

Self-employment

Did you know?

According to the standard ILO definition any person who works for more than one hour per week is counted as being employed. As a result, self-employment rates are very high in countries where there are many small farms because virtually all family members will do at least an hour's work on the farm.

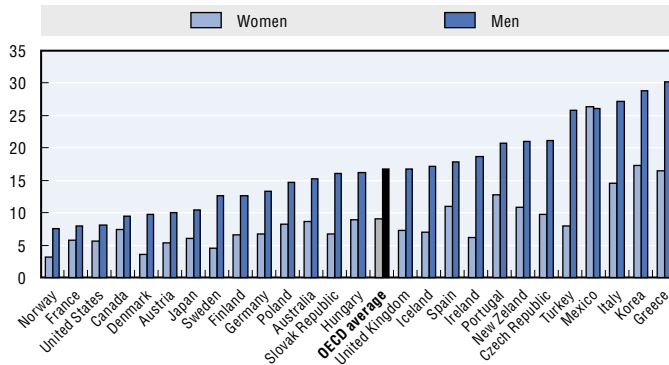
Ignoring self-employment in agriculture, Greece, Korea, Italy and Mexico have the highest rates of self-employment while Norway, France and the United States have the lowest.

The self-employment rate for men is more than twice that of women in most OECD countries.

Self-employment may be seen either as a survival strategy for those who cannot find any other means of earning an income or as evidence of entrepreneurship and a desire to be one's own boss.

Percentage of self-employed as a percentage of employed men and women

Excluding self-employed in agriculture, 2004 or latest years available



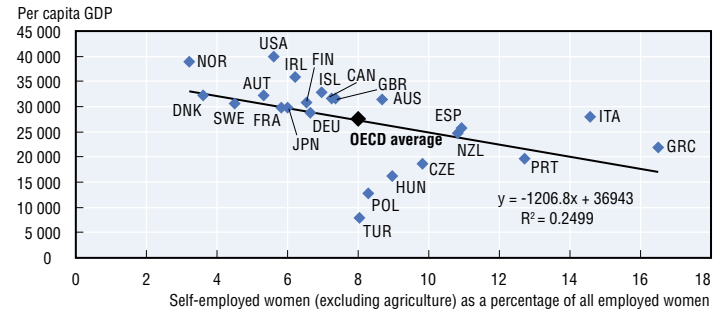
Excluding the agricultural sector, more men than women are self-employed in all OECD countries except Mexico. The gender gaps are particularly large in Turkey, Greece, Italy and Ireland and are smallest in Mexico, France and Canada.

In most OECD countries, self-employment rates have been falling since 1990: rates for women have declined somewhat faster than those for men.

Female self-employment outside of agriculture is negatively correlated with levels of economic development as measured by per capita GDP; the richer the country the lower the share of women in self-employment. The same result is also found for men.

Female self-employment and per capita GDP

2004 or latest year available



Source: OECD (2005), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.

Further reading:

OECD (2005), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2001), *Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs: Realising the Benefits of Globalisation and the Knowledge-based Economy*, OECD, Paris.