
Global Labour Data Sources

A Reference Report for Researchers & Analysts

Sources catalogued	29	Thematic categories	8
Geographic scope	Global	Date	April 11, 2026

Covers international organisations, national statistical agencies, research consortia, and indices across wages, employment, regulation, automation, social protection, and structural change.

Contents

Introduction	3
1 International & Intergovernmental Bodies	4
2 World Bank & Multilateral Development Banks	5
3 National & Central Bank Data	5
4 Index & Competitiveness Rankings	6
5 Structural & Sectoral Databases	6
6 Automation, Technology & Future of Work	7
7 Social Protection & Inequality	8
8 Wages & Earnings	8
Quick Reference	10
Research Notes	12

Introduction

Labour market data is spread across a wide range of international organisations, government agencies, academic consortia, and private research bodies. This report consolidates the most significant and widely cited sources used in labour economics, workforce planning, macroeconomic forecasting, and development policy.

Sources are organised into eight thematic categories. Each entry lists the maintaining organisation, URL, thematic tags, and data type.

Access note: Most databases are freely accessible. Some microdata (e.g. LIS) require registration. Proprietary indices (e.g. WEF GCR) may need institutional access.

1. International & Intergovernmental Bodies

ILOSTAT – ILO Labour Statistics Database

International Labour Organization

The world's largest repository of labour statistics, covering employment, unemployment, wages, working conditions, social protection, and labour productivity for 200+ countries. Includes harmonised microdata.

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

Employment | Wages | Productivity | Global

Type: Time-series, Cross-section, Microdata

World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends (WESO)

International Labour Organization

Annual flagship publication providing forecasts on labour market trends, employment, unemployment, and working poverty globally.

<https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/lang--en/index.htm>

Forecasts | Social Outcomes | Working Poverty

Type: Annual report with structured datasets

OECD.Stat – Labour Market Statistics

OECD

Comprehensive labour force statistics for OECD members: employment by sector, part-time work, hours worked, job tenure, earnings, and labour market transitions.

https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=LFS_SEXAGE_I_R

OECD Members | LFS | Earnings | Sector Data

Type: Time-series, Quarterly & Annual

Product Market Regulation (PMR) Indicators

OECD

Composite indicators measuring the degree to which policies promote or inhibit competition. Important for understanding how product markets shape labour demand.

<https://www.oecd.org/economy/reform/indicators-of-product-market-regulation/>

Regulation | Competition | Policy

Type: Indicators, Periodic surveys

UNdata – Labour Statistics

United Nations Statistics Division

UN aggregation of ILO data through the UNdata interface, aligned to the SDG framework, particularly SDG Goal 8 (Decent Work).

<https://data.un.org/Explorer.aspx?d=ILO>

SDG 8 | Decent Work | UN System

Type: Cross-section, Time-series

UNIDO Industrial Statistics (INDSTAT)

UN Industrial Development Organization

Manufacturing value added, output, employment, wages, and productivity at 2–4-digit ISIC level for all countries.

<https://stat.unido.org/>

Manufacturing | Value Added | ISIC | Industry

Type: Panel data, Annual

2. World Bank & Multilateral Development Banks

World Development Indicators (WDI)

World Bank

Over 1,600 indicators covering labour force participation, employment by sector, self-employment, vulnerable employment, child labour, and social protection coverage for 217 economies.

<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>
LFP Rate | Self-Employment | Social Protection | Global
Type: Time-series, Annual

Employing Workers Index

World Bank (Doing Business / Business Ready)

Benchmarks regulations on hiring, working hours, redundancy procedures, and severance costs across economies.

<https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploretopics/employing-workers>
Regulation | Hiring | Redundancy | Cross-country
Type: Index, Annual

Jobs & Development – World Bank Jobs Group

World Bank

Research data and reports on job creation, quality of work, labour market transitions, and the future of work in developing economies.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/jobsanddevelopment>
Developing Economies | Job Quality | Future of Work
Type: Reports, Microdata, Policy notes

3. National & Central Bank Data

FRED – Federal Reserve Economic Data

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Extensive US labour market series: unemployment rate, non-farm payrolls, JOLTS job openings, labour force participation, earnings, and the Sahm Rule.

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/categories/12>
USA | Unemployment | JOLTS | Sahm Rule | Payrolls
Type: High-frequency time-series (monthly/weekly)

Sahm Rule Recession Indicator

FRED / Claudia Sahm

Signals recession onset when the 3-month moving average of unemployment rises ≥ 0.5 pp above its 12-month low. Real-time and vintage data available.

