

Council**INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE OECD: FINAL
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR**

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OECD Independent External Evaluation

Evaluation Final Report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIAC	Business at OECD
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CIBRF	Capital Investment Budget and Reserve Fund
CTP	Centre for Tax Policy and Administration
DEV	Development Centre
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECG	Evaluation Contact Group
EDRC	Economic and Development Review Committee
ELS	Directorate for Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs
ELSAC	Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs Committee
ENV	Environment Directorate
EPC	Economic Policy Committee
EU	European Union
EXD	Executive Directorate
FSCG	Financial Sustainability Contact Group
G20	Group of 20
G7	Group of Seven
GRC	Global Relations and Co-operation Directorate
HLF	High-Level Finding
IDE	In-depth evaluation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Public Affairs and Communications Directorate
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
SDD	Statistics and Data Directorate
STI	Science, Technology, and Innovation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TAD	Trade and Agriculture Directorate

UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
VCs	Voluntary contributions
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WP	Working Paper
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the Evaluation.

In terms of strategic considerations, the OECD is recognised for its strengths in economic and technical policy leadership and in providing evidence-based analyses and policy recommendations. The OECD's standard setting role is highly regarded, as the consensus-based and non-binding standards developed by the OECD provide added value and enhance the organisation's reputation and visibility. The OECD is particularly well-known for the significant impact of “soft law” standards and its peer review mechanisms.

The organisation has the potential for greater engagement through wider membership and stronger partnerships. Effective governance and leadership are crucial in maximising the OECD's position and adaptability across various roles. The absence of a flexible funding and budget model, along with a complex budget process, constrains the organisation's ability to address multiple demands effectively.

Operationally, the OECD's working processes and delivery characteristics, such as the role of Substantive Committees and voluntary contributions (VCs), are fundamental to its approach. Multisectoral approaches and integrated solutions are necessary to tackle complex issues effectively. However, there is room for improvement in optimising Committee processes, in creating a shared understanding and in facilitating participation for all Members. The Organisation's decentralised structure presents challenges. Workforce diversity and talent management need to adapt to the evolving needs of the OECD and to attract emerging skills.

In terms of relationships and partnerships, the OECD's convening power, peer-review mechanism, and ability to engage diverse stakeholders are considered strengths. However, continued investment in high-quality representation, engagement in peer-review processes, and innovative partnership approaches is critical. The OECD has demonstrated a political will to do this and has flexible mechanisms to expand its membership and Partnership base. Ensuring inclusivity and diversity in staffing and delegation profiles is essential in supporting the evolving requirements of the organisation.

Regarding performance, the OECD would benefit from a stronger focus on outcomes and impact (beyond outputs) to better demonstrate the difference made by its policy work. Members expect tangible evidence of the organisation's vision: better policies for better lives. The OECD's reputation for delivering quality data, evidence, and analyses is highly valued, however, there is a growing demand for more contextualised and utilisation-focused products. Resource adequacy and managing different perspectives pose challenges in meeting these demands.

This Evaluation highlights the OECD's strengths and the areas for improvement across its strategic, operational, partnership/relationship, performance, and results dimensions. Addressing the identified challenges – such as governance and budget processes, workforce diversity, strategic planning, outcome focus, and contextualised products – will enhance the OECD's ability to adapt, engage and achieve its vision in a rapidly changing world.

Strategic Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Consolidate the OECD's coherence of purpose, priorities, and organisation wide strategic planning.

Tighter strategic planning around agreed priorities is required to better articulate and strengthen the medium-term direction-setting path of the OECD towards its vision: better policies for better lives. The OECD should develop a medium-term planning process which acknowledges, links, and builds on its strengths in its multiplicity of roles and unique Committee structures. The medium-term planning process should more visibly link Committee priorities with the OECD's strategic intent, and it should ensure a balanced, efficient, and simple process for the allocation of resources through a flexible funding and budget model. This more dynamic strategic planning process would address the challenges in maintaining the OECD's strengths in a context of increasing diversity and over-stretched Part I Assessed Contribution resources.

Recommendation 2: Reinforce the quality and value of engagement between Members and the Secretariat to better enable substantive and strategic-level decision making.

The OECD needs to create the appropriate conditions and spaces to allow informed dialogue between Members and the Secretariat to be maintained and improved. The issues of overly complex meeting processes, document and meeting overload, and the strong focus on process rather than substantive dialogue, which were identified during the Evaluation, need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the engagements with Members at the level of the Council and its Standing Committees. A review is required to identify where functions and processes can be made more efficient and to identify where time is being absorbed by non-essential matters, which jeopardises the much-needed substantive and strategic dialogues between the Council and Secretariat.

Recommendation 3: Intensify the outcome and impact focus across OECD policy work.

Shift the attention of OECD policy work to be more outcome- and impact-focused. This would respond to the increasing demand for more focus on and visibility of OECD outcomes and impact in delivering its vision. Moreover, this shift would also build upon the already high quality of OECD outputs by adding more focus on their useability and usefulness. In addition, there is a need for a stronger strategic framing of the high-quality OECD outputs towards clearly identified outcomes. This would require embedding outcome-focused approaches in existing workplans, resource allocations, performance reviews and learning processes to enable a better demonstration of how OECD activities contribute to the achievement of its collective vision.

Recommendation 4: Capitalise on the OECD's outward-facing engagement and strengthen the parameters of partnership working.

Capitalising on the OECD's strong momentum regarding Global Relations, as reflected in the work of the Global Relations and Cooperation Directorate (GRC) in support of the External Relations Committee (ERC), clearly define a whole-of-organisation approach to OECD's outward engagement. This requires greater clarity and communication, both internally and externally, on the respective benefits and requirements for expanding OECD relationships with non-Members and for different forms of global, regional, and national partnerships.

Recommendation 5: Enhance the mutual accountabilities of core corporate issues.

The OECD needs to align corporate strategies for core business areas to drive coherence and respond to the pace of global change, thus creating internal efficiencies. The OECD's decentralised model is positive in that it empowers Directorates to manage independently; however, it is also creating challenges in corporate coherence and efficiency. Core business areas, such as human resources, digital and communications, need clearly aligned lines of responsibility and accountability at the Directorate level, and oversight and monitoring at the Secretariat level to identify and achieve greater efficiency. This will enhance the synergy and

compliance with corporate policies right across the organisation, while taking account of the specificities of the Directorates.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen mechanisms to deepen and accelerate the Organisation's integrated approach to increasingly interconnected policy issues.

The OECD needs to develop appropriate mechanisms for cross-sectoral, cross-Directorate and cross-ministerial working. The progress made so far in achieving integrated outcomes, which are delivered through horizontal working and joint working parties, will provide learning that can be expanded. However, there is also a need to examine other options, such as more embedded and innovative systems and processes for the integrated and synergistic delivery of results to respond to the increasingly complex and diverse interests of Members. Team-based working can create a dynamic and responsive approach to appropriately address complex and inter-related issues. The OECD can harness its existing strengths regarding structural and economic trend analyses and the anticipation of future issues to provide a value-added lens on complex issues, which is unique to OECD's expertise and avoids duplication with other organisations.

Recommendation 7: Update the working processes of policy committees to ensure inclusiveness and rich substantive dialogues.

The OECD should identify existing good practices and broaden its adoption of such practices within Committee processes. These practices should focus on effective collaboration, building shared understanding and ownership, joint activities, and dialogue for productive feedback between Members and non-Members to enhance open consensus building. Moreover, contemporary meeting processes such as multi-sectoral network management and digital engagement platforms would help to enrich dynamic, substantive, multi-sectoral dialogue; enhance consensus building; and strengthen a fit-for-purpose approach to core OECD delivery mechanisms within an increasingly complex context.

Recommendation 8: Equip the OECD so that making the economic and social case on critical issues of vulnerability and inclusion (addressing gender equality, in particular) is intrinsic to its work.

Operationalise the OECD's commitment to global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda, to explicitly address vulnerability and inclusion as a core element of effective policymaking. The OECD should leverage its reputation, credibility, and economic expertise to make the economic and social case for addressing gender, vulnerability and social inclusion in effective policy making. The organisation should also develop mainstreaming strategies and action plans to ensure that its work is increasingly grounded in the sustainable development goals (SDGs); that it integrates the principles of the 2030 Agenda; and that OECD work encapsulates sub-national diversity and social issues, which are of increasing interest to its existing and prospective Membership and Partners.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Evaluation

1. The overarching purpose of this independent external Evaluation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – which is the first of its kind in the organisation’s history – is to help ensure that it is equipped to remain a global leader in a changing world.
2. Formed in 1961, the OECD is a Member-led organisation, headquartered in Paris. In addition to its Members and Committees, the organisation has (as of December 2022) over 4,000 staff, who work in a Secretariat composed of Substantive Directorates, corporate Directorates, and a General Secretariat. Through the work of OECD substantive Committees and Working Parties/Groups, the organisation provides high-quality, evidence-based analyses and policy recommendations; benchmarks policies; and develops and disseminates best practice, policy guidelines and legal instruments to its Members and beyond.
3. The Evaluation was conducted between September 2022 and June 2023. It focused its inquiry on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of OECD work, as conducted by its Substantive Committees and its Budget Committee, which are supported by the OECD Secretariat, under the oversight of the Council. Through a fit-for-purpose lens, the Evaluation¹ examined the alignment of the organisation’s bodies, its structure, and its processes with its Members’ forward priorities and policy commitments; its effective provision of support to the Members; and the efficient allocation and management of resources.
4. The Evaluation was designed to be strategic and forward-looking. The results and insights obtained from it are intended to contribute to the ongoing reform agenda within the OECD as it looks to position and equip itself to effectively deliver on its vision statement: better policies for better lives.

1.2. Key Features of the Evaluation Process

5. The Evaluation process drew on recent evaluations, audits, and reviews, which were conducted by the OECD.² In addition, it also used a range of other evaluative tools and methods to provide an analytical and independent assessment of the current positioning and progress of the organisation.
6. The Evaluation focused specifically on three substantive Committee areas (economic surveillance, labour and employment, and climate change). It only drew on experience and examples from other areas selectively and to a limited extent, as agreed in the inception phase. The development cluster of the OECD, with its own governance structure did not form part of the Evaluation’s immediate scope.
7. Four overarching Evaluation questions were addressed (see Table 1, below).

¹ Terms of Reference for the Independent External Evaluation of the OECD

² The evaluation covered the period 2019-2022

Table 1: Key Evaluation Questions by Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
Relevance	1. To what extent does the OECD respond to and align with Members' policy needs?
Effectiveness	2. To what extent does the OECD impact on, contribute to and provide added value to Members' policymaking?
Efficiency	3. To what extent does the OECD implement its activities in a cost-effective and organisationally sound manner?
Fit-for-purpose	4. To what extent is the OECD fit-for-purpose?

8. The Evaluation's focus on how future facing the OECD is, in turn, lent itself to a focus on key OECD behavioural and organisational mechanisms. The mechanisms were selected as a key area of focus in the Evaluation as they both underpin and are strongly evident in the work of the OECD Policy Committee, compared with other aspects. This focus has allowed the Evaluation to reach conclusions regarding the extent to which the organisational capacity of the OECD, as evidenced through its mechanisms, is fit for its current and future purpose – that is, the extent to which these capabilities are enabling the intended Committee impact pathways.

9. The approach used in the Evaluation process was to examine the mechanisms of the OECD from different vantage points. The process worked outwards from the core systems and processes of the organisation, looking at how selected transversal³ issues were being integrated and how global relations were being taken forward. To complement this, it then worked back into the organisation by interviewing key stakeholders about their experiences of engaging with the OECD. These stakeholders were drawn from within the national policy ecosystems of the Members and key Partners.

10. The data collected under each of the high-level Evaluation questions were also used to address several sub-questions, providing for additional granularity when the findings were extracted. The shaping of the conclusions was informed by a benchmarking exercise, which looked at peer organisations. See Annex II for an overview of the reach of the Evaluation's inquiry, both within and outside of the OECD.

11. The OECD's governance of the Evaluation process was supported by an Evaluation Contact Group (ECG), which was composed of OECD Permanent Representatives. The independent Evaluation team from IOD PARC had regular interactions with the ECG. The team also benefited from interactions with the Financial Sustainability Contact Group (FSCG) and progress reports were submitted to the Council. See Annex I for the engagement points across the timeline of the Evaluation process.

12. The remainder of this report proceeds as follows:

- A **context section**, considering the key features of the internal and external setting of the OECD.

³ Transversal issues refer to issues that are cross-cutting across several or all sectoral areas. If mainstreamed appropriately into sectoral work, they improve both sectoral and transversal results significantly. For the purpose of this Evaluation, the enquiry looked into three transversal issues: gender equality, communication and digitalisation.

- A **findings section**, in which the high-level findings (HLFs) are organised against the key Evaluation questions. The end of each sub-section is marked by the trade-offs and tensions facing the organisation, which became evident during the inquiry.
- A **conclusions section**, which is framed by the overarching question on the extent to which the OECD is fit-for-purpose.
- A **recommendations section**, in which this Independent Evaluation's strategic and specific recommendations are presented. These are intended to inform the actions taken in the OECD's ongoing reform process, which is under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

2. Context

13. This strategic Evaluation of the OECD has taken place in a context marked by multiple global crises and increasing challenges to multilateralism. Globally, societies and economies have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation, and supply chain shocks. There are also mounting geopolitical challenges from climate change, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and increasing levels of online misinformation. While there are tensions between the trends towards unilateralism, deglobalisation and protectionism, there is also a recognition that these major global issues cannot be solved in isolation, as they require heightened cooperation.

14. There has been a shift in the axis of political and economic power in the world, with the growing importance of countries in Asia and Latin America, and the need to better integrate African nations into the global economy. Different partnerships between nations at a regional level are also growing in their prominence, for example, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This is also occurring at a global level, for example, in ties between other large economies, such as Brazil, India and South Africa, and the Group of 20 (G20).

15. The OECD is navigating these dynamics and its Members are considering the global position that the organisation currently occupies and the position that it wishes to occupy in the future. In this respect, the Evaluation has been timely: it was initiated following the OECD's 60th anniversary (in 2021), while the organisation was engaged in several key reforms and change processes. The Organisation still strives to be a global leader in providing evidence-based analyses and policy recommendations, which positively contribute to the well-being of its Members' citizens, and to enhance its role as a convenor within international discussions on challenges and best practices in domestic policy and beyond.

2.1. The OECD's Role and Mandate

16. The 60th Anniversary Vision Statement⁴ reaffirmed the value-based nature of the OECD and articulated its shared values: multilateralism, democracy, open markets, inclusiveness, sustainability, peace and prosperity, and the importance of considering gender. The OECD is not a universal organisation, which is open to every country. Instead, it brings together a group of like-minded countries that have shared values, which the Members hope will be increasingly and more widely shared.⁵

2.2. The OECD Programme of Work and Structure

17. Within its core programme of work, the OECD assumes a multiplicity of roles: delivering policy analyses, data, evidence-based standards, and tools to identify best practices.

Box 1: The OECD Operating Model – A Multiplicity of Roles⁶

⁴ OECD (2021), Trust in Global Cooperation – The Vision for the OECD for the Next Decade

⁵ OECD (2021), Trust in Global Cooperation – The Vision for the OECD for the Next Decade

⁶ OECD (2021), Global Relations Strategy. Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level, C/MIN(2021)17/FINAL.

The OECD is a somewhat unique intergovernmental organisation: it is neither a universal nor a regional organisation. Its gradually diversifying membership currently number 38 Member Countries, which work alongside other countries, organisations, and stakeholders, worldwide, to address pressing contemporary policy challenges. The Organisation plays multiple roles: it is a policy forum, a think tank, a platform for peer learning and dialogue, a standard setter, a knowledge generator, and a capacity builder. Using its convening power, the Organisation provides the space for daily collaboration among representatives from governments, parliaments, international organisations, business and labour, civil society, and citizens. As a global pathfinder,¹ the OECD plays an important role as a global convenor and endeavours to shape the global policy agenda, as outlined in the OECD Global Relations Strategy. As part of the Organisation's implementation of the Council-approved Global Relations Strategy, the OECD co-operates and engages with leading economic forums such as the Group of Seven (G7) and G20; the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); and the Pacific Alliance and the African Union.

At the core of its distinctive role is a cooperation model, which is based on a web of 300+ Committees, experts, and Working Groups, covering almost all areas of policymaking. The topic covered are diverse and include education, finance, trade, the environment, and development; however, they exclude matters such as religion, defence, peace, and security. This cooperation model brings together Member Countries and Partners (approximately 40,000 participants each year) to share policy experiences, review policy implementation and to elaborate standards. Peer reviews and consensus-based decision making are two core defining features of the OECD's working modalities to-date. This complex cooperation model is supported by a Secretariat, which that includes substantive Directorates. These mirrors the sectoral areas covered by OECD Committees: they oversee collecting data, providing analyses, and formulating recommendations to inform Committees' discussions. The OECD Council, the "highest body of the OECD" as referred to in the Governance Resolution [C (2015)100, Chapter 2, Section II, para 9] (henceforth referred to as the Council) provides strategic direction and oversight. It is the "body from which all acts of the Organisation derive" [Article 7 of the Convention of the OECD] and is composed of representatives from the Member Countries and the European Union, and it is chaired by the Secretary-General (henceforth referred to as the Chair).

18. The organisation has been scaling up – building on achievements within its existing membership group and expanding its policy agenda – and scaling out – leveraging and multiplying its impact beyond the current membership to exert a greater global influence and extend its reach. For this to be achieved, the OECD needs to be fit-for-purpose, as stated in the Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General (2021)⁷: "The OECD should be a model of good governance, management excellence, integrity, resource efficiency and digital security." This ambitious agenda has raised some new issues and has underlined the importance of the OECD's ongoing reflections on its financial sustainability and its need to prioritise its engagements and scope of work, inter alia.

19. Through its convening power, its Committee – and consensus-based approach, and through the mutual accountability for commitments made, the OECD supports its Members and Partner Countries in navigating transitions and challenges. This delivery increasingly requires multidisciplinary and horizontal work, which integrate growth, productivity and economic efficiency with inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability. Addressing such a complex and multifaceted agenda carries with it two very notable challenges (in addition to many smaller challenges), as follows:

⁷ OECD (2022), Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level – Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General (not approved by Council).

- The difficulty of setting priorities and of balancing the trade-offs and interests of a wide array of different stakeholders, who have interests that are sometimes divergent or opposing.
- The organisational challenge of working within subsidiary structures, with thematic and sectoral expertise and expectations at different levels.

20. The constituencies of the organisation are national administrations, which are largely organised in sectoral or thematic vertical structures. The OECD Directorates have been organised along similar sectoral lines to reflect both its Members' administrations and the sectoral expertise, and the Committee structure is mainly sector-based. In this structure, delegates are primarily focused on their own sectoral interests: "It should be recalled that Delegates from national administrations and various constituencies in capitals do not always perceive a design larger than their own sectoral interests."⁸

21. Today, however, many policy issues involve a wide variety of organisational units, with transversal issues – such as climate change, digitalisation, and gender equality – becoming increasingly important and as key elements in advancing sectoral themes, such as trade, tax policy, agriculture, or data privacy. The introduction of horizontal projects⁹ within the OECD was intended as a primary means of responding to these transversal requirements in an organisation that was still organised along key sectors, and to link and bridge different approaches to related issues. The interconnectivity of substantive policy issues and the stated desire for the OECD's impact to be felt beyond its Members requires complex stakeholder engagement, inclusive and integrated working methods and processes, and an adaptive governance structure.

2.3. Reforms and Change Processes

22. Over time, various analyses and reviews of the OECD's governance structure have been undertaken to ensure its appropriateness in a dynamic, global context.

In 2022, the Council acknowledged the implementation of the 52 recommendations on working methods in the 2014 governance review [C(2022)172].

23. The trends, challenges and ambitions outlined in the sub-sections above emphasise the need for organisational effectiveness and for an operating model and funding structure that is continually aligned to the OECD's mandate and strategic aims. Predictable and sustainable funding is a fundamental issue, and reflection on this is ongoing in the FSCG, with whom the Evaluation team has engaged to ensure transparency and complementarity and to inform the findings of the Evaluation.

24. The Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General (2022),¹⁰ aware of the need for continuing change, announced improvements and reforms in several priority areas, including enhancing collaboration across all parts of the organisation and advancing a Communications

⁸ OECD (1998), The OECD Committee Structure – A Review, Final Report, CE (98)3

⁹ Horizontal projects are flagship endeavours by the OECD, overseen by the OECD Council. They draw directly on the full range of policy expertise across the OECD's numerous Directorates and agencies to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to a specific issue. Housing, the climate and economic resilience are examples of key OECD horizontal projects.

¹⁰ OECD (2022), Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level – Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General (not approved by Council)

Strategy¹¹ to strengthen and better organise communications with Members and beyond. Digitalisation is also a core priority. These reform efforts were then recognised as part of the Council decision on adoption of the 2023-2024 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) in December of 2022. A reform roadmap was then released by the Secretary-General in January 2023, outlining 32 key reform and review processes, which aimed to improve efficiency, accountability, transparency, and management excellence).

2.4. Key Challenges to the OECD Operating Model

25. A defining feature of the OECD, one that is central to its work, is its consensus-based approach to decision making. Alongside the peer-review structure and processes, this approach ensures mutual accountability to commitments made. While the consensus-based decision-making process remains a key principle, in the future, the increasingly diversified membership of the OECD may mean that more time and effort is needed to maintain this principle and to ensure a constructive dialogue across and among Committee Members. This means that the need for effective working processes within Committees will become paramount, both for Standing Committees and Substantive Committees.

26. A 2019 note by the Secretary-General on the follow-up to a series of governance assessments relating to working methods stated that: “It is worth noting that in the last few years, it has become more time consuming and complex to reach consensus on many important issues of the OECD agenda.”¹² Some of the challenges associated with these difficulties in decision making are not new, for example the inability of the organisation to decommission certain Committee structures.¹³ The interviews and the targeted survey used during this Evaluation signalled that these challenges are intensifying within the work of some of the Substantive Committees, where individual country positions are sometimes difficult to align, for instance on matters such as labour laws, trade practices and data privacy. This requires strong leadership from the Committee Chairs and the Bureaux.

27. Moreover, these challenges are being compounded by the need to accommodate an ever-expanding set of policy issues in a constrained budget environment. In addition, the Members’ decisions to move away from a formula that provided for a zero real growth budget since 2019-2020 and to absorb the increased costs of pension contributions, as well as other budget pressures such as inflation, have eroded the organisation’s financial position.¹⁴ Although this approach may promote efficiencies, it also exposes critical risks, such as an underinvestment in IT infrastructure and in long-term assets, which are fundamental to the OECD’s organisational efficiency and effectiveness, and has led to a more time-consuming biennial budget development and negotiation process.¹⁵

28. Considering these challenges, the OECD is at a critical juncture in its drive to be fit-for-purpose. Central to this drive, is balancing the flexibility allowed by the OECD Convention in interpreting the promotion of economic growth, trade, and stability through a broad lens in this era of climate and digital transitions, with the need for a streamlined set of strategic priorities.

¹¹ OECD (2022), OECD Communications Strategy (Approved by Council)

¹² OECD (2019), Report on the Assessment of the 2014 Recommendations on Decision Making and Working Methods (Note by the Secretary-General), C (2019)125

¹³ See Pierre Vinde’s report, which conveyed this point as early as 1998

¹⁴ OECD (2021), OECD Secretary-General’s Report to Ministers 2021

¹⁵ OECD (2021), OECD Secretary-General’s Report to Ministers 2021

These priorities should be underpinned by a clearly articulated organisational purpose and an efficient administrative and operational delivery.

29. The Evaluation has built its evidence base on relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency regarding how the OECD is currently operating. The Evaluators have also investigated the OECD's trajectory of change and its stakeholders' perceptions on its readiness to contribute to its members' priorities in a changing world.

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1. Brief Description of the Evaluation's Scope

30. Informed by an initial document review and preparatory discussions with the Evaluation Contact Group and peer experts, the Evaluation examined¹⁶ the following key areas:

- A review of OECD **core systems and processes**, which was guided by an adapted MOPAN¹⁷ methodology.
- Three **thematic policy areas**: economic surveillance, labour and employment, and climate change.
- Three **transversal themes**: digital transformation, how the OECD communicates its work, and gender.
- A focus on **global relations** as an important aspect of the OECD's ongoing and future work.
- Ten **country studies**, with the following OECD Members: Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Sweden, Türkiye, and the United States of America (USA).
- **Partner studies**, including with the OECD's Key Partners, Brazil and South Africa, and its regional institutional Partner, ASEAN.
- **Special studies** with the European Union (EU) – given its close collaboration with and support of the OECD – and with India – as the current president of the G20.
- **A targeted survey (1,190 responses), which was completed by** in-country stakeholders across all the 38 OECD Members (1,161 in total) and respondents (29) within the EU Delegation/European Commission.
- A **benchmarking exercise, which was conducted** with relevant peer organisations,¹⁸ exploring issues around budgeting, efficiencies, and the use of Committee structures.

31. On the completion of the above activities, the evidence gathered was synthesised in a process of analysis involving triangulation, validation, and layering. The Evaluation Team first analysed the data collected through the different Evaluation workstreams against the Evaluation questions/sub-questions. This source evidence was then synthesised to provide the basis for extracting the HLFs against each of the overarching key Evaluation questions (see the Technical Note on Methodology for a Table showing the alignment of the findings and evidence sources and the line of sight to the conclusions).

¹⁶ A compendium of the approaches taken in each area of study can be found in a detailed Evaluation methodology note, which accompanies the final report. This note documents the methodology that was developed and applied in the Evaluation. It also provides links to several other sources, which were developed and drawn upon by the Evaluation Team in the analysis process.

¹⁷ MOPAN – Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network – in existence since 2002, it uses a rigorous analytical assessment framework for performance assessments of multilateral organisations: www.mopanonline.org.

¹⁸ The peer organisations accessed for benchmarking purposes were the EBRD, the World Health Organisation and the Council of Europe.

32. An abridged MOPAN¹⁹ methodology was applied to probe the core systems and processes that are in place to underpin, enable and facilitate the Policy Committee's work, and which, thereby, influence the OECD's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. MOPAN assessments draw upon recognised institutional streams of evidence (for example, documents, surveys, and interviews) from both internal and external sources to validate and triangulate findings against a standard indicator framework, which has been developed based on international good practice. The Evaluator tailored micro-indicators from the MOPAN framework to the OECD operating framework. The Evaluation focused on four MOPAN performance areas, which were most relevant to OECD work:

1. Strategic management: strategic plans, the intended results and organisational architecture; the financial framework; and corporate and sectoral strategies.
2. Operational management: organisational structures, human and financial resources, budget allocation, decision-making processes, results-based management, and risk management.
3. Relationship management: transversal issues in intervention designs
4. Performance management: accountability systems and the uptake and follow-up of all evaluations' recommendations and lessons learnt.

