



*ILO-PARIS21 Seminar on
Capacity Building for Labour Statistics
Geneva, 3 December 2003*

Thematic Paper

ILO-PARIS21 Seminar on Capacity Building for Labour Statistics

Technical cooperation by the ILO

Summary: This paper summarises the means by which the ILO Bureau of Statistics and field specialists in labour statistics provide technical assistance to countries, summarises these activities over the last five years 1999-2003 and outlines the Bureau's aims for the future.

Introduction

1 One of the four¹ main functions of the ILO Bureau of Statistics (STAT) is to provide technical advice and guidance aimed at helping ILO member States and other countries and territories to develop their labour statistics systems.

2 The ILO provides this technical advice and guidance directly by telephone, e-mails, letters, etc as well as through technical cooperation projects, expert consultancies, technical manuals and guidelines, and training. The advice provided through these activities is based on, and compatible with, the international standards in labour statistics, which represent international consensus on best practices, taking into account the experience and needs of member States. In this way, the ILO is able to pass on to countries the lessons learned by others.

3 The technical competence of the ILO Bureau of Statistics relates to the measurement of the labour force, employment (including underemployment, informal employment and public sector employment), unemployment, demand for labour, wages, earnings and hours of work, international migration of workers, labour cost, strikes and lockouts, occupational injuries, household income and expenditure, and consumer price indices, as well as the classification of occupations and classification by status in employment.² The aim is to be in a position to provide support for at least the labour topics covered in the ILO's Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No 160). These statistics are expected to be used in the preparation of Decent Work Indicators and in other new areas being developed within the ILO.

Overall assistance during 1999 to 2003

4 As shown in Table 1 (see end of paper), the staff of the Bureau of Statistics in Geneva and the field specialist in labour statistics undertook a total of 375 missions during the period 1999 to 2003. Table 2 shows that in excess of 230 work-months³ of staff time was used in providing technical assistance to countries (desk work as well as missions).

5 The amount of work done by the ILO ranged from small and immediate responses to engagements that lasted for longer periods and involved significant staff resources, such as:

- the development of labour force surveys in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and Nepal;
- the redesign of labour force surveys in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Jordan, the Republic of Moldova, Turkey and the Ukraine;

¹ The other three main functions of the ILO Bureau of Statistics are the development of international statistical standards, the dissemination of labour statistics and methodological information, and serving the statistical needs of the ILO as a whole.

² Statistics on child labour, social security and socio-economic security are covered by other areas of the ILO.

³ Desk time on technical assistance is believed to be considerably under-estimated in this figure.

- support to the analysis of poverty surveys in Gambia;
- labour market information systems in Jordan, the Caribbean and the Maldives;
- development of occupational classifications in Jordan, Brazil, Columbia and Peru;
- the design of informal sector surveys in Barbados, Georgia, the Palestinian Occupied Territories and Turkey; and
- the collection and dissemination of statistics on occupational injuries through sources other than notification systems.

Resources

6 The resources that are available to the ILO Bureau of Statistics for technical cooperation work are limited. The Bureau in Geneva has 10 professional statisticians, all of whom undertake technical advisory services. Outside ILO headquarters, there are few professional statisticians engaged in technical assistance as shown in Table 3.

7 Not covered by this paper are the technical cooperation activities of other units. For example, some of the ILO multidisciplinary advisory teams (Port of Spain and Lima, for example) have positions that combine statistical support with other technical responsibilities (mainly in labour market policy and economics), and other ILO units (such as the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour - SIMPOC, Key Indicators of the Labour Market – KILM, the area responsible for Social Economic Security, and the Statistical Development and Analysis unit) provide advice and guidance (relating to child labour statistics, labour market information dissemination, socio-economic security surveys and statistical analysis respectively).

8 Funds for the missions shown in Table 1 are provided either through projects that are funded by international and bilateral agencies, through the ILO's Regular Budget for Technical Cooperation (RBTC), or by the countries themselves. For technical advice and guidance that requires significant desk work and staff time (Table 2), funds to cover staff time are also sought; otherwise the costs are covered by the ILO's Regular Budget.

