to start work on a day that, according to the schedule, is a working day for the employee.

The existing flexible working time in Poland is sometimes described alternatively as mobile working time. In practical terms, it makes it possible to adjust the schedule to the needs expressed by the employer as well as the employee. The key point is that each flexible working time rule of the Labour Code must be honoured.

Flexible working hours entail the employer setting the time slot, and the employee himself decides the time to start work, however, he must work a certain number of hours per day.

The time of leaving work will therefore depend on the time at which the employee arrived at the company.

The second way to implement flexible working hours is to set a weekly norm for employees to spend on their work duties. The most common is 40 hours. In this case, it is entirely up to the employee how he distributes his working time throughout the week - for example, one day he can work 10 hours, another, for example, 6.





The choice of flexible working hours allows a change in the organization and distribution of working hours. Usually, this is the consequence of shift work. Any entrepreneur who runs his own business can choose his own working time system. To a considerable extent, this decision is determined by the specifics of the company, as well as the tasks that one performs on the job.

### **Flexible working time - advantages and disadvantages**

Movable working hours allow you to more easily reconcile your professional and personal life. This includes combining work and parenting responsibilities. Working with a flexible schedule also makes it possible to gain work experience while attending college or to further improve your skills in intensive training and courses. Irregular working hours are perfect for people who need a lot of time for their hobbies, such as traveling.

Flexible working hours can increase the attractiveness of a recruitment offer. Such a system of employment is valued both by working parents and people who like individually tailored hours of professional activity. Irregular working hours are one of the more desirable benefits a company can offer

**The advantages of a flexible working time system** include savings related to overtime. It is also an asset for the company during recruitment processes. Many candidates are open to job offers from companies that use flexible working hours. Flexible hours will help employees reconcile work duties with training or postgraduate studies.

Flexible working hours also allow you to match the demand for employees' services with the current needs of the company.

### **Disadvantages of flexible working hours**

A disadvantage of flexible working time is the difficulty of reconciling employee shifts.

Such a solution can help entrepreneurs adjust the demand for work only to their own needs and thus reduce wages for the period when work is not provided. The employer may also encounter difficulties in organizing joint meetings as well as performing group tasks.

## **II/On-field research**

The survey was completed by 8 employees, most of whom work in a medium-small sized company (37.5%), 25% at the university, and the rest respectively represent public administration, schools, and micro-enterprise.

Most of the survey participants (37.5 %) have experienced the "hybrid" environment for 2 years, only one person for 3 years, and the rest (25%) 6 months and one person a year and one for 5 months respectively.



We asked respondents the question: “Did you experience continuously or intermittently the 'hybrid' environment?”

62.5% answered: continuously which means that the majority of respondents have experienced the hybrid work environment on a continuous basis and 37.5% intermittently.

Flexible work arrangements may be influenced by various types of legislation, regulations, and policies. In the context of flexible work adoption in Poland, the basis of legislation varies from one answer to another: 5 respondents mentioned National Law, 3 mentioned: no regulations: decisions taken by the bosses, and the rest of the respondents listed respectively: Regional/local law (1 person), Formal internal agreements (1 person), Informal internal agreements (1 person). The basis for flexible work in the case of an informal internal agreement was quoted: “setting a policy for shifting to the home office in times of covid-19”

To all respondents to the survey, the adoption of flexible work arrangements was introduced at Covid-19

62.5% of participants in the survey did not receive any training when it comes to working remotely, and if the training was introduced it was in the form of internal solutions introduced occasionally, and for 66.7% of respondents the training was in the form of a few intensive sessions, and for 33.3% of these sessions were more but very light.

As for the evaluation of the training and its results, 66.7% of respondents rated it 3 (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative and 5 is very positive), and 33.3 % rated it 4.

According to the respondents, hybrid work will become permanent: 50% answered: yes, but to a lesser extent, 25% don't know.

At the very end, we surveyed what they thought were the positive and negative aspects of hybrid work.

On the positive side, hybrid work offers flexibility and work-life balance, as employees can create their own schedules and avoid commuting. Furthermore, many respondents pointed to reduced stress as the main benefit. Additionally, it allows for harnessing a diverse talent pool by overcoming geographical constraints, improving productivity, and reducing overhead costs for organizations. However, negative aspects must also be acknowledged. Hybrid work may lead to feelings of isolation and reduced team cohesion, as face-to-face interaction and spontaneous collaboration are limited.

Further, the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life can cause stress and hamper work-life balance.

In the end, we asked the respondents to indicate based on their experience recommendations for the most effective performance of a hybrid working environment. The following recommendations were given:

*Establish clear rules, goals, expectations, and communication, stick to a daily plan(to-do-list), better training, use better tools for communication, and set up a system of checking in for work-from-home days, the best would be a platform that can also be used for 'in-house' communication between co-workers/management*



*Have a list of tools/programs/websites that are useful to your co-workers (if it's divided into departments even better), collecting feedback from employees and assessing the effectiveness of the hybrid work model can help organizations continuously improve their approach and address any challenges that may arise.*

*Foster effective communication and collaboration.*

### III/ Conclusion

Hybrid work in Poland has witnessed significant advancements and shared challenges in recent years. As the digitisation of workplaces accelerates, it has roused the interest and intrigue of both employers and employees alike, leading to an exploration of new work paradigms. This summary seeks to provide an insightful overview of the hybrid work landscape in Poland, delving into its emerging trends, benefits, and obstacles encountered by businesses and individuals. By examining its impact on productivity, work-life balance, and employee satisfaction, this analysis aims to shed light on the potential of hybrid work as an innovative solution for the evolving needs of the Polish workforce. Hybrid work is gaining popularity in Poland, both in the public and private sectors. Companies are increasingly introducing flexible work models, allowing employees to combine remote and in-office work. Hybrid work brings both benefits, such as better work-life balance and greater flexibility, and challenges, such as social isolation, difficulties in communication, and monitoring remote work.

The coronavirus pandemic has greatly accelerated the adoption of hybrid work. In 2020, many companies had to switch to remote work, causing many to become more flexible in their work model. Many companies have introduced a hybrid model, where employees have the option to work both in the office and remotely. This allows for greater flexibility and customisation of work according to the nature of the tasks.

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# **NATIONAL REPORT**

## **ENPHASYS - CYPRUS**



## I / Desk Research

The concept of flexible working has gained significant momentum globally, and Cyprus is no exception. With its focus on promoting work-life balance, increasing productivity, and attracting skilled professionals, the country has been making strides in adopting and implementing flexible work policies. Below you can find insights into the legal and regulatory framework surrounding flexible work in both public and private sectors, the role of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals, and the partnership/collaboration trends between VET entities and public/private organizations to maintain a knowledgeable and trained workforce, in the Cypriot context as well as the existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with their respective advantages and disadvantages.

