Translating the

Wage Indicator Questionnaire

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1   INTRODUCTION

The *Wage Indicator Questionnaire (WIQ)* consists of a Master questionnaire, which includes all questions and items posed. Most questions are asked in all countries, but some are country-specific. Participating countries have ticked the items that they judge to be applicable for their country. The country-specific questions have country columns indicating whether the question/item is applicable. We use a so-called Questionnaire Engine on the Internet to manage the questionnaire, including the country-specific items, the languages and the routing.

For the translation of the Master questionnaire a translation table will be made available of the items that need to be translated for the national versions. Once the Master-questionnaire is finalized, our data-manager will prepare the file for the web-programmer, who in turn will prepare the questionnaire for the website and who will generate the so-called translation table.

This paper discusses major issues regarding the translation of the questionnaire.

2   THE TRANSLATION TABLE

The translation table is an excel spreadsheet with the items to be translated in the first column and the translation to be put in the second column.

The translation table includes the questions, the response categories, the instructions to the questions, the alerts, and web-related items such as 'next page'. Double items will be shown only once in the translation table.

Any translations that already have been made for the Salary Check and for other purposes will be included in this translation table, reducing the translation load. Once a translation table is returned, the web-programmer will upload the questionnaire on a dedicated website. Next, the national team will be asked to test the national questionnaire online. Once agreement is reached about the online version, the questionnaire will be available on the national wage indicator website.

For a few countries, the national version of the *Wage Indicator Questionnaire* has two or more language versions. This applies to Belgium with a Dutch and a French language version. Spain is still discussing having, apart from a Spanish language version, also a Catalan and a Basque language version. The language versions only differ with regard to the language, not with regard to the questions and response categories. The translation table for the second language version of the national questionnaire will be generated from the first language version.

3   THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Our philosophy is that the questionnaire should use a positive phrasing of the questions. We do not want people to feel bad about their job after having completed the questionnaire. For example, question E01b addresses the respondents who have a temporary contract. It has both positive and negative items. It is no problem to analyse afterwards, using the dataset, how bad temporary contracts are. In the Wage Indicator questionnaire, we will not pose negative items only.

In addition, the questionnaire addresses the personal experience of the respondents with regard to wages, working hours, working conditions, work organisation, employment history and personal characteristics. It has only statements that directly refer to the respondent's own situation. The questionnaire does not address opinions about items beyond the work-related issues, thus neither items in national or international politics, nor opinions about trade union or any other policies. Therefore, no political statements such as 'the Euro is bad for the economy', or 'the trade unions should demand higher wages in the mines'.

Finally, to prevent bias in the response, it is important that the questionnaire addresses the work force at large, thus these groups in formal, stable employment. This requires that large groups in the work force understand the questionnaire. Yet, the questionnaire must also address minority groups in the work force. The aim is to inquire both formal and informal employment, thus respondents in full-time jobs as well as in jobs of a few hours per week, and regularly paid workers as well as cash-in-hand paid workers. If certain groups have a feeling that the questionnaire does not address their particular situation, they will quit the questionnaire, and this may cause bias in the response. Therefore, the questionnaire has a selective routing for a number of minority groups in the labour force, notably:

- ✓ Self-employed, own-account worker, freelancer
- ✓ Family worker / working for family business
- ✓ Apprentice / trainee
- ✓ People in a job creation scheme
- ✓ School pupil, student in full-time education with a job
- ✓ Unemployed / looking for a job, never had a job
- ✓ Unemployed / looking for a job, have had a job before

People on sickness benefit / incapacity for work

4   RULES FOR TRANSLATION – STYLE

How to address the public in the national (web) culture? Each national team decide about their own style and tone of voice. At this crucial moment we just would like to share with you the decisions we made in loonwijzer.nl:

- ✓ the style and tone of voice of the web content, including salary check and questionnaire, should be uniform and consistently applied
- ✓ the tone of voice should be conversational, rather than academic
- ✓ the approach of the public should be informal as this fits the setting in which the visitor consults websites: as an individual on a personal quest, asking questions and hoping for proper solutions provided by a trusted friend in an intimate atmosphere
- ✓ no formal terms of address
- ✓ web culture evolves fast in its own way – keep an eye on the style and approach of big national portals and do it similarly
- ✓ the style and tone of voice of web content, including salary check and questionnaire should be uniform and consistently applied

The word 'you' in English is used for addressing friends, children or foreigners. In some countries, two words are used, for example in German 'Sie' and 'Du'. The Spanish team has explained that there are two ways of addressing the respondent, one is "tu" which is more informal, for example between friends, and another is "usted" which is very formal between people that do not have any relationship at all, and who want to maintain a certain degree of distance in the relationship. In many questionnaires the respondent is addressed as "usted", but we think that in general the idea of the wage indicator has a more informal and closer feeling that would suggest the use of the informal alternative "tu".

