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COUNCIL

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THE THIRD CYCLE OF IN-DEPTH EVALUATION: METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW NOTE

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1. Introduction

1. In-depth Evaluation (IDE) is part of the OECD's Integrated Management Cycle (IMC) and was introduced in 2005 to assess the performance of the Organisation's substantive committees (herein Committees).¹ IDE builds on and complements other elements of the IMC, particularly Programme Implementation Reporting (PIR), and has been designed and implemented in accordance with mainstream evaluation practices. IDE is implemented by the OECD Secretariat Internal Audit and Evaluation (EVIA) Directorate, under the oversight of the Evaluation Committee (EVC).

2. Through IDE the OECD is able to evaluate what is considered to be its unique aspect, namely its extensive structure of intergovernmental committees, which have formal accountability for the implementation of the Organisation's Programme of Work. Since its inception, IDE has focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the OECD's Committees and Part II programmes, including in the context of their horizontal activities.

3. With the 2nd IDE Cycle, launched late 2011, starting to enter into its final stages², this Note³ presents a methodological overview of a 3rd IDE Cycle to be implemented over the 2017-2022 period that incorporates significant changes in scope and approach. IDE would continue, with a refined methodology, to address the objectives of: (i) providing a mechanism through which Council can assess whether Committees are conducting processes, delivering outputs and achieving impacts that are in line with Members' policy expectations and priorities and with the comparative advantage of the OECD; and (ii) identifying and promoting the dissemination of good practices across the Organisation. In addition, the IDEs of Horizontal Projects (HPs) would:

- inform discussions in the Council about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of Committees' contributions to Horizontal Projects, of HP results in relation to initial objectives, and of lessons learned for future Projects;
- inform HPs' mainstreaming within the Organisation in the post-implementation phase.

4. Furthermore, the 3rd IDE Cycle would aim to strengthen the OECD's culture of evaluation through the delegation of some elements of the In-depth Evaluation process in the case of strongly performing Committees.

2. Overarching Considerations

5. A defining characteristic of the 1st and 2nd IDE Cycles has been the implementation of a single evaluation approach using a core methodology (i.e. combination of data collection, data analysis and assessment tools and techniques) that has been applied systematically across all evaluations, with some variations at the margin to take into account specific aspects of Committees.⁴ With the 2nd IDE Cycle due to start drawing to a close as of 2016, there is an opportunity to move towards a more differentiated approach in the 3rd Cycle that reflects both the performance track record of individual Committees and the

1. [C/M\(2005\)4/PROV](#), Item 38 and [C\(2004\)190](#).

2. [C/M\(2011\)20](#), Item 218, [C\(2011\)123/REV1](#) and CORR1.

3. The Note takes into account the results of an external review conducted by Professor Elliot Stern, Emeritus Professor of Evaluation Research, University of Lancaster.

4. More significant adjustments are made when evaluating Part II programmes, which are much less homogeneous than OECD Committees.

increasing horizontality of the Organisation's activities, while also capturing the growing focus on interconnected, inclusive, and multidimensional approaches in the OECD's work.⁵

6. The core IDE methodology is well-structured and rigorously applied from the design phase through its implementation, to the reporting of results and the following up of Council-approved recommendations. The periodicity of the IDE cycle, roughly every six years, reflects the fact that policy impact is usually the result of the combined influence of several OECD products, often produced over two or more PWB biennia. This cumulative process supports the development of a critical mass of knowledge in Member and Partner countries, increasing the potential of OECD products to visibly influence policymaking.

7. There have been a number of efforts to broaden the dissemination of IDE results within the OECD and its Committees and raise awareness of the Evaluation Committee's work amongst Ambassadors. These would continue into the 3rd Cycle, including at least one awareness-raising exercise as part of the yearly induction session for Ambassadors.

8. In line with these efforts and in accordance with OECD document declassification rules⁶, final In-depth Evaluation reports, excluding the Annexes, would be made available on the OECD's external website following Council's approval. The Secretariat will ensure that publication of the reports does not disclose sensitive information and follows declassification procedures.

9. In order to strengthen confidence in the evaluation results, each final IDE report would include an annex listing the stakeholders consulted during the report review process, and reflecting, as required, material changes to the evaluator's judgements as a result of these consultations which in the views of the evaluator merited amendments to the report.