### **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors**

In Cyprus, the legal framework for flexible working in the public sector is primarily established by the Civil Service Law and relevant decrees. These regulations are designed to provide civil servants with various options for flexible work arrangements, reflecting a commitment to promoting work-life balance and accommodating personal responsibilities. Among the flexible arrangements available are part-time work, job-sharing, teleworking, and compressed workweeks. To ensure a stable work environment, civil servants can request such arrangements only after completing six months of service in their positions. The focus on work-life balance and employee well-being is evident in the legal provisions governing flexible working in the public sector. By offering these options, the government aims to support its workforce in managing their commitments while contributing effectively to their roles and maintaining productivity.

On the other hand, the private sector in Cyprus adheres to the Cyprus Labour Law, which permits employers and employees to negotiate flexible working arrangements on mutually agreeable terms. This legal flexibility encourages a wide range of innovative work approaches, including remote work, flexible working hours, and alternative work weeks. This adaptability recognizes that different individuals may have distinct needs and preferences regarding their work arrangements. While the legal framework allows for such flexibility, the actual adoption of flexible work practices may vary across industries and organizations. Larger corporations, which often have more resources and organizational capacity, are generally more open to implementing flexible work policies and accommodating their employees' preferences. They recognize the potential benefits of such practices, such as improved employee satisfaction, increased retention, and enhanced productivity.

On the other hand, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may encounter challenges in adopting and implementing flexible work policies. Resource constraints, limited administrative capacity, and a traditional organizational culture may hinder the integration of such practices in smaller businesses.



## **B- Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals are critical in championing and facilitating the adoption of flexible work practices in the workforce. As advocates for skill development and workplace adaptability, these experts play a pivotal part in designing and implementing tailored training programs that cater to the specific needs of both employees and employers.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of modern workplaces and the growing importance of work-life balance, VET professionals identify the essential skills required to thrive in flexible work arrangements. Time management, communication, adaptability, and remote collaboration skills are among their target competencies in their training initiatives. By focusing on these areas, VET professionals equip the workforce with the tools to successfully embrace flexible work options.

Public and private sector entities have increasingly realized the value of investing in their employee's professional development. Consequently, they have sought partnerships with VET providers to develop customized training programs. These collaborations create a win-win situation, as organizations can tailor the training content to meet their workforce's unique requirements.

For employers, partnering with VET providers means delivering training that aligns with the company's objectives, culture, and specific flexible work practices. Such training enhances employee engagement and job satisfaction, as workers feel valued and supported by their employers in their career growth and work-life balance aspirations.

Moreover, these training programs also benefit the employees, as they gain valuable skills that boost their productivity and make them more adaptable to changing work environments. Employees become better equipped to handle the challenges and opportunities presented by flexible work arrangements, which, in turn, positively impacts their overall job performance and job satisfaction.

Public-private partnerships, particularly, have gained popularity as an effective approach to fostering flexible work practices. Public and private sector entities can pool their resources and expertise by joining forces to create comprehensive and impactful training initiatives. Such collaborations also help address the specific needs of various industries and sectors, enabling a more inclusive and holistic approach to workforce development.



## **C- The existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with their respective advantages and disadvantages.**

**Flexible Work Hours:** The "Flexible working arrangements for work-life balance Law of 2022" in Cyprus allows companies to offer employees who are carers and parents the option to set their work hours within certain parameters. In the case of civil servants, the flexible working hours have been extended from one hour provided under the current legislation to one and a half hours in order to reduce traffic during rush hour. Either way, flexible working hours improve work-life balance, as employees can choose their start and end times based on their preference, benefiting from increased satisfaction, reduced commuting time, and improved productivity. However, it could lead to team collaboration challenges and require clear communication guidelines to ensure a smooth workflow.

**Remote Work Options:** Many private companies in Cyprus have embraced remote work, especially after Covid-19. The Cypriot parliament is discussing a bill that outlines voluntary remote work agreements between employees and employers, with provisions for necessary remote work, and fines up to 10,000 for non-compliance. Remote work offers flexibility, cost reduction, and access to talent from various locations. The bill also protects remote employees from discrimination. In addition, employees working remotely are protected from any discrimination, and additional costs of remote work, such as the cost of buying and maintaining equipment, will be covered by employers. Challenges include reduced in-person collaboration, potential isolation, and maintaining team cohesion.

**Performance-Based Assessment:** Many private firms have shifted their performance evaluation criteria to focus more on outcomes than the number of hours worked in the office. This approach fosters a results-oriented culture and recognizes quality work regardless of location, increasing trust and efficiency. However, clear and objective performance metrics are necessary to ensure fairness and avoid biases.

## **II/ On-field research**

The field research survey was completed by eight employees, the majority of whom worked for a medium-sized company. The participants had experienced a hybrid work arrangement for 1 to 3 years. Only one participant continuously worked in a hybrid environment, while others experienced it intermittently. Formal internal agreements did not impose the adoption of this arrangement; instead, it was primarily due to informal internal agreements (because of health safety concerns or preference for such working arrangements), or leadership decisions. Only one participant had experienced flexible working arrangements before Covid-19.

Five of the eight employees mentioned that they had not received any training for working in a hybrid environment. Those who did receive training stated that it was occasionally provided through internal solutions in two cases and systematically in one case. The training included tutorials (3 participants),





training games (2 participants), case studies, and success stories (2 participants). The content covered organizational matters (65%), technical aspects like digital tool usage (60%), other matters (60%), and relational aspects with bosses and colleagues 50%).

Regarding the future of the hybrid workplace, three participants believed it would become less permanent than it is now, two supported it staying the same, two were uncertain, and one mentioned a return to only face-to-face working methods.

Participants highlighted several negative aspects of hybrid work arrangements, including isolation, reduced social interaction, lack of teamwork, blurred work-life boundaries, increased workload, transferring equipment between home and office, and technical difficulties during online meetings. On the other hand, participants mentioned positive aspects of hybrid work, such as increased concentration and productivity, saved commuting time and costs, flexibility in organizing their schedules, the comfort of working from home, feeling restful as they have the opportunity to sleep more and having more time to pursue personal interests, complete house chores, and other obligations that would usually pile up for the weekend.

To effectively perform in a hybrid environment, participants recommended the following organizational policies and good practices:

1. Implement good monitoring of work progress.
2. Conduct regular virtual meetings for better communication and collaboration.
3. Provide training for digital tool usage and a smooth transition to hybrid working conditions.
4. Systematically adopt hybrid work, allowing employees to choose which days to work from home.
5. Establish fixed procedures for organizational tasks with clear internal deadlines and review processes.
6. Divide workload based on the working environment (office or home).
7. Ensure that employees have a reliable internet connection at home.