In general, we think that addressing friends is a better alternative than addressing people in a formal way. But the final decision about this issue has to be taken in the national web team. Anyhow, the words should be uniform and consistently applied in the website and in the questionnaire.

5   RULES FOR TRANSLATION – WORDS AND SENTENCES

Compared to a written questionnaire, an Internet questionnaire requires fewer words, as people read and scan 'quickly' on the Internet. So it is required that visitors understand immediately the meaning of a sentence. A questionnaire on the Internet requires the following rules:
- ✓   avoid meaningless words
- ✓   check and double check for superfluous words
- ✓   reduce the number of words to the minimum needed
- ✓   use simple words, no difficult words
- ✓   use short sentences
- ✓   one meaning per sentence only
- ✓   the first words should address the topic of the sentence
- ✓   always use the same words for items with the same meaning
- ✓   use present tense as much as possible, only a few questions need to be translated in the past tense
- ✓   avoid negation (none or not), and particularly avoid two times negation in a sentence

6   RULES FOR TRANSLATION – MALE AND FEMALE

In some languages, for example Polish, different forms of verbs are used for men and women. Taking into consideration that one of our project's main points is to

study the wage differences between men and women, it seems to be quite important to make the questionnaire applicable without any discrimination.

From this point of view the best solution would be to start the questionnaire with the question about gender and have a different routing for males and females, each addressing in their own language format. In practice this would require too much of the system, because all questions need to be doubled. Thus, all questions need to be doubled and all routing instructions for the unemployed, self-employed, students/pupils need to be checked if they work well for both genders. That is an enormous effort at the start of the questionnaire. Testing if the master-questionnaire runs smoothly with the minimum routing instructions already takes a week. Therefore, we think that the risks are too large and the effort is too much.

Using combined solutions, such as the male/female or the (fe)male format implies that the sentences may become too long for the questionnaire lay-out at the web. In addition, it is time-consuming to read these sentences.

The best solution is to write one or two sentences for the introduction of the questionnaire, indicating that although the male language format is used, both men and women are addressed.

7   PUNCTUATION

Take care of punctuation:
- ✓   Use a single space before and after a slash, for example: *My partner / family*
- ✓   Except for *I/We*
- ✓   Use a single space and three dots for half sentences, for example:
    Finally, how satisfied are you with ...
    ... your job

8   AVOID MISTAKES IN THE TRANSLATION

Please translate the questionnaire carefully and avoid mistakes in the translation. Our experience with the Dutch Wage Indicator Questionnaire is that respondents write emails about spelling mistakes and other failures in the questionnaire. Thus, then web management has to respond to these emails. Repairing mistakes requires changes in the Questionnaire Engine. A mistake is really time-consuming and can better be prevented in the initial phase.

9 COUNTRY SPECIFIC TRANSLATION

A number of words need to be translated in a country-specific terminology. These words are:

Text in translation table	Translate with
COUNTRY OF SURVEY	The country in the national language
Region	Translate according to the terminology in your country, given level 1 in the REGION chooser. These regions are listed in Appendix 2.
a public / national employment agency	Please use the word(s) that are used in your country to indicate a national/local job centre
Euro	Please translate with the national currency for non-Euro countries
Gross wage: before deduction of taxes and social security	Please give a country-specific instruction of a gross wage
Net wage: after deduction of taxes, social premiums, and unemployment and health insurance premiums.	Please give a country-specific instruction of a net wage
Military service or equivalent	If there is no 'equivalent' in the country, please translate only the words 'Military service'
I wanted to collaborate, because I like wageindicator	COUNTRY-SPECIFIC TRANSLATION of the word wageindicator (Do not use www before the national name)
This was the Wage Indicator Questionnaire	COUNTRY-SPECIFIC TRANSLATION of the word Wage Indicator Questionnaire
Please select your collective agreement.	COUNTRY-SPECIFIC TRANSLATION of the sentence (ONLY IN NL AND BE)
How many people are employed by the whole organisation in your country?	How many people are employed by the whole organisation in YOUR COUNTRY {HERE THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY}?
I decided to do so when I used the Salary Check because …	I decided to do so when I used the Salary Check {HERE THE NAME OF YOUR SALARY CHECK}because …

10 THE TRANSLATION OF 'WORKPLACE' AND 'ORGANISATION'

The ttranslation of 'workplace' and 'organisation' was a big discussion in Amsterdam. Here follow some instructions.

The first questions in section B address the workplace=establishment, after the question 'Does your organisation have more than one establishment?' the wording changes to organisation.