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SAHMREALTIME>
Recession Indicator | Unemployment | USA | Leading Indicator
Type: Monthly indicator

Beveridge Curve Data (JOLTS)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics / FRED

Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey data underpinning the Beveridge Curve – the inverse relationship between vacancies and unemployment.

<https://www.bls.gov/jlt/>

Job Openings | Vacancies | Structural Unemployment | USA

Type: Monthly survey

Eurostat – Labour Market Statistics

Eurostat (European Commission)

Harmonised EU and EEA labour force survey data covering employment, unemployment, earnings, labour costs, and working hours.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/labour-market>

EU | EEA | Harmonised | Labour Force Survey

Type: Quarterly & Annual, Time-series

4. Index & Competitiveness Rankings

Index of Labor Freedom

The Heritage Foundation

Composite index measuring regulatory freedom in labour markets: minimum wage, hours restrictions, hiring/firing costs, and collective bargaining.

<https://www.heritage.org/index/labor-freedom>

Freedom Index | Regulation | Hiring | Firing

Type: Annual index, Cross-country

Global Competitiveness Report – Labour Market Pillar

World Economic Forum

Assesses labour market efficiency and flexibility: redundancy costs, hiring and firing practices, worker-employer cooperation, and pay-productivity linkages.

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2020/>

Competitiveness | Flexibility | Efficiency | WEF

Type: Annual survey-based index

Human Development Index (HDI)

UNDP

Captures income per capita, education, and life expectancy to contextualise labour quality. Includes the Inequality-adjusted HDI and Gender Inequality Index.

<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center>

HDI | Income | Education | Gender

Type: Annual index

5. Structural & Sectoral Databases

World Input-Output Database (WIOD)

WIOD Consortium (EU-funded)

The most complete and consistent source for value added (current and constant prices) and employment across 43 countries and 56 sectors. Essential for global value chain and labour productivity research.

<https://www.wiod.org/>

Value Added | GVC | Productivity | 43 Countries | 56 Sectors

Type: Annual, Input-Output tables

EU KLEMS Growth & Productivity Accounts

EU KLEMS Consortium

Industry-level output, employment, capital, and TFP. Separates labour into skill types. Covers EU, US, Japan and other major economies.

<https://euklems-intanprod-ilee.luiss.it/>
TFP | Skill decomposition | Industry-level | EU
Type: Annual, Panel

Penn World Tables (PWT)

University of Groningen / UC Davis

Long-run cross-country data on real GDP, employment, human capital, and labour productivity for 183 countries back to 1950.

<https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt/>
Long-run | GDP | Human Capital | Labour Productivity | 183 Countries
Type: Annual, Cross-section time-series

GGDC 10-Sector Database

Groningen Growth & Development Centre

Tracks sectoral shifts in employment and value added across 10 broad sectors for developing and developed economies.

<https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/structuralchange/>
Structural Change | 10-Sector | Developing Economies
Type: Annual, Panel

6. Automation, Technology & Future of Work

IFR – World Robotics Report

International Federation of Robotics

Annual data on industrial and service robot deployments by country and industry since the 2010s. Key input for automation and labour displacement research.

<https://ifr.org/ifr-press-releases/news/robot-sales-2022-results>
Robotics | Automation | Industry | Displacement
Type: Annual, Survey-based

Patent Data for Automation Measurement

USPTO / EPO / OECD

ML text analysis of patents identifies automation-related inventions. Used to measure the pace and direction of technological change affecting labour.

<https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/intellectual-property-statistics-and-analysis.htm>
Patents | ML text analysis | USPTO | EPO
Type: Patent records, NLP-derived indicators

OECD Future of Work & Automation Risk

OECD

Country-level estimates of jobs at high risk of automation, task content of jobs, and policy responses to skill-biased technological change.

<https://www.oecd.org/future-of-work/>
Automation Risk | Occupational Tasks | Skills | Technology
Type: Research reports, Derived indicators

O*NET – Occupational Information Network*U.S. Department of Labor*

Detailed task and skill content of 1,000+ US occupations. Widely used to construct routine/non-routine task indices for automation research.

<https://www.onetcenter.org/>

Task Content | Skills | Occupations | Routine Tasks

Type: Cross-section, Updated periodically

7. Social Protection & Inequality**OECD Social and Welfare Statistics***OECD*

Social spending, benefit replacement rates, pension systems, income inequality (Gini), poverty rates, and minimum wages across OECD members.

