Environmental Performance Reviews
OUR MISSION

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides its 35 member countries with a forum to work together, share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We work with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We analyse and compare data to predict future trends. We set international standards on a wide range of subjects, from agriculture to tax to chemical safety.

The common thread of our work is a shared commitment to market economies backed by democratic institutions and focused on the well-being of all citizens.

MEMBER COUNTRIES

The OECD’s origins date back to 1960, when 18 European countries plus the United States and Canada joined forces to create an organisation dedicated to economic development.

Today, our 35 member countries span the globe. We also work closely with our Key Partners: China, Brazil, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

Each member country’s Permanent Representation and national experts are actively involved in the OECD’s thematic groups and peer reviews.
Peer reviews

Among the OECD’s core strengths is its ability to offer its members a framework to compare experiences and examine “best practices” in a host of areas. Peer reviews, where each country’s policy is examined by fellow members on an equal basis, have been used at the OECD for more than 50 years.

A country seeking to reduce pollution, for example, can learn valuable lessons from its peers on what has worked and what has not. This can save time and costly experimentation, and help governments gain support at home for difficult measures.

As everyone goes through the same exercise, no country feels singled out.

Reports prepared by the OECD Secretariat serve as a basis for countries to examine and assess one another’s performance. The reviews provide an independent, fact-based assessment and targeted recommendations to encourage further reforms from a whole-of-government perspective. Reviews are conducted to:

- Help countries measure their progress against domestic and international commitments.
- Promote dialogue between countries and peer learning.
- Stimulate greater accountability to the public and to other countries.

The OECD publishes several types of country reviews, including the Economic Survey which is published every two years. Only two are mandatory: Economic Surveys and Environmental Performance Reviews. The Better Life Index compares quality of life among member countries.
Environmental Performance Reviews

Since 1992, the OECD has conducted over 90 Environmental Performance Reviews of its member and partner countries.

WHAT’S IN THE REVIEWS?

- The assessment and recommendations summarise the main findings of the review and present policy recommendations to help the country improve its environmental performance.

- Key environmental trends describe the country’s progress in using energy and natural resources efficiently, reducing the carbon intensity of its economy, managing its natural assets and improving environmental quality of life.

- Environmental governance and management reviews the country’s environmental governance system and legislative framework, and how the country ensures compliance with environmental regulations.

- Towards green growth presents the country’s efforts to mainstream environment into its economic policy and to promote the greening of the economy, for example through the use of taxes and other pricing instruments.

- Each country also chooses two topics for in-depth analysis.
The OECD is holding a mirror up to our faces, not only showing us what we are currently doing right, but also what is open to improvement: for example, with respect to the quality of our water, soil and air.

Sharon Dijksma, Minister for the Environment, the Netherlands, 2015.

The EPR of Chile is relevant for two reasons. First, it gives us an external viewpoint on the problems we are discussing, and it helps us put them in the right perspective. Second, it will surely help us in practice, as a roadmap to improve our environmental policies.

Ezio Costa, Executive director of the Chilean NGO FIMA, 2016.
What is performance?

Objectives
Have they been clearly defined? Are they measurable? Are they based on an assessment of benefits and costs?

Examples: international greenhouse gas reduction commitments, % reduction in pesticide use, recycling rates, areas under strict biodiversity protection, etc.

Actions
What has been done to reach the objectives? Was it the most efficient and effective way to get there?

Examples: new or improved regulations, taxes, economic incentives, public investment, administrative reform, permitting, voluntary agreements and support measures, etc.

Results
Results are assessed in the economic, social and environmental context of each country.

Examples: Has air quality improved? Have greenhouse gas emissions declined? Is less waste produced, and more recycled? Has the number of threatened species decreased?
In-depth chapters

Biodiversity and forestry
**14 countries**: Australia, Hungary, Switzerland, Japan, Norway, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, Spain, Poland, Brazil, France, Chile.

Climate change mitigation and/or adaptation
**13 countries**: Turkey, Canada, Japan, Norway, Israel, Slovak Republic, Germany, Slovenia, Mexico, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Chile.

Waste and materials management
**11 countries**: Hungary, Czech Republic, Japan, Norway, Israel, Slovenia, Colombia, Poland, Netherlands, Estonia, Korea.

*Sustainable cities*
New Zealand, Netherlands

*Environmental innovation*
Germany

*Multi-level governance*
South Africa

*Agriculture and environment*
Slovak Republic

*Environmental justice*
Korea

*Urban wastewater management*
Turkey, Canada

*Mining and environment*
Estonia

*Sustainable mobility*
Netherlands

*Tourism & environment*
Iceland

*Sea*
Sweden, Portugal

*Env.performance of industry*
Spain

*Chemicals management*
Australia, Austria, Colombia

*Energy and environment*
Portugal, Iceland, France.

