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**ILO plans to support implementation of ISCO-08 in national and
regional activities**

International Labour Organization



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Organisation internationale du Travail
Organización Internacional del Trabajo

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**Paper for discussion by the United Nations Expert Group on
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POLICY INTEGRATION DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF STATISTICS

ILO plans to support implementation of ISCO-08 in national and regional activities

Introduction

1 The International Labour Office (ILO) project to update the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is to be completed by late 2007. The timing of completion is intended to allow sufficient time for the updated classification (ISCO-08), or national adaptations of it, to be used in the round of national population censuses to be conducted from 2010 onwards. This is in accordance with the resolution in 2003 of the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) and a request from the UN Statistical Commission.

2 To achieve this outcome, a number of steps will need to be taken during 2008 and 2009 to support implementation of the new classification in national and regional settings. These include publication of the classification in English, French and Spanish and its release on the ILO Website; preparation of manuals and training material on how to adapt ISCO-08 for use in national and regional settings; provision of training on a regional basis; provision of technical assistance and advice directly to countries; and assistance with and review of correspondence tables between national classifications and ISCO-08.

3 This paper outlines the materials, support and assistance that will be needed and discusses issues associated with coordination and resource provision that will need to be addressed. Table 1 provides a summary of the major activities that will need to be undertaken to ensure completion of the work to update ISCO, and that appropriate support is provided for implementation of the new classification.

Publication and dissemination

4 The introductory material, classification structure, definitions of categories, indexes, and correspondence tables between ISCO-88 and ISCO-08 will be loaded to the ILO Website as soon as possible following adoption of the classification. Assuming the Tripartite Meeting of Experts in Labour Statistics that will take place in Geneva from 3 – 6 December 2007 recommends adoption of the classification by the ILO Governing body, this material will be available early in 2008. It is also planned to produce a printed publication and it is hoped that the English version will be available during 2008. The material will need to be translated into French and Spanish, however, before full French and Spanish versions can be published. The bulk of this work is in translation of the definitions of categories¹.

¹ The classification structure will be available in French and Spanish as part of the development work, and will be made available on the ILO Website following adoption of the classification.

Manuals

5 Manuals explaining how to use ISCO-08 and adapt it for use in national censuses and surveys will need to be developed. The following topics should be covered:

- the concept of occupation and why we need to classify statistical and administrative data occupation;
- introduction to ISCO-08, its underlying principles and structure, and what has changed from ISCO-88;
- understanding specific national requirements for occupational data and the occupational structure of the national labour market;
- how to adapt ISCO-08 to satisfy these needs while retaining comparability with the international standard;
- collecting and processing data on occupation in surveys and censuses;
- development, use and maintenance of a national coding index for occupation;
- development of correspondence tables between old and new classifications and between national classifications and ISCO; and
- international reporting of occupation data.

Provision of training on a regional basis

6 Based on the material developed for the manuals described above, training workshops for the following regions are envisaged: Francophone Africa, Anglophone Southern and East Africa, Anglophone West and North Africa, Middle East, South-East Asia, Southern Asia, Pacific Nations, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.² The following structure for the workshops, lasting 4 – 5 days is envisaged, although the detail needs further development:

- introduction to occupation classification and ISCO-08;
- presentation and group discussion on problem and difficult areas of ISCO (tailored to suit sub-regional circumstances);
- understanding specific national requirements and occupational structures (ideally with case studies presented by selected participants);
- adapting ISCO-08 to satisfy these needs while retaining comparability with the international standard;
- small groups working together to identify potential adaptations for each country and reporting back to the whole group;
- collecting and processing data on occupation in surveys and censuses;
- how to develop a national coding index for occupation;
- development of correspondence tables between old and new classifications and ISCO; and
- identification in small groups of national strategies for development and implementation of occupation classifications based on ISCO-08 and of opportunities for regional collaboration.

² Workshops for North America are not envisaged since the countries in the region have advanced classification systems and strong technical capacity. It is envisaged that training and implementation in Western and Central Europe would be handled by the European Commission with support from ILO. Assistance to North-East Asian countries may be more appropriately provided directly to countries or to small groups of countries as needed.

