



# Declaration for the Future of the Internet Economy (The Seoul 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 for the Future of the Internet Economy (The Seoul Declaration)*, OECD/LEGAL/0366

Series: OECD Legal Instruments

© OECD 2018

---

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>"

---

## **Date(s)**

Adopted on 18/06/2008

Noted by the Council on 26/06/2008

## **Background Information**

The Declaration for the Future of the Internet Economy (Seoul Declaration) was adopted on 18 June 2008 on the occasion of the OECD Ministerial Meeting on “The Future of the Internet Economy” held in Seoul, Korea. The Declaration articulates a common set of core values and basic principles that will guide the development of the Internet economy into the future. In this respect, Ministers also welcomed the OECD report *Shaping Policies for the Future of the Internet Economy*, recognised its importance and commended its consideration by Member countries and non-Member economies in developing their policies to support the Internet Economy.

**WE**, the Ministers and Representatives of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Community, assembled in Seoul, Korea, on 17 and 18 June 2008 to discuss the future of the Internet Economy.

**WE STATE** our common desire to promote the Internet Economy and stimulate sustainable economic growth and prosperity by means of policy and regulatory environments that support innovation, investment, and competition in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. We will work with the private sector, civil society and the Internet community to secure the ICT networks that underpin the Internet Economy as well as to take measures to protect the users of the Internet Economy, including the necessary cross-border co-operation.

**WE ARE DETERMINED** to work together to promote ubiquitous access to ICT networks and services enabling widespread participation in the Internet Economy. The further expansion of the Internet Economy will bolster the free flow of information, freedom of expression, and protection of individual liberties, as critical components of a democratic society and cultural diversity. We will also work to use the tools of the Internet Economy to address global challenges, such as climate change. In moving forward, we recognise the significant foundation that the 1998 *OECD Ministerial Conference on Electronic Commerce* provided to the nascent Internet Economy and take note of the outcomes of the 2003 and 2005 *World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS)*.

**WE SHARE** a vision that the Internet Economy, which covers the full range of our economic, social and cultural activities supported by the Internet and related information and communications technologies (ICT), will strengthen our capacity to improve the quality of life for all our citizens by:

- Providing new opportunities for employment, productivity, education, health and public services as well as addressing environmental and demographic concerns;
- Acting as a key driver for the creation of enterprises and communities and stimulating closer global co-operation;
- Enabling new forms of civic engagement and participation that promote diversity of opinions and enhance transparency, accountability, privacy and trust;
- Empowering consumers and users in online transactions and exchanges;
- Reinforcing a culture of security which applies to information systems and networks, and their users;
- Developing an increasingly important platform for research, international science co-operation, creativity and innovation in many different sectors;
- Creating opportunities for new economic and social activities, applications and services through ubiquitous and seamless access to communication and information networks;
- Promoting a global information society based on fast, secure and ubiquitous networks which connect billions of people, machines and objects.

**WE AGREE** that our challenges are, through an appropriate balance of laws, policies, self-regulation, and consumer empowerment, to:

- Expand Internet access and use worldwide;
- Promote Internet-based innovation, competition, and user choice;
- Secure critical information infrastructures, and respond to new threats;
- Ensure the protection of personal information in the online environment;
- Ensure respect for intellectual property rights;
- Ensure a trusted Internet-based environment which offers protection to individuals, especially minors and other vulnerable groups;

- Promote the secure and responsible use of the Internet that respects international social and ethical norms and that increases transparency and accountability;
- Create a market-friendly environment for convergence that encourages infrastructure investment, higher levels of connectivity and innovative services and applications.

**WE DECLARE** that, to contribute to the development of the Internet Economy, we will:

**a) Facilitate the Convergence of Digital Networks, Devices, Applications and Services, through Policies that:**

- Establish a regulatory environment that assures a level playing field for competition;
- Uphold the open, decentralised and dynamic nature of the Internet and the development of technical standards that enable its ongoing expansion and contribute to innovation, interoperability, participation and ease of access;
- Stimulate investment and competition in the development of high capacity information and communication infrastructures and the delivery of Internet-enabled services within and across borders;
- Ensure that broadband networks and services are developed to attain the greatest practical national coverage and use;
- Encourage a more efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum to facilitate access to the Internet and the introduction of new and innovative services, while taking into account public interest objectives;
- Encourage the adoption of the new version of the Internet protocol (IPv6), in particular through its timely adoption by governments as well as large private sector users of IPv4 addresses, in view of the ongoing IPv4 depletion;
- Ensure that convergence benefits consumers and businesses, providing them choices with respect to connectivity, access and use of Internet applications, terminal devices and content, as well as clear and accurate information about the quality and costs of services.

**b) Foster Creativity in the Development, Use and Application of the Internet, through Policies that:**

- Maintain an open environment that supports the free flow of information, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and business transformation;
- Make public sector information and content, including scientific data, and works of cultural heritage more widely accessible in digital format;
- Encourage basic and applied research on the Internet and related ICTs;
- Encourage universities, governments, public research, users and business to work together in collaborative innovation networks and to make use of shared experimental Internet facilities;
- Combine efforts to combat digital piracy with innovative approaches which provide creators and rights holders with incentives to create and disseminate works in a manner that is beneficial to creators, users and our economies as a whole;
- Encourage new collaborative Internet-based models and social networks for the creation, distribution and use of digital content that fully recognise the rights of creators and the interests of users;
- Strengthen the development of human resources to take full advantage of the Internet and related ICTs, and further develop ICT skills and digital and media literacy.

