



International
Labour
Organization

Example of a LFS News Release

after implementation of latest standards adopted
by International Conferences of Labour Statisticians

February 2026

STATISTICS



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Description and rationale

The latest international standards on work and labour statistics, namely those adopted by the 19th [International Conference of Labour Statisticians](#) (ICLS) in 2013 and by subsequent sessions of the conference, represent a coherent body of statistical standards enabling the production of more relevant, detailed, and comprehensive work statistics for an improved understanding of the world of work in countries at all levels of development and for all population groups.

However, the knowledge gains associated with these improved standards only materialize when countries implement them in their data collection activities via robust statistical methods, and then communicate the results effectively, fostering their wide and sound use.

Indeed, to align with latest statistical standards, the main labour data collection activity in any given country, typically the national Labour Force Survey (LFS), will need to be thoroughly revised. The ILO has developed a complete [LFS questionnaire toolkit](#) based on research and evidence to help in this endeavour.

Once the results of the revised LFS are ready, communicating them is nothing short of challenging. In fact, a carefully planned communication and dissemination strategy is crucial to ensure the public's accurate interpretation of the results, and particularly their understanding of the impact of the methodological change, the rationale behind this change, the value added of the new methodology, and the actual state of the labour market. The ILO has also developed [resources and materials](#) to support the efforts to communicate statistics effectively.

A key pillar of the communication strategy post implementation of latest statistical standards in the LFS is the **LFS News Release**. This document is of utmost importance since it is the first (and often only) approach to LFS results of many members of the public, and this concerns different types of audiences (journalists, researchers, students, policymakers, etc.). What is more, some of them may act as intermediate users, catalysts of sorts, relaying the statistical, analytical, and methodological information to other audiences. Thus, it is all the more important that the **LFS News Release** is clear and effective, covering all the key topics, presenting all the essential statistics, and explaining in a plain and unequivocal manner the impact and rationale of the methodological change to avoid any misinterpretation of breaks in series.

The present document provides an example of a **LFS News Release** after the implementation in the LFS of 19th, 20th and 21st ICLS standards. This example builds on numerous country practices, their successes and lessons learned. For illustrative and didactic purposes, it refers to a fictional country (Fictland) and presents fake data.

This example relates to a one-off LFS. That is, in the fictional country used as reference, the LFS is conducted irregularly, every several years. In the case of a more frequent, sub-annual LFS, some modifications would be needed in the **LFS News Release** to include timeseries and portray the corresponding trend analysis.

Moreover, the example of a **LFS News Release** presented here refers to the first survey round after the implementation of 19th, 20th and 21st ICLS standards. This is when explanations about the changes in definitions of the core labour-related concepts and other methodological changes are needed the most, but it may be necessary to repeat them on the news release of (a limited number of) subsequent rounds, until the public has gained enough familiarity with the new standards.

Even with the above caveats it must still be noted that there can be no one-size-fits-all solution for communication of LFS results. Publications should be adapted based on national priority and context. Notwithstanding this, there are core elements that would be expected to be present in most cases such as key labour market indicators, common characteristics of jobs and working time. The type of country chosen for the illustration below is one with a relatively high prevalence of subsistence agriculture, and a high level of informality – as these elements illustrate some of the key developments arising from most recent ICLS standards.

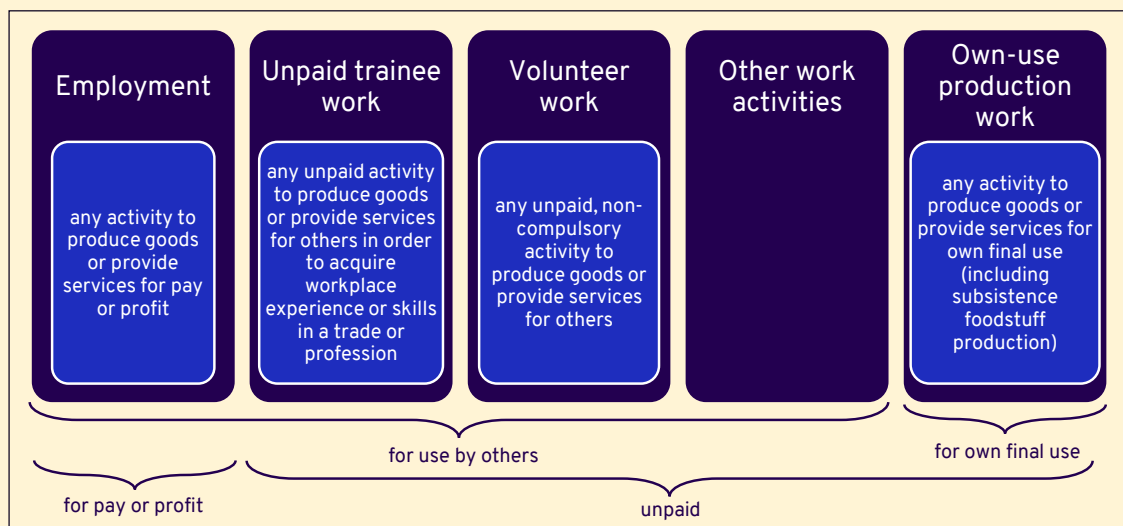
Background and rationale

As stated in the [Quick guide on the communication of results after implementation of latest standards on statistics of work, employment, and labour underutilization – Practical Visualization examples](#) :

In 2013, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted a resolution that laid the foundation for improved statistical labour standards by defining (or redefining) the core concepts used in labour statistics. Indeed, the [Resolution concerning statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization](#) revised and expanded the previous standards dated 1982 (amended in 2008) and 1998, to improve the measurement of all forms of work and of labour underutilization.

These are some of the key changes introduced by this core resolution:

- ▶ It redefines **employment** in a narrower way compared to previous standards, as work done for pay or profit and mainly intended to produce goods or to provide services for others. This excludes from employment people participating in subsistence agriculture and other own-use production and unpaid work, who were previously considered employed.
- ▶ It establishes the first international statistical definition of **work**, which refers to any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use.
- ▶ Related to the core concept of work, it presents a **forms-of-work framework** distinguishing five forms of work (based on the intended destination of the work and the nature of the transaction): **own-use production work**, **employment**, **unpaid trainee work**, **volunteer work**, and **other work activities** and recommends the publication of data on the different forms of work. It also recognizes that people can engage in multiple forms of work in the same period of time, allowing calculation of a total work burden.



- ▶ It determines a stricter definition of **unemployment** compared to previous standards. The relaxation of the job-search criterion is no longer accepted, establishing that the unemployed are those who are **not in employment, available for employment and seeking employment**.
- ▶ It introduces the concept of the **potential labour force**, comprised of persons outside the labour force (that is, neither employed nor unemployed) who are available for employment but not seeking employment (**available potential jobseekers**) and those seeking but not available (**unavailable jobseekers**). Linked to this, the resolution promotes the study of the degree of labour market attachment of persons outside the labour force.
- ▶ It provides additional measures of labour underutilization to complement the previously existing unemployment and time-related underemployment measures, establishing that at least two of the four measures proposed should be used: **LU1** - Unemployment rate, **LU2** - Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment, **LU3** - Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force, and **LU4** - Composite measure of labour underutilization.