10. In line with good Committee practice, the Evaluation Committee mandate, which is to be found in various Council documents and EVC papers, would be consolidated into a single document.

3. Refinements to Committee Evaluation Methodology

11. IDE serves to improve Committee performance (through conclusions and recommendations, and the evaluation results informing mandate reviews) and supports organisational learning (including through the sharing of good practices). The 3rd IDE Cycle would build on this foundation to contribute to strengthening the culture of evaluation across the Organisation.

12. Against this backdrop, it is proposed that the core IDE methodology as applied to Committees be maintained, with some refinements introduced for the 3rd Cycle as highlighted below:

- Capital-based delegates contribute to the development and implementation of Committees' mandates and work programmes, and are a channel through which the dissemination of OECD products to policymakers in Members can take place. Thus, in order to reflect the consequences of Members' non-participation in Committees on their performance, regular and prolonged absences would be systematically integrated into quantitative analyses of data, notably on the relevance of Committees' objectives and the impact of their products. A further refinement

5. See [C/MIN\(2015\)2](#) for a complete discussion of the change in perspective needed for the OECD to provide more relevant, better targeted and new evidence-based analysis to Member and Partners, as identified by the NAEC initiative.

6. Council Resolution on the classification and declassification of information [[C\(97\)64/REV/FINAL](#)].

would be to factor in, quantitatively if possible, the degree of senior-level engagement in Committees.

- After two IDE cycles, expectations are that the average performance of Committees will have improved since 2005. The results of the 2nd Cycle IDEs completed to date suggest that this is indeed the case. But, this also raises the opportunity to review the ‘success thresholds’ applied to quantitative data (both PIR and delegate participation data), central to establishing ratings, with a view to “raising the bar” and maintaining the impetus that IDE provides for continued efforts to improve committee performance, while ensuring comparability between ratings within and across IDE cycles. In addition, the analysis of PIR use/impact statements would be further developed by EVIA to become an integral part of the performance assessment.
- Currently IDEs focus on Committees’ performance vis-à-vis Members. In the context of the Organisation’s drive to be more globally relevant and impactful, the extent to which Committees engage with non-Member countries, especially Key Partners, would be given additional consideration (e.g. data from PIR survey of non-Members and meeting participation of their delegates). The Secretariat would examine how to develop such an approach and build it into the 3rd IDE Cycle methodology.
- The V4M initiative has given rise to a number of actions aimed at reinforcing work done by Committees to assess the impact of their outputs for Members,⁷ including by measuring potential benefits, and has given renewed impetus to self-assessment by Committees. Relevant elements of this data could be an additional input into IDEs, providing complementary information to PIR survey data and IDE in-depth interviews.
- As part of the 3rd Cycle, IDE reports would integrate an analysis of the evaluated Committee’s contribution to those Horizontal Projects programmed for evaluation. Furthermore, IDEs would continue to examine horizontal collaboration across Committees, including for multidimensional initiatives.

4. Evaluating Committees with a Solid Track Record of Strong Performance

13. During the 1st IDE Cycle, 21 Committees and 7 Part II programmes were attributed performance ratings.⁸ Of these 28 evaluations, 7 assessed the Committee or Part II programme as being highly or very highly relevant, effective and efficient, i.e. 25%. The results of 13 IDEs completed within the 2nd Cycle to date suggest that the proportion of strong performers is likely to double to around 50%.

14. In order to further mainstream evaluative thinking and support the development of an evaluation culture within the Organisation, strongly-performing Committees would be delegated responsibility for implementing some of the qualitative elements of the 3rd IDE Cycle, with the support of their Secretariat and assisted by EVIA. These elements would largely focus on obtaining insights from delegates on the reasons for the Committee’s strong performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and to better understand how shortfalls can be addressed and good practices transferred and replicated.

15. The main advantages of delegating responsibility for some elements of IDE to certain Committees that have a solid performance track record are:

- it would integrate evaluative thinking more firmly into Committees’ regular way of working, support their internalisation of an evaluation culture and underpin their future performance;

7. For example, a survey framework and related guidance for Committees is under development as part of the V4M initiative.

8. The rating framework was introduced after the first three Committees were evaluated in 2005/06.

- ownership of IDE results would be enhanced, in particular the lessons and insights that they encompass and the actions for improvement, thus increasing a Committee's commitment to implementation;
- strategic discussions amongst Committee delegates would be better supported.

