



ONLINE

INFORMAL ECONOMY

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TRANSITION FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL ECONOMY

20 APRIL – 15 MAY 2026

 12 HOURS OF LEARNING

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the informal economy absorbs six out of ten workers and eight out of ten economic units worldwide. This phenomenon impacts economic and social development, limiting economic growth, hindering fiscal management and reducing social protection for workers.

The vast majority of employment in Africa (84%) is informal. Asia and the Pacific (66%) have a slightly higher level of informality than the Arab States (54%). Informal employment accounts for 37% of total employment in the Americas and Europe, and in Central Asia one in five workers is employed in the informal economy.

Although the recovery after COVID-19 has fully reversed the informal job losses recorded in 2020, it has also slowed down the trend towards formalisation observed in the previous 15 years. The impacts of the pandemic on the informal economy, coupled with geopolitical crises and global trends such as digitalisation, demographic transition and climate change, have added new urgency to the formalisation agenda, given the benefits that formality can bring to workers, sustainable businesses and society.

In this context, this course, developed by the ITCILO Employment Policy and Analysis Programme in collaboration with the ILO Action Programme on Formalization, aims to support policy-makers in accelerating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, taking into account the cross-cutting nature of informality and incorporating emerging approaches to the design and promotion of effective pathways to formality.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By attending this course, participants will be able to strengthen their understanding of the current situation and key challenges of transitioning to formality in the context of global crises and structural trends.

They will improve their ability to design and implement effective policies, strategies and solutions to promote the formalisation of workers and enterprises, while identifying viable solutions that respond to the needs of their countries and institutions.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The contents of this course are designed in line with the ILO's approach to formalisation strategies and in accordance with the objectives and outcomes of the General Discussion on Innovative Approaches to Addressing Informality and Promoting the Transition to Formality for Decent Work at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2025.

The course consists of five learning modules spread over four weeks.

The first module, delivered during a self-paced opening week (20-26 April), combines readings, an interactive introductory module and forum-based exercises. It supports participants in analyzing the informal economy context in their countries and addresses the following topics:

- informal economy and formalisation, from policy orientation to statistical definition;
- informality in numbers, including incidence, trends and the groups most exposed; and
- ILO guidance and action on formalisation.

The following four modules, consisting of webinars and self-guided exercises, focus on innovative approaches and good practices in the strategic areas highlighted by the [Report VI of the 113th International Labour Conference](#):

- **Module 2** examines national strategies and frameworks supporting formalisation, with a focus on strengthening political commitment, building trust and promoting a culture of formality. It considers integrated formalisation strategies, the importance of evidence-based policies, electronic formalisation initiatives and awareness campaigns.
- **Module 3** explores the organisation, voice and representation of workers and economic units in the informal economy, with particular attention to facilitating access to effective social dialogue. It addresses the role of representative organisations, alliances and partnerships, including social and solidarity economy approaches.
- **Module 4** focuses on productivity as part of the enabling environment for transition to formality. It addresses structural transformation, sectoral policies and business growth, access to supply chains, skills development, and the coordination of just transition and formalisation strategies to increase climate resilience and promote decent and productive work.
- **Module 5** looks at gradual approaches to improving living and working conditions, guaranteeing human and labour rights, and leaving no one behind. It covers sectoral approaches targeting specific groups, reducing decent work deficits in the informal economy, and extending labour protection and social protection.

WHO ATTENDS THIS COURSE?

The course is designed for policy-makers at different levels and staff from key public institutions, including ministries responsible for finance, planning, social affairs and statistics, as well as researchers, professionals and staff from international organisations working on formalisation strategies.

It is also relevant for representatives of civil society organisations, including associations from the informal economy, employers' and workers' representatives, and development partners.

FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY

The learning path consists of five modules spread over four weeks and is delivered through the ITCILO eCampus online platform.

Based on ITCILO online learning methodology, the course combines digital learning resources, real-time interactive sessions led by ILO experts and experienced ITCILO trainers, and individual and collaborative exercises. Participants from diverse institutional and geographical contexts will exchange experience and knowledge throughout the course.

The provisional dates and times of the online seminars are as follows:

- **Webinar 1:** Wednesday, 29 April 2026, 13:00 – 15:00 Turin time. Overview on national strategies and frameworks supporting formalisation.
- **Webinar 2:** Wednesday, 6 May 2026, 13:00 – 15:00 Turin time. Organisation, voice and representation of workers and economic units in the informal economy.

- **Webinar 3:** Friday, 8 May 2026, 13:00 – 15:00 Turin time. Productivity, structural transformation and just transition as drivers of formalisation.
- **Webinar 4:** Wednesday, 13 May 2026, 13:00 – 15:00 Turin time. Improving living and working conditions, guaranteeing rights and extending protection through gradual approaches.

Please note that dates may be subject to slight changes depending on speaker availability. In that case, participants will be informed in due time.

CERTIFICATION

After completing the exercises and activities proposed during the course, including participation in the webinars, participants will receive an ITCILO Certificate of Participation in digital format.

LANGUAGE

The course will be delivered in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation provided throughout the webinars.

Learning materials will be available in both languages. Participants may discuss and present the results of group activities in their preferred language.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted through the ITCILO course page by **31 March 2026** through the form available at the link: <https://oarf2.itcilo.org/DST/A9719113/en>

For further information, please contact informaleconomy@itcilo.org.

COST OF PARTICIPATION

The tuition fee is €1,010.

ITCILO has a limited number of fellowships available for developing countries that may cover part of the tuition fees! If eligible, early applicants will be given priority so, if interested in the course, please enquire as soon as possible. You will be able to add your request for an ITCILO fellowship directly in the application form mentioned above.

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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