*Water management*
Switzerland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand

*Climate change*
7 countries: Turkey, Canada, Japan, Norway, Israel, Slovak Republic, Germany, Slovenia, Mexico, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Chile.

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*Climate change mitigation and/or adaptation*
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Key steps of a review

Countdown from Working Party on Environmental Performance

REVIEW PREPARATION AND INFORMATION COLLECTION

- **Selection of the in-depth chapters** and agreement on the timetable.
- **Questionnaire response** in co-operation with relevant ministries and agencies.
- **Data and documentation compilation.**
- **Preparation of the review mission**, involving a team of analysts and specialists, including experts from two reviewing countries.

REVIEW MISSION

- **Meetings with environmental policy stakeholders**: representatives of the environment ministry, other ministries, agencies, as well as independent experts, representatives from NGOs, industry, trade unions and state and local governments.
- **Field visit** on a chosen in-depth theme.

POLICY MEETING

- **High-level discussion** of the draft assessment and recommendations of the EPR, between the OECD Secretariat and the reviewed country government.

DRAFT REPORT

- **The draft report** and its assessment and recommendations are made available to the government of the reviewed country and representatives of the OECD Working Party on Environmental Performance.
PEER REVIEW

- **Presentation of the report to the Working Party on Environmental Performance** in the presence of a high-level delegation from the reviewed country.
- **Delegates discuss**, ask questions and exchange good practices on the subjects covered in the review.
- **Approval of the review’s assessment and recommendations**, which reflect the collective views of OECD member countries.

Every OECD member country and the European Commission are represented in the Working Party on Environmental Performance (WPEP).

The review’s assessment and recommendations are endorsed by the Working Party. The report is published under the responsibility of the OECD Secretary-General.

LAUNCH

- **The report is published** and made freely accessible online for all, including civil society and the media.
- **Press conference**, publication of the *Highlights* brochure and other online communications tools.
Reviewing countries

An Environmental Performance Review is a peer review. This is why, for each report, two or three OECD member countries volunteer to send country experts to participate in the review mission. They are usually experts in one of the two in-depth topics, and are either from a government department or a research institute.

Recently, participants from the United States and Australia contributed to the EPR of Canada and participants from the Czech Republic and the European Commission, to the EPR of Switzerland.

As experts, they formulate pertinent questions for the country under review and provide an assessment of the country’s performance, to support the OECD review team.

As peers, they have an opportunity to share their country’s experiences with the country being reviewed, and to take away useful good practices.

Being involved in the review is also the opportunity to learn about the process before their own country is reviewed.
Environmental Performance Reviews contain tailored recommendations to help countries design and improve all their policies that have an influence on the environment.

Countries are encouraged to submit a mid-term report to the Working party, five years after their review. They explain how they acted on the recommendations and the difficulties they might have encountered. Following their review:

- The Netherlands adjusted motor vehicle taxation in 2015.
- Chile adjusted its tax system in 2015.
- Japan adopted a Basic Act on water cycle in 2014.
- Ireland reformed waste collection services in 2012 and water pricing in 2014.
- Israel reformed company car taxation in 2013.
- Denmark introduced a NO\textsubscript{x} tax in 2010, contributing to a decrease in emissions.
A cycle is complete when all member countries have been reviewed. The third cycle of Environmental Performance Reviews started in 2010. So far:

- **20 member countries** have been reviewed, and **4 non-members**.
- **6 member countries** are currently at different stages of review or publication.
- **9 countries** are yet to be reviewed.
TO BE PUBLISHED

IN 2017: Canada, Switzerland.
IN 2018: Czech Republic, Hungary.
IN 2019: Australia, Turkey, Indonesia.
Recently published

The OECD has an open access policy. All reports, in-depth chapters, data, *Highlights* brochures and more are available on the website.

http://oe.cd/epr
The launch of each EPR is a public event, where government representatives, academics, businesses, NGOs and the media discuss current policies and the best ways to improve them, based on facts provided in the review. The key messages of the reports are showcased in Highlights brochures, on the website and on social networks.

Forests are intensively used in Estonia
Fellings related to annual productive capacity, 2014, top ten OECD countries

Belgium 106%  
Estonia 91%  
Germany 81%  
Slovak Republic 78%  
New Zealand 73%  
Czech Republic 71%  
Switzerland 71%  
Sweden 68%  
Finland 64%  
Poland 64%

Fossil fuels dominate Korea’s energy mix
Total primary energy supply, Mtoe

Land-use change to dairy farming increases nitrogen pollution
Change in land area used for dairy farming (1,000 ha)
Environmental Performance Reviews provide an independent assessment and targeted recommendations aimed at improving policies that impact the environment.

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Second edition - July 2017

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http://oe.cd/epr