

International Labour Organisation / O.E.C.D definitions

1. Total population

All nationals present in, or temporarily absent from the country, and aliens permanently settled in the country.

Includes the following categories:

- national armed forces stationed abroad;
- merchant seamen at sea;
- diplomatic personnel located abroad;
- civilian aliens resident in the country;
- displaced persons resident in the country.

Excludes the following categories:

- foreign armed forces stationed in the country;
- foreign diplomatic personnel located in the country;
- civilian aliens temporarily in the country.

Data for total population may be compiled following two basic concepts:

- “Present-in-area population” or *de facto*, i.e. persons actually present in the country on the date of the census.
- “Resident population” or *de jure*, i.e. Persons regularly domiciled in the country on the date of the census.

Except where otherwise indicated, data refer to the actual territory of the country considered.

2. Total labour force (or currently active population)

The total labour force, or currently active population, comprises all persons who fulfill the requirements for inclusion among the employed or the unemployed as defined below.

3. Armed forces

The armed forces cover personnel from the metropolitan territory drawn from the total available labour force who served in the armed forces during the period under consideration, whether stationed in the metropolitan territory or elsewhere.

The following are excluded from the armed forces:

- personnel drawn from areas outside the metropolitan territory of the country concerned;
- security forces, except forces such as mobile gendarmerie units and armed border patrols which receive training in military tactics, are equipped like the military forces and are able to be placed under military command;
- Reservists recalled for a period of training of less than one month.

4. Civilian labour force

The Civilian Labour Force corresponds to Total Labour Force excluding armed forces.

5. Total employment

Persons in employment include civilian employment plus the armed forces and all those employed as defined below:

5.1 The employed include all persons above a specified age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day, were in the following categories:

5.1.1 Paid employment:

At work: persons who during the reference period performed some work for wage or salary, in cash or in kind;

With a job but not at work: persons who, having already worked in their present job, were temporarily not at work during the reference period and have a formal attachment to their job. This formal job attachment should be determined in the light of national circumstances, according to one or more of the following criteria: (a) if he or she continued receipt of wage or salary; (b) an assurance of return to work following the end of the contingency, or an agreement as to the date of return; (c) the elapsed duration of absence from the job, which, wherever relevant, may be that duration for which workers can receive compensation benefits without obligations to accept other jobs.

5.1.2 Self-employment:

At work: persons who during the reference period performed some work for profit or family gain, in cash or in kind;

With an enterprise but not at work: persons with an enterprise, which may be a business enterprise, a farm or a service undertaking, who were temporarily not at work during the reference period for any specific reason.

5.2

For operational purposes, the notion of some work may be interpreted as work for at least one hour.

5.3

Persons temporarily not at work because of illness or injury, holiday or vacation, strike or lock-out, educational or training leave, maternity or parental leave, reduction in economic activity, temporary disorganisation or suspension of work due to reasons such as bad weather, mechanical or electrical breakdown, or shortage of raw materials or fuels, or other temporary absence with or without leave should be considered as being in paid employment provided they have a formal job attachment.

5.4

Employers, own account workers and members of producers' co-operatives should be considered as being self-employed and classified as at work or not at work, as the case may be.

5.5

Unpaid family workers at work should be considered as being self-employed irrespective of the number of hours worked during the reference period. Countries which prefer for special reasons to set a minimum time criterion for the inclusion of unpaid family workers among the employed should identify and separately classify those who worked less than the prescribed time.

5.6

Persons engaged in the production of economic goods and services for own and household consumption should be considered as being self-employed if such production comprises an important contribution to the total consumption of the household.

5.7

Apprentices who received pay in cash or in kind should be considered as being in paid employment and classified as at work or not at work on the same basis as other persons in paid employment.

5.8

Students, homemakers and others mainly engaged in non-economic activities during the reference period, who at the same time were in paid employment or self-employment as defined in (5.1) above should be considered as employed on the same basis as other categories of employed persons and be identified separately, where possible.

5.9

Members of the armed forces should be included among persons in paid employment. The armed forces should include both the regular and the conscripts as specified in the most recent revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).

6. Unemployment

6.1

The unemployed comprise all persons above a specified age, who during the reference period were:

6.1.1

without work, *i.e.* were not in paid employment or self-employment during the reference period.

6.1.2

Currently available for work, *i.e.* were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period.

6.1.3

Seeking work, *i.e.* had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment. The specific steps may include registration at a public or private employment exchange; application to employers; checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, market or other assembly places; placing or answering newspaper advertisements; seeking assistance of friends or relatives; looking for land, building, machinery or equipment to establish own enterprise; arranging for financial resources; applying for permits and licences, etc.

6.2

In situations where the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganised or of limited scope, where labour absorption is, at the time, inadequate, or where the labour force is largely self-employed, the standard definition of unemployment given in subparagraph (6.1) above may be applied by relaxing the criterion of seeking work.

6.3

In the application of the criterion of current availability for work, especially in situations covered by subparagraph (6.2) above, appropriate tests should be developed to suit national circumstances. Such tests may be based on notions such as present desire for work and previous work experience, willingness to take up work for wage or salary on locally prevailing terms, or readiness to undertake self-employment activity given the necessary resources and facilities.

6.4

Notwithstanding the criterion of seeking work embodied in the standard definition of unemployment, persons without work and currently available for work who had made arrangements to take up paid employment or undertake self-employment activity at a date subsequent to the reference period should be considered as unemployed.

6.5

Persons temporarily absent from their jobs with no formal job attachment who were currently available for work and seeking work should be regarded as unemployed in accordance with the standard definition of unemployment. Countries may, however, depending on national circumstances and policies, prefer to relax the seeking work criterion in the case of persons temporarily laid off. In such cases, persons temporarily laid off who were not seeking work but classified as unemployed should be identified as a separate subcategory.

6.6

Students, homemakers and others mainly engaged in non-economic activities during the reference

period who satisfy the criteria laid down in subparagraphs (6.1) and (6.2) above should be regarded as unemployed on the same basis as other categories of unemployed persons and be identified separately, where possible.

Note: As an amplification of these definitions, the OECD Working Party on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, at its October 1983 meeting recommended that Member countries retain the criterion of job search in a recent period such as the prior month in their labour force surveys and specifically test for it so that unemployment data embodying this criterion are available for international comparisons.

7. Civilian employment - breakdown by professional status

Civilian employment is broken down into two groups: employees and self-employed

Employees: persons who work for a public or private employer and who receive remuneration in the form of wages, salary, commission, tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind.

Self-employed are : **employers** and **persons working on their own account:** persons who operate their own economic enterprise or follow a profession or trade on their own account, whether they employ other persons or not, and also unpaid family workers

Employers are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or a few partners, hold the type of job defined as a "self-employment job" and in this capacity, on a continuous basis (including the reference period) have engaged one or more persons to work for them in their business as "employee(s)"

Own-account workers are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the type of job defined as a 'self-employment job' and have not engaged on a continuous basis any 'employees' to work for them during the reference period

8. Civilian employment - breakdown by activity and wage earners and salaried employees - breakdown by activities

The Major Divisions of economic activity listed are defined in the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, ISIC Rev. 2. , Rev. 3 or Rev 4.

The armed forces should be excluded and hence not included in Community, social and personal services (Major Division 9 of Rev.2) or in the series Civilian Employment, Total. (See definition of armed forces above.)