Expert consultancies

9 Typically, the ILO responds to requests for assistance that are made by countries through ILO field offices. A decision is made as to whether the request can be handled locally or whether it has to be referred to ILO Headquarters. In the latter case it is decided whether support can be provided with or without a mission to the requesting country. Missions are undertaken when the advice is complex, when an assessment needs to be made by direct consultation and observation, and/or when a significant element of training of local staff may be involved. In general, the advice is provided to national statistical offices or ministries of labour.

10 Advice is tailored to suit the statistical capacity of the country. Countries with limited resources (in terms of trained staff, equipment, funds, etc) are encouraged to learn new techniques and skills, but not if this would risk the successful implementation of their project.

11 The expert consultancies might include:

- (a) an assessment or review of the labour statistical system with recommendations for change;
- (b) assistance in the implementation of such recommendations;

- (c) assistance in the preparation of a draft project proposal for some form of statistical development to be funded by external donors;;
- (d) advice on the development or revision of a component of the statistical system or on their implementation.

Training in labour statistics

12 In addition to on-the-job training, the ILO organizes and conducts training courses, training workshops and seminars at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. Training may be organized in collaboration with ILO field offices or with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin. The training is usually provided to officials from national statistical offices and ministries of labour, as well as representatives of workers' and employers' organizations.

13 A compendium of statistical training tools relevant to labour statistics is being progressively developed and expanded. One of the largest modules prepared is on “Statistics of the Economically Active Population”.

Technical manuals and guidelines

14 The ILO Bureau of Statistics produces manuals based on the international statistical standards adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians. They provide operational guidance for the application of the ICLS resolutions.

15 During the period 1999-2003, the ILO Bureau of Statistics worked on the following manuals:

- (a) *Consumer Price (CPI) Manual*: This volume is a revision of the ILO *Manual on Consumer Price Indices* issued in 1989. The revision has been undertaken under the joint responsibility of six organizations: ILO, IMF, OECD, UNECE, Eurostat, and the World Bank through the mechanism of an Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (IWGPS), and is being published jointly by the six organizations. It is scheduled for publication towards the end of 2003.
- (b) *Measuring the non-observed economy: a handbook*. This handbook was drafted by a team of authors from national and international statistical organizations, and was published in 2002 by OECD, IMF, ILO and CIS STAT. It is available in English and Russian. A French version is under preparation.
- (c) *Informal economy manual*: The ILO is in the process of producing a manual on conducting surveys of employment in the informal economy. A first complete draft is expected to be available in 2004, for discussion by the Delhi Group.
- (d) *Manuals on child labour statistics*: The ILO programme responsible for monitoring and elimination of child labour is expected to release a manual on this topic early in 2004. The Bureau of Statistics has provided technical inputs to these Manuals.
- (e) *Statistics on occupational injuries*: A manual on methodologies for sources other than notification systems is now under preparation.
- (f) *Economic characteristics in population censuses*. A Technical Report on the practical implementation of the relevant UN Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, prepared in cooperation with United Nations Statistics Division

16 The ILO's statistical manuals and guidelines have continued to be popular:

- (a) The manual on wages statistics (ILO, 1997) is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese;
- (b) The manual on surveys of the economically active population (Hussmanns, et al, 1990) is available in English, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese and Croatian.
- (c) The guideline on the compilation and presentation of labour statistics based on administrative records (EASMAT, 1997) was reprinted in 1999 and is available in English and a number of Asian languages (Khmer, Vietnamese, Nepalese, Thai and Mongolian). It has been used in training in non-Asian countries.
- (d) The technical guide for transition countries (Chernyshev, 1997) was revised and updated and published in Russian and Ukrainian in 1999 and 2000 respectively.

