D.1.1. International Standard Classification of Occupations

7.39. The term “occupation” refers to the kind of work done during a given reference period by the person employed (or the kind of work done previously if unemployed). Information on occupation provides a description of a person’s job. In the present context, a job is defined as a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment.

7.40. Jobs are classified by occupation (with respect to the type of work performed, or to be performed). This may be a past job, for persons who are unemployed, a present job, for employed persons; or a future job, for jobseekers. It is therefore important to determine whether the classification by occupation is carried out with respect to one job only or for a number of jobs. Consequently, it is important that the questionnaire specify for which job the information is to be collected the main job or the secondary job and whether this refers to the past or the future. “Main job” is often defined as the one with the longest hours usually worked during the reference period and the one for which detailed information is collected in respect of industry and occupation.

7.41. The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) provides a system for classifying and aggregating occupational information obtained by means of statistical censuses and surveys, as well as from administrative records.

7.42. ISCO-08 is a four-level hierarchically structured classification which allows all jobs in the world to be classified into 436 unit groups. These groups form the most detailed level of the classification structure and are aggregated into 130 minor groups, 43 submajor groups and 10 major groups, based on the similarity of the skill level and skill specialization required. [1]

7.43. It should be emphasized that ISCO-08, may serve as a model but is not intended to replace any existing national classification of occupations, as the occupational classification of individual countries should fully reflect both the structure of the national labour market and relevant special national information needs.

7.44. ISCO-08 seeks to facilitate international communication about occupations by providing statisticians with a framework for making internationally comparable occupational data available, and by allowing international occupational data to be produced in a form that can be useful for research as well as for specific decisionmaking and action-oriented activities, such as those connected with international migration or job placement.

7.45. Among the key characteristics used in the retrieval and organization of labourmarket information are the occupational characteristics of both employees and jobs. It should be noted that so far, a list of tourism characteristic occupations based on ISCO-08 has not been developed.

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Box VII.10

International Standard Classification of Occupations: “job”

In the context of International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), a job is defined as a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment.

Through the application of this definition a job in a tourism industry could be defined as a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person in an establishment that carries out a tourism characteristic activity as its principal activity.

Source: International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08).

7.46. At a minimum, it is useful to collect and compile data about tourism characteristic occupations for the following reasons:

(a) There is a need to know the nature and type of jobs to be found in industries that cater to the needs of visitors and to monitor change over time;

(b) Tourism authorities and policymakers need to examine labour demand and supply in terms of occupations, skills and training requirements.

7.47. As a preliminary starting point, in this regards, Statistics Canada and the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council use an approach which is designed to identify tourism characteristic occupations.[2]

7.48. A tourism characteristic occupation is one in which employment would be significantly affected as a direct result of an absence of tourism and that satisfies each of the following four criteria:

(a) The occupation should be found within tourism industries;

(b) The occupation should involve direct contact with visitors or the supervision or management of job holders in direct contact with visitors;

(c) The tourism industries should account for a significant share of all jobs in that occupation;

(d) The occupation should make up a significant share of all jobs in the tourism industries.

As mentioned in paragraph 7.45, an agreed definition of “tourism characteristic occupation” has not yet been established. Hence, the approach just described, albeit provisional, is still useful.
Two dimensions of the skill concept are used: skill level, which is a function of the range and complexity of the tasks involved, where the complexity of tasks has priority over the range; and skill specialization, which reflects type of knowledge applied, tools and equipment used, materials worked on, or with, and nature of the goods and services produced. While a national occupational classification may use references to the national educational system to define an appropriate number of skill level categories, ISCO-08 uses the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1997 to define four broad categories of skill level.