

Conferencia Interamericana de Seguridad Social



**Centro Interamericano de
Estudios de Seguridad Social**

Este documento forma parte de la producción editorial del Centro Interamericano de Estudios de Seguridad Social (CIESS), órgano de docencia, capacitación e investigación de la Conferencia Interamericana de Seguridad Social (CISS)

Se permite su reproducción total o parcial, en copia digital o impresa; siempre y cuando se cite la fuente y se reconozca la autoría.

REVISTA CIESS

PUBLICACIÓN DEL
CENTRO INTERAMERICANO DE
ESTUDIOS DE SEGURIDAD SOCIAL

EDICIÓN
BILINGÜE
BILINGUAL EDITION

PRIMERA ÉPOCA

DICIEMBRE

2004

NÚMERO

8



R E V I S T A

CIESS

Revista CIESS

8
December
2004

SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION



**INTER-AMERICAN
CENTER
FOR SOCIAL
SECURITY
STUDIES**

Educational, training and research organ of the Inter-American
Conference on Social Security

Contributions on Social Security

THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS OF THE INSS ON THE MATTER OF NEGOTIATION OF BENEFITS

*Alejandro Slocker Torres **

*"The objective for the future is to make possible that a man
will come to present the application for a benefit and
leave with the check in his hand"*

Antonio Redecillas y López de Sabando (Secretary General to the
Labor Mutualism Service in an informal conversation with the author.
Esteponia. September 1977)

I. Introduction

In the world in which we are bound to live, which is characterized
by a constant and vertiginous change of technology and in which
the obsolescence of the latter becomes a fact the following day,

* Inspector of Services of the National Social Security Institute (INSS) of Spain.

organizations in general, and especially public organizations, have had to adapt themselves, for a mere reason of survival, to said changes, not only applying the techniques of the private enterprise but also making strong investments to procure sufficient and powerful technological media, with the strategic objective of achieving maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the work that, as a public service, has been entrusted to them.

In this paper we will expose the course followed by the National Social Security Institute (INSS) to achieve its adaptability to the ends set forth.

The institute is a dependency of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry entrusted by Law with the concession of Pensions and Subsidies of a contributive nature within the Spanish Social Security system. Its structure is based on a General Directorate and 52 peripheral organs, called Provincial Directorates, located at each one of the provinces into which the national territory is divided; these Directorates in turn, have a network of local attention and information centers (CAISS), the number and distribution of which vary in each province.

II. Antecedents

In the year 1988, the Institute presented a series of defects that affected its own organic-functional structure: there was a lack of determination of the aspects of the negotiation of benefits and, at the same time, a deficient service of attention to the citizens.

Evidence of the former was constituted, fundamentally, by an administrative procedure based on the exclusive use of paper support, with all the flaws that this involves (high costs, possibilities of error, insufficiency of space used for filing, etc), absence of adequate technological media

(informatics programs) applied to this activity and excessive documentation requested from the possible beneficiaries of the benefits.

Likewise, and with respect to the second of the defects pointed out, the initial contact with the citizens did not present the characteristic of adequacy of the premises or guaranty of the information and, mainly, there was an absence of a closed negotiation center dedicated exclusively to process and solve the granting of benefits. Attention to the public took place mainly at the provincial see located at the capital city of the Province and, in the second place, through a series of Agencies located in different municipalities of the Province that did not gather the minimum requirements to offer the first contact with sufficient guaranties.

The situation described resulted in the practice of a series of malfunctions among which the following can be mentioned: delay in the resolution of the granting of benefits, with average values of 60/70 days; increase in the attention to beneficiaries at the provincial see; lack of guaranty of the information provided; saturation of paper in all offices and, finally, deteriorated external image.

All this resulted in that the Institute considered the need to improve substantially and in a profound manner, the structural defects that affected it.. For this purpose, a series of projects inter-connected with one another were established that would permit modernizing and updating the process which had and has been entrusted to the Institute.

III. Stages of the process

1. Documentation simplification

In 1988 the Institute became conscious of the fact that the amount of documents requested for each benefit was excessive and, in many cases, reiterative and/or superfluous. In order to attain a documentation simplification and not to burden beneficiaries with an excessive number of documents, a study was made aimed at determining the essential documents that would be necessary to process and solve the requests for benefits received.