### III / Conclusion

Cyprus progressively embraces flexible work practices, supported by a legal framework catering to the public and private sectors. The legal framework in the public sector provides civil servants with various options for flexible work arrangements, focusing on promoting work-life balance and accommodating personal responsibilities. In contrast, the private sector allows employers and employees to negotiate flexible working arrangements on mutually agreeable terms, promoting various innovative work approaches. However, adopting flexible work practices may vary across industries and organizations,



with larger corporations being more receptive due to their resources and capacity, while SMEs may face challenges in implementation.

In addition, VET professionals play a pivotal role in upskilling the workforce, and partnerships and collaborations between these experts and entities in both sectors have become more prevalent. These collaborations create a win-win situation, allowing organizations to align training with their objectives, culture, and flexible work practices, while employees gain valuable skills for increased productivity and adaptability. Finally, the on-field research survey sheds light on the experiences and perceptions of employees working in a hybrid environment in Cyprus. Participants highlighted both positive and negative aspects of flexible work, with increased concentration, productivity, and time savings among the benefits. However, feelings of isolation, reduced social interaction, and technical difficulties were mentioned as drawbacks.

The findings emphasize the importance of providing training and support to employees in hybrid work settings and implementing clear procedures and effective monitoring to ensure successful adaptation to this work model.

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# NATIONAL REPORT

## FCB - BELGIQUE



## I /Desk Research

This national literature search focuses on telework in Belgium, examining the legal and regulatory framework in both the public and private sectors. We will also analyse the current situation and trends related to the role of vocational education and training (VET) professionals and their partnerships with public and private entities aimed at maintaining a skilled and trained workforce. Finally, we will explore existing policies and practices surrounding flexible working in public and private organizations, highlighting their respective advantages and disadvantages.

### **A - Legal and regulatory framework in the public and private sectors**

#### **a) Private sector**

In Belgium, telecommuting in the private sector is essentially regulated by collective labour agreement no. 85 .

**Telework** is legally defined as a form of organization and/or performance of work, using information technology within the framework of an employment contract, in which work which could have been carried out on the employer's premises is carried out away from these premises on a regular and not occasional basis.

In Belgium, a clear distinction must be made between the regulation of regularly organized telework (relating to labour agreement no. 85) and that of occasional telework, for which the law of March 5, 2017 concerning feasible and manageable work has created a different regulatory framework. Occasional teleworking is available in cases of force majeure, i.e., when the employee, due to unforeseen circumstances beyond his or her control, is unable to work at his or her usual place of work (e.g. in the event of an unforeseen train strike or severe weather conditions causing serious traffic problems).

In order to transpose the aforementioned European framework agreement of July 16, 2002, on telework, Belgium adopted National Labour Convention no. 85 of November 9, 2005, on telework, which enables private sector companies to introduce telework on a regular and permanent basis as a form of work organization. In this context, telecommuting is seen as a special form of remote working, not covered by a specific employment contract.

#### **Voluntary teleworking: the need for a written agreement**

The rule is as follows: Teleworking must always be voluntary. In Belgium, it must therefore be the subject of a written agreement between employer and employee, at the latest when the teleworker begins to telework. In the case of an existing employment contract, the agreement must be the subject of an amendment to the employment contract. If teleworking is not part of the initial job description,



the decision to move to teleworking can be reversed by individual and/or collective agreement. A written document must mention the following points:

- frequency of teleworking and, where applicable, the days and hours during which teleworking is carried out, or the days and hours during which the employee is present at the company.
- times and periods when the worker must be contactable, and by what means.
- arrangements for covering the costs of equipment required for teleworking.
- times when the teleworker can call on technical support.
- procedures for returning to work on the company's premises and, if applicable, the notice period and/or duration of teleworking and its renewal.
- the location(s) where the teleworker has chosen to work.

The teleworker must be informed of the working conditions:

- a description of the work to be performed.
- the company department to which the teleworker is attached.
- identification of their immediate superior and other persons to whom they can turn for personal or professional advice.
- reporting procedures.

### Working conditions

- Teleworkers must enjoy working conditions comparable to those of employees working on the company's premises.
- In this respect, they must enjoy the same rights in terms of training, career opportunities, assessment policy and collective rights as other employees.
- - Teleworkers manage the organization of their work within the framework of the working hours applicable in the company. Their workload must be comparable to that of workers on the employer's premises.
- The employer must supply, install and maintain the equipment required for teleworking. It must also cover the cost of telework-related communications and connections.

### Safety and health control

Internal prevention services may inspect the teleworking location, with the consent of the teleworker if it is the home.

#### a) Public sector

In Belgium, in the public sector, the government itself determines the rules applicable to teleworking at each level: for example, for the federal government, the Royal Decree of November 22, 2006 on teleworking and satellite office working in the federal administrative civil service applies. According to Digital Wallonia's 2022 barometer, 33% of public sector workers have the option of teleworking. In the federal administrative civil service: the regulatory framework is set by the Royal Decree of March 9, 2017. In parallel to the private sector, many public services have adopted specific regulations aimed at framing the practice of teleworking within the public sector. For many years, the use of telecommuting as a means of organizing work has been more widespread in the public sector than in the private sector. We will simply list the main regulations



in this area, with the dates of those currently in force: for the federal civil service, the Royal Decree of November 22, 2006 on telecommuting and satellite office working in the federal administrative civil service -for the French Community, the French Community Government Decree of November 15, 2017 on teleworking for the Walloon Region, the Walloon Government Decree of December 5, 2019 on teleworking.

## **B - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees**

Belgium is a federal state made up of three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital) and three communities (Flemish Community (BEFL), French Community (BEFR) and German-speaking Community, BEDG). The multiplicity of education and training authorities and the diversity of education and training systems do not prevent policy coherence around common objectives, as defined in the 2014 National Reform Program: reducing the school dropout rate, increasing the rate of participation in lifelong learning, developing access to and valuing qualifications, reducing inequalities within each region.

At all levels, vocational education and training (VET) policies closely involve the social partners. In Belgium, vocational training is a lever for effective employment policy. In 2020, the Brussels Government has earmarked an additional 3,600,000 euros to strengthen the training offer in sectors in demand in 2021 and 2022. In Brussels, for example, the “Pôles Formation Emploi” are currently being set up. A “Pôle Formation Emploi” is the result of a public/private partnership. The aim is to improve the economic situation of a sector by meeting companies' needs for skilled workers, training job seekers, workers and students in the latest technologies in the sector, and anticipating the needs of the future.