3.2. Limitations, Risks, and Mitigating Actions

33. Many risks to the delivery of a robust and rigorous Evaluation were identified during the inception phase. These are detailed in Table 2 and are supplemented with the additional risks that emerged during the Evaluation.

¹⁹ Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network <https://www.mopanonline.org/home/>

Table 2. Evaluation Risks and Mitigating Actions

Limitation/Risk	Mitigating Action
Sampling of stakeholders	This risk was successfully mitigated through the design and execution of clear criteria for the selection of stakeholders, supported by the Secretariat and complemented by an effective “snowballing” ²⁰ approach to identify key stakeholders.
Key informants unavailable for participation in the Evaluation process	While there were occasional challenges in securing timely responses to our invitations to interviews, this risk was mostly mitigated through careful planning, the sequencing of data collection activities and the support of Secretariat staff in prompting colleagues to engage in the Evaluation process. Some interviews with key peer organisations were not possible due to a lack of responses or a lack of availability.
Low survey response rate	The survey, as part of the external independent Evaluation, received responses from all 38 OECD Members – above the initial threshold established for a satisfactory response rate in each country.
Timely availability of documentation	Additional documents were received throughout the Evaluation’s processes, requiring ongoing review and coding work. Critical documents were also generated/shared beyond the document cut-off period, requiring re-assessment.
Benchmarking documentation and interviews	The criteria used for selecting peer organisations as part of the benchmarking exercise were carefully designed to include publicly available information as a prerequisite for inclusion. However, in some instances, the Evaluation Team faced challenges in accessing comparable documentation, despite having identified focal points within peer organisations (where possible) and securing interviews with representatives.
Partner study interviews	With support from the OECD Secretariat, appropriate stakeholders to approach for interviews were carefully selected. This was part of the Partner studies component of the Evaluation. However, many of these stakeholders either did not respond to our invitations or were unable to participate in the Evaluation due to a lack of availability.
Resources and time limitations to the scope of the evaluation	The design of the methodology was cognisant of the required resource envelope and the required timing of the Evaluation. This required the methodology to be focussed on agreed themes and focus areas, which precluded detailed inquiries into a wide range of the OECD’s work that the Evaluation team recognised as important, for example, the OECD Development Centre (DEV). The three themes and transversal issues were selected based on the dialogue with the ECG, however, it is recognised that there are important elements that may not have been explored due to the necessary boundaries of the Evaluation.
Lack of awareness of the scope and purpose of the Evaluation	This risk was mitigated through a carefully planned process of communication on the purpose and scope of the Evaluation. This was undertaken by the Secretary-General, supported by the Secretariat. The materials were also shared with stakeholders and/or focal points prior to the interviews and surveys to ensure the requisite understanding.

²⁰ Stakeholders were contacted on an ongoing basis following recommendations from engaged stakeholders. This was particularly effective through a focal point approach within each country study country who provided contact details or an introduction to relevant interviewees at the capital or within the delegation.

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance

Summary

34. The OECD is broadly responsive and well-aligned to Members' policy needs in the current global context, and this is strongly related to the organisation's evidence-based, credible data and analyses. The nature and extent of the relevance of OECD products and activities, influenced by country-specific factors such as economic strength; the length of OECD membership; the maturity of national statistics and research functions; differing national policy settings, both across and between various sectors and themes; and cultural contexts. The multiplicity of the OECD's roles also impacts relevance, given the required diversity of its products and activities.

HLF 1: The OECD strategic priorities are well-aligned to Members' policy needs, particularly in relation to its core economic dimensions, but with variation across country contexts.

Box 2: The OECD's Strategic Priorities

The five OECD strategic priorities, as set out in the Secretary-General's Strategic Orientations following the Ambassadors' convergence paper, are as follows:

1. Optimising the strength and quality of the ongoing recovery from COVID-19 while responding to the economic and social impacts of the war in Ukraine.
2. Leadership on climate action to help secure global net-zero by 2050 in a way that is effective and fair.
3. Seizing the opportunities of the digital transformation while better managing some of the associated risks, challenges, and disruptions.
4. Helping to ensure well-functioning global markets and a global level playing field with a rules-based trading system in good working order; and
5. Advancing OECD standards, through membership and partnerships and a sound approach to development.

35. Substantive Committees – as the core OECD delivery mechanism – are strong cooperation avenues, which allow Members to shape priorities in sectoral areas, thus driving the organisation's relevance. They are also useful avenues for Members to engage in dialogue and cooperate on specific thematic issues. Moreover, such avenues ensure that there is a strong alignment between the Committees' work and Members' policy needs, especially in agreed priority areas. Overall, where there are a productive levels of Member engagement with OECD Committees, the response through the Evaluation survey and interviews demonstrated the value of both the Committee process and the resulting activities and products. However, the feedback signalled that there are aspects of Committee functions and OECD policy work that could be better aligned with Members' domestic policy needs. Different countries – particularly through the Ambassador, country, and thematic studies – identified that there is variability across Policy Committees regarding both process and focus, which affects the extent of the organisation's relevance. This variability arises through the Committee processes and the links between Directorates and national ministries. Country context is also important, for example, each country's size, resources, and ability to engage directly (face-to-

face). In addition, topic relevance is also important to countries' priorities, for instance regarding climate change, countries with large agricultural sectors and energy-intensive industries (for example, Poland) have different policy needs to the countries with large service or tourism sectors (for example, Switzerland); therefore, the policy needs in this area are diverse.

36. The economic expertise of the OECD was seen to be highly relevant and valued by all the Member countries. The long-term OECD analyses, such as its macroeconomics and structural reform work, are particularly important to the policy work of most Members. The leveraging and focussing of the OECD's economic expertise in specific areas of policy interest was also identified as relevant – for example, in the economic aspects of its COVID-19 response.

Box 3: Economic Surveillance – An OECD Foundation

The work of the OECD Economic Development and Review Committee (EDRC) and the Organisation's broader economic activities, such as structural reforms and trade policies, were seen to be relevant across the evidence streams, as they were identified as core OECD work. Economic surveillance is strongly linked to the OECD's mandate: "to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world".

The leading role of the OECD in economic outcomes was reaffirmed in the 2021 60th Anniversary Statement, through the commitment made by the OECD Membership: "We are determined that the OECD will continue to support countries, within and outside the OECD, to develop policies together that promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and we are committed to developing benchmarks with global relevance."

The Evaluation showed that, as the OECD has expanded to address new emerging issues, a strong demand has been maintained on its economic domain. The OECD's economic expertise underpins policy decisions, providing valuable input into the policy decisions of OECD Members across a wide range of thematic areas.

[Sources: the document review, country and Partner study interviews, survey, thematic and transversal studies, and OECD staff interviews. Feb–May 2023].

37. Increasingly, Members' domestic policy responses must factor in challenges of a global nature. A consistent theme, which was particularly prominent in the Ambassador interviews, was the emphasis that Member's place on the importance of the OECD's global role as an objective and evidence-based leader, through its support of the G7 and G20 and other major global forums. This role is significant to Members because it enables productive engagement and cooperation on global cross-cutting and emergent issues.

38. As illustrated by the examples drawn from the Evaluation's country studies, the OECD's capacity to identify and engage with critical global issues adds value to Member's domestic policymaking. Such issues include climate change; the digital economy and digitalisation; international taxation; labour and employment outlooks; structural economic analyses; and (increasingly) social policy and migration. The founding Members and those with larger economies particularly emphasised this global role as being relevant to their engagement with the OECD; however, the Members with smaller economies and those that are newer to the OECD also see the relevance of having a like-minded voice in global dialogues through their membership.

39. The relevance of OECD data, analyses, and sectoral and transversal policy work was considered very high for new Members and Members in the upper–middle income category, compared with the Members in the high-income category, where the process of accession has

been more recent and where the transformative potential of this process was greatest. For example, for Costa Rica and Lithuania, the accession process added significant value and facilitated significant policy change. Similarly, for Greece, OECD engagement has been highly relevant and highly valued as it has withstood its financial shocks. However, relevance was found to be more mixed for the founding Members, particularly those with larger economies. For these Members, the relevance of OECD data analyses in sectoral policies was particularly mixed when their own policies were more advanced; however, the OECD's relevance was considered higher regarding its support for strategic initiatives on contemporary issues, such as data privacy and carbon mitigation.

40. In addition, while several of these founding Members indicated that their specific policy needs are addressed through OECD Policy Committees (especially when accompanied by voluntary contributions (VCs)), others stated that some of their specific policy needs are not. This insufficiency was identified in relation to critical or complex issues such as the economic impacts of migration policy, youth unemployment, workforce reskilling, the decentralisation of governance, the health care impacts of COVID-19, and the ageing population and disability trends. Such specific topics, which are most relevant for individual countries, are generally funded by VCs. Some Members (including larger and founding Members) emphasised the importance of the OECD's ability to lean more towards emerging and anticipated complex policy challenges, which reflect the maturing conditions within their own economies. Some Members voiced concerns about how proactive the OECD is in tackling particularly pressing, critical global issues, which are often cross-cutting or transversal in nature. When coupled with the lack of policy implementation monitoring, this creates uncertainty in where the membership stands regarding these critical policy issues. Thus, Members highlighted the potential for the OECD to further leverage and utilise its economic intelligence to support countries with horizon scanning and foresight work.

41. The diversity of interests apparent within the growing OECD membership and the differentiated economic models within, decreases the applicability of common recommendations for all Members. This creates a tension for the OECD between how it balances its focus on the priorities of most of its Members, with its focus on the priorities of its largest contributors. This tension creates an increasingly strong imperative for the OECD to be more audience-focused: either more outward-facing – engaging with non-Members – or more inward-facing – focusing on the specific needs of each Member, as the need arises. The outward-facing work of the OECD's Development Centre was mentioned by some countries as being of importance in the organisation's engagement with non-Member countries. Therefore, there was interest in strengthening the linkages between the work of the DEV and the OECD Committees for wider benefit. This is in line with the eighth high-level meeting of the Governing Board Development Centre, in 2022, which identified a priority for the DEV's future in building bridges between DEV countries, its Governing Board and regional Partners.²¹

HLF 2: The OECD's products and activities generally address Members' policy needs; however, the usefulness and applicability of these are varied. An increasingly varied membership means relevance for all becomes increasingly hard to achieve.

42. Largely, Members expressed that the OECD produces high-quality analytical outputs on a wide range of policy issues, which reflect their policy needs. This was confirmed by the

²¹ 8th High-Level Meeting of The Governing Board Development Centre, 24-25 October 2022. The Future of The OECD Development Centre High-Level Report of The Group of Eminent Personalities.

documentary evidence on the demand for and use of OECD economic and other outlooks, and through the workstreams' evidence on policy themes and country perspectives.

43. However, it was suggested that OECD products are not sufficiently context-specific for some countries – especially for smaller countries, with resource constraints in providing VCs for detailed work that aligns with their interests. Conversely, where countries have invested VCs for specific work, the feedback on the quality and use of the products was very positive. The non-European Members and non-Members interviewed also raised the issue that, in some cases, outputs that were seen as reflecting an overly Eurocentric nature, were not readily applicable to their context. Moreover, language and cultural barriers to data collection and the useability of the syntheses were also raised as concerns in relation to areas such as labour laws, gender, and legal frameworks. This point was also raised in the interviews with Partners (South Africa, Brazil, and ASEAN).

44. The survey demonstrated substantial variance in the types of products that were selected as the most useful.²² However, it did confirm that economic surveys, policy publications and materials providing policy guidance or standards were the most-used products, with over 45% of the respondents selecting them as useful. This contrasted with the reported popularity of the specific thematic materials, with only 8%–11% of respondents selecting these as useful (for example, the environment and gender). The thematic studies received more varied feedback through the survey and through the country studies interviews on the applicability of OECD work to national contexts. This feedback depended on the policy requirements of the countries at the time and on their resource capacity to engage in multiple thematic areas.

45. The use of OECD outputs in policy debates across a wide range of areas and Member contexts demonstrates the high credibility and objectivity of OECD work and policy guidelines. Its good practice examples and benchmarking work assists countries in considering alternative policy options. However, OECD policy-making processes and output publications do not always align well to Members' policy and planning cycles. Countries all have their own cycles, during which policy debates are most influential. If products are not available while debates are occurring, this is felt to be a missed opportunity.

46. A positive example of timeliness was in the OECD work in relation to the COVID-19 response. This was highlighted as very useful to countries as they pivoted their fiscal policy to address the demands and impacts of the pandemic on their national economies. However, an example given of OECD work being misaligned to its Members' timings was its climate-related work; this is seen as lagging behind the pace required and as being indistinct from the work of other international organisations, creating a lack of clarity and duplication in this particularly time-critical area. Nevertheless, the OECD's contribution in this crowded field was noted as most useful when considering the related economic policies. This was also noted in relation to the OECD's advice on social and labour policy, in which its advice on tax reform and the economic implications of financing social welfare systems were much valued.

47. Although OECD products are used by all Members, as evidenced by the survey, there were variations in the extent of their use. The countries with medium and small economies (such as Sweden, Costa Rica, and the Republic of Korea) more commonly affirmed their use of OECD data and reports. They reported that they either directly use OECD data and analyses to inform their own policymaking, or they reference them in policy discussions and comparisons with other countries. However, the larger countries indicated that OECD data

²² Survey provided 1,051 responses to this question with relatively consistent responses across the countries.

and analyses have less influence in their policymaking, but that they use its data in specific technical work.

48. Furthermore, a tension was evident across all the data sources. This tension was between the internal mechanisms for generating standard, well-respected products – which are known and, on occasion, of moderate use – and the interests of the OECD in being more impactful by ensuring that its outputs contribute to its vision in a more acute and targeted way.

49. While OECD statistical products were found to be highly relevant across most countries, the countries that have their own internal economic prospective capacity mainly use these analyses as additional comparative data. The comparative indices were considered useful by all the Members. For example, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies were highly regarded for their comparative data and analyses.

50. The targeted OECD work on the digital economy assists in the development of their own digital profiles and helps them to consider pathways for digital transformation. The OECD Going Digital project (see Box 4) and the leadership from the Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Directorate in supporting Members in their digital transformation generated positive feedback. This was evidenced through the transversal, country and Partner studies and the wider survey; triangulated through relevant documentation; and based on the experience recorded by the STI Directorate.

51. In addition, the country studies and Ambassador interviews highlighted the OECD's global influence on digital issues, including developing digital transformation policies, reflection on artificial intelligence and how to strengthen digital security. The breadth of evidence indicates that OECD digitalisation work is an effective way to share experiences and learn from others. In addition, Members highly valued the ability of the OECD to bring expertise into Policy Committee discussions, especially through tech industry leaders. This was highly relevant to the newer and smaller Members. Digital transformation is seen by the Members as an issue that requires international cooperation; therefore, the OECD's leadership in this area will continue to gain relevance (including with the G20).

Box 4: Going Digital Project – VCs Drive Innovative Programmes of Global Relevance

VC-funded, country-specific activities can contribute to larger strategic learning objectives and can provide a blueprint for activities that can be applied across multiple Members and non-Members. For example, the Going Digital project has been led by the STI Directorate, which has benefited from a budget that was allocated by the Central Priorities Fund. This fund prioritises the policy work of digital transformation. Consequently, the STI Directorate has been able to launch the Going Digital project, which is strongly funded and has a robust governance framework. This project has contributed to the G20 Toolkit for Measuring the Digital Economy.

The first phase of the project was VC-funded and involved Sweden as a country case study. It assessed the different levels of digitalisation within the country – for example, in urban versus rural areas – and how Sweden was positioned compared to other countries. The study helped to inform Sweden’s digital strategy and has also encouraged other Members and Partners to conduct similar studies, such as Türkiye, Latvia, and Brazil.

Similarly, the VC-funded work supported by Japan has been instrumental in the OECD’s leading work on digital security, which has developed standards in privacy and transborder flows of personal data; the Internet and Internet policy making; the digital economy, innovation, growth, and social prosperity; artificial intelligence; digital government strategies; and public procurement (among others). These were noted by several Member and Partner countries as highly innovative and relevant.

[Sources: document review, STI Directorate, and country and Partner study interviews. Feb–May 2023].

HLF 3: The appropriateness of OECD ways of working and delivery mechanisms, including use of voluntary contributions, are fundamentally good but would benefit from being simpler and clearer in prioritisation and funding and more integrated in application.

52. The relevance of OECD delivery mechanisms generated mixed feedback across and within the different data sources. However, overall, the Committee and Working Groups’ mechanisms were seen as relevant, particularly as cooperation mechanisms to engage and set priorities on thematically clustered policy issues. Their embedded processes, such as open dialogue, consensus building and peer reviews, are highly valued. Members consistently indicated that peer learning was highly useful, with 78% of survey respondents indicating that this added value to OECD engagement. Additionally, the promotion of shared knowledge, values, experiences, and practices, as well as networking opportunities, were consistently identified as beneficial aspects of OECD engagement of benefit (Annex III).

53. The OECD is the only intergovernmental organisation that links directly back into almost all the Member countries’ substantive ministries and government bodies on policy. The Members acknowledged that the relevance of OECD ways of working to national policies also depends on how much countries themselves are willing and able to engage or take things forward at the national level. A common view expressed in the interviews across different Evaluation workstreams was: “Countries get out of OECD what they put into it.”

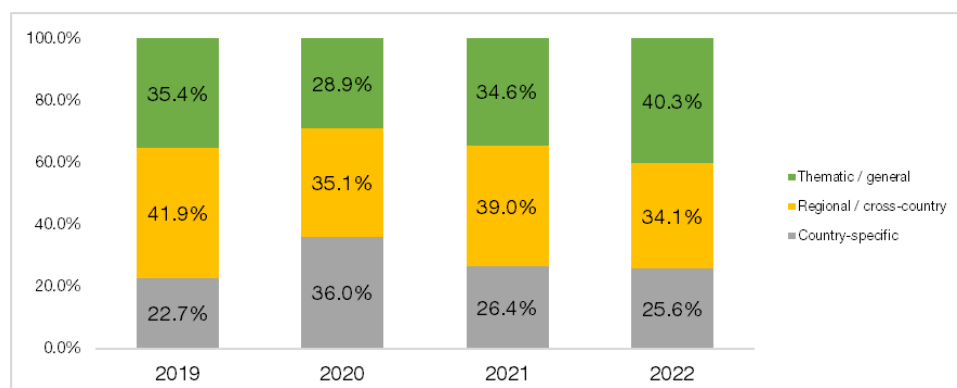
54. While most Policy Committees were reported to be working well, it was noted consistently through the Ambassador interviews and across approximately six of the ten countries for which country studies were conducted that the Committees’ bottom-up approach is sometimes at odds with the policy needs of the specific Members. Examples given of this included labour market approaches and renewable energy, where contexts vary, and OECD

recommendations are less readily applicable. Furthermore, duplications of Committee processes were seen in several policy areas – particularly in climate change and gender, where such duplication was seen as requiring greater streamlining across the organisation.

55. The financial data and reviews confirmed that VCs are a key delivery mechanism for OECD work (see Box 5, below). Based on the documentary evidence and on the thematic, transversal, and country studies, VCs contribute substantially to the OECD's relevance to its members, particularly in the national Ministries. As a key Partner of the OECD, the EU's VCs are highly regarded and well-aligned through Committee processes. VCs also appear to support multiple aspects of OECD work: they positively impact the OECD's ability to resource critical workstreams; to produce useful and high-quality products; and to focus on specific thematic work, which may otherwise not be possible.

Box 5: Trends and Features in Use of VCs

The largest share of VCs accepted each year focus on thematic or cross-country work, in 2022 74.4% of the total value of VCs accepted were for these two types of work.



Value: The total value of VCs has grown steadily since 2010. Recent biennia confirm the increase in VCs, with +14.9% (EUR577m) in the total value of the VCs accepted in 2021–22, compared to the 2019–20 biennium (EUR503m).

Trend: The trend in VC expenditure as a share of resources has increased over time, with VC financing increasing from 29.7% of resources in 2012, to 45.8% in 2022.

Source: Most VCs come from Members and the EU, accounting for 80% of the total value of the VCs accepted in 2022.

Duration: Most VC funds support multi-year work, with 70.4% of the total value of the VCs accepted in 2022 funding multi-year work.

Focus: Most of the VCs accepted each year focus on thematic or cross-country work: 74.4% of the total value of the VCs accepted in 2022 covered this type of work.

Earmarking: Most of the VCs are earmarked for a specific output in the Programme of Work, with 97.4% of the total value of the VCs earmarked in 2022.

The bulk of the VCs in the OECD emerge directly from the Programme of Work of the Substantive Committees. First, the priorities are defined and, second, the VCs are sought from the Member Countries in the Committee. By their nature, these VCs should be considered as **earmarked/targeted contributions to the Programme of Work**.

- Earmarked/targeted contributions are **multi-year** (70.4% of the total VCs in 2021) and **thematic/regional** (74.4% of the total VCs in 2022). This is important as it shows that the other types of VCs (for example, **one year, one country/ non-Member States and private contributions**) constitute a minority of the VCs.
- Whether or not earmarked/targeted contributions are part of the budget is irrelevant; they are raised and exist **to finance the Programme of Work decided on by the Committees**.

[Sources: document review, Feb–May 2023, information shared by FSCG June 2023].

56. Yet, a concern was raised regarding the VCs – particularly by the smaller countries, with fewer resources to engage in multiple Committees. This concern was about the extent to which the VCs affect the prioritisation of OECD work. There was a perception that VCs can lead to diversions or delays in addressing wider and alternative priorities, by turning the OECD’s attention to funded priorities, rather than to consensus-driven ones.

57. Based on the interviews, there was a lack of understanding among the Ambassadors and country stakeholders regarding the parameters of the OECD’s mechanism for accepting or rejecting VCs. There is also some uncertainty about the clear prior processes by which other Members can understand whether they will benefit from the funding obtained through a VC. This raises the issue of insufficient dialogue and understanding. There was also no clear documentary evidence to confirm the scale of the concerns about the VCs; however, they were raised across multiple countries, in ways that affected relevance differently. For example, comments such as the following emerged across the Ambassador and country interviews:

- “We can’t optimise relevance because we can’t afford VC for our priorities.”
- “We invest in VC otherwise our priorities may not be supported.”

58. The OECD does not have a clear resource mobilisation approach to counteract the risk (or perceptions) that priorities are skewed towards the countries with the capacity to provide VCs. Moreover, both large and small Members raised concerns about the decision-making processes and priority setting, feeling that they are not sufficiently clear. This affects their confidence that the OECD is working on the areas that are most relevant to their needs. These issues are worthy of further reflection in terms of how to mitigate risks and negative perceptions through more effective governance, as VCs will continue to be a key component of its work. Therefore, the challenge for the OECD in a constrained resource environment, is to ensure that VCs are channelled to support the priority activities of the collective membership.

HLF 4: The OECD has positioned itself to engage in and influence policy areas of national and global importance, in which it has a comparative advantage (for instance, economic analysis, standard setting and comparative analysis).

59. The OECD’s global relations and its efforts to deepen its engagement with and outreach to emerging markets and economies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East; its work in support of international forums such as the G7 and G20; and its work in regional bodies such as ASEAN is growing and deepening. This work involves a range of thematic areas of global importance, including taxation; labour markets; demographic trends; and emerging issues, such as artificial intelligence. Such work is appreciated by Members and reflects core OECD knowledge resources and expertise in supporting evidence-based policymaking at regional and global forums.

60. In a rapidly changing geopolitical context, the OECD is leveraging and utilising its knowledge capacity and convening power to bring greater data and evidence to bear upon discussions of global concerns. This is particularly valued regarding its economic analyses, standard setting, and comparative rankings across a range of themes. Countries reported that these are extensively used in national policy deliberations. In the other the global concerns raised through the interviews and the survey, such as climate change, education, transport, infrastructure, and energy, it was seen that the global interest in intersectionality and integration in addressing complex issues is becoming more critical when considering the OECD’s future global role. For example, there is now increasing engagements from the G7 and G20, which address wide-ranging issues of critical importance for OECD Members and

Partners. In these issues, there are a multitude of actors, and the high profile of the OECD was noted as a key added value across all the country studies and Ambassador interviews. However, there were also concerns raised about the OECD's focus on its core expertise. It was indicated that it should maintain its focus on these and not spread itself too thinly or beyond its expertise, into areas where duplication occurs.

61. The OECD's demonstrated ability for quality work in data and knowledge, as well as its potential to convene multiple and diverse countries are clear strengths, which heighten the potential for the OECD to leverage its relevance in the future. The Ambassador, country, Partner, and OECD Secretariat staff interviews highlighted a common perspective: the OECD has the potential to enhance its role and to become a bridge between major economies in the Global North and the Global South. This would enable it to facilitate global collaboration on challenging issues in an era when other international organisations are being constrained by their roles, functions, or reputations.

62. Moreover, the Partner studies noted that the OECD is making notable shifts towards becoming more inclusive of diverse perspectives while still retaining its relevance. For instance, appreciation was expressed by the Partners for the fact that, over time, the OECD has been engaging on issues and topics that are of interest to developing and emerging economies. However, they also highlighted the limitations and risks regarding how policy is considered and formulated at the OECD. Further concerns were also raised (see Box 6, below) as to whether the OECD would be capable of taking wider, more diverse perspectives into consideration, especially perspectives from the Global South and concerning contentious issues such as climate finance, trade tariffs and protectionism. However, the horizontal/integrated work between several Committees on cross-cutting issues was noted as an area of promising relevance, although it has yet to realise its full potential.

Box 6: A Partner's Perspective on the OECD (Brazil)

Brazil is a Key Partner of the OECD and has been going through an accession process since 2022. According to interviews (and supported by the Active in Brazil 2020 document), Brazil highly values the data and analyses coming from the OECD. Brazil participates as an Associate/Member in 14 OECD Bodies and Programmes (on an equal footing with OECD Members), in 25 OECD Bodies (as a Participant) and is now invited to participate in all the OECD bodies, which are open to all OECD Members based on its status as an accession candidate country.

While their interest in and engagement with the OECD is highly valued and the accession process is supported by the Brazilian stakeholders interviewed, they all identified critical challenges for the future of the OECD. They identified the need for the OECD to consider and embrace different macroeconomic thinking and models, to remain neutral and to reflect southern perspectives on issues ranging from development to climate change and agriculture.

[Sources: documents and interviews with Brazilian stakeholders. May 2023].

63. Overall, from the perspective of the OECD's Partners interviewed during the Evaluation (Brazil, India, and South Africa), there is a strong sense that opportunities are presented by the OECD's global profile and its influence in a changing world.

64. Although the profile of the OECD is not yet strong in all regions, it does have a growing profile in Latin America, and the OECD centres in Japan, Korea and Indonesia are gradually raising its profile in Asia. However, there are still countries in which the OECD is not well known. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for it in achieving wider relevance.

65. The increasing numbers and diversity of its membership and Partnership bases, and the multiplicity of its roles places the OECD in a strong position to further strengthen its role as a global pathfinder, enabling it to shape the global agenda. However, as well as opportunities, the increasing diversity within the OECD’s membership also poses challenges in continuing to respond to the demands of its Members and in maintaining its relevance to an increasingly diverse membership base.

66. The OECD, as an international, membership-based organisation, with a global role and ambition, is aiming to address a wide array of critical issues through various means and roles. However, simultaneously, it is also trying to meet the many different priorities of its members, within a rapidly changing context. This creates several tensions and trade-offs. These relate to prioritising its focus and resources to ensure a clear strategic direction, while also considering the implications and building consensus on the choices made. Moreover, they must also navigate the breadth of interests and priorities in an effective way to uphold consensus and relevance. Thus, flexibility must be a key feature in any future organisational structures and operating models of the OECD.

Box 7: Relevance – Trade-offs and Tensions

Trade-off: A very broad strategy allows for the inclusion of a wide range of Members’ policy needs; however, it also somewhat blurs the strategic direction.

Tension: The OECD assumes a multiplicity of roles: policy forum, think tank, standard setter, capacity builder and knowledge generator. The Members and non-Members view each role differently in terms of their relevance and expectations, which implies an inherent tension among the stakeholders, as they attach varying degrees of importance to these roles.

4.2. Effectiveness

Summary

67. The OECD delivers high-quality products, which generally achieve the expected outputs and add value to Members’ policymaking. These results generate direct benefits for each Member. In addition, the Members are also indirectly benefitted through the OECD’s wider role as a platform for global policy dialogue and influence. The collegiate and neutral approach (based on “soft law”) that is operationalised in its guidelines and policy recommendations for Members and non-Members is also effective. Standard setting, as a traditional role, remains important across all OECD Members and globally. However, the results achieved through these processes are not evenly distributed: the levels of appreciation for different results vary among the countries, and some areas have been identified for improvement.

68. The positive aspects of effectiveness relate to the use and usefulness of OECD work and its global role as a leading international forum for sharing best practice and international standard setting. The process for producing the outputs is highly valued (for example, the quality of the Policy Committee’s discussions and the peer review processes). This is underpinned by the strong and reputable analytical and statistical foundation of the OECD.

69. Less positive responses were recorded regarding the use of certain OECD products and standards in relation to the recommendations for national policy action, and the availability and effectiveness of OECD knowledge-building and communications mechanisms. A gap was also perceived in relation to the documentation of the OECD’s results, which can inform future

activities. As a result of this, the effectiveness assessment that is included in this section of the Evaluation report is based largely on feedback from OECD Members, staff, and Partners and on recent evidence from the In-Depth Evaluations (IDEs) about the use of policy advice.

HLF 5: The strong analytical and statistical core of OECD work gives it credibility and underpins its brand – a fundamental asset.

70. The documentary evidence across the organisation in terms of national reviews and specific technical outputs clearly indicated the importance of the core range of OECD statistical and analytical work and how it is used across both Member and non-Member countries. As noted in the relevance findings, generally, this work is aligned with Members’ interests and is guided through the respective Committees and Working Groups, and by the supplementary VC-funded projects. A key message that emerged from the country studies was that the usefulness of OECD outputs is underpinned by the OECD’s credibility, global profile, and neutrality. This triangulated with the evidence from the policy theme inquiry, where comparative analyses and benchmarking had particularly high levels of added value.

71. This fundamental aspect of the OECD’s work results in high-quality analytical products for a wide range of issues. In the country studies and the survey, most of the Members reported that the added value of the comparative analyses and data, models, indicators, and statistics across most topics was high. However, it was only possible for the larger countries, with a substantial presence in the OECD Headquarters, to engage with the full range of topics. Although the broad scope of the topics is also appreciated by the smaller countries, they have insufficient human resources to attend multiple Committees and Working Groups. Consequently, each country identifies the topics of greatest priority for their own national interests.

Box 8: Labour and Employment Policies are a Common Priority Across the Members, but in Varied Ways

The Evaluation found that the OECD work that supports the employment, labour and social affairs concerns of its members is highly appreciated. However, the priorities and work programmes differ according to country contexts, which contributes to the high relevance of the OECD’s support in this sector.

For example, in the Republic of Korea, the OECD supported a review of the employment, labour and social affairs issues. This included a focus on the fourth revolution, employment, and climate change. This nuanced work was seen to be greatly appreciated and has assisted Korea in considering its current and future policies. Moreover, the OECD’s technical support in relation to pensions in Korea has also been very helpful in helping it to consider the policy context of its national social security system. The country has been working closely with the OECD (using VCs) on its fiscal sustainability to increase its social security.

Furthermore, the OECD is effectively supporting Costa Rica with its workforce issues, which have resulted from its informal business sector. There are also discussions about the OECD potentially providing guidance on the well-being of its health workforce.

France has emphasised the importance of OECD work in embedding workplace strategies to address workplace inequalities, both within France and without, as this work underpins economic policies, globally.

Although this broad scope of priorities presents the OECD with a challenge in responding to the varied needs of its members, if it can effectively respond to these diverse needs, the OECD will remain relevant across its membership in the future.

[Sources: the ELSAC thematic study, document review, country study interviews and OECD staff interviews. Feb–May 2023].

72. In terms of the value added to policymaking, the OECD's analytical and statistical work was generally found to be effective across all ten country studies, and when triangulated with policy theme and Ambassador interviews, the value of the evidence was confirmed. However, a slightly different emphasis was placed on the results that were most highly valued by the different Member Countries, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

73. For recent Members, the support and products relating to the basic national governance processes and fiscal policies were seen as critical in strengthening national economic policies and functions. Furthermore, the membership process itself challenged these countries to improve their internal governance policy standards and practices.

74. For non-European countries, strong interest was seen to be in the global rankings, which encourage internal policy dialogues on the potential pathways for better policy outcomes. European countries also consider EU-comparative data and have more opportunities for benchmarking against other European countries. There was also a strong interest in thematic work on critical issues such as taxation, labour, and digitalisation; however, it was also indicated that the findings of this work were used as references and inputs to national policy dialogues and were not always considered as directly applicable to the country contexts.

75. For larger countries, there was less direct national benefit from the OECD's work; however, they supported other countries' use of such products and standards to achieve a common global approach. This point is expanded upon under the next HLF.

76. Moreover, the effectiveness of OECD products for Members' policy ecosystems was also seen to vary across the countries. Statistics for national reporting, country economic survey recommendations, general policy publications, economic and migration outlooks, and global economic analyses were generally cited as useful in informing Members' policies and reforms. However, the more targeted products, particularly those with an environmental focus, were found to be less utilised across all the country studies.

77. In addition, the useability of the reports and the communication needs of the policymakers were seen to vary according to their function. Policymakers at the technical level and those working on specific thematic issues were seen to welcome detailed technical reports, which capture substantive points and comparative approaches. However, policymakers in more political or cross-cutting roles and more senior-level positions (including Ambassadors) consistently identified the need for shorter products and digests of long reports for easy, immediate, and more actionable use in informing domestic policymaking, reforms, and political discussions. Increased use of data visualisation to assist with understanding and use of products would be appreciated across stakeholder groups.

78. Both the Secretariat staff and the representatives of the Member countries acknowledged that the need for more digestible and actionable recommendations was not a communication function but one that should be initiated by substantive Directorates, building on different skillsets, beyond thematic expertise.

79. Despite the positive feedback on the OECD's core data and analysis work, some concerns were raised in the Ambassador and country interviews over the perceived or potential risks to data management and analysis. This thread of concern arose from several different perspectives, relating to different country profiles.

80. For smaller Member countries, this concern related to the increasing breadth of topics covered by the OECD, as resources are perceived to be spread more widely because of this, with less resources for core activities.

81. Conversely, it was predominantly the larger countries and founding Members who expressed the potential risks of the OECD becoming more absorbed in standard products as the membership expands. It was suggested that this may mean that less attention will be given to the emerging, complex issues that are of interest to longer term or larger Members, who have a more established research capacity and who have already completed their foundation work on standards and good practices.

HLF 6: The effectiveness of OECD work through peer-to-peer networks brings a fundamental benefit to Members and Partners. The OECD is valued as a platform for dialogue and a channel for peer engagement and global influence.

82. In the survey and during the Ambassador, thematic and country interviews, the respondents/interviewees generally reported that attending the Substantive Committees and Technical Working Groups is an effective engagement, which generates benefits beyond the specific activities and products. Furthermore, the OECD is widely seen and appreciated as a leading global forum for good practice in certain policy areas, such as economic surveillance, education, taxation, corporate governance, and development evaluation. OECD events for knowledge sharing were noted as very important to future country needs by 47% of the survey respondents.

83. Moreover, the effectiveness of the Committee system – as evidenced by the appreciation that was expressed for the peer review process – is seen to give significant networking, trust-building, and knowledge- and experience-sharing benefits. This is dependent on the continuous, frequent, and high-quality engagement of the Members, who activate and operate the system with Chairs and with the support of technical divisions and Bureaux.

84. The potential for co-learning, which is offered by OECD membership, was seen to be greatly appreciated. It was identified as an effective means of engaging with the OECD and with other Members, as these opportunities provide a space in which important issues can be raised and discussed in a collegial format. During meeting sessions, the opportunity to listen to and engage with individuals who have specific professional expertise and to listen to technical discussions provide a forum for rich and productive debates, which would not be possible to the same extent for most countries without these sessions. These opportunities alert Members to new information, different perspectives, and alternative courses of policy action to be considered. This was consistently raised as a substantial benefit for those engaging in the OECD's processes.

85. Furthermore, the OECD documents, the interviews, and the data gathered in relation to the OECD's global relations signalled the importance and effectiveness of the organisation's peer-to-peer engagement. This was seen to go beyond the membership, linking the Members and Partners in a global policy dialogue.

86. For example, the role of the OECD in the G7 and G20 provides an opportunity for Members who are not included in these platforms to engage with the key issues discussed at the forums. Thus, through the OECD, these Members gain a global voice, along with other countries who have common interests. Specific examples of the critical topics raised in these important forums by the OECD, which were frequently mentioned during the key informant interviews, related to taxation, carbon markets and digital security. In addition, the OECD also engages with other global forums on specific topics, such as responsible business. These aspects of the OECD's membership give visibility to Members' concerns and access to critical and timely information, which would not be possible to the same extent if they were operating independently.

Box 9: Leveraging the OECD's Economic Strengths

The OECD's core expertise and mandate successfully adds value to the economic aspects of a wide range of topics. However, the feedback from the Members suggested that the OECD risks duplication with other global actors when it seeks to exert influence beyond the economic realm. Climate change is one example of this, with multiple actors providing countries with policy advice and guidelines for addressing climate change. Specifically, the country stakeholders expressed some frustration with the OECD's duplication of the work of other multilaterals and in the fact that its advice is sometimes not well-aligned with existing guidelines, creating additional strain in an already crowded space.

Nonetheless, when the OECD applies its economic perspective and expertise to this high-profile issue, there is significant potential for added value. A positive example of this can be seen through the current OECD activities on the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches. Through this process, the OECD is aiming to estimate the impact of carbon mitigation policies and to provide statistics for Members through a mapping and stocktaking approach. Here, the OECD is effectively applying its economic expertise to create economic models and to provide a comparative analysis among countries. This area of OECD work in climate change is generally greatly appreciated. In addition, climate financing was also identified as an area in which the OECD can provide valuable guidance and information.

Working at the intersection of cross-cutting themes and economic dimensions is clearly in line with the OECD mandate and provides it with the focus necessary to achieve more tangible results. Moreover, maintaining a clear focus on such large global topics provides an avenue for the OECD to collaborate and coordinate more effectively with other actors for enhanced global action. The OECD could apply such an approach more broadly, for example, to other key global issues.

[Sources: document review and internal, country, thematic and Partner study interviews. Feb–May 2023].

87. However, views on the effectiveness of the OECD's influence in global direction setting were more mixed. In the interviews and the Members' survey, divergent views were expressed on this, with Members raising questions on what it should seek to bring its added value to in relation to comparative international bodies. This was especially true in areas in which there are other international institutions involved as direction influencers – for example, the UNFCCC (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) on climate change and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) on the economic recovery in Ukraine. Throughout the focus on climate change, the country stakeholders who engage with the OECD noted the confusion and duplication of roles and approaches in climate change policy and in planning guidance and instruments from various international agencies, which is time-consuming and resource intensive.

88. Despite this, the importance of the OECD's work on global standards is also seen to bring opportunities, such as early market access and technical directions for emerging topics (for example, digital), and as accelerating progress on/changes in specific policy areas (for example, education). The OECD is seen to predominantly provide "soft law" and guidance – such as standards and advice – as opposed to the "hard law" (legally enforced regulations and conditions – provided by institutions such as the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)).

89. Moreover, on a global scale, a significant number of standards and technical instruments contribute to cementing the role of the OECD in helping to level the global playing field, giving it visibility beyond its members, and allowing it to promote good practices widely in other countries. This was noted in the Partner interviews with ASEAN and South Africa, where the OECD's assistance was said to reach all ASEAN Members and where the OECD-generated information is shared to other African and BRICs nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and

South Africa). Similarly, the OECD's centres in various regions help to promote its work to both Member and non-Member countries. No firm evidence was found to suggest the extent to which this dissemination and sphere of influence occurs; however, based on the feedback received, it is likely that the breadth and depth of the knowledge within the OECD is appreciated and useful for both Members and non-Members. The recent work of the GRC to track the convergence of Partners with the OECD's standards through a country series was an important step in extending its reach and in helping to redress the global balance. It has also provided a good practice example of an effective monitoring tool to assist in tracking the outcomes of OECD work.

90. Although the operations of the OECD Committees were identified as largely effective, areas where improvements could be made to enhance the OECD's effectiveness were identified through the interviews and the Members' survey. The country representatives who have engaged with the OECD's Committees and Working Groups suggested that the quality of the dialogue varied among the different Committees. This was particularly noted by the representatives from the smaller countries, from which individuals attend multiple Committees and Working Parties/Groups, or in cases of newly appointed delegates, who have yet to familiarise themselves with Committee processes. Some Committees are seen as being very effectively managed, with clear objectives and workplans in the Working Parties/Groups, which feed back into the decision making of the main Committee deliberations. However, other Committees are seen as less effective, specifically those that take longer to access the required information for decision making and those in which the process of the decision making is protracted. In some circumstances, the Committees' approaches to providing equal peer treatment to all the processes that lead to products was also felt to be compromised. This was seen to result from the influence of a Committees' leadership and by the availability of VC resources, which reportedly distort the prioritisation of activities and the nature of the decisions reached.

Box 10: The Education Policy Committee – A Good Practice Example of Committee Communication

The Education Policy Committee (EPC) was highlighted through many interviews as a particularly effective example of Committee management and of the related working process. This effectiveness is grounded in excellent communication networks for real-time dialogue. The processes allow delegates to engage evenly and to contribute substantially to the Committee's work and joint prioritisation. There is a strong connection between the Education Directorate; the EPC; and several working groups, which include Counsellors for education. This connection assists in creating strong feedback loops for identifying and productively discussing the priorities and providing feedback on results.

The work of the Committee is communicated well to Counsellors through an education-specific website, which provides a central repository for information and facilitates feedback and simultaneous commenting. This tool is important in maintaining momentum and providing a platform for continuing discussions and progress between Committee sessions. This online platform also provides additional transparency to Committee decisions and processes, thus building a sense of ownership over the resulting products. This contributes to timely and productive decision making.

[Sources: document review and the country and transversal study interviews. Feb–May 2023].

91. The processes for the economic surveys were also highlighted as being generally effective, although there were some requests that they be updated to include a more dynamic presentation and more contemporary issues.

92. Conversely, several examples were raised during the interviews of duplication occurring among the different Directorates and other multilateral institutions, leading to different positions being recommended for the same issue. Recognising that the Evaluator focused on

only a subset of the policy themes covered by the entire OECD, this was particularly notable in relation to the risk assessment processes for climate change and in approaches to social protection frameworks and renewable energy. Furthermore, it was said that the work of several Committees was being stretched due to the expanding demands of the Members and of the non-Members, which have detracted from the priority focus of the work.

93. The importance of non-Members' and Partners' participation in Committees and Working Groups was highlighted both through the Members' interviews and in the Partner studies. The Members appreciated the participation of non-Members, particularly of the Partners, in the OECD's processes. The reasons given for this related to the wider world view that is presented by the inclusion of large global economies and the attendant diversity of perspectives and experiences. From the perspective of the OECD's key Partners (Brazil, South Africa, and India), who were interviewed for the Evaluation, the OECD's knowledge- and evidence-driven approach, its technical expertise, and the peer-to-peer engagement it provides is appreciated. Its work and standard-setting role in areas such as education, taxation and fiscal governance were also much appreciated. However, there is a general view that the OECD could do more to bring in the perspectives of non-Members and developing countries to inform its work and discussions, particularly concerning areas in which there are differing views between OECD Members and non-Member countries, for example, climate finance, business practice and gender approaches.

94. The role of the relationship between the OECD and the EU was raised as an important feature of policy dialogues and decision making, particularly for European Members (see Box 11, below). Generally, the links between the two institutions were seen as complementary and, at times, synergetic with the European Commission-led processes of hard law, compared to the more formative debate facilitated by the OECD on soft-law guidelines and recommendations (not legally binding) and its attention to emerging issues.

95. However, it was noted by the European Members that the national officials' attention was, understandably, more drawn to the EU Commission's processes. This was due to the signatories required and to the attendant technical and financial assistance provided by the EU for their implementation. This preference was also noted for smaller countries, which meant that participation in EU sessions was preferable to the OECD sessions, where there were conflicting dates or resource requirements. Some Members also noted that the non-binding nature of the OECD's policies in comparison with the EU's policies meant that the OECD's policy recommendations often garnered less political attention in their domestic arenas.

Box 11: The added value of OECD Partnerships – The EU as a Case Study

The EU has a unique position in the OECD. It participates in the work of the Organisation, including that of the Council and the standing committees. It does not provide assessed contributions to the Part I budget but makes significant VCs to support the implementation of the organisation's programme of work. For the EU stakeholders, it is the technical aspects of the OECD rather than the strategic areas which are of most value. The OECD is seen as largely relevant and aligning to the EU's policy needs (for example, labour standards, economic structural issues, climate transition and reform) and there is a high level of alignment between both organisations in identifying policy gaps and needs. The OECD's added value is largely seen to lie in medium- to long-term issues and analyses, rather than in the short-term issues or in addressing crises. The OECD is, therefore, seen to be particularly aligned with the EU on (economic) structural issues. Given the significant use of VCs from the EU, the EU delegates indicated a strong satisfaction with the EU-funded OECD products, the quality of data and the staff. Issues and flagship products, especially where the EU has exclusive competence, were identified as being highly relevant, especially for economic surveillance, the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC) and in slowly catching up on climate issues. The EU perceives the OECD as very good at exercising its core mandate, particularly in building and using evidence and informing policy.

However, there was a common view that the OECD needs to refocus in terms of the areas and the nature of the work it is engaging in. As in the country studies, the EU stakeholders clearly expressed that the OECD suffers from being siloed in how it functions internally, with the work of Policy Committees not being sufficiently integrated. While the OECD is one of the EU's most reliable Partners in terms of the outcomes it delivers, OECD processes are time-consuming and restrictive or rigid. As in the country studies, there was a strong view that the communication about the products could be improved. The EU addresses similar issues as the OECD through hard law; therefore, the OECD's standard setting role is of less value to the EU, except in areas of the OECD's comparative advantage or where there is geopolitical space to agree on a standard by a larger group.

[Source: document review, the interviews with 13 EU stakeholders, and a survey covering 29 EU officials.]

HLF 7: An increasingly varied membership brings opportunities and challenges in terms of providing recommendations that are sufficiently tailored to specific contexts and/or easily implementable.

96. The incremental path within the OECD towards membership growth brings opportunities from a stronger collective voice, greater credibility from a larger membership, more resources from the Members' engaging in and supporting the OECD's work, and from a wider knowledge base. The process of growth is well-documented within the OECD and the accession process was noted by newer Members as a privilege and a source of effective advancement within their national policy contexts. The Ambassadors and country-level stakeholders considered the expanding and increasingly diverse membership as largely positive, with a growing richness of dialogue on complex issues and an introduction of new expertise, capabilities, and resources to the OECD's range of products and activities.

97. However, with this increase in diversity now being reflected in the OECD's Members, there are now both large and small economies to be respected and considered, in addition to different economic models, policy cycles, heritages, languages, and cultural and social dimensions. This was seen to be reflected in the national views expressed in the country interviews and in the survey on the OECD's products' quality and utility, which varied depending on several factors: the audience (experts/policymakers); the capacity of Members

to engage (delegation size/geographical location); and delegates' knowledge and understanding of the OECD.

98. Moreover, this growing and increasingly diverse membership also means that dialogues need to reflect the larger number of people involved in the discussions, as there are more voices that need to be heard. Yet, this was also highlighted as a challenge during the country study interviews, as a wider conversation can lead to less depth and specificity, in favour of more generality at Working Groups and Committees. This caused some country stakeholders to express frustration, as they had expected more targeted and decisive discussions.

99. The interviews from within the policy theme inquiry emphasised the need for Members to engage with the available opportunities for dialogue and to extract the information that was most useful for their national policy context from the sessions. This involves each Member taking responsibility for their own input and applying their knowledge to achieve their own results at a country level. For the Members, the Evaluation revealed that there is a tension between their desire to access the richness and the depth of information offered by the diverse membership, and their desire for clear and specific information, which can be more readily applied within their own contexts. The actionability of the analytical products' findings and recommendations, and the capacity to apply these across all Members is not even, implying higher utility for some Members than others.

100. Consequently, the OECD's ability to work effectively with diversity is an increasing challenge. However, the Members recognise the importance of embracing and capitalising on the growing diversity within the membership, as this is reflective of global diversity and is important in shaping relevant and effective global solutions.

HLF 8: Access to and analysis of data is an area that is becoming challenging as the breadth of initiatives and products expands. Yet, data are imperative to informing the strategic and focused multi-sectoral approaches necessary for the OECD to address demand and tackle the complexity and inter-relatedness of global issues, which it must do to maintain and enhance its effectiveness.

101. The data and evidence-based products of the OECD are highly respected, as they support comparative learning and provide substantial contributions to policymaking processes at national and global levels. It is, however, challenging for Members to absorb the mass of information from the OECD's many thematic workstreams and to keep track and contribute meaningfully to all the initiatives of interest.

102. The Evaluation evidence gathered through the document and thematic reviews and the interviews highlighted challenges in the Members' absorption capacity. The first challenge related to Members' internal organisation: whether they have small or large economies, the Members are organised differently regarding their contributions to the work of the OECD. They have a range of national-level coordination mechanisms, which have different degrees of formality, and which enable a coordinated contribution from the relevant ministries to the work of the OECD Committees. However, in the absence of a strong mechanism for the integration of Committees' agendas within the OECD, these national mechanisms can provide a complete and coherent view of the contributions made across the thematic areas. The national coordination mechanisms also help to coordinate initiatives of several international organisations in overlapping areas of operation, such as education, trade, and climate change.

103. Another challenge that was identified related to the increasing complexity of the issues addressed by the Committees. Encompassed within this challenge, was the issue of the Secretariat and the Members' preparation ahead of the Committee meetings. Their ability to

prepare in advance is impacted by the increased workload of the Committees and the complexity of the information provided. The subsequent difficulties encountered in addressing a more varied and complex agenda and the associated documentation, which must be reviewed prior to the Committee sessions, requires further attention and time. This diminishes the time available for other preparatory activities and, thus, the quality of the contributions. This is because the Members do not have the time to process the information so that they can provide coordinated contributions. In some cases, these challenges are exacerbated by language barriers, which means additional time is required for translation and comprehension.

104. Moreover, the OECD has been actively attempting to address the increasing importance of intersectionality, multidisciplinary research, and the integration and synergy between important issues. This reflects the global trend in acknowledging and building evidence on complex issues and understanding; the policy synergies that can be achieved; and the trade-offs that need to be considered to achieve the optimal and most sustainable outcomes. The OECD has engaged in a range of horizontal projects, which are designed to facilitate such issues. The feedback through the thematic and transversal studies, the country studies and the Partner interviews indicated that the horizontal projects are achieving positive results. However, the feedback also indicated that these initiatives are insufficient for the OECD to be fully effective, and that it is still largely seen as focusing on single issues through specific Committee processes.

105. The communication and engagement with Members on integrated or cross-cutting priorities appear to be increasing but still require more focus. In the documentation and interviews, aspects such as digitalisation, climate change and gender were identified as receiving increasing attention; however, this does not appear to be translating to substantial outcomes.

106. The OECD gender recommendations of 2013 and 2015 are key reference documents for gender-related work in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship and on Gender Equality in Public Life. These two documents outline the areas of focus for adherents to mainstream gender equality in national policies within these two areas of work. There is no allied outlining of the necessary concrete steps that the OECD needs to take to mainstream gender within Committee work, such as identifying resource needs (for example, staff with specific skill sets) or including a timed road map, with milestones for the objectives. This is now being addressed somewhat, with the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in June 2023 welcoming adoption of the new strategy – The OECD's Contribution to Promoting Gender Equality.

107. For example, while there is a tradition of collecting gender disaggregated data, the respondents among the Members and Secretariat staff identified that there were limited gender analyses. The Social Institutions and Gender Index was identified as a positive step in improving analyses. However, it was also noted that the underlying causes of the differences in the data and the fragmented approaches to this issue are a barrier to mainstreaming. Moreover, a randomised review of the OECD's published working papers (WPs) from the last five years, showed no gender focus at all, even though gender analyses would have been relevant in the WPs that were reviewed (see Box 12, below).

Box 12: Extent of Gender Focus – Some Examples.

