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Icelandic Labour Force Survey (IS-LFS)

1. Contact

1.1 Contact organisation	Statistics Iceland
1.2 Contact organisation unit	Labour market and social statistics
1.3 Contact name	Ólafur Már Sigurðsson, labour market researcher
1.6 Contact e-mail address	Olafur.Sigurdsson@hagstofa.is
1.7 Contact phone number	528 1284

2. Metadata update

2.3 Metadata last update	16 January 2020
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3. Statistical presentation

3.1 Data description

The purpose of the Icelandic Labour Force Survey (IS-LFS) is to gather information about people's jobs, hours worked, and job search in line with the [labour market measures](#) used by the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat). The survey has been carried out since 1991. At that time, data was collected two times per year, in May and November. But, since 2003 data collection has been continuous.

Sample and response. The sampling frame for the Icelandic Labour Force Survey (IS-LFS) is drawn from all Icelandic and foreign citizens in the National Registry who are 16-74 years of age and domiciled in Iceland.

The data are collected continuously throughout the year. The year is divided into four 13-week periods and the sample is about 5,200 individuals every quarter. The size of the sample each time is around 5,200 individuals, divided into five rotation groups (waves), so that in each survey one group from the sample is being interviewed for the first time, another group for the second time and so forth. When each new survey arrives, the group which has been in the sample five times is replaced by a new group of persons. The new individuals are selected as a simple random sample without any rejections.

In all, participants are partake in the study three quarters in a row, followed by a two quarters rest before returning to participation in the survey for two quarters in a row (a 3-2-2 design). When survey participation is over respondents are not returned to the sampling frame until two years after having last belonged to a sample.

Questionnaire. Questions in the IS - LFS of Statistics Iceland are based on various models in comparable questionnaires used in neighboring countries, particularly the Nordic countries. The main focus of the questionnaire is labour participation of people, but it also includes questions about education and people's labour market experience.

In the questionnaire design it was considered that the results must be aligned to the Eurostat's [main employment indicators](#) and that data must be standardized in accordance with agreements on the EEA.

Scheduling. Those participating in each survey are asked about their employment activity in a given reference week. The reference week starts on a Saturday and is the last whole week before the interview occurs.



Metadata

3.2 Classification system

Education. In the Statistics Iceland's labor market survey participants are asked about their highest degree of participants. The responses are categorized according to the ISCED, the International Education Classification. Primary education corresponds to classes 1 and 2, vocational and upper secondary education corresponds to category 3, special education corresponds to category 5 and university education corresponds to classes 6, 7 and 8.

Residence. The National Registry provides information on the municipality and the address of the respondents. The residence is classified by legal domicile in the National Registry and / or new information on the address of the respondents during the survey. Results are consequently published for the two residential areas; the *capital area* and *outside the capital area*.

Industries are categorized according to Icelandic sector classification, ÍSAT2008.

Occupations are classified according to the Icelandic occupational classification, ÍSTARF95.

3.3 Sector coverage

3.4 Statistical concepts and definition

In the labour force survey, all concepts and definitions are aligned to those of the European statistical office (Eurostat), which are used internationally.

The main definitions used in the IS-LFS are:

Population is the number of people aged 16 to 74 domiciled in Iceland.

Job. Any kind of work in return for money or a kind, unpaid work with a company of your own family, unpaid work on building your own home or production for your own consumption. Furthermore, artistic work works even if the person does not have income from it. Unpaid work at home in a home has not been considered employment.

Unemployed persons are those who were unemployed in the reference week of the study, i.e., had neither employment nor been employed (for one hour or more) as an employee or self-employed, are looking for work and can start work within two weeks or have received a job that begins within 3 months. Individuals who are not in work but are studying are classified as unemployed if they meet the above criteria. *Students*, including those who seek a study contract in the field of industry, are therefore only considered unemployed if they have searched for work along their studies or future work in the past four weeks and are ready to start work within two weeks from the time the survey was conducted.

Employed persons are classified as those respondents who worked one hour or more in the reference week or were temporarily absent from the work which they are usually hired to do.

Main job is the job that the respondent considered to be his main job.

Self-employed are those who work in his own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit.

Labour force consists of employed and unemployed persons.

Inactive are those who are considered to not belong to the labour force. That is, people are considered to be inactive if they do not meet the conditions of being employed or unemployed.

Underemployed is applied to a person who were working part-time in the reference week and worked less than that person normally does but who wished and was able to work more.

Labor force participation is the proportion of those who are unemployed and employed of the *population* of people aged 16 to 74.

Unemployment is the proportion of those who are unemployed of the *labour force*.

At work in reference week are those who were present at their job in the reference week.

Actual hours worked/actual working hours are the total hours a person works in main job in the reference week.

