

The project



Statistics and Indicators on the Labour Market in the eEconomy

- With core funding from the European Commission's Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme, STILE aims to provide innovative methodologies and content for the statistical monitoring of the European labour market in the eEconomy. This includes the fine-tuning of statistics to match the eEconomy and the monitoring of ICT-related work patterns. In doing so, STILE aims to contribute to the efficient functioning of the European labour market and to the prevention of social exclusion. It is the explicit project strategy to involve users in a systematic and direct way and to formulate strategies for European convergence in the statistical monitoring of the labour market in the eEconomy.
- The difference in pace between the evolution of the socio-economic reality and the development of scientific and statistical monitoring systems remains a challenge for everyone who is concerned with knowledge relating to the Information Society. This concern, and the support of the current and future statistical needs of the IST Programme and its constituencies in particular, is essential for all STILE partners and underpins the collaboration within this consortium.

Why STILE?

Participation in the labour market is a key asset for social inclusion. As a consequence, an adequate statistical monitoring of the labour market is of strategic importance. It will enable us to know who is working where and under what conditions, and how working patterns are evolving. Such close monitoring of the labour market to provide accurate and timely information will contribute to a more efficient allocation of labour in the production process and to a more effective policy aimed at maximising the work opportunities for all.

However, the data and information that are available on the labour market, in particular, are still too dispersed because of differences in sources (surveys versus administrative databases, differences in concepts, definitions and measurements, etc.), and in levels (regional, national, European, global). Furthermore, the rapid technological and organisational changes in recent years that are associated with the emergence of the Information Society have not always been reflected in the classification systems used to categorise industries and occupations.

STILE will tackle a range of existing conceptual, methodological and practical problems associated with measuring various parameters of the new Information Society and the labour market in the eEconomy. The current shortage of such measurements constitutes a growing problem both for the scientific community and for national and European policymakers.

Seven ambitious goals

Within the context of providing innovative methodologies and content for the statistical monitoring of the labour market in the eEconomy, the three-year STILE project (November 2001 - November 2004) will carry out detailed studies on:

- extending the coding of the Community Labour Force Survey for the monitoring of eWork
- updating the sectoral classifications (NACE) to include eBusinesses
- updating the occupational classifications (ISCO) to include eWork
- developing methodological benchmarks and a module for existing organisational panel surveys to take into account ICT-related labour market issues in enterprises
- developing a module for monitoring telework in existing Labour Force Surveys
- analysing sectoral mobility in ICT industries, using the Community Labour Force Survey and administrative databases
- profiling ICT-related occupations, including required qualifications, training needs, type of contracts and likely future developments, and benchmarking them according to regional differences in ICT penetration

Our sponsor

STILE, a three-year project launched in November 2001, is funded as an Accompanying Measure under the fifth call of the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme of the European Commission's Fifth Framework. STILE was actually approved under the Cross-Programme Action 8 (V.1.8) 'Statistical tools, methods, indicators and applications for the Information Society' and its focus is on 'the definition, measurement and exploitation of new socio-economic statistical indicators for the Information Society'.

The STILE proposal was submitted in response to a joint call for proposals from IST and Eurostat. According to Jean-Louis Mercy of Eurostat, "the conceptual, methodological and practical problems of the measurement of the new Information Society and economy have not all been solved and therefore further research in the field is needed in order to be able to produce statistics and indicators which will form the basis of the new policy documents". Because STILE will innovate existing statistical tools and indicators in order to take into account the rapid penetration of modern ICTs into all branches of the economy, it will contribute to solving the above-mentioned problems.

More information on the European Commission's IST Programme and Eurostat can be found on <http://www.cordis.lu/ist/> and <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>, respectively.

Keep yourself informed

The STILE consortium aims to ensure that the project results are disseminated in a well-targeted, appropriate and user-friendly way.

The **STILE website** includes all the latest project news: <http://www.stile.be>.

Twice a year, a **STILE newsletter** will present key findings from the project.

The concluding international **STILE conference** will target policymakers, scientists, representatives of statistical bodies and all relevant users.

An EMERGENCE spin-off

The STILE project is a direct result of active collaboration among existing IST-funded projects. In particular, STILE is a spin-off from the EMERGENCE project. EMERGENCE stands for Estimation and Mapping of Employment Relocation in a Global Economy in the New Communications Environment. This project laid the foundation for a network of researchers with a strong interest in eWork and in the problems that scientists and policymakers face in their attempts to monitor new working patterns.

