

Evaluation of Business Finland's Talent Boost activities

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Two parts: Evaluation of the initial stage (2018-2020) and creation of a monitoring and evaluation model

Business Finland's Talent Boost activities and services were established and implemented from 2018 to 2020. This initial stage has now been successfully completed. This evaluation report sums up the results and successes and identifies areas for improvement as the activities need to be expanded and scaled up in the future. This report also includes a suggested monitoring and evaluation model to be used by the Business Finland Talent Boost team in order to use the resources as efficiently as possible.

The material for the evaluation was gathered between March and December 2020.

Finland has both advantages and disadvantages

Competition for international talent

Migration and the mobility of international talent are increasingly important issues for Finland's wellbeing and competitiveness. According to a number of reports, the less than optimal availability of talent is one of the biggest obstacles to growth and internationalization in companies and other organizations. Finland's working age population is decreasing, and the country's population growth is exclusively based on immigration. In attracting international talent, Finland has both advantages and disadvantages.

Skilled employees create international success

Finnish companies need skilled employees

Finnish companies need skilled employees, particularly ones with special skills currently unavailable in Finland. Immigration of skilled labor into Finland will help to put Finnish innovation on a stronger and more international footing and will attract international investment to Finland. This in turn will create new jobs and help Finnish companies in their efforts to become more international.

Business Finland has successfully contributed to creating the basic infrastructure for furthering Talent Boost activities

Business Finland has a critically important national role in Talent Boost

According to the evaluation, Business Finland has successfully contributed to creating the basic infrastructure for furthering Talent Boost activities. For example, Business Finland is responsible for nationwide coordination of various business services. Regional implementation of the program largely relies on the Talent Hub service model. The model brings together various regional actors involved in the recruitment of international talent and other related service provision, thereby aiming to create cross-sectoral service paths for international specialists and for companies and other organizations that require their input.

Impacts describe the goals of the whole Talent Boost program. Results describe what Business Finland needs to achieve

Proposal for a new monitoring and evaluation model

A new monitoring and evaluation model is proposed for Business Finland's Talent Boost activities. This model describes the activities, results and impacts. The impacts basically are broader objectives of the whole national Talent Boost program. The results describe what specifically needs to be achieved through Business Finland's Talent Boost activities.

The intervention logic of the activities is described as well as the indicators and data sources.

Key observations from the evaluation of the initial stage (2018-2020)

From experimental stage to systematization

<p>Assessment of the initial stage</p> <p>The basic infrastructure has been created efficiently by a small team. Results are not yet widely visible</p> <p>Activities have been partly experimental; systematization is needed</p> <p>Availability of data on supply and demand of international talent is fragmented</p> <p>The national Talent Boost network is booming</p> <p>Business Finland is commended extensively for expertise and good cooperation</p>	<p>Country brand and marketing</p> <p>Activities have been fragmented and experimental</p> <p>Tools and resources provided for the whole Talent Boost network</p> <p>The country brand for international talent needs strengthening</p>
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From laying a foundation to achieving results

<p>Services to companies</p> <p>Companies are not familiar with the Talent Boost services</p> <p>It is complicated to market the whole service offering</p> <p>Questions arise on how to best market and provide services to companies</p> <p>The number of clients of Business Finland's Talent services is small</p> <p>Companies with experience of Business Finland's Talent services are satisfied</p>	<p>National coordination</p> <p>The fact that Talent Boost involves numerous actors and several target segments complicates the coordination and service development</p> <p>Furthermore, it is challenging to manage the expectations that different stakeholders have for Talent Boost</p> <p>Business Finland's coordinative role is unclear to some stakeholders</p> <p>The value of better national coordination is recognized by all stakeholders</p> <p>The main stakeholders are satisfied with Business Finland</p> <p>Stakeholders in general are not as satisfied as companies that receive Talent services directly from Business Finland</p> <p>Linking public employment services to Talent Boost services is still at an early stage</p>
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	Stakeholders recognize that the resources of Business Finland's team are overstretched
<p>Attracting people from elsewhere to start up businesses in Finland</p> <p>More high-quality applications are desired</p> <p>The application process needs to be digitalized and the data flows improved</p> <p>The process needs to be improved holistically in order to facilitate the marketing and effectively attract people from abroad to start up businesses in Finland</p>	<p>Internal synergies within Business Finland</p> <p>The familiarity of Talent Boost is still limited despite the efforts to increase it</p> <p>Visible results and success stories on participating companies would improve the status of Talent Boost activities</p>

In the overall interpretation, it is argued that changes are needed in the future as the same operating model cannot be used when the anticipated demand for services and coordination grows.

Recommendations of the evaluation

Based on the evaluation, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations with regard to the Talent Boost contents

<p style="text-align: center;">RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CONTENTS OF BUSINESS FINLAND'S TALENT BOOST ACTIVITIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ownership of Talent Boost activities must be strengthened within Business Finland as a whole 2. Systematic PR work needs to be developed as part of the country brand and promotion 3. The existing Talent Boost services to companies need to be developed further and positioned as integral parts of all services marketed to companies 4. New services to companies need to be conceptualized and defined, especially with regard to attracting new talent 5. The startup process needs to be digitalized and improved to enable data flow between key actors and, consequently, impact evaluation 6. The coordinating role of Business Finland needs to be sharpened in dialogue with key actors implementing the Talent Boost program 7. Business Finland needs to be actively involved in improving the overall data architecture regarding the supply and demand for international talent 8. The resources of Business Finland's Talent Boost team need to be strengthened
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Recommendations with regard to the monitoring and evaluation model

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION MODEL

- 9. The proposed monitoring and evaluation model for Business Finland's Talent Boost activities needs to be coordinated with the future model of the whole Talent Boost program**
- 10. The aim should be to use the evaluation model on a continuous basis with bi-annual reporting**
- 11. Systematic PR work to be developed will require its own monitoring tools**
- 12. Some of the tools used in the proposed evaluation model are best implemented jointly with other Talent Boost actors**
- 13. Activities relating to social media and internet pages would benefit from more detailed monitoring**
- 14. Some indicators require further development. More specifically, further research is needed to evaluate the connection between companies' internal internationalization and their business success**
- 15. The experiences and views of startup entrepreneurs should be compiled and collectively analyzed by all relevant stakeholders**
- 16. Monitoring and evaluation of international Talent Boost presence (Talent Advisors, Talent Counselors and Team Finland in general) requires further development**
- 17. Monitoring and evaluation of utilization of internal synergies within Business Finland would benefit from better use of customer relationship management systems and self-evaluation practices**

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