

Council**INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE OECD:
SECRETARIAT RESPONSE**

The Council agreed to declassify this document on 9 October 2023 [C/M(2023)13].

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Over the last 60 years, the OECD has become a global custodian for its Members' shared values: democracy, the rule of law, protection of human rights, and open and transparent market economy principles. The OECD's analysis, evidence, policy recommendations and fora for dialogue promote a shared understanding of key global issues. They also enable the development of standards and policy best practices, helping drive reforms including well beyond the Organisation's membership.

The first Independent External Evaluation of the OECD took place in a challenging global context. Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal invasion of Ukraine has had a devastating impact, first and foremost on the people of Ukraine, but also on households and businesses around the world. In combination with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has dragged down global growth and triggered a surge in inflation. These effects hit vulnerable households and countries the hardest. As they confront these shocks, policymakers must also make progress on long-term structural reform priorities, including supporting high-quality growth, responding effectively and rapidly to climate change, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the green and digital transformations, and adapting to an aging population.

Multilateral co-operation is central to effective action on these and other shared challenges. It can help enhance public policies and address cross border issues, including keeping markets open, closing tax loopholes, optimising action on climate change and other environmental challenges, tackling corruption, maximising the benefits and addressing the risks of digitalisation and building resilient supply chains. To enable this co-operation, and to deliver on Members' expectations, the OECD Secretariat seeks to continuously improve the Organisation's impact, relevance, efficiency and inclusiveness.

In this context, the Independent External Evaluation of the OECD, carried out between September 2022 and July 2023 is a highly welcome contribution. The Evaluation will help to ensure that the Organisation is equipped to remain a global leader in providing high quality, evidence-based analysis and policy recommendations, in benchmarking policies, and in developing and disseminating standards and best practices in the years ahead.

The timely and effective delivery of the Evaluation benefited from the constructive relationship between OECD Members and the Secretariat. The Evaluator's mission was facilitated by the high degree of open, formal and informal exchange between Members and the Secretariat on a wide array of topics across policy and corporate management, and the high level of trust between the Secretariat and Members.

The Secretariat provided its full support to the Evaluation throughout. It facilitated 26 meetings of the two sub-groups of Ambassadors established to support the Evaluation – the Evaluation Contact Group and the Financial Sustainability Contact Group. The Evaluator interviewed all Permanent Delegations to the OECD¹ and 82 Secretariat representatives and reviewed several hundred documents, as well as completing a survey of over 1100 respondents in Member and some Partner country administrations and a benchmarking of other international organisations.

This was an Evaluation of the Organisation as a whole. While some findings and recommendations speak more to Members' oversight and engagement, others are more within the Secretariat's area of responsibility, and some are shared. In most instances, follow up on the Evaluation recommendations will be best accomplished through a partnership between Members and the Secretariat, requiring mutual accountability for successful implementation.

The Evaluation provides important insights into the future trajectory for a strong and effective OECD. The Secretariat appreciates the constructive and forward-looking nature of both the findings and the recommendations.

The Evaluation recognises that the OECD is highly valued by its Members and Partners, that it functions well and efficiently, that there is growing demand for its work and that it has increasing diversity and influence. The report reaffirms that, among international organisations, the OECD brings a unique combination of extensive, verified data, deep expertise, the ability for cross-cutting analysis, the flexibility to respond to emerging policy issues and remarkable convening power as a forum to facilitate peer exchange. The report recognises the strength of the OECD's very unique substantive committee structure. It also recognises that outstanding, highly professionalised human capital lies at the heart of the OECD's strengths and that we must continue to develop and nurture that strength.

¹ All OECD Members and the European Union.

The Secretariat broadly agrees with the Evaluation's recommendations. It is reassuring that the Evaluation recommendations are broadly aligned with many priorities for continuous improvement and positive change that are already underway.

The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation to further strengthen priority setting and medium-term strategic planning across the Organisation. The Secretariat will develop a proposal to enhance medium-term planning, further align Organisation-wide priorities with those of the substantive committees and consider introduction of a longer Programme of Work and Budget cycle.

Strong, high-quality engagement between Members and the Secretariat remains a top priority. This is a hallmark of the OECD. Together with Members, the Secretariat will build on recent improvements to Council, standing and substantive committee working methods to further deepen these connections.

