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Measuring platform employment: International recommendations and country experiences

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Overview

1. Relevance of measurement
2. Digital platforms and their characteristics
3. Platform employment: definition and approaches to measurement
4. International experience in measuring platform employment
5. Key Findings



“Destandardization” of employment – a long trend

“Standard” - work for hire, full time and an open-ended contract. Regulatory and social welfare agencies have been guided by this standard for much of the 20th century.

In recent decades, there has been an active spread of various forms of non-standard employment (OECD, 2018; weforum, 2020; 20th ICLS, 2018; 21th ICLS, 2023)

- Part-time, non-permanent, informal employment, self-employment, etc.
- Remote employment
- **Platform employment**



Features of platform employment

Advantages

Possible risks

Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- increased efficiency of the matching process in the labour market;- flexible working conditions: place, schedule and volume of work, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- violation of labour rights and failure to provide social guarantees;- job or income insecurity;- no career development, training;- algorithmic discrimination;- work stress, etc.
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- increased efficiency of the matching process in the labour market;- access to the global labor market;- reduction in labor costs, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- distortions to market competition , etc.
Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- increased efficiency of the matching process in the labour market;- reduction in unemployment, increase in employment, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- decrease in labour productivity;- deterioration of the position of workers;- tax avoidance, etc.



The development of platform employment has necessitated the development of legislation and statistics

Measuring directions:

- Number of people employed via digital platforms;
- Classification of digital platform workers;
- Individual and labour characteristics of those employed through digital platforms (payment, working hours, frequency of work through platforms, types of services provided, labor protection, etc.);
- Social responsibility of platforms, tax payments and social insurance, international aspects, etc.



Digital platform

- digital interface that generates economic and/or social value and that intermediates between three distinctive agents: the owner of the platform, the provider of labour services, and the final user of the goods and services produced [OECD-ILO-Eurostat, 2023; ILO, 2023].

Digital platforms can be identified by the following attributes [OECD-ILO-Eurostat, 2023]:

- it acts as a **digital interface or platform between multiple parties**;
- it generates **economic and/or social value through network effects**;
- it provides a common set of **integrated digital tools and services** that enable the delivery of the services or goods, and the monitoring of the process;
- **it incorporates an assessment or evaluation** of the delivery of the service or goods through an integrated rating, review mechanisms or similar tools;
- **it sets the rule of participation in the platform** through their terms of service agreements.



A typology of digital platforms depending on the services provided

<i>Services provided</i>	Mediate work	Facilitate and mediate exchange	Provide services to individual users	Mediating work and providing other services
<i>Types of digital platforms</i>	Online web-based	Business to business (B2B) platform *	Social media platforms	Hybrid digital platforms
	Location-based		Electronic payment platform Crowdfunding platforms	
			Other digital services platforms	

* Typically used to sell goods to small and medium sized businesses (businesses or individuals).



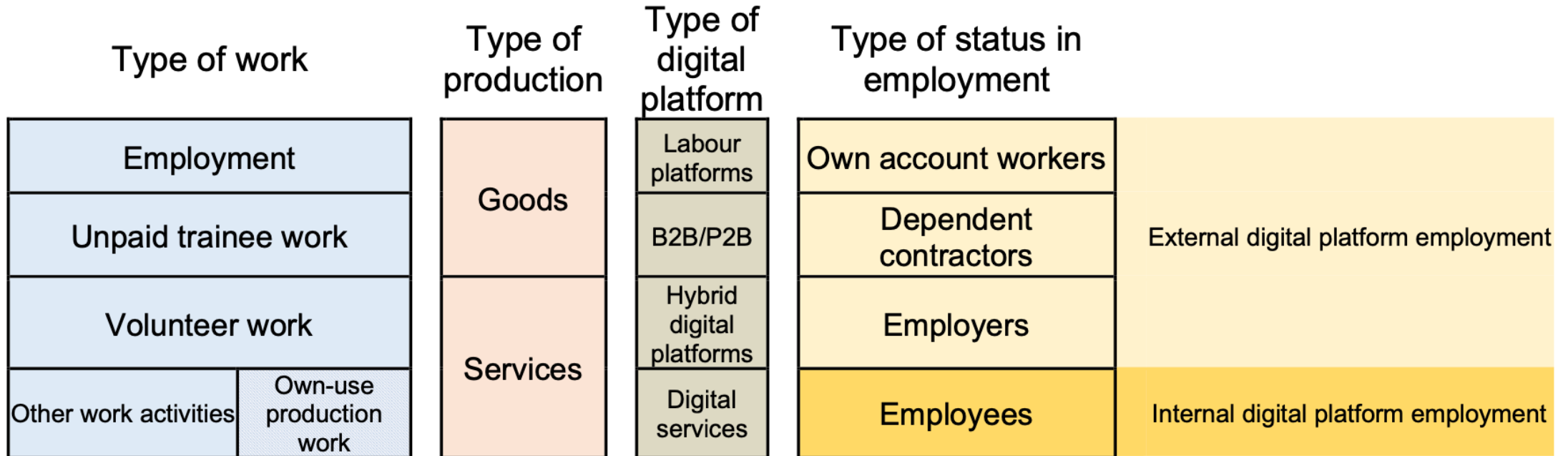
Platform employment

- work performed for others on or through digital platforms with the intention to generate pay or profit [OECD-ILO-Eurostat, 2023].