## **C - The existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with their respective advantages and disadvantages.**

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a spectacular rise in teleworking in Belgium, overturning traditional ways of organizing work for both public and private entities.

Its implementation and policy, however, remain highly innovative.

Some advantages and disadvantages:

**A lack of work policy in structures**



In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more companies have decided that telecommuting will continue to have a place in their organization, not only when activities resume after containment, but also in the more distant future. The majority of Belgian workers, too, want to move towards a system of alternating office work and telecommuting in the future. A survey conducted by the University of Ghent (2023) even indicates that 60% of Belgian workers want to telework at least two days a week. But while demand is growing, half of Belgian companies currently have no "teleworking

policy or charter". Many organizations are therefore wondering how to properly implement an effective and sustainable teleworking policy.

### **Employers have the right to monitor their employees Internet activity**

Employers not only have the right to monitor their employees' web browsing, they also have an obligation to do so in order to justify any illicit activities. Indeed, employers are legally considered to be Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and can be held responsible for the actions of their employees. The URLs consulted can be recorded and kept for a year. On the other hand, the employer is not authorized to view or take screenshots of the content of the pages when they are consulted by the employee. For example, the employer will be able to see the URL of the personal mailbox, but not its content. Employers must also inform employees before implementing these systems.

**Employees' right to disconnect** The Belgian law of October 3, 2022 provides for a right to disconnect, i.e. the right for workers not to be connected to professional digital tools (mobile phone, smartphone, PC, e-mail, etc.) outside their working hours. The aim is twofold: to guarantee respect for the worker's rest and vacation periods, but also for his or her private and family life. This right is inserted in the March 26, 2018 law on strengthening economic growth and social cohesion (art. 16 to 17/2). The right to disconnect participates in the fight against psychosocial risks such as burn out and aims to protect the worker's work-life balance. In accordance with this law, all employers with 20 or more employees must at least sign the following agreements on the use of digital tools: practical arrangements for implementing the employee's right not to be contacted outside working hours; instructions on how to use digital tools in such a way as to guarantee rest periods, vacations, privacy and family life; training and awareness-raising initiatives for employees and management on the sensible use of digital tools and the risks associated with excessive connection.

## **II /On field research**

Our field survey focused on 8 salaried workers, the majority of whom (62.5%) came from third-sector organizations (cooperatives, associations, foundations), but also from the public administration, university and high school sectors.

It should be noted that all the participants testified to a recent, post-covid experience of working in a hybrid environment, no more than two and a half years old.

Here are the salient features of this study:





- 100% of participants had intermittent experience of the hybrid environment.
- 100% of participants had been offered one or more training courses to integrate this environment, with a large predominance for training courses carried out by their own structures and not by specialized external organizations. With regard to the teaching methods used, the most common were tutorials (100%), games (62.5%) and success stories (37%). All participants rated the training courses positively on a scale of 1 to 5. These training courses focus more on technical content (i.e. the use of digital tools).
- 50% of participants felt that this hybrid work is not destined to become permanent and will return to a face-to-face mode, 37, 5% think that it will return to face-to-face to a lesser extent, only 12.5% think that hybrid work will be reinforced.
- As for the disadvantages of hybrid working, 9 participants felt that "isolation and loss of social contact" was the most negative aspect of their experience. Also cited were the dilution of team spirit and low interactivity.
- As for the benefits, a better work-life balance was highlighted, followed by "savings in terms of time (travel) and money (fuel)".
- The 8 participants' tips for improving the hybrid remote working experience are, according to their own experience within their current organization:

1. Ensuring regular face-to-face contact between colleagues, providing high-performance, appropriate equipment, working together to achieve objectives instead of spending time in front of a controlled screen.

2. Acquire good equipment, have solid training in technical tools, and have regular feedback and consultation with colleagues.

3. Equip learners with computer equipment, especially those from poor families, set aside a time for face-to-face meetings to maintain team spirit, offer regular training not only on technical aspects, but also on organizational and motivational aspects.

4. Planning regular formal meetings.

5. Offer intensive training on all aspects of hybrid work, provide quality materials, ensure team coordination.

6. Staff training; provision of good equipment; designation of a "teleworking" coordinator/referent within the organization.

7. Training on motivation in addition to training on technical aspects; explore all existing technical solutions before making the choice; update networks and servers.

8. Ensure better coordination of remote workers; provide solid training on all aspects of telecommuting and hybrid working; equip workers.





### III / Conclusion

Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, the practice of hybrid working was marginal in Belgium, particularly in the private sector. It still concerned a small percentage of workers and was generally limited to a restricted part of their working time. Gradually, however, we began to hear of a growing demand for telecommuting among workers, in the name of a better work-life balance, but of companies that were for the most part still rather reticent.

In just three years, work has changed radically. In Belgium, by combining the nature of the work performed (the profession) and the establishment's sector of activity, several recent studies have estimated that almost half of salaried jobs located in the Brussels Region (the capital) could be concerned by the application of hybrid working.

It should be noted that the experience of the participants in this study shows that the advent of hybrid working is a relatively young experience in Belgium, rooted in post-Covid-19 practices and not yet perceived by the participants in the professional training course as a sustainable or acquired organization, even if they emphasize a better quality of work in general, enabling them to reconcile their professional and private lives. It should also be noted that the participants' needs do not seem to lie at a technical level, but rather reflect a need for a better understanding of the new technologies.



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# NATIONAL REPORT

## GDOCE - SPAIN



## I/ Desk research

Amidst the recent pandemic and the restrictions it imposed, the importance of flexibility in the workspace and the adoption of hybrid environments policies surged across many productive sectors in Spain. Organisations recognized the need to adapt swiftly, embracing hybrid work models to strike a balance between remote and on-site work, ensuring continuity, productivity and efficiency in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Despite the potential offered by technological advancements in recent decades that could have facilitated office-home working arrangements long before the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, Spain lagged behind other EU countries with a mere 25.5% of its workers having prior remote working experience. Not to mention socio-cultural barriers, both public administrations and companies faced significant challenges in implementing remote work into their operations.

During the height of the health crisis, 31.7% of the Spanish workforce swiftly transitioned to remote work, and similar data could be observed for Cyprus and Poland. However, these figures were still far from the remarkably higher rates of Luxembourg (56.1%) and Finland (60.5%). A year later, as restrictions were lifted, remote working hours decreased from 16.7 to 15.1 hours per week (equivalent to 35.6% of the weekly hours). Nonetheless, an overwhelming 83.7% of Spanish workers surveyed expressed a strong inclination for this work modality, indicating a lasting impact on the country's work culture.

