

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2018/2019 Bureau  
Geneva (Switzerland), 14-15 October 2018

Item IV (f) of the Provisional  
Agenda

MEASURING QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Progress report and updated terms of reference of the Steering Group

*The paper describes results of the first phase of work of the UNECE Steering Group on measuring quality of employment, and presents a proposal for future work, including updated Terms of Reference. **The Bureau approved the progress report, the proposals for further work and the updated terms of reference.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2015 endorsed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework* and supported further work on measuring quality of employment. On this background, in October 2015, the Bureau decided to establish a Steering Group to guide and oversee the CES work in this area. The Bureau emphasised the importance of following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook, keeping the statistical framework and the list of indicators up-to-date, and following up on the research agenda as outlined in chapter V of the Handbook.
2. The Steering Group's Terms of Reference approved in October 2015 covered the period of 2016-2018 (ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/8, Annex I<sup>1</sup>). The planned activities and outputs included the following:
  - a) Implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook;
  - b) Identification of priority issues from the research agenda where more work is needed;
  - c) Organisation of an expert group meeting on measuring quality of employment to follow up on the research agenda and the implementation of the statistical framework.
3. The following countries and organizations are members of the Steering Group: Austria, Azerbaijan, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, United States, Eurofound, ILO, OECD and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). The Steering Group is co-chaired by Canada and Switzerland. Eurostat was a member until March 2018.
4. Section II of the current document summarises the activities and outputs of the Steering Group during 2016-2018. Section III presents a proposal to the Bureau on how to continue the work. Updated terms of reference for the Steering Group are presented in the Annex.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2015/October/08-Quality\\_of\\_Employment.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2015/October/08-Quality_of_Employment.pdf)

## **II. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS 2016-2018**

5. In the period from 2016 to 2018 the Steering Group on measuring quality of employment worked on the following issues:

### **A. Implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook**

6. Several activities of the Steering Group are connected with implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook:

(a) An article on cross-national comparison of quality of employment was authored by members of the Steering Group from Germany, Italy, Switzerland and UNECE with the support from Finland and Israel. The article was submitted to the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) for review.

(b) The framework was presented at several occasions and received in general very positive feedback:

- Eurostat Working Group on Labour Market Statistics LAMAS (June 2016) by Germany and Eurostat;
- Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts, Chicago (July 2016) by Eurostat;
- ISI World Statistics Congress, Marrakesh (June 2017) by ILO and Germany;
- WORK2017 Conference (Work and Labour in the Digital Future), Turku Finland (August 2017) by ILO and Finland;
- International Conference on Work and Health, Paris (September 2017) by Germany;
- Statistics Austria (May 2018) by Switzerland;
- Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM) Summer School (June 2018) by Italy;

(c) Eurostat set up and maintains an online-database<sup>2</sup> with around 40 indicators for the countries of the European Union, based on the recommendations of the Handbook.

### **B. Follow-up to the priority issues from the Handbook's research agenda where more work was needed**

7. The Steering Group identified a number of topics of the research agenda included in chapter V of the Handbook as priorities. The identified topics and the respective outcomes for the first phase of work from 2016-2018 are:

- (a) Discrimination at work (lead: OECD)

The Steering Group is finalising a paper summarising current practices and possible data sources on discrimination at work.

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<sup>2</sup> The database can be accessed through the Eurostat page on quality of employment <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/labour-market/quality-of-employment> or directly under "Cross cutting topic" in the online database <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

## (b) Work-life balance (lead: Eurostat)

The Steering Group reviewed the existing operational definitions and guidelines for compiling and interpreting the indicators, summed up in the so-called indicator sheets, on work-life balance (sub-dimension 3c). Furthermore, three additional indicators for this sub-dimension were identified: care for incapacitated relatives, work intrusion into leisure time, and self-perceived work-life balance. Indicator sheets for each of these indicators were developed.

## (c) Job satisfaction (lead: Italy)

The Steering Group identified a relevant indicator on self-perceived job satisfaction in sub-dimension 7b (work motivation) and developed an indicator sheet.

## (d) Approaches to present the indicators (lead: Eurofound)

The Steering Group is collecting country approaches to present the indicators and drafting a paper to summarise the findings.

(e) Impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS (lead: ILO)

Further work on the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS resolution on work activities and employment has been postponed to the next phase of work.

8. The Steering Group will summarise the results on points (a) – (d) by the end of 2018 and make them publicly available as a supplement to the Handbook. The proposed indicators by the Steering Group on sub-dimensions 3c (work-life balance) and 7b (work motivation) are planned to undergo country assessments and testing. Depending on the results, the Steering Group will consider whether to include these indicators in the framework.

**C. 2017 Expert Group meeting on measuring quality of employment to follow up on the research agenda and the implementation of the statistical framework**

9. A meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment was held in Geneva on 4-6 October 2017. The meeting discussed the following topics:

- *impact of the 19th ICLS resolution on work activities and employment*: the updated definition of ‘employment’ can have an impact on specific indicators of the framework;
- *country experiences* with the introduction of quality of employment indicators, as well as practical experiences with specific quality of employment indicators;
- *new forms of work and their measurement*, discussing for instance the increased amount of alternative work arrangements or specific challenges of measuring the digitalised work life;
- *frameworks related to quality of employment*: presentation of the Eurostat database which allows promotion of the framework, and ILO and OECD presentations of other related frameworks and their similarities, differences and complementarities with the quality of employment framework;
- *qualifications and skills*, discussing measuring the mismatch between qualifications and skills; and
- *future work agenda and other topics*, where topics like measuring discrimination at work, job satisfaction, work-life balance and ways to present the indicators were

discussed as well as the publication of experimental indicators and the role of international organisations in the context of the statistical framework.

