

# Our 10 business priorities for 2021

The priorities below are based on close dialogue with our member organizations and focus on areas in which the OECD has a key impact, including G20 and G7 mandates, legal instruments, work on global governance, and targeted research that underpins current policy discussions. In addition, *Business at OECD* (BIAC) is placing an emphasis on crosscutting policy dialogue, which is becoming increasingly pertinent in light of the Covid-19 crisis. This includes work in areas such as development and regulatory policy, which have a strong horizontal nature.

The 10 priorities should thereby not be considered exhaustive. Work on more technical and sector-specific issues will continue to play an important role in the overarching *Business at OECD* agenda.

## Economic and Finance policy

The OECD's world leading macro-economic insights are a valuable resource for business to guide decisions and frame advocacy efforts. Through our work, business can also shape the content and direction of these influential reports.

In light of the Covid-19 crisis and longstanding structural issues, our work on economic policy and finance enables members to enhance the OECD's insights through our annual Economic Policy Survey and perspectives on the OECD Economic Outlook. Our ongoing engagement with OECD bodies gathering economic and finance policy makers and regulators allows members to influence the direction of OECD initiatives on productivity, green growth, "fintech", financial policy, and investment. In 2021, members will have an opportunity to provide business views on how to leverage financing for a post-Covid-19 economic recovery and on how to address high public and private sector indebtedness following the crisis.

# Employment, Skills and Education

OECD work on employment compiles best practices and produces recommendations on employment and skills at a national level, together with social protection policies. Our collaboration with the OECD will focus on how to bring jobs back after the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on policies to improve youth employment and access to upskilling and reskilling. It will also be critical to understand changing skills requirements resulting from the structural changes induced by the Covid-19 crisis as well as the reinforced focus on greening economies.

As we work towards recovery, we will present forward-looking business recommendations to the OECD on how governments can support dynamic labor markets, strengthen access to and financing for skills opportunities, and achieve inclusion and diversity. These recommendations will lay the ground for the 2021 OECD Ministerial on Employment. We will also showcase industrial relations models to the OECD that broaden the scope beyond collective bargaining as a panacea for all future of work-related challenges.

The Covid-19 crisis is also changing educational systems. In 2021, our work will address the urgent priority for school and training curricula to deliver relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies to equip individuals to thrive and successfully adapt in light of the accelerating digital transformation of our economies and societies, with a view towards better preparedness and resilience for the future.

## Trade and Investment

The OECD is a key provider of fact-based analysis on trade and investment trends and barriers, and acts as knowledge partner to national governments the WTO G7, and G20. It pioneers research on global value chains, trade in value-added, or services restrictiveness. The OECD also hosts important legal instruments on national security, national treatment of foreign investment, and export credits, and is an important platform for investment policy coordination, for instance, via its *Freedom of Investment Roundtable*.

In 2021, the OECD will focus on digital trade — including the joint e-commerce initiative at the WTO — and scale up its analysis on trade and sustainability. Further focus areas include work on services trade, government support, and export credits. The OECD will also examine how illicit trade creates and exploits market vulnerabilities.

Business insights will encourage the OECD to uphold the importance of open markets and global value chains in light of calls for re- and nearshoring, new national security concerns, and plummeting trade and foreign direct investment flows. We will also continue to call on the OECD to foster a conducive policy environment to leverage private investment to get back on a sustainable growth path, with a particular focus on increasing resilience in health, infrastructure, digitalization, and the environment to be better prepared for potential future crises.

The OECD develops health policy recommendations that affect the market operations of the pharmaceutical and research-based industries on the one hand and the agri-food, wellness, and sports sectors on the other hand.

In 2021, the OECD will deepen its analysis and policy options on challenges and opportunities related to pharmaceuticals and medical devices. We will encourage the OECD and governments to adopt a pro-innovation approach detailing how governments can improve health resilience and preparedness. We will encourage the OECD to work on pull incentives to address anti-microbial resistance, and to identify recommendations to improve the potential of digital health.

On the agri-food side, we will continue bringing to governments' attention the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles to reduce risk factors for non-communicable diseases. The OECD has an ambitious program in public health, which provides governments with recommendations to tackle obesity, improve nutrition, and address alcohol abuse. We encourage national member organizations to appoint business experts to shape OECD work.