According to the latest report released by the Spanish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation in March 2023, the percentage of people engaged in remote work has seen a decline from 13.6% (2,742,000 people) to 12.5% (2,563,000 people), staying below the EU average. Notably, the post-pandemic trend indicates a convergence between regular and casual remote work, with the latter experiencing the most significant increase.

Analysing the type of employment relationship, self-employed individuals stand out, with almost triple the percentage of employees engaging in remote work at any frequency. Regarding sex, while women initially participated more in remote work during the early stages of the pandemic, the gender gap has narrowed by the end of 2022. At that point, 12.6% of women were teleworking, compared to 12.5% of men, demonstrating a more balanced distribution of remote work participation between sexes. Furthermore, remote work appears to be more prevalent among individuals over the age of 25, indicating that older employees are more likely to embrace teleworking as a viable work option.



## **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors.**

In Spain, remote work is subject to regulation by the law enacted on the 9th of July 2021, which replaced the previous Royal Decree-Law 28/2020, in effect since the 13th of October 2020. This current law is notably shaped by various national regulations that have evolved over the past decade, as well as the influence of international agreements.

The aim of this Law is to provide sufficient, cross-cutting and integrated regulation in a single substantive rule that responds to various needs while striking a balance between the utilisation of emerging employment arrangements and the benefits they bring for both companies and workers. On one hand, the Law seeks to foster the implementation of these innovative forms of employment, while, on the other hand, ensuring a robust framework of rights that safeguard various principles.

These principles encompass the voluntary and reversible nature of the new employment modalities, allowing workers to make informed choices about their work arrangements. Moreover, the Law emphasises the principle of equal treatment in professional conditions, guaranteeing fair pay, including compensation for expenses, and promoting equitable opportunities for career advancement and vocational training. Furthermore, the Law seeks to safeguard collective rights, ensuring workers have a collective voice and are able to collectively negotiate for their interests. It also addresses the crucial aspects of maximum working hours and minimum rest periods to protect workers' well-being and work-life balance.

Equal opportunities across territories are a key focus, as the Law aims to eliminate geographical disparities and promote fairness in employment opportunities across different regions. At the same time, flexibility in the distribution of working time is encouraged, allowing workers to adapt their schedules to better align with their personal commitments and responsibilities. Additionally, the Law places significant importance on preventive measures, especially related to physical and mental fatigue, as well as the use of data display screens. It aims to mitigate the risks of work-related strain and isolation to ensure the overall health and well-being of workers.

The second additional provision establishes that the stipulations contained in this Law shall not apply to the civil servants of the Public Administrations, which shall be governed in this matter by their specific regulations, whereby we can understand that the scope of application is limited to the private sector.



The Royal Decree aimed at regulating remote work in the State Administration was made available for public information on the 15th of December 2021. The proposed framework emphasises the role of remote work in enhancing work organisation by setting clear objectives and evaluating their accomplishment. It seeks to promote cost reduction and address the organisational needs of ministerial departments and public bodies. Additionally, the decree aims to support the residence of public employees in areas facing demographic decline, contributing to regional development. Under this proposal, remote work is designed to complement face-to-face work and is intended to be voluntary and reversible, except for justified special circumstances. The option to work remotely is not considered an entitlement for public employees, nor is it associated with the occupation of a specific position in the corresponding job list. Nonetheless, this proposed framework remains pending as of now, subject to further developments and potential revisions in the future.

As the government undertakes the revision of the Civil Service Law that governs the activities of public employees, it is noteworthy that the incorporation of the teleworking aspect has been excluded from the current proposal. As a result, there is currently no specific regulatory framework for remote work in the public sector. However, there is growing social pressure to address this gap and introduce provisions for teleworking in the public service.

## **B - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees.**

At the national level in Spain, similar to the European context, vocational training holds a central position in policy measures, including education, labour, and economic spheres. Strategies and plans devised in recent years are not solely addressed to appeal to young individuals but also aim to give response to the needs of the entire population, emphasising the importance of a lifelong learning approach. The focus is on establishing a unified, flexible, and easily accessible VET system to ensure continuous learning opportunities for everyone.

The current VET policy prioritises the modernization and regular updates of vocational training, with the goal of enhancing qualification levels and employability across the workforce. Additionally, the policy framework actively encourages innovation and entrepreneurship within the VET sector, fostering a dynamic environment that aligns with the evolving demands of the job market.

Social partners and regional authorities play a crucial role in ensuring the success of national VET strategies. According to Fundae, the foundation for on-the-job training, the year 2022 witnessed a significant participation in training programs, with 5.3 million workers benefiting from the initiatives provided by 343,677 firms. Impressively, both figures presented annual increases of 6.5% and 10%, respectively.



Out of the 5.3 million participants, a substantial 3.1 million (58%) received in-house training, indicating the commitment of companies to upskill and empower their workforce. Face-to-face training prevailed as the primary modality in 63% of cases, while online courses (37%) had double the duration.

Regarding the training topics, management and administration emerged as the most popular choice, with nearly one-third of participants enrolling in such courses. The importance of safety and environment was also highlighted, as 25% of participants opted for courses related to these critical areas.

In terms of economic resources, companies employed 573.1 million of the training credit available, showcasing the dedication of businesses towards investing in their employees' development. The private contribution of companies to training costs amounted to a total of 888.6 million.

## **C- The existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with the respective advantages and disadvantages .**

**Job Sharing:** flexible work arrangement that involves two or more employees jointly sharing the responsibilities and duties of a full-time position. In this setup, each job-sharing employee usually works part-time, with overlapping hours to ensure smooth communication and collaboration. The distribution of responsibilities, tasks, and workload is based on the individual employees' skills, preferences, and availability, allowing for a balanced and efficient division of labour. Depending on the agreed arrangement, job-sharing employees may alternate days, weeks, or shifts to accommodate their respective schedules. *Advantages:* Reduction of staff turnover, retaining talent, reducing stress and better work-life balance. *Disadvantages:* Limited career progression, misunderstandings, job insecurity and it is challenging to find the perfect partner.

**Telework:** refers to the execution of tasks from a location outside the employer's office, facilitated by the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT). When ICT is not involved, this arrangement is commonly known as remote work. In both cases, the employees are enabled to work remotely, contributing to enhanced work flexibility and the potential for increased productivity. *Advantages:* No time spent in commuting, cost savings, environmental benefits and access to a broader talent pool. *Disadvantages:* Communication might be challenging, isolation, lack of teamwork, difficulty in monitoring progress and blurred work-life boundaries.

