

Revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)

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Session 7

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What is ISCO-08?

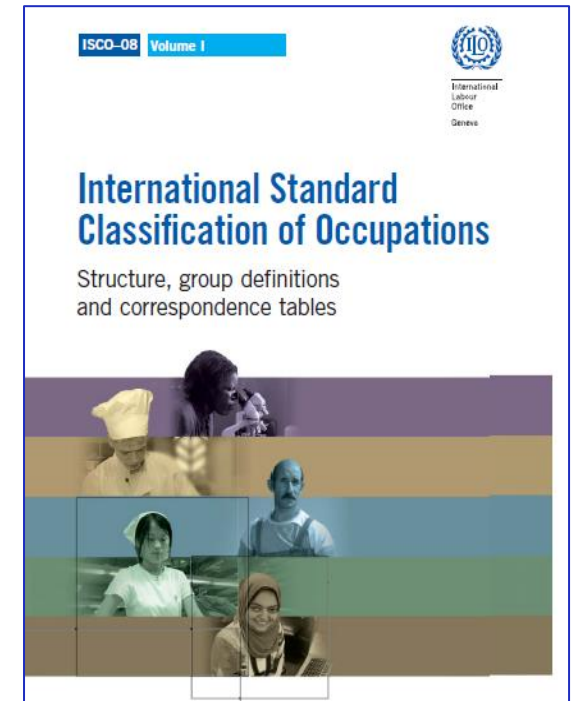
The ILO is the custodian for ISCO

ISCO is a statistical classification used to classify and code information on occupations, with the following objectives:

- A basis for the international reporting, comparison and exchange of statistical and administrative information about occupations
- A model for the development of national and regional International classifications of occupations
- A system that can be used directly in countries that have not developed their own national classifications

ISCO-08 was adopted by a tripartite Meeting of Experts on Labour Statistics on updating ISCO, convened by the Governing Body of the ILO in accordance with a resolution of the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)

- The resolution of the Meeting of Experts was endorsed by the Governing Body of the ILO in March 2008.



Learn more about [ISCO](#)

- Detailed classification
- ISCO-08 code search function
- Index of occupational titles
- Crosswalk to ISCO-88
- Previous versions of ISCO
- Other information



What is ISCO-08?

- The statistical unit in ISCO-08 is jobs
- ISCO-08 is a four-level hierarchically structured classification
 - 10 Major Groups (most aggregated level)
 - 43 Sub-Major Groups
 - 130 Minor Groups
 - 436 Unit Groups (most detailed level)
- that allows *all jobs* in the world to be classified into 436 *unit groups*
- Occupations are grouped on the basis of their similarity in terms of the skill level and skill specialization required for the jobs
- Given its international characteristics, only 4 skill levels are used in ISCO and they are set at the top level of the classification
 - All subsequent groups follow the same skill levels (few exceptions)

ISCO-08 major groups

1	Managers
2	Professionals
3	Technicians and Associate Professionals
4	Clerical Support Workers
5	Services and Sales Workers
6	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers
7	Craft and Related Trades Workers
8	Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers
9	Elementary Occupations
0	Armed Forces Occupations

Definitions and concepts used in ISCO-08

Jobs

Set of tasks and duties performed or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self employment

Occupations

Refers to the kind of work performed in a job. The concept of occupations is defined as a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity

Definition of Skill

The ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job

Operational measure of Skill levels

- A function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties performed in an occupation
- Measured operationally by considering one or more of:
 - The **nature of the work performed** in an occupation in relation to the characteristic tasks and duties
 - The level of formal education defined in terms of ISCED-97
 - The amount of informal on-the-job training and/or previous experience in a related occupation
- required for competent performance of the tasks and duties involved

Skill specialization

Considered in terms of four concepts:

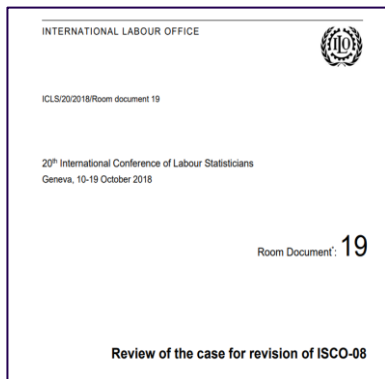
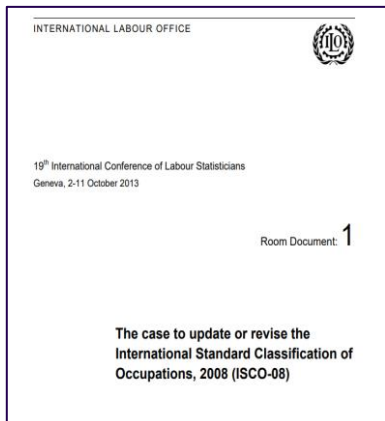
- the field of knowledge required
- the tools and machinery used
- the materials worked on or with
- the kinds of goods and services produced

Why is ISCO-08 revision needed?