All these improvements in the statistical measurement of people's participation in different forms of work (both paid and unpaid) and labour underutilization greatly increase the relevance of work statistics for all population groups and their potential to convey a detailed and comprehensive picture of the world of work. Thus,

implementing the 19th ICLS fundamental resolution has great benefits which materialize in a better understanding of the labour market situation and deficits, favouring analysis, research, and policymaking.

The 19th ICLS standards laid the foundation for improved work statistics, and the standards adopted by subsequent ICLS build on it, tackling specific priorities. The 20th ICLS held in 2018 updated the classification of status in employment to align with the 19th ICLS standards and better capture diverse and changing work relationships, and the 21st ICLS held in 2023 improved the measurement of the informal economy also in line with the 19th ICLS core resolution. The 22nd ICLS, which will take place in 2028, is expected to address the measurement of care work and digital platform work, as well as to revise the occupations classification (ISCO-08).

Guiding principles

Naturally, the **LFS News Release** presented in this document is intended as a mere example of what information could be included and how, but it should be modified as needed to respond to local data needs and circumstances.

The creation of this **LFS News Release** followed some guiding principles, worth considering for the drafting of any similar document or adaptation:

► Explain the methodological change and its impact

Whenever an impactful methodological change is implemented in a data collection activity (such as the revision of the LFS to align with the 19th ICLS standards), it should be communicated openly and clearly in all relevant data and analytical outputs. However, the level of technical detail used in this methodological explanation should vary across outputs, taking into consideration the intended audience and purpose of each output.

The methodological revision of the LFS to align it with 19th ICLS standards calls for the drafting of a detailed technical document outlining the changes. Nonetheless, non-technical audiences should not be expected to refer to such detailed methodological documents. The essential methodological information needed to ensure their good understanding of the LFS results must be included in each output, in the most appropriate format for each output.

For the **LFS News Release** in particular, a very brief section or box can (should) be added outlining the main methodological changes, explaining their rationale, highlighting their value, and summarizing their impact on data interpretation including any breaks in existing time series. This should be done in a succinct manner and without much technical detail (links can be included to the more thorough methodological documents for interested users). This section or box is evidently needed on the first **LFS News Release** post new standards implementation, but it may be worth including it also in subsequent editions, during a transitional period, until the new methodology gains wide recognition.

In addition to a section or box specifically devoted to methodological aspects, it is crucial that in the whole **LFS News Release**, the statistical and analytical contents also reflect the changes, making them self-explanatory (as much as possible) and avoiding misinterpretation of breaks in series via the choice of indicators and data visualizations presented. This strategy too, bears repeating in a limited number of subsequent rounds of the survey, until the public is familiar enough with the new standards.

► Keep in mind the purpose and audience of the document

Each data, analytical and methodological output has its own intended audience and purposes. Therefore, each of them must be carefully designed to cater to them. Maximizing the impact and reach of each product requires differentiating across them and this differentiation should be considered when developing the overall communications strategy for the results. In most cases results should be communicated via several channels, including databases, social media, summary news releases and more detailed publications including information on the methodology of the survey.

The **LFS News Release** presented below is not a comprehensive LFS results report, and it is not an LFS methodology report. The **LFS News Release** is meant to provide a first snapshot of the LFS results, focussing on the core labour-market and world-of-work indicators. The illustration of a **LFS News Release** presented here includes key indicators from the 19th, 20th and 21st ICLS resolutions along with brief narrative designed to make this new information accessible to key users. Through a combination of (brief) text, charts, and tables, the **LFS**

News Release should give the basic information needed on the situation of the labour market (and the latest trends, if timeseries are available) to a variety of technical and non-technical users. Users, including journalists, researchers, students, and policymakers, may use this information in their work or decision-making, or they may simply wish to be kept abreast of latest labour market developments. Some of them may amplify the reach of the contents of the **LFS News Release**, by disseminating them widely in press articles and other media outlets, studies, scientific publications, etc.

The **LFS News Release** can direct users looking for more in-depth and detailed information to the relevant documents and resources. However, given that many users will refer solely to the **LFS News Release**, it is essential that it does include all the core indicators and information.

In order to take full advantage of the knowledge gains derived from the implementation of the new standards, it is recommended to produce complementary thematic reports showcasing the results for specific topics. These thematic reports give the opportunity to present more indicators, more disaggregations, and more cross-tabulations on a single topic than the **LFS News Release**, allowing for a more detailed and in-depth understanding of it. Examples of topics which could be the object of a complementary report include gender, informality, the status in employment, occupations, agricultural activities, urban and rural areas, migration, the situation of youth, the situation of older workers, to name a few. Naturally, local circumstances and policy interests will dictate which topics are worth exploring and with what frequency.

► **Emphasize increased analytical value and improvements**

The benefits of implementing the new standards far outweigh the costs, enabling a more accurate interpretation of the world of work, with more detailed information on people's participation in paid and unpaid forms of work and various types of labour underutilization. Nonetheless, the methodological revision implies breaks in series which, depending on the local context, may be significant. These breaks may not be well understood or received by users, who may see them as an inconvenience. In order to address this potential discomfort, the **LFS News Release** must emphasize the knowledge gains enabled by the new standards, by highlighting labour market issues which could not be captured before. Focussing the narrative on the positives can help users understand the breaks in series as a necessary trade-off for the valuable knowledge gains.

► **Avoid misinterpretation of breaks**

Every effort should be made in the **LFS News Release** to avoid misinterpretation of breaks in series. This applies, naturally, to the text included, which should be clear enough to prevent any misunderstanding, but also to charts and tables. Indeed, the formatting choices underlying these should contribute to the sound understanding of breaks in series. In particular, any data visualization that would lead the user to intuitively compare non-comparable estimates should be avoided. The issue of breaks in series will inevitably be greater where data is published on a more frequent basis (e.g. quarterly) and users are accustomed to tracking short term movements in key indicators. For less frequent publication cycles (e.g. a LFS once every 5 years), breaks in series may be a lesser issue but it will nonetheless be important to be transparent regarding comparability to previous series.

► **Jointly use as many indicators as needed**

No single indicator can convey a comprehensive depiction of a particular labour market phenomenon. As useful and informative as a given indicator may be, it can only provide a limited picture of the phenomenon, from one perspective.

For example, the unemployment rate is (understandably) a headline labour market indicator. However, it informs solely on the share of the labour force who are unemployed. It does not inform on the conditions of the unemployed (are they receiving unemployment benefits? how long have they been unemployed?), on other forms of labour underutilization (are time-related underemployment and/or the potential labour force more prevalent than unemployment?), or on the quality of employment of those who are employed (are workers escaping unemployment by taking up low-quality jobs?). Thus, the analysis of the situation is greatly enhanced by combining the study of the unemployment rate with that of other indicators.

An accurate and comprehensive depiction of the labour market truthfully conveying its nuances and complexities requires the joint use of several key indicators. Indeed, the ICLS has recognized that single indicators are

becoming more and more insufficient to depict a labour phenomenon, thereby setting an increasing trend in the number of core labour market indicators used.

This should be reflected in the contents of the **LFS News Release**, presenting and highlighting the value of a wide range of complementary indicators to more fully understand the labour market and world of work.

► Highlight rates and absolute values

In line with the previous point, it is important to present both rates and absolute values for some key items. Indicators based on rates, ratios, shares, distributions, etc. are crucial to ease the user's interpretation of a given phenomenon by putting it in perspective. However, it is also essential to recall, at least for some key items, how many people are concerned by the situation under review.