**Smartwork:** encompasses not only the freedom to choose the location of work but also the flexibility to determine the most suitable working hours. In this modern work approach, employees have the autonomy to decide not only where they work but also when they work, allowing for a personalised and adaptive work schedule. *Advantages:* Being able to combine work with other duties and activities, focus on outcomes and adaptability. *Disadvantages:* overemphasis on metrics, neverending working days and working hours out of sync with the rest of the workforce.



**Hour banks:** a system that permits workers to accumulate credits or debits for hours worked over an extended period, with specific limits in place. Employees can accumulate surplus hours worked, which can then be compensated with paid time off or utilised for planned vacations or time away from work. *Advantages:* employee motivation, improved attendance, attractive flexible arrangement and reduced overtime costs. *Disadvantages:* management complexity, potential for abuses, team coordination becomes challenging and legal compliance.

**Compressed week:** often referred to as the "4x3" or "4-day work week," is a work arrangement where the same total weekly hours are completed, but over fewer days per week, with longer working days. For example, employees may work for four days, each with a duration of ten hours, and enjoy three consecutive days off. *Advantages:* reduced commuting, focus on productivity, cost savings and attractive strategy to retain talent. *Disadvantages:* Longer working days, not applicable to every industry and impact on health.

## II/ On field research

Respondents to the questionnaire are mostly individuals working within medium-sized companies, occupying a diverse range of positions that span from interns to middle managers. Survey participants have been consistently engaged in a 'hybrid' work setup for a duration of at least 2 years, with some having experienced this arrangement for up to 6 years. These new working conditions have been brought upon them due to the COVID-19 outbreak, except in one single case where the hybrid model was somehow present..

The regulation governing flexible work arrangements drew from a combination of national and regional laws, with a notable emphasis on informal agreements made internally. Based on the responses, it became apparent that these agreements were initiated from “above” and significantly influenced the determination of the “where” tasks were performed. Online meetings became the common rule and in some cases the focus was on the finalisation of tasks rather than on working hours. In informal discussions aimed at filling in gaps in other answers, flexible working hours and hybrid meetings were again highlighted.

Regarding training, it appears that the adoption of this practice is not widespread. Merely one out of eight individuals asked participated in any form of training to be prepared for the hybrid work environment. In that case, it was provided by a third party, occasionally, delivered through tutorials, and covered organisational and technical aspects.

Looking ahead to the future of their hybrid workplace, almost three-quarters of the respondents believe that this arrangement will either persist in its current form or potentially become even more prominent. In contrast, one-third of the participants anticipate a return to face-to-face working methods, indicating different perspectives regarding the long-term trajectory of the hybrid work model.

Looking at the positive aspects of the hybrid work model, respondents pointed out several favourable outcomes. These included efficient time management, enhanced work organisation, minimised commuting time, cost saving, boosted productivity, higher employee satisfaction levels, and an





improved work-life balance. On the less positive side, respondents mentioned issues such as miscommunication, the complexity of defining work schedules, the potential loss of collaborative synergies due to reduce in-person interactions, delays in information sharing, issues keeping track of extra hours and working longer hours.

Lastly, with regards to recommendations, participants in the survey stated relevant suggestions such as: the importance of sticking to working hours; incorporating breaks into one's schedule; ensuring effective disconnection; creating protocols for coordination; enhancing communication among team members to counter the potential isolation of remote work; offering compensation for the expenses associated with teleworking; a more balanced distribution of work; offering improved work tools and technical assistance; designating a dedicated work area and; maintaining a structured and organised approach to tasks.

### III/ Conclusion

The concept of a hybrid work environment has become popular in Spain, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to March 2020, remote work was relatively limited, but the crisis prompted a substantial shift, with around one-third of the Spanish workforce transitioning to remote work. Although the volume of remote working hours decreased a year later, the impact on individuals was profound, leading to a preference for this work modality (as indicated by 83.7% expressing a strong inclination for it).

The Spanish Government was pushed to catch up with this new reality and to regulate this “new work culture”. The goal was to establish a cohesive framework for the whole territory, while balancing the advantages of emerging employment arrangements for both companies and workers. As described previously, the legislation encourages the adoption of innovative work models while upholding a comprehensive set of rights that protect essential principles. However, the public sector continues to await its dedicated legislation in this regard.

In terms of training, there is a unanimous recognition among companies, social stakeholders, as well as central and regional governments about the importance of upskilling the workforce across a diverse spectrum of skills. Data available shows that training is continuously on the rise, reaching 5.3 million workers. Predominantly, the usual approach involves offering management and administration courses, often conducted in-house and face-to-face. Last, worth noting is the total investment of 888.6 million euros in facilitating employee training by companies.

The landscape of flexible work practices in Spain is diverse and expansive, making it a challenging task to encompass the entire spectrum in the list provided. The compilation, while selective, aims to capture a blend of both commonplace and cutting-edge approaches. On one end, practices like telework and smart work have been the number one and two options assumed by most organisations. On the other end, practices such as hour banks and job sharing are perfect examples of innovative strategies to enhance both productivity and employee well-being. This comprehensive range of practices show the efforts of organisations to maintain optimal productivity and efficiency, without undermining the motivation and work-life balance of their workforce.



The on-field research served as a practical validation for almost all of the earlier discussed elements. These insights highlighted that the formulation of hybrid work agreements arose from a blend of informal internal negotiations and the framework of national and regional legislations. Numerous positive aspects have been highly valued by participants, nonetheless it's important not to lose sight of feasible improvements. The general feeling is that respondents are pleased with this modality, although some of the companies they work for might not keep it in the near future. Last, in contrast to the studies presented previously, training was actually scarce in the chosen sample.

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# **NATIONAL REPORT**

## **MEDORO - ITALY**



## I/ Desk research

Also in Italy, with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of smart working and more generally of smart working has spread massively, which has led to the increasingly frequent formation of "hybrid" work environments. Smart working has been promoted with (almost) full marks by employers and workers, as also emerges from recent studies by INAPP, the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies. For 66% of employers it increases productivity and saves costs of managing physical spaces, in particular for small businesses and for 72% of employers it increases organizational well-being and improves work-life balance of employees.

On the workers' side, on the other hand, it is the improvement in the quality of life that is particularly appreciated. For 80% it improves the organization and management of private-family commitments, for 72% it favours greater autonomy with respect to methods, schedules, rhythms, and places of work and, above all, saving time when traveling (90 %). There is no shortage of critical issues: isolation and difficulties in relationships with colleagues are the greatest for both companies and workers.

The public sector does not seem to have seized the opportunity of this change and already in 2022 only 57% of institutions adopted smart working forms, compared to 67% of the previous year. However, a trend reversal is expected in 2023, with a growth of around 20% in the number of workers involved.

