

# Agriculture Recovery and Resilience



## *Business priorities for agricultural policy*

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# Key Messages

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The Agricultural sector, due to its reliance on natural resources and climate conditions, is highly vulnerable to external shocks from natural hazards, weather variability, pests and diseases. The Covid-19 pandemic also demonstrated the crucial need to improve the sector's overall resilience and implement risk management strategies to boost capacity and re-establish its baseline functioning in the face of economic, social and environmental shocks and stresses.

Agriculture and food systems are co-evolving with technological progress. Digital technologies still offer untapped potential to contribute in concrete ways to productivity and environmental sustainability across the food value chain and to improve market performance and policy. The agri-food requires ongoing innovation to meet consumer demands, improve competitiveness, increase output, and growth productivity and sustainability while supporting new market development.

Stimulating the uptake of established and the creation of innovations that can contribute to the sustainability of agricultural production systems and food value chains is essential for post Covid-19 recovery. This includes digital innovation as mentioned in the section above, social, ecological, mechanical, physical and chemical established and innovations that are available or under development. Farmers need a well-equipped toolbox in order to be able to supply the social, environmental and economic needs of society through the agricultural value chain.

International trade and participation in global value chain (GVCs) are critical drivers of employment and incomes for the agricultural sector worldwide. Both trade and GVCs allow raw agricultural products to smoothly cross the globe, ultimately becoming final consumer products. Agricultural participation in GVCs is a key driver of economic transformation and growth with strong knock-on effects for livelihood improvement, production growth, and productivity improvements.

Pressure on agricultural supply chains and related restrictions on economic activities revealed vulnerabilities in global trade logistics, as related policy responses aimed to curtail exports from key suppliers contributed to food price inflations. Compounded with disruptions to global supply chains and transportation, rising food prices could lead to malnutrition and health related issues, as price volatilities and growing market uncertainty, particularly in emerging markets raise further concerns for post-pandemic economic recovery.

The food and agriculture impact on the environment, climate change and biodiversity poses significant challenges for agricultural production. Despite it, climate related concerns may encourage the sector to expand production and contribute to climate change mitigation through nature-based solutions. Climate-related factors bring market outlook uncertainty, prompting innovation and climate-adaptation policies, while biodiversity loss can impact ecosystem service provisioning to farmers, with potential consequences on farm productivity and resilience.

To ensure future generations maintain healthy diets and are food secure, sustainable food systems are critical. Similarly, sustainable food systems are essential for environmental stability and are key to the functioning of many economies. Even though these key social environmental and economic objectives are interconnected, policymaking and policy analysis have historically tended to deal with them in isolation. It is important to argue for coherent, science proven policy solutions and voice potential trade-offs surrounding sustainable food systems.

# Introduction: The role of agriculture

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Agriculture and food systems as a whole play a crucial role in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but most importantly, in feeding the world and mitigating climate change. Similarly, global food systems are critically important to the livelihoods of people working on more than 570 million farms worldwide, particularly in developing countries. Beyond fundamental necessity, the agricultural sector contributes to value-added GVCs downstream as commodities are transformed into more convenient and higher-valued consumer products, including a variety of bio-based products.

Noting the broad based importance of the sector, it is no surprise that the Covid-19 pandemic placed an unprecedented burden on the agricultural sector, demanding new policies to ensure the sector's resilience, efficiency, and sustainability over the short and the long term. During the pandemic and fearing for the vitality of their producers and consumers, governments responded with new farm subsidy packages and food export restrictions, which cause further uncertainty for producers and consumers.

In addition to the most recent hurdles, the sector continues to face long standing challenges: feeding a growing and more affluent population; contributing to inclusive growth and reasonable prosperity, in particular in rural and less developed regions; adapting to climate change and contributing to mitigation; reversing environmental damage; preserving and restoring biodiversity; building overall food security and nutrition on a global basis.

According to the FAO, the world's population is expected to reach almost 10 billion people in 2050, which will require accelerating the production of affordable, healthy and nutritious food. Policies aimed at addressing the food requirements of a growing population must concur with raising the agriculture sector's productivity to meet the "triple challenge" of ensuring food security, nutrition and bio-based non-food products, supporting the livelihoods of people working in the food supply chain, and doing so in an environmentally sustainable way to increase resilience across all three dimensions.