This study, once finalized, led to reduce to three the number of documents that had to accompany the application and produced the elimination of 700,000 documents per year.

2. The PROGESPRESS project

In 1988, the implementation of the PROGESPRESS (Process of Negotiation of Social Security Benefits) started, with the purpose of establishing an informatics program that would permit negotiating through this program, the benefits whose competence was attributed to the Institute.

This technological process has a permanent development both in aspects of technical qualification and of the ambit affecting benefits: if it starts with the basic benefits processed by the Institute (Retirement, Widowhood, Orphanhood) later on it is extended to the rest of benefits, Permanent Disability, Temporary Disability, Maternity and Family Protection. Sometimes it is even applied to the benefits affected by international regulations.

It was completed by the end of the year 1989, with the preparation of a fully automated procedure that totally discarded

the paper support and guaranteed the reliability and safety of the legal facts and economic calculations it contained. This procedure presents the following phases:

It starts with the **client contact phase** that is effected in a personalized manner; then comes the **capturing and opening of the file**, in which the personal, family and labor data of the beneficiary are introduced in the program, automatically assigning in the program a sequential number for identification of the file; phases developed at the Social Security Attention and Information Centers (CAISS).

In the **third phase or impulse phase** the file is completed with the data and facts that facilitate its resolution.

Finally, in the **resolution phase** the program makes the calculations of the first payment and issues the corresponding resolution to be sent to the beneficiary.

It can be observed that the procedure has the great advantage that paper is not used and, consequently, does not require remittances and re-remittances from one unit to the other, but everything is handled through informatics.

After having designed the procedure, it was necessary to train the different officials of the Provincial Directorates in its handling and understanding, to which effect it was implemented at regular intervals along one year in all Directorates.

This made it possible that by 1992 the program was totally operative in the 52 Provincial Directorates.

At the same time, an important investment was made in the acquisition of individual informatics equipment for each official, interconnected with one and other and with the Social Security Informatics Management.

3. The CAISS project

Simultaneously with the start of the studies leading to develop and put into practice the PROGESPRESS project, the Institute undertook the unpostponable reform of its Agencies which were disseminated throughout the entire national geography.

As previously mentioned, these Agencies did not meet the minimum requisites of space, convenience and comfort to offer an adequate public service, in addition to agglutinating scarcities both with respect to assignment of personnel and to reliable information for the citizen.

Due to all of the above, in 1989 the project denominated CAISS was put in motion with the philosophy of acting in three directions: a) modernize the appearance of the offices, or better said, modernize the point of encounter with the citizen; b) establish a maximum network of Centers in the entire national territory; and c) train the officials assigned to these Centers to guarantee the reliability and quality of the information they were to present. All of the above was intended to create a closed processing center (the Provincial Directorate) which would not be open to the public, and a network of Centers dedicated fundamentally to receive and inform the client.

In 1989 the maximum network of the CAISS was established, taking into consideration a series of parameters such as population with rights to benefits, economic activity, geographic peculiarities with respect to territorial and communications infrastructure, minimum distances between Centers, nucleus of presence of other Entities of the Social Security System or other Public Administrations, etc., and an attempt was made, as far as possible, to maintain the geographic location of the former Agencies. These Centers were classified as urban

Centers (located in the capital cities of the Provinces) and District Centers, located in nucleus of population of said Province.

With respect to the training of the officials destined to the CAISS, the program tried to give an institutional response, from certain training premises that were considered as not renounceable, up to a need and a demand.

The need to train officials that in the near future would work in the new Centers, a need that required the proposal that the Entity had to offer with respect to that training, because the assertion and the conceptual binomial training/CAISS, exceed the simple formal proposal and determined the planning of the CAISS course.

It was a matter of offering to the officials a generic, but rigorous, vision of the legal parameters that would rule and determine their future actions; it was also a matter of providing them with the instrumental techniques that their action would demand if the purpose was that they could respond effectively and efficiently to the requirements that society demanded then and now.

Requirements of the citizen from the perspective of the client, but also mutual, rigorous and permanent requirement, between the Institute and the officials themselves.

And all of the above, not only from the precise knowledge of the philosophy and meaning of the new centers, but also from the perspective that they were integrated in an organic-functional spectrum that, having its natural origin in the Institute, cohabitated and cohabits with the social ambit which they serve.