In WP 5553: “Objectives and challenges in the implementation of a universal pension system in France” (OECD 2019), the words “gender” or “women” were never mentioned. In WP 1454 (2018): “France: Promoting economic opportunities and well-being in poor neighbourhoods”, the word “women” appeared twice: “native born women” and “mostly women”. In WP 1587 (2019): “Improving school results and equity in compulsory education in Sweden”, the word “gender” was mentioned twice in the context of statistics being presented “by gender”, whilst the words “women” and “girls” never appeared. Similarly, in WP 1601 (2020): “Sickness and disability systems: comparing outcomes and policies in Norway with those in Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland”, neither “gender” nor “women” appeared.

[Sources: document review]

108. The engagement between the Members and the Secretariat on integrated priorities or cross-cutting initiatives largely occur where there are cross-Committee initiatives, for example, the initiative to tax organisations such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon, which involved three Committees and the corresponding Directorates and a greater logical involvement of the Committee Chairs. There is, however, no institutionalised mechanism to ensure the coherence of Committees’ work on increasingly interconnected topics, despite the Chairs and the OECD staff playing an ever more active bridging role.

109. At the Council level, the Ambassadors consistently highlighted the limited space for discussion on current global strategic issues and the unusual nature of the organisation: it aims for international cooperation, even though there is limited opportunity for dialogue and consensus building at the overarching strategic level. More recently, this has in part been addressed through the introduction of discussion on Organisation-wide strategies at Council meetings and the introduction of a range of additional informal Council meetings.

110. Another critical aspect of the OECD’s effectiveness in the future is how it positions itself, given the breadth of its products and complexity of its analyses. The OECD is already working with multiple and integrated datasets, and it has also been working in partnership with other institutions to build integrated datasets, which can be cross analysed. This requires a significant investment in technology and raises the importance of data management and analysis capability. There are new and emerging technology techniques and solutions for interpreting spatial and integrated data on a widening range of topics – for example, integrating economic and climate data into a model.

111. Furthermore, there is an increasing demand for data that are concisely presented in digital and searchable formats. The feedback on the OECD’s digital capacity, which was identified through the focus on digitalisation, is that, while the OECD can effectively identify what Members should be undertaking, it is lagging in its own capability. For the OECD to keep ahead (or at least abreast) of the trends and knowledge in data management and analysis, the demands for integrated datasets and products will require strategic action and investment.

Box 13: The OECD's Influencing Role in Gender Equality

The OECD has the potential to leverage its strong economic expertise and its role as a global leader to improve gender outcomes, globally. This would help to achieve the international goals on this issue. Currently, however, the OECD's focus on gender equality is limited.

Generally, throughout the country studies, it was felt that the OECD is not proactive on gender equity and that its efforts focus too much on gendered data collection rather than on mainstreaming transformational change in gender equality. Similarly, in its policy work, the OECD was seen as having an imbalance in its approach to gender, with insufficient attention being given to the aspects of labour, employment, and economic empowerment. Furthermore, it was felt that undue emphasis was placed on the technical aspects of this issue, with some respondents feeling that this was not warranted or timely regarding the matters under discussion. Thus, the OECD's focus on this issue was seen as token or process-driven, which could undermine the OECD's influence.

However, recent work has been undertaken to improve gender mainstreaming, both within the OECD and across its work. Given the OECD's global influence and its role as a global leader, there is huge potential for it to affect positive gender outcomes. It could achieve this by increasing its recognition of and action on the gendered impacts of economic changes and by integrating gender equality and other aspects of inclusion with its work.

[Sources: document review and internal, country, thematic and transversal study interviews. Feb–May 2023].

112. The increasing recognition, globally, of the interconnectedness and complexity of key global issues, including the interface of economic, environmental, and social action, is an important future area of focus for the OECD in maintaining its effectiveness as a cutting-edge global leader. Given this reputation as a global leader, the absence of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is an important gap, which must be addressed to bring the OECD in line with other global organisations.

HLF 9: The OECD is positioned as a knowledge-based organisation and is effective in presenting research and analytical findings; however, it is less effective in demonstrating evidence on its own level of achievement. The Members were able to articulate good examples of the outcomes that have been achieved, however, these have not been clearly documented or fed into the feedback loops for institutional recognition and learning.

113. There is clear evidence that the OECD is performing well in generating high-quality outputs and convening dynamic activities, which are considered useful. However, it is less clear how it is performing in the outcomes in relation to its vision. Whilst the framing of the vision is at a high level, the contribution pathway from the activities across the organisation to the achievement of the vision is not explicit. Moreover, it is unclear what guides the internal strategic learning across the organisation.

114. For a knowledge-based organisation to be effective, it is important to be clear about the internal knowledge building processes and their contributions towards outcomes. Evidence from the country synthesis analysis identified that the mechanisms and processes for measuring and communicating the OECD's work and impact are only considered to be moderately effective. All the countries indicated that there are insufficient and ineffective feedback loops from implementation to learning. Whilst it was recognised that the OECD conducts their own impact studies and surveys, it does not track the impact of its products and work on the Member states' policymaking, nor does it track the Members' implementation of the recommendations made in the policies.

115. Some countries also admitted that it is not always possible to credit the OECD's work and influence at a domestic level, especially when it is seen as being associated with informing a sensitive or controversial area of government reform. In addition, many Members stated that it was difficult to see the impact that the iterative policy discussions and implementation had in their national contexts. These discussions and the implementation of policies are informed through the OECD's delivery mechanisms and products.

116. Conversely, in other countries the reverse was observed. For example, in Costa Rica, an explicit reference was made to the OECD. Moreover, in other countries, it was indicated that the OECD's guidance is important to policymakers when they are considering the viability of governments' proposed policies and reforms, which may be at odds with the OECD's analyses or advice.

117. Furthermore, the larger Members, who have strong internal national systems for performance-based budgeting and strong accountability and learning mechanisms, questioned the extent to which the OECD is confident that its mechanisms lead to the expected outcomes and to its aspirations for long-term impact. Whilst the OECD does conduct performance reviews, programme implementation reports, evaluations, and surveys – including annual stakeholder surveys and medium-term orientation surveys. However, without clearer and more embedded mechanisms for capturing information on the contribution of their work to the outcomes, the relevance of the OECD's work in contributing to long-term impact will remain partially obscured.

Box 14: Outcome Tracking – A Work in Progress for the OECD

Collaboration across the Directorates (for example, the Public Affairs and Communication Directorate (PAC)) to develop systems that can better capture organisational impact are gradually improving, but these are still a work-in-progress and are not yet institutionalised. In the context of other multilateral institutions, the OECD remains comparatively ineffective in terms of its outcome tracking.

Although limited examples of outcome tracking were evident in the Evaluation, improved guidance and instructions were seen to have been issued. For example, in 2013 and 2015, the ELSAC received instructions and recommendations that encouraged progress monitoring. Two progress reports were subsequently delivered in 2017 and 2022, which systematically assessed the Committee's progress in relation to each area of the specific recommendations. An annual report on progress in implementation of OECD standards is also tabled yearly at the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting. However, these reports did not analyse the cause-and-effect relationship between the recommendations and the progress under different headings. Furthermore, the country and thematic interviews highlighted concerns with the insufficient reporting of how investments contribute to the OECD's intended outcomes, beyond a basic counting of its outputs.

Despite calls for the improved tracking of outcomes, in line with the strengthening of global practices in this regard, Committee Members indicated that insufficient progress has been made. It was considered that the organisation's internal documents and interviews, its allocated funding for improved data systems and its staff capacity are serious limitations in improving its outcome analyses, transparent reporting on its contributions and its organisational learning pathways. This represents a missed opportunity for learning regarding the determinants of effective and less effective performance.

[Source: document review; MOPAN assessments; the internal, country, thematic and transversal study interviews; and comparator studies. [Feb–May 2023].

118. A further recommendation made in 2015 instructed the Public Governance Committee to cooperate with ELSAC in continuing to monitor progress. Consequently, two progress reports were published in 2017 and 2022. These monitoring reports systematically assessed the progress made by adherents to the recommendations, under each specific recommendation.

However, they did not assess the cause-and-effect relationship between the recommendations and the progress under different headings.

119. However, there were examples of emerging collaboration among the Directorates – for example, the Public Affairs and Communication Directorate (PAC) – in developing systems to better capture organisational impact. Yet, these are still works in progress and have not been institutionalised, and the low levels of funding and staff resources are also serious limitations. This represents a missed opportunity to learn the determinants of effective and less effective performance.

120. This incomplete learning system weakens the ability of the OECD to demonstrate where it is most effective, both for its members and for wider impact. During the Ambassador interviews, countries, particularly those putting forward large amounts of VCs, identified this limited capturing of progress towards outcomes and impact as a gap in the OECD, which affects its level of transparency in the use of funds.

121. In an increasingly competitive funding arena, funders are seeking evidence that their investments are achieving the expected outcomes within the defined impact pathways. In addition, several countries also added that they have been approached for additional VCs, without any attempt to demonstrate what has been achieved with previous funding, apart from the financial disbursements and the outputs achieved.

122. Evaluations and Audits are both a part of the OECD’s control framework. Although each has a different purpose and focus, there is a complementarity, and it is important to draw on this. The Internal Audit Annual Report 2021 stated: “Internal Audit will continue to further its Strategy to provide insight, foresight and oversight and add value through timely and relevant audit projects. Pursuant to its mission to promote continuous organisational improvement by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight, it will also continue to provide advisory services to the Secretary-General and senior management on areas of executive governance, risk management and internal control. It will coordinate its work with that of the external audit, and, through its role as Secretariat, will serve the Audit Committee.”²³ Formal coordination with the evaluations may strengthen both functions.

123. Better articulation and more consideration of the complementarities between the Audits and Evaluations could provide the foundation for stronger coordination – both formal and informal – and bring transparency to the issues that lend themselves most to evaluation and learning, rather than to compliance and accountability. This could also provide opportunities for the OECD to better highlight how it is achieving its outcomes. Capturing and measuring achievement at the outcome or impact level of its vision is currently beyond the scope of the Evaluation function. As the Member governments implement the policies, this is seen as their responsibility.

124. However, formal links to the Evaluation function were not found. Moreover, the unit has had limited success in resource mobilisation and demand for its advisory services and ad hoc Evaluations, such as programme Evaluations. Despite some successful work previously, these declined between 2020 and 2021. However, accountability systems to track follow-up, for example, through Intermediate Reports, are well developed, and the In-depth Evaluation (IDE) Unit is preparing a new series of events to further exploit and enhance the use of the good practices collected during the IDEs. These will be stored in a repository and used for learning and inspiration. This is a good example of existing initiatives within the Evaluation

²³ OECD (2022), Internal Audit Annual Report 2021, C (2022)11

function, which will need the full support of the OECD's management and Members as the imperative to document policy outcomes and impacts grows.

125. Overall, the evaluation function focuses mainly on the evaluation of Committees, does not produce many evaluations each year, applies a limited range of methodological approaches and is not well-staffed. However, there have been developments in this function and other recent examples of good practice, as follows:

- The evaluation function has recently moved to capture examples of contribution and outcome harvesting as part of the third cycle methodology.
- The work of the GRC tracks non-Members who sign up to OECD standards.
- There is documentation on how the Members promote standards to others through regional organisations.
- The Communication Department's development of a strong impact and Evaluation culture, with its 2018 award-winning impact framework.
- The Impact and Intelligence Unit's IMPACT, which helped to monitor and measure the impact of the OECD's external communications efforts.

126. These are examples of a stronger organisational awareness of the importance of impact and feedback loops in learning and improving corporate performance, which were further documented in the internal audit of the OECD's Publications Quality Review Process.

127. Furthermore, measuring the impact on audiences is very different from measuring the impact on policy reforms/implementation. The capacity to strengthen organisational learning requires a systematic approach, with associated capacity building or the recruitment of staff with existing skills in knowledge systems, information management and evaluation skills.

128. Evidence from this Evaluation's benchmarking inquiry shows that the range of different evaluations in peer organisations are significantly larger than the range in the OECD. This includes corporate evaluations, which address key management and operational issues, as exemplified by the evaluations of the results-based management (RBM) systems of the Council of Europe (COE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

129. In the OECD, such issues are, to some extent, addressed by the Internal and External audits, but the purpose here is compliance rather than learning. A recent example of this is the Preliminary Analysis of the Public Affairs and Communications Directorate (PAC) Centres, and the SGE/GRS Liaison Offices. This analysis was conducted to provide insights into how the OECD can best leverage these centres in line with the Secretariat-General's vision and priorities for stronger global engagement, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

HLF 10. The communication and engagement between the Secretariat and Members is generally good at the technical level, but lacks an institutionalised approach, in particular around corporate priorities, at a more senior level.

130. One important aspect relating to the OECD's effectiveness was raised across this Evaluation: the importance of communication. Aspects of internal communication have already been noted as an integral aspect of the effectiveness of the OECD's Committee and Working Group operations.

131. Communication between the OECD Secretariat and the Committee delegates works well, as highlighted by the policy themes' inquiries into labour and employment and the climate, which were conducted as part of this Evaluation. Members consistently praised the

responsiveness of the Secretariat to their requests as well as the expertise and quality of the OECD's Secretariat staff. In addition, the Secretariat also stressed the very good level of cooperation with Committee delegates; however, they did note delays in the submission of data for comparative reports. It was also noted that engagement with the Secretariat relied more on staff professionalism and expertise in specific areas rather than an organised or systematic approach to engaging Members. Consequently, Substantive Directorates have developed different initiatives to manage this engagement.

Box 15: New Frontiers in Communication

Digital communication is now a core communication priority for the OECD. Its convening power in specific technical issues for digitalisation demonstrates its knowledge leadership in technical matters. The OECD's leadership in these matters is shown through its work on cutting-edge issues such as digital security in both Member and non-Member countries. It is also shown through the convening value and power of education and of other areas working towards the public good, globally.

However, while there is evidence of the OECD's progress towards data visualisation, its existing digital communication platforms are not sufficiently user-friendly to encourage the use of its resulting products.

There is some indication that the OECD is already aware of these concerns and that there are plans to address them. These plans are based on the findings and actions outlined in the Outcomes of the Communication Functional Review, which includes recommendations for a revised structure that brings digital communication to the fore. This proposed shift towards the increased utilisation of digital means has become even more critical following the uptake of digital communication during COVID-19. Considering how rapidly other organisations adopted such technologies, OECD Members suggested that its slower adoption of these technologies has left the organisation behind other international organisations in this regard.

[Source: document review, Ambassador interviews, and internal staff, country, thematic and transversal study interviews. Feb–May 2023].

132. However, some examples of the OECD's internal use of outdated or dysfunctional tools were highlighted. Whilst there is progress towards data visualisation, its existing digital communication platforms are not sufficiently user-friendly, and the use of them for policy development is uneven across the OECD's Committees. For example, Directorates use the O.N.E. digital platform to engage with delegates in different ways, with some focusing on information sharing while others (such as the Environment Directorate (ENV)) use it to enable joint online commenting processes on reports and the sharing of best practices.

133. Furthermore, smaller countries or countries that have joined the OECD more recently, which do not have the capacity to gain a complete overview of the OECD's work or a general understanding of the organisation, highlighted the lack of guidance available for engaging with the OECD (for example, who to engage with and how).

134. Another challenge that was identified was related to external communications, which is recognised as key for the quality of dialogue with Members and beyond. Although the multiple communication channels for individual thematic areas (for example, newsletters and social media) were recognised as useful to the thematic experts in ministries, and the communication on core products (for example, economic surveys and the PISA) was cited as strong, Members expressed a need for snapshots of key data and developments from across the whole of the OECD. This would enable more strategic communications at senior levels, which would increase the organisation's visibility in Member countries.

135. In addition, the visibility and strategic core of the OECD is being obscured by a product- and output-focused communication. Despite efforts to communicate earlier in the process, this

communication tends to take place at the end of the policymaking process, blurring the visibility of corporate strategic priorities or issues of global relevance.

136. To address these issues, the OECD recently developed key corporate documents outlining corporate communication priorities: the first OECD Communication Strategy was approved by the Council in 2022 and the OECD Communication Plan was updated in early 2023. Furthermore, a functional review of the OECD's communication function was undertaken in 2022/2023 to better align the communication efforts of all the OECD stakeholders. While these initiatives were highlighted by Members as being extremely important, they are not yet sufficient to enable the OECD's internal and external communications to reflect its position as a leading, global knowledge-based organisation.

137. The Committees and the Secretariat are at the core of the OECD; therefore, how effectively they work, both independently and together, have a profound impact on how and to what extent the organisation will be able to meet its vision. The structure implies that Members are navigating certain tensions and, thus, are making decisions that have trade-offs.

138. One important tension that the OECD must navigate is balancing the demand that work and resources should be directed at the OECD's global role versus the demand that priority and resources should be directed at addressing the policy issues that are more focused on its Members' domestic policy areas. Furthermore, given the limited resources available, strategic decisions need to be made on the type and level of its engagement in a range of different issues, considering the trade-offs between depth and breadth.

139. The scope for work is, thus, large, and ever-expanding. This puts pressure on resources and requires a very high degree of efficiency in how the organisation works if it is to meet the high expectations associated with being a global leader.

Box 16: Effectiveness – Trade-offs and Tensions

Trade-off: Although the products are highly valued and considered by the Members, the format and dissemination could be improved. Concerns were expressed on the viability of an expanding array of areas of engagement, which could potentially create trade-offs between depth and breadth.

Tension: The OECD's reputation and high levels of established trust with Members and beyond contribute to the demand for products (for example, economic surveys); however, this could potentially deepen the tension between membership-focused work and externally or globally focused work.

4.3. Efficiency

Summary

140. The OECD implements its activities in a cost-effective and cost-efficient way and some of its characteristics and ways of working are common to international organisations with Member-driven and consensus-based approaches. However, others, which are less effective, are a symptom of working practices that have either emerged organically or are anchored within the constraints of long-standing, organisational conditions. These characteristics relate to *governance and coordination efficiency* issues around key structures and processes in terms of decentralised management; priority setting; a lack of coordination on key issues, such as horizontality and hidden costs; and a lack of efficient prioritisation.

141. In this environment, sometimes there has been confusion over the interpretation of roles: Members have been drawn into micro-managing the Executive (which, in turn, can lead to inefficiencies), without being able to focus their collective efforts on addressing the root causes of this confusion.

142. In terms of *operational efficiency* – for example, the head count and value for money – the OECD has shown large efficiency gains in its corporate functions over a 10-year period. There are also ongoing efforts to improve organisational efficiency in several key areas, such as human resources and communications. The observed weaknesses in the OECD’s efficiency (as signified by the Members’ experiences) relate to aspects of prioritisation; the complexity of its processes; accountability; outdated systems; and incentives and disincentives.

HLF 11: The governance²⁴ of the OECD is generally sound and has been regularly reviewed over the years. Such reviews have helped the organisation to gradually adjust to its changing and expanding role and membership. However, the ever-increasing diversity of the Members and issues now stretch the consensus-based Committee structure, and, in some cases, the capacity of the Standing Committee Members to substantively engage.

143. Over the last 15 years, the OECD’s membership has grown from 30 Members to 38 Members,²⁵ and a further five countries²⁶ have had their roadmaps for their accession to the OECD Convention adopted. This expansion in its membership has been matched by the organisation’s increasing engagement in partnerships and other types of collaboration. This greater diversity requires more time for dialogue to find consensus and a willingness to find common ground.

144. The OECD also now addresses a wider substantive agenda, meaning that delegates sometimes need more preparation and support from the capitals to engage in issues that they may not be very familiar with. This is a challenge when they have to participate in particularly complex processes within Standing Committees, such as the development of the PWB. Moreover, the feedback from OECD staff, Committee delegates and Ambassadors consistently conveyed frustration that the Standing Committees and Council meetings are very focused on process, at the expense of discussions on substantive issues. Consequently, the OECD will have to give more attention to Committees’ effectiveness to ensure that there is space for substantive discussions, especially at the Council level.

145. Over time, much thought has been given to OECD governance and to ensuring it can continue to support the organisation in a dynamic and changing world order. In 2019, a review²⁷ was conducted to examine the results of its efforts from the previous decade. This review involved close to 70 working meetings, in which Members thoroughly reviewed OECD governance. It highlighted several issues that still warrant attention, even though the context has changed. Two of these deserve particular attention, as they were frequently raised in the

²⁴ The relationship with Members through the Council, the Committee structure, and the consensus-based approach.

²⁵ New Members joining/have joined in the period between 2008 and 2023 are Chile, Slovenia, Israel, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

²⁶ Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru, and Romania.

²⁷ OECD (2019), Report on the Assessment of the 2014 Recommendations on Decision Making and Working Methods (Note by the Secretary-General), C (2019)125.

interviews from across the organisation, which were conducted as part of this Evaluation, as follows:

1. The principle of consensus: “it is worth noting that in the last few years, it has become more time consuming and complex to reach consensus on many important issues of the OECD agenda. For consensus to work, it is important that Members want to find ways to agree and are ready to find common ground to do so.”²⁸
2. Priority setting: “Overall, the implementation of the recommendations has helped tighten priority setting and improve Members’ information. However, priority setting is now such an intensive and complex process that it is affecting the space for Members to have the in-depth strategic discussions that allow consensus to be reached. Going forward it would be recommendable that Members rethink what could be simplified to deliver good outcomes.”

146. The interviews conducted as part of this Evaluation also confirmed that the Committee-based consensus architecture is perceived to be under pressure. This is because the diversity in Members and issues has made consensus harder to achieve. For example, setting “sunset clauses” for Committees may be common practice in some circumstances but winding-up processes are constrained and seem to be difficult to gain consensus on. Attempts to address this issue have included improving the efficiency of dialogue in the meetings. Moreover, the independence of the Committees means that there is significant diversity in their structures, processes, and governance; however, through the document reviews, we observed that efforts have been made²⁹ (and continue to be made) to summarise and share ways to improve working practices. These efforts have been made through the IDEs conducted of different Committees.

Box 17: Tools to Assist in Consensus Building

Delegates in multilateral organisations employ several tools and techniques to facilitate consensus building. The use of procedural mechanisms includes delegates serving as facilitators in decisions to help identify common interests, to bridge gaps between conflicting positions and to propose alternative solutions. Groups of Member States, based on interests, regions and/or key characteristics, can organise in preparation for formal meetings. Therefore, they can harmonise their positions and reduce the number of negotiating positions. When positions are far apart, the meeting Chair can request that the delegations that are furthest apart meet informally in a breakout group to attempt to find a solution, which is then presented back in the plenary. For smaller delegations, limiting the number of formal meetings and documents, while providing space for informal dialogues among delegates, can reduce the burden.

Delegates utilise these procedural mechanisms to manage discussions, facilitate the orderly progression of negotiations and to strive for consensus. The rules of procedure provide a structured framework for conducting negotiations and ensure fairness and equal participation. They can also address the concerns of all parties involved, ultimately, paving the way for consensus.

[Source: Benchmarking inquiry]

²⁸ OECD (2019), Report on the Assessment of the 2014 Recommendations on Decision Making and Working Methods (Note by the Secretary-General), C (2019)125.

²⁹ For example, the 2014 annual report to the Evaluation Committee capitalized on past experiences and included a transversal analysis of the recommendations included in all the OECD IDE reports, since inception of IDE at the OECD (in total, 58 IDEs issued since 2005, yielding 250 recommendations). The most common recurrent recommendations relate to working method efficiency considerations. This constitutes 54% of total recommendations made to date.

147. Moreover, the interviews and country studies also revealed a desire for modern working practices, such as more virtual engagement to reduce travel for non-Paris-based delegates. If this is systematically applied for all participants, it will allow all Members to participate on an equal basis, irrespective of its size and geographical location.

148. The legal and procedural framework that guides the Council and the Secretary-General and that establishes the relative responsibilities is comprehensive and complex. The interviews suggested that, while the rules and procedures are adequate, as reviewed and assessed by the Internal and External Audit, the complexity still leads to uncertainty and perceived micro-management, particularly in some Standing Committees. These difficulties are amplified by the turnover of delegates who, in general, stay between three and five years. The external audit of the PWB process³⁰ remarked that: “new delegates are unaware of the history, the mandate and the functioning of the OECD governing bodies (including Standing and Substantive Committees) and it takes some time they become acquainted with the various phases of the process, fully understand their purpose and, consequently, to be able to consciously participate in it.” This finding was echoed in the interviews with the Paris-based delegates and in the country studies.

149. This is particularly clear in the second area highlighted: the setting of priorities. The PWB process is the key tool. Improvements have been made to this over time, including through two reviews of the PWB process, which have been conducted over the past three years. These were conducted as a part of the external auditor’s performance audits and as also as part of a Member-led review by the Budget Committee. However, the process remains highly complex, lengthy and resource intensive. Consequently, this was seen as unsatisfactory by many interviewees from across the staff and the membership.

150. Furthermore, the timelines of the process were raised as being of concern in the external audit: “[the] terms of office of representatives of Members to the OECD usually last from three to five years, which means that a number of Delegates do not have an opportunity to participate in one full PWB cycle (from the start of Medium-Term Orientation survey, throughout its biennial execution, till closing the books for PWB Year 2), take part in the evaluation of the implementation of the PWB they worked on and the achievement of the adopted priorities. The processes for identifying priorities and drawing up of the PWB based on them are in place, but because of their timeframe and complexity they may not be well understood by the Members.” Despite various changes having been made, the evidence from across the Evaluation suggests that, overall, the process remains unsatisfactory and burdensome.

151. An Evaluation of the Intergovernmental Committees of the Council of Europe³¹ – the only other organisation among the comparators with a committee-based structure – resonated, to some extent, with these findings. For example, it found that “[whilst] the overall objectives of the intergovernmental committees are clear, there is a lack of prioritisation in deciding on actions to promote these goals.” Furthermore, it was also found that “there is a quite widespread view that the Committee of Ministers focuses too much on rather detailed issues in considering the committees’ terms of reference rather than on providing strategic direction or helping to prioritise themes being considered by the intergovernmental committee.”

³⁰ C (2021)69/PART2/ADD1

³¹ Council of Europe (2019), Evaluation of the Intergovernmental Committees Final Report

HLF 12: With both a long-term vision and a short, two-year PWB cycle, there is a vacuum in the medium term. The experiences of the OECD's peer organisations suggest that a medium-term strategy can be a good instrument in helping to set operational priorities and in channelling efforts, in a rolling budget.

152. The OECD's PWB is developed using a comprehensive strategic management system, which consists of two key elements. The first is the Strategic Management Framework, a results-based system that is designed to take the six strategic outcomes of the organisation (derived from the OECD Convention), and to cascade these down into output groups (broad policy areas); output areas (specific policy areas); and output results (specific products and deliverables, which are delivered through the Committees, sub-Committees, or Working Parties/ Groups on an individual or joint basis).