Current policy environments in many countries are not well tuned to address these challenges and are indeed contributing to distortions on international markets. Such distortions are also exacerbating environmental damages and resource depletion. Likewise, economic downturns and market fluctuations generally undermine food security in vulnerable populations. Further, the recent pandemic induced drop in household income that may depress demand in the short-to-medium term. To tackle this host of issues, governments need to collaborate for an open, predictable and transparent international trade system, reducing the trade tensions and considerable uncertainty in global agri-food markets.

*Business at OECD* and its members, including the leading business federations in all 38 OECD countries, appreciate the role of OECD in developing a coherent and consistent whole-of-systems perspective for food, bio-based non-food products and agriculture supply chains to address the triple challenge. In this context, we acknowledge the urgent need for enabling policies supporting innovation that will drive productivity, sustainability and resilience. From a practical standpoint, a refresh of the global sustainable agriculture dialogue to adequately include all potential solutions, notably, science-based ones is called-for.

Drawing on the practical experience of a wide and regionally diverse business constituency, this paper provides *Business at OECD's* thoughtful assessment of priority issues facing agriculture and food systems. As such, we strongly encourage the OECD to examine these priorities as part of its agriculture agenda towards sectors' recovery and resilience.

# Business priorities for agricultural policy

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## Agricultural resilience and risk management

The agricultural sector, due to its reliance on natural resources and climate conditions, is highly vulnerable to external shocks from natural hazards, weather variability, pests and diseases. The Covid-19 pandemic also demonstrated the crucial need to improve the sector's overall resilience and implement risk management strategies to boost capacity and re-establish its baseline functioning in the face of economic, social and environmental shocks and stresses.

*Business at OECD* recognizes and supports developing policies to strengthen the agricultural sector's preparedness and capacities for absorbing, recovering, adapting and transforming the sector's response to adverse and unexpected events. The interdependence of the agricultural industry with other critical sectors makes it particularly vulnerable to disruption from natural hazards. For example, irrigation, drainage, and transport systems are tied into society-wide critical infrastructure – the disruption of which results in widespread input and output disruptions surrounding agriculture. Natural hazards are a leading concern, but better preparedness and resilience will provide broader sector wide security for all events, notably those similar to the COVID19 pandemic.

Agriculture is also particularly susceptible to market shocks – both local and international such as supply shortages, market uncertainty, and price volatility. These risks negatively affect economic returns from agriculture, threatening the livelihood of farmers and their capacity to invest and innovate in the long-term. Food production systems are also vulnerable to the pressures of a growing population, yet farmland suffers from urban encroachment along with desertification, inundation and other challenges. Conversely, agricultural land is also seen as a solution to some climate changes such as absorption of atmospheric carbon through plant and soil carbon storage. Differing and sometimes conflicting issues pose important challenges requiring holistic policy approach.

*Business at OECD* members strongly support the OECD work providing a holistic approach to risk management in agriculture, taking into account trade-offs between various risks, on-farm strategies, and government policies. It is important to avoid focusing on a single source of risks. Rather, various potential disruptions to agricultural markets and food systems must be taken into account.

### An enabling business environment requires:

- **Reliable and holistic risk management policies that strengthen the resilience of food systems as a whole, including ex-ante prevention policies, and increasing the sector's capacities to adapt and transform towards the uncertain future.**
- **Policies that enable business to strengthen resilience by building capacity to absorb shocks, adapt, and transform risk management strategies, while encouraging innovation.**

### Business recommendations to OECD:

- **Emphasize, based on the lessons learned from Covid-19, the 2008/2009 and previous world food crises, how preparedness for systemic risks can be increased in the aftermath of the crisis through improving risk management, increasing resilience, and strengthening innovation and digitalization.**
- **When analyzing risk management, distinguish regular business risks from larger, but less frequent disruptions, requiring market solutions, and catastrophic disasters, such as environmental risks and those requiring public interventions.**

## Agriculture digitalization

Agriculture and food systems are co-evolving with technological progress. Digital technologies still offer untapped potential to contribute in concrete ways to productivity and environmental sustainability across the food value chain and to improve market performance and policy. The agri-food requires ongoing innovation to meet consumer demands, improve competitiveness, increase output, and growth productivity and sustainability while supporting new market development.

