



TOOL 1: SETTING YOUR NEW JOB GOALS



MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 1

This tool is designed to help you prepare for your job search in the best possible way. This tool is part of a series of 5 tools especially designed for international and multicultural talent looking for a job in Belgium.

You'll learn:

- ✓ How to research the Belgian job market
- ✓ What the most wanted profiles and skills are
- ✓ Where to look for mentors
- ✓ How to define a clear job goal
- ✓ How to invest in your strengths



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1. RESEARCH



1.1. The Belgian job market

If you live in a (new) country, getting to know the local job market should be ranked high on your priority list. **Google** (or any other search engine) will probably become your best friend, **LinkedIn** your partner in crime and even **Facebook** could help you with some inside information on what our small country's job market looks like.

But don't fool yourself, because learning about the Belgian job market isn't something you can do by only sitting behind your computer screen or mobile phone. You will need to **reach out**, find **relevant networking events** and **mentors**. Tips and tricks on how to network can be found in "Tool 3: The importance of networking".

1.2. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Depending on the region you're living in you may subscribe to one of Belgium's **4 public employment services** for free:

VDAB: responsible for anyone living in Flanders, official language: Dutch

Actiris: responsible for anyone living in the Brussels-Capital Region, official language: Dutch and French

Le FOREM: responsible for anyone living in the Walloon Region, official language: French

ADG: responsible for the German Community, official language: German

These public employment services can help you in many ways. They have a database of all different kinds of vacancies, you can **publish your CV** on their website so employers can reach you and you can ask for some personal assistance to help you in your search for a job. Another useful service is the possibility to

follow one of their **courses or trainings**. The overview of the courses will be in the official language the public employment service operates in, but you can always contact one of **their consultants** to ask for more information.



1.3. EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS



When looking for a job in Belgium it is important to know that you have **different options** when it comes to what kind of contract or type of work you will be doing. A common mistake is to apply only for those jobs that offer contracts for an indefinite period or fixed-term contracts. However there are a lot of other options that you should consider.

One of these options is **volunteering**. If you have a chance to do some work while searching for a paid job, don't hesitate to do so. It will help you keep that gap on your CV as small as possible and it can help you with meeting new people and extending your network.

Another option is a **paid internship** to get acquainted with a job like a BIS internship that is supported by VDAB/Actiris. Both organisations can also help you with more information on an IBO internship. This is a different formula for individual profession training.

Another way to kick-start your career could be by using one of the many **interim agencies** you can find in Belgium. They can help you find temporary work as a first start and experience.

The key message here is **to not limit yourself** when looking for a job in Belgium by only searching for a contract for an indefinite period. Know that there are many options out there waiting for you to explore them.

1.4. BOTTLENECK VACANCIES



Knowing the Belgian job market also means knowing which **profiles are most sought after**. That way, if you can't find a job in the field you're currently skilled in, you know what skills to acquire to have a bigger chance of being recruited. Below you can find 10 bottleneck vacancies in Belgium in 2018 as published by VDAB*. Each year VDAB, Actiris, le Forem and ADG make an overview of all bottleneck vacancies.

You have a lot of organisations that can help you with developing skills that fit these **bottleneck vacancies**. VDAB, for example, has a lot of courses that will not only help you develop these skills, but will also give you a chance to network with relevant businesses. Someone who took the opportunity to develop himself in a new skill, is Bilal. He decided that his previous experience as a Turkish Staff Officer **wasn't enough to help him find a job in Belgium**. You can read his full testimonial at the end of this tool.



IT jobs are bottleneck jobs, so this course will broaden my chances of getting employed. Actually, Intec promises an 80% success rate of finding a job, which motivates me a lot.



10 BOTTLENECK VACANCIES 2019:

- ✓ Nurse
- ✓ Technical client support
- ✓ Integration specialist ICT
- ✓ Hospital pharmacist
- ✓ Accountant
- ✓ Technical installations
- ✓ Production manager
- ✓ Secondary education teacher
- ✓ Analyst developer ICT
- ✓ Elektro mechanic engineer

Find the most recent and more bottleneck vacancies on VDAB, Actiris, Forem or ADG

* <https://www.vdab.be/trends/vacatureanalyse.shtml>

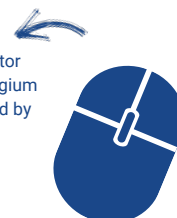
1.5. MENTORING PROGRAMS

FINDING A MENTOR



Could you use some help in discovering the Belgian job market? Then your research should include discovering all the **mentoring programmes** Belgium has to offer. These mentoring programmes will connect you with professionals experienced in the field you want to succeed in. They can guide you, give you advice and help you expand your Belgian business network.