Usual working hours are the average hours a person works in all jobs (main and second job).

Employed full-time refers to employment in which a person usually works 35 hours or more.

Employed part-time refers to employment in which a person usually works 1 to 34 hours.



Metadata

3.5 Statistical unit	Individuals
3.6 Statistical population	A population for the labor market survey constitutes of all Icelandic and foreign citizens aged 16–74 who are registered in the National Registry and domiciled in Iceland in the reference week of the study.
3.7 Reference area	Figures are generally published for the country as a whole, for the capital area and the area outside the capital area.
3.8 Time coverage	Continued results from the Icelandic labour market survey have been published since 2003. In some cases, figures from 1991 can also be found, but it is not possible to guarantee coherent chronological order until 2003.
3.9 Base period	The calendar month
4. Unit of measure	
4. Unit of measure	The basic unit of the labor market survey is the individual. In most cases, the results are published as number of individuals (in thousands). Some measurements are displayed as a percentage (for example, unemployment rate) or in other forms (for example, the number of hours worked per week).
5. Reference period	
5. Reference period	<p>Data is collected continuously throughout the year. The year is divided into four 13-week periods.</p> <p>From 2018, the quarterly sample constitutes about 5200 individuals, but between 2003 and 2017, the sample counted about 4,000 people.</p> <p>The sample is divided evenly over all 13 weeks and each participant is asked about their position in the given reference week of the study.</p>
6. Institutional mandate	



Metadata

6.1 Legal acts and other agreements	Law nr. 163/2007 on Statistics Iceland and official statistics and (EC) 577/98.
7. Confidentiality	
7.1 Confidentiality - policy	See rules on confidentiality
7.2 Confidentiality – data treatment	Law nr. 163/2007 on Statistics Iceland and official statistics and (EC) 577/98, articles 10-13.
8. Release policy	
8.1 Release calendar	See rules on statistical releases
8.2 Release calendar access	The Advance release calendar with scheduled releases for the forthcoming calendar year (1 January to 31 December) is published in November each year
8.3 User access	All results from the labour market survey are accessible through Statistics Iceland website under the heading " Labour Market "
9. Frequency of dissemination	
9. Frequency of dissemination	Results from the labour market survey are published monthly, quarterly and yearly.
10. Accessibility and clarity	
10.1 News release	
10.2 Publication	
10.3 On-line database	
10.4 Micro-data access	It is possible to apply for micro-data access through Statistics Iceland research service .



Metadata

10.5 Other	
10.6 Documentation on methodology	
10.7 Quality documentation	
11. Quality management	
11.1 Quality assurance	
11.2 Quality assessment	<p>Approved methods are used in all our sample studies.</p> <p>The labor market survey is also used in validation tests of other research within Statistics Iceland, which in turn supports correspondence between the IS-LFS and other data collected and processed by Statice.</p> <p>Regular quality reports are submitted to Eurostat. The purpose of these reports is to ensure that the quality of the Icelandic research is in line with the European standard for official statistics.</p>
12. Relevance	
12.1 User needs	
12.2 User satisfaction	
12.3 Completeness	
13. Accuracy and reliability	
13.1 Overall accuracy	



Metadata

13.2 Sampling errors

The labor market study is a sample based survey. Every sample survey entails a degree of uncertainty because of the sample not being an exact reflection of the entire registry or population. In order to adjust the sample to the population responses are weighted by the gender and age of the respondent. Therefore, the results are subject to uncertainty, which becomes greater as the breakdown of the numerical content becomes more detailed.

It is proper to point out that numbers based on IS-LFS may have been considerable broken down. This means that there is a noteworthy uncertainty in the counts where the breakdown is great (such as for certain age groups). Hence, these numbers may greatly change between years according the numbers of individuals and how much they weigh in the data production.

13.3 Non-sampling errors

The main errors other than sampling errors in the IS-LFS are coverage errors and non-response errors.

Coverage errors. Coverage errors, on the one hand, stem from the fact that the registry that is the basis for the selection of the sample (the sampling frame) is not exhaustive and, on the other hand, because in the frame there are individuals or entities that do not belong there. This is called on the one hand *under-coverage* and on the other hand *over-coverage*.

For example, in the IS-LFS sample sometimes includes individuals who have real residence abroad because they are studying or working for more than 6 months in a given year and should therefore be considered as not a part of the population. If this group is not deducted from the population of working age, there is a disturbance, an assessment of the total size will be overestimated by the amount. This kind of distortion is called *over-coverage*.

It is much more difficult to detect *under-coverage*, i.e., people who should be included in the population. This group may be considered Icelandic nationals registered domiciled abroad but who are actually resident in Iceland and people from the European Economic Area who live and work in Iceland without being registered here as legally domiciled.

