



# Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development



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## Date(s)

Adopted on 29/04/2010  
Amended on 11/12/2019

## Background Information

The *Recommendation of the Council on Good Institutional Practices in Promoting Policy Coherence for Development* was adopted by the OECD Council on 29 April 2010. The Recommendation was revised by the Council on 11 December 2019 on the proposal of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the Public Governance Committee (PGC). On this occasion it was renamed the *Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development* (PCSD). The revisions aimed at providing a comprehensive instrument to help Adherents equip policymakers with the necessary institutional mechanisms and policy tools to support and promote coherent policies for sustainable development with a view to respond to the universal commitments made under the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### ***OECD's work on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and the need for a standard on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development***

Since the early 1990s, the OECD has been at the forