

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2015/2016 Bureau
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Item 4(c) of the Provisional
Agenda

MEASURING QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT: PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE WORK

Note prepared by the Secretariat

*The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2015 endorsed the 'Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework'. The CES supported further work in this area and asked the Bureau to decide on the next steps. **The Bureau approved the proposed future work on measuring quality of employment.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. In June 2015, CES endorsed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework*, prepared by an Expert Group chaired by Germany. The Conference supported further work in this area, including continuing to organize expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment, and asked the Bureau to decide on the next steps.
2. The following issues were raised during the discussion of the Handbook at CES:
 - a) The importance of coherence with other existing frameworks, such as those of Eurostat, International Labour Organization (ILO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), was emphasized. The suggested indicators on quality of employment could possibly be used for measuring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - b) The updated Handbook reflects the resolution of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians on statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. This makes the Handbook applicable at the global level.
 - c) The need for further work to follow up on practical experiences with using the Handbook and compiling the indicators was highlighted.
3. A number of countries and organizations expressed interest in participating in future work, including Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, United States, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD and ILO.

II. PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE WORK IDENTIFIED IN THE HANDBOOK

4. Labour markets constantly change. New forms of employment are emerging, new working time patterns affect the structure of the working day and the technology used for work constantly evolves. Changes are also taking place regarding data on employment as new data sources become available. The new sources enable better compilation of existing indicators or compilation of new indicators, as in the case of enhanced statistical registers, accounting systems or other data sources, including Big Data.

5. To take into account such developments, the Handbook, in Section V on future work and research issues, proposes to examine at regular intervals the need to update the framework and keep the list of indicators relevant. Furthermore, some indicators included in the list are still earmarked as experimental where further conceptual and methodological work and practical experiences are needed.

6. The Handbook includes the following list of detailed topics for future work and research:

- Exploring the need to develop further indicators regarding physical working conditions (e.g., related to the equipment, use of information technologies, physical space, etc.).
- Development of further indicators on discrimination at work.
- Development of approaches taking into account additional payments, bonuses and non-wage benefits in indicators on income and benefits from employment, including facilities made available by the employer (e.g., canteen, medical centre, kindergarten).
- Development of indicators regarding prospects for promotion, including the use of longitudinal indicators of mobility within and across employers.
- Exploring the possibility of including longitudinal indicators regarding the stability of income from employment (e.g., mobility of low wage earners over time).
- Further refinement of the indicators on work-life balance, in particular those regarding implications and measurement of parental leave and the use of child care.
- Expansion of the indicators on work-life balance to include measures of those people who are facing work-life balance issues due to eldercare, care for older dependent children who reside in their parents' homes, or care for other relatives (besides children) and friends.
- Requirements for implementation of the concept of "precarious employment" from the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93).
- Analysis and development of operational definitions allowing measurement of the impact of subcontracting on security of employment.
- Application and operationalization of informal employment according to the Guidelines on statistical definition of informal employment endorsed by the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS).¹
- Review of the indicators after the revision of the International Classification of Status of Employment (ICSE-93), scheduled for the 20th ICLS in 2018.
- Coverage of the population by (basic) health care provision.
- Development of further indicators relating to social insurance covering contingencies, in particular disability.

¹ Preliminary work has already been conducted by the Expert Group, exploring the application of the statistical definition of informal employment using indicators already being developed for Dimension 4 (Security of Employment).

- Improving data availability as well as further conceptual work regarding the employer organization density rate.
- Analysis of the impact of relationships with clients on social support in employment.
- Exploring the possibility and need to add an indicator on work engagement in the sub-dimension work motivation.
- Improving data availability and measurement of employment-related violence, including suicide and homicide at work.
- Further analysis of the indicators in the framework in relation to measures of job satisfaction.

7. The Handbook concludes that there is a need for continued exchange of experience and expertise at the international level to ensure that the framework remains practical and relevant. This also concerns the development of innovative approaches to present the indicators, e.g. in the form of dashboards, aggregated indicators or by identifying core or headline indicators. Building on previous work by OECD and the Job Quality Index (JQI) of the European Trade Union Institute, further research could be undertaken on constructing indices that summarize several indicators.² Further experiences and exchange are also needed on the use of general labour market indicators and other context information in the analysis of quality of employment indicators and their development over time. Statistical offices are invited to make use of the statistical framework for publications on quality of employment in countries and provide feedback on their experiences.

III. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION BY THE BUREAU

8. Following the decision of the Conference, the potential further work on quality of employment covers a wide area and would require a group of member countries to steer the work, identify priority tasks, and advise the Secretariat on organizing expert group meetings. Furthermore, in February 2015, the Bureau emphasised the importance of following up on the implementation of the CES guidelines and recommendations, and decided that this task should be undertaken by the Steering Groups working in the relevant area.

9. In view of this, the Bureau is invited to establish a Steering Group on measuring quality of employment. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Group are included in ANNEX 1. The Steering Group should submit a more detailed work plan to the Bureau, including an outline of an agenda for the proposed expert group meeting on measuring quality of employment to take place in 2017.

10. The following countries and organisations who have expressed interest in further work on this topic should be invited to join the Steering Group: Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Switzerland, United States, Eurostat, OECD and ILO.

² See OECD, 2014: *How good is your job? A Framework for measuring and assessing job quality*. In OECD Employment Outlook 2014, Paris.

ANNEX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STEERING GROUP ON MEASURING QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

I. BACKGROUND

1. In June 2015, CES endorsed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework*. The Conference supported further work in this area, including continuing to organize expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment to discuss implementation issues and share experience. On this background the Bureau at its meeting in October 2015 agreed to establish a Steering Group to guide and oversee the CES work in the area of measuring quality of employment.

II. MANDATE

2. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the CES work programme. The Steering Group reports to the Bureau on CES activities on measuring quality of employment, as well as on emerging issues in the area and possible ways of addressing them.

III. OBJECTIVE

3. The Steering Group has the following objectives:

(a) Coordinate CES work in the area of measuring quality of employment and guide the work of the Secretariat in this area.

(b) Promote the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook and collect feedback from countries on the use of the Handbook.

(c) Review the list of indicators and context information based on country feedback and developments in methods and data sources and, where necessary, update the statistical framework to ensure its relevance and practical usability.

(d) Identify priority areas for further work and research to support countries in measuring quality of employment.

(e) Organise biennial expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment to follow up on the research agenda and the implementation of the statistical framework.

(f) Facilitate the sharing of experiences, methods, statistical techniques and other resources related to measuring quality of employment, e.g. through wikis.

(g) Ensure coordination and cooperation with other international organisations working in this area, in particular Eurostat, ILO and OECD.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

4. The main outputs of the Steering Group on measuring Quality of Employment in 2016-2018 will be:

(a) The implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook.

(b) Identification of priority issues from the research agenda where more work is needed.

(c) Organization of an expert group meeting on measuring quality of employment to follow up on the research agenda and the implementation of the statistical framework.

V. TIMETABLE

5. The work on promotion and implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook is ongoing. The expert group meeting on measuring quality of employment should be prepared to take place in 2017.

6. The CES Bureau will review the terms of reference of the Steering Group in 2018.

VI. METHODS OF WORK

7. The Steering Group will primarily work via exchange of email and audio conferences. The Group will have face-to-face meetings on the occasion of meetings of the group of experts on measuring quality of employment, or other events where a significant number of the Steering Group members participate.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

8. The Steering Group comprises: Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Switzerland, United States, Eurostat, OECD and ILO. Experts from other countries or organisations may be invited to contribute to the work of the Steering Group.

9. UNECE acts as Secretariat of the Steering Group.

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