10. In addition to the research agenda proposed in the Handbook, participants of the Expert Group meeting made specific proposals for future work, including work on:

- how to take into account the definitions of the 19<sup>th</sup> *ICLS Resolution on Work Statistics* in the framework;
- establishing an online database with quality of employment indicators as well as a designated webpage for exchange of research and practical experiences in measuring quality of employment;
- ways to further promote the statistical framework for measuring quality of employment; and
- new forms of employment and their measurement, measuring commuting time, intrusion of employment into the private life.

11. A detailed summary of the meeting and its outcome can be found in the report of the meeting<sup>3</sup>.

### **III. NEXT PHASE OF THE WORK IN 2019-2021**

12. For the next phase of work in the period 2019-2021, the Steering Group, based on discussions at the 2017 Expert Group meeting, identified the following priority topics:

- (a) Collection of further feedback on the Handbook (lead: Austria)

The objective is to collect more country feedback on the implementation of the Handbook to keep the Handbook up-to-date and to meet the users' needs. The Steering Group has developed a template questionnaire and will continue to adapt the template if necessary. It is crucial to address the questionnaire to the right person and therefore the Steering Group will actively collect country contacts in preparation of the consultation. The Steering Group will prepare a report analysing the feedback provided and consider the results in defining the future work priorities. The consultation shall be carried out in connection with the next expert group meeting proposed to take place in 2019.

- (b) Teleworking (lead: Switzerland)

Teleworking and mobile work have gained importance in the context of digitalisation of the labour market and can be considered as a new form of employment. Based on the Swiss experience from measuring teleworking and international research on measuring mobile work, the intention is to develop a potential new indicator for the framework by using available international data (for instance the European Working Conditions Survey).

- (c) Commuting time (lead: Israel)

Commuting time has already been identified as a relevant factor to the quality of employment in the Handbook and an indicator is included within the framework under sub-dimension 3c (work-life balance). The goal is to analyse this indicator further as

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.12/2017/mtg1/Report\\_MQE\\_2017.12.30\\_final.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.12/2017/mtg1/Report_MQE_2017.12.30_final.pdf)

well as its relations to other aspects of the framework, for example the possibility of teleworking. Ideally, the analyses would lead to recommendations on how to meaningfully disseminate the indicator. Furthermore, if the analyses suggest using a different or additional aggregation of the indicator, the indicator sheet shall be adjusted accordingly.

(d) Further promotion of the statistical framework and publication of indicators under the headline of ‘Quality of employment’ (lead: Germany)

Several indicators of the framework are often published and well perceived across countries. But in many cases the indicators are reported out of context of the framework. Therefore, a need to further promote the statistical framework and to publish indicators under the headline of “Quality of employment” was identified. To promote the statistical framework, the Steering Group identified four different user groups: policy; science and academia, organisations; media and the broad public. The Steering Group will develop user specific promotion tools. NSOs will be encouraged to publish indicators under the headline of “Quality of employment”. A number of specific activities have already been carried out, including the previously mentioned presentations under paragraph 6 point b.

#### **IV. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION BY THE BUREAU**

13. **The Bureau is invited to:**

- (a) comment on the progress of work of the Steering Group;**
- (b) review and approve the proposals for further work as described in para 12;**
- (c) review and approve the updated Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on measuring quality of employment (Annex I).**

14. The following countries and organisations will be invited to continue their participation in the Steering Group: Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, United States, Eurofound, Eurostat, ILO, OECD and WIEGO. The Bureau is invited to suggest possible other members of the Group.

## ANNEX I

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

#### I. BACKGROUND

1. In June 2015, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework*. The Conference supported further work on measuring quality of employment, including continuing to organize expert group meetings. On this background the Bureau in October 2015 established a Steering Group to guide and oversee the work of CES in the area of measuring quality of employment. A progress report and updated Terms of Reference of the Steering Group were submitted to the Bureau for approval in October 2018.

#### 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 this area and possible ways of addressing them. The Steering Group's mandate covers the period of 2019-2023.

#### 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 further 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 continued relevance and practical usability;

(d) Follow-up on the research agenda from the Handbook: 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 2018-2023 will be:

(a) To promote and follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook;

(b) To keep the statistical framework and the list of indicators up-to-date;

(c) To organise biennial expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment to follow up on the research agenda and the implementation of the statistical framework;

(d) To identify emerging issues in the area of measuring quality of employment, to identify further priority issues of the research agenda where more work is needed, and to follow-up on already identified priority issues, including: collection of further feedback on the implementation of the Handbook; impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS resolution on work activities and employment; teleworking; commuting time; and further promotion of the statistical framework.

## **V. TIMETABLE**

5. The work on promotion and implementation of the recommendations of the Handbook is ongoing. The next expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment is planned to take place in 2019.

6. The CES Bureau will review the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group in 2023.

## **VI. METHODS OF WORK**

7. The Steering Group will primarily work via email and audio conferences. The Group will hold 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: Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, United States, Eurofound, Eurostat, ILO, OECD, and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). 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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