16. A set of guidelines would be developed by EVIA to help Committees implement the delegated IDE elements, with EVIA also providing advice as necessary and intervening at key pre-determined points to support Directorates in the process.

17. EVIA would remain responsible for the analysis of quantitative data, conducting interviews with Committee stakeholders as necessary, and for the development of the final performance assessment.

18. The outputs of this delegated evaluation approach would be a three-criteria performance rating (covering relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and good practice cases as per the 2nd IDE Cycle, as well as proposed actions for implementation with input from the Committee.⁹

19. As in the case of the 2nd IDE Cycle, once Council approves the proposed actions for improvement and recommendations, their implementation would be monitored by the Evaluation Committee and progress reported back to the Council.

20. This delegated responsibility to Committees would not change the focus of In-depth Evaluation or the responsibilities of the Evaluation Committee. But, for IDE delegated evaluations developed as part of the 3rd IDE Cycle, the IDE methodology could incorporate the following additional tasks:

| Actors | Tasks specific to IDE delegated evaluations* |
|------------------------------|---|
| Evaluation Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee delegated IDEs in conformity with the guidance developed. • Review actions for improvement proposed by Committees and monitor their implementation. |
| Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in collective in-depth reflections to generate qualitative data regarding Committee performance since the last evaluation. • Discuss and validate report on delegated IDE elements. • (Committee Bureau) present the delegated IDE elements to the Evaluation Committee. • Develop and implement actions for improvement. |
| Committee Secretariat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support data collection and analysis (informing delegates, circulating documents, supporting discussions, coordinating with EVIA, etc.) for delegated IDE elements. • Prepare a report on delegated IDE elements and submit it to the Committee for discussion. • Support Committee reflections and follow up. |
| EVIA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop IDE guidelines for delegated IDEs and supporting material (templates, etc.). • Support the Committee Secretariats in the implementation of delegated IDE elements. • Analyse and synthesise the different IDE elements (delegated and non-delegated) into a draft Final IDE report. |

*In addition to those tasks already specified by the IDE methodology.

9. These would be draft 'recommendations' developed by the Committee and submitted to the Council via the Executive Committee following their review by the Evaluation Committee.

21. Committees, identified on the basis of the current 2nd IDE Cycle results to date, that would be covered by an IDE delegated evaluation approach are: Competition Committee, Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP), Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC), Trade Committee, Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP), and Committee for Scientific and Technical Policy (CSTP).

22. The new delegated evaluation methodology would be tested on a pilot basis at the start of the 3rd IDE Cycle with one or two IDEs, before being fully rolled out.

5. Evaluating Committees with Room for Improvement in their Performance Track Record

23. In the case of the estimated 50% of Committees and Part II programmes assessed with a ranking below high in terms of relevance, effectiveness and/or efficiency, IDEs would continue to be fully implemented by EVIA. This would provide both incentives and support for further improvements in their performance. The IDEs would follow the methodology as implemented in the 2nd Cycle, refined as indicated in Section 1 above. Based on 2nd IDE Cycle results to date, these Committees would include: Tourism Committee, Insurance and Private Pensions Committee (IPPC), Committee on Industry, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE), Cooperative Research Programme: Biological Resource Management for Sustainable Agriculture Systems (CRP), Committee on Financial Markets (CMF) and the Fisheries Committee (COFI).

6. Evaluating Horizontality

24. Horizontality within the OECD can take a range of different forms, for example Horizontal Projects, Committee consultations and information sharing, joint meetings, etc. Different ways of addressing cross-cutting issues have been examined in the 1st and 2nd IDE Cycle through the lens of the evaluated Committee, with significant issues relating to horizontal linkages being taken into account in evaluations of counterpart Committees.

25. In recent years, Horizontal Projects (HPs) have taken a visible role in the Organisation's work, to the point where they now have a dedicated section of the OECD PWB. This development would be reflected in the 3rd IDE Cycle which will include the evaluation of HPs. The methodology would use the approach developed in the pilot HP IDE in 2012 that evaluates committees' involvement in and contributions to HPs, and take into account lessons learnt from this exercise.¹⁰

26. The evaluation methodology would comprise two steps:

- **Step 1** – Analyses of contributing committees' involvement in a Horizontal Project;
- **Step 2** – Consolidation of Step 1 results into an analysis of a Project's cross-cutting dimensions, including mainstreaming efforts and, when relevant, policy impact and 'lessons learnt'.