These are all mentor organisations in Belgium ready to be explored by you.



Duo for a job
Team4Job
Mentor2Work
MentorYou
Motivation United
Net2Work
Connect2Work
Talent2Connect

Looking for a mentor is also something you could do by yourself. Here in Belgium **LinkedIn** is the way to go. Look for companies you're interested in, join groups and look for people that really inspire you. You have nothing to lose by sending them a message and asking them if they would be a up for a cup of coffee or answer a few of your questions. More on how to network and LinkedIn can be found in **Tool 3: The importance of networking**.

2. THE JOURNEY OF FINDING A JOB IN BELGIUM

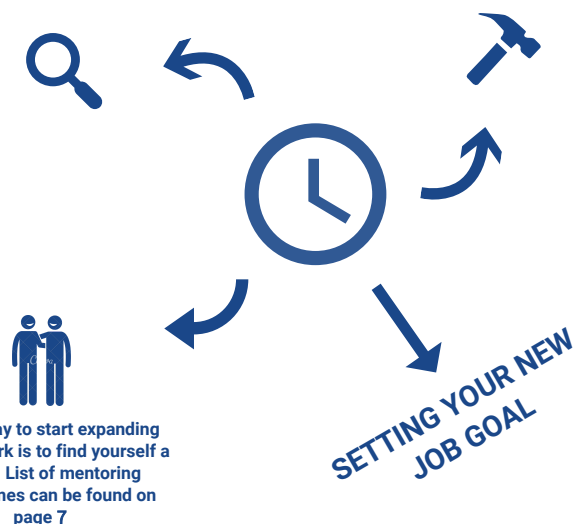


IT TAKES TIME

Finding a new job, redefining yourself and getting to know the local scene can take some time. A normal process for this kind of transformation can easily take up to 1 year. So don't feel demotivated if you haven't found your way after a couple of months. It's logical that setting your new job goals, building your network, perhaps gaining a new skill or two doesn't happen overnight.

When you just begin your new job search, a lot of your time will go to research where you should not only learn more about the local job market, but also about yourself.

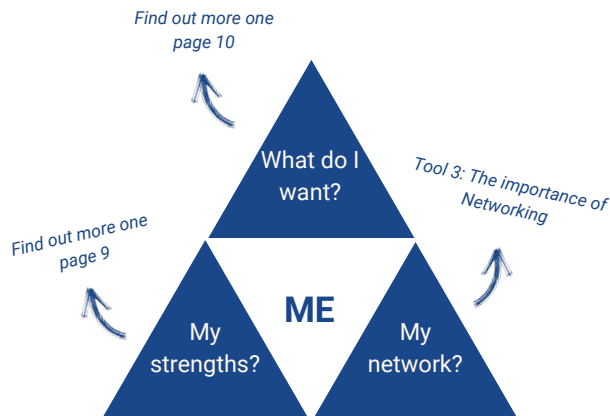
Once you know your strengths and possible weaknesses you can determine whether or not you need to gain some new skills. Maybe you even have to completely reskill yourself in order to find your way into the Belgian job market



A good way to start expanding your network is to find yourself a mentor. List of mentoring programmes can be found on page 7

2.1. DEFINING YOUR JOB GOAL

We all have different stories to tell. These stories, no matter how long, short, exciting or challenging they are, all have a **huge impact on our career**. It's important to take some time to acknowledge the fact that your life has changed and that your past goals might not be the same as the ones you want to achieve now. For example when moving to a new country you might have some expectations on how it will be. These expectations however will probably need to be checked with reality once you arrived and really start to get to know the country.