## Digital Transformation

Our cross-cutting digital economy policy agenda aims to advance the responsible use of digital technologies, enable business resilience, and inform timely government actions in the current Covid-19 and technological context. Business participants in this work address privacy, digital safety and security, internet related policy, and the impacts of new and emerging digital technologies.

OECD digital policy instruments are the global standards for privacy, digital security, broadband connectivity, internet policy cooperation, benchmarking and measurement. We work with OECD Members and relevant stakeholders to shape this guidance and ensure its practical implementation for enhanced trust and security, with a strong focus on governance, and regulatory frameworks that support investment, innovation and digital inclusion. OECD Principles for Artificial Intelligence and forthcoming guidance on blockchain, and access to data, are highly relevant across sectors increasingly advancing through data-driven digital innovation.

In 2021, we will focus on the implementation of OECD Digital Policy instruments, and inform the OECD's project on data and data governance. The impacts of trusted government access to personal data held by the public sector, and data localization on privacy and cross border data flows will be among issues high on our business agenda.

Implementation of the G20-mandated OECD Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) project recommendations remains on top of the international corporate tax agenda. Current focus of this work is on delivering consensus guidance for taxation of the digitalizing economy by mid-2021, together with the 137 countries part of the BEPS Inclusive Framework. Core issues addressed include profit allocation and a proposed minimum tax.

Covid-19 is shedding even greater light on corporate tax issues in line with fiscal policies that will need to address growing debt burdens from the crisis. Our business input in 2021 will focus on encouraging the OECD to reinforce its position as standard setter for international tax policy, and ensuring a holistic coordinated approach to assessing and implementing fiscal measures to ensure a rapid recovery across sectors.

In 2021, we will continue to work on ways to increase tax certainty, through improved dispute prevention and resolution, administrative simplification, and tools for enhanced engagement and cooperation with tax authorities. Green taxes, Value Added Tax, and reporting standards for new and emerging technologies will also be addressed. Our agenda will drive engagement that delivers pro-growth tax policies in OECD countries and beyond.

## Responsible Business Conduct & Anti-Corruption

The OECD leads on the promotion of responsible business conduct building on its Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNE Guidelines), the most comprehensive government-backed instrument on responsible business conduct. It also implements the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, which constitutes the first and only international anti-corruption instrument focused on the 'supply side' of bribery.

As businesses are responding to evolving expectations by incorporating responsible practices into their daily activities, the OECD is increasingly exploring critical interlinkages with other policy fields. At the same time, a range of national and regional initiatives are evolving, including on mandatory due diligence, which could have far-reaching consequences for business. We will closely follow related discussions, stressing our support for balanced implementation of the OECD MNE Guidelines, while underlining critical business realities to ensure that policies remain implementable on the ground.

In 2021, we will continue our active involvement in the fight against corruption. We will highlight the need to take concrete steps to address the demand side of bribery, proactively support compliance programs, leverage technology in the fight against corruption, and address bribery in State-Owned Enterprises. Our efforts will also address the link between anti-corruption and human rights, building on the joint *Business at OECD-IOE* guide we issued in September 2020.

# Small Business and Entrepreneurship

The OECD provides governments with analysis to develop policies that can support small and medium-sized companies and entrepreneurs (SMEs). Members can inform OECD work that affects SMEs), including economic performance reviews, data collection, projections, and policy analysis. Businesses can further use OECD tools to identify the structural and regulatory barriers to small business growth, and help shape governments' response to SME policy design and implementation.

OECD work also serves as an important comparator of SME policy responses during the Covid-19 crisis. The SME sector, which comprises the majority of companies in OECD countries and beyond, has been and continues to be particularly exposed to the crisis. Yet, SMEs also provide an enormous growth and employment potential, which may be a key driver of recovery efforts.

Through our open dialogue with the OECD bodies addressing SME policies, we will stay actively engaged throughout 2021 in responding to OECD analysis including the short-term and longer-term response measures to the Covid-19 crisis, diversifying the finance landscape, digitalization and e-commerce, addressing administrative hurdles, youth entrepreneurship, and integrating SMEs into international trade opportunities.

