
Forum themes: Cleaner

The 2009 OECD Forum programme reflects the objectives of the OECD for sustainable growth in a world economy that is not only stronger but also cleaner and fairer.

To make the world economy **stronger**, we must revitalise it by improving regulation, strengthening private and public sector governance, promoting well-regulated, effective markets for trade and investment, and enhancing robust “green” growth.

To make the world economy **cleaner**, we need to promote transparency and integrity, fight corruption and money-laundering, combat tax evasion, address corporate governance failures and restore public trust in public and private institutions. We must confront climate change and clean up the environment.

To make the world economy **fairer**, we must boost employment and social inclusion, spread opportunity, improve equity, provide decent education and healthcare, and build development goals more firmly into the core of our global policy thinking and strategies.

Cleaner

- [Corporate governance](#)
- [Tax evasion and abuse](#)
- [Fighting corruption](#)
- [Green growth and water](#)
- [Energy solutions](#)

Improving corporate governance

Can faith in financial markets be restored? Failures and weaknesses in corporate governance were a primary cause of the financial crisis. Risk management and rating systems failed, while accounting and reporting standards often proved insufficient. Remuneration incentives were out of line with shareholder and wider public interests, with some policies actually encouraging excessive risk-taking. Taxation and tax evasion may also have had some influence. What is being done to fix these failures and what more is needed? What improvements can the OECD bring to its own Principles of Corporate Governance and Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, so as to encourage better, more responsible practices in boardrooms?

Tax evasion and abuse

The public cost of bailing out failed banks and firms has cast a spotlight on the need to curtail tax evasion and the abuse by firms and individuals of non-transparent, low-tax jurisdictions. The OECD has led the fight against tax evasion for several years and is now supporting G20 efforts to tackle offshore tax abuse. Tax evasion weakens the ability of governments to finance services, from education and healthcare to infrastructure. The end result is higher taxes for honest taxpayers. Tax evasion and misuse of public funds trap millions of people in poverty. How can tax evasion be stopped and abuses flushed out? How can incentives for tax evasion be reduced? At the same time, how can governments face the twin challenge of

making taxation more equitable in the crisis, while reducing its burden on economic activity? OECD Week promises a rich and relevant discussion in one of the world's leading forums on tax policy.

Fighting corruption

Corruption threatens good governance, sustainable development, democratic process and fair business practices. Thanks to international conventions, corruption and bribery are now universally condemned. The OECD's 1997 Anti-Bribery Convention was the first global instrument to fight corruption in cross-border business deals. Ratified by all 30 OECD members and eight partner countries, it makes bribing a foreign public official a punishable offence in signatory countries. The FATF works to ensure that it is harder to launder illicit funds for criminals and for terrorist finances. But more needs to be done. South Africa is the only African country to have signed the OECD Convention: how can more countries, particularly in emerging markets, be encouraged to join the fight? How do anti-corruption initiatives affect international agreements in areas such as investment and procurement? Can the public be better mobilised to stamp out corruption, whether in politics or in business?

Green growth and water

"Green growth" will help reduce greenhouse gas emission and environmental pollution and create new growth engines and jobs with green technology and clean energy, bringing together information and communications technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology and transcending them all. Making best use of our water resources is a major element of a green growth strategy. Water is the basis of life and everything from food to heavy industry is dependent on water to some degree. But the credit crunch is squeezing water utilities and municipalities dry, public finance for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades is evaporating, the financial viability of utilities is threatened, and vital maintenance and rehabilitation work is being postponed. How can governments best emphasise the urgency of investing in water supply and sanitation services in a time of crisis? What can be done to make investing in water infrastructure both more attractive and smarter?

[From Grim to Green - OECD Messages on Green Growth](#)

Energy solutions

The economic crisis provides an opportunity for firms to improve energy efficiency and for the energy sector to re-evaluate its costs. In many cases, stimulus packages include long-term investment in infrastructure. These measures should be designed so that they do not lock in traditional, polluting energy production and consumption, but instead promote investment in cleaner, climate-friendly alternatives. Is it time to remove expensive and environmentally harmful subsidies to fossil fuel-based energy? Should agriculture subsidies be reformed or removed entirely? What role should nuclear energy play in our post-crisis future?