It would be too cumbersome to apply this strategy of publishing both rates and values to all indicators presented in the **LFS News Release**, but it is important to do it for the most crucial labour market aspects, such as employment, unemployment, the informal economy, etc.

Possible additions based on national context and needs

The example of a **LFS News Release** provided here was kept simple with a view to making it as generic, applicable, and adaptable as possible. However, many other items could be included in the **LFS News Release** where relevant and appropriate given local circumstances and data needs, and where the LFS design enables it.

Additional items that could potentially be covered in a **LFS News Release** include:

- **Forms of work other than employment:** As per the 19th ICLS, it is expected that data on all forms of work be produced, although not in every round of the relevant survey or with the same frequency. That is, a long-term statistical program should plan for the production of statistics on employment, own-use production of goods, own-use provision of services, volunteer work, and unpaid trainee work, within a given time period (even if it takes several years), but not all of these need to be produced at the same time and with the same frequency. The frequency and timeliness should be determined by data needs and local circumstances, provided, of course, that employment is measured with the highest frequency. In the example **LFS News Release** presented here, the forms of work covered are employment and own-use production of goods (mainly subsistence foodstuff production). The ILO has published measurement guidance and [model questionnaire content](#) on employment, own-use production of goods, own-use provision of services and volunteer work.
- **Relevant breakdowns:** There is a potentially very long list of breakdowns that could be applied to key labour market indicators. The **LFS News Release** is not the place to delve into all of them, but rather, it should include a few essential ones. The example **LFS News Release** included here disaggregates some key indicators by sex, age (youth/adults) and geographical area (rural/urban). Other core disaggregations may be relevant to the national context and should therefore be included.
- **Additional indicators and tables:** In line with the previous point, the example **LFS News Release** presented here includes a limited number of key indicators to convey a snapshot of the world-of-work situation. These cover the core labour market subjects commonly used across regions and income levels. However, many more indicators could be considered for inclusion according to the national context and priorities, such as additional indicators on employment characteristics or youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) – if not in the news release itself they could be contained in supplementary reports or online databases.
- **Seasonal adjustment:** The example **LFS News Release** presented here refers to a one-off LFS, and therefore, there is no timeseries presented. Nonetheless, in cases where the LFS has a sub-annual frequency and the news release disseminates short-term trends, seasonal adjustment methods could be considered.
- **Flows:** Where the LFS design allows for it through the overlapping of part of the sample in various survey rounds, it could be enlightening to study labour market flows. That is, not only the numbers and shares of people employed, unemployed, and outside the labour force, but also, how many of those in each of these categories were in each of the other categories previously (for example, of many of the currently employed were unemployed in the last period). This information can be revealing, since it is possible that the total number of people in a given category barely changes while the people in that category are far from the same. For

example, the number of unemployed may be similar in the first and second quarter of a given year, but most of the unemployed of the first quarter quit the labour force altogether while most of the unemployed of the second quarter are newly unemployed.

- **Complementarity with other data sources:** Where other official sources of data exist providing data series for the same, similar, or complementary indicators to those presented in the [LFS News Release](#), it could be worth considering including some of these key series as well, providing the relevant joint analysis. For example, where the number of people receiving unemployment benefits (from administrative data sources) is widely cited and used by the media and policymakers, it could make sense to cite it in the [LFS News Release](#) alongside the LFS unemployment estimates, pointing out the conceptual differences and the conclusions that can be drawn from their joint analysis. Notwithstanding the availability of other data sources, the ILO promotes the inclusion of the LFS in all national statistical programmes as a key source of official statistics on labour, for many reasons including the ability to design it to cover a diverse range of topics, the ability to cover the full working-age population of a country (subject to good sample design) and the ability to design it to apply the various criteria stipulated in the definitions contained in international resolutions.

LFS News Release Example

Labour Force Survey Fictland 2024

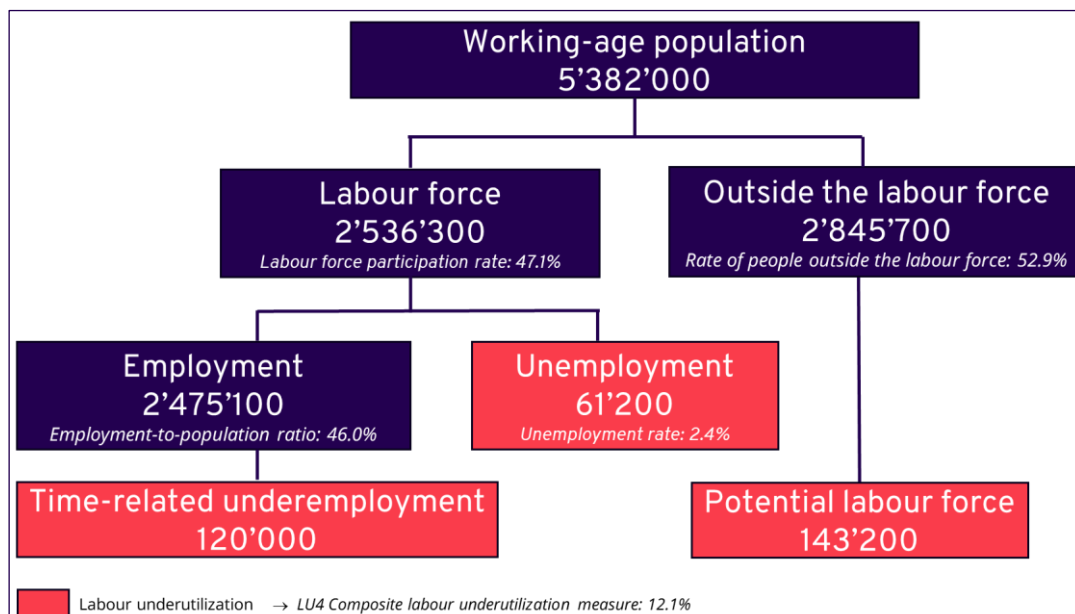
Reference period: January-March 2024

Released: November 15th, 2024

Access LFS data downloads [here](#), the LFS results report [here](#), the LFS methodology [here](#), and the glossary [here](#).

Highlights

- ▶ 47.1 per cent of Fictland's working-age population were in the labour force in 2024 amounting to 2536.3 thousand people. The labour force participation rate was 41.9 per cent for women and 52.6 per cent for men.
- ▶ 46 per cent of Fictland's working-age population were employed (working for pay or profit) in 2024, amounting to 2475.1 thousand people.
- ▶ 41.1 per cent of working-age women (1131.4 thousand) and 51.1 per cent of working-age men (1343.7 thousand) were employed.
- ▶ 39.1 per cent of the working-age population participated in subsistence foodstuff production, and 19.9 per cent did so while being also in employment.
- ▶ Fictland's 2024 informal employment rate was 86.5 per cent (95.8 per cent for youth and 84.5 per cent for adults).
- ▶ The unemployment rate stood at 2.4 per cent (1.9 per cent for women and 2.8 per cent for men), while the composite labour underutilization measure – LU4 – stood at 12.1 per cent (12.1 per cent for women and 12.1 per cent for men).
- ▶ Youth were particularly vulnerable to labour underutilization, with a youth unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent and a youth labour underutilization rate of 21.8 per cent.



