



Declaration on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth and Social Prosperity (Cancún Declaration)

**OECD Legal
Instruments**

This document is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. It reproduces an OECD Legal Instrument and may contain additional material. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in the additional material do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD Member countries.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

For access to the official and up-to-date texts of OECD Legal Instruments, as well as other related information, please consult the Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments at <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>.

Please cite this document as:

OECD, *Declaration on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth and Social Prosperity (Cancún Declaration)*, OECD/LEGAL/0426

Series: OECD Legal Instruments

© OECD 2025

This document is provided free of charge. It may be reproduced and distributed free of charge without requiring any further permissions, as long as it is not altered in any way. It may not be sold.

This document is available in the two OECD official languages (English and French). It may be translated into other languages, as long as the translation is labelled "unofficial translation" and includes the following disclaimer: "This translation has been prepared by [NAME OF TRANSLATION AUTHOR] for informational purpose only and its accuracy cannot be guaranteed by the OECD. The only official versions are the English and French texts available on the OECD website <http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>"

Background Information

The Declaration on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth and Social Prosperity (Cancún Declaration) was adopted on 23 June 2016 on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Digital Economy Committee held in Cancún, Mexico. The Ministerial meeting helped strengthen the position of digital issues on the global political agenda. Discussions stressed the urgency to develop a strategic vision and fully integrated policy approach to digitalisation in order to maximise its benefits and respond to the transformative digital shifts underway across the world. The Cancún Declaration calls on governments to actively leverage the opportunities of the digital economy for more sustainable and inclusive growth focused on well-being, equality of opportunities, and trust.

WE, THE MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union¹, assembled in Cancún, Mexico, on 22-23 June 2016;

COMMITTED to the rule of law and respect for human rights, to advancing freedom and democracy, and to increasing economic, civic and social opportunities for all;

RECOGNISE that the world economy is becoming ever more digital; that growing use of and investment in digital technologies and knowledge-based capital is profoundly transforming our societies;

RECOGNISE that the digital economy is a powerful catalyst for innovation, growth and social prosperity; that our shared vision is to promote a more sustainable and inclusive growth focused on well-being and equality of opportunities, where people are empowered with education, skills and values, and enjoy trust and confidence;

RECOGNISE that advancing our vision relies on the participation of all countries and on collective action to seize the opportunities and tackle the evolving challenges of the digital economy;

RECOGNISE in this regard, that we need to adopt holistic and whole-of-society approaches that encompass coherent evidence-based policies to stimulate investment in higher speed broadband connectivity, reduce barriers to use of digital technologies, foster research, innovation and new business opportunities, strengthen trust, promote job quality and address skill needs;

RECOGNISE that the 1998 Ministerial Conference on Electronic Commerce in Ottawa and 2008 Ministerial on the Future of the Internet Economy in Seoul helped pave the way for the digital economy to flourish through a successful combination of policies developed in close collaboration with experts from business and industry, trade-unions, civil society and the Internet technical community through their advisory committees; and that we need to continue working closely together and with all stakeholders;

RECOGNISE that the OECD Recommendations of the Council on Principles for Internet Policy Making, Consumer Protection in E-commerce, Digital Security Risk Management for Economic and Social Prosperity, Cryptography Policy and Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data, which all stem from multi-stakeholder cooperation, provide a robust foundation for guiding the development of coherent policies for an increasingly digitalised economy;

FURTHER RECOGNISE in this regard, the important contribution of the Internet Governance Principles of the NETmundial Multistakeholder Statement;

UNDERLINE the critical need for continued multi-stakeholder, consensus-driven approaches to developing global technical standards that enable interoperability and a secure, stable, global, open, and accessible Internet; and the equally critical ongoing need for open, transparent and inclusive processes in global multi-stakeholder Internet governance;

FURTHER UNDERLINE that our initiatives to support the digital economy also help attain the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and its ten year review; and that we need to promote gender equality and be inclusive of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups;

DECLARE that we will:

