



Recommendation of the Council
concerning a General Framework of
Principles for International
Co-operation in Science and
Technology

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Background Information

The Recommendation concerning a General Framework of Principles for International Co-operation in Science and Technology was adopted by the OECD Council on 21 April 1988 on the proposal of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy. The Recommendation is based on the consideration that economic growth and social development of countries depend on advances in scientific and technological knowledge, requiring both a sustained research effort by countries and the widest possible circulation and interchange of ideas and information among countries.



Relevance to COVID-19 Response and Recovery

The current COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of the cross-border co-operation promoted by this Recommendation. This is the case, in particular, in the context of the search for and development of therapeutics and vaccines that can exceed the capacity and capabilities of individual firms or countries, and therefore necessitate international co-operation.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Articles 2 b) and 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the conclusions of the Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level on 12 and 13 May 1987 concerning the importance of the development and diffusion of technology for the growth of output, employment and living standards and the need to define an integrated and comprehensive approach to the different technology-related questions, and to the conclusions of the meeting of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy at Ministerial level of 28 and 29 October 1987, at which Ministers agreed that the Committee should prepare proposals for a general framework of common principles for international co-operation in science and technology;

CONSIDERING that a new context affects the contribution of science and technology to economic growth and social development, the main features of which are: increased opportunities opened by science and technology; the growing interdependence between technological development and basic scientific research as well as between different new technologies; the increasing involvement of enterprises in basic research; the increasing cost and complexity of some areas of research and innovation; the need for increased selectivity and flexibility in the allocation of human and financial resources to research; the special problems faced by less industrialised Member countries in exploiting the opportunities offered by science and technology; increased attention being given to the protection of the environment, and to the social, ethical and safety issues raised by developments in science and technology; the growing internationalisation of science and technology;

CONSIDERING that, in this context, the economic growth and social development of all countries depend more than ever on advances in scientific and technological knowledge, which require both a sustained research effort by all Member countries, and the widest possible circulation and interchange of ideas and information;

NOTING that in the utilisation of scientific and technological knowledge, the different circumstances and policies of Member countries may affect the openness of international exchanges, and in particular that:

- i) Barriers may be created by certain national and regional policies aimed at encouraging the effective transfer of scientific and technological knowledge to enterprises and strengthening their ability to exploit such knowledge;
- ii) Enterprises which have invested in research and development and innovation are more ready to exchange and transfer their technological knowledge when there exists an adequate regime for the protection of intellectual and industrial property rights, which can furthermore facilitate the publication of scientific knowledge having potentially immediate economic value;
- iii) In order to transfer to other countries certain technologies and related information involved in or resulting from research and development programmes, some Member countries require, for reasons of national defense or security, assurances of adequate protection of such technologies and related information; further noting that such issues are dealt with in arrangements to which not all OECD Member countries belong;

On the proposal of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries promote mutually beneficial scientific and technological exchanges and remove barriers which have harmful effects on scientific and technological progress and its contribution to economic growth and social development;

II. RECOMMENDS that Member countries promote, individually and collectively, advances in scientific and technological knowledge, in particular through:

- a) Contributing, to the greatest extent commensurate with their capabilities, to supporting basic research and maintaining up-to-date research facilities, and encouraging the development of efficiently managed co-operative projects;
- b) Promoting the education and advanced training of future generations of scientists, engineers and technical personnel, and facilitating the exchange of students and scientists between Member countries;
- c) Facilitating the international mobility of scientists and engineers, and in particular their access to major basic research facilities;
- d) Promoting the dissemination of the results of basic research, particularly through publication in internationally available scientific literature, access to data banks and networks, and open participation in scientific meetings;

III. RECOMMENDS that Member countries also strive to promote international co-operation in science and technology for economic growth and social development, in particular through:

- a) Promoting international co-operation in research programmes for the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge to enterprises;
- b) Encouraging the circulation, exchange and trade of technologies as well as co-operation between enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular through improved access to worldwide markets and improved harmonization of standards and regulations;
- c) Promoting improved universal protection of intellectual and industrial property rights;

IV. INSTRUCTS the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy to contribute, within its terms of reference, to further understanding of the issues raised by the above principles, avoiding duplication with the responsibilities and activities of the other international organisations and OECD Committees concerned.

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