## **A - Legal and regulatory framework in public and private sectors.**

In Italy, the "hybrid" work environment at the regulatory level is often referred to as "agile work" which basically involves the more or less intense and prolonged use of "smart working". Since the beginning of 2020, on the occasion of the Covid-19 pandemic, smart working has spread exponentially in Italy, so much so that the government has intervened on several occasions to review rules and regulations considered outdated. As mentioned, smart working has been significantly reduced in the public administration and currently only some categories of "disadvantaged" workers or some territories affected by some disasters or other emergencies benefit from it (for example the flood in Emilia-Romagna). For both the public and private sectors, when it comes to Smart Working in Italy, the reference discipline is the Law of 22 May 2017, n.81 (articles 18-24), as last amended by the Law of 4 August 2022, n. 122 (which converted, with amendments, Legislative Decree No. 73 of 21 June 2022, the so-called Tax Simplification Decree). In 2021, the National Agile Working protocol for the private sector was adopted, shared between the social partners, which set the rules for carrying out this working method.



### The essential elements of smart working in the private sector according to current legislation

1) The legislation in force on smart working provides that in order to adopt this form of agile work, a written agreement is required between the employer and employee which establishes the duration, conditions of withdrawal, methods of execution of the service, technological tools used, in compliance with the right to disconnect for the worker

2) The employer must communicate electronically to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies:

- the names of the workers;
- the start and end date of work services in agile mode, according to certain methods identified with a specific Decree of the Ministry of Labor and of Social Policies (n. 149 of 22 August 2022).

3) The National agile working protocol for the private sector, signed in agreement between the Ministry of Labor and trade union representatives, provides for:

- written individual agreement (with obligation implemented from 1 January 2023), between employer and employee which clarifies terms, duration, methods, places, tools to use and criteria for training
- participation in Smart Working takes place on a voluntary basis
- any refusal by the worker does not imply the extremes of dismissal, nor can it be the subject of admonitions on a disciplinary level
- new protections for fragile workers, women, the disabled, as defined by the Work-Life Conciliation Decree

4) Smart Working remained a right for frail, disabled or immunosuppressed workers and for employees with children under the age of 14 until 31 December 2023. Starting from 13 August 2022, employers who enter into agreements for performance of work in smart working are required to recognize additional priorities for those with children up to 12 years of age or without any age limit in the case of children with disabilities and for caregivers.

### Smart working in the Public Administration

With the Covid-19 emergency, the Decree Law of 17 March 2020, n. 18 (article 87) introduced Smart Working as the only working method available in the public sector. As of October 15, 2021, this setting has been deprecated, but with some exceptions. In fact, recourse to smart working has remained a right only for frail, disabled or immunosuppressed workers, but for now only until 30 September 2023. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor has published the "Guidelines on labor agile in public administrations", a document that links smart working "to individual agreement, to the security of the IT platform and to the quality of services for citizens" and which has become the canvas on which to reason on the subject for the near future.



**A - Current situation and trends relating to the role of VET professionals and the forms of partnership/collaboration between them and the entities of public and private sectors benefiting from VET mainly aimed in maintaining knowledgeable and trained employees.**

In Italy the public system of Vocational Education and Training is entrusted to the Regions in terms of planning and implementation through the training institutions that are accredited to access the training plans. The private circuit of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is overseen by Training Organizations (possibly accredited at national and/or regional level), by Bilateral Organizations (made up of Trade Unions and Entrepreneurial Associations) and by Inter-professional Funds (fuelled by contributions from companies to finance training when it is not subsidized by public funds). These three subjects are committed to becoming more and more strategic players in the still tenuous link between the worlds of business and knowledge and to contribute to a renewed conception of school-work alternation, above all through a renewed alliance with a still bewildered school world from the effects of the pandemic.

The "right" training, after the experience of "remote" work massively adopted during the pandemic period and in the perspective of an ever greater diffusion of "hybrid" work, must contribute to overcoming the concrete risk of isolation (which has led to a drop in the generativity of ideas in the workplace, as demonstrated by various studies - for example the research promoted by Microsoft "Building resilience & maintaining innovation in a hybrid world. Modernising the workplaces emerges as top business transformation priority", October 2020 ) aiming to strengthen and support a recovery of subjectivity in work precisely in the era of algorithms.

Furthermore, there will be a further evolution and profound revision of roles, professionalism, work organisation, which will lead to a situation with significant gaps in skills and knowledge in vast sections of the working population. However, these gaps will not be homogeneous and cannot be addressed with identical standard training for all but necessarily adapted to the particularities of people, roles, work environments, especially in adult training. A great role can be played by the workers' representation, at every level, enhancing and implementing some training tools already present in some national collective agreements of the category.

Training is also one of the strategic levers necessary to accompany public administrations in a process of progressive "hybridisation" which seems to be demonstrated by the fact that in 2023 an increase of around 20% of the workers involved is expected compared to around 600,000 in 2022, which by 33% compared to 2021 and by as much as 70% compared to 2020, the year the pandemic exploded (FPA Annual Report) This training will have to support in particular the adoption of 'true Smart Working', which must be for public administrations the opportunity to implement a profound change, focused



on work by objectives and an intelligent digitisation of activities, to avoid the risk of reducing smart working to remote work only.

## **A - The existing policies /practices adopted for flexible work by public and private entities with the respective advantages and disadvantages .**

The significant diffusion of flexible working methods and therefore of "hybrid" work environments is still relatively "young" so it is difficult to identify consolidated support policies and/or universally adopted good practices, detectable from reliable statistics. However, thanks to some micro-surveys and/or targeted journalistic inquiries, some examples and some trends of a certain interest can already be found, above all in the private sector but also in some realities of the public sector. Here are three, attributable to different areas: training, financial support, organization and management.

### **The peer working group**

In defining and sharing training activities, it was useful to set up a joint working group on an experimental basis which:

- identifies the training needs, programmes, criteria and aims of the training offer, assessing its feasibility
- analyzes the quality and relative effectiveness of the training provided, in order to take any corrective actions
- promotes the use and implementation of financing instruments (bilateral bodies, interprofessional training funds, calls for tenders on public funds, etc.).

At the end of the experimental period, the company evaluates the effects, effectiveness and results of the working group and decides on its possible extension.

### **New Skills Fund**

An innovative financing tool consisting of a public fund co-financed by the European Social Fund, created to counter the economic effects of the Covid-19 epidemic. It allows companies to adapt workers' skills, allocating part of the working hours to training. The hours of salary of personnel in training are paid for by the fund, thanks to contributions from the State and the ESF, with the provision of validation through collective agreements which, in some areas, have had a territorial extension and involved small companies and workers often without direct union representation.