While the OECD's work is already focused on advising on and achieving policy outcomes, the Secretariat agrees with the Evaluation's recommendation to continue to strengthen the usability and impact of the OECD's policy work. Given that the breadth of the OECD's work has many distinct users and audiences and that it is difficult to isolate the impact of OECD work, any impact assessment must inevitably rely on the active engagement of many Ministries and government agencies. The Secretary-General's forthcoming proposals to streamline and improve the Organisation's Programme of Work and Budget process will include a focus on ensuring a more outcome-oriented approach to budgeting. The OECD Communications Strategy, finalised in late 2022, the Annual Communications Plan, and the new OECD.org website also present important opportunities to strengthen the OECD's approach to communicating results and outcomes.

The Evaluation's recognition of the increasing value of the OECD's integrated policy work is also highly pertinent. The interconnected and complex nature of global challenges today require sophisticated, comprehensive policy responses. The OECD, with its multi-disciplinary mandate, is very well equipped to support that and must continue to be so. The Secretariat will explore appropriate ways to further facilitate the OECD's cross-cutting work, building on the very active and diverse range of horizontal work already underway. The Secretariat is also fully committed to deepening its integrated focus on gender, equality and inclusion right across the portfolio of OECD work.

The Secretariat also supports the recommendation to strengthen coherence and accountability across the OECD's decentralised model. This must be done while continuing to allow for the benefits that decentralisation brings in a highly expert and specialised organisation with a unique and extensive committee structure.

The Evaluation highlights the value and importance of the Organisation's engagement with Partners, which is enshrined in the OECD Convention and benefits Members and the world economy at large. Broadening the OECD's global reach is essential for the Organisation's continued effectiveness and relevance. The Secretariat will work closely with Members and Partners to strengthen and deepen such engagement in a coherent and structured way.

Responses from the Secretariat to each of the Evaluation recommendations follow in the table. The Secretariat will work with Members to elaborate further on follow-up actions for implementation of the Evaluation recommendations, building on these responses and taking due account of resource implications. Many of the recommendations are linked to reform and corporate improvement processes already underway across the Organisation. Planning will be integrated and appropriately sequenced.

The Secretariat thanks the Independent External Evaluator IOD and Independent External Evaluation Experts for their work, is grateful to Members for their constructive engagement throughout and looks forward to building on this Evaluation to continue to improve and strengthen the Organisation. The Secretariat will continue delivering on its management excellence and reform agenda to ensure the Organisation remains relevant, effective and efficient, and a global leader in providing policy support to its Members and beyond in the years ahead.

RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

| RECOMMENDATION 1: STRENGTHEN MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PRIORITY SETTING | |
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| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
| <p><i>Recommendation No. 1.</i></p> <p><i>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 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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>1.3 Establish a four-year budget cycle, which is aligned with two rolling biennia strategy cycles.</i></p> <p><i>1.4 Identify and establish a mechanism for the replenishment of the Capital Investment Budget and Reserve Fund to finance Class 1 assets.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>There is potential to further strengthen priority setting and medium-term strategic planning across the Organisation, while maintaining the Organisation’s flexibility to respond to emerging issues in an agile manner. An enhanced central strategic planning process, including medium-term strategic planning, would help to strengthen the alignment of Organisation-wide priorities with the priorities of the OECD’s substantive committees. This process should build directly from the OECD’s 60th Anniversary Vision Statement, which sets out a clear vision for the Organisation for the next decade. An enhanced focus on medium-term strategic planning would also reinforce the OECD’s cross-cutting policy work in support of gender equality, social inclusion and the 2030 Agenda, as proposed by the Evaluator in Recommendation 8.</p> <p>Recognising that Members’ views vary, the Secretariat agrees that a longer Programme of Work and Budget (“PWB”) cycle would support longer-term strategic planning, allow for the time needed to align priority setting across the Council and substantive committees, and ensure that the PWB process is more efficient for substantive committees, Council and the Secretariat. The Secretariat will develop a proposal for the consideration of Members. This proposal will also seek to ensure: a simpler and more streamlined budgeting process for the allocation of resources that supports both priority setting and deprioritisation; appropriate consideration of actual and estimated Assessed Contribution and Voluntary Contribution levels; and an appropriate degree of flexibility to support top-down priorities and to adapt to changes in a longer PWB cycle.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees with the need for a fully funded Capital Investment Budget and Reserve Fund to ensure that the OECD’s digital and physical infrastructure remains fit for purpose across the Organisation. Appropriate financing of all Organisation assets is essential to support longer term planning.</p> |

