

## **Call for Expression of Interest**

### **How skills affect transitions over the life cycle**

#### **Background**

While many occupations continue to exist in name, the day-to-day tasks of many jobs are unrecognizable from decades or even years before. Many other occupations no longer exist and new occupations have appeared. Such shifts in the labour market are a reflection of broader transformations in economies that have implications for the demand for certain skills and which motivate workers to develop new abilities, but which also rely on the foundational skills and abilities that workers bring to the labour market. Though it may seem evident that developing one's set of skills will make an individual worker more resilient in the labour market, there is limited in-depth research, particularly in developing countries, of how individual's skill sets and their acquisition of skills affects employment transitions over their life-course.

Given the interest of policy makers, businesses and unions to better understand ongoing changes in skill requirements and to support workers in skill development and during labour market transitions, the Research Department of the International Labour Office (ILO) is carrying out a research project with the aim of analysing the linkages between skills dynamics and transitions in the labour market in middle and low-income countries. More specifically, the project aims to understand the role of skills in fostering efficient transitions (i.e., minimising fragmented labour market experiences, especially during the crucial stages of transitioning) and effective transitions (e.g., those leading permanently to decent work). This analysis is undertaken with the ultimate objective of understanding the role of skills in making people more resilient to transformations in the labour market and helping to identify those sets of skills that better prepare workers for facing such transitions.

#### **Objective**

Contribute to the ILO Research project on skills and transitions in middle and low-income countries by preparing a country study<sup>1</sup> using panel data that analyses transitions in the labour market (principally focused on employment-to-employment transitions, but, depending on the research question, also considering transitions to unemployment, inactivity, or between different contractual arrangements) and assesses the role that skills play in this transition. Depending on the research question, the study may focus on a crucial moment during workers' employment biographies (e.g., after an experienced job loss or after child birth). Nevertheless, longer panels capturing more years of an individual's life would be preferred in order to determine when transitions take place as well as the permanency of transitions. While such rich data are less available for middle and low-income countries, they do exist. Although our preference is for long-term panel data, we will consider proposals that exploit repeated cross-sections in an innovative way (i.e., through pseudo panels).

The analysis of skills should go beyond crude indicators of skills such as years of formal education and include other measures that analyse tasks performed on the job or, ideally, which assess individuals' aptitudes or soft skills. Given that alternative skill measures are not widely available,

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding Indonesia and South Africa as these studies are already underway.

we welcome innovative approaches to exploiting occupational and other data available in LFS and/or matching like individuals with information gleaned in other surveys such as the PIAAC or STEP or other surveys available for low- and middle-income countries.

The researcher(s) should prepare an article of approximately 10,000 – 12,000 words based on their analysis that will be published in the ILO working paper series (subject to peer-review) and which would be a reference for a future ILO policy report on this topic. The researcher would be able to submit the article to journals, subject to a footnote acknowledging the ILO as a source of funding.

### **Eligibility**

This consultancy is open to individual researchers, or to small teams of individual researchers, preferably with a PhD in Economics or related fields.

### **Application**

Interested candidates should send a short letter of interest, as well as their CV(s) to Janine Berg ([berg@ilo.org](mailto:berg@ilo.org)) and Hannah Liepmann ([liepmann@ilo.org](mailto:liepmann@ilo.org)), by June 15, 2021. Selected candidates will be contacted by June 25. The final Terms of Reference for this work will be developed jointly by the ILO and the consultant(s).

### **Conditions**

The work is to be completed by December 1, 2021 with some inputs delivered prior. The ILO will pay between 10,000 and 15,000 USD for this work, depending on the scope of the project and the experience of the consultants.