The WTO estimates that digital technologies uptake by agricultural actors can increase production and trade growth from 31% to 34% by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Digitalization will specifically play a key role in enabling better management of firms, risk management, mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change, increase market opportunities for all, improve administrative processes, collecting and tracking product data throughout value chains, and help in improving compliance with safety standards.

For *Business at OECD* and our members, it is a crosscutting priority to create, use, share, combine, and analyze agricultural and other data in digital format to improve the sustainability, productivity and resilience of agriculture and food systems.

However, to enable continued wider adoption of new technologies, farmers need the capacity to identify, adopt, analyze and successfully use digital tools as they continue to evolve. Confusing and fragmented data governance arrangements may also negatively affect farmers' willingness to adopt new technologies, because of concerns over data privacy and confidentiality. Persisting issues involve interoperability and data quality standards of different regulatory regimes, restrictions to cross-border data flows, and inadequate connectivity infrastructure.

For the agricultural sector to utilize the benefits of new technologies and engage more effectively in global trade and value chains, OECD and governments should consider how to collectively address challenges to facilitate digital trade and the overall digitalization of the agricultural sector, while government policy must look at boosting agricultural capacity for innovation.

### An enabling business environment requires:

- **Policies that facilitate the positive effects (e.g. improved risk management, increased connectivity, better market access, and smoother engagement in global value chains) and productivity gains of digital technologies for farmers.**
- **A welcoming policy and regulatory environment improving access to agricultural data.**

### Business recommendations to OECD:

- **Explore how the linkages and interactions between different stakeholders are redefined by digital technologies and provide suggestions to further enhance such cooperation.**
- **Promote programs aimed at training farmers and agricultural workers to uptake digital innovations.**
- **Analyze whether current government innovation policies for agriculture are fit-for-purpose in the context of digital innovation.**

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<sup>1</sup> WTO (2018), 2018 WORLD TRADE REPORT: The future of world trade: How digital technologies are transforming global commerce, World Trade Organization, Geneva, <http://www.wto.org>.

## Agriculture innovation

Stimulating the uptake of established and the creation of innovations that can contribute to the sustainability of agricultural production systems and food value chains is essential for post Covid-19 recovery. This includes digital innovation as mentioned in the section above, social, ecological, mechanical, physical and chemical established and innovations that are available or under development. Farmers need a well-equipped toolbox in order to be able to supply the social, environmental and economic needs of society through the agricultural value chain.

Farmers combine tools and practices on prevention, monitoring and intervention in integrated crop management (ICM) to optimize along social, environmental and economic pathways. Depending on the farmer, the region or the market the farmer produces for these optimizations defer. It is therefore crucial to ensure all farmers have access to the social, ecological, mechanical, physical, chemical and digital established and innovative tools and practices.

*Business at OECD* strives to create an inclusive policy environment towards different farming systems, from conventional to organic, stimulating the strengths and offering innovative solutions to the weaknesses farm systems can have. A diversity of farming system is necessary to supply in the demand for food, feed, fuels, fibre and other bio-materials that are needed to fulfil societies demand, since no farming system can supply all demands at once.

Optimizing the sustainability of integrated crop management in the different existing farming systems needs cooperation between science, business, governments and civil society organizations, building extension services that connect sustainability needs, scientific knowledge, established and innovations with the realities of farming.

Our members believe that innovation in integrated crop management should be judged on its sustainability performance. Proper impact assessments, assessing costs and benefits of tools and practices and the systems farmers create with these should guide agricultural policy.

### **An enabling business environment requires:**

- **Policies that are inclusive towards innovations and different farming systems taking into account the different needs of farmers.**
- **Science based assessments of costs and benefits of tools and practices used by farmers and the farm systems they are used in.**
- **A supportive and sound regulatory policy environment and well-functioning markets, encouraging farmers to innovate, responding to current productivity and environmental challenges of food systems.**

### **Business recommendations to OECD:**

- **Explore a framework for impact assessment for agricultural tools and practices.**
- **Collect best practices to create effective farm extension services that can support farmers and value chains to increase social, economic and environmental sustainability.**
- **Encourage inclusive collaborative innovation systems, which form clear strategic objectives and comprehensive mechanisms for evaluation.**

## Agriculture value chains

International trade and participation in global value chain (GVCs) are critical drivers of employment and incomes for the agricultural sector worldwide. Both trade and GVCs allow raw agricultural products to smoothly cross the globe, ultimately becoming final consumer products. Agricultural participation in GVCs is a key driver of economic transformation and growth with strong knock-on effects for livelihood improvement, production growth, and productivity improvements.