RECOMMENDATION 2: REINFORCE THE QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBERS THROUGH THE STANDING COMMITTEES

| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
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| <p>Recommendation No. 2.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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 of Committee time for deliberation on non-critical or less essential issues.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>Strong engagement between Members and the Secretariat remains a top priority, as highlighted through the suite of recent improvements in the functioning of Council and its standing committees and special bodies.</p> <p>Over the past two years, there has been important progress in making Council processes more fluid and efficient, following an extensive Council-led governance review that concluded in December 2022.* In the coming year, more enhancements are anticipated once the informal working group of Ambassadors on Council working methods has completed its work.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees with the importance of continuous improvement of the working methods of the OECD's standing committees and special bodies, recognising that each of the standing committees and special bodies has a distinct mandate and functioning. Significant improvements in the functioning of the standing committees have been implemented in recent years as follow-up to the annual informal seminars of members of each of the Executive Committee, Budget Committee and External Relations Committee, and as part of the relevant ad hoc and informal working groups of each standing committee.</p> <p>The Evaluation does not identify aspects of OECD rules and procedures requiring amendment, nor does it identify any relevant best practices or meeting tools in use in other international organisations that it considers useful models in the OECD context. The Secretariat will undertake a benchmarking exercise and survey to identify appropriate and feasible best practices of committee functioning and governance that could be implemented in the OECD context and that would sensibly build on the improvements already being undertaken.</p> <p>* In December 2022, the Council acknowledged that the Secretariat had successfully implemented all 52 recommendations stemming from a governance review carried out in 2014 and all “new ideas” arising from its assessment carried out in 2019, covering priority-setting, global relations, the working methods of OECD Committees and horizontal projects.</p> |

RECOMMENDATION 3: STRENGTHEN THE OUTCOME AND IMPACT FOCUS OF THE OECD’S WORK

| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
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| <p>Recommendation No. 3.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>3.1 <i>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.</i></p> <p>3.2 <i>Build on the evolving approach within the OECD towards the impact assessment of policy outputs using emerging techniques.</i></p> <p>3.3 <i>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.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>The OECD’s work is already significantly outcome focused, involving the extensive development of standards and options for policy reform. Given the nature of the OECD’s policy work and Committee structure, the ongoing dialogue in the substantive committees is focused on assessing and constantly refining the OECD’s work. Nonetheless, the Secretariat agrees on strengthening tools for defining, obtaining information about, and communicating the outcomes and impact of, OECD policy work at international, national, and subnational levels, including through the use of digital tools.</p> <p>As the Evaluation notes, the OECD 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. There is also an immense breadth to the OECD’s analytical and policy work, which thus has a range of distinct audiences. The impact of the work for different users must be measured accordingly and must engage many different Ministries and government agencies.</p> <p>Measuring the impact of policies in Member and Partner countries is necessarily on a voluntary basis and relies heavily on the active engagement of Permanent Representatives and capitals.</p> <p>Given the complex nature of assessing the impact of the OECD’s diverse outputs for diverse audiences, the OECD’s internal evaluation function will continue to strengthen its use of “contribution analysis”, first introduced in 2021, as part of its impact assessment of the work of substantive committees. It will also strengthen its communication with substantive committees and the use and value of this analysis for enhancing the outcome-focused nature of their work and will continue to work closely with other relevant parts of the Secretariat.</p> <p>The Secretariat will also continue to present to Council periodic reports on the relevance and implementation of individual OECD standards as well as its overall assessment of the impact of OECD standards presented each year to the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting.</p> <p>In terms of communication, the new five-year OECD Communications Strategy approved by the OECD Council in late 2022, the now annual Communications Plan, and the new OECD.org website each present a good opportunity to strengthen the OECD’s system for measuring and communicating results, with a focus on whole-of-Organisation priorities.</p> |