► Methodological changes and impact

The last Labour Force Survey (LFS) was conducted in Fictland in 2016, almost a decade ago. There was, therefore, a strong need to carry out a new LFS to have updated information on the labour market.

The 2024 LFS was designed in alignment with the latest labour statistics standards adopted by the [19th, 20th and 21st International Conferences of Labour Statisticians \(ICLS\)](#).

The 19th ICLS standards established a forms-of-work framework distinguishing five forms of work (employment, own-use production, volunteer work, unpaid trainee work, and other work activities), comprehensively covering all paid and unpaid work. Along with this, the 19th ICLS standards also refined the definition of employment, giving it a narrower delineation than it previously had, to include only work done for pay or profit (and exclude all own-use and unpaid work to be reported on as other forms of work, some of which were included in the old employment definition). The intention of these changes is to create an employment definition more closely aligned to employment policymaking needs, while also promoting the measurement of the other forms of work to create a more complete understanding of the different types of working activities people engage in. These standards also introduce additional labour underutilization measures to be used jointly with the unemployment rate, capturing time-related underemployment and the potential labour force.

The 20th ICLS introduced the 2018 International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18), updating and revising the previous classification (ICSE-93) to better capture diverse and changing work relationships, including the blurring boundary between paid employment and self-employment.

The 21st ICLS updated and improved the measurement of the informal economy, recognizing that informal activities can be found in the formal sector, the informal sector, and in households. Also, the 21st ICLS resolution is aligned to the 19th and 20th ICLS resolutions, and therefore contributes to create a coherent statistical framework with consistent and more harmonized statistical output and indicators.

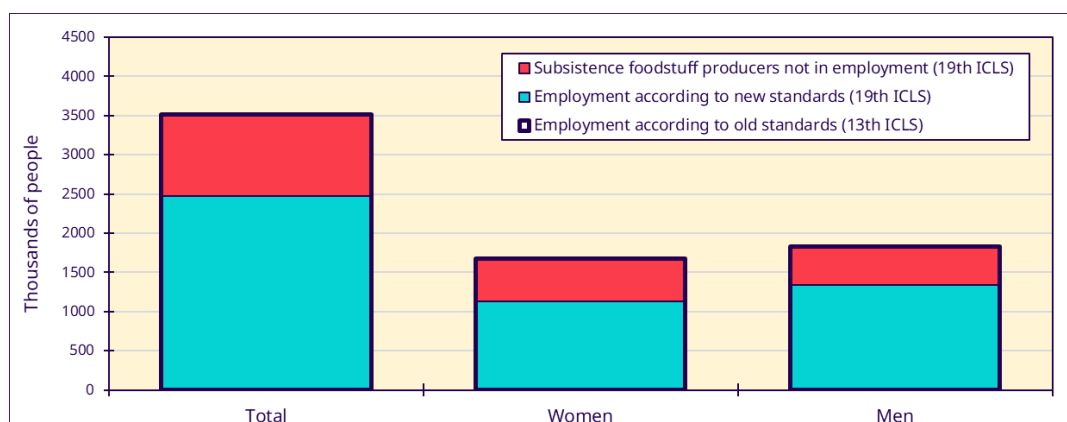
The 2016 LFS had been designed following previous standards, namely the old (broader) employment definition adopted by the 13th ICLS in 1982, covering some own-use and unpaid activities, and the ICSE-93. Therefore, the results of the 2024 LFS are not strictly comparable with those of the 2016 round. Where possible and for comparative purposes, statistics are presented for 2024 following both new (19th ICLS) and old (13th ICLS) statistical standards.

► Employment

Participation in employment and subsistence foodstuff production

In 2024, 2,475.1 people were in employment in Fictland, of which 1,131.4 thousand were women and 1,343.7 thousand were men, using the new (narrow) international employment definition (see figure 1 and table 1).

► **Figure 1: Employment and subsistence foodstuff producers by sex (in thousands of people)**



According to the new (narrow) international employment definition, 46 per cent of the working-age population were employed in 2024, with a 10-point gender gap (see table 2). The employment-to-population ratio was 41.1 per cent for women and 51.1 per cent for men.

A total of 2,103.6 thousand people (39.1 per cent of the working-age population) in Fictland were engaged in subsistence foodstuff production, which is work that people do to produce foodstuff either mainly or only for their household or family consumption (see table 1). This comprised 1,032.2 thousand women and 1,071.4 thousand men. Among these, 1,034.1 thousand people (546.7 thousand women and 487.5 thousand men) were engaged in subsistence foodstuff production without undertaking any other work for pay or profit (see figure 1 and table 1). This group is of particular interest as they were included in the old employment definition from the 13th ICLS but are no longer within the employment definition of the 19th ICLS. If these people are included, it brings the total number of people employed based on the old definition to 3,509.3 thousand or 65.2 per cent of the working-age population (see tables 1 and 2). On this basis, 60.9 per cent of women and 69.7 per cent of men would have been considered employed.

What is more, 19.9 per cent of the working-age population participated simultaneously in employment and subsistence foodstuff production (17.6 per cent for women and 22.2 for men) – this group highlights that a reasonable proportion of the working-age population is engaged in multiple activities to sustain their household livelihood.

Both the employment-to-population ratio and the subsistence foodstuff production rate were lower for youth than for adults, although the gap was wider for the former (see table 2).

While the employment-to-population ratio (19th ICLS) was considerably lower in rural areas than urban areas (42 versus 53.5 per cent), the subsistence foodstuff production rate in rural areas (48.2 per cent) was more than twice that of urban areas (21.8 per cent) (see table 2). The old, broader definition of employment including subsistence foodstuff production and other own-use and unpaid activities hid these pronounced differences and therefore presented a less clear distinction between the work situation of people in rural and urban areas.

► **Table 1: Employment and own-use producers by key breakdowns (in thousands of people)**

	Working-age population (15+)	Employment (13th ICLS)	Employment (19th ICLS)	Subsistence foodstuff production (19th ICLS)	
				Total	Not in employment
Total	5382.0	3509.3	2475.1	2103.6	1034.1
Women	2754.6	1678.1	1131.4	1032.2	546.7
Men	2627.4	1831.2	1343.7	1071.4	487.5
Youth (15-24)	1316.1	701.5	437.3	488.0	264.2
Adults (25+)	4065.9	2807.8	2037.8	1615.7	770.0
Rural areas	3522.8	2334.0	1480.7	1698.7	853.3
Urban areas	1859.3	1175.2	994.4	404.9	180.8

► **Table 2: Employment-to-population ratio and subsistence foodstuff production rate by key breakdowns (%)**

	Employment-to-population ratio (13th ICLS)	Employment-to-population ratio (19th ICLS)	Subsistence foodstuff production rate (19th ICLS)	Share of the working-age population in employment and subsistence foodstuff production simultaneously
Total	65.2	46.0	39.1	19.9
Women	60.9	41.1	37.5	17.6
Men	69.7	51.1	40.8	22.2
Youth (15-24)	53.3	33.2	37.1	17.0
Adults (25+)	69.1	50.1	39.7	20.8
Rural areas	66.3	42.0	48.2	24.0
Urban areas	63.2	53.5	21.8	12.1

Key employment characteristics

Status in employment

The 20th ICLS adopted a new International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18), more detailed and flexible than the previous one (ICSE-93). However, given that the ICSE-93 is still widely used, it is worth looking at what it yields. According to the new employment definition and the ICSE-93, 34 per cent of the employed in 2024 were *own-account workers*, 33.5 per cent were *employees*, and 31.2 per cent were *contributing family workers* (see table 3). The narrower employment definition has a great impact on the employment distribution by status in employment, given that those not doing work for pay or profit previously considered employed (subsistence foodstuff producers without other work for pay or profit) would have been considered own-account workers, contributing family workers or employers, depending on their specific circumstances (table 3).