Box 18: The Missing Strategic Middle in the OECD

The OECD has undergone expansion, bringing an ever increasing and more diversified Membership and a larger range of technical areas. This shift has had multiple implications for the OECD, which were well documented in the 2019 Report on the Assessment of the 2014 Recommendations on Decision-Making and Working Methods. Two key implications are the increased pressure on consensus building processes and on priority setting. These are evident across the organisation in relation to its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and agility, which are all aspects that are within the scope of this Evaluation.

Simply maintaining its current processes could have significant negative effects on the OECD's operations and future growth. Continuing to use its cumbersome decision making would result in delayed and insufficient strategic guidance regarding its future directions and actions, which would impinge on the OECD's effectiveness. The interviews indicated that this risk is already being observed. Therefore, collaborative, and Member-based processes for consensus building and prioritisation are essential. Moreover, coordination mechanisms, such as the VC's focal point in the office of the Secretary-General, are important in facilitating coherence. However, many of the challenges that were identified in this Evaluation were related to the OECD's strategic and forward-looking processes, including the PWB.

Previous reviews of the PWB process have found that it is effective in generating the expected outputs. However, concerns and challenges have been identified in relation to the long-term strategic planning aspect of the priority setting processes. There is limited clarity in the alignment between the PWBs and the long-term strategic ideas, directions, and documents, such as the 2021 60th Anniversary Vision Statement. Stronger alignment between short- and long-term strategic and operational directions could assist in bringing more clarity to the OECD's consensus-building and priority-setting processes, in the context of a more diversified membership and portfolio.

[Source: document review; Ambassadors interviews; MOPAN assessment; the internal staff, country, thematic and transversal study interviews; and the comparator study. [Feb–May 2023].

153. Complementing this is a second element: the Integrated Management Cycle. This ensures the effective and comprehensive oversight of all PWB-related processes, and it is divided into several steps, as follows:

- Strategic planning – to identify Members' priorities (the key top-down elements).
- Committee planning – to identify the priorities from within the Committees (the key bottom-up elements).
- Budget parameters – to interpret the above into several guiding parameters for the PWB.
- The PWB – to approve the biennial PWB, clearly identifying how resources are aligned to output groups and output areas.
- Committee Progress Report – to allow for adjustments to budgets by Members and to report to Members on the PWB's execution.

- Performance Evaluation – allowing Members and selected Partners to evaluate the quality, usage, and impact of outputs, through the mechanisms of the Programme Implementation Report and IDE.³²

154. The PWB development process has been enhanced over recent years to ensure its transparency and effectiveness, as demonstrated in the Council's approval of the Modifications to the Preparatory Process for the Programme of Work and Budget in 2021.³³ The modifications included launching the Medium-Term Orientations survey at an earlier stage, improved guidance on the PWB process to Substantive Committees, and an enhanced process for the Budget Committee's review of preliminary PWBs.³⁴

³² OECD (2022), Annual Management Report, C (2022)122

³³ OECD (2021), Modifications to the Preparatory Process for the Programme of Work and Budget [C (2021)181].

³⁴ OECD (2022), Changes in the PWB Committee EDG (2022)14

Box 19: Strategic Budgeting

The discussions on the OECD budget process, for instance as part of the FSCG, highlight issues that could benefit from experiences gained in other multilateral organisations. A budget typically fulfils one or more functions, as follows: (1) A plan for how to deliver results; (2) A spending authorisation or upper resource limit; and (3) An instruction to undertake activities.

The budget also needs to strike the right balance between what needs to be explicitly approved independently versus what is only reported on retrospectively. Therefore, the budget and reporting process needs to be looked at holistically. Typically, multilateral organisations plan and approve resource utilisation at a higher level, while reporting on the use of resources at a more granular level.

The specific function(s) of a budget should determine its structure, level of detail, and approval process. For instance, if a budget primarily serves as a spending authorisation, then its level of detail should reflect that management is trusted and tasked with optimising the use of resources in pursuit of agreed objectives. Regarding their budget structures, several multilateral organisations delink the allocation of resources from departments to force more thematic collaboration across the departments. The budget is then used as a matrix, which allocates resources according to the agreed objectives. All departments can access this based on their specific contribution to the achievement of such results (for example, the United Nations Environment Programme).

Such organisations use a bottom-up budget process – particularly in multilateral organisations that pursue results in different country contexts (for example, the WHO). This type of process is typically used to arrive at the clear and realistic resource estimates required to deliver such results; however, that is not necessarily the level at which resource spending is approved or appropriated.

In cases of multiple funding sources, such as a mixture of assessed contributions and VCs, the budget can play an important role in aligning the results and resources. The strategic choice regarding how to mobilise and use VCs can be an important signal to donors and stakeholders and can address perceptions that VCs become a distraction and divert attention away from agreed objectives. For example, organisations can choose either to deepen engagements in areas that are already funded through assessed contributions (as is the case in UNICEF) or they can reserve assessed contributions for “orphan issues”, for which VCs are hard to mobilise (as is the case in the United Nations Development Programme).

Moreover, the length of the budget cycle should reflect the operating model, for example, multilateral organisations that focus on sudden-onset crises often use shorter, more flexible budget cycles, while those that pursue long-term change favour a longer planning horizon. A four-year budget cycle (for example, the United Nations Development Programme), or a rolling three-year budget cycle (for example, the EBRD) can be helpful in supporting a medium-term strategy. However, these organisations still need to manage their year-to-year cash flow issues, which, typically, are dealt with by management and only reported on retrospectively.

[Source: Benchmarking inquiry]

155. Some of the stakeholders engaged in this Evaluation highlighted their concerns with the strategic planning aspect of the cycle, specifically, the following:

- The number of separate steps involved in the strategic planning element of the cycle³⁵ can be burdensome, with as long as eight months elapsing between the Medium-Term Orientations survey and the Council’s decisions on the PWB.³⁶
- Discussing allocations prior to setting the priorities leads to unnecessary revisions/redrafting of key budget documents. For example, in 2021, inflation caused costs to rise in the period between the allocations being made and finalising the PWB.

³⁵ For example, through the MTO, the Secretary-General’s preliminary views, the Informal Convergence papers, the Strategic Orientations papers, and the Ministerial Council meetings.

³⁶ OECD (undated), Revised PWB planning process, 2023-24 PWB: Timeline

156. More generally, a broad range of stakeholders expressed the challenges occasioned by the existence of a two-year cycle for the PWB. This creates high demands on Secretariat staff and increases their workload. These included a shared desire among stakeholders across the membership and Secretariat for a better strategic direction and clearer priorities – a desire that has not yet led to the establishment and agreement of mechanisms to enforce stronger prioritisation and, by implication, de-prioritisation. Governance reform has alleviated some of the pressures associated with this, and the FSCG is reflecting on various aspects of this issue and considering options to address it.

HLF 13: There is a commitment and willingness to engage horizontally throughout the OECD, while also recognising that narrowly focused communities of experts can create an environment for strong outputs. While informal networks across the Directorates do exist, working processes are still experienced and perceived as siloed, both at the Secretariat and Member level. The decentralised budget and management models, to some extent, cement this characterisation.

157. The survey data suggested that there is a high level of staff willingness to collaborate within the OECD. However, this is not well supported by the structures and incentives in place at the organisation – the budget structure and aspects of the decentralised management. While the interviews suggested that there is much informal horizontal engagement, the extent of this is not documented, nor are the costs and expected benefits of such engagements. For example, the current practice in the ENV, which requires the project managers on climate change to look across the work of 13 Committees and Working Parties/Groups, is not sustainable.

158. The introduction of horizontal projects has been one means of encouraging more integrated work approaches. While some lessons have been drawn from this, and while there is twice yearly reporting on the HPS to both the Executive Committee and the Council which considers outcomes, more work could be done to assess the costs of more horizontal work, the skills needed, the incentive structure required and what impact it has had on the Organisation. Moreover, the resources allocated through horizontal projects to the Directorates are not substantial enough to change ingrained working patterns.

159. Over the years, the OECD has gradually begun to adopt a more horizontal working approach to promote collaboration and information sharing across different departments and teams to break down the silos. The importance attached to this is evidenced by the half-yearly reports on horizontal projects, which are presented to the Council, and the Ambassadors' Informal Convergence Paper for the 2019–2020 PWB, in which Members emphasised that horizontality is a core OECD strength.

160. One of the key drivers of this shift towards horizontal working has been the growing recognition that complex problems require a more integrated and cross-disciplinary approach. In response to this, the OECD has sought to foster a culture of collaboration, both within and across different Directorates.

161. To this end, a major project, the Improving Collaboration Project, was conceived in 2019. This identified 22 distinct initiatives to support the move to more cross-departmental collaboration. However, as no Evaluation of the project was conducted, the changes it resulted in and the lessons that were learnt remain undocumented, though it is understood that a stocktaking of progress of these recommendations is now underway. Yet, various models for horizontal engagement do exist and the OECD has used horizontal projects – the structure, management, and implementation of which are continuing to evolve.

162. An assessment of the 2014 recommendations on decision making and working methods³⁷ was conducted in 2019. It acknowledged the significant progress that had been made since 2014 on the governance, management and reporting of horizontal projects. The report also highlighted that there are now excellent examples of good governance for such projects, which could be further standardised.

163. Yet, despite this recognition of the value of multidisciplinary and horizontal work, there are insufficient incentives in place to facilitate this, both within and among the Committees and among the Directorates. In fact, the budget process constitutes a strong disincentive. This means that, while the direction that the organisation is moving in does indicate greater horizontal working, in practice, this tends to entail further coordination rather than an integration of work.

164. Horizontal working is one of the areas in which the implementation of digital solutions has made a difference, as the increasing use of digital tools and platforms facilitate it.

Box 20: Horizontal Mainstreaming

Horizontal working is one of the areas in which the implementation of digital solutions has made a difference, as the increasing use of digital tools and platforms facilitates horizontal working. For example, the new intranet system allows staff to easily share information and collaborate on projects in real-time. Across the Directorates, digitalisation has been seen to have increased the automation of certain tasks, with one interviewee stating: “it has made life easier”.

Processes are now more digitalised in the system, as identified, for example, by the EPOC and the EDRC). However, while digital ways of working have been improved, digital and IT departments have not been sufficiently resourced.

Linked to this lack of a digital strategy are the following:

- A lack of sufficient capital budget in digital solutions and chronic underinvestment (the budget has been cut by 20% over the last 4–5 years)
- A high degree of obsolescent IT infrastructure
- A lack of dedicated senior leadership roles, with responsibility for holding, guiding, and making decisions (for example, Chief Information Officers)

[Sources: document review; internal staff; MOPAN assessment; and country, thematic study interviews. [Feb–May 2023].

HLF 14: While the decentralised management approach has advantages in terms of empowering Directors, it also creates perceived challenges in ensuring consistent and efficient standardised approaches within some key corporate functions. Despite it being a core aspect of organisational management, feedback loops on how well it is working are not adequate and it does not seem to have been subject to a rigorous audit or performance evaluation.

165. Many of the internal corporate systems housed within the OECD Secretariat operate in a partially or fully decentralised manner, with Directorates having a high level of budgetary and operational authority over planning and execution. This arrangement is perceived to have some benefits by stakeholders within the Secretariat: it allows for greater autonomy and flexibility for Directorates in decision making around areas such as procurement – at least in principle. In this, they can manage the decisions concerning their needs and the source of

³⁷ C (2019)165/REV1 and CORR1 and C/M(2019)17, Item 257

their suppliers, but with the centralised procurement function managing and limiting the associated risk and providing the necessary guidance.

166. However, this decentralised management approach leads to several challenges. The first of these challenges is the management of human resources, as the recruitment process for grades A4 and below is the first related decision area within specific Directorates; however, how controls have been implemented has varied widely across the Directorates.

167. The stakeholders who were interviewed highlighted that this can cause issues with retaining effective corporate oversight on issues such as diversity targets and a lack of standardisation in contracts for trainees. An external performance audit of the OECD's human resources management policies and their implementation from 2021 found that the decentralisation of the recruitment process and the lack of a template-based model means that a significant amount of tailoring occurs at the Directorate level, where there is a low concentration of recruitment expertise.³⁸

Box 21: Decentralised Management Approach and Feedback Loops

The OECD's decentralised management approach is common across many internal corporate systems and is a key feature of the OECD's organisational management structure. Internally, decentralised management is seen to allow for improved flexibility and increased autonomy. This is particularly valued in areas such as procurement, in which rapid decisions must be made.

However, several challenges related to the decentralised management structure were also identified during the Evaluation. These generally related to the inconsistent application of approaches; the insufficient use of shared expertise and knowledge and resources; and the lack of corporate oversight. Largely, these challenges were seen to arise from the lack of coordination across the Directorates, which is associated with the decentralised management structure.

Furthermore, this lack of coordination inhibits the effective implementation of feedback loops for organisational management and learning. However, there are ample opportunities across the OECD to facilitate improved coordination, while still maintaining its decentralised management approach. One such opportunity is for the OECD to adopt more digital solutions to facilitate sharing and collaboration.

[Source: document review; MOPAN assessments; and the internal staff, country, thematic and transversal study interviews. [Feb–May 2023].

168. Decentralisation also presents certain challenges to the work on the OECD's corporate digital transformation. Some centralisation of key functions around digital transformation is evident within the OECD Secretariat's structure, which has a centralised Digital, Knowledge, and Information service: Digital Strategy 1.0 (2018) and Digital Strategy Framework 2.0 (2020). This framework aims to develop a comprehensive strategy for future digital initiatives, with cybersecurity increasingly being seen as a critical area for the organisation. It also established a Community of Practices and a network of digital champions to promote collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing among staff members.

169. However, the stakeholder interviews highlighted that, in practice, the Digital, Knowledge and Information service faces challenges in enforcing compliance with existing frameworks and in holding Directorates accountable. Staff also highlighted the lack of a shared vision on digitalisation and the lack of central controls to ensure that digital transformation is harmonised and aligned across the Secretariat. This leads to decisions on digital approaches and practices largely being made by individual Directorates.

³⁸ OECD (2021) Report by the external auditor to the Council of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020 OECD Performance Audits, C (2021)69/PART2/ADD1

170. While, in practice, key outputs such as the EDRC’s economic surveys and the ELSAC’s employment outlooks are delivered through a consultative process, the decentralised structure of the OECD means that not all the processes of publication ensure coherence to this extent. An internal publications audit from 2021 found that the OECD’s decentralised structure leads to many documents being developed individually, without considering their coherence with other publications. Moreover, the recent communications function review found that the OECD communications budget accounts for 8.6% of its total budget, a much higher percentage than is allocated by the OECD’s peer organisations, albeit acknowledging that the OECD’s outputs are more closely linked to publications than the organisations against which it was benchmarked.³⁹ It also had the most decentralised model of any of the organisations assessed as part of the review.

171. Furthermore, the OECD’s peer organisations had a more centralised approach to the key elements of their communications strategy across areas such as strategy/planning, publishing, events management, and social media. However, this finding must be considered in the context of OECD activities, which lean more heavily towards knowledge production, intellectual outputs, and publications than its peers. Although, this review also found that this entailed some fragmentation and siloing of communications activities, with no shared definition of the scope or activities involved in the communications across the organisation, and an unclear division of roles and responsibilities.

172. While the challenges outlined above were clearly evidenced through the document review, the benchmarking exercise and through the engagement with key stakeholders within the OECD Secretariat, there was a lack of existing evaluative evidence with which to determine the precise advantages and disadvantages of the decentralised management approach within the OECD.

HLF 15: Limitations in financial resources because of the efficiency drive within corporate processes have led to reduced head counts within key corporate functions. The resultant high workloads risk affecting the Secretariat and the Executive Directorate’s (EXD’s) ability to respond to the ever-increasing demands.

173. The 2022 Management Report⁴⁰ transparently demonstrated the workload placed on the Secretariat by having to meet the expectations of Members, especially in relation to the Council’s oversight of the Standing Committees.

174. This is a long-standing issue, as raised in the 2019 Governance review:⁴¹ “Today, the Secretariat provides Members with over 50 categories of recurrent reports every year, many of them governance-related, and standing committees meet about 75 days per year altogether. We must find ways of streamlining and rethinking some of those processes.”

175. However, as can be seen from the Table 3 below, the streamlining and rethinking referenced in the 2019 Governance review has not yet led to a reduction in meetings. On the contrary, the number of meeting days per year has increased between 2019 and the present day, from 75 days a year to almost 100.

³⁹ UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), 2%; EBRD, 0.8%; the IMF, 0.7%, the WTO (World Trade Organisation), 0.8%; and the World Bank, 3.3%.

⁴⁰ OECD (2022), Annual Management Report, C (2022)122, (C2022)122

⁴¹ OECD (2019), Report on the Assessment of the 2014 Recommendations on Decision Making and Working Methods (Note by the Secretary-General), C (2019)125

Table 3: Workload Summary 2022 of Standing Committees and Special Bodies

Entity	Documents	Meetings
Standing Committees		
Executive Committee	101	21
Budget Committee	254	53
External Relations Committee	63	25
Total	418	99
Special Bodies		
Audit Committee	Not available	4
Evaluation Committee	Not available	9
Pension Budget and Reserve Fund Management Board	Not available	4
Total	-	17

176. This uplift in reporting responsibilities within the Secretariat resulted, in part, from numerous drives towards efficiency gains within corporate processes. An estimated EUR172m was saved between 2009 and 2021 due to various corporate reform initiatives, which were undertaken within the OECD Secretariat. These included reductions in staff benefits, a thinner managerial structure, space rationalisation and reductions in mission costs. The relative costs of the corporate areas reduced significantly in the period between 2009 and the present,⁴² with the 2020 Value-for-Money Report also showing an increase in cost efficiency across several key indicators.⁴³

177. Despite the organisation-wide strain on staffing because of the limits put on the available financial resources, the reviews of the available corporate data indicated that most substantive Directorates (10 out of 15) increased their head count between 2018 and 2021. Within the 15 substantive Directorates, the head count increased by an average of 10%.⁴⁴ However, it is important to note that in some substantive Directorates, which are financed primarily through assessed contributions, the head counts did not see an upward trend in this fashion, with the zero nominal growth budget approach limiting access to additional resources.⁴⁵ In the last three years, Members have triggered the Affordability Clause, rather than granting the full recommended pay award proposed by the Coordinated Committee on Remuneration. While this is positive for fiscal management, it does present a growing risk the OECD could have in attracting high level talent.

178. Between 2018 and 2012, the staff group that delivers the centralised support to these Directorates was significantly reduced. The interviews with key staff within the centralised support suggested that the workload associated with these positions has significantly increased. The staff cited the high burden of the external audit's recommendations and

⁴² OECD (2021), Management, Administrative Systems And Control Framework Of The OECD: Secretary-General's Update 2021, C (2021)72 C (2021)72

⁴³ OECD (2020), Budget Committee, 2020 Biennial Value for Money Report for PWB 2021-22, BC (2020)10

⁴⁴ Data taken from OECD (2022), Annual Management Report 2022, C (2022)122

⁴⁵ Corporate data taken from OECD (2022), Annual Management Report 2022, C (2022)122, confirmed by consultations with key stakeholders in substantive Directorates.

reforms as the main reason for this increase, in addition to the increasing complexity of work demands. These must be delivered within the EXD's purview, in addition to the core areas of its work.

HLF 16: Significant shortfalls have been identified in the OECD Capital Investment and Reserve Fund (CIBRF), which will impact the financing of short-, medium- and long-term fixed assets in the period up to 2041⁴⁶. Increasing demands and a lack of mechanisms for building reserves Assets have created a shortfall in the financing of IT assets, which are required to ensure the OECD can transform its digital architecture and that it is future proofed against emerging cybersecurity risks.

179. The OECD Council established a CIBRF in 2011 to fund the replacement of fixed assets.⁴⁷ This fund categorises the existing assets according to three classification categories, as follows:

1. Class 1 – short and medium-term operating assets, with useful lives shorter than 10 years.
2. Class 2 – long-term capital assets related to building infrastructure, with useful lives between 10 and 20 years.
3. Class 3 – long-term capital assets related to building infrastructure, with useful lives extending beyond 20 years.⁴⁸

180. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing shortfall in the financing for the CIBRF, with the 2020 Biennial Value-for-Money Report particularly highlighting the emerging risks associated with the key sustainability indicators for the CIBRF.⁴⁹ A more recent review of this fund was also undertaken by the Budget Committee. It estimated that the organisation's 20-year investment (2021–2041) will require EUR285.7m. However, the projected funding available for this same period (estimated to be EUR150.8m), plus the balance of the reserve (EUR24.5m), do not cover these needs. This has resulted in a financing gap of EUR110.3m, of which EUR40.6m is for Class 1, EUR36.6m is for Class 2, and EUR33.1m is for Class 3 assets. The issues with replenishing the CIBRF have only increased because of the challenging fiscal environment for Members, which has been occasioned by COVID-19.

181. While these shortfalls in the reserves for Class 2 and Class 3 assets are concerning for the medium- to long-term sustainability, a more immediate risk is posed by the shortfall in the funding that is available for Class 1 assets, many of which are associated with digital solutions and IT. The financing gaps in this area over the 20-year plan (EUR40.6m) are partly due to the OECD's lack of an existing mechanism for building a reserve for Class 1 assets, with investments, instead, being financed by annual transfers of existing Investment Annex budget allocations and budgetary resources from other sources.

182. The shortfall associated with IT is estimated to be EUR9.5m.⁵⁰ This is compounded by an existing lag effect between the funding availability and the requirements, which is due to certain assets not being covered by the core IT services' charge-cost-recovery mechanism.⁵¹ These shortfalls have emerged at a time when the OECD's needs for long-term digital

⁴⁶ OECD (2022), Budget Committee - Review of the Capital Investment Budget and Reserve Fund, BC (2022)20

⁴⁷ C (2011)144/FINAL

⁴⁸ C (2011)144/FINAL

⁴⁹ OECD (2020), Biennial Value for Money Report for PWB 2021-22, BC (2020)10

⁵⁰ OECD (2022), Review of Capital Investment and Reserve Fund, BC (2022)20

⁵¹ OECD (2022), Review of Capital Investment and Reserve Fund, BC (2022)20

investments are increasing. These needs are particularly pressing due to the increasing levels of obsolete IT infrastructure within the OECD, meaning that its requirements for Class 1 IT assets have risen considerably over time. These are necessary to support remote working practices and to combat the increasing threat of cyberattacks.⁵²

183. However, the 2020 Biennial Value-for-Money Report found that the OECD is only investing 12.8% of its IT resources in implementing new systems and in evaluating new technology solutions, compared to the 30% necessary (according to the benchmark). This underinvestment has been exacerbated by cuts in the organisation's budget, which are related to the zero nominal growth policy and having to absorb the additional cost of pensions.⁵³

184. Underinvestment in IT is particularly significant when considered in the context of the OECD risk register, which lists the degradation of IT infrastructure, cyberattacks and data breaches as three of the six most critical risks to the organisation.⁵⁴ This evidence was reinforced by the perceptions of key stakeholders within the Secretariat, who identified a lack of sufficient capital investment to fund internal digital transformation.

HLF 17: The recently completed functional review of the OECD communication function largely addressed concerns related to its governance (roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities). The OECD is following the required course to professionalise and institutionalise this function.

185. The communication of OECD work is largely driven by the OECD Secretariat. The corporate communication function was consistently described by staff (as well as several Member countries) as dysfunctional. Specifically, in relation to the absence of any clear delineations of the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the PAC, the communications department and the Substantive Directorates, and the lack of a clear direction in corporate communication priorities.

⁵² OECD (2022), Review of Capital Investment and Reserve Fund, BC (2022)20

⁵³ 2020 Biennial Value for Money Report for PWB 2021-22 BC

⁵⁴ OECD (2022), Secretariat's Risk Register – First Semester 2022, Critical and Non-Critical Risks

Box 22: Outcomes of the Communications Costs and Internal Governance Review

The management's response to the Communications Costs and Internal Governance Review largely addressed the long-standing concerns related to governance, roles, and responsibilities, with a view to institutionalising the communication function. Both the reform process (described by staff as collaborative) and the proposed outcomes clarify the servicing role of the PAC in relation to the substantive Directorates and their contribution to corporate priorities (as outlined in the 2022 Communication Strategy). They establish clear responsibilities and accountability lines for the various communication stakeholders, contributing to one communication function and greater visibility.

The management's response establishes a new, relatively centralised communication function, which recognises the decentralised priorities (in line with the OCommittee-based nature of the organisation, in which substantive Directorates remain in the frontline to service the Committees) and is organised to cater for both in a more coherent and coordinated manner.

This approach aligns with the independent Evaluation's findings, which stress the need to clarify the responsibilities and accountabilities, while working towards making the OECD's key priorities and its added value more visible.

Importantly, the Functional Review focused mostly on corporate governance aspects and did not tackle the wider communication issues related to OECD engagement with Members. It focused on the tension between the long reports, which cater for the needs of the expert community, and the shorter summaries, with actionable recommendations intended for senior policymakers and political stakeholders. These are intended to improve the useability of OECD outputs and the issues around the efficiencies and streamlining of communication tools to engage with Committee delegates.

In addition, it is worth noting that the 2022 Communication Strategy addressed differing perspectives on the target audience of the OECD communication function, defining policymakers as the priority audience. However, it also recognised the need to cater for a wider audience, who can impact policymaking (for example, journalists, academics, civil society organisations, the private sector, and citizens of OECD countries and beyond).

[Source: Communication Review – summary and evaluation team reflections]

186. This led to the organic development of communication units in Substantive Directorates, which drive valuable work, to cater for the thematic communication needs. Equally, it also led to disparate approaches, discrepancies in standard implementation and multiple uncoordinated channels of communication, which blurred strategic communication.

187. However, these concerns have recently been addressed by the following two key developments:

1. The Council's adoption of a communication strategy outlining corporate communication priorities.
2. The independent review of the communication function and the subsequent management response to this review.

188. The impact of the strategy, the updated communication plan and the revamped Communication Department have yet to be fully realised. It is also worth noting that, while the OECD's communication is largely driven by the Secretariat's corporate function, the Committees are increasing their roles in communications. In this, they are following the example of the ELSAC, which developed its first communication strategy in 2022.

HLF 18: As a knowledge-based organisation, human resources assume a unique importance within the OECD's future and, thus, require attention to ensure the OECD's future agility.

189. Staff expertise is a fundamental aspect of the OECD as they are a core foundation for the agility and adaptability of the OECD's future role and focus; consequently, staff costs

represent 84% of its budget.⁵⁵ Therefore, when looking at the medium-to-long-term for the OECD, its human resources strategy and work force planning is pivotal to its inclusion of emerging skills and in addressing its future priorities. In the peer-knowledge-intensive organisations covered by the benchmarking inquiry, staff costs represent a lower proportion of their overall costs: the IMF, 77.8% for the financial year 2023;⁵⁶ the WHO, 75% for the proposed 2024–25 budget;⁵⁷ and the EBRD, 68% for the financial year 2022.⁵⁸

190. A key factor in the OECD's high staff costs is that Paris is a very high-cost duty station. To date, there has been no explicit analysis of the potential savings that could be made by moving back-office functions to low-cost locations. Several international organisations have invested upfront in transitions to save costs in the medium term. For example, the back-office human resources and finance operations for the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), IFAD (the International Fund for Agricultural Development), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and the WFP (World Food Programme) are in Budapest.

191. Because of its importance within the OECD, the Human Resources function is supposed to be a significant component of the Secretariat. This centrality has been reflected in the recent approval of the organisation's first human resources strategy – although, the stakeholders from within the Members and the Secretariat did express surprise that the OECD has only recently developed its first dedicated five year human resources strategy and related action plan. This strategy has included a review of the OECD's participation in the coordination system; its work on the New Pension Scheme and the New Employment Package;⁵⁹ and an ongoing technical review of the OECD's human resource's function.

192. In addition, several recommendations were made as part of the external audit of the OECD's human resources policies and their implementation in 2021. During this external audit, transparency was among the issues raised as needing attention. The auditor also recommended “that Management procure and implement technological and digital solutions at the earliest opportunity to improve the efficiency of processes for recruitment, conversion, and promotion of staff.” All the recommendations made were accepted by Management. The Secretariat also reported that it was responsive to these recommendations; consequently, adjustments were made to senior recruitment and contract renewal procedures to ensure that they are merit-based, accountable and supportive of diversity.⁶⁰ However, stakeholders from across the Members and the Secretariat noted that reforms to the OECD's human resources processes have been slow-moving. In part, this is due to the time required for consensus-based decision making. In addition, it is also due to the constrained resources available for the professional expertise needed to facilitate and expedite reform processes in line with global human resources standards.

193. While the Evaluation Team did not request to quantitative data on OECD recruitment trends, the interviews across different stakeholder groups identified several issues of concern. One concern related to the competitiveness of the OECD in attracting staff. Recent anecdotal examples were given of good candidates turning down offers because of the perceived low salaries.

⁵⁵ OECD (2022), Annual Management Report, C (2022)122

⁵⁶ IMF (2022), IMF Policy Paper: FY2023-FY2025 Medium-Term Budget

⁵⁷ WHO (2022), Proposed Programme Budget 2024-2025

⁵⁸ EBRD (2022), Strategy Implementation Plan 2023-2025

⁵⁹ OECD (2022), Draft PWB 2023–24: Ambassador's Convergence Paper and the Secretary-General's Preliminary Views on the Policy Environment and Priorities for the 2023–24 PWB

⁶⁰ OECD (2022), Annual Management Report, C (2022)122

194. Although the evaluation team did not have access to quantitative data on OECD recruitment trends, interviews with the various stakeholder groups identified several areas of concern. One of these concerns the OECD's competitiveness in attracting staff. Recent anecdotal examples were given of good candidates turning down offers because of perceived low salaries.

195. In 2022, the OECD diverged from the Coordinated Organisations' position of ensuring that salaries rise in line with inflation, which has potentially undermined its ability to attract the best talent. This concern was expressed more by the Secretariat than by the Members. In addition, stakeholders from across the Members and the Secretariat also indicated that the OECD remuneration package and its lack of training and onboarding for new staff may render it less attractive to prospective employees, thus compromising the OECD's competitiveness as an employer.

196. Another concern raised in the interviews related to diversity. While progress has been made internally on gender parity – with the percentage of senior management roles occupied by women rising from 21.9% in 2012 to 45.2% in 2021, and similar improvements in the professional cadre – there is a notable lack of national diversity within the OECD Secretariat staff. French nationals account for just over a quarter of the staff group, and almost three-quarters are nationals of European countries. Founding-Member country nationals are also much more strongly represented.

197. As the OECD looks to its personnel to bring creativity and innovation to the organisation, some Members emphasised the importance of prioritising diversity and continuing to strengthen its efforts regarding it, indicating the need to draw from a wide global pool of talent to enhance diversity within the Secretariat.

198. Human resources is also an area where the decentralised management approach presents challenges. While it enables individual Directors the flexibility to recruit the best person for any given opening, it makes long-term work force planning and ensuring diversity across the organisation more difficult. It also leads to a lack of transparency. For example, temporary staff, of which there were 251 in 2021, work with different types of contracts and different compensation.

199. However, barriers exist within the internal human resources processes, which will make it difficult to make progress on these challenges. The active engagement of all participants in Committee working processes contributes to upholding the consensus-based approach, which is a key OECD characteristic. In the future, more participants, and a wider range of positions in Committee discussions is likely to require more time for discussion; therefore, the efficiency of these processes will become more important than ever.

200. More participants and a wider range of issues put pressure on resources and on the availability of VCs to provide the necessary flexibility in terms of acquiring new resources. This may create trade-offs and tensions, which need to be adequately reviewed and discussed. It may also pose challenges in terms of the need for continued consensus among Members on the agreed priorities.

Box 23: Efficiency-- Trade-offs and Tensions

Trade-off: While VCs create opportunities to respond to emerging issues in an agile way, there are a range of trade-offs that need to be very thoroughly understood and discussed, and the work of the FSCG in this respect is critical.

Tension: The consensus-based approach is a fundamental aspect of decision making, but it has a trade-off in terms of efficiency due to the transaction costs, which are sometimes high.

HLF 19: The OECD has strong agility in key thematic aspects; however, it is less agile in multidisciplinary approaches and where responsive internal systems are required. More effective coordination, streamlining and systemic approaches to innovation would help to ensure organisational agility.

201. The evidence from the country studies and surveys suggests a contradiction in how the OECD's organisational agility is viewed by its Members. Some Members see the OECD as being able to embrace and demonstrate its agility in terms of its support and responses to crises. For example, the OECD's response to time-critical emergencies, such as COVID-19, were seen as positive by most Members. This indicates that its responses in this case were timely and appropriate – namely, its leveraging of its policy and standards work to support the responses of Members' and non-Members' to the crisis and by moving its communications online. Its rapid response to this crisis was made possible through flexible work planning and budget processes. However, it was also suggested that this response did direct the OECD's attention and resources away from other priorities.

202. Despite this positive feedback about its response to the COVID-19 crisis, generally, its management and administrative processes and systems are felt to be outdated and not sufficiently agile or responsive to enable more systematic and rapid policy responses. Different stakeholders indicated that updating the OECD's digital systems could facilitate more cost-effective approaches, speed up systems of data collection and incentivise Members to collect data.

203. The OECD's response to emerging issues and trends such as digitalisation, internal taxation and economic growth were also viewed positively, and are reflective of an intellectual agility. Members also noted the OECD's caution in embracing change within its normal operating conditions and in its ability to respond to changing contexts. For example, some Members identified the OECD's response to the ongoing issue of climate change as being somewhat hesitant, relative to the urgency of the crisis; however, they also recognise the significant potential of what the OECD could bring to this policy space.

204. This position is reinforced by the changing scope of the ENV, as climate change is now dealt with in several Directorates. While OECD data and statistics on environmental issues are appreciated, the challenging multidisciplinary nature of the climate crisis needs specific expertise and extensive coordination. Overall, the expertise within the OECD is not viewed as sufficiently in-depth, flexible, or cross-cutting on the emerging climate issues and the suggestions received were for the OECD to be more focussed on where it can contribute most effectively.

205. Furthermore, the perceptions expressed in the country studies and the Ambassador interviews indicated that the OECD is seen as experienced, but also as having characteristics of old-style organisational practices, which constrain its ability to be agile and responsive. Members see value in the OECD being able to continually reflect upon and adapt to new management styles and practices in the ways that best fit with the evolving demands of its work. In addition, Members and Directorates indicated that the Secretariat workforce needs to

continually respond to and refresh in line with emerging priorities, and to enhance their synthesis capacity to improve product use.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Overall Position

The following conclusions have been drawn from the Evaluation's findings, paying particular attention to the trade-offs and tensions identified at the end of each sub-section. The conclusions follow a MOPAN-style structure and cover five key areas: strategic, operational, partnership/relationship, performance, and results. Careful consideration has been made to develop conclusions that focus on areas of OECD work that are viewed as the most important in ensuring that the organisation remains fit-for-purpose in the future and to maintain its relevance.

The following conclusions have been drawn from the Evaluation's findings, with attention to the trade-offs and tensions identified at the end of each sub-section. The conclusions follow a MOPAN-style structure and cover five key areas: strategic, operational, partnership/relationship, performance, and results. The development of the conclusions was carefully considered, and they focus on areas of OECD work that are considered the most important in helping it to remain fit-for-purpose and in ensuring that it can sustain and extend its position as a global pathfinder in a changing world.

5.2. Strategic

1. **The OECD has widely recognised strengths, credibility, and areas of strong comparative advantage**, particularly in economic and technical policy leadership. It is seen by its members as a global leader in providing evidence-based analyses and policy recommendations. There is significant potential for future engagement through wider membership, stronger partnerships and through other potential channels of engagement, which will increase the OECD's contribution and influence.
2. **There is value in the OECD having a multiplicity of roles; however, effective governance and leadership is necessary to allow the organisation to maximise on its position.** The ability of the OECD to pivot across a range of roles is a strength. It means that the organisation can meet the continuously evolving policy needs and priorities of its diverse membership, as the relative importance attached to these different roles by the Members shift over time. As the OECD has grown, the needs and priorities of its members have diverged. Some Members gain most benefit from its standard setting and policy guidance roles, while others place more value on its global role. Effective dialogue, consensus building and decision making at the level of the Council have become essential in setting priorities and meeting expectations. However, the Council recognises that there are challenges in its ability to effectively prioritise and deprioritise its work, which is necessary to ensure that less relevant work can be phased out or streamlined, and that new, critical priorities are addressed and adequately resourced.
3. **Faced with multiple demands and expectations, the OECD is constrained by the absence of a flexible funding and budget model and an extremely complex budget process.** The two-year budget framework is short, considering the complex and time-consuming PWB process and the duration of many of the organisation's initiatives. Many peer organisations and comparators work successfully with a medium-term framework, and with rolling budgets, which generally include a capital budget. This provides assurance that there are adequate investments being made – for example, in IT infrastructure – to

meet efficiency through digitalisation possibilities. Clearer budgetary and outcome-based budgeting processes in the OECD would elicit stronger confidence from its Members regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of how the OECD's resources are prioritised and used to achieve results for agreed priorities.

5.3. Operational

4. **While the OECD's operating model is fundamentally sound in responding to Members' needs and changes in the global context, there are several areas which need to be addressed for the model to operate at increasing speed in a more complex environment.** The OECD's working processes and delivery mechanisms, including working through Policy Committees and the use of VCs, are fundamental to the OECD's way of working. However, the OECD's Committee processes are not always optimal. In some cases, the structures and approaches could be updated and streamlined to create a shared understanding and equal access and participation across the membership. This would build stronger confidence and trust across all Committee work. It is important that these working processes are regularly reviewed within the OECD membership to ascertain how they can benefit all Members in terms of how priorities are set, how funding is agreed, and how these aspects are more integrated across the organisation.
5. **A creative tension exists between the need for strategic planning and oversight – on both policy and corporate matters – at the centre of the OECD and the autonomous and entrepreneurial nature at the Directorate level.** Although there are strengths in the decentralised management approach, the OECD's organisational structure lacks a complementary, strong, dedicated, and unifying core in its strategic planning, in particular for corporate processes. One that can clearly link different bottom-up processes with Organisation-wide corporate strategy, while taking into account the available resources. In terms of policy priorities, there is a planning and programming vacuum beyond the two-year budget, resulting in a challenge for the OECD in developing and implementing a long-term vision. While there are clear Secretary-General strategic priorities (with a four-to-five-year horizon) and other Organisation wide, thematic strategy papers, these do not represent a fully coherent and integrated organisational plan. Such a plan would protect the OECD from becoming more over-stretched and would enable it to maintain its focus on the work that generates the greatest outcomes for its Members.
6. **The current workforce of the OECD is recognised for its excellence, high-quality and technical expertise. Yet, as the focus of the OECD broadens and diversifies, the OECD's talent management also needs to shift, recognising in this the challenges in attracting new talent.** The attraction of emerging skills is a premium to ensure that OECD stays at the forefront of emerging issues and is able to provide contemporary expertise and guidance to Committee and Working Party / Group deliberations, as well as expertise in corporate functions, such as HR, budget, procurement and communications. This is also crucial to its ability to provide expertise in corporate functions, such as human resources, budget, procurement, and communications. In addition to its sectoral expertise, the OECD increasingly requires employees with political analysis and coordination skills to support its multidisciplinary approaches to global issues, to increase the useability of its products for non-expert audiences and to increase its visibility. To maintain its positive ability to respond to the diversity of its Members' needs, particularly as the membership

and Partnerships expand, it is important that OECD staff are equally varied in terms of their culture, professional backgrounds, and areas of expertise.

7. **The OECD is clearly responsive to changing global dynamics and pressures that its Members are facing. However, there is also a recognition that there is a need for multisectoral approaches in tackling complex issues. For Members, this requires a whole-of-government approach,** which can link together their own strands of policy initiatives and build synergies. For the OECD, this will be an increasing challenge in relation to its policy work, as it needs to identify integrated solutions. However, the OECD is well-positioned to respond to this environment as it has built a considerable understanding of the structural and economic features of global trends. Its current strength is in its focus on understanding past trends to anticipate the future and help prepare Members to navigate new trends. There is demand for the OECD to strengthen this capacity.

8. **Various models for horizontal engagement exist within the OECD, including the use of horizontal projects; however, there has yet to be a greater cultural shift towards integrated, multidisciplinary approaches.** The introduction of horizontal projects was intended to address the need for more integrated policy options to address complex challenges. Providing budget resources was intended as an incentive to encourage Directorates to go beyond informal mechanisms of collaboration. The challenge for the OECD here is two-fold: it needs to both transcend internal sectoral silos and engage with Members across multiple ministries to offer whole-of-government policy options. Unfortunately, the resources provided through these horizontal projects have been insufficient to shift the culture within the OECD. Members also highlighted that horizontal project risk creating an additional layer rather than integration, thus, they offer no effective solutions in the efforts to use multidisciplinary approaches to address complex issues in normal practice. There is a need to balance the advantages of specialised directorates and processes that enable a more integrated approach to complex issues. Ways to support this further could include:
 - Ensuring that the granularity of the PWB is consistent between Output Groups (this could help multiply Directorate collaboration).
 - Extension to a 4-year budget cycle (with a capacity for mid-course corrections).
 - Reconsidering the approach to the Central Priorities Fund and Long-Term Reallocation Fund.
 - Updating the Medium-Term Orientations process.

9. **The OECD has the potential to leverage its reputation and credibility in the economic space to make a stronger, linked case for action on key issues such as vulnerability and inclusion, in line with organisational commitments to global frameworks.** There are good examples of the OECD making the case for social action in specific thematic areas such as labour and employment. These examples reinforce the OECD's reputation as a global leader and demonstrate its ability to go beyond a purely economic lens to catalyse action in other areas. These examples are also positive demonstrations of the OECD fulfilling global commitments, such as the sustainable development goals (SDGs). However, these approaches are largely ad hoc and efforts to address key social issues are not yet sufficiently mainstreamed across the organisation. This constitutes an unrealised potential for the OECD.

10. **While there are commitments towards gender equality within the OECD’s policy work, there is not a fully developed gender action plan underpinning the new gender strategy, which remains an important gap.** This signals the need for more integrated and inclusive strategic gender equality work within the OECD. Currently, due to a lack of specific funding and incentives, there is limited scope for analytical work, which could build on the gender disaggregated data already being collected. This is a problem as consistent analyses and planning work are required for gender mainstreaming in the OECD’s policy work. However, it is important to recognise the breadth of existing gender-related work and the recent Ministerial commitment to promote gender equality (June 2023). Positive steps are being taken, such as the development and use of the Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD work with the G20 on gender and the organisation’s focus on gender within different products. Yet, the challenge faced by the OECD in strengthening its gender equality goals and objectives is both symptomatic of and a prerequisite to progress in relation to the broader scope of its strategy development and processes. It is also a way to move more progressively on horizontal integration.

5.4. Relationships/Partnerships

11. **One of the real strengths of the OECD is in its convening power and peer review mechanism, which are at the core of its working approach.** The OECD has the intellectual credibility and capability to bring together a diverse set of actors around a specific policy area, developing partnerships with non-Members, including the private sector, civil society, and trade unions. The OECD’s ability to act as an expert, a convenor and a facilitator is invaluable to Members and in the wider global context of the G7, G20 and other global forums. To a very large degree, this is underpinned by the active contributions of its Members and their delegates, and by OECD staff, who are the core of its intellectual capital. Preserving this capital and continuing to evolve it is critical in ensuring the organisation’s relevance in the future. This requires its Members to continually invest in ensuring high-quality representation, to strongly engage in the peer-review processes and to support the OECD in developing innovative partnership approaches.

12. **The OECD has expressed the political will to continue to adapt and expand its membership and Partnership base and it possesses the flexible mechanisms to allow it to pursue this.** It is well-positioned for expansion, with some Partners already on an accession pathway. Although other Partners may prefer to remain in their current role, the OECD offers different avenues for different types of partnerships. Recent initiatives, such as the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches, effectively demonstrate how OECD can accommodate different types of stakeholders on an equal footing. Another way in which the OECD is showing that it can adapt and be flexible is through the work of the Global Relations and Co-operation Directorate (GRC) in its engagement with non-Members and Partners and – while not fully covered by the scope of this Evaluation, the work of the OECD “development cluster”, including the Development Centre. This outward-facing engagement by the OECD (through the GRC but also more widely across the OECD) is more critical than ever before. It is also important that this inclusivity and diversity is reflected in the organisation’s staffing profile (as discussed in Conclusion 7, above). This inclusivity and diversity must also be reflected by its members through their own delegations to the OECD, which should reflect and support the shifting requirements of the organisation.

5.5. Performance

- 13. The OECD would benefit from being more outcome- and impact-focused, meaning that it would better articulate anticipated outcomes and have a good knowledge of the outcomes and impact achieved, rather than just of the outputs of its work. This emerged as a key issue for Members.** A desire for the OECD to consider the impact of its work was clearly expressed in the country-level and Ambassador interviews. Among the OECD Ambassadors there was an emerging and strong recognition of the need for the organisation to show how its policy work is making a difference in the different national and sub-national contexts. Members would like to see how the OECD's vision, better policies for better lives, is actioned and demonstrated. They intimated that demonstrating this vision in practice, both in terms of the evolving nature of the OECD's work and the way in which it considers and assesses impact, should be at the centre of all policy work within the organisation. This translates to measuring the impact of policy reports, making reports shorter and more incisive, and delivering recommendations that are more actionable, measurable, and more clearly related to contributing towards the OECD's vision. Furthermore, a better articulation of the outcomes would assist Members in demonstrating the value of investing in OECD work.
- 14. The OECD is highly valued by its members for delivering quality data, evidence, and analyses.** This is its core business, for which it is known both internally (by Members) and externally (by Partners and other international actors). It is important to uphold the OECD's brand. The OECD will continue to be relevant to policymaking in areas where it has a comparative advantage, particularly in the economic-related structural policy area, which underpins other thematic priorities. However, Members and non-Members, alike, are looking for more contextualised and utilisation-focused products (for example, analyses, reports, and peer reviews). The organisation's growing membership base, wider geographical engagement and expanding field of focus pose challenges in terms of resource adequacy. These changes also require the OECD to think more clearly about how its high-quality work can be more utility-focused regarding its policy impact at both the Member and the broader international level. Embracing and managing different political and economic perspectives is seen as critical for potential new Members.
- 15. The OECD's standard setting is highly regarded,** given the global climate in which international standards are being threatened by practices that are not of benefit to Members or its wider global Partners. The OECD's standards are valued due to how they have been developed and how they are applied in policymaking. Its standards are developed through consensus and are mainly non-binding which is seen as an advantage by Members and Partners. They provide added value beyond the hard law employed by other international institutions such as the EU. This standard setting role enhances the OECD's reputation and visibility.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the findings, conclusions, and considerations in relation to the future directions for the OECD. The recommendations consider the current strengths of the OECD, which can be built upon, and the feasibility of the recommended courses of action in terms of the implications for resource requirements, the likely risks involved and the extent of organisational shifts.

Each of the eight strategic recommendations addresses a particular area of focus of the recommended changes. Following from each of these are more detailed, specific sub-recommendations. If pursued, this set of interventions are expected to provide a pathway for transition, which is aligned with the OECD being fit-for-purpose in a changing world.

- **Recommendation 1: Consolidate the OECD's coherence of purpose, priorities, and corporate strategic planning.**

Tighter strategic planning around agreed priorities is required to better articulate and strengthen the medium-term direction-setting path of the OECD towards its vision: 'better policies for better lives'. The OECD should develop a medium-term planning process which acknowledges, links, and builds on its strengths in its multiplicity of roles and unique Committee structures. The medium-term planning process should more visibly link Committee priorities with the OECD's strategic intent, and it should ensure a balanced, efficient, and simple process for the allocation of resources through a flexible funding and budget model. This more dynamic strategic planning process would address the challenges in maintaining the OECD's strengths in a context of increasing diversity and over-stretched Part I Assessed Contribution resources.

- **Recommendation 2: Reinforce the quality and value of engagement between Members and the Secretariat to better enable substantive and strategic-level decision making.**

The OECD needs to create the appropriate conditions and spaces to allow informed dialogue between Members and the Secretariat to be maintained and improved. The issues of overly complex meeting processes, document and meeting overload, and the strong focus on process rather than substantive dialogue, which were identified during the Evaluation, need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the engagements with Members at the level of the Council and its Standing Committees. A review is required to identify where functions and processes can be made more efficient and to identify where time is being absorbed by non-essential matters, which jeopardises the much-needed substantive and strategic dialogues between the Council and Members.

- **Recommendation 3: Intensify the outcome and impact focus across OECD policy work.**

Shift the attention of OECD policy work to be more outcome- and impact-focused. This would respond to the increasing demand for more focus on and visibility of OECD outcomes and impact in delivering its vision. Moreover, this shift would also build upon the already high quality of OECD outputs by adding more focus on their useability and usefulness. In addition, there is a need for a stronger strategic framing of the high-quality OECD outputs towards clearly identified outcomes. This would require embedding outcome-focused approaches in existing workplans, budgets, performance

reviews and learning processes to enable a better demonstration of how OECD activities contribute to the achievement of its collective vision.

- **Recommendation 4: Capitalise on the OECD’s outward-facing engagement and strengthen the parameters of partnership working.**

Capitalising on the OECD’s strong momentum regarding global relations, as driven by the GRC, would clearly define a whole-of-organisation approach to OECD’s outward engagement. This requires greater clarity and communication, both internally and externally, on the respective benefits and requirements for expanding OECD relationships with non-Members and for different forms of global, regional, and national partnerships.

- **Recommendation 5: Enhance the mutual accountabilities of core corporate issues.**

The OECD needs to match corporate strategies for core business areas to drive coherence and respond to the pace of global change, thus creating internal efficiencies. The OECD’s decentralised model is positive in that it empowers Directorates to manage independently; however, it is also creating challenges in corporate coherence and efficiency. Core business areas, such as human resources, digital and communications, need clearly aligned lines of responsibility and accountability at the Directorate level, and oversight and monitoring at the Secretariat level to identify and achieve greater efficiency. This will enhance the synergy and compliance with corporate policies right across the organisation, while taking account of the specificities of the Directorates.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen mechanisms to deepen and accelerate the organisation’s integrated approach to increasingly interconnected policy issues.

The OECD needs to develop appropriate mechanisms for cross-sectoral, cross-Directorate and cross-ministerial working. The progress made so far in achieving integrated outcomes, which are delivered through horizontal working and joint working parties, will provide learning that can be expanded. However, there is also a need to examine other options, such as more embedded and innovative systems and processes for the integrated and synergistic delivery of results to respond to the increasingly complex and diverse interests of Members. Team-based working can create a dynamic and responsive approach to appropriately address complex and inter-related issues. The OECD can harness its existing strengths regarding structural and economic trend analyses and the anticipation of future issues to provide a value-added lens on complex issues which is unique to OECD’s expertise and avoids duplication with other organisations.

- **Recommendation 7: Update the working processes of policy committees to ensure inclusiveness and rich substantive dialogues.**

The OECD should identify existing good practices and broaden its adoption of such practices within Committee processes. These practices should focus on effective collaboration, building shared understanding and ownership, joint activities, and dialogue for productive feedback between Members and non-Members to enhance open consensus building. Moreover, contemporary meeting processes such as multi-sectoral network management and digital engagement platforms would help to enrich

dynamic, substantive, multi-sectoral dialogue; enhance consensus building; and strengthen a fit-for-purpose approach to core OECD delivery mechanisms within an increasingly complex context.

- **Recommendation 8: Equip the OECD so the making of the economic and social case on critical issues of vulnerability and inclusion (addressing gender equality in particular) is intrinsic to its work.**

Operationalise the OECD's commitment to global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda, to explicitly address vulnerability and inclusion as a core element of effective policymaking. The OECD should leverage its reputation, credibility, and economic expertise to make the economic and social case for addressing gender, vulnerability and social inclusion in effective policy making. The organisation should also develop mainstreaming strategies and action plans to ensure that its work is increasingly grounded in the SDGs; that it integrates the principles of the 2030 Agenda; and that OECD work encapsulates sub-national diversity and social issues, which are of increasing interest to its existing and prospective membership and Partners.

