



Declaration on International  
Science and Technology  
Co-operation for Sustainable  
Development

**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 International Science and Technology Co-operation for Sustainable Development*, OECD/LEGAL/0320

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 International Science and Technology Co-operation for Sustainable Development was adopted on 30 January 2004 on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy. The Declaration reaffirms the objectives set forth in the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, as adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) on 4 September 2002 and the concrete actions and measures set out in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD. Notably Ministers emphasised the critical role of science and technology as key instruments to address the challenges in sustainable development, including the specific areas of water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity.

**THE GOVERNMENTS**<sup>1</sup> of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States:

**RECOGNISING** that sustainable development involves human progress towards a more prosperous and equitable future within the context of environmental conservation and even development with respect to access to resources, energy, markets, health and education;

**RECOGNISING** that sustainable development brings into sharper focus the growing socio-economic interdependence of developed countries with developing countries and economies in transition;

**RECOGNISING** that the process of globalisation has given rise to new patterns of networking that are changing the way in which knowledge is created, diffused and applied, and that comprehensive responses, especially innovative policies and technologies, are required to bridge global inequalities including in knowledge and information;

**RECOGNISING** that global science and technology networks and platforms bringing together relevant social and professional communities facilitate the expansion of concerted international collaboration to more effectively address the challenges of sustainable development;

**RECOGNISING** that in order to optimise the contributions of science and technology to sustainable development, it is necessary to enhance the use of existing national and international instruments and facilitating mechanisms, and promote mutually beneficial collaboration between governments, civil society, business and industry;

**RECOGNISING** that in order to increase confidence in the application of science and technology for sustainable development, citizens need reassurances about effective risk management, appropriate regulatory environments and observance of ethical considerations by science and technology practitioners;

**RECOGNISING** the importance of international scientific and technological co-operation as a means for human resource development and institutional capacity building to strengthen problem-solving competencies in developing countries and economies in transition;

**RECOGNISING** the competence of the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy in facilitating international scientific and technological co-operation and enhancing exchange of information on science and technology policy practices, and the distinctive role played by the Global Science Forum in addressing complex scientific issues as well as, more generally, the major contribution that the OECD is making in addressing sustainable development issues, and the scope that exists for providing developing countries and economies in transition with best practice frameworks in the development and implementation of science and technology policies for sustainable development;

**REAFFIRM** the objectives set forth in the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, as adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) on 4 September 2002; and the concrete actions and measures set out in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD emphasising the critical role of science and technology as key instruments to address the challenges in sustainable development, including the specific areas of water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity.

**DECLARE THAT:**

They reaffirm their commitment expressed at the WSSD to the promotion of sustainable development through the application of science and technology by strengthening national innovation policies and programmes, and by enhancing existing global collaborative networks.

They will take the necessary steps, within the framework of international agreements as well as their respective laws and practices, to strengthen existing national and regional research and development

funding programmes and instruments to support international collaboration in science and technology for sustainable development, in particular in respect of:

- a) Citizen education and public awareness regarding safety and ethical concerns relating to the application and the utility of science and technology for sustainable development.
- b) Strengthening innovation and knowledge-generation capacities of developing countries and economies in transition to entrench science and technology for sustainable development.

They will support initiatives undertaken by the CSTP, its subsidiary bodies and more generally the OECD, notably those of the International Energy Agency (IEA), to promote international science and technology collaboration for sustainable development. These initiatives will form part of a plan of activities to be mapped and monitored. Some of these activities may include:

- a) Supporting the exchange of information about effective methods to promote sustainable development through science and technology, with the aim of achieving the objectives of this Declaration.
- b) Introducing initiatives that are complementary to but do not duplicate WSSD follow-up activities, which promote research for sustainable development and support dedicated research partnership initiatives including developing countries and economies in transition. Such initiatives may include:
  1. The development of new or enhanced international research co-operation initiatives that address the scientific dimensions of issues of global concern in the area of sustainable development on the basis of an evaluation of current international co-operation programmes.
  2. The identification of new science and technology policy choices for sustainable development as well as benchmarking good practice activities in support of the creation of framework conditions for developing countries and economies in transition.
  3. Supporting activities on the development of a bio-based economy, the possible establishment of a framework for a network of Biological Resource Centres and the role of biotechnology in fighting infectious diseases, especially emerging, neglected diseases.
- c) Fostering a dialogue within all relevant fora of the OECD, including the IEA, on the critical interface between science and technology and sustainable development, and the necessity for a broad collaborative effort, including with non-member economies.

They agree to review progress made in furtherance of the objectives of this Declaration within a period of three years, and to examine the need for new strategic options to ensure the most effective harnessing of science and technology for sustainable development in the appropriate OECD fora.

**FURTHER DECLARE THAT THE OECD SHOULD:**

Further articulate specific issues raised within the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD and by relevant OECD and CSTP policy recommendations on science and technology for sustainable development, such as the outcome of the OECD Seoul Conference on International Science and Technology Co-operation: Towards Sustainable Development, held in November 2000 and, after collection and distribution of case studies of member countries and CSTP observers, provide practical assistance and advice to them on the formulation and implementation of policies which would harness science and technology as instruments for sustainable development.

Co-operate with relevant regional and international organisations as well as civil society, industry and business, as they work to promote sustainable development through science and technology.

Periodically review the main developments and issues in the fields of sustainable development and science and technology with respect to the objectives of this Declaration.

**INVITE:**

Other countries to take this Declaration into account.

Relevant international organisations to take this Declaration into consideration as they develop or revise international instruments to harness the contributions of science and technology to sustainable development.

Industry, business and civil society to take the objectives of this Declaration into account and to work with governments to further them by implementing programmes for optimising the contribution of science and technology to sustainable development.

Concerned countries and relevant stakeholders to convene, in collaboration with the OECD if possible, an appropriate event such as a dedicated conference of specialists on the issues raised by this Declaration to further enhance the consensus of the WSSD on the application of science and technology for sustainable development.

---

<sup>1</sup> Including the European Community.

## 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.