### **True smart working for public administrations**

The results of the 2022 Research of the Smart Working Observatory of the Politecnico di Milano highlight how organizations that maintain a traditional model of face-to-face work have had minor increases in the last year in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and capacity for innovation and they have diminished their ability to attract and retain resources. The situation of the realities that have stopped at remote work alone is little better. On the other hand, the situation of those realities that have adopted a complete Smart Working model, accompanying a progressive and increasingly differentiated flexibility in the choice of workplaces, with interventions on flexibility in managing working hours, on digital skills, on the redesign of spaces and on the evolution of the managerial and leadership model in the direction of work by objectives. Instead, these realities have favored an





improvement in employee engagement and well-being and have therefore achieved better productivity and innovation capacity for the benefit of society and the environment as a whole.

## II/ On field research

The field survey was carried out on 8 interviewees, of which most (4) working in small or micro companies and each of the others working in the school, in the public administration (local authority), in the third sector (social) and as labor policy expert. With regards to their role, there are 2 top-managers, 2 middle-managers, 3 office heads or group heads and a freelancer, mostly with a hybrid work experience of at least 3 years and equally divided between subjects with continuous experience and with intermittent experience.

Most of their reference bodies relied on national rules complemented by formal internal agreements (which quite rigidly defined working conditions), 2 resorted to informal agreements (mostly based on personal empowerment and the achievement of certain results) and in others the "bosses" decided directly, while the division between entities that had already experimented with hybrid flexible working methods before Covid-19 and entities that activated it during the pandemic is in perfect balance.

As for the hybrid working methods, smart working (or sometimes simple teleworking) was mostly used to be carried out a few days a week or a month and more rarely inspired by a more "free" flexibility, in relation to certain objectives and / or in any case to specific working needs.

In relation to the training eventually received to adapt to hybrid work, only 50% of the interviewees stated that they had received it, almost all (3 out of 4) with interventions carried out directly within the institution, half systematically and half occasionally. For all the interviewees, the training was done through numerous but short or very short sessions mainly using tutorials (1), or success stories (1), or case studies (1) or other teaching tools (1). As regards the contents, technical issues prevailed (between 70% and 100%) compared to organizational and relational ones (present between 50% and 70% of incidence). The judgment on the quality and usefulness of this training was, however, on average very positive

As regards the perspective of the hybrid environment, the answers are also in this case quite balanced between an unchanged situation (3), one of a lower level (2) and one of a higher level (2)

Participants (not all, 6 out of 8) highlighted some negative aspects of hybrid work, including (mostly) isolation or in any case reduced social interaction and technical problems especially with connection, followed to a lesser extent by confusion between work and private life or possible increase of the workload. One interviewee pointed out, as a negative factor, that joining the "Hybrid" system is on a voluntary basis: an issue to think about.....

On the other hand, the participants highlighted a series of positive aspects mostly linked to the quality and organization of their lives such as reduction of transfer times and better management of their time to devote more to work or (mostly) to family, to the house, to social relationships, to one's interests in general. The possible advantages in terms of better work performance are less highlighted, which





naturally depends on the "philosophical" and organizational quality of the setting of the hybrid environment

Finally, here is what the interviewees "recommended" as good policies or good practices to follow so that the hybrid work environment is increasingly "performing". They are grouped by "areas":

#### Technology area

- availability of appropriate digital tools and collaboration software, e.g. platforms for managing and sharing information
- ensure a minimum standard of ability to use technological tools

#### Management/organization area

- define precise rules and review them periodically on the basis of KPIs
- careful planning, shared timetables, systematic meetings between colleagues and/or managers to share and verify objectives and results and "enhance" teamwork.
- results-based work approach (from bosses to collaborators)
- flexible and adaptive mentality (from bosses to collaborators)
- short but effective training for the use of digital tools and a smooth transition to "hybrid" working conditions.

#### Quality of life area

- maintain adequate separation between work and private life
- defend, indeed increase, one's spaces for the family, other social relationships, one's cultural, sporting interests, etc...

### III/ Conclusion

The conclusions that we can draw from this research are of three kinds: normative, experiential and prospective.

#### **Regulatory aspect**

The regulatory system concerning "agile working", which in Italy is mostly synonymous with "smart working", is all in all quite streamlined and also operationally effective.

In fact, for the private sector there is only one "mother law" of 2017 (only updated in 2022), therefore already existing before the pandemic, which is particularly centered on the protection of workers' rights and safety and on the "reserve" for disadvantaged individuals (for health or family reasons), while the concrete definition of the conditions and methods of carrying out agile work (or smart working) has been entrusted to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the State with the Trade union organizations, which time refers to the agreements that each company enters into with its employees.

Also for the public administration there is only one reference law which was instead approved in 2020, precisely on the occasion of the pandemic, and a document from the Ministry which indicates a series of guidelines of an operational nature which also refer to the agreements individual with employees. For both the private and public sectors, the basic principle is that of voluntary adherence to smart working by workers: in our opinion, this principle, if on the one hand safeguards the employee's freedom of choice (perhaps influenced by their own configuration of life) on the other hand, however, it could make an efficient and effective organization of work very difficult, especially if based on small groups that work towards objectives with an adequate level of cohesion. It is an issue that we think deserves some reflection.



### Experiential aspect

The few data that we have reported are sufficient to show that, as regards the private sector (basically that of companies), even after the pandemic crisis, only large companies maintain a very high percentage of workers in smart working and have managed to organize a medium efficient hybrid working environment on a permanent basis. Medium, small and micro enterprises, on the other hand, still suffer from a fundamentally cultural delay, which then translates into organisational, technical and training difficulties. Even in the public administration, the margins for improvement are still considerable and the delays and difficulties indicated for small companies are even more evident.

The role of training in accompanying this process of necessary adaptation to the new hybrid way of working therefore appears absolutely essential, as evidenced by the good quality and flattering results found on the occasion of the few training experiences found.

Both on the part of workers and employers, the advantages of "hybrid" work are substantiated in greater organizational well-being with consequent greater productivity as well as in a greater quality of life especially in terms of balance between work and private life. The critical issues, on the other hand, are found mainly from a relational and mental point of view and very often also in the technological field.

### Perspective aspect

As a consequence of what has emerged, the best prospect of a work organization that increasingly provides for flexible and "hybrid" methods is entrusted to the ability to:

- have adequate digital tools and adequate skills in their profitable use
- organizationally define precise rules and verifiable methods
- adopt a work approach based on objectives and teamwork
- have a flexible and adaptive mentality (from bosses to collaborators)
- accompany the "hybrid" transition with adequate and systematic training interventions
- better manage your time especially to optimize the balance between work and private life



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