



Recommendation of the Council on Material Flows and Resource Productivity

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Background Information

The Recommendation on Material Flows and Resource Productivity was adopted by the OECD Council on 21 April 2004 on the proposal of the Environment Policy Committee. The Recommendation recognises the need for concerted efforts by Adherents to improve information and knowledge on material flows and resource productivity and to develop common methodologies and measurement systems, with emphasis on areas in which comparable and practicable indicators can be defined.

THE COUNCIL,

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

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 8 May 1979 on Reporting on the State of the Environment [C(79)114];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 31 January 1991 on Environmental Indicators and Information [C(90)165/FINAL];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 20 February 1996 on Implementing Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers [C(96)41/FINAL] amended on 28 May 2003 [C(2003)87];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 3 April 1998 on Environmental Information [C(98)67/FINAL];

HAVING REGARD to the Communiqué of the OECD Council meeting at Ministerial level of 17 May 2001 which stated that "OECD countries bear a special responsibility for leadership on sustainable development worldwide, historically and because of the weight they continue to have in the global economy and environment" and which asked the OECD to "continue to assist governments by: developing agreed indicators that measure progress across all three dimensions of sustainable development, including decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation";

HAVING REGARD to the OECD's Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century endorsed by the Ministerial Council Meeting in May 2001;

HAVING TAKEN NOTE of international work on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (commonly referred to as SEEA);

CONSIDERING the need for better information designed to integrate more fully environmental and economic decision-making;

CONVINCED of the need for intensified efforts by OECD Member countries to establish and use indicators of progress concerning the implementation of national and subnational policies on the environment, eco-efficiency and sustainable development; and to systematically compare achieved results with relevant objectives of environmental policies and, where appropriate, related international commitments;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the close co-operation on environmental matters between OECD and other international organisations;

On the proposal of the Environment Policy Committee (EPOC):

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries:

1. Take steps to improve information on material flows, including its quality and relevance for environmental management, in particular:

- Develop methodologies to enhance knowledge of material flows within and among countries;
- Consolidate and improve data collection concerning material flows within and among countries;
- Develop tools to measure resource productivity and economy-wide material flows, including appropriate estimation methods, accounts and indicators;

2. Further develop and use indicators to better integrate environmental and economic decision-making, and to measure environmental performance with respect to the sustainability of material resource use;

3. Promote the development and use of material flow analysis and derived indicators at macro and micro levels;
4. Link environmental and economic related information through work on material flows, stocks and flows of natural resources, environmental expenditure, and macro-economic aspects of environmental policies;
5. Co-operate to develop common methodologies and measurement systems of material flows, with emphasis on areas in which comparable and practicable indicators can be defined, drawing on work already done at national and at international level.

II. INSTRUCTS the Environmental Policy Committee:

1. To support and facilitate Member countries' efforts to improve information on material flows and related indicators, including through exchange of information on national and international innovative experiences;
2. To continue efforts to improve methods and indicators for the assessment of the efficiency of material resource use in important areas;
3. To develop a guidance document to assist Member countries in implementing and using common material flow accounts;
4. To carry out these tasks in co-operation with other appropriate OECD bodies and other international organisations to prevent duplication and reduce costs;
5. To report to the Council on progress achieved by Member countries in implementing this Recommendation, within three years of its adoption.

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