Future work

19 As indicated on page 90 of the General Report to the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ILO, 2003), the ILO will continue to support statistical capacity building for labour statistics, with emphasis on the development or revision of labour force surveys, surveys of employment and conditions of work in the informal economy, establishment surveys of employment, wages and hours of work, the compilation of labour statistics from administrative records, and consumer price indices.

Geneva, September 2003

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ILO: *An integrated system of wages statistics: A manual on methods*, Geneva, 1979.

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ILO/EASMAT (East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team): “*Labour Statistics based on administrative records: Guidelines on compilation and presentation*”, Bangkok, 1997 (reprinted 1999).

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Table 1: Number of missions (a) during the period 1 Jan 1999 to 31 Dec 2003 classified by purpose and region

Purpose	Region								
	Middle East and North Africa	Central Asia	Other Asia/Pacific (b)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Latin America and Caribbean	Russia and Eastern Europe (c)	OECD countries	Global, inter-regional	Total
LFS	9	1	8		13	27	3		61
HIES		1		2		1		5	9
Establishment surveys	4				3	12	1		20
Admin records			2		1				3
CPI			1					10	11
Informal sector					1	9	5	1	16
LMI generally	7		8	15	4	4	7	1	46
Training	3	1	11	3		2		13	33
Other conferences, meetings	3	4	5	1	3	12	26	42	96
Other (d)	1		4	11	12	12	26	14	80
Total	27	7	39	32	37	79	68	86	375

- (a) Includes missions by staff of Bureau of Statistics or field specialists in labour statistics only. Excludes missions by staff of other ILO units (child labour, KILM) or statistics-related missions by field staff who are not specialists in labour statistics.
- (b) Excluding Middle east, Central Asia and OECD countries. Including Mongolia and China.
- (c) Excluding OECD countries.
- (d) Relating to statistical integration, labour accounting systems, occupational classifications, population censuses, statistics on occupational injuries, HIV-AIDS, income from employment, child labour, time use, vacancies and international migration.

Table 2: Work-months (a)(b) of assistance (desk work and missions) during the period 1 Jan 1999 to 31 Dec 2003 by purpose and region

Purpose	Region								
	Middle East and North Africa	Central Asia	Other Asia/Pacific (c)	Sub-Saharan Africa	Latin America and Caribbean	Russia and Eastern Europe (d)	OECD countries	Global, inter-regional	Total
LFS	2		5		5	15	0.5		27.5
HIES		4		6.5		3		5	18.5
Establishment surveys	0.3		6.5	0.5	5	6			18.3
Admin records			9		4			0.5	13.5
CPI			0.5					3.3	3.8
Informal sector					2	5	2	0.5	9.5
LMI generally	2.5		9	16	1.5	1.5	2.5		33
Training	0.2	1	8.2	5		0.7		6.6	21.7
Other conferences, meetings	0.7		1.2			1.5	11	24.5	38.9
Other (e)	1		4	10	18	5.5	3.5	8.1	50.1
Total	6.7	5	43.4	38	35.5	38.2	19.5	48.5	234.8

- (a) Includes work-months by staff of Bureau of Statistics or field specialists in labour statistics only. Excludes work-months by staff of other ILO units (child labour, KILM) or by field staff who are not specialists in labour statistics.
- (b) Estimate of work-months desk work is believed to be considerably under-estimated.
- (c) Excluding Middle east, Central Asia and OECD countries. Including Mongolia and China.
- (d) Excluding OECD countries.
- (e) Relating to statistical integration, labour accounting systems, occupational classifications, population censuses, statistics on occupational injuries, HIV-AIDS, income from employment, child labour, time use, vacancies and international migration.

Table 3: Number of specialists in labour statistics (a) based in field duty stations, 1999-2003

Period	Number of field specialists in labour statistics (a)	Location of these field specialists
Jan 1999 to Aug 2001	1	Bangkok
Spt 2001 to Aug 2003	0	-
Spt 2003 to date	2	Addis Ababa and Abidjan

(a) Excludes statisticians supporting child labour statistics and specialists combining statistical support with other technical responsibilities.