Characteristics of platform employment (PE):

- the **digital platform or a phone app controls and/or organizes essential aspects of the activities**, such as:
 - the access to clients,
 - the evaluation of the activities carried out,
 - the tools needed for conducting the work,
 - the facilitation of payments,
 - distribution and prioritization of the work to be conducted; and
- the work is for **at least one hour in the reference period**.

Conceptual scope for platform employment measurement



Components of platform employment

- **Employment is one of the forms of work** that can be carried out through digital platforms (indicators are measured according to the Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization (19th ICLS resolution I)).
- **Platform employment includes the provision of various services, as well as the production of goods.** In the earlier period, measurement often included only service delivery.
- More often attention is paid to the analysis of two groups of workers: **self-employed and dependent contractors**. For a more complex assessment it is useful also to consider **employers** carrying out external digital platform work, as well as **employees** engaged by the digital platform to perform work on or through the digital platform.
- To understand the specifics of the work performed, it is important to collect information about **the type of digital platform and the service provided.**

Data sources about platform employment (1)

1) Administrative data

Advantages: low cost of data collection, high frequency of generation, reduced reporting burden for data providers

Limitations: differences in methodology between countries, inability to measure the informal economy (a significant problem for some countries)

Key measurement directions: number of platform workers, income from platform employment

2) Digital platform data, big data

Advantages: low cost of data collection and high frequency of formation (if access is available)

Limitations: differences in approaches to the formation of indicators on different digital platforms, difficulty in planning data acquisition

Key measurement areas: number of registered and active workers on each platform, their labour income, number of completed orders/projects

Data sources about platform employment (2)

3) Survey data

Types of survey	Advantages and Limitations	Key measurement directions
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Large sample; + Application of international standards in the field of labor statistics; + Detailed employment characteristics; - Underestimation of platform employment, if it is not the main job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates of the scale of platform employment; • Detailed characteristics of the main and second job
ICT Use Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Detailed characteristics of ICT use; - Smaller sample compared to LFS; - International standards in the field of labor statistics are less frequently applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates of the scale of platform employment; • Intersection with other characteristics of ICT use
Specialized surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Often the sample includes only the target group, the ability to collect detailed information about it; - Often not representative of the entire population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation in the labor market of certain groups of platform workers; • Working conditions
Surveys of organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A view from the labor demand side; - It is difficult to reach small and micro businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business demand for digital platform services, satisfaction with the quality of services

International experience in measuring platform employment

- **Countries have accumulated extensive experience measuring platform employment over the decade**, but information is predominantly available for high-income countries.
- **Most often, platform employment is analyzed using data from sample population surveys, in particular labor force surveys** (for example, in Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Singapore) and surveys of ICT use by the population (for example, in EU countries, the USA, Canada). Other data sources are used much less frequently. An example of the use of administrative data is Belgium. Big data is analyzed mainly by researchers.
- **Estimates of the prevalence of platform employment between countries are difficult to compare due to differences in methodology**, in particular in:
 - definitions of platform employment (coverage of all or part of respondents; goods and services, activities on different digital platforms);
 - length of the reference period (last week, month, year).



Examples of measuring platform employment in population surveys

Country	Year	Reference period	Survey	Platform employment definition	Share of platform employment in total employment
Canada	11.2015-10.2016	12 months	LFS Fast Track Module	Digital labour platforms (location-based)	0,2%
Canada	2018	12 months	Canada Internet Use survey	Digital labour platforms, digital platforms for selling goods and digital platform for renting assets	8%
EU	2018	12 months	Eurostat Community Survey on ICT Usage and e-commerce in Households and by Individuals	Obtained paid work by using an intermediary website or apps	Results have not been published
EU	2022	12 months, 1 month, week	Pilot module questionnaire in the EU LFS	Work for pay or profit in tasks or activities organized through an internet platform or a phone app, for at least 1 hour in reference period	3.0 % of people reported digital platform employment in the last 12 months
USA	May 2017	week	Bureau of Labour Statistics Contingent Worker Supplement	Digital platforms labour	1% following recoding (3.3% based on survey responses)
USA	November 2017	6 months	US CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement	Digital platforms, digital platforms for renting assets	6%