Career focus tool™ developed by the Centre for Excellence in Career Management (Vlerick Business School)

The first and most important step in defining a (new) job goal is getting everything in place. This applies to all administration that you'll need to go through, but also to **the psychological process** you'll find yourself in. Give yourself some time to figure out what you want, what your strengths are and who is already part of your network. Then **refocus** and get your story straight. What skills do you need to gain insight into where you want to be and who do you need to know to help you get there? To help you with your search Vlerick Business School created the **Career focus tool™** that, as the name of the tool kind of explains itself, helps you with finding the focus in your career needs.

Figuring out what you want can be a hard thing. But try to search for what drives you the most. Think of all the things you did in the past. Maybe they have something in common or maybe you can think of something that gave you energy or joy.



2.2. INVESTING IN YOUR STRENGTHS



STRENGTHS

Once you defined your strengths, there is one rule that you can always apply: **always invest in your strengths**. Make a list of all your skills and try to find which ones make you the happiest. Recruiters do not only listen to what you are telling them, but also take notice of how you are telling it. Basically, they will try to look for the passion in your eyes. Think of the things you're good at, where you can call yourself a talent.

This is how recruiters will screen: which job will make the best use of your talent apart from the effort you will do



WEAKNESSES

Be willing to pay the price of your weaknesses, if not get them at the Olympic minimum. A typical example of a "weakness" for those fairly new in a country is knowledge of the local language. The most important factor here is to show your willingness and effort by getting it at "an Olympic minimum". If, for example, you want to improve your Dutch, include it in your resume, even if you haven't started your course (and then start one right away).

Performance = talent + effort
Talent = performance - effort

2.3. SKILLS INVENTORY FRAMEWORK*



However these skills can help you get a first job and be your step stone to the next career move.

* This skills inventory framework is a part of the Career focus Tool™ developed by Vlerick Business School.



Use this list to find out which skills would apply for your potential future job, which ones you already possess and which ones you still need to develop.

2.4. SKILLS MOST SEARCHED FOR BY EMPLOYERS

- ▲ Communication skills (oral communication, presentation skills)
- ▲ Interpersonal skills (relating & inspiring, conflict handling, negotiation skills)
- ▲ Teamwork skills (group dynamics, group decision making)
- ▲ Adaptability and learnability (adjusting to change, managing tasks, setting priorities, learning fast)
- ▲ Analytical skills (assessing, gathering information, decision making)
- ▲ Technical proficiency (competence in your field of study)
- ▲ Leadership skills (taking charge, coaching, delegating)
- ▲ Organisational skills (designing, planning, implementing)
- ▲ Multicultural skills (awareness, handling diversity)



You can find interesting online courses to improve these skills in Tool 2: Preparing your CV and cover letter

YOUR TURN

MAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR SKILLS

	MY STRENGTHS	MY WEAKNESSES
WHAT I WANT	<i>"My selling proposition"</i>	<i>"My growth domain"</i>
WHAT I DON'T WANT	<i>"My pitfall"</i>	<i>"Others' opportunities"</i>

3. THE STORY OF BILAL

A REDEFINED CAREER JOURNEY

Country of origin: Turkey

Educational background: Master's in Political Science + PhD in Organisational Design

Years of professional experience: 17 years

Last job experience: Policy/Staff Officer

Job search length: 2+ years

Current field of study: IT

Currently: IT course at Intec Brussel

After years of working, Bilal found himself in a difficult situation here in Belgium. Application after application, he experienced disappointment from all the no's. Being active by nature and wanting to keep busy, Bilal began looking in different directions. When he saw the **IT course at Intec Brussel**, he was sure that this was a great way for him to **upskill and take a fresh start**. Joining the multicultural group with 12 classmates, Bilal is learning a lot of valuable things within the IT field. What's even better is that Intec Brussel also offers a 6 month **Dutch course** related to IT!

When asking Bilal what motivates him the most about his studies, he says:

"IT jobs are bottleneck jobs, so this course will broaden my chances of getting employed. Actually, Intec promises an 80% success rate of finding a job, which motivates me a lot."



Apart from his IT studies, Bilal is also doing his PhD in Organisational Design which boosts his confidence.

Challenges and strengths in the search process

Bilal's previous **experience in the public sector** worked against him in finding a job in the private sector. He would also receive feedback on his lack of local language skills. Bilal also tells us that his CV was not in accordance with Belgian standards, which also scared some recruiters off. This is something he now has acquired more knowledge about, and in his future job search, he will make his CV shine and leave the Belgian recruiters in awe.