Provision of technical assistance and advice directly to countries

7 Since it is unlikely that the needs of all countries will be met fully through the training workshops, requests for technical assistance from individual countries and regions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and provided subject to availability of both funds and suitably qualified personnel. Efforts will be made to establish a network of consultants who may be able to collaborate with the ILO in the provision of technical assistance.

8 During the initial phase of implementation and adaptation, there will be many requests for advice about the most appropriate location in the classification of specific job titles. To facilitate self help and international consistency, it is proposed to create a database of these requests and of the responses to them, and to make these available in anonymous form on the ISCO Website.

Assistance with and review of correspondences between national classifications and ISCO-08

9 Resources will be required to review correspondences between national occupation classifications and ISCO-08, to ensure that a consistent approach is taken in reporting national data classified by ISCO-08 to ILO and other agencies.

Table 1: Summary of Major Activities – Jan 2007 – Dec 2009

Activity	Timing
1. Preparation of final draft classification structure	Apr – Jun 2007
2. Develop/update and validate definitions of categories in ISCO-08	Jan – Dec 2007
3. Develop ISCO-08 index of occupations (English, French and Spanish versions)	Jan - Dec 2007
4. ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts to recommend the adoption of ISCO-08	Dec 2007
5. Translation of updated ISCO-08	Dec 2007 -Dec 2008
6. Development of Manual and training materials	Feb – Sep 2008
7. Translation of Manual.	Jul – Dec 2008
8. Conduct regional training workshops (4-5 days each)	2008-9 and ongoing
9. Technical Assistance - Direct response to queries - Provision of advice on development and updating of national classifications - Review of correspondence tables between national classifications and ISCO	2008-9 and ongoing

Coordination of activities

10 A number of other activities will take place during 2008 and 2009 that are related to the development and implementation of international classifications. These include the regional workshops on ISIC and CPC described in the papers for Agenda Item 4, the Census workshops planned by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and regional workshops and seminars on labour statistics and surveys.

11 It will be important to ensure that appropriate mention is made in any such activities of the updated ISCO, and particularly of the need to consider updating national classification systems in advance of the 2010 round of population Censuses. Where related material is covered in these activities it will need to be done in a harmonious way. For example the ILO is currently working with UNSD to develop an updated Handbook on the Collection of Economic Characteristics in Population Censuses, and will ensure that the material on occupation and industry is in line with the up-to-date classifications and that the material is in harmony with that included in other handbooks etc.

12 From the point of view of timing, it will be advisable to avoid scheduling these activities too close together, as this may limit the capacity of countries to send appropriate delegates to the various workshops, and could possibly cause confusion. Although it may be tempting to amalgamate the ISIC/CPC workshops with the ISCO workshops, or run them back-to-back, this may be impractical as the target audience for the ISCO workshops may be different, depending on which organisational units are responsible for occupation classifications in particular countries. Those responsible for labour statistics and the population census may have a strong stake in or be responsible for the occupation classification, whereas the industrial and products classifications may be the responsibility of those concerned with economic statistics.

13 Since occupation classifications are also used in a variety of administrative activities, particularly employment services, it is likely that Ministries of Labour will need to be involved in the ISCO workshops as well as national statistical offices. The benefits of coordination and collaboration at national level, between those responsible in statistical offices and other government agencies for the development and use of occupation classifications, will need to be stressed.

Resources

14 The costs involved in conducting nine or more regional workshops, and providing direct technical assistance to a large number of countries, are likely to be substantial. The ILO is therefore seeking the support of regional development banks and other interested parties, so that as many countries as possible are able to attend the regional workshops and receive technical assistance.

15 Capacity to provide support for implementation of ISCO over a relatively short period is also dependent on the availability of suitably qualified experts in occupation classification. It is proposed, therefore, to establish a network of regional consultants who would be able to provide technical assistance in adapting ISCO for use in national circumstances and advise on the construction of national coding indexes for occupation. It is also hoped that statistical offices in countries with well-

developed national classification systems would be able to provide support. A useful approach would be to involve regional consultants and experts from relevant statistical offices in each regional workshop. These experts would then be in a good position to become involved in the provision of technical assistance, coordinated by the ILO.

Conclusion

16 Members of the Expert Group may wish to comment on these plans and make any suggestions they consider appropriate regarding the problems of coordination and resource provision discussed in the paper.