

Appendix 1 Outline of the Labour Force Survey

1. Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the Labour Force Survey is to elucidate the current state of employment and unemployment in this country every month.

2. History of the survey

This survey has been conducted every month since July 1947 after an experimental period of ten months from September 1946. It was designated in April 1950 as Designated Statistics No.30 under the Statistics Law. In order to tabulate the results of 10 regions, the number of EDs (enumeration districts) were increased in 1982. In January 2002, the Labour Force Special Survey was integrated into the Labour Force Survey to publish the detailed results on employment and unemployment quarterly.

3. Population coverage

The universe of the survey is composed of all persons usually residing in this country, except foreign diplomatic and consular corps, their family members and foreign military personnel and their family members.

Actual enumeration takes place every month on a sample basis. Persons usually residing in about 40 thousand households selected from about 2900 enumeration districts in 900 thousand Population Census Enumeration Districts. Those 40 thousand households are selected on the basic questionnaire, of which 10 thousand on the special questionnaire.

The questions on employment status are asked to the members 15 years old or more (about 100 thousand persons in total) in those household.

4. Reference period (Reference week)

The survey is conducted as of the last day of each month, however, in December it is done as of the 26th.

The reference period to which questions on the employment status refer is one week ending on the last day of each month except December for which it is one week from 20th to 26th.

5. Survey organization

The Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) is responsible for the survey, processing of the returns and publication of the reports.

The survey is conducted through the following channel.

Supervisors are selected from the staff of the prefectural governments and are responsible for training and supervision of enumerators.

Minister for MIC
(Director-General, Statistics Bureau)

Governors of Prefectures
(Prefectural governments)

Supervisors

Enumerators

Households

6. Field operation

The enumerator prepares a list of all dwelling units in the enumeration district (ED) assigned to him or her. The supervisor selects the sample of dwelling units from the list according to the method instructed by the Statistics Bureau. Households in those selected dwelling units are surveyed.

There are two types of questionnaire in the Labour Force Survey: a basic questionnaire and a special questionnaire. Surveys are conducted using the basic questionnaire in the same two months in two successive years, and using the special questionnaire only in the second month of the second year (refer to appendix 3).

Within the seven days before the survey week, the enumerator visits all the households in the sample dwelling units and asks them to fill out the questionnaires.

Within the three days after the close of the survey week, the enumerator visits the households again, and collects the questionnaires after checking the entries on the spot.

The collected questionnaires are then submitted to the prefectural office, checked by the supervisors, and sent to the Statistics Bureau.

7. Publication of results

The survey results are processed by the National Statistics Center.

The results of whole Japan, as a rule, are released at the end of the month after a month of the survey in the preliminary report, etc.

The "Monthly Report on the Labour Force Survey" is published two months after the survey. The "Annual Report on the Labour Force Survey (I Basic Tabulation)" is published in March of the following year.

The Detailed Tabulation from the special questionnaire are released quarterly, two months

after the last month of the survey, while the “Annual Report on the Labour Force Survey (II Detailed Tabulation)” is published in April of the following year.

Moreover, quarterly regional results of the Basic Tabulation are published at the end of the month after the final month of the quarter. They are shown on the Monthly Report of the final month of the quarter and on the Annual Report.

8. The outline of revision of the Labour Force Survey in 2002

(1) The purpose of revision

To cope with a severe employment situation that the unemployment rate rose over 5%, the Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey, which had been carried out 1 time a year (from 1999 to 2001, 2 times a year), was unified to the Labour Force Survey in 2002. The aim of this unification is to improve the data on unemployed person and not in labour force. It enabled us to provide the detailed data every quarter.

(2) The points of revision

(a) The introduction of two types of questionnaire

An original questionnaire was changed into a basic questionnaire, and a questionnaire of the Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey was changed into a special questionnaire. Basic questionnaire is distributed to all the households, and special questionnaire is distributed to the households in the second month of the second year (quarter of all households).

(b) Differences between the original questionnaire and the basic questionnaire

In reason for seeking job of unemployed person, “Quitted a job involuntary” was subdivided into the “Mandatory retirement, or termination of employment contract” and the “Circumstances of employer or business”, “Other” was subdivided into the “Necessary to earn revenue” and the “Other”. And some other modifications were done.

Furthermore, as for reason for seeking a job, asked to the households in the second month (half of all households), but, asked to the households in first month (all the households).

(c) Differences between the Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey and the special questionnaire

Common items with the basic questionnaire, question on the “reason for wishing to change

a job” of the employed, and the “reason for seeking a job” of the unemployed person were deleted.

And, the unification of the choices of the question and the revision of the words were done.

9. Revision of the Labour Force Survey with the revision of Japan Standard Industrial Classification

Along with the revision of Japan Standard Industrial Classification (JSIC, Mar. 2002), the data are shown by New Standard Industrial Classification from the January 2003 survey results. As for the “Time series table, Whole Japan”, figures of industries which have no or small influence by the revision are only shown, which are “Agriculture”, “Forestry”, “Non-agricultural industries”, “Fisheries”, “Mining”, “Construction”, “Electricity, gas, heat supply and water”, “Wholesale and retail trade” and “Government (not elsewhere classified)”.