In all surveys, results may be skewed due to the fact that *attrition* in the sample varies by group. The main reasons for attrition are refusals, barriers to illness or disability, absence from home during a survey or failure to find the address or telephone number of those in the sample.

In the labor market study, the most prominent error is attrition. The main reasons for the attrition in the study are refusals, barriers to illness or disability, absence from home during the investigation, or failure of participants, for example, when people do not respond to the phone, failure to find the address or phone number of those in the sample.

Since 2003, the response rate in the IS-LFS has fallen from about 80% to about 65%, mostly because participants could not be reached by telephone. To reduce the impact of dropout errors, the data is weighted by gender, age, and place of residence.



Metadata

Imputation. In addition, to address respondents' failure to respond to particular questions in study missing information likely to add to the attrition error is imputed. The methods are mainly two types: 1) the likely answer is derived from the answers of other similar respondents or 2) the likely answer has been derived from other responses of the same person in the same survey or from previous surveys he has participated in. For specific variables, regression models have also been used in order to impute missing data.

14. Timeliness and punctuality	
14.1 Timeliness	Monthly results from the labor market survey are available 3 weeks after the end of the last reference week in a month. Quarterly and annual results are available 4 weeks after the last reference week of the year / quarter ends.
14.2 Punctuality	The results of the labor market study are usually published on previously advertised dates. It is very rare for publications to be delayed.
15. Coherence and comparability	
15.1 Comparability – geographical	The labor market study provides, among other things, figures for Eurostat's international data collection, which is intended to gather information on international labor supply and short-term labor market organization. Emphasis is placed on coordinated data collection and processing between European countries where the aim is to ensure the comparability of results across the countries participating in the European statistical co-operation
15.2 Comparability – over time	From 1991 to 2002, Statistics Iceland's labor market study was carried out twice a year, but since 2003 it has been continuous throughout the year. Since 1991, a number of changes have taken place in the questionnaire and the questionnaire and the conduct of the study were revised before the continuous study began in 2003.
15.3 Coherence – cross domain	Various information on the number of people employed, development and size of industries can be found in other publications of Statistics Iceland. Statistics Iceland also publishes figures on the total number of employed persons, by sex, background and industry from public registries, monthly figures on the number of employees by months and years derived from tax data and annual operating and balance sheets of enterprises by industry, based on their tax returns which gives an overview of the status and development of individual industries.
15.4 Coherence – internal	
16. Cost and burden	



Metadata

16. Cost and burden	Participants in the sample are free to refuse to participate in the study. The average interview time is about 6 minutes,- shorter if participants have previously been in the study but longer if they are new to the study.
17. Data revision	
17.1 Data revision - policy	See Statistics Iceland revision policy .
17.2 Data revision -practice	Changes from the first press release to the final number of monthly publications occur because of the methods used to weigh the data. The final weights for each month are generally not ready for use until the end of each quarter - the survey is still as of yet a quarterly survey, not a monthly survey. This means that monthly figures are preliminary figures until the end of the quarter.
18. Statistical processing	
18.1 Source data	This is a sample study of individuals based on their answers in telephone surveys. The main purpose of the survey is to assess the size of the workforce and those outside the labor market and their experience of the labor market.
18.2 Frequency of data collection	Weekly

<p>18.3 Data collection</p>	<p>Data is collected via computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) and collected using the BLAISE data collection program. This program saves task time, helps the interviewers choose the right series of queries and reduces errors.</p> <p>Most phone calls take place in the evenings and during weekends, but there are also efforts to phone participants during the daytime if information from other household members indicates they are most likely to be reached then. Thoroughgoing attempts are made to reach those who have moved or do not have a registered telephone number, though no trips are undertaken to the participants' homes.</p> <p>Since after 1991, interviewers have been hired to phone the participants. Before each survey begins, the interviewers are instructed in interview techniques, reviewing the list of questions, and computer system and explaining unclear issues.</p>
<p>18.4 Data validation</p>	<p>Validation is done during data collection during which responses must adhere to certain internal conformity rules for each respondent. In data processing, other rules are used to check the data set and its consistency across different variables and measures.</p> <p>Since the third quarter of 2019 all data compilation and processing of monthly figures has been done using the statistical program R. Variables are coded based on Eurostat's recommendation for the operational definition of the main indicators of employment.</p>
<p>18.5 Data compilation</p>	<p>All results are weighted by gender and age, and seasonally adjusted. As a rule, the weighted results are published for the measurement itself and then the seasonally adjusted measurement. The trend of the measurement is also published.</p>
<p>18.6 Adjustment</p>	<p>Data is weighted by gender and age group so that the results reflect the number of these groups in the National Register. Regular reviews of weighing methodology also occur in order to deal with attrition.</p>
<p>19. Comment</p>	
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