Why choose vocational training instead of work?

"The job market in Belgium is very challenging and competitive, so I decided to do vocational training instead, which could be an entrance to the Belgian labour market, in my case in the IT-sector."

What's more is that this specific course at Intec Brussel offers Bilal **great working possibilities:**

"The course even has its own HR department. They help you in your job search that you need to initiate 6 months into the course. Specifically, you have to apply for at least 20 jobs within IT. This is a good beginning for obtaining experience with job interviews, preparing a good

CV and motivation letter etc. Of course, the main reason for this is to find a job with the experiences gained. If you happen to find a job before the course ends, you are free to stop the course. If you finish 80% of the course and you find a job, you get a certificate."

Apart from that, it is very important to **stay active and keep your confidence level up**. Not surprisingly, it can be very devastating if the job market keeps letting you down, so if you shift your focus you might regain some of that lost confidence. And as Bilal puts it:

"I have always been professionally active, so I wanted to keep busy!"

If you too find the Belgian job jungle to be tough, surely a few tips and tricks can benefit your journey. Bilal kindly shares his with you. **Bilal's four TIPS and TRICKS for international and multicultural talent out there:**

1

"Pay a lot of attention to your CV and motivation letter, because it is the first thing that HR recruiters see about you before a possible job interview. If your CV and motivation letter do not meet some minimum requirements, the HR recruiter won't even bother looking into them, despite you maybe being the best fit for the job. So, you lose the chance of getting a job interview which is your best shot to advertise yourself to the employer."

2

*"Make use of **LinkedIn**. I see LinkedIn as an important tool to attract people to your profile and to meet new people. Other media and/or social media such as Facebook can also be helpful."*

3

*"Learn **the language**. I am certain that my current IT-related Dutch classes will help me in my future job search!"*

4

*"Seek **a vocational training** or **an internship** if you fail to find a job in your own field, and if you want to change and start **a new career path**. There are lots of free quality vocational trainings in Belgium – not only within IT – which provides a good starting point for you to land a new job."*

4. THE STORY OF SARA

PERSEVERANCE AND FULL FOCUS

Country of origin: Iraq

Educational background: MSc in Infectious diseases, MSc in Molecular Biology and Bachelor in Veterinary Medicine

Years of professional experience: 18

Last job title: Senior Researcher / Assistant of Head of Health Department

Job search length: 13 months

Current job title: Lab Technician – molecular biology tests

Currently: job within molecular diagnostics

Sara started her new job as Lab Technician. Filling the gaps on her CV and a profound wish to work were some of the drivers behind her decision to join the team. In addition, the job is much in line with her former experience and field of expertise, allowing her not to lose touch with her capabilities:

“After going from unemployed to employed I feel alive again! Even working for free would be better than staying at home and losing touch with my professional field.”

She also adds that she feels “very happy” being part of an organisation, in which she works in a team that is diverse in terms of both age and profile. Exactly this openness towards diversity is something that further convinced Sara that she wanted to join the team.



Challenges and strengths in the search process

Sara has tried multiple times to apply in both Flanders and Wallonia. She was often told that her lack of Dutch or French was the main reason for an employer not to select her. In fact, this comment was also given to her when she initially applied for the organisation where she is currently working. This time, however, her skills, confidence and persuasion made them think twice and see beyond the language issue.

Sara experienced it as a clear strength that she obtained experience working for the European Commission in a high-level lab environment. Moreover, she mentions her

ambition as her biggest strength both in and outside the search process.

Cultural differences on the work floor

When asking Sara about her experiences with cultural differences on the work floor, she initiated her answer saying:

“Human nature is the same everywhere – there is competition in both Iraq and Belgium.”

With that being said, she mentioned freedom as a cultural difference she truly treasures here in Belgium. She always feels that she is treated with respect. Apart from these personal differences that she points out, she also turned our attention to the more technical implications of having kick-started her career in Belgium:

“In Belgium, I find that there are more rules, more computer systems to navigate and in general much more advanced systems than the ones I am used to from Iraq.”