27. To strengthen buy-in, IDE Terms of Reference would be discussed and validated with the Bureaus of (lead) Committees involved in a Project, the Project Leader, and Committee Secretariats. They would also participate in the discussion of 'lessons learnt'. The 3rd IDE Cycle would incorporate the following tasks to the IDE methodology:

10. Pilot Evaluation of the Innovation Strategy horizontal project [See [C\(2013\)20](#), Annex II].

| Actors | Main tasks specific to IDE HP evaluation* |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Evaluation Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft HP IDE terms of reference, intermediate and draft final reports |
| (Lead) Committee Bureaus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and validate draft terms of reference for Committee evaluations, including HPs components, and draft final reports Discuss HP results 'lessons learnt' |
| (Lead) Committee Secretariats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support (lead) Committee Bureaus, including in reviewing draft terms of reference for Committee evaluations and HP components and in discussing HP results 'lessons learnt' |
| HP Project Leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and validate draft terms of reference for HP evaluations and draft final reports Fact-check and review draft final reports Discuss HP results 'lessons learnt' |
| EVIA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare discussion on HP results 'lessons learnt' |

*In addition to those tasks already specified by the IDE methodology.

28. As IDEs of the Education Policy Committee (EDPC), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Committee on Fiscal Affairs (CFA) and Economic Development Review Committee (EDRC) are programmed towards the end of the 2nd IDE Cycle and will cover their contribution to and involvement in the Skills Strategy HP (i.e. Step 1), the Step 2 to evaluate this Project would be programmed at the start of the 3rd IDE Cycle in the 2017-18 Biennium.

29. It would be necessary to identify as far as possible those Projects to be evaluated over the course of the 3rd IDE Cycle – i.e. those having delivered their outputs and where sufficient time has passed to assess their impact – so that relevant Committee IDEs could be appropriately sequenced. At the same time, for IDE to continue to provide a strong impetus for improving committee performance, the 3rd IDE Cycle programme would try to maintain a close alignment between IDE and Committee mandate renewal cycle.

30. The optimal dovetailing of Committee IDEs and mandate renewals would be observed, updating as required the 3rd Cycle programme of IDEs. When it is not possible to programme a Committee IDE in advance of the corresponding evaluation of an HP to which the Committee has been expected to contribute, its contribution could be analysed as a separate 'module' as trialled in the abovementioned pilot HP evaluation.¹¹

31. It is estimated that up to one HP IDE report per biennium would allow for an efficient implementation of the 3rd IDE cycle, i.e. by minimising the number of "modules" and effectively addressing assigned objectives of IDE.¹² It is also the maximum feasible with current EVIA capacity.

32. A sufficient lapse of time following the delivery of a Project should be allowed, not only for mainstreaming to begin but also for related policy impacts in Members and Partner countries to have potentially manifested themselves in a significant manner. In this context, it could be envisaged that a horizontal project implemented in years 1 and 2 and covered by the PIR survey in year 3, would then be ready to undergo an IDE.

11. See [C\(2013\)20](#) Annex II

12. As presented in Paragraph 2.

7. Good Practices

33. Introduced in the 2nd Cycle of IDE, Good Practices have become an important part of IDE. In the 3rd Cycle, the types of Good Practice identified and elucidated by IDE would be broadened and differentiated, to include operational practices as well as those more innovative practices, in order to encourage cross-Committee learning and good practice uptake. Good Practices would be proactively disseminated and their utility communicated.

8. Proposed Action

34. In light of the preceding, the Secretary-General invites the Council to adopt the following draft conclusions:

THE COUNCIL

- a) noted document [C\(2015\)144](#);
- b) welcomed the modifications to the In-depth Evaluation methodology to be introduced in the 3rd IDE Cycle as set out in [C\(2015\)144](#);
- c) agreed to launch the 3rd IDE Cycle as of 2017 and to return to the programming of the Cycle before the end of 2016, including programming arrangements for the transition from the 2nd to the 3rd IDE Cycle;
- d) invited the Evaluation Committee to consolidate its mandate into a single document before the end of 2016;
- e) invited the Secretariat to consider building on existing In-depth Evaluation results and fostering a culture of robust evaluation across the OECD.