



## HR LANDSCAPES:

### Argentina – Telecommuters Network

#### (Red de Teletrabajo)

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The second largest country in Latin America (the first is Brazil), Argentina declared its independence from Spain on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1816, and today is the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world (in terms of land area).

Argentina has not yet completely recovered from the 2001 economic and political crisis, which was the most serious in the country's history. In 2008/2009, as with most other countries in the world, Argentina suffered the impact of the global economic crisis with an increase in the unemployment rates, which currently stands around 9%.



In an innovative and creative move, the Government and the Labor Department launched an experiment around Telecommuting Work with the intention of evaluating the benefits and the challenges of working remotely. The goal of the program was to determine if telecommuting would be an effective way to create jobs and decrease unemployment in the country. The pilot (PROPET -- Programa Piloto de Seguimiento y Promoción del Teletrabajo en Empresas Privadas: Pilot Program for Telecommuting Incentive in Private Companies) was launched in 2008 with a limited number of employees and in a controlled environment. The goal was to determine if the results could justify public investment to structure and regulate remote work in the country's private sector.

As we know, technology is now available that allows virtual teams to work effectively together regardless of their location. In some cases, virtual teams are even more productive than if they were working together in the same place. The results from the pilot program met the expectations, and the Labor Department has begun to work on a plan to expand the initiative to the private sector for the entire country.

Now it is official! Effective as of December 7<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Telecommuters Network (Red de Teletrabajo) is a collaboration between public and private sectors and has already peaked the interest of many large companies who joined the Labor Department to offer remote work opportunities, such as YPF, Cisco and Telecom who were part of the pilot in 2008 and have currently around 200 employees working remotely. To demonstrate how productive and cost-effective this model can be, they are aiming to offer even more remote work positions,

With regulations in place, the government is now designing a similar program with special opportunities for people with disabilities and workers aged 45 years or more. Such programs promote social inclusion by means of labor and technology and partnership between public and private sectors.

We will stay tuned on the results and updates. It's always good to see initiatives like this!

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