

System of Quality of Employment Indicators

Report for the Meeting on Measuring Quality of Employment (Geneva, 31 October–2 November 2011)

National Statistical Institute, Spain
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1. Introduction

This document describes the tasks performed to date to implement the System of Quality of Employment Indicators in Spain following the conceptual framework agreed at the Fifth Joint UNECE/ILO/EUROSTAT Meeting on the Measurement of Quality of Employment.

The aim is to obtain the maximum possible coverage based on the availability of our statistical sources although, given the flexibility for individual countries to develop their system of indicators, we have ignored the indicators of sub-dimension 1.b on Child labour and forced labour, as it is not considered relevant to Spain.

Some suggestions are made at the end of the document, both general and specific to certain indicators. The aim of this is to clarify the operational definition to be used in these indicators and to facilitate international comparisons.

2. Completed and future tasks

After analysing and studying the available literature, the System of Quality of Employment Indicators was translated into Spanish and the titles of the dimensions and sub-dimensions and their representative indicators were adapted.

The **available statistical sources** were then reviewed to ascertain the level of coverage of our statistical system with a view to meeting System of Indicators requirements.

A **database** was also created, consisting of series of results (usually annual), disaggregated according to the most relevant variables.

This strategy has been used to develop the indicators for sub-dimension (a) (Safety at work) of dimension 1 (Safety and ethics of employment) and for dimension 2 (Income and benefits from employment). For the majority of the 13 indicators representing dimensions 1 and 2, the database also contains results disaggregated by the relevant variables (sex, age group, nationality, Autonomous Community-NUTS 2) representative of sub-dimension 1.c (Fair treatment in employment). As stated earlier, sub-dimension 1.b on Child labour and forced labour was not included.

Upon completion of the indicators of all dimensions, the Quality Profile of the country will be prepared and the results published. This will include:

- **Time series** with the **final** results of all indicators of the system for which information was ultimately obtained.
- **Quality profile**, an electronic version of the full comments to indicators figures, aimed at specialist users.
- **Summary of results**, for the purpose of informing the general public.
- **Methodological documentation** of each indicator (theoretical and operational definitions, name and characteristics of the statistical source used).

3. Suggestions and issues to be addressed

The first suggestion concerns the name of each indicator. For labour statistics specialists, the simple name of each indicator, as currently established in the system, should allow the formulation of the relevant operational definition so that its results could be obtained unequivocally. This is the case for a large number of indicators of the system. However, in some cases, such as those described below, the simple name of the indicator does not necessarily or consistently refer to its operational definition. This leaves room for doubt when it comes to interpreting the definition of the indicator, with potentially undesirable consequences, in the later stages of the project, on international comparisons of results between countries.

Hence, we consider it necessary to include in the available reference documentation on the system of quality of employment indicators developed by UNECE/ILO/EUROSTAT, in addition to the current name, a theoretical definition of each of the system indicators that should be as detailed and descriptive as possible. The aim of this is threefold:

- a) Facilitate, where possible, the formulation of the relevant operational definition.
- b) Minimize ambiguity in the interpretation of its theoretical definition.
- c) Help improve the future international comparability of its results.

As examples of the specific problems we can come across when attempting to obtain results because of the ambiguity – and even absence – of an operational definition, the cases of certain indicators of dimensions 1 and 2 now follow.

Indicator 1.a.4 (Hazardous work)

In the system of quality of employment indicators, the definition established for this indicator is **Share of employed persons working in “hazardous” industries and occupations (as defined by ILO)**.

On the ILO website and in the context of its **SAFework (Safety and Health at Work and the Environment) programme**, we find that one of its 12 subject areas is **Hazardous work**. This area considers "hazardous" to refer to *3D jobs (dirty, difficult and dangerous)*, which leaves room for interpretation.

We can nonetheless find more objective information in the **Hazard Datasheets on Occupations – HDO**, developed by the ILO in collaboration with the Israel Institute for Occupational Safety and Hygiene and the National ILO/CIS Occupational Safety Centres. These datasheets can indeed prove useful when applied as a statistical definition but they need to be improved because:

- The current version (72 occupations) is probably not a closed list. Some occupations that could objectively be considered as hazardous (e.g. mining) are absent.
- They do not include the occupation code of the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

If these datasheets are deemed useful for the operational definition of indicator 1.a.4, then they ought to be completed.

Indicator 1.a.5 (Significant levels of stress)

In the system of quality of employment indicators, the definition set for this indicator is the **Share of employed persons who feel significant levels of stress on the job**.

For this indicator, Spain has results from two continuous sources, the Quality of Life at Work Survey (*Encuesta de Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo*, ECVT) and the National Health Survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Salud*, ENSE). In both, respondents report their stress levels by rating them on a Likert scale that ranges from 0 to 10 in the first survey and from 1 to 7 in the second. The results vary considerably and are not comparable to those obtained from the ad-hoc module attached to the 2007 Labour Force Survey because the question is formulated in a very different way.

Level of stress on the job

	ECVT-2006			ENSE-2006			
	Average level	7-10	9-10	Average level	5-7	6-7	7
Total	5.6	47.2	18.6	4.18	43.7	21.2	8.8
Men	5.5	45.8	17.0	4.17	43.4	20.9	8.4
Women	5.8	49.5	21.1	4.18	44.1	21.7	9.5

With a view to orientating countries, guidelines should be given on how to interpret the term *significant* in the operational definition to be used. In particular, if the source is a survey with questions about stress levels expressed in numerical terms, the range of values that ought to be considered as "significant stress" should be given.

Indicator 2.b.5 (supplemental medical insurance plan)

This indicator is defined as the **Share of employees with supplemental medical insurance plan** and is the last of the five in sub-dimension 2b.

To answer this indicator (2.b.5), we have used ENSE-2006 as a source of reference, one of whose sections investigates the *Use of medical services*, specifically the various medical insurances (public and/or private) that the respondent holds or is a beneficiary of.

We have considered a medical insurance plan to be supplemental when it is taken out privately by an individual (either as holder or beneficiary thereof) who already has medical insurance for the simple fact of being employee (all employees in Spain are entitled to medical coverage).

Although this interpretation of the definition seems to be the most reasonable one, the System of Indicators should nonetheless include a clarification on this matter.