Agricultural value chains vary from “primary pathway” exports, where inputs are later processed by foreign industries, to “processed pathway”, where the value-added is embedded in exports produced as processable inputs. Protective trade policies, tariff and non-tariff barriers and trade distortions of domestic support inhibit these value chains to ultimately slow down the sector’s growth and development of global markets.

Similarly, non-tariff measures (NTMs), such as high compliance, costs raise prices and inhibit smooth participation in GVCs. In turn, competition is restricted and employment growth slows. These measures pose a direct threat not only to growers in exporting countries but also to consumers and processors in importing nations, as a lack of predictability threatens their ability to access the safe and quality products they need. At the same time, designing evidence-based policies that integrate trade liberalization with other objectives, such as tackling climate change, achieving higher resource efficiency and stimulating sustainable agricultural produce, can make a critical contribution to meet global challenges.

Our members place high importance on the pragmatic harmonization of regulatory frameworks, data requirements, and the international trade rules necessary for effective and sustainable agri-food trade and practices. Thus, it is imperative to ensure sustainability and inclusiveness through assessing the impact of trade restrictive policies on the most vulnerable populations, in particular in emerging countries with a high dependence on the agricultural sector.

Changes in global markets, developments across food value chains, on-going trade tensions, and natural resource and climate pressures are expected to have structural implications across the entire food system. The OECD and governments need to highlight the risks of global supply chain disruptions to economic recovery, including export bans, and the need for risk-proportionate and evidence-based trade policies.

### **An enabling business environment requires:**

- **A regulatory environment based on fundamental principles of transparency, predictability, non-discrimination, proportionality and evidence-based, ensuring NTMs facilitate trade and GVC participation, without impeding a country’s right to regulate.**

### **Business recommendations to OECD and governments:**

- **Provide best practice solutions to anticipate and mitigate the Covid-19 impacts on food security, livelihoods, and agri-food trade and markets, considering national conditions and sectoral circumstances and ensuring inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of collaboration of various stakeholders, including state, business and civil society.**
- **Contribute evidence to the debate on national integration into international agricultural value chains, and highlight the benefits of open markets, promoting the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and market distorting domestic support measures.**
- **Ensure trade policy and regulation aim to increase the contribution of international trade to sustainable development.**
- **Recognize the complex multinational supply chains needed for both inputs and outputs from food and fibre production systems.**

## Food prices inflation

Pressure on agricultural supply chains and related restrictions on economic activities revealed vulnerabilities in global trade logistics, as related policy responses aimed to curtail exports from key suppliers contributed to food price inflations. Compounded with disruptions to global supply chains and transportation, rising food prices could lead to malnutrition and health related issues, as price volatilities and growing market uncertainty, particularly in emerging markets raise further concerns for post-pandemic economic recovery.

Fueled by strong feed demand in China and constraints on global production growth, international prices of most commodities, including for agricultural markets, increased in the second half of 2020. Markets are subject to shocks, whereas in some instances, such shocks cause temporary periods of rising prices, high volatility and growing market uncertainty, shocks such as the Covid-19 crisis can lead to disruptions in the overall functioning of global supply chains.

In the context of rising domestic food prices, policymakers tend to suspend or tax exports to help contain price increases. Such measures can have devastating consequences for farmers in production countries; poor consumers in food-importing countries and disincentive agricultural investment over the long-term. New regulations and over-regulated markets also increase the cost of the food in emerging markets, which in turn increases transaction costs.

Our members support further trade liberalization, strengthening international markets, and enabling trade to play its role in stabilizing and balancing food prices and increasing the sustainability of global supply chains. While governments need systems in place to manage risks, such as disruptions caused by the pandemic, self-sufficiency policies increase risks to domestic food security from unforeseen variations in domestic production.