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
<p>Recommendation 1: Consolidate the OECD’s coherence of purpose, priorities, and Organisation-wide strategic planning.</p>	
<p>Tighter strategic planning around agreed priorities is required to better articulate and strengthen the medium-term direction-setting path of the OECD towards its vision: better policies for better lives. The OECD should develop a medium-term planning process, which acknowledges, links, and builds on its strengths in its multiplicity of roles and unique Committee structures. The medium-term planning process should more visibly link Committee priorities with the OECD’s strategic intent, and it should assure a balanced, efficient, and simpler process for the allocation of resources through a flexible funding and budget model. This more dynamic strategic planning process would address the challenges of maintaining the OECD’s strengths in a context of increasing diversity and over-stretched Part I Assessed Contribution resources.</p>	
<p>1.1 Improve the organisation’s approach to strategic planning through a stronger central function to align and coordinate the linkage of strategic planning between the Secretariat and Committee work.</p>	<p>A less fragmented, OECD-wide strategic approach that reflects and aligns Committee priorities and Organisation priorities in a systematic and more efficient way will strengthen coherence and shared efforts towards strategic priorities.</p>
<p>1.2 Develop a medium-term Organisation-wide strategy centred around a set of organisational outcomes, which reflect Committee priorities and link key initiatives to an overarching strategic framework.</p>	<p>A medium-term strategy and linked operational plans will raise the visibility of the short-to medium term strategic objectives of the OECD both substantive and corporate and will help align the work of all parts of the organisation towards those strategic objectives.</p>
<p>1.3 Establish a four-year budget cycle, which is aligned with two rolling biennia strategy cycles.</p>	<p>A four-year budget cycle will enhance the predictability of funding, flexibility to respond to emerging priorities and reduce the administrative burden on the Secretariat and Members.</p>
<p>1.4 Identify and establish a mechanism for the replenishment of the Capital Investment Budget and Reserve Fund to finance Class 1 assets.</p>	<p>A capital budget process, which is linked to strategic capital investment, would help tackle resource availability for long-term or critical strategic priorities, which achieve tangible and transparent benefits across the OECD membership.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Reinforce the quality and value of engagement between Members and the secretariat to better enable substantive- and strategic-level decision making.</p>	
<p>The OECD needs to create the appropriate conditions and spaces to allow informed dialogue between Members and the Secretariat to be maintained and improved. The issues of overly complex meeting processes, document and meeting overload, and the strong focus on process rather than substantive dialogue, which were identified during the Evaluation, need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the engagements with Members at the level of the Council and its Standing Committees. A review is required to identify where functions and processes can be made more efficient and to identify where time is being absorbed by non-essential matters, which jeopardises the much-needed substantive and strategic dialogues between the Council and Members.</p>	
<p>2.1 Update the parameters for the functioning of Standing Committees (for example, the key skills of value for the membership on respective Committee topics, effective orientation and onboarding of delegates and consistency in Member participation) and address key aspects that impact effective engagement, avoiding the use</p>	<p>Stronger conditions for engagement within Standing Committees will build confidence that agreed priorities are receiving the attention required across the OECD and that Members’ relevant expertise and the resources invested are commensurate with the strategic decisions needed.</p>

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
of Committee time for deliberation on non-critical or less essential issues.	
2.2 Appraise tools and techniques used by other international organisations to support an efficient and consistent level and quality of dialogue within Standing Committees and alter Rules and procedures where needed. This would include improving digital and accessible summary records of Committee business; Members' participation; the basis for the decisions reached; and, potentially, an improved orientation and briefing process for new delegates.	Updated and more efficient Committee procedures will allow Members and Secretariat staff to invest more time in reaching decisions earlier, which will facilitate better outcomes. It would also generate more accessible and substantive records of how and why decisions were reached. This would underpin the confidence in the collaborative and consensus-based decision making of the OECD.
<p>Recommendation 3: Intensify the outcome and impact focus across OECD policy work.</p> <p>Shift the attention of OECD policy work to be more outcome- and impact-focused. This would respond to the increasing demand for more focus on and visibility of OECD outcomes and impact in delivering its vision. Moreover, this shift would also build upon the already high quality of OECD outputs by adding more focus on their useability and usefulness. In addition, there is a need for a stronger strategic framing of the high-quality OECD outputs towards clearly identified outcomes. This would require embedding outcome-focused approaches in existing workplans, budgets, performance reviews and learning processes to enable a better demonstration of how OECD activities contribute to the achievement of its collective vision.</p>	
3.1 In reference to the proposed medium-term strategy and associated plans, track performance on outputs and how contribution to impact through a range of core outcomes is being achieved. Apply contribution analysis techniques to assist in organisational learning loops on the most effective pathways to longer term impact in achieving better policies for better lives.	Substantiating the outputs' contribution to the OECD's vision will help to identify opportunities to build upon good practice, to merge and combine efforts across Policy Committees, to avoid duplication or unproductive approaches, and to create learning towards better outcomes.
3.2 Build on the evolving approach within the OECD towards the impact assessment of policy outputs using emerging techniques.	Updated and contemporary evaluation and impact assessment approaches will more clearly reflect the OECD's achievements and value.
3.3 Enhance the processes within the Substantive Committees for dialogue on the use of OECD products and the outcomes achieved and for better communication of the range and scope of the OECD's influence.	Better information on the outcomes will enhance the OECD's reputation for achieving outcomes. This will lead to continued and higher usage of OECD products, better understanding of the value and applicability of the OECD's recommendations and increased support for OECD initiatives.
<p>Recommendation 4: Capitalise on the OECD's outward-facing engagement and strengthen the parameters of partnership working.</p> <p>Capitalising on the OECD's strong momentum regarding Global Relations, which is being driven by the GRC, would clearly define a whole-of-organisation approach to its outward engagement. This requires greater clarity and communication, both internally and externally, on the respective benefits and requirements for expanding OECD relationships with non-Members and for different forms of global, regional, and national partnerships.</p>	
4.1 Building on the OECD External Relations Strategy, better define and coordinate a whole-of-OECD approach, aligned with other strategic approaches, towards outward engagement,	Improved internal coordination on the OECD's engagement in global forums and partnerships provide an increasing opportunity for the OECD to showcase its achievements; build influence;

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
<p>underpinned by clarity on the benefits of various good practice approaches/models for partnering. This includes building on the positive relationship between the OECD and the G7/G20, other global forums, regional bodies, and emerging partnerships.</p>	<p>leverage critical global issues and promote good governance, globally.</p>
<p>4.2 Harness the OECD's reputation as a neutral and substantive partner by improving its current partnership engagement and approval mechanisms; recognising the diversity of its partnerships, while also ensuring a focus on the nature and benefits of partnerships; avoiding duplication; and ensuring benefits to Members.</p>	<p>The OECD secures its global relationships and develops stronger and wider partnerships, which results in opportunities for the OECD to expand its impact.</p>
<p>4.3 OECD to build and strengthen partnerships with Regional Organisations to efficiently link between the priorities of Members and non-Members in the same region and to achieve wider impact, paying attention to inter- and intra-regional diversity.</p>	<p>The OECD has a stronger national, regional, and global profile, which enables the OECD to broaden its engagement and impact in a cost-effective manner.</p>
<p>4.4 Establish clear links and coordination to draw on the OECD's existing capacity, including within Development Co-operation Directorate and the DEV, to engage non-Members and Partners (especially from emerging economies) in a more contextualised and inclusive manner, while also guarding the OECD from being deflected from its core purpose.</p>	<p>The OECD's greater involvement in working with developing countries provides an opportunity to leapfrog to wider outcomes in good governance and better policies.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: Enhance the mutual accountabilities on core corporate issues.</p> <p>The OECD needs to align corporate strategies for core business areas to drive coherence and respond to the pace of global change, thus creating internal efficiencies. The OECD's decentralised model is positive in that it empowers Directorates to manage independently but is creating challenges in corporate coherence and efficiency. Core business areas, such as human resources, digital and communications, need clearly aligned lines of responsibility and accountability at the Directorate level, and oversight and monitoring at the Secretariat level to identify and achieve greater efficiency. This will enhance the synergy and compliance with corporate policies right across the organisation, while taking account of the specificities of Directorates.</p>	
<p>5.1 Revisit the existing Digital Strategy Framework (2.0) and mechanisms to support the digitalisation of the OECD across the organisation.</p>	<p>The OECD's capacity to generate high-quality (internal corporate and external facing) data, which are concisely presented in digital and searchable formats, is enhanced. This responds to demands for integrated datasets and products to address complex global issues.</p>
<p>5.2 Establish a digital governance Working Group to strengthen and implement the proposed medium-term strategy. This should have lines of corporate oversight, Secretariat and Directorate responsibilities and accountabilities, and an associated core investment fund.</p>	<p>The OECD's internal processes become more efficient as the decentralised Directorates continue to function autonomously, but with a greater line of sight to strategic directions and with better coordination for core business functions that improve efficiency across Directorates.</p>

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
<p>5.3 Conduct a human resources functional Review (like the recent Communications Review), which would include a consideration of the global trends in talent acquisition and workforce management. This would also include a reflection on contemporary working styles; greater workforce diversity; and the effective supervision of delegated work practices, standards, and authority. It would also be aligned with the proposed medium-term strategy to ensure the OECD's readiness for future skills and capacity requirements.</p>	<p>The OECD will continue to have an excellent workforce, which is well-managed and adaptive to the OECD's future requirements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: Strengthen mechanisms to deepen and accelerate the organisation's integrated approach to increasingly interconnected policy issues.</p> <p>The OECD needs to develop appropriate mechanisms for cross-sectoral, cross-Directorate and cross-ministerial working. The progress made so far in achieving integrated outcomes, which are delivered through horizontal working and joint working parties, will provide learning that can be expanded. However, there is also a need to examine other options, such as more embedded and innovative systems and processes for the integrated and synergistic delivery of results to respond to the increasingly complex and diverse interests of Members. Team-based working can create a dynamic and responsive approach to appropriately address complex and inter-related issues. The OECD can harness its existing strengths regarding structural and economic trend analyses and the anticipation of future issues to provide a value-added lens on complex issues, which is unique to OECD's expertise and avoids duplication with other organisations.</p>	
<p>6.1 Review the structures, incentives, and the enabling conditions for effective integrated work through team-based working structures, communities of practice, or taskforces. These should be easily established, short-term and solution-focussed, but should also push forward the frontiers on knowledge regarding challenging global issues.</p>	<p>A shift in its working culture towards integrated solutions would enable the OECD to be better equipped to respond to Members' interests by being able to explore and address multi-sectoral solutions to complex issues more readily.</p>
<p>6.2 Driven and guided by supportive human resources policies and practices, shift the composition of the staff group within Directorates to bring in employees with skills in working across multiple disciplines – for example, multisector (nexus) expertise – combined with an understanding, knowledge, and experience in respective political economy/affairs, where relevant.</p>	<p>Bringing different expertise together to achieve specific solutions will enhance the OECD's product offering across its Members and Partners.</p>
<p>6.3 Ensure continued access to key datasets that are central to the OECD's working practices, which allow for inter-relational analyses, and which establish a central planning and budgetary mechanism. This will facilitate coordination between Directorates and with Partners to promote innovation and efficiencies in integrated data management.</p>	<p>The OECD continues to be at the forefront of high-quality data analysis that is relevant to its Members and Partners.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: Update the working processes of Substantive committees to ensure inclusiveness and rich substantive dialogues.</p> <p>The OECD should identify existing good practices and broaden its adoption of such practices within Committee processes. These practices should focus on effective collaboration, building shared</p>	

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
<p>understanding and ownership, joint activities, and dialogue for productive feedback between Members and non-Members to enhance open consensus building. Moreover, contemporary meeting processes such as multi-sectoral network management and digital engagement platforms would help to enrich dynamic, substantive, multi-sectoral dialogue; enhance consensus building; and strengthen a fit-for-purpose approach to core OECD delivery mechanisms within an increasingly complex context.</p>	
<p>7.1 Strengthen inclusive dialogue across the Committee structure through the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the use of hybrid options for participation, 2. Ensuring materials are provided in sufficient time to allow for translation and feedback from Capitals. 3. Enhancing the use of live translation during Committee meetings 4. Regularly reviewing each Committee to ensure smooth and effective working processes and substantive outcomes. 	<p>The enhanced engagement of all Members in more efficient dialogue processes contributes to approaches and activities with expanded relevance within the membership.</p>
<p>7.2 Strengthen the digitalisation processes and the use of digital solutions within OECD Committees to support modern working practices, and to enhance communication, data visualisation and user-friendliness</p>	<p>Ease of engagement with Committee processes improved for a level playing field that facilitates understanding and decision-making across the membership.</p>
<p>7.3 Building on recent work undertaken by the IDE unit, the OECD should streamline Committee processes and institutionalise the lessons learnt from the most effective Committees and specific experiences, such as the response to COVID-19. It should then share these lessons to reduce variability and strengthen Committee effectiveness.</p>	<p>Having consistently good practices across Committees and minimising the burden of engagement in multiple Committees will make broader engagement more feasible across the membership and create more effective Committee processes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: Equip the OECD so that making the economic and social case on critical issues of vulnerability and inclusion (addressing gender equality in particular) is intrinsic to its work.</p> <p>Operationalise the OECD's commitment to global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda, to explicitly address vulnerability and inclusion as a core element of effective policymaking. The OECD should leverage its reputation, credibility, and economic expertise to make the economic and social case for addressing gender, vulnerability and social inclusion in effective policy making. The organisation should also implement mainstreaming strategies and action plans to ensure that its work is increasingly grounded in the SDGs; that it integrates the principles of the 2030 Agenda; and that OECD work encapsulates sub-national diversity and social issues, which are of increasing interest to its existing and prospective membership and Partners.</p>	
<p>8.1 Accelerate and raise the profile of the OECD's work on gender equality.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the structures and mechanisms to measure and inform the gender impact of OECD work through the work of the Substantive Committees. 2. Prepare, resource, and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy and gender action plan to ensure the inclusion and visibility of gender work in 	<p>The OECD's response to gender equality is more visible, mainstreamed and creates wider impact.</p>

Sub-Recommendations	Contribution to Strategic Outcomes
a transversal way across substantive policy-themed work.	
8.2 Link the OECD's proposed medium-term strategy and key initiatives more strongly to global commitments for sustainable development and inclusion.	Policy recommendations are aligned with Member's initiatives to comply with global commitments and become more relevant to national diversity.
8.3 Place attention on subnational heterogeneity and diversity, including geographic and cultural diversity.	Better support for countries to respond to specific internal contexts and extend benefits to a wider and more diverse citizenry within Member and non-Member countries.
8.4 Develop contemporary tools to support diversity and inclusion, including acknowledging different perspectives, supporting improved translation and cultural considerations.	The OECD is positioned more effectively to achieve positive outcomes and address the concerns of Members in relation to complex social policy issues and diversity concerns.

Annex I⁶¹: Timeline of the Evaluation Process

Evaluation Phase	Activity	Date
Pre-Inception	FSCG Meeting	July 12, 2022
Inception	Team Kick Off with OECD	August 25, 2022
	ECG Meeting	September 9, 2022
	Zero draft inception report	September 21, 2022
	FSCG Meeting	September 28, 2022
	FSCG Meeting	October 3, 2022
	Meeting with Evaluation Contact Group for Inception report feedback	October 13, 2022
	Inception Report	October 17, 2023
	Council Meeting (Presentation of Inception Report)	October 25, 2022
Data Collection	Beginning of Evaluator in-depth document review	November 1, 2022
	ECG Meeting	November 11, 2022
	Engagement with Corporate Directors and OECD Secretariat	November 21, 2022
	ECG Meeting	December 7, 2022
	December Progress Report	December 9, 2022
	Beginning of Secretariat interviews	January 4, 2023
	Beginning of Country Studies Interviews	January 21, 2023
	January ECG Meeting	January 24, 2023
	February ECG Meeting	February 16, 2023
	Deployment of Targeted Survey	February 14, 2023 - April 25, 2023
	Evaluation Team analysis working sessions	March 9-10, 2023
	March Progress Report	March 20, 2023
	March ECG Meeting	March 22, 2023
	Council Meeting (Preliminary Findings)	March 22, 2023
Analysis & Reporting (+continuation of Data Collection)	Evaluation Team analysis working sessions	April 3-4, 2023
	April ECG Meeting	April 19, 2023
	FSCG Meeting	May 3, 2023
	May ECG Meeting	May 30, 2023
	Meeting with Secretary General	May 31, 2023
	June Council Meeting	June 2, 2023
	June Progress Report	June 9, 2023
	Evaluation Draft Report	June 9, 2023
	FSCG Meeting	June 15, 2023
	ECG Meeting	June 20, 2023

⁶¹ A number of documents are subject to confidentiality or data protection requirements.

Evaluation Final Report	July 4, 2023
July Presentation of Report to Council	July 12, 2023

Annex II: Reach of the Evaluation Process

Annex for Stakeholders Interviews

Working on the process of data collection, the team was able to interview different stakeholders from different levels of governance within OECD and member countries.

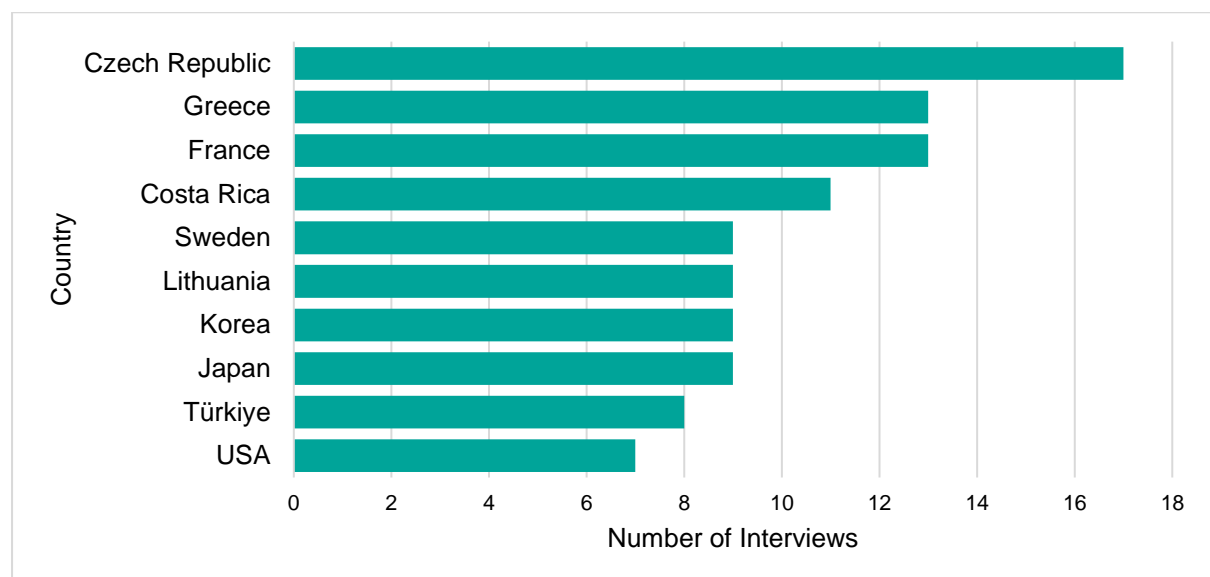
Ambassador-level Engagement

Among the members, Permanent Representatives from 38 of the 39 OECD Permanent Delegations were interviewed, with a Deputy Permanent Representative substituting in for an ambassador for the remaining Permanent Representative.

Country Studies

Number of stakeholders from the country study included a total of 17 interviews for Czech Republic, 11 from Costa Rica, 13 from France, 13 from Greece, 9 from Sweden, 9 from Lithuania, 9 from Korea, 9 from Japan, 8 from Türkiye and 7 from the USA—as shown in the chart below.

Figure 1: Number of Interviews in Country Studies by Member



Partner Study List

At the Partner-country level interviews of stakeholders, 3 interviews were done with Brazilian stakeholders, one of them including interview with the Ambassador, 4 with members from the office of ASEAN at different roles namely of Policy Analyst and Project Manager, Assistant Director at Finance and Socio-Economic Issues Division and Assistant Director, Enterprise and Stakeholders Engagement Division(ASEAN Secretariat) and Head at Connectivity Division; and 3 from South Africa as demonstrated in the chart below.

Stakeholders at EU

Interviews at the EU level included a total of 8 representatives, listed in the table below.

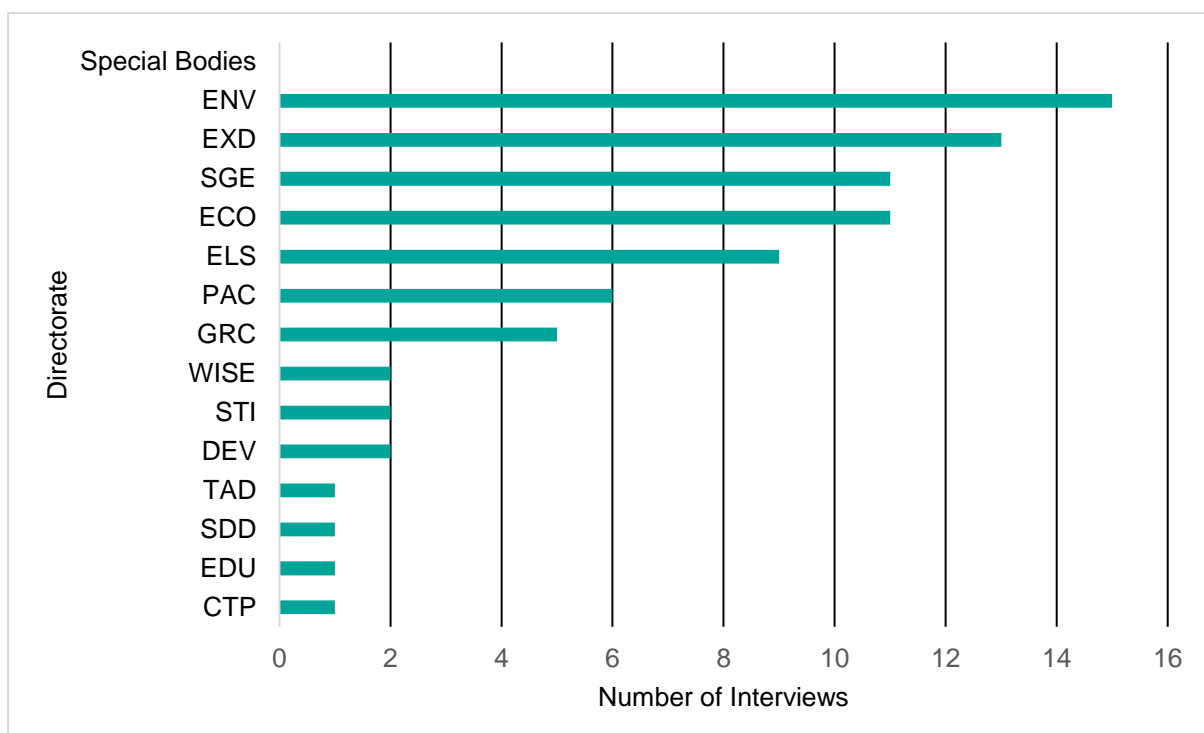
Table 4: Breakdown of Stakeholders Interviewed in EU Study by Role

Organisation	Role
EU	Ambassador
EU	Climate Change
EU	Deputy Director, Structural Reform Support; DG Reform
EU	DG Connect
EU	Deputy Director, Structural Reform Support; DG Reform
EU	EU Case study - EU EMPL
EU	Focal Point
EU	DG Finance, EU ECFIN

OECD Secretariat

At the Secretariat level, a total of 82 stakeholders were interviewed, representing a range of different roles and levels of seniority. From the SGE, there a total of 11 stakeholders interviewed, including Senior Management, DSGs, and staff from SGE/LEG, SGE/CES, and SGE/EVIA. Other stakeholders interviewed at the corporate level included 13 interviewees with EXD, including staff from the Digital Knowledge Information, PBF, and Human Resources Management divisions, as well as 6 stakeholders from PAC. At the level of substantive directorates, 15 stakeholders were interviewed from ENV, 11 from ECO, 9 from ELS, 5 from GRC, 2 each from WISE, DEV, and STI, each from EDU, CTP, SDD, and TAD. There were also two interviews with autonomous organisations from within the OECD “umbrella” (one with NEA and one with Business at the OCED). One Staff Association representative was interviewed.

Figure 2: Number of Interviews Conducted with Secretariat Staff by Directorate

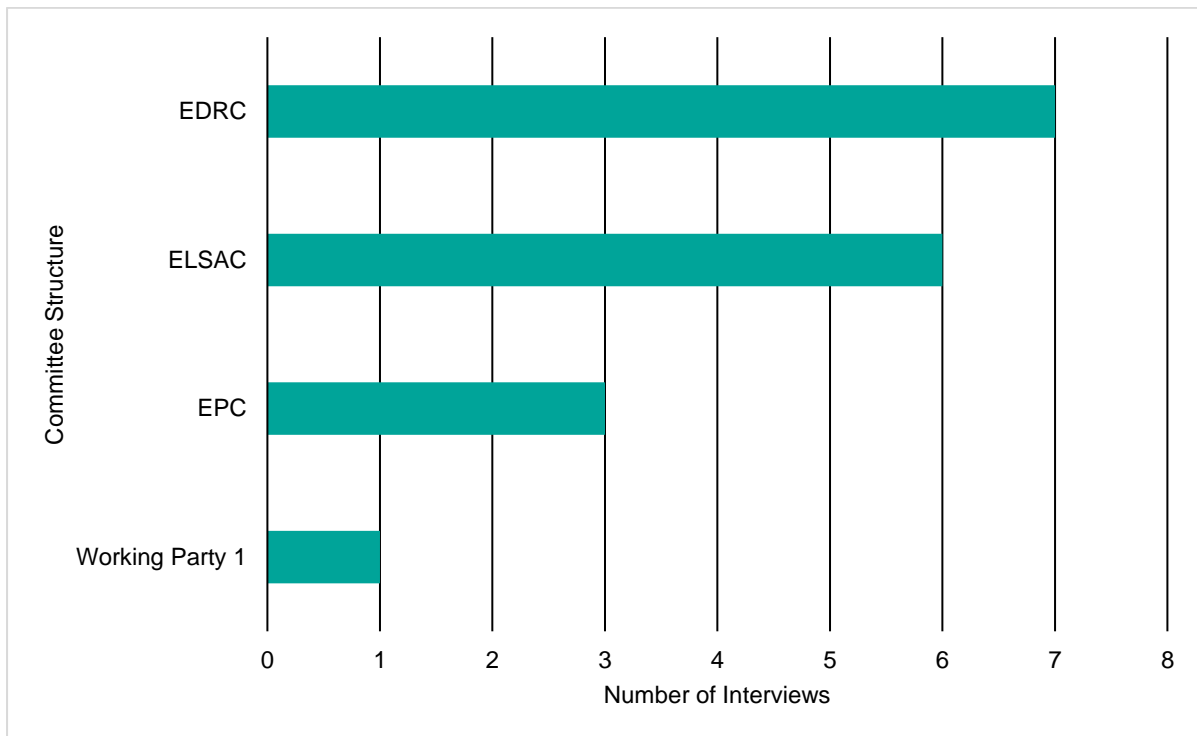


OECD Substantive Committees

At the substantive Committee level, as part of the Policy Themes workstream, which looked at climate change, economic surveillance, and labour and employment, 7 interviews were conducted with EDRC

members, 6 with ELSAC members under different roles, 3 for EPC Chair and Support staffs, and 1 Chair for Working Party for EPC.