Diversity as an asset

As previously mentioned, Sara enjoys working in a very diverse team in terms of colour, age and profile. It is safe to say that

diversity is viewed as an asset by her. When asking her what a diverse team brings to the table that a homogeneous team does not, she says:

“Every person has his or her own way of thinking especially coming from different places, and it is very valuable that we can learn new perspectives from each other.”

Finally, Sara shares three tips and tricks with us for getting a job in Belgium:

1

“Learn the language(s)! This was the main feedback why I was not selected. Language is very important here.”

2

“Customise your CV for every job you apply for. This shows interest in the specific company.”

3

“Make sure to adapt your CV to the Belgian market.”



5. TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Getting to know the local job market can not only be done by searching for information online, you also have to reach out, attend interesting events and find the right people to contact.
- ✓ When researching the local job market always take a look at the bottleneck vacancies. When you feel that the skills you have now, might not be enough to find you a job, then reskill into a field that will increase your chances of finding employment.
- ✓ When expanding your network make use of the many mentoring programmes Belgium has to offer. They will not only help you expand your network, but also give you great insider tips on the job market and your industry (find more on the importance of networking in Tool 3).
- ✓ Setting your new job goal also means getting to know yourself. Find out what your current strengths and weaknesses are and what gives you energy.
- ✓ Setting your (new) job goals, going through different steps and putting in place a strategy takes time. It's a process you need to go through so you can start applying with confidence and focus.

6. INSPIRED BY

The content in this toolkit is created for the **Newcomer Induction Management Acceleration Programme** (NiMAP), sponsored by **ESF** and **the Flemish Government**. Goal of the project is to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor of newcomers entering the Belgian job market by supporting both talent and employers.

Belgian partners in this project are **Vlerick Business School** - a top-tier international business school - and **Talentree** - a new venture building international and entrepreneurial teams. This project is inspired by the Rapid Acceleration Programme from our transnational partner, Stockholm School of Economics, whom we are deeply grateful for a great partnership!

The project team:

- Prof Dr Dirk Buyens - Professor of Human Resources and Partner at Vlerick Business School
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We would like to thank:

- All international talents who were in the process of finding a job or already found one for sharing their challenges, learnings, tips and dreams. We wish them a great future career journey!
- All the companies and organisations sharing the employer's perspective via focus groups, interviews and coaching on the work floor
- All other organisations like the public employment services, mentoring and other great local and international projects, network organisations... for sharing their expertise
- All experts who shared their experiences and knowledge through blog posts and social media



OVERVIEW FIVE TOOLS:



Tool 1: Setting your new job goals

Tool 1 will help you research the Belgian job market, find more information about bottleneck vacancies and mentoring programmes. You'll discover how you can define your new job goal. It ends with a framework to help you define your strengths and weaknesses and two testimonials about reskilling and focusing on your passion.



Tool 2: Preparing your CV and cover letter

Tool 2 will help you create a good CV, cover letter and a LinkedIn profile. It contains information on life long learning and language training with names of possible organisations and courses. It ends with concrete examples of resumes and cover letters.



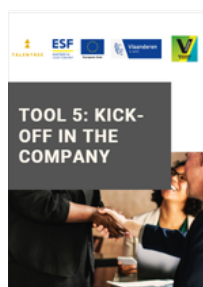
Tool 3: The importance of networking

Tool 3 will tell you why and how to network. You'll learn how to sell yourself, use LinkedIn as a network tool and how to follow up on any networking you did. It contains a testimonial of a newcomer who found a job in Belgium thanks to his network. It ends with a checklist you can use when preparing for a network meeting.



Tool 4: From first call to getting hired

Tool 4 will guide you through the application process. You'll learn about telephone screenings, preparation for any job interview, assessment centres and feedback. It will give you more insight on how to answer a question related to salary expectations and the STAR method (a method frequently used by recruiters). It ends with a testimonial from a newcomer who found a job by being confident and it contains cards that will help you practice difficult interview questions.



Tool 5: Kick-off in the company

Tool 5 will help you when you've found a job. It contains information on talent development, career moves, internal and external network, evaluation talks, work-life balance and a testimonial of a newcomer who found a job and made her personal life fit with her work life. In the end you'll find a checklist that will help you in your first three months on the job.