Please translate the word 'organisation' in such a way that it applies equally to private and public sector organisations.

Approximately half of the respondents will have a job in an organisation with one establishment only; the other half will have a job in an organisation with more establishments. Both groups have to go smoothly through the questionnaire. Therefore, the terminology should be as neutral as possible.

11 THE CHOOSERS

The *Wage Indicator Questionnaire* uses international renowned classifications for variables such as occupation, industry, country, and region. In most questionnaires are asked as either an open text field or from a short aggregated list. To prevent either a huge recoding effort or a limited list of items, we have developed the so-called 'choosers'. A chooser enables a web-visitor to choose easily from a long list of items, for example industries, occupations, regions, or countries. A chooser is a database, linking first level items to second and third level items. Once an item is ticked on the screen, the appropriate items of the second level appear, and subsequently the third level. The Region database is only available in the language(s) of the country, the other databases have translations for all language(s) involved in the *Wage Indicator Questionnaire*. Seven choosers have been developed. They are presented in the table.

Chooser	Available in the languages	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	IT	NL	PO	UK
The INDUSTRY chooser with the NACE industries		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
The OCCUPATIONS chooser with the ISCO occupations		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
The COUNTRY chooser with continents and		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

countries (ISO)										
The REGION chooser with the NUTS regions and provinces per country, including a list of neighbouring countries to trace border work and residence;	The chooser is only available in the language(s) of the country									
The TRIANGEL chooser with the names of all industries, occupations and collective agreements in the Netherlands	The chooser is only available in Dutch							√		
The PARCOM chooser with the names of all so-called Paritaire Comites in Belgium	Available for Belgium-nl, Belgium-fr will follow							√		
The TRADE UNION chooser with the names of all Trade Unions in Finland, Germany, United Kingdom and the Netherlands	Other countries may follow	√			√			√		√

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APPENDIX: REGIONS

Netherlands	United Kingdom	Belgium
Groningen	North East	Prov. Brabant Wallon
Friesland	North West	Prov. Hainaut
Drenthe	Yorkshire and the Humber	Prov. Liège
Overijssel	East Midlands	Prov. Luxembourg (B)
Gelderland	West Midlands	Prov. Namur
Flevoland	East of England	Prov. Antwerpen
Utrecht	London	Prov. Limburg (B)
Noord-Holland	South East	Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen
Zuid-Holland	South West	Prov. Vlaams-Brabant
Zeeland	Wales	Prov. West-Vlaanderen
Noord-Brabant	Scotland	
Limburg (NL)	Northern Ireland	

Finland	Spain	Italy
Åland	Galicia	Piemonte
Etelä-Karjala	Asturias	Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste
Etelä-Pohjanmaa	Cantabria	Liguria
Etelä-Savo	País Vasco	Lombardia
Itä-Uusimaa	Navarra	Provincia Autonoma Bolzano/Bozen
Kainuu	La Rioja	Provincia Autonoma Trento
Kanta-Häme	Aragón	Veneto
Keski-Pohjanmaa	Madrid	Friuli-Venezia Giulia
Keski-Suomi	Castilla y León	Emilia-Romagna
Kymenlaakso	Castilla-La Mancha	Toscana
Lappi	Extremadura	Umbria
Päijät-Häme	Cataluña	Marche
Pirkanmaa	Comunidad Valenciana	Lazio
Pohjanmaa	Illes Balears	Abruzzo
Pohjois-Karjala	Andalucía	Molise

Pohjois-Pohjanmaa	Murcia	Campania
Pohjois-Savo	Ceuta	Puglia
Satakunta	Melilla	Basilicata
Uusimaa	Canarias	Calabria
Varsinais-Suomi		Sicilia
		Sardegna

Poland	**Germany**	**Denmark**
Dolnoslaskie	Baden-Württemberg	Århus amt
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Bayern	Bornholms amt
Lubelskie	Berlin	Frederiksborg amt
Lubuskie	Brandenburg	Fyns amt
Lodzkie	Bremen	København og Frederiksberg kommuner
Malopolskie	Hamburg	Københavns amt
Mazowieckie	Hessen	Nordjyllands amt
Opolski	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Ribe amt
Podkarpackie	Niedersachsen	Ringkøbing amt
Podlaskie	Nordrhein-Westfalen	Roskilde amt
Pomorskie	Rheinland-Pfalz	Sønderjyllands amt
Slaskie	Saarland	Storstrøms amt
Swietokrzyski	Sachsen	Vejle amt
Warminsko-Mazurskie	Sachsen-Anhalt	Vestsjællands amt
Wielkopolskie	Schleswig-Holstein	Viborg amt
Zachodniopomorskie	Thüringen	