RECOMMENDATION 4: STRENGTHEN THE WHOLE OF ORGANISATION APPROACH TO GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
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| <p>Recommendation No. 4 <i>Capitalising on the OECD’s strong momentum regarding Global Relations, which is being driven by the Global Relations and Cooperation directorate (GRC), would help 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.</i></p> <p>4.1 <i>Building on the OECD External Relations Strategy, better define and coordinate a whole-of-OECD approach, aligned with other strategic approaches, towards outward engagement, 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.</i></p> <p>4.2 <i>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.</i></p> <p>4.3 <i>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.</i></p> <p>4.4 <i>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.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees with the importance of continuing to promote a whole-of-Organisation approach to outreach and engagement, at the national, regional and more global levels. The Secretariat also fully recognises the importance of the Organisation’s relationship with the G7, G20, and other global forums, international organisations and regional bodies.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees on the importance of harnessing the OECD’s standing as a neutral and substantive partner, and ensuring the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of its partnerships.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees to further strengthen partnerships with regional organisations through the work of its regional programmes and to build greater alignment of the priorities of Members and non-Members in the same region, while remaining sensitive to inter- and intra-regional diversity.</p> <p>Very significant progress has been made across these fronts in recent years and meaningful efforts are already underway to ensure stronger internal coherence and co-ordination, as well as stronger external communication on global relations, guided by the OECD Global Relations Strategy, and the relevant frameworks and partnership agreements for co-operation with Partner countries and regions.</p> <p>The work of the OECD External Relations Committee is essential to this effort. The work of the Development Centre, the Development Co-operation Directorate and the Development Assistance Committee are also critical and will be further leveraged across relevant areas of OECD global relations.</p> <p>The Secretariat recognises the importance of safeguarding the OECD’s reputation and the quality of its work in collaborating with non-governmental stakeholders. These relationships will be supported by a new policy framework.</p> |

RECOMMENDATION 5: INCREASE COHERENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS THE ORGANISATION’S DECENTRALISED CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
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| <p>Recommendation No. 5.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>5.1 <i>Revisit the existing Digital Strategy Framework (2.0) and mechanisms to support the digitalisation of the OECD across the organisation.</i></p> <p>5.2 <i>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.</i></p> <p>5.3 <i>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.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees that a strengthened corporate approach across the Organisation to core business functions can help to drive coherence, compliance with corporate policies and efficiencies.</p> <p>The Secretariat welcomes the finding that in terms of operational efficiency, head count and effectiveness, “the OECD has shown large efficiency gains in its corporate functions over a 10-year period”. It also welcomes the finding that the OECD’s highly professionalised workforce is central to the Organisation’s strengths and that the OECD’s attractiveness and competitiveness as an employer must be maintained.</p> <p>Following an independent function review and the decision to move to an Open by Default model for OECD publications, the OECD communications service is now undergoing a significant transformation, which will support implementation of this Recommendation.</p> <p>Similarly, the planned review of the OECD’s Digital Strategy Framework and associated governance will help to ensure secure, coherent and integrated digitalisation across the Organisation. Strengthening IT systems, IT infrastructure and platforms, and supporting data activities and digital security will require dedicated resources to make improvements and help increase efficiencies in the longer term.</p> <p>Other actions to implement this recommendation, in particular concerning human resources management, will be informed by the Organisation’s human resources policies and by the recommendations of the forthcoming External Audit of the OECD’s model of decentralisation, bearing in mind resource implications.</p> |