► **Table 3: Status in employment in main job according to ICSE-93 (in thousands of people and %)**

		New employment definition (19th ICLS)	
		Thousands of people	Distribution (%)
Employers		31.8	1.3
Employees		848.0	33.5
Own-account workers		830.6	34.0
Contributing family workers		764.7	31.2
Total		2475.1	100

The new ICSE-18 provides greater detail to the analysis of work relationships and status in employment. For one, it enables the study of the status in employment from two different perspectives: the type of authority exercised by workers and the economic risk they are exposed to. In this sense, in Fictland in 2024, 55 per cent of the employed were *dependent workers* (corresponding to 1,360.3 employed people) and the remaining 45 per cent (1,114.7 employed people) were *independent workers* (see table 4). Also, 65.4 per cent of the employed (or 1,618.8 people) worked *for profit*, while the remaining 34.6 per cent (856.2 people) worked *for pay* (see table 5). That is, while less than half the employed population were *independent workers*, a much higher share of the employed worked *for profit*, or in simpler words, workers' exposure to economic risk was much more widespread than workers' autonomy in decision-making. Two key groups which encapsulate this contrast are dependent contractors (180.3 thousand or about 7.3 per cent of all employed) and contributing family workers (350 thousand or about 14.1 per cent of all employed) – both of these groups having a low degree of decision-making authority in their work, while still relying on profits from their activities.

► **Table 4: Status in employment in main job according to type of authority (ICSE-18-A) (in thousands of people and %)**

International Classification of Status in Employment according to type of authority (ICSE-18-A)	New employment definition (19th ICLS)	
	Thousands of people	Distribution (%)
Independent workers	1114.7	45.0
Employers	31.8	1.3
Independent workers without employees	1082.9	43.8
Dependent workers	1360.3	55.0
Dependent contractors	180.3	7.3
Employees	829.9	33.5
Contributing family workers	350.0	14.1
Total	2475.1	100

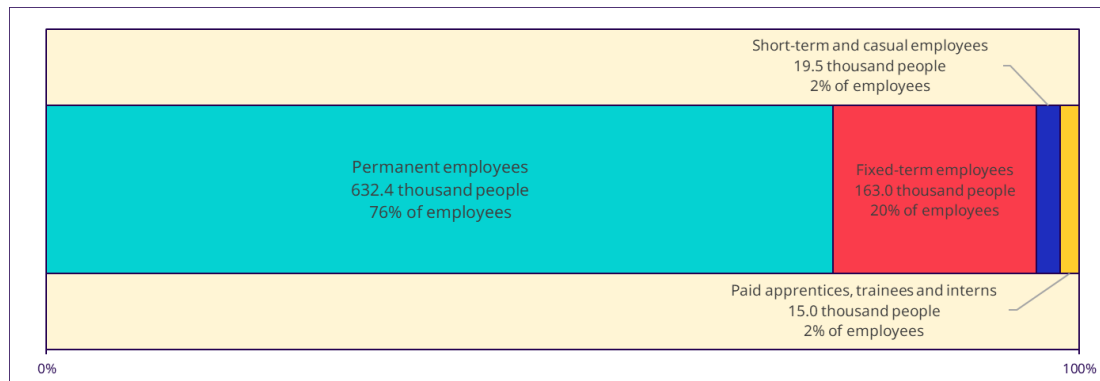
► **Table 5: Status in employment in main job according to type of economic risk (ICSE-18-R) (in thousands of people and %)**

International Classification of Status in Employment according to type of economic risk (ICSE-18-R)	New employment definition (19th ICLS)	
	Thousands of people	Distribution (%)
Workers in employment for profit	1618.8	65.4
Independent workers in household market enterprises	1088.5	44.0
Dependent contractors	180.3	7.3
Contributing family workers	350.0	14.1
Workers in employment for pay	856.2	34.6
Owner-operators of corporations	26.3	1.1
Employees	829.9	33.5
Total	2475.1	100

The ICSE-18 introduced the category of *dependent contractors*, the “in-between” group of workers who are not employees of a given economic unit but operate under a commercial agreement and depend on it for the organization of their work, income or market access. In Fictland in 2024, 7.3 per cent of the employed were *dependent contractors* (see tables 4 and 5). Given their non-negligible share, this new classification category is highly relevant and greatly improves the understanding of workers’ actual conditions and work relationships. Actually, given that the *dependent contractors* category did not exist in the previous international standard classification (ICSE-93), they were previously considered *own-account workers*, *contributing family workers*, or *employees*, depending on their specific situation (see table 6). Their separate category now enables a better understanding of their hybrid situation.

Another strength of the ICSE-18 is that it enables the more detailed study of employees, casting light on non-standard forms of employment and the prevalence of economic risk among those typically seen as holding the most secure type of jobs. In Fictland in 2024, while most *employees* (76 per cent) were *permanent employees*, still almost a quarter of all employees did not have an open-ended contract. Indeed, *permanent employees* represented 25.5 per cent of all employed, whereas *fixed-term employees*, *short-term employees*, *casual employees*, *paid apprentices*, *trainees and interns* all together represented around 8 per cent of the employed (see figure 2).

► **Figure 2: Employees by category (in thousands of people and %)**



Similarly, the depiction of the work situation of independent workers without employees was also obscured under the ICSE-93, as they were distributed across the categories of own-account workers and contributing family workers. What is more, under the ICSE-18, only 14.1 per cent of the employed in 2024 were categorized as *contributing family workers* (compared to 31.2 per cent under the ICSE-93), highlighting the value of this more detailed classification to accurately depict workers' situations and work relationships (see table 6).

► **Table 6: Correspondence between ICSE-93 and ICSE-18-A (in thousands of people)**

ICSE-18-A \ ICSE-93	Employers	Employees	Own-account workers	Contributing family workers	Total
Independent workers					
Employers	31.8				31.8
Independent workers without employees			734.5	348.4	1082.9
Dependent workers					
Dependent contractors		848.0	95.4	416.9	1360.3
Employees		18.0	95.4	66.8	180.3
Contributing family workers		829.9		350.0	829.9
Total	31.8	848.0	829.9	765.3	2475.0

Gender-disaggregated data reveal that 59.5 per cent of employed women were *dependent workers*, while the remaining 40.5 per cent were *independent workers*. Comparatively, 51.1 per cent of employed men were *dependent workers* while 48.9 per cent were *independent workers*. However, a look into the detailed categories of dependent workers reveals that, while only 26.9 per cent of employed women were *employees*, 39.0 per cent of employed men were *employees*, and while 24.7 per cent of employed women were *contributing family workers*, only 5.2 per cent of employed men were *contributing family workers* (see table 7). This conveys a much stronger likelihood of women to be contributing family workers (jobs typically associated with higher degrees of vulnerability and risk) and of men to be employees (jobs typically associated with higher degrees of security), reflecting additional barriers faced by women to access quality jobs. The share of employed who are dependent contractors is slightly higher for women (7.8 per cent) than men (6.8 per cent), although the difference is small (see table 7).

