

Manual on Surveys of Informal Employment and Informal Sector

Progress Report

Prepared by

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1. Background

Paragraph 38 (1) of the Resolution concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector, that was adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in January 1993, requested the International Labour Office (ILO) to prepare a manual to provide technical guidelines on the contents of the resolution. The 15th ICLS specified that the manual should reflect such improvements in the concepts and techniques for informal sector measurement as they were expected to be made as experience in the design and implementation of informal sector surveys would built up at the national and international levels. The 15th ICLS thus realized that it would be only a number of years after the adoption of the resolution that such a manual could be usefully prepared, because at the time of adoption of the resolution there was not enough experience available for doing so.

On several occasions in the past, the Chair and members of the Delhi Group have emphasized the need for a technical manual to guide countries in the development of statistics on the informal sector. However, due to the way in which it is organized and operates, the Delhi Group as such cannot engage in the preparation of a manual. In 2005, the Chair of the Delhi Group and the ILO therefore agreed to cooperate on this matter. As a result of the endorsement of an international statistical definition of informal employment by the 17th ICLS (2003), the scope of the manual was broadened to also include the measurement of informal employment outside the informal sector.

2. Funding

The funds for preparation of the manual are provided by the Government of India and the ILO on a 50:50% cost-sharing basis. Initially, the manual will be published in English only. Translations to other languages, such as Spanish, Russian, Arabic or French, are desirable but will depend on financial support by the governments of the countries concerned, the UN regional commissions, or other donors.

3. Contributors

The manual is prepared by a team of contributors composed of (in alphabetical order):

- Jacques Charmes (Director, Department 'Societies and Health', Institute of Research for Development, France)
- Ralf Hussmanns (Head, Methodology and Analysis Unit, Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Office)
- Rodrigo T. Negrete Prieto (Sub-director, Evaluation of Socio-demographic Projects, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics, Mexico)
- Nittala S. Sastry (former Director General and Chief Executive Officer, National Sample Survey Organisation, India)
- Joann Vanek (former Chief, Social Statistics Branch, United Nations Statistics Division)
- Vijay K. Verma (Professor, Department 'Quantitative Methods', University of Siena, Italy)

Work on the manual is planned, coordinated and administered by the ILO. Joann Vanek will edit the final draft of the manual, in close collaboration with the other contributors.

4. Role of the Delhi Group

All of the contributors to the manual are active members of the Delhi Group. In addition, the Delhi Group acts as an expert group to provide technical advice for the preparation of the manual.

5. Contents

The team of contributors prepared a detailed outline of the manual, which was approved by the members of the Delhi Group during the Ninth Meeting (Delhi, May 2006). Members of the Delhi Group emphasized the need for the manual to reflect country experiences in the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment.

The manual will consist of 10 chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Concepts, definitions and sub-classifications
- Chapter 3: Measurement objectives and data collection strategy
- Chapter 4: Household surveys on informal sector employment and other types of informal employment
- Chapter 5: Informal sector establishment surveys
- Chapter 6: Informal sector mixed household and enterprise surveys
- Chapter 7: Informal sector modules attached to household surveys
- Chapter 8: Independent informal sector surveys using the mixed household and enterprise survey approach
- Chapter 9: Tabulation, reporting and dissemination
- Chapter 10: Use of data for national accounts purposes

Chapter 10 of the manual will serve as an input for the preparation of the chapter on the informal sector, which will be included in the 2008 SNA. A revised draft of Chapter 10 was sent to Ms. Carol Carson on 4 February 2007.

6. Work accomplished

Since it was constituted in September 2005, the team of contributors has met three times: in Geneva from 31 October to 2 November 2005, in Delhi on 9 and 10 May 2006 (prior to the Ninth Meeting of the Delhi Group), and in Paris from 15 to 19 January 2007. The next meeting of the contributors is planned to be held in Geneva on 11 and 12 October 2007, immediately after the Tenth Meeting of the Delhi Group (see below).

To date, the team has prepared revised drafts of Chapters 1, 3 and 10, and first drafts of Chapters 2, 4 and 5 and of parts of Chapter 9.

7. Next steps

The team of contributors suggests that the Tenth Meeting of the Delhi Group be held in Geneva during the period 8-10 October 2007. Subject to the approval of the dates by the Chair of the Delhi Group, a conference room has been reserved at the ILO headquarters building in Geneva for these dates. The Chair of the Delhi Group is kindly requested to confirm the dates or to suggest alternative dates.

During the meeting in Paris, the team of contributors committed itself to having final, edited drafts of Chapters 1-5 and 10 of the manual ready for submission to the Tenth Meeting of the Delhi Group. However, given the many other commitments that all contributors have in addition to the preparation of the manual, the team considered it impossible to finalize Chapters 6-9, too, during 2007. These chapters will thus be presented in 2008 to the Eleventh Meeting of the Delhi Group.