RECOMMENDATION 6: REINFORCE MECHANISMS FOR HORIZONTAL AND CROSS-ORGANISATION COLLABORATION

| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
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| <p><i>Recommendation No. 6.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>The Secretariat welcomes the Evaluator's recognition of the increasing value of integrated OECD work to address global challenges. There are many good examples of cross-Organisation collaboration, a significant number of which were not covered by the Evaluation. These include OECD Recommendations developed through the contributions of more than one substantive committee, the development of six Organisation-wide strategies on key policy themes over the past two years, flagship multi-disciplinary projects such as the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches and a large number of projects overseen by more than one substantive committee.</p> <p>The Secretariat will explore appropriate incentives for further facilitating cross-cutting work. In so doing, it will be important to balance the unique value of the OECD's deep subject matter specialisation across different economic and policy sectors with the growing interest in whole-of-economy and whole-of-government policy work. To maintain the Organisation's unique value as a specialist policy entity, the OECD needs to increase the integration of data, analysis, committee deliberations, peer learning and policy recommendations, without reducing the dedicated and expert nature of its staff and analysis.</p> <p>The Secretariat welcomes the recommendation on access to integrated data management, which is in line with the OECD Smart Data Strategy, to ensure that the OECD continues to be at the forefront of the provision and analysis of high-quality data relevant to its Members, Partners and the public. The current migration to the new oecd.stat data platform is a concrete and important step in the direction of integrating data sets across the Organisation.</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION 7: REINFORCE GOOD PRACTICES IN THE WORKINGS OF THE SUBSTANTIVE COMMITTEES | |
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| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
| <p>Recommendation No. 7.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>7.1 Strengthen inclusive dialogue across the Committee structure through the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Increasing the use of hybrid options for participation.</i> 2. <i>Ensuring materials are provided in sufficient time to allow for translation and feedback from Capitals.</i> 3. <i>Enhancing the use of live translation during Committee meetings.</i> 4. <i>Regularly reviewing each Committee to ensure smooth and effective working processes and substantive outcomes.</i> <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>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>Agree.</p> <p>The Secretariat agrees with the importance of continuously improving the efficient and effective working of substantive committees.</p> <p>It also welcomes the finding that the OECD’s committee structure is unique and a core feature of the Organisation.</p> <p>The substantive committees currently offer hybrid options for participation, provide materials in advance of meetings to ensure time for consultation and translation, use live interpretation into OECD official languages during meetings, and discuss ways of working through the Committee Bureaux and other informal settings.</p> <p>While hybrid meeting options are important for promoting inclusiveness and reducing carbon footprint, in-person interactions also continue to serve an important role, to increase the in-depth quality of exchanges and to promote informal peer learning and networking, all of which is an important element of consensus-building.</p> <p>The Secretariat will continue to facilitate regular sharing of information across substantive committees and among Chairs of committees.</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION 8: REINFORCE OECD POLICY WORK ON INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, GENDER AND SUPPORT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS | |
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| Recommendation from Independent External Evaluator | Secretariat Response |
| <p>Recommendation No. 8.</p> <p><i>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.</i></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. <i>Improve the structures and mechanisms to measure and inform the gender impact of OECD work through the work of the Substantive Committees.</i> 2. <i>Prepare, resource, and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy and gender action plan to ensure the inclusion and visibility of gender work in a transversal way across substantive policy- themed work.</i> <p>8.2 Link the OECD’s proposed medium-term strategy and key initiatives more strongly to global commitments for sustainable development and inclusion.</p> <p>8.3 Place attention on subnational heterogeneity and diversity, including geographic and cultural diversity.</p> <p>8.4 Develop contemporary tools to support diversity and inclusion, including acknowledging different perspectives, supporting improved translation and cultural considerations.</p> | <p>Agree.</p> <p>The Secretariat welcomes support for accelerating implementation and awareness-raising of the OECD’s work in support of the 2030 Agenda and its growing work to address and integrate consideration of vulnerability and inclusion right across the Organisation’s workstreams.</p> <p>This includes, but is not limited to: the Regular Dialogue on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD); the OECD Development Co-operation Report; the OECD-Africa Partnership: Finance for Sustainable Development; the Friends of Gender Equality initiative, OECD’s Gender Equality Strategy; the OECD Development Centre’s Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI); the OECD Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance; the OECD DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequalities; the OECD Development Centre’s Key Indicators of Informality based on Individuals and their Household (KIbIH) database; the extensive work of the OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity; and OECD Recommendations on Ageing and Employment (2015); Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work (2015); and, Creating Better Opportunities for Young People (2022).</p> <p>The Secretariat appreciates that much of this work was not considered by the Evaluator as it was considered to be beyond the scope of the Evaluation.</p> <p>The Secretariat will move ahead decisively with implementation of its new OECD Gender Equality Strategy, continue to systematically consider work to support commitments for sustainable development, encourage inclusion of sub national statistics and more granular data as and when appropriate, and continue to promote diverse and inclusive meeting participation by Partners.</p> <p>Successful implementation of this Recommendation will be linked to implementation of Recommendation No. 6 on supporting horizontal collaboration.</p> |