- ▶ • **Positive feedback on the use and implementation of ISCO globally**
 - Many national and regional occupational classifications are based on/ or directly use ISCO-08,
 - Large number of research papers, analysis, policy making, projects, and other uses of ISCO-08
- **But, since the launch of ISCO-08 there have been major changes, knowing that the practice has been to revise ISCO in a 20-year cycle (ISCO-58, ISCO-68, ISCO-88 and ISCO-08)**
 - Technological transformation and changes affecting the world of work, and at a faster pace,
 - New jobs have emerged (ICT, climate change and the green economy, etc.),
 - Tasks have changed (use of machine, ways work is done, business are run, such as self-check out, etc.),
 - The need for more detail in some jobs (breakdown of some existing groups), less detail in others (obsolescence of jobs),
 - Other factors including change in skills, higher knowledge and skill requirements, etc.
 - Other opportunities, including using of available technology and various user needs
- **Provide a relevant and modern system to code and classify information on occupations**
 - Taking into account what can be achieved with known challenges and available resources including time frame: 22nd ICLS (before the next round of housing and population censuses in 2030)

Consultations, feedback and major issues in ISCO-08

Consultations, feedback from countries and experts- presented during 19th and 20th ICLS



ISCO-08 skill model

- Problems with the application of skill level as a classification criterion and its implication on analysis
- Revision of skill level boundaries and their descriptors
- Revision of skill level for a number of occupations

ISCO-08 specific group issues

- Systematic treatment of certain groups or cases
- Need to maintain or not certain groups

Need to update and improve the structure of ISCO-08

- Identify and incorporate emerging occupations
- Identify and treat obsolete occupations
- Restructuring and regrouping the ISCO structure: to provide more detail (breakdown) or less for certain groups

Need to maintain ISCO aligned with relevant standards

- 19th ICLS resolution I concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization

Modernization of ISCO

- Exploring means to modernize various aspects of ISCO

Continued receiving and seeking feedback – log of issues and concerns

- Countries and other users
- Associations of professionals
- Other initiatives or working groups and regional events

Examined a number of country experiences and various sources of information and statistics

- National Occupational Classifications, other sources
- Anticipating skill needs,
- Jobs in demand in the future,
- Etc.

Formed the Technical Working Group for ISCO-08 revision

- Knowledge-sharing platform

The revision process of ISCO

Conducted in a collaborative approach - an extensive international consultative process

- Formed Technical Working Group (TWG) in June 2021: representatives of governments, workers, employers, and observers (international and regional organizations)

Three sub-working groups

- SWG1: Revising and improving the ISCO structure – Chair Mexico
- SWG2: Revising and improving group descriptions- Chair Switzerland
- SWG3: The modernization of ISCO- Chair New Zealand
- Since June 2021, we held 7 online meetings + 1 meeting for each SWG
- Receiving feedbacks and input from other channels in addition to ad-hoc consultations, when needed
 - Regional activities to collect additional feedback on issues or concerns with ISCO-08

Composition of the Technical Working Group (TWG)

Argentina	Ecuador	Mexico
Australia	India	New Zealand
Bahrain	Iraq	Pakistan
Brazil	Italy	Rwanda
Canada	Jordan	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of
Chile	Korea, Rep. Of	Sri Lanka
China	Lesotho	Switzerland
Colombia	Madagascar	Tanzania
Dominican Republic	Maldives	Tunisa
Eswatini, Kingdom of	Morocco	United States of America
France	Netherland	Uruguay
		Vietnam

AFRISTAT	Pacific Community
ESCO	UNECA
EUROSTAT	UNECLAC
ETF	UNIDO
FAO	UNSD
GCC-STAT	WHO

The scope of ISCO-08 revision

- **Maintain ISCO relevant to mirror the reality of the world of work and address priority policy needs**
- **Remain globally relevant and inclusive**
 - Global relevance of the proposed options and their suitability to various contexts and regions, etc.
- **Maintain a balance between relevance, continuity and comparability with past statistics**
 - Minimizing break in series, unless unavoidable
 - Maintaining similar conceptual approach, including the basic principles and the main structure of ISCO-08

What is being revising and improved?

▶ Revising and improving the ISCO skill model

- Exploring means to expand the operational measurement of the skill levels (focus on additional skill dimensions, not only on formal education)
- Reviewing existing boundaries between skill levels (in particular between SL 2 and SL3)
- Revising skill levels of a group of occupations that are believed to be at the wrong skill level, etc.

Revising and improving the ISCO structure and group descriptions

- Examining and incorporating emerging occupations, treating obsolete ones
- Restructuring, regrouping of certain groups, or split of groups
- Updating the list of main of tasks, taking into account the impact of technology and change in skills, etc.

Modernization of ISCO

- Presentation of ISCO in a user-friendly mode, exploring the potential creation of job families, options for a flexible presentation of the ISCO structure
- Exploring feasibility and relevance of targeted update in the future as a mean to maintain ISCO relevant between major revisions, including a 'flexible' ISCO model and testing the feasibility of using of big data – job adverts and AI (POC with the MOM in Singapore)
- Research agenda for future ISCO revisions: innovative approaches could be explored

Time plan

21st ICLS in 2023: progress of work and proposals for future actions

- What have been done so far: exploring means to improve the skill model, groups that could be revised, etc
- The modernization of ISCO: including the idea of targeted ISCO updates and the relevance of using big data to maintain ISCO up-to-date and relevant between major revisions
 - Finalise a first draft (structure of ISCO) and undertake targeted testing and global consultation
 - Finalize updated group descriptions
 - Draft methodological notes (treatment of specific groups and cases, changes between ISCO-08 and ISCO-28, etc) and brief implementation companion.
 - Finalize the Index of occupational titles
 - Crosswalk with ISCO-08

2023



2028

22nd ICLS in 2028: finalized version of ISCO-28

- Ready for use for the next round of housing and population censuses in 2030

▶ **Thank you**

