



# Flemish Workability Monitor (employees)

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Since 2004, the three-yearly workability monitor provides a statistical overview of working conditions and job quality on the Flemish labour market.

The monitor is an initiative of the Flemish social partners, who agreed with the Flemish Government to develop actions to improve the quality of jobs. These agreements were formalized in the Future Pact for Flanders (Pact 2020). The Foundation Innovation & Work was commissioned to develop a measurement system for monitoring the evolution/progress in job quality, both for employees (since 2004) and for self-employed entrepreneurs (since 2007).

## What do we survey?

The workability monitor measures four key aspects of job quality: mental fatigue (stress at work), well-being at work (motivation), learning opportunities and work-life balance. Workability means your work is motivating and offers opportunities to learn. It also means that you are not overloaded with work and have a good work-life balance. The 'workability rate' is the percentage of workers for whom the work situation does not score problematically for these four quality criteria.

The workability monitor also looks at job characteristics responsible for a good or poor workability. Six so called 'risk indicators' are mapped: pressure at work (to do with pace of work and deadlines), emotional workload (especially important for customer-facing occupations such as nursing, teaching and customer services), task variety, autonomy at work (the extent to which employees are able to influence the planning and organization of their work), social support (the extent to which employees are supported by their line managers) and finally physical working conditions (health and safety risks).

## Method

The workability survey is a mail survey of a representative sample of employees (Flemish Region). In 2016, 30,000 employees were surveyed with a net response rate of 40.6%.

## Timing

The workability survey is carried out every three years. The first measurement was made in 2004 and the most recent in 2016.

## Results

In 2016, 51% of employees on the Flemish labour market had a job awarded the 'workability' quality label. After a steady improvement over the last decade, the workability rate is dropping back to the 2004 level. A glance at the underlying workability indicators provides a clear view of (positive and negative trends in) the working situation of Flemish employees. The most striking finding of the 2016 workability monitor is the sharp rise in problematic scores in the 'pressure and stress at work' cluster, which evidently also has a depressive effect on motivation. Over the last decade, substantial and systematic progress has been made in the workability dimension 'learning opportunities at work'. Work-life balance conflicts represent the least frequently reported issue with workability.

Figure: % of workable jobs (green) and non-workable jobs (orange), employees, 2004-2016

