

# Groeipakket

Submitted by Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) and Flanders Information Agency

## ★★★★ Nominee Candidate

### Kind en Gezin

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### Size of organisation

500-5000; people involved: >15

### Type of sector

Social Security

### Key words of project

Child benefits; Family benefits; Groeipakket;  
Family policy

As a result of the sixth Belgian governmental reform, the competence of child benefits was transferred from the Federal level to the Communities and Regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels and the German-speaking Community) on 1 January 2019. Flanders seized the opportunity of the governmental reform to establish a more efficient support of children and families.

Family allowances are now a pillar of an integrated family policy, to create opportunities and support active participation to the society and thus also to support a combination of employment and raising a family. We named it Groeipakket (this roughly translates as Growth Package). Overall, an integrated family policy offers many advantages: possibilities to maximise support for all children and families throughout their development. We integrated competences of education, care and childcare together with child benefits in one family policy, aimed at creating opportunities to start a family with active participation to society and thus also to combine (labour) participation with a family. A key focus in achieving this integrated family policy is the automatic granting of rights.

We applied several basic principles:

- Ensure that working poor have the same rights as the non-working poor.
- Every child is equal.
- Add new allowances to support participation.
- Adjust to the new social reality.
- Automatically granting as far-reaching as possible to ensure that the administrative burden for the families is reduced to a minimum and ensure that no child is left out.
- Lower the risk of child poverty by selective support of low-income families.

To implement such an ambitious transformation a number of dimensions of change were crucial. These are: establishing an ambitious top team, a clear strategic direction, a clear action plan and implementation, effective management infrastructure and releasing staff energy. The choice of working with self-organising teams composed of people that were very familiar with the old system, people that knew which were the key aims of the new system and people that were able to spread the word in their own organisations and agencies, brought the necessary social energy to continue the change process over a period of approximately 3 years.

Using this project methodology, we managed to:

- Replace 70-year old legislation with new law.
- Replace 10+ existing IT systems by 1 overall system (the Groeipakket application), used by 1 public agency and 4 private partners and 1000+ agents.
- Connect with 40+ different information sources to provide automatic payment.
- Train 1000+ agents in learning a new legislation and a new IT system.
- Reform the payment system with 10+ payment funds to a payment system with no more than 5 partners.

In short, it can make a good case for claiming to be the biggest reform of social security in Belgian history.