**c) Strengthen Confidence and Security, through Policies that:**

- Protect critical information infrastructures at national and international levels from security risks;

- Strengthen the resilience and security of the Internet and related networked ICT systems and devices to meet the increasing demands and needs of our economies and societies;
- Reduce malicious activity online through reinforced national and international co-operation among all stakeholder communities in their steps for effective prevention, protection, information sharing, response, business continuity and recovery;
- Ensure the protection of digital identities and personal data as well as the privacy of individuals online;
- Ensure that consumers benefit from effective consumer protection regimes and from meaningful access to fair, easy-to-use, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms, including appropriate redress for economic harm resulting from online transactions;
- Encourage collaboration between governments, the private sector, civil society and the Internet technical community in building an understanding of the impact of the Internet on minors in order to enhance their protection and support when using the Internet;
- Promote research to address emerging security threats.

**d) Ensure that the Internet Economy is Truly Global, through Policies that:**

- Support expanded access to the Internet and related ICTs, especially for people in developing countries;
- Recognise the potential of the Internet and related technologies to provide enhanced services to people with disabilities and special needs;
- Recognise the importance of a competitive environment for the successful growth of the Internet Economy and the opportunities this can bring for development, particularly for people and regions with the most limited economic means;
- Promote use of Internet and related ICT networks by all communities as well as the creation of local content and multi-language translations to improve economic and social inclusion of people with different capabilities, education, and skills, and to preserve cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Facilitate the introduction of internationalised domain names (IDNs) while ensuring the integrity and stability of the Internet;
- Increase cross-border co-operation of governments and enforcement authorities in the areas of improving cyber-security, combating spam, as well as protecting privacy, consumers and minors;
- Harness the potential of the Internet to tackle global challenges such as improving energy efficiency and addressing climate change.

**WE WELCOME** the OECD report *Shaping Policies for the Future of the Internet Economy*, **RECOGNISE** its importance and **COMMEND** its consideration by OECD Member countries and non-member economies in developing their policies to support the Internet Economy.

**WE COMMIT** to working collectively with all stakeholders towards implementing and reviewing, as appropriate, the understanding that we have achieved in this Declaration in order to maintain its relevance to future challenges and opportunities confronting our economies and societies.

**WE INVITE** the OECD to further the objectives set out in this Declaration, through multi-stakeholder co-operation, by:

- Analysing the future development of the Internet Economy, namely: *i)* the important role and contribution of the Internet and related ICTs as a driver of innovation, productivity and economic growth; *ii)* the economic, social and cultural impacts of emerging Internet technologies, applications and services, including virtual worlds, sensor-based networks and social networking platforms;

- Based on this analysis, developing and promoting policy and regulatory principles, guidelines, other instruments and best practices for the future development of the Internet Economy;
- Researching the impacts of Internet and related ICTs in addressing climate change and improving energy efficiency;
- Examining the role of various actors, including intermediaries, in meeting policy goals for the Internet Economy in areas such as combating threats to the security and stability of the Internet, enabling cross-border exchange, and broadening access to information;
- Improving statistical systems to measure the changing access and use of the Internet and related ICT networks by citizens, businesses and institutions in order to provide reliable measures of evolving uses and the impact of the Internet on economic performance and social well-being;
- Assessing the application of current OECD instruments addressing consumer protection and empowerment, privacy and security in light of changing technologies, markets and user behaviour and the growing importance of digital identities;
- Recommending the development of OECD instruments that provide guidance in the formulation of policies for the development and use of converged communication networks;
- Continuing multidisciplinary work looking at the challenges and good practices of e-government and public sector transformation;
- Supporting measures and mechanisms to implement more effective cross-border co-operation;
- Conveying this Declaration and the OECD report *Shaping Policies for the Future of the Internet Economy* to all relevant international bodies and organisations, including the G8, the ITU, the WIPO, and UNESCO;
- Reinforcing co-operative relationships and mutually beneficial collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation, the Council of Europe as well as the Internet technical community, the private sector and civil society within fora such as the Internet Governance Forum;
- Reviewing within three years of its adoption, and thereafter as appropriate, the progress made at national and international levels in light of this Declaration.

## Adherents\*

### OECD Members

Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Canada  
Chile  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Korea  
Latvia  
Luxembourg  
Mexico  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Slovak Republic  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Turkey  
United Kingdom  
United States

### Non-Members

Brazil  
Costa Rica  
Egypt  
European Union  
India  
Indonesia  
Lithuania  
Romania  
Senegal

---

\* Additional information and statements are available in the Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments:  
<http://legalinstruments.oecd.org>



## 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, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, 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 450 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:** OECD legal instruments which are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. While they are not international treaties, they entail the same kind of legal obligations. Adherents are obliged to implement Decisions and must take the measures necessary for such implementation.
- **Recommendations:** OECD legal instruments which are not legally binding but practice accords them great moral force as representing the political will of Adherents. There is an expectation that Adherents will do their utmost to fully implement a Recommendation. Thus, Members which do not intend to do so usually abstain when a Recommendation is adopted, although this is not required in legal terms.
- **Declarations:** OECD legal instruments which are prepared within the Organisation, generally within a subsidiary body. They usually set general principles or long-term goals, have a solemn character and are usually adopted at Ministerial meetings of the Council or of committees of the Organisation.
- **International Agreements:** OECD legal instruments negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several ad hoc 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.