Source: Author on the basis of [OECD-ILO-Eurostat, 2023], [Eurostat](#), 2023



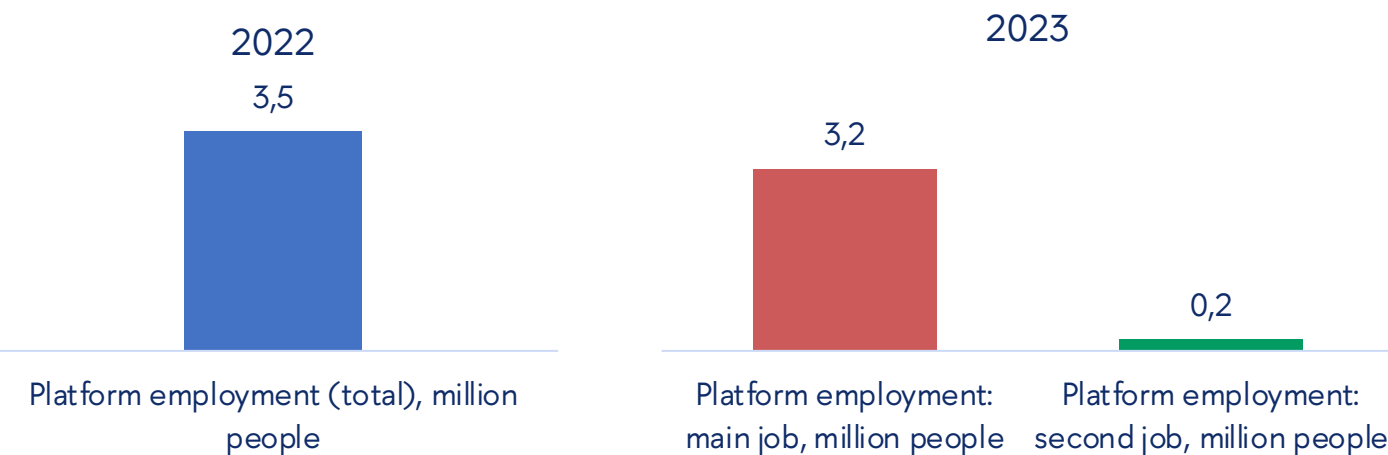
Russian experience

• Labour Force Survey

From 2022, the LFS questionnaire includes the following question:

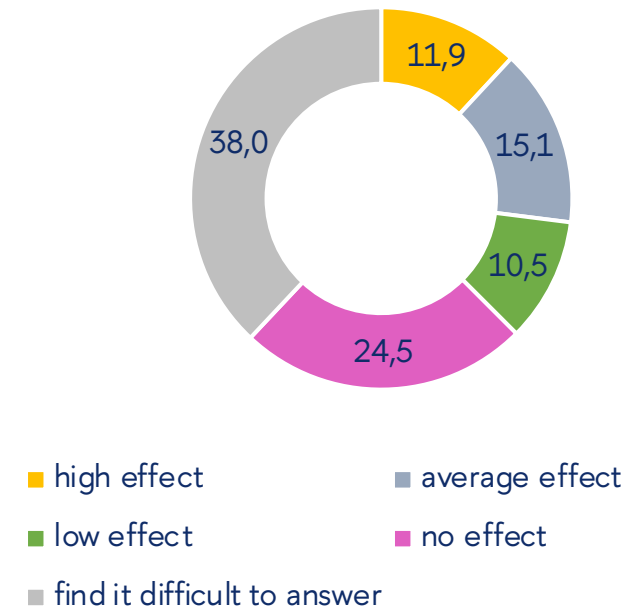
“Did you use websites or applications to find clients or fulfill orders last week (Yandex-taxi, Avito, Profi.ru, etc.)?”

In 2022 one question was used, from 2023 - two, separately for main and second jobs



• Monitoring digital transformation of business (HSE University, 2023)

Assessment of the effect of using digital technologies to attract workers to project work through digital platforms (% of the number of organizations using digital technologies)



Key Findings

- Existing estimates platform employment across countries are difficult to compare across time and between countries due to differences in methodology. To ensure a comprehensive description and the possibility of cross-country comparison, **the measurement of employment and work activity on digital platforms should be carried out according to a single approach** proposed in the OECD-ILO-Eurostat Handbook, 2023
- To obtain correct information and equal understanding of questions by respondents, it is **important to take into account the cognitive burden on respondents.**
- To correctly classify digital platform workers through surveys, **international organizations recommend asking several short questions, instead of one question**, regarding various forms of employment and work on digital platforms, and their characteristics.



Thank you for attention

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