



Employers and eWork

Think Ability.....

Flexibility

Employability

Accessibility

Connectability

Adaptability

Think Ability....

Flexibility ▷ Employability ▷ Accessibility ▷ Co

What is eWork?

eWork can generally be defined as any normal business activity carried out from a remote location by using modern computing and communication technology. There are distinctions between home-based eWork, mobile eWork and eWork by the self-employed who work from small offices in their home. According to the 2003 Collaboration@Work Report (www.efw.org, 2003) taking all types of eWork together, 13% of the working population in the EU can be classified as eWorkers.

The term telework has been popularised in Europe since the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1999, the term eWork emerged with the introduction of eLearning, eGovernment and eBusiness initiatives and the broadening in scope of ICT enabled work.

In the EU, the share of eWorkers is considerably higher among the self-employed than among workers with a contract of employment. However, the degree of interest is considerable: 40% of the EU workforce express interest in permanent eWork and 52% in alternating eWork. (SIBIS ("*Statistical Indicators Benchmarking the Information Society*"), www.sibis-eu.org)

Benefits of eWork

Companies that apply eWork strategically to their core business functions can gain clear benefits. Some of these benefits are outlined below while more detailed information and resources are available on the following web-sites:

www.ework.ie

www.worklifebalance.ie/ease-to-eworking

www.telework.ie

Improved Productivity

eWork can result in efficiency improvements of between 10% to 30% (*eWork guide to company use, Enterprise Ireland, 2000*). Factors leading to improved productivity could include: reduced distractions for eWorkers, reduced non-productive travelling time for eWorkers and better communications. Some eWork jobs have easily measurable productivity - for instance, producing lines of code or handling telephone calls. In other jobs the improvement may be in contact time with customers, scheduled performance or task management.

Case Study: Mike Davidson is Head of Marketing and Business Development for Eircom's corporate customer unit. Each of his 17-strong team works from home an average of two days a week, writing, marketing and communication briefs. The rest of the time is spent in the office in meetings and brainstorming sessions. *"The advantages are increased productivity, usually by about 25%, a more motivated workforce, and the opportunity to retain key people who might be going through lifestyle changes"*

(Adapted from *The Irish Times*, 14 February 2000, by Sandra Burke)

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Reduced Costs

Introducing eWork can involve up-front costs, but significant savings build up over time. The major savings associated with eWorking are:

<i>Staff Time</i>	No commuting time means staff spend more time working
<i>Space</i>	Infrastructure costs can be contained and reduced
<i>Staff Retention</i>	Reduced staff turnover saves on recruitment and training
<i>Market Coverage</i>	Using advanced information and communication technologies and skills helps companies to explore the potential of eBusiness opportunities
<i>Development Costs</i>	The increased flexibility of eWork allows companies to reduce development costs by splitting tasks more efficiently, and accessing external skills as and when required.
<i>Time to Market</i>	Using advanced communication systems, information sharing techniques, and groupware can cut product and service development times significantly.

Enhancing Customer Service

This can be achieved through shortening response times, simplifying contact procedures and creating new service options like out-of-office contacts or online real-time support. Expanding geographic coverage of service support can also be achieved through eWork as can reduced interaction costs (*travel and meetings*) for both company and client.

Benefits for Employers Participating in the Project

The Equality through eWork project will collaborate with 15 employers to rigorously test eWork as a method of working which delivers a business advantage while at the same time provides an employment accommodation for people with disabilities and lone parents. The project will provide information, advice and practical support to employers who wish to develop eWork within their organisation.

Free Supports provided to employers will include:

- œ Needs analysis, to identify jobs suitable to transfer to eWork and the cost / benefit of doing so
- œ Support developing appropriate monitoring and management systems
- œ Training and staff development in disability awareness
- œ Training and staff development in family friendly employment practices.

Employers participating in the project will also gain positive PR outcomes. Company profiles will be raised through the dissemination of their experience of piloting eWork across private and public sector organisations.

The Equality through eWork Project

The Equality through eWork Project is an EU funded project that aims to pilot eWork as a method of working that will increase access to employment opportunities for people with disabilities and lone parents. The project will achieve this by:

- ✎ Promoting eWork to SMEs and other employers as a business advantage
- ✎ Engaging with employers to integrate flexible employment practices and thereby developing ways of combating segregation in the economy by allowing full participation of groups who find this difficult due to disability and / or lone parenthood
- ✎ Engaging with education and training providers to integrate flexible / open learning environments into their teaching practices to combat segregation in the education / training sector and thereby enable full participation of groups who find this difficult due to disability and / or lone parenthood
- ✎ Enhancing mainstream employment / education support services with specialised knowledge in the area of disability, lone parenthood, eWorking and eLearning
- ✎ Providing ICT equipment and broadband to 30 people with disabilities and 30 lone parents who will be participating in the programme.

The project is overseen by a development partnership constituted by the following organisations:

Venturepoint	IBEC
ICTU	Clann Credo
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	Department of Social and Family Affairs
Local Employment Service	FÁS - eCollege
Dublin South Supported Employment	Southside Women's Action Network
One Family	Roslyn Park College
Senior College Dun Laoghaire	Southside Partnership <i>(Designate Partner with overall responsibility for implementation and coordination)</i>

How do I become involved?

If you are interested in becoming involved in this exciting project please contact:

Project Leader Fiona Brennan

Equality through eWork

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An Roinn Fiontar, Tráda agus Fostálachta
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
helping develop employment by
promoting employability, the business
spirit and equal opportunities and
investing in human resources

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