Figure 3: Number of Committee Level Interviews by Committee Structure



Peer Institutions

Several peer institutions were engaged as part of the evaluation benchmarking exercise. As part of this process, interviews were conducted with two stakeholders from the EBRD, two stakeholders from WHO, and one stakeholder from the Council of Europe.

Annex III: Summary of Electronic Survey results

Introduction

The survey for the Evaluation of the OECD was sent to the delegations of all OECD Members for distribution among their delegation and wider policy network. There was a total of 1,161 responses, with 937 full responses and 224 partial responses. The analysis for each question indicates the number of responses that it is based on.

A separate survey on the EU was distributed with a total of 29 responses, 24 of which were complete. These responses were not integrated into the response numbers quoted in the analysis below, but insights are included from this dataset, where pertinent.

The following sections present a brief methodology and a high-level analysis of the survey, including overarching findings and patterns across different categories of countries.

Methodology

Survey Design: The survey questions were designed based on the evaluation questions provided in the Evaluation Terms of Reference and in the approved Inception Report. The design considered the wide range of countries, languages, varying positions, organisations, and contexts of the likely respondents. For this reason, the survey questions were crafted to be simple and clear to avoid differences in interpretation. The initial design was tested with several ECG members and senior OECD staff to address any gaps or questions that were unclear. Given the Evaluation Team's experience in evaluation survey design and understanding the likely constraints, the survey was designed to be largely multiple choice but with scope for respondents to note that the question was not applicable to them, they were unsure of the answer, or they had additional information to add. The time allocated to the survey was important to encourage a high response rate, thus was specifically designed to require no more than 15 minutes of response time.

Survey Distribution: The OECD does not have a central database of contacts from which survey distribution could have been organised. Also, given the relatively short timeframe for the evaluation, it was not viable to develop a broad contacts database. For this reason, a "snowball" technique was used. The technique involves the survey distribution following the national networks within each country for respondents that are currently engaged with and knowledgeable about the OECD. The extent to which the survey was distributed can then provide information about the extent and characteristics of the national networks engaged with OECD.

This involved a focal point from each Member country delegation being sent the survey for distribution amongst their delegation and wider networks engaged with the OECD. Focal points indicated that a minimum of 10 responses was required, but that a higher response rate was welcome. Although this has led to a high variation in the number of responses per Member country, ranging from 5 to 115 responses. The response rates from the Members were used as a data point, as an indication of engagement with the OECD including from the countries' wider policy network.

The Evaluation Team opted not to weigh the survey responses so as not to introduce bias but instead accounted for patterns across the different categories of Member countries. These categories included:

- Regions – Asia, the Americas, Australasia Pacific, Eastern Europe/Baltic states, Western/Northern/Southern Europe and the Middle East, and North Africa
- Length of country membership – founding Members, medium-term Members, and new Members

- Total country contributions – Members were split into quartiles based on total assessed and VCs from 2019–2022.

Whilst the closed questions were obligatory, the open-ended questions were optional to encourage completion of the survey. However, this meant that the open-ended questions have relatively fewer responses.

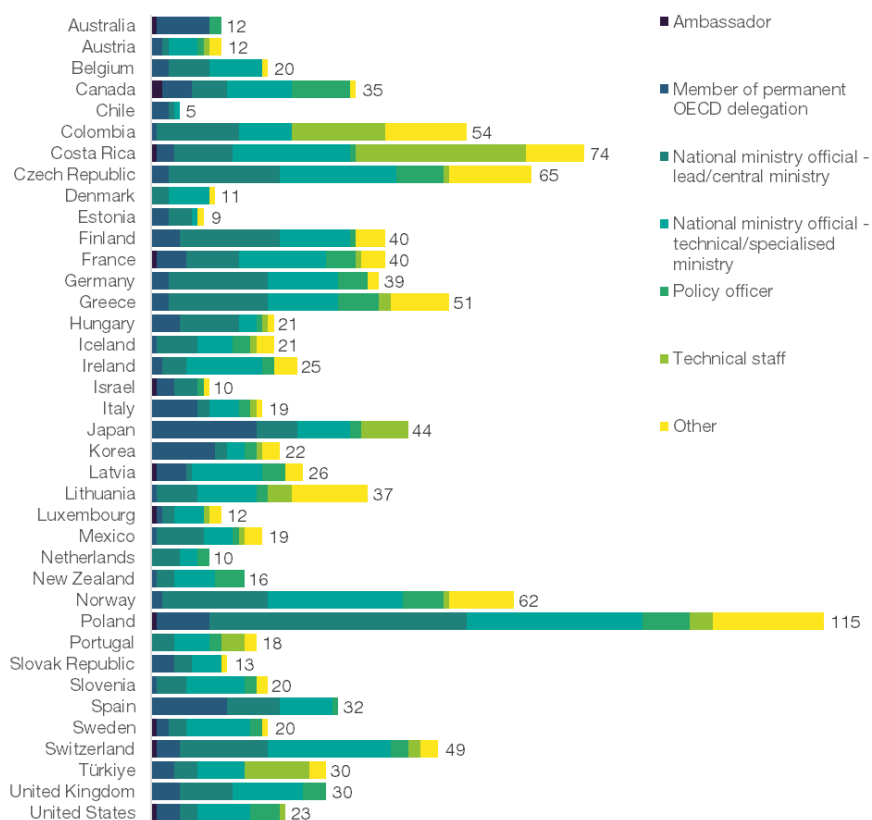
In terms of the analysis, the evaluation team developed a PowerBI dashboard, which presented the quantitative survey data in aggregated form and allowed for the filtering and comparison of the survey responses across the various categories. This was an accompanying resource to the report, the link for which can be found in the accompanying technical methodology note.

The qualitative survey data was coded and categorised using the qualitative analysis software, MAXQDA, to assess the most frequent responses.

Respondent Information

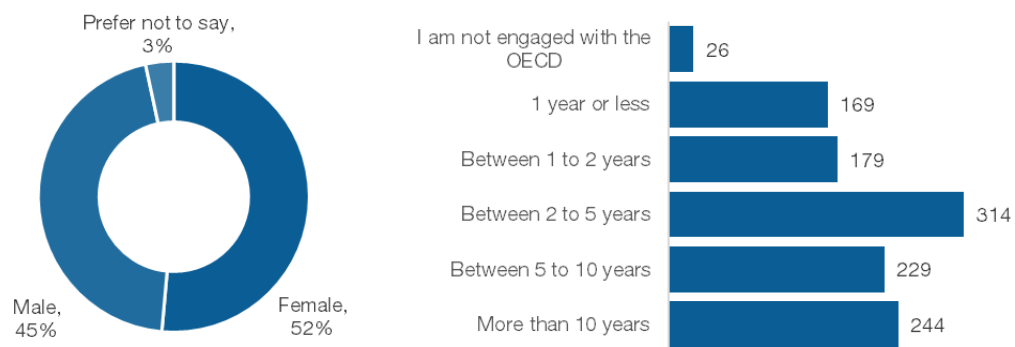
The survey received responses from all Members (exact numbers per country shown in Figure 4 below). As shown in the figure below, survey responses came from both the Member countries’ delegations to the OECD and their policy networks in country capitals in all but three Members (Denmark, Netherlands, and Portugal, where responses were not received from their delegation). This indicates a good breadth and depth in terms of the OECD stakeholders across the Member countries.

Figure 4: Survey Responses per Country and Position



The responses were reasonably gender-balanced, with 597 female respondents, 525 males, and 39 preferring not to say, as shown in Figure 5 below. This balance was relatively consistent across the Member countries, with the number of female respondents consistently higher. Most of the respondents have engaged with the OECD for two or more years (787 or 68%), with 473 (41%) having engaged with the OECD for five or more years.

Figure 5: Survey Responses by Gender and Length of Engagement with the OECD



Engagement with the OECD

Most respondents (720 or 63%) indicated that they have been regular representatives to an OECD committee, sub-Committee or Working Group/Party, whilst fewer (329 or 28%) indicated that they have been a participant in national-level policymaking activities or a participant or contributor to studies, projects, or other initiatives with the OECD (251 or 22%).

A large majority of respondents (832 or 76%) indicated that they have participated in the policy work of an OECD committee, sub-committee or working group/party, whilst 381 (35%) indicated that they had used OECD studies or materials. Only 28 respondents (3%) had participated in joint research, whilst a greater number (194 or 18%) had produced or co-produced studies or materials, and 161 (15%) had participated in a specific project or programme.

Engagement with the OECD – Committees

Out of the 792 respondents who indicated that they had participated in the policy work of an OECD committee, sub-committee or working group/party, the top three OECD committees⁶² selected were as follows:

1. PGC – Public Governance Committee (95 respondents or 12%)
2. EPC – Economic Policy Committee (79 respondents or 10%)
3. ELSAC – Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs Committee (77 respondents or 10%)

The bottom three were as follows:

1. NFR – OECD Network on Fiscal Relations Across Levels of Government (three respondents or 0%)
2. CRP – Governing Body of the Co-operative Research Programme: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (11 respondents or 1%)
3. SHIP – Council Working Party on Shipbuilding (11 respondents or 1%)

Most of the respondents signalled that their country had been involved in shaping the work of the OECD's Committees, with over 69% signalling that they had been involved to some extent and 20% to a great extent. However, this figure was relatively lower for newer Members, with 59% indicating that they had been involved to some extent, compared to 67% for medium-term Members and 76% for founding Members.

There were also differences between Member country responses dependent on the level of total contributions to the OECD. Countries with greater total contributions felt they had greater involvement in shaping the work of OECD Committees. Of the respondents from Members in the top quartile of total contributions, 81% felt they had been involved to some extent, whereas this figure dropped to 59% in the bottom quartile.

⁶² Note that sub-committees and working groups/parties are included in the total figure under the parent Committee.

Most of the respondents (79%) also felt that participation in the Committees was important for shaping policy in line with national priorities to some extent or greater. Interestingly, a greater percentage of respondents from new Members felt that it was of greater importance with 87% indicating that it was important to some extent or greater compared to 76% and 78% for medium-term and founding Members, respectively.

The respondents were similarly positive regarding the extent to which the OECD's Committee processes are fit-for-purpose, with 79% indicating that they were fit-for-purpose to some extent or more. The responses to the open-ended question, "Do you have any other comments on the functioning of the OECD committees, sub-committees or working groups/parties?", aligned with this and were largely positive regarding their functioning and outputs, although it was noted that there were substantial differences in the quality of the functioning between different committees dependent on several factors including chairing, advance preparation, and communication. Other key issues highlighted by respondents included the following:

- Coordination across committees could be improved to reduce duplication and reinforce collaboration, especially in areas such as climate.
- Agendas and items for discussion could be shared earlier to allow prioritisation of items, preparation, and greater contributions to both the agenda and discussions.
- Although hybrid meetings have improved opportunities for participation and should remain, there remain logistical challenges for non-EU Members to participate including language, time-zones, and cost of travel.
- The quantity and length of papers and documents can limit opportunity for Members to prepare and contribute.
- The bureaucracy can make the Committees relatively slow-moving.

Engagement with the OECD – Products

Out of the 1051 respondents who answered the question, "Have you used any of the following types of OECD products?", the following three OECD products were the most selected:

1. Country economic surveys (499 respondents or 47%)
2. General policy publications (492 respondents or 47%)
3. Policy/legal guidance (483 respondents or 46%)

The least selected were as follows:

1. Gender mainstreaming support (79 respondents or 8%)
2. Environmental performance reviews (112 respondents or 11%)
3. Statistics/information on environmental practice (112 respondents or 11%)

This was relatively consistent among the different categories of Member countries.

Relevance of OECD Work

In terms of the thematic areas of OECD work, respondents felt that gender was the least relevant thematic area, according to their countries' needs, with only 42% signalling that the OECD's recent work was somewhat relevant or more. Economic surveillance was selected as the most relevant thematic area of recent OECD work, with 63% of respondents indicating it was somewhat relevant or more – 54% for labour and employment, 62% for digital transformation and 58% for climate change.

It should be noted that across the five themes, a high percentage of respondents selected "do not know" for several themes (between 29% of respondents for digital transformation and 40% for gender). One potential explanation is that respondents were not familiar with the OECD's recent work on these themes. This could indicate an issue around the external communication of the OECD's recent thematic work on these cross-cutting issues.

The most frequent responses to the open-ended question on examples of other OECD areas of work that are relevant to the respondent's country were as follows:

1. Education
2. Taxation
3. Trade
4. Governance
5. Health

While most respondents did not identify any notable gaps in the OECD's support in relation to country-level reform needs, the most frequent notable gaps identified were as follows:

1. Follow up support/technical assistance for national policy recommendations and reforms.
2. Policy recommendations that are more specific to country contexts.

The most frequent suggestions to the open-ended question on how the OECD might address these gaps were as follows:

1. Working in a participatory way with national counterparts to develop and implement context-specific policy recommendations.
2. Products shared in a broader range of languages – respondents from the Americas, in particular, called for Spanish.
3. Sharing of best practice to provide concrete examples of implementation.

Usefulness of OECD Activities

Out of 973 responses, the following areas of OECD work were highlighted as being of the greatest added value to the respondents' countries:

1. Data, models, indicators, and statistical resources (82% indicated that this was of added value)
2. Comparative analyses (82% indicated that these were of added value)
3. Peer learning with other countries (78% indicated that this was of added value)

The following areas were highlighted as giving the least added value to their countries:

1. Capacity building and technical assistance (58% indicated that this was of added value)
2. Policy/legal leadership and dialogue at the multilateral level (65% indicated that this was of added value)
3. Substantive Committee engagement (72% indicated that this was of added value)

This was relatively consistent across the different categories for the Member countries.

In response to the open-ended question, "Are there other aspects of engagement with the OECD that are of benefit to the country?", the most frequent responses were as follows:

1. International/multilateral engagement and cooperation
2. Promotion of shared knowledge, value, experience, and practice
3. Networking opportunities

In response to the open-ended question, "Do you have any challenges in working or engaging with the OECD", the most frequent responses were as follows:

1. Language barriers
2. Lack of resources to engage
3. Time zone differences
4. Lack of time to engage with the high volume of lengthy papers/documents
5. Ineffective IT systems (O.N.E system)

6. Budgetary procedures perceived to be long and cumbersome
7. Lack of publicly available resources on the organisation's structure and staff

Usefulness of the OECD's Activities – Future Priorities and Opportunities

The following aspects of OECD work were all rated important or higher for respondent's/ country's future needs by most respondents:

- Leadership/dialogue on multilateral issues
- Committees/sub-Committees, working group/party processes and communication of OECD work
- Multi-sectoral work within the OECD
- Innovative approaches
- Practical guidance/tools
- OECD events for knowledge sharing

For all the aspects except for leadership/dialogue on multilateral issues, at least 20% of respondents rated these as “very important”. No respondents rated leadership/dialogue on multilateral issues as “very important”.

It should also be noted that 26% and 23% of respondents selected “do not know” for “leadership/dialogue on multilateral issues” and “multi-sectoral work”. This could indicate that there is less certainty amongst the OECD's stakeholders regarding the direction that the OECD is taking in these areas.

This was broadly consistent across the different categories of Member countries, although it should be noted that a very high percentage of respondents from new Members indicated that practical guidance / tools (59%), innovative approaches (51%) and OECD events for knowledge sharing (47%) are very important for their country's future needs.

In response to the open-ended question, “What top three opportunities do you see for future OECD engagement at the ministerial or country level (including overcoming gaps in the current engagement)?”, the most frequent responses were as follows:

1. Climate Change/Environment/Green Transition

Stakeholders highlighted the need for additional support for Members' in improving climate change action strategies and to Ministers on how to implement climate transformative policy across various parts of government. There was a general perception that the OECD can play a role in embedding climate change considerations better across Committee structures/ substantive policy issues in a cross-cutting way, to improve whole-of-government approaches among Members.

2. Digital Transformation, including Artificial Intelligence

Stakeholders highlighted the need to develop frameworks for digital governance and engage in more projects on digital security at the country level. Stakeholders also highlighted the role the OECD can play in focussing on cross-border issues around digitalisation and cybersecurity.

3. Strengthening International/Multilateral Cooperation and Values

Some stakeholders highlighted the benefits of the OECD expanding its regional presence to facilitate greater exchange and engagement with civil society organisations, business, and the public. Key to this would also be the need for the OECD to maintain its transition from a “think tank” to a “do tank”, ensuring that it provides more steering of policy through setting standards.

Annex IV: Documents Reviewed⁶³

2020 Biennial Value for Money Report for PWB 2021-22. Budget Committee. Council. (2020)

2020 Biennial Value for Money Report for PWB 2021-22. Council. (2020)

2020 Ethics Staff Survey the first OECD Ethics Staff Survey. Presentation and analysis of results and outline of next steps.

2020 Missions Indicators Report. Budget Committee. Council. (2021)

2022 Horizontal Project Update - First Semester Report to the Council. Council. (2022)

2022 Horizontal Project Update - Second Semester Report to the Council. Council. (2022)

2023 Communications Plan. Council. (2023)

2023 OECD Stakeholder Survey Presentation. (2023)

2023 OECD Stakeholder Survey. Questionnaire for feedback. (2023)

2023-24 PWB Roadmap Jan. – Jun. 2022. (2022)

A guide to the EDRC and its work. (2022)

A Vision for EXD/CSI's Enhanced Environmental Stewardship. (2022)

Agreed Principles and Practices. Economic and Development Review Committee. (2022)

Annex G. Revisiting Elements of the 3rd Cycle Methodology. (2021)

Annual Management Report 2022. Management, Administrative and Control Framework of the OECD: Secretary General's Update. Council. (2022)

Annual Management Report 2022. Management, Administrative Systems and Control Framework of the OECD: Secretary General's Update. Council. (2023)

Annual Report by the Head of Ethics 2020. Council. (2021)

Annual Report on the OECD Risk Management Framework. Council. (2019)

Annual Report on Voluntary Contributions (2021) Overview Presentation. Budget Committee. (2022)

Annual Report on Voluntary Contributions: 2021. Budget Committee. (2022)

Assessment of Members' advances to the Working Capital Fund for 2022 and contributions to the UN regular budget for 2022. UN Secretariat. (2022)

Audit of Environmental Vision

Audit of the Consultation with Civil Society by the OECD. Council. (2018)

Audit of the Mission Costs of the OECD. Executive summary for decision makers. Council. (2018)

Audit of the OECD's Digital Strategy. Executive Summary. Council. (2017)

Audit of the OECD's Digital Strategy. Executive Summary. Council. (2017)

Committee Progress Report – January 2021 – June 2022. Economic Policy Committee Economic and Development Review Committee. (2022)

Committee Progress Report - January 2021 - June 2022. Environment Policy Committee. (2021)

Communications Costs and Internal Governance Review: Key outcomes. (2022)

Commuting Survey Results 2018, 2019

⁶³ A number of documents are subject to confidentiality or data protection requirements.

Compendium of Existing OECD Communications and Dissemination Policies and Guidelines. Council. (2015)

Council Resolutions on Governance of the OECD. Council. (2015)

COVID All Staff Survey Report (December 2020, October 2020, Sept 2021)

Detailed Methodology for Committees IDE – Overview.

Digital Hub on Tackling the Coronavirus

Draft Decision of the Budget Committee concerning the Scale of Contributions:

- Part II Programme: OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) for the Financial Year 2022. Budget Committee. Council. (2022)
- Part I of the Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2022. Budget Committee. Council. (2022)
- Part I Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2022. Council. (2022)
- Part II Programme: OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) for the Financial Year 2021. Budget Committee. Council. (2021)
- Part I of the Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2021. Budget Committee. Council. (2021)
- Part I Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2021. Council. (2021)
- Part II Programme: OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) for the Financial Year 2020. Budget Committee. Council. (2020)
- Part I Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2020. Council. (2020)
- Part II Programme: OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) for the Financial Year 2019. (2019)
- Part I of the Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2019. Budget Committee. (2019)
- Part I Budget of the Organisation for the Financial Year 2019. Council. (2019)

Draft Decision of the Council Concerning the Part I Budget of the Organisation for 2021-22. Council. (2020)

Draft Decision of the Council Concerning the Part I Budget of the Organisation for 2023-24. Council. (2022)

Draft Decision of the Council on the Voluntary Contributions Cost Recovery Policy. Council. (2021)

Draft OECD COVID-19 Stakeholder Survey Questionnaire (2020)

Draft Programme of Work and Budget 2023-24: Ambassador's Convergence Paper and the Secretary-General's Preliminary Views on the Policy Environment and Priorities for the 2023-24 PWB. Environment Policy Committee. (2022)

Draft Programme of Work and Budget 2023-24: Ambassador's Convergence Paper and the Secretary-General's Preliminary Views on the Policy Environment and Priorities for the 2023-24 PWB. Environment Policy Committee. (2022)

Draft Report by the Executive Committee to Council on the Desirability and Feasibility of an 'Open by Default' Dissemination Policy. Council. (2022)

Draft Resolution on the Council consolidating the mandate of the Evaluation Committee. Council. (2017)

Draft Revised Framework for Council and Standing Committees Remote Working Methods during the Coronavirus Outbreak. Council. (2020)

Draft roadmap for the OECD Accession process of (candidate country). Council. (2022)

EDGE Assessment and Certification.

ELSAC Programme of Work and Budget 2023-24 Committee Templates. Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs; Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. (2022)

Environment National Delegates (In Paris) Contact List.

EPC Working Party No. 1 Strategy Note. Working Party No. 1 on Macroeconomic and Structural Policy Analysis. (2021)

EPOC Bureau Members 2022-23 Contact List.

EPOC Delegates Contact List.

Evaluation of the skills strategy Horizontal Project. Council. (2022)

Explanations of the 2022 Part I Scale of Contributions. Budget Committee EDG. (2021)

Final Proposal for IFCMA Terms of Reference (2022), Governance Note (2022)

Follow up on 2019 Governance Assessment on the 2014 Recommendations on Working Methods. (2021)

Fourteenth Annual Report of the Evaluation Committee to the Council. Council. (2022)

Gender and Environmental Statistics: Exploring available data and developing new evidence. (2020)

Global Relations Strategy for EPC and EDRC. Economic Policy Committee. (2016)

Global Relations Strategy for EPC and EDRC. Economics Department. (2016)

Governance Slides. (2023)

Guidelines on Institutional social media accounts at the OECD. (2019)

Harnessing Technology in Support of the OECD's Global Role THE OECD ICT Strategy 2008-2011, 2008

Horizontal Projects. Council. (2015)

HR External Audit Recommendations 2022-2023.

Improving Collaboration Project. Key actions, selected initiatives, and lead directorates. (2019)

Independent study on the impact of the work produced by the Environment Policy Committee. Environment Policy Committee. (2019)

In-Depth Evaluation of the Chemicals Committee. Council. (2020)

In-Depth Evaluation of the Economic and Development Review Committee. Terms of Reference. Council. (2019)

In-Depth Evaluation of the Employment, Labour, and Social Affairs Committee.

- Council. (2018)
- Monitoring the Implementation of IDE Recommendations. Council. (2018)

In-Depth Evaluation of the Environment Policy Committee. Council. (2019)

In-Depth Evaluation of the Health Committee.

- Council (2016)
- Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations. Council (2017)

Indicators document.

Insights on the implementation of the Resolution of the Council on Partnership of OECD bodies. Result of the fact-finding exercise. Council. (2019)

Insights on the implementation of the Resolution of the Council on Partnerships in OECD bodies. Results of the fact-finding exercise. Council. (2019)

Internal Audit Annual Report

- 2018. Council. (2019)
- 2019. Council. (2020)
- 2020. Council. (2021)
- 2021. Council. (2022)

Internal Audit of “OECD Publications Quality Review Process”. Internal Audit Report. (2021)

Internal Audit of “OECD Publications Quality Review Process”. Internal Audit Report. (2021)

IPAC Informational Brochure. (2022)

Making Migration and Integration Policies Future Ready. Ministerial Statement and Orientations for Future Work of the OECD on Migration and Integration. Ministerial Meeting on Migration and Integration. 17 January 2020, Paris. (2020)

Management, Administrative Systems and Control Framework of the OECD: Secretary General's Update 2021. Council. (2021)

Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level, 9-10 June 2022. Council. (2022)

Meeting of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee at Ministerial Level. Orientations for Future Work of the OECD on Migration and Integration –6th Revision. Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs; Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. (2019)

Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level. Paris, 5-6 October 2021. (2021)

Memorandum of Understanding between the association of Southeast Asian Nations and the OECD.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the OECD. (2022)

Message from the Secretary-General: OECD IT Governance Arrangements, 2015

Ministerial Council Statement. Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level. Paris, 5-6 October 2021. (2021)

Ministerial Policy Statement. Social Policy for Shared Prosperity: Embracing the Future. OECD Ministerial Meeting on Social Policy. 15 May 2018, Montréal, Canada. (2018)

Monitoring exposure to climate-related hazards: Indicator methodology and key results. Environment Directorate. Environment Working Paper No. 201. (2022)

Moving beyond the COVID-19 crisis to a better labour market that works for all. OECD Employment and Labour Ministerial Meeting. Policy Statement.

OECD 2015 Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life. OECD Publishing, Paris. (2016)

OECD All Staff Survey: “Have your say”. Report. (2021)

OECD Communication Costs and Governance Review. Market Consultation. (2022)

OECD Communications Strategy. Council. (2022)

OECD Companion to the Inventory of Support Measures for Fossil Fuels. (v.2018, v.2021)

OECD COVID Stakeholder Survey Presentation of Global Results (2021)

OECD Digital Policies & Standards: Audit Results. TIMAF. (2022)

OECD Digital Strategy 2.0 Framework, 1 July (2020)

OECD Digital Strategy DSAG Discussion Draft V1.0, (2017)

OECD Directorates – Environment Divisions List.

OECD Global Relations Presentation. (2022)

OECD Global Relations Strategy. Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level. Council. (2021)

OECD Going Digital II Project: Q4 2020 Update. Committee on Digital Economy Policy. (2020)

OECD Improving Collaboration Project. Concluding Report. Prepared by Territory. (2019)

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