Due to all of the above, training was based on an effort to offer a basic legal culture that affected constitutional, administrative,

labor, civil and economic ambits. But it was also borne in mind that said action was derived, fundamentally from the functions and competences assigned to the CAISS and that, in short, refer basically to attention and information.

Likewise, consideration was given to the legal relations that vis-à-vis the Social Security benefits, have an instrumental nature, like the Social Services that the State and the Autonomous Communities grant from instances different from those of the Institute itself.

Finally, the punctual and updated reference to the legal regime of the benefits handled and recognized by the INSS were also taken into consideration.

All the above mentioned actions, modernization of the point of encounter with the client, investments in material and training plan, make possible the existence of a network of modern Centers adapted to the requirements of the present society.

IV. Results

All that has been set forth so far would have no sense without an explanation of the results that the Institute has achieved with the implementation of all the projects described.

These results can be summarized in three points: a radical reform of the process; safety and reliability; and adaptation to the needs of the client.

With respect to the first of these points, we show below the results with respect to the average national time of delay in the processing, handling and resolution of the benefits administered directly by the Institute and that are contained in the following chart, whose values are expressed in days:

Benefit	1989	Second semester/04	Objectives 2004
Permanent Disability	150/180	67,19	70
Retirement	60/70	10,76	18
Survival	40/50	8,46	13
Temporary Disability	20/30	9,28	10
Maternity	-----	7,17	10

As may be observed from the above data, the Institute works on the basis of operative objectives since 20 years ago, which causes that objectives are established annually both at a national and at a provincial level. On the basis of the objectives of this year they were all exceed with respect to all benefits, reaching correct results.

As regards the safety and reliability of the process and resolution, they are achieved due to the fact that the program itself carries out all the operations and mathematic calculations, and because the resolution is also issued by the program itself.

Regarding the adaptation of the needs of the client, the Institute carried out at the start of the decade of the nineties, a first generation marketing using the SERVQUAL model, to learn the expectations of the users and the differences or gaps between said expectations with respect to the service to be rendered and the actual perceptions that result in favor of the client after the service has been offered. To this effect, the users were questioned directly and, after having analyzed the results, the expectations of the clients with respect to the service offered by the organization were established. With periodical surveys, the subsequent replies offered by the clients with respect to

satisfaction of those expectations were valued and the difference between both represents the "quality of the service".

With the purpose of continuing to advance in this philosophy, as from 1997 the Institute opted for a reference model that would serve to develop its strategy of quality of the process: the European Model of Excellence, of the European Quality Foundation. At present it is immersed in this phase, after having made a "self-diagnosis of the Organization", to determine both its mission and its strategic objectives.

The entire process caused that in the year 2000, the Provincial Directorate of Guipúzcoa of the Institute was awarded the price for "Quality in the General Administration of the State", as well as one of the prizes for the Best Practices.

In subsequent summons as of that time, prizes for the Best Practices have also been obtained by different Provincial Directorates.

V. Perspectives for the future

At present, and within the general policy of the Institute to improve its relations with clients, several projects are in the process of study, of which the following can be underlined:

- **"Inform@ Project"**. Consisting in the implementation of a new model of attention to the citizen, whose fundamental objectives are the following:
 - Offer to citizens new ways of access to the services of the INSS.

- Guarantee an homogeneous and uniform information, regardless of the medium or place in which the service is rendered.
- Optimize resources by the massive employment of new technologies.

This project presupposes the strengthening of presential attention through the CAISS network and the concentration of all the informative non presential activity in one single Center.

The purpose of the above is, definitely, the creation of the virtual office with respect to which certain problems relative to safety, confidentiality, etc., are being studied.

- **"IRIS" Project** which is intended to furnish the Provincial Directorates with a specific informatics application for the handling and resolution of pensions according to international norms, that will gather the particularities of this process and that will improve, in addition to the agility and uniformity of the process, the production of the liaison form necessary for the negotiation of pensions.

The project has been developed partially with the implementation of the informatics process procedure for retirement pensions according to Community Regulations.

At present the second phase is being established through the necessary developments that will make possible the utilization of this informatics application to the rest of the pensions of the above mentioned Regulations, as well as in the negotiation of pensions handled under Bilateral Agreements.