EMERGENCE's global statistical analysis and eWork in Europe survey revealed major difficulties in identifying eWork on the basis of the existing statistics. To use the words of Ursula Huws, EMERGENCE project director: "The rapid technological and organisational changes in recent years have not always been reflected in the classification systems used to categorise industries and occupations. Yet accurate information on trends is needed to develop policies in fields as diverse as transport, environmental sustainability, trade and industry, employment and social inclusion".

For more information on EMERGENCE, have a look at: <http://www.emergence.nu>. The EMERGENCE **WEDGE conference** (Where in the World? E-work location in a Digital Global Economy) in Budapest, where the idea for STILE was born, was clearly a success. A second EMERGENCE conference, entitled **WWW - the World, the Workplace and We the Workers**, will be held in Brussels in April 2002.

The work of the project will be broken down into a series of discrete work packages. These include:

Extending the coding used in current national LFS

This work package will result in recommendations as to where extensions of the current coding processes can provide more detail and more information about eWork. To this end it will examine the extent to which the coding in national Labour Force Surveys can be extended and the classifications fine-tuned for the purpose of optimising the information on eWork.

The initial stage will be a review of the national LFS and their coding, for the purpose of acquiring more detailed information on eWork. Special attention will be given to four key variables involved in measuring eWork. The first aim of this work package is to establish more fine-tuned sectoral classifications; the second aim is to establish more detailed and up-to-date occupational classifications. Because it is important to link eWork and the educational level, special attention is given to relevant educational classifications as a third variable. Finally, national Labour Force Surveys will also be examined for indicators of the use of ICT by individuals and how these individuals relate to ICT.

National reports on the potential use of the national Labour Force Surveys in eWork analysis will be discussed in workshops. This methodology will allow an overview of the most productive routes for further analysis.

The project's work

Mapping eBusinesses and eWorkers

Whereas the former package is focused on adapting classifications so they will provide more fine-tuned information on the new economic reality, this work package is focused on obtaining insight into the coding processes of different statistical bodies, documenting how coding decisions are made and recording problems with the current definitions. To accomplish this task, a list of 150 fictive descriptions of eWork establishments will be developed to challenge the current NACE rev.1 classifications. Similarly, 150 fictive descriptions of eWork occupations will be designed to challenge current ISCO 88 (COM) classifications.

The findings of this 'coding investigation' will be incorporated into clarifications as to how to code establishments using the current NACE rev.1 and occupations using ISCO 88 (COM) classifications. Additionally, the work package will serve as a basis for discussions leading to possible future revisions of NACE and ISCO in the light of the new economic reality.

ICT feasibility study of organisational surveys

The purpose of this work package is to make an inventory of relevant EU and non-EU establishment panel studies to investigate whether they cover the use of ICT in the organisation and labour market related issues, including educational and training investments and Human Resources Management. This inventory will make it possible to do benchmarking with regard to the relation between ICT investments and ICT applications, on the one hand, and internal and external labour market effects, on the other. The interpretation of the international divergences will take into account both the methodological aspects and the 'real differences'.

On this basis, an innovatively designed modular instrument will be developed for measuring the use and effects of ICT on organisational strategies. This instrument will be disseminated for use in a wide range of international organisational surveys.

Ad hoc module on telework

The general aim of this work package is to fulfil the need for reliable, valid and internationally comparable indicators for the measurement of telework. The main problems with surveys on telework relate to their international comparability and their cost efficiency, as well as to the difficulty of developing clear, exclusive and exhaustive definitions and indicators of telework.

To overcome these problems, this work package will develop common indicators of telework rather than standardised phrasing of common questions as such. These indicators should be translatable into concrete questions, which can be added to an existing survey, taking into account the specificity of the surveys and the cultural diversity of each country. To guarantee the validity and reliability for the actual implementation of a telework module, the nationally developed set of questions will be pilot-tested. A feasibility study will be set up to investigate the conditions under which this module can be added on to Labour Force Surveys, and on to the Community Labour Force Survey in particular. In doing so, active use will be made of the wealth of experience possessed by the expert subcontractor who has already applied this methodology in the US.