► Table 7: Status in employment in main job (ICSE-18-A) by sex (in thousands of people and %)

		New employment definition (19th ICLS)	
International Classification of Status in Employment according to type of authority (ICSE-18-A)		Thousands of people	Distribution (%)
Total	Independent workers	1114.7	45.0
	Employers	31.8	1.3
	Independent workers without employees	1082.9	43.8
	Dependent workers	1360.3	55.0
	Dependent contractors	180.3	7.3
	Employees	829.9	33.5
	Contributing family workers	350.0	14.1
Total		2475.1	100
Women	Independent workers	458.5	40.5
	Employers	12.3	1.1
	Independent workers without employees	446.2	39.4
	Dependent workers	673.8	59.5
	Dependent contractors	88.3	7.8
	Employees	305.5	26.9
	Contributing family workers	280.0	24.7
Total		1131.4	100
Men	Independent workers	656.2	48.9
	Employers	19.5	1.5
	Independent workers without employees	636.7	47.4
	Dependent workers	686.5	51.1
	Dependent contractors	92.0	6.8
	Employees	524.5	39.0
	Contributing family workers	70.0	5.2
Total		1343.7	100.0

Informal employment

In 2024, 86.5 per cent of all employment in Fictland was of an informal nature (87.5 per cent for women and 85.7 for men), meaning the vast majority of workers were not covered in law or in practice by a job-related social protection, labour legislation, or were engaged in economic activities operating outside formal registration, taxation or other regulatory frameworks. Youth were particularly exposed to informality, with a youth informal employment rate of 95.8 per cent compared to an adult rate of 84.5 per cent (see table 8).

While the informal economy is vastly widespread throughout Fictland, it is even more prevalent in rural areas, with a rural informal employment rate of 93 per cent compared to an urban rate of 76.9 per cent (see table 8).

Here too, the narrower employment definition has a great impact. Those not doing work for pay or profit previously considered employed had a very high likelihood of being in informal employment, thus, the informal employment rate based on the old broader employment definition was 90.5 per cent, compared to 86.5 per cent based on the new definition limited to work done for pay or profit (see table 8).

► Table 8: Informal employment by key breakdowns (in thousands of people and %)

	Informal employment with old employment definition (13th ICLS)		Informal employment with new employment definition (19th ICLS)	
	Thousands of people	Informality rate (%)	Thousands of people	Informality rate (%)
Total	3175.5	90.5	2141.4	86.5
Women	1537.1	91.6	990.4	87.5
Men	1638.4	89.5	1150.9	85.7
Youth (15-24)	683.3	97.4	419.1	95.8
Adults (25+)	2492.2	88.8	1722.3	84.5
Rural areas	2229.9	95.5	1376.6	93.0
Urban areas	945.6	80.5	764.8	76.9

There are some types of jobs that are more common in the informal economy, while others seem better shielded from it. In fact, all *contributing family workers* in Fictland in 2024 held informal jobs, as well as 90.9 per cent of *independent workers*. In contrast, informality reached *only* 75 per cent of *employees* (see table 9).

These informality patterns hold true across genders. All female and male *contributing family workers* belonged to the informal economy. The informality rate of *independent workers* was 93.5 per cent for women and 89.0 per cent for men. In contrast, *only* 63.1 per cent of female *employees* and 81.9 per cent of male *employees* held informal jobs.

► Table 9: Informal employment by sex and status in employment in main job (ICSE-18-A) (in thousands of people and %)

		New employment definition (19th ICLS)				
		Thousands of people		Distribution (%)		Informality rate (%)
		Total employment	Informal employment	Total employment	Informal employment	
Total	Independent workers	1114.7	1013.6	45.0	47.3	90.9
	Employers	31.8	28.2	1.3	1.3	88.5
	Independent workers without employees	1082.9	985.5	43.8	46.0	91.0
	Dependent workers	1360.3	1127.6	55.0	52.7	82.9
	Dependent contractors	180.3	155.1	7.3	7.2	86.0
	Employees	829.9	622.5	33.5	29.1	75.0
	Contributing family workers	350.0	350.0	14.1	16.3	100.0
Total		2475.1	2141.4	100	100	86.5
Women	Independent workers	473.2	442.5	41.8	44.7	93.5
	Employers	12.3	11.2	1.1	1.1	91.3
	Independent workers without employees	460.9	431.3	40.7	43.5	93.6
	Dependent workers	673.8	547.8	59.6	55.3	81.3
	Dependent contractors	88.3	75.1	7.8	7.6	85.0
	Employees	305.5	192.8	27.0	19.5	63.1
	Contributing family workers	280.0	280.0	24.7	28.3	100.0
Total		1131.4	990.4	100	100	87.5
Men	Independent workers	641.5	571.2	47.7	49.6	89.0
	Employers	19.5	16.9	1.5	1.5	86.8
	Independent workers without employees	622.0	554.2	46.3	48.2	89.1
	Dependent workers	686.5	579.8	51.1	50.4	84.5
	Dependent contractors	92.0	80.0	6.8	7.0	87.0
	Employees	524.5	429.8	39.0	37.3	81.9
	Contributing family workers	70.0	70.0	5.2	6.1	100.0
Total		1343.7	1150.9	100	100	85.7

► Unemployment and labour underutilization

Labour force status and labour underutilization

The narrowing of the employment definition to associate it with remuneration has a great impact on the distribution of the working-age population by labour force status, and this impact is stronger for some population groups. Based on the old 13th ICLS definitions, there were 3,552.2 thousand people in the labour force in 2024, of which 3,509.3 thousand were employed and 42.9 thousand were unemployed. The labour force participation rate (the share of the working-age population in the labour force) was 66.0 per cent. Labour force participation was higher among men (1,859.0 thousand, giving a participation rate of 70.8 per cent) than for women (1,693.2 thousand and a participation rate of 61.5 per cent). However, based on the new 19th ICLS definitions, there were 2,536.3 thousand people in the labour force in 2024, of which 2,475.1 thousand were employed and 61.2 thousand were unemployed. The labour force participation rate was 47.1 per cent. Labour force participation was still higher with the new definitions among men (1,383.0 thousand, giving a participation rate of 52.6 per cent) than for women (1,153.3 thousand and a participation rate of 41.9 per cent). The vast majority of those doing own-use or unpaid activities previously considered employed are now considered outside the labour force, while some of them are in unemployment due to their availability for employment and job search (see tables 10 and 11). This impact is stronger in rural areas, where the type of unpaid activities that were previously considered employment are more common.