## Competitive Neutrality and State-Owned Enterprises

The OECD facilitates exchange and best practices among regulators and antitrust enforcers on competition policy. In 2021, we will focus on State-Owned Enterprises, the importance of which is likely to increase following the Covid-19 crisis. Members will have an opportunity to provide input to ongoing OECD work on a global reporting standard for internationally active State-Owned Enterprises, which would be a first important step in addressing the undue advantages, which some of them may enjoy.

Our priorities for next year will also focus on providing views on competition issues linked to digitalization, intellectual property rights, state support and competitive neutrality, procedural fairness, and international cooperation on competition policies.

# Environment and Climate Change

The OECD work on the environment helps governments implement policies that should be win-wins for both the economy and the environment. Liaising closely with the International Energy Agency, the OECD also provides fact-based input to global discussions including the climate COPs, the G7 or the G20.

In 2021, work on climate change will continue to support country efforts to move to net-zero emissions pathways, addressing distributional aspects of climate policies, climate-resilient infrastructure and technology diffusion. Emerging sustainable finance definitions, methodologies and their application will also be a core theme. Work on environmental taxation will allow members to provide views on effective carbon rates, energy taxes, and emissions trading systems.

We will also work to make sure that OECD work on climate change considers both mitigation and adaptation efforts and outline the importance of developing a better understanding of the implications of circular economy approaches for business and the economic system more broadly.

The OECD is further currently developing a *Global Plastics Outlook*, and will further explore the potential of digital technologies and the role of extended producer responsibility. Work on international trade and circular economy will advance with a focus on the exponential growth in electronic waste, as well as the traceability of materials in products and global supply chains.

The OECD environment, health and safety program will develop high-quality tools and guidance on technical chemicals management issues, which provide concrete cost-saving effects of about 309 million Euros annually for industry and governments by harmonizing testing and assessment approaches.

# Recent selected *Business at OECD* publications and recommendations

## Responsible Business Conduct

- [Joint IOE/\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\)/BusinessEurope position on the second draft revised Treaty on business at human rights](#)
- [Joint Statement Supporting the Capacity of the NCP in the Current COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) comments on the Secretariat paper on the 20th anniversary of the NCP system](#)

## Anti-corruption

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\)-IOE: Connecting the anti-corruption and human rights agendas: Guide for business and employers' organizations](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) brochure on why OECD work on anti-corruption matters to business](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) contribution to the UN General Assembly against corruption 2021](#)

## Health

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) paper on Leveraging investment for more resilient health care systems](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) A call to action: business recommendations for future OECD work on health](#)

## Economic Policy

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) comments on OECD Outlook](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Policy Note- Financing the Recovery](#)

## Corporate Governance

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Improving Business resilience through corporate governance](#)

## Environment and Energy

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages to the OECD Ministerial Council Roundtable on “Economic Recovery: Strong, Resilient, Green and Inclusive”](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages on Preventing Single-Use Plastics Waste: Implications of Different Policy Approaches](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages on Sustainable Finance Taxonomies](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages on Trade and Circular Economy](#)

## Finance

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Financing the recovery](#)

## Trade and investment

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages: Building Resilience for Global Supply Chains](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Compilation of Covid-19 Supply Chain Case Studies](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Key Messages: Covid-19 International Travel Restrictions on Services-Trade Costs](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Statement on The Trade Policy Response to Covid-19: A Call for Urgent OECD Action](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Investment, the key to recovery](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) paper on Leveraging investment for more resilient health care systems](#)

## Export Credits

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Joint Business Position: Export Credits and Covid-19](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Illicit Trade in Context of COVID-19 and Future Pandemics](#)

## Food and Agriculture

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Statement on the Food and Agriculture Policy Response to Covid-19](#)

## Development

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Development Strategy paper: A roadmap to broadening development efforts](#)

## Employment, Labor, and Social Affairs

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Bringing jobs back after Covid-19: Business recommendations to the OECD](#)

## Digital Economy

- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Unlimited Government Access to Personal Data Held by the Private Sector: Impact on Cross-Border Data Flows and Economic Growth](#)
- [\*Business at OECD\* \(BIAC\) Position on Voluntary Transparency Reporting of Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content \(TVEC\) Online](#)