The establishment of national user-groups and a European user-group to monitor the proceedings in this work package will underpin the usefulness and effectiveness of the telework module from the point of view of science and policy.

Mobility in the eEconomy

Using administrative data and the CLFS, this work package is aimed at gaining more insight into the intersectoral mobility of eWorkers. The key objective is to reveal determinants of the mobility of ICT workers. The inflow and outflow of ICT workers will be detailed and traced. Where possible, the destination sectors of the former ICT personnel will be documented. This will result in a better understanding of the knowledge flows in and around the ICT sector, as well as of the distribution of Information Society knowledge. This work package will also look, where possible, at the effect that gender, age and educational background have on ICT jobs being created, comparing this to other sectors of importance and to the economy as a whole.

Administrative databases and the CLFS will be used to give in-depth insight into ICT mobility and into the methodological characteristics of each source.

ICT occupational profiles

A description of occupational profiles of new ICT-related jobs will be the main outcome of this work package. These profiles will include a detailed description of the work organisation, task composition and co-operational aspects of an occupation. Furthermore, the required technological and behavioural competencies and other relevant related labour market issues, such as types of contract, flexibility, etc. will be derived. This overview will be the result of an internationally standardised occupational profiling methodology that gives special attention to the systematic involvement of relevant stakeholders (such as employers, employees and training experts). This means that the profile will be validated by its users on the basis of how consistent, complete and up-to-date it is.

One crucial aspect is the regional comparison of these profiles, since it can be assumed that there is diversity in the types of contracts, the required training infrastructure and the actual shaping and institutionalisation of new occupations. Regional comparison makes it possible to benchmark and to detect analogies and differences in occupational shaping and vocational strategies. Because the eEconomy is a typically global phenomenon, additional information from the US will be provided.

The final evaluation of the existing occupational profiling methodology will lead to recommendations for the fine-tuning and adaptation of the methodology for the purpose of taking into account the specificity of IT occupations.

Who we are

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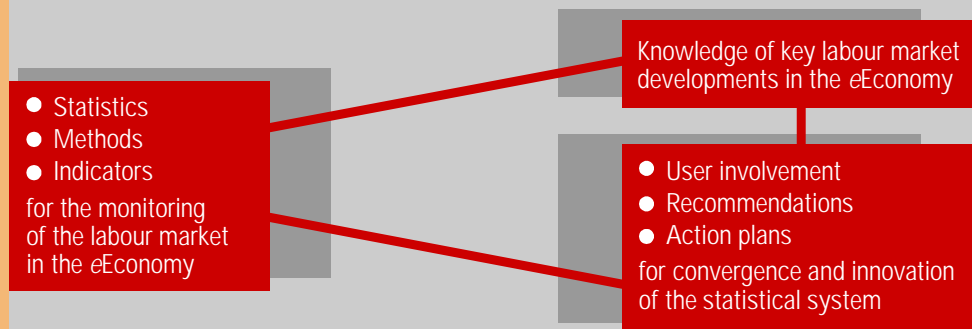
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Three interactive perspectives



In order to build on existing efforts to implement an adequate statistical system and to focus in particular on adding European value to the work already done, STILE has three interacting perspectives.

- 1** The first perspective is the **benchmarking, updating and innovation of existing methodologies and indicators** to bring the labour market monitoring systems up to speed with respect to the rapid growth of the knowledge economy, and to do this in an effective and efficient way. This effectiveness and efficiency will be achieved by focusing the work packages less on the development of new surveys or statistics, and more on innovating and optimising the existing ones and maximising their usability for the broad range of users.
- 2** The second perspective is **to contribute to the knowledge of and insight** into key labour market developments in the eEconomy. Improving our understanding of the Community's labour market is a key goal. In pursuing this goal, STILE is focusing on the most relevant new forms of work organisation, work patterns, occupations and mobility. In the course of these efforts, the methodological innovations are being tested and validated.
- 3** The third perspective relates to **the systematic organisation of peer review and the active and direct involvement of users**. It is aimed at developing future-oriented recommendations and action plans. This is accomplished by focusing on different target groups through the direct and systematic involvement of users and producers of labour market statistics (both from the academic world and the public statistical system). Furthermore, in their final reporting most work packages include action plans or recommendations for stimulating European convergence and the standardisation of methods, statistics and indicators.

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