► **Table 10: Labour force status of the working-age population by key breakdowns (in thousands of people)**

	According to old definitions (13th ICLS)			According to new definitions (19th ICLS)		
	Employment	Unemployment	Outside the labour force	Employment	Unemployment	Outside the labour force
Total	3509.3	42.9	1829.8	2475.1	61.2	2845.7
Women	1678.1	15.1	1061.4	1131.4	21.9	1601.3
Men	1831.2	27.8	768.4	1343.7	39.3	1244.4
Youth (15-24)	701.5	16.2	598.5	437.3	24.1	854.7
Adults (25+)	2807.8	26.7	1231.4	2037.8	37.1	1991.0
Rural areas	2334.0	20.0	1168.7	1480.7	33.1	2009.0
Urban areas	1175.2	23.0	661.1	994.4	28.1	836.7

► **Table 11: Core labour-related indicators by key breakdowns (%)**

	According to new definitions (19th ICLS)			
	Labour force participation rate	Employment-to-population rate	Unemployment rate	Share of people outside the labour force
Total	47.1	46.0	2.4	52.9
Women	41.9	41.1	1.9	58.1
Men	52.6	51.1	2.8	47.4
Youth (15-24)	35.1	33.2	5.2	64.9
Adults (25+)	51.0	50.1	1.8	49.0
Rural areas	43.0	42.0	2.2	57.0
Urban areas	55.0	53.5	2.8	45.0

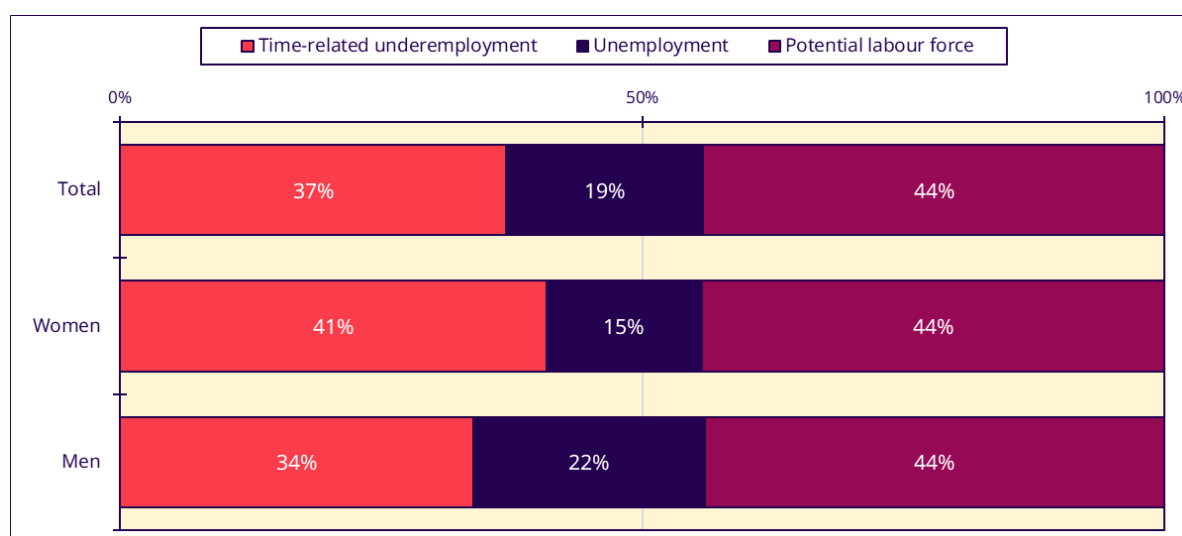
Unemployment, time-related underemployment and potential labour force

Labour underutilization can take different forms: time-related underemployment (when employed people work less hours than they would like to and are available for), unemployment (when people are not employed but are available and seeking employment), and the potential labour force (when people outside the labour force are

available for employment or seeking employment but not the two simultaneously). All of these situations indicate an unmet need for employment (or underutilized labour).

In Fictland in 2024 (and according to new definitions), the most common form of labour underutilization was the potential labour force, both for men and women. There were in total 324.3 thousand people in labour underutilization, of which 143.2 thousand were in the potential labour force, 120 thousand in time-related underemployment, and 61.2 thousand in unemployment. The fact that unemployment is the least common form of labour underutilization suggests people may be facing strong barriers to job searching and becoming available, such as issues of access to job-search infrastructure, lack of resources to apply for jobs and follow recruitment procedures, discouragement due to lack of jobs available in previous searches, family responsibilities, etc. (see figure 3 and table 12).

► **Figure 3: Composition of labour underutilization by sex, according to new 19th ICLS definitions (%)**



► **Table 12: Time-related underemployment, unemployment, and potential labour force by key breakdowns according to new 19th ICLS definitions (in thousands of people)**

	According to new definitions (19th ICLS)			
	Time-related underemployment	Unemployment	Potential labour force	Total labour underutilization
Total	120.0	61.2	143.2	324.3
Women	60.1	21.9	65.3	147.3
Men	59.8	39.3	77.9	177.0
Youth (15-24)	39.2	24.1	47.9	111.2
Adults (25+)	80.8	37.1	95.2	213.1
Rural areas	82.3	33.1	106.9	222.3
Urban areas	37.6	28.1	36.2	102.0

The 2024 unemployment rate (according to new definitions) – still a key labour market indicator as it covers those without employment and with the strongest attachment to the labour market – was 2.4 per cent (1.9 per cent for women and 2.8 per cent for men). Youth are particularly vulnerable to unemployment, with a youth unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent, almost three times the adult unemployment rate of 1.8 per cent (see tables 11 and 13).

For a full understanding of the unmet need for employment, these seemingly low unemployment rates need to be supplemented with indicators on the other, more prevalent forms of labour underutilization. Indeed, the rate combining unemployment and time-related underemployment (LU2) stood at 7.1 per cent, while the rate combining unemployment and the potential labour force (LU3) stood at 7.6 per cent. The composite labour underutilization measure (LU4), covering unemployment, time-related underemployment, and the potential labour force, reached 12.1 per cent. Here too, youth were in a particularly notable situation, with a labour underutilization rate of 21.8 per cent for youth compared to 9.8 for adults (see table 13).

Although unemployment appears more as an urban phenomenon (with an urban unemployment rate of 2.8 per cent compared to 2.2 per cent for rural areas), other forms of labour underutilization are much more prevalent in the rural economy (with a composite labour underutilization rate of 13.7 per cent in rural areas compared to 9.6 in urban ones). This could be taken as a reflection of the fact that job opportunities tend to be more readily available in urban areas (see table 13).

► **Table 13: Headline labour underutilization indicators by key breakdowns (%)**

According to new definitions (19th ICLS)						
	LU1 Unemployment rate	LU2 Time-related underemployment and unemployment rate	LU3 Unemployment and potential labour force rate	LU4 Labour underutilization rate	Share of employed in time-related underemployment	Share of those outside the labour force in the potential labour force
Total	2.4	7.1	7.6	12.1	4.8	5.0
Women	1.9	7.1	7.2	12.1	5.3	4.1
Men	2.8	7.2	8.0	12.1	4.5	6.3
Youth (15-24)	5.2	13.7	14.1	21.8	9.0	5.6
Adults (25+)	1.8	5.7	6.1	9.8	4.0	4.8
Rural areas	2.2	7.6	8.6	13.7	5.6	5.3
Urban areas	2.8	6.4	6.1	9.6	3.8	4.3

► Hours of work

In terms of working time, in 2024, the largest share of the employed population worked excessive hours (over 48 hours per week), and this was true both for men and women, and both based on usual and actual hours of work. Indeed, 47.5 per cent of the employed population usually worked 48 hours a week or more, and 46 per cent of the employed population actually worked 48 hours or more during the reference week (see tables 13 and 14). ILO Conventions on working time set forth the threshold of a 8-hour workday and a 48-hour workweek to avoid excessive working time, which interferes with the balance between work and personal life, increases accident and injury risks, and poses long-term threats to workers' physical and mental health.