<https://www.oecd.org/social/>

Social Spending | Gini | Poverty | Minimum Wage

Type: Annual, Panel

ASPIRE – Social Protection & Labor Database*World Bank*

Household survey data on social protection coverage, benefit adequacy, and incidence across developing countries. Covers cash transfers and social insurance.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/datatopics/aspire>

Cash Transfers | Social Insurance | Developing Countries

Type: Household survey microdata

LIS Cross-National Data Center*Luxembourg Income Study*

Harmonised microdata on income, wealth, employment, and living conditions across 50+ countries over 50 years. Gold standard for inequality research.

<https://www.lisdatacenter.org/>

Microdata | Inequality | Income | 50+ Countries | Harmonised

Type: Microdata, Cross-section

8. Wages & Earnings**ILO Global Wage Report & Database***ILO*

Biennial report tracking real wage growth, minimum wages, gender pay gaps, and wage inequality globally. Accompanying dataset available for download.

<https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/lang--en/index.htm>

Real Wages | Minimum Wage | Gender Pay Gap | Inequality

Type: Annual, Biennial report

OECD Earnings and Wages*OECD*

Average wages, minimum wages, wage distribution (D9/D1 ratios), gender pay gaps, and employer labour cost data across OECD countries.

<https://www.oecd.org/employment/earnings.htm>

Average Wages | Wage Distribution | Gender Pay Gap | Labour Costs

Type: Annual, Time-series

Quick Reference

#	Source	Organisation	Primary Use
1	ILOSTAT	ILO	Employment, wages, conditions – global
2	WESO Trends	ILO	Labour market forecasts & trends
3	OECD.Stat LFS	OECD	Employment, earnings, hours
4	PMR Indicators	OECD	Competition & regulation benchmarking
5	UNdata Labour	UN Statistics Division	SDG-aligned labour aggregates
6	INDSTAT	UNIDO	Manufacturing employment & value added
7	World Development Indicators	World Bank	Macro labour, 217 economies
8	Employing Workers Index	World Bank	Ease of employment regulation
9	Jobs & Development	World Bank	Developing-economy job creation
10	FRED Labour Data	Fed. Reserve, St. Louis	US high-frequency labour series
11	Sahm Rule Indicator	FRED / Claudia Sahm	US recession early-warning
12	Beveridge Curve (JOLTS)	BLS / FRED	Job openings vs. unemployment
13	Eurostat LFS	Eurostat	Harmonised EU/EEA labour data
14	Index of Labor Freedom	Heritage Foundation	Labour regulation freedom
15	Global Competitiveness Report	WEF	Labour flexibility & efficiency
16	Human Development Index	UNDP	Income, education, gender context
17	WIOD	WIOD Consortium	Value added & employment, GVC
18	EU KLEMS	EU KLEMS Consortium	TFP, skills, industry productivity
19	Penn World Tables	Groningen / UC Davis	Long-run labour productivity
20	GGDC 10-Sector	GGDC	Structural transformation
21	IFR World Robotics	IFR	Robot deployment by country
22	Patent Data (Automation)	USPTO / EPO / OECD	Patent-based automation indicators
23	OECD Future of Work	OECD	Occupational automation risk
24	O*NET	U.S. Dept. of Labor	Task & skill content of jobs
25	OECD Social & Welfare Stats	OECD	Gini, poverty, social spending
26	ASPIRE	World Bank	Social protection, dev. economies
27	LIS Data Center	Luxembourg Income Study	Harmonised income microdata
28	ILO Global Wage Report	ILO	Wages, gender pay gap, inequality

continued...

#	Source	Organisation	Primary Use
29	OECD Earnings & Wages	OECD	Wage distribution, labour costs

Research Notes

Combining sources. No single database covers all dimensions of labour markets. For productivity research, combine WIOD with Penn World Tables and EU KLEMS. For automation research, link IFR robot data with O*NET task content and OECD risk estimates.

Harmonisation. Employment definitions vary. The ILO definition (15+ hours/week) is the international standard, used by ILOSTAT, WDI, and Eurostat. Always check reference metadata before pooling datasets.

Frequency. For cyclical analysis use FRED (monthly), Eurostat LFS (quarterly), and BLS JOLTS. For structural analysis use WIOD, GGDC, and Penn World Tables (annual).

Accessing microdata. LIS and World Bank LSMS require registration. ILO microdata is available via IPUMS International. Allow time for data access approval in research planning.

Automation data caveats. Patent-based indicators use NLP/ML and methodology varies across teams. IFR data covers industrial robots; service robots are tracked separately. Verify sector definitions before cross-country comparisons.