1. Support the free flow of information to catalyse innovation and creativity, support research and knowledge sharing, enhance trade and e-commerce, enable the development of new businesses and services, and increase people's welfare through policies, grounded in respect for human rights and the rule of law, that reinforce the Internet's openness, in particular its distributed and interconnected nature, while respecting applicable frameworks for privacy and data protection, and strengthening digital security;
2. Stimulate digital innovation and creativity to spur growth and address global social issues through coordinated policies that promote investment in digital technologies and knowledge-based capital, encourage availability and use of data, including open public sector data, foster entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium enterprises, and support the continued transformation of all economic sectors, including public services;
3. Increase broadband connectivity and harness the potential of interconnected and converged infrastructures and digital services to bridge digital divides and foster innovation by adopting technologically neutral frameworks that foster investment in broadband networks, protect consumers, promote competition and enable opportunities for all;
4. Embrace the opportunities arising from emerging technologies and applications such as the Internet of Things, cloud computing, digital transformation of manufacturing and data analytics, while addressing their economic and social effects, and assessing the appropriateness of policy and regulatory frameworks, and of global standards;
5. Promote digital security risk management and the protection of privacy at the highest level of leadership to strengthen trust, and develop to this effect collaborative strategies that recognise these issues as critical for economic and social prosperity, support implementation of coherent digital security and privacy risk management practices, with particular attention to the freedom of expression and the needs of small and medium enterprises and individuals, foster research and innovation and promote a general policy of accountability and transparency;
6. Stimulate and help reduce impediments to e-commerce within and across borders for the benefit of consumers and businesses by adopting policies and regulatory frameworks that strengthen consumer trust and product safety, promote competition and support consumer-driven innovation, and enable co-operation among consumer protection and other relevant authorities within and among countries;
7. Take advantage of the opportunities arising from online platforms that enable innovative forms of production, consumption, collaboration and sharing through interactions among and between individuals and organisations, while assessing their social and economic benefits and challenges as well as the appropriateness of related policy and regulatory frameworks;
8. Spur the employment opportunities created by the digital economy by reducing barriers to investment in and adoption of digital technologies in all economic sectors, promoting an attractive and agile business environment, in particular for new digital entrants, adapting labour policies and programmes to foster job quality and social protection, in particular in new work arrangements facilitated by digital technologies, and by continuing to address job displacement and mitigate the related social cost especially for vulnerable groups;
9. Strive for all people to have the skills needed to participate in the digital economy and society through policies that improve the capacity of educational and training systems to identify and respond to the demand for general and specialist digital skills; that facilitate up- and re-skilling through lifelong learning and on-the-job training; and that promote digital literacy as well as inclusive and effective use of ICTs in education and training;

FURTHER DECLARE that we will deliver on our objectives in a timely manner in close co-operation with all stakeholders, and that, with the support of the OECD, we will share experiences and work collaboratively to:

- help preserve the fundamental openness of the Internet while concomitantly meeting certain public policy objectives, such as the protection of privacy, security, intellectual property and children online, as well as the reinforcement of trust in the Internet;
- identify, develop and activate the mix of skills needed to enable inclusive participation in an increasingly digitalised economy; and analyse new work arrangements enabled by digital technologies and their implications for job quality and labour relations;
- develop privacy and data protection strategies at the highest level of government that incorporate a whole-of-society perspective while providing the flexibility needed to take advantage of digital technologies for the benefit of all; and support the development of international arrangements that promote effective privacy and data protection across jurisdictions, including through interoperability among frameworks;
- assess the effects of digital transformation on society and on all parts of the global economy to identify expected benefits and challenges, and to examine how national strategies and policies can address these transformations and take advantage of innovation to help bridge digital divides;
- strengthen the collection of internationally comparable statistics on the adoption and use of broadband infrastructures and digital services together with the use of digital technologies by firms and individuals across the economy and society; and contribute to developing new metrics for the digital economy, such as on trust, skills and global data flows;

INVITE the OECD to further develop its work related to the digital economy, and in this regard, to build on its work in other areas, including the OECD Skills Strategy and the update of the OECD Jobs Strategy;

CALL ON the OECD to continue to provide us with strong evidence and the innovative analysis needed to develop sound policies to achieve our objectives and contribute to a flourishing digital economy.

¹ Australia adhered on 7 November 2016

About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD Member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Legal Instruments

Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, around 460 substantive legal instruments have been developed within its framework. These include OECD Acts (i.e. the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the OECD Council in accordance with the OECD Convention) and other legal instruments developed within the OECD framework (e.g. Declarations, international agreements).

All substantive OECD legal instruments, whether in force or abrogated, are listed in the online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments. They are presented in five categories:

- **Decisions** are adopted by Council and are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. They set out specific rights and obligations and may contain monitoring mechanisms.
- **Recommendations** are adopted by Council and are not legally binding. They represent a political commitment to the principles they contain and entail an expectation that Adherents will do their best to implement them.
- **Substantive Outcome Documents** are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a ministerial, high-level or other meeting within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.
- **International Agreements** are negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several other types of substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.