In Fictland in 2024, employed people spent on average 45.8 hours per week in all jobs (45.4 for women and 46.1 for men; 45.3 in rural areas and 46.4 in urban areas).

In addition to time spent in employment, it is important to consider time spent in other (unpaid) forms of work, including own-use production of goods (such as subsistence foodstuff production) and own-use provision of services, otherwise known as unpaid care and domestic work. In this regard, it is especially important to consider gender patterns in total work burden (unpaid and paid work burdens). Efforts will be made in the future to capture information on time spent on these other forms of work.¹

¹ The ILO has produced guidance for the measurement of other forms of work including own-use production of goods in the main [ILO model questionnaire](#), [volunteer work](#) and [own-use provision of services](#).

► **Table 13: Employment by weekly hours worked in all jobs by sex according to new definitions (in thousands of people and %)**

In thousands of people in employment

Weekly hours bands	Usual hours			Actual hours		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
No hours				4.8	1.7	3.1
0-14	147.7	72.0	75.7	150.7	72.8	77.8
15-29	252.1	126.0	126.1	258.0	128.8	129.2
30-34	103.7	51.1	52.6	107.2	53.0	54.2
35-39	170.0	82.4	87.6	173.6	83.7	89.8
40-48	626.7	274.2	352.5	643.1	282.1	361.0
49+	1174.8	525.7	649.1	1137.8	509.3	628.5
Total	2475.1	1131.4	1343.7	2475.1	1131.4	1343.7

As a % of total employment

Weekly hours bands	Usual hours			Actual hours		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
No hours				0.2	0.2	0.2
0-14	6.0	6.4	5.6	6.1	6.4	5.8
15-29	10.2	11.1	9.4	10.4	11.4	9.6
30-34	4.2	4.5	3.9	4.3	4.7	4.0
35-39	6.9	7.3	6.5	7.0	7.4	6.7
40-48	25.3	24.2	26.2	26.0	24.9	26.9
49+	47.5	46.5	48.3	46.0	45.0	46.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

► **Table 14: Employment by weekly hours worked in all jobs by rural/urban according to new definitions (in thousands of people and %)**

In thousands of people in employment

Weekly hours bands	Usual hours			Actual hours		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
No hours				4.8	1.7	3.1
0-14	147.7	94.7	53.0	150.7	95.9	54.7
15-29	252.1	167.4	84.7	258.0	169.7	88.3
30-34	103.7	76.6	27.1	107.2	80.4	26.8
35-39	170.0	108.7	61.3	173.6	109.6	63.9
40-48	626.7	323.2	303.5	643.1	340.6	302.5
49+	1174.8	710.1	464.8	1137.8	682.7	455.0
Total	2475.1	1480.7	994.4	2475.1	1480.7	994.4

As a % of total employment

Weekly hours bands	Usual hours			Actual hours		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
No hours				0.2	0.1	0.3
0-14	6.0	6.4	5.3	6.1	6.5	5.5
15-29	10.2	11.3	8.5	10.4	11.5	8.9
30-34	4.2	5.2	2.7	4.3	5.4	2.7
35-39	6.9	7.3	6.2	7.0	7.4	6.4
40-48	25.3	21.8	30.5	26.0	23.0	30.4
49+	47.5	48.0	46.7	46.0	46.1	45.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

► Summary tables

	According to current standards (19th ICLS)			According to previous standards (13th ICLS)		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
► Headcounts (thousands of people)						
Working-age population	5382.0	2754.6	2627.4	5382.0	2754.6	2627.4
Labour force	2536.3	1153.3	1383.0	3552.2	1693.2	1859.0
Employment	2475.1	1131.4	1343.7	3509.3	1678.1	1831.2
Unemployment	61.2	21.9	39.3	42.9	15.1	27.8
Outside the labour force	2845.7	1601.3	1244.4	1829.8	1061.4	768.4
Time-related underemployment	120.0	60.1	59.8	130.9	61.1	69.8
Potential labour force	143.2	65.3	77.9	68.5	32.6	35.9
Subsistence foodstuff producers	2103.6	1032.2	1071.4			
- not in employment	1034.1	546.7	487.5			
- in employment	1069.5	485.6	583.9			
► Key rates in relation to the working-age population (%)						
Labour force participation rate	47.1	41.9	52.6	66.0	61.5	70.8
Employment-to-population ratio	46.0	41.1	51.1	65.2	60.9	69.7
Rate of people outside the labour force	52.9	58.1	47.4	34.0	38.5	29.2
Subsistence foodstuff production rate	39.1	37.5	40.8			
► Key rates in relation to employment (%)						
Share of informal employment	86.5	87.5	85.7	90.5	91.6	89.5
Share of employees	33.5	27.0	40.4	24.2	18.2	29.6
Time-related underemployment rate	4.8	5.3	4.5	3.7	3.6	3.8
► Headline labour underutilization indicators (%)						
LU1- Unemployment rate (% of the labour force)	2.4	1.9	2.8	1.2	0.9	1.5
LU2 - Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (% of the labour force)	7.1	7.1	7.2	4.9	4.5	5.3
LU3 - Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (% of the extended labour force)	7.6	7.2	8.0	3.1	2.8	3.4
LU4 - Composite measure of labour underutilization (% of the extended labour force)	12.1	12.1	12.1	6.7	6.3	7.0

	According to current standards (19th ICLS)			According to previous standards (13th ICLS)		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
► Headcounts (thousands of people)						
Working-age population	5382.0	3522.8	1859.3	5382.0	3522.8	1859.3
Labour force	2536.3	2354.0	1198.2	3552.2	1513.8	1022.5
Employment	2475.1	1480.7	994.4	3509.3	2334.0	1175.2
Unemployment	61.2	33.1	28.1	42.9	20.0	23.0
Outside the labour force	2845.7	2009.0	836.7	1829.8	1168.7	661.1
Time-related underemployment	120.0	82.3	37.6	130.9	93.3	37.6
Potential labour force	143.2	106.9	36.2	68.5	42.8	25.7
Subsistence foodstuff producers	2103.6	1698.7	404.9			
- not in employment	1034.1	853.3	180.8			
- in employment	1069.5	845.4	224.1			
► Key rates in relation to the working-age population (%)						
Labour force participation rate	47.1	43.0	55.0	66.0	66.8	64.4
Employment-to-population ratio	46.0	42.0	53.5	65.2	66.3	63.2
Rate of people outside the labour force	52.9	57.0	45.0	34.0	33.2	35.6
Subsistence foodstuff production rate	39.1	48.2	21.8			
► Key rates in relation to employment (%)						
Share of informal employment	86.5	93.0	76.9	90.5	95.5	80.5
Share of employees	33.5	23.5	50.3	24.2	14.9	42.5
Time-related underemployment rate	4.8	5.6	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.2
► Headline labour underutilization indicators (%)						
LU1- Unemployment rate (% of the labour force)	2.4	2.2	2.8	1.2	0.8	1.9
LU2 - Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (% of the labour force)	7.1	7.6	6.4	4.9	4.8	5.1
LU3 - Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (% of the extended labour force)	7.6	8.6	6.1	3.1	2.6	4.0
LU4 - Composite measure of labour underutilization (% of the extended labour force)	12.1	13.7	9.6	6.7	6.5	7.1