We agree it is critical to enhance food market transparency and encourage coordination of policy action in response to market uncertainty, which the OECD is conducting contributing to the work of G20-led Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). Involving all stakeholders in this process will enable accurate market forecasting and signaling, which is crucial to keep global markets working and to support the resilience of the food system in providing people around the world with affordable, nutritious food.

### **An enabling business environment requires:**

- **Effective trade environment, supported by improvements in infrastructure and transparency regarding supply, demand, stocks and prices.**
- **Accurate, timely and transparent information on global food markets, exposing bottlenecks and highlighting risks, with the aim to address price volatility and market uncertainty, and strengthen cooperation amongst stakeholders.**

### **Business recommendations to OECD:**

- **Strengthen competition through increasing variety and avoiding regulatory barriers, facilitating access to intellectual property and genetic resources, and stimulating both public and private R&D.**
- **Address the problem of agri-food sufficiency and availability of appropriate energy value, by promoting open market access and avoiding agro-food trade restrictions.**
- **Continue the cooperation with AMIS to assemble and diffuse accurate information increasing the frequency of monitoring, supporting informed decision-making and reduce market uncertainty.**

## Agriculture and the environment

The food and agriculture impact on the environment, climate change and biodiversity poses significant challenges for agricultural production. Despite it, climate related concerns may encourage the sector to expand production and contribute to climate change mitigation through nature-based solutions. Climate-related factors bring market outlook uncertainty, prompting innovation and climate-adaptation policies, while biodiversity loss can impact ecosystem service provisioning to farmers, with potential consequences on farm productivity and resilience.

As the largest user of world's land and water resources and a major contributor to and sink for GHG emissions, the agricultural sector's environmental footprint is considerable. Under current policy settings, the food, agriculture, and fisheries sector can be expected to make positive additions to addressing climate change. It will be critical to ensure sustainable growth in production, for in the absence of adaptation, economic losses in the agricultural sector related to climate change will be substantial. Agriculture is also the main contributor to biodiversity loss predominately due to its land-use footprint and in many areas due to environmental pollution.

Agriculture policy-makers are increasingly confronted with the dichotomy between the sector's international trade and environmental performance. Carbon leakage risks or domestic regulations of emissions that could potentially lead to rising emissions in non-regulated countries and to a net increase in global emissions is being led by governments entering into agriculture GHG emission mitigation plans. In this context, national health systems also face a heavy toll as governments are challenged with issues such as soil degradation, leading to food shortages.

Environmental and climate policies, such as carbon pricing, in particular, will also impact agricultural trade over the coming decade, and could impose additional costs on carbon producers and affect agricultural trade, potentially undermining food security and livelihoods.

Our members draw attention to the work on sustainable agriculture systems and their positive impact on carbon footprints and climate change overall. Further policy action is needed to support the uptake of practices that contribute to sequestering carbon to help mitigate climate change while making croplands more productive and resilient. This is particularly critical as farmland is subsumed to urbanization that also increases demand on water and energy resources.

### **An enabling business environment requires:**

- **Close partnerships with the private sector to define and implement new policies and initiatives that enable adaptation to climate change while also positioning the food and agriculture sector to contribute to mitigation efforts.**
- **Targeted support systems for farmers that avoid distortive subsidies and benefit producers, consumers and society, complemented by coherent regulatory systems to improve efficiency and environmental performance of agricultural practices.**

### **Business recommendations to OECD:**

- **Provide guidance on integrated and coherent agricultural and environmental policies to achieve competitive, sustainable, productive and resilient farm practices.**
- **Substitute distortive subsidies with less costly and more effective forms of support, targeting agricultural policies with environmental goals.**
- **Conduct research to determine the quantitative environmental benefits resulting from particular sustainable agricultural practices and support farmers' transition to them.**
- **Continue to support research, development and technological advancements to address current and future challenges for sustainable agricultural practices.**

## Sustainable Food Systems

To ensure future generations maintain healthy diets and are food secure, sustainable food systems are critical. Similarly, sustainable food systems are essential for environmental stability and are key to the functioning of many economies. Even though these key social environmental and economic objectives are interconnected, policy making and policy analysis have historically tended to deal with them in isolation. It is important to argue for coherent, science proven policy solutions and voice potential trade-offs surrounding sustainable food systems.

The agricultural industry is the only major industrial sector featuring a full domestic supply chain from farm to fork (as well as parallel overseas chain of imports and exports). The industry interacts with a wide range of economic and social interests with particular relevance for the environment. The sustainability credentials of the agriculture industry must be recognized and supported, contributing to the discussions on sustainable food systems.

Our members support the OECD work in this regard, in particular in developing new food systems approaches capable of simultaneously making progress on food security, nutrition, livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Further work requires better coordination between policy makers in a range of sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, environment, and public health. Additionally, any one size fits all policy will be inherently flawed; future policies must recognize the important regional nuances within the agriculture sector.

The complexity of food systems requires developing a more holistic approach to policy making and setting objectives. For policymakers, this requires placing greater emphasis on the possible effects of farm policies on economic, environmental and social outcomes. In this context, as environmental issues related to agriculture are being addressed through agri-environmental policies, a food systems approach relies on using other instruments, such as those promoting change in consumer or firm behavior.

The OECD is ideally positioned to clarify both the challenges and the opportunities food systems are facing in efforts to meet the triple challenge of improving the provision of social livelihoods (e.g. the availability of nutritious and affordable food) and environmental sustainability. In the wake of Covid-19, this can serve as an opportunity to roll back distorting forms of policy support, investing in policies supporting the transformation of agricultural sector towards more effective and more value-added, and addressing the negative narrative of the concept of sustainability in the context of food systems.

### **An enabling business environment requires:**

- **Policies supporting sustainable food production at a global level, based on evidence, economic impact, best practices and effective and inclusive solutions.**
- **A positive definition framework structured around several entry points, including outcomes, trade-offs, core activities and feedbacks, allowing to identify key elements needed to support the transition towards sustainable food systems.**

### **Business recommendations to OECD:**

- **Prioritize identifying specific synergies and trade-offs in enabling the global food system to address the triple challenge and its implication for coherent policy packages.**
- **Study the effects of the drive for more sustainable agriculture, including implications of policies to encourage farmers to use sustainable practices and what shifts in farming practice mean for agricultural production balances and total production volumes.**

# Conclusion: Communicating the benefits of agriculture

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The *Business at OECD* Food and Agriculture Committee, through this paper, provides a reflected consideration of key priority issues that require further concerned and coherent policy guidance and outlines ways forward for OECD to support sector's resilient recovery.

The business community highly appreciates OECD's research and analysis to inform better policies to achieve a productive, sustainable and resilient global food systems. This work is critically important to better enable farmers and the food sector to simultaneously improve productivity, increase competitiveness and profitability, improve resilience to climate-based and other disasters and disruptions to global value chains, access markets at home and abroad, manage natural resources more sustainably, contribute to global food security, and deal with extreme market volatility and growing market uncertainty, while avoiding trade distortions.

Protectionist rhetoric, trade distortive measures, tariff and non-tariff barriers slow down the sector's growth and development of global markets. The OECD identifies half of support to agriculture as market distorting, inequitable and harmful to both the environment and global food security. More effective communication is needed to promote the benefits of investing in innovation systems, in hard and soft infrastructure, in climate and environmental measures, and in risk management and improved resilience.

Concentrating policy effort in this way can also help enable trade in agriculture and food to generate growth and income opportunities for farm households and to contribute more to building food security in the face of climate change. At the same time, it is essential that policy responses to challenges, such as climate change and food security, are informed by evidence-based analysis of costs and benefits for individual countries and for the global food system.

Communicating the benefits of agriculture should be clearly promoted by the OECD and its members in achieving food security, better livelihoods and contributing to important, global environmental goals.

# About the *Business at OECD* Food and Agriculture Committee

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Established in 1962, *Business at OECD* (BIAC) supports policies that enable businesses of all sizes to contribute to sustainable growth, broader economic development and enhanced societal prosperity. Through [our 55 national federations and 45 associate expert groups networks](#), we currently work with over 7 million companies in virtually all sectors.

The *Business at OECD* Food and Agriculture Committee contributes private sector experience to the work of OECD, and related fora, and actively supports the mobilization of efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our Food and Agriculture Committee allows all private sector actors in the agri-food chain to contribute their expertise to the broad range of activities carried out under the auspices of the OECD Committee for Agriculture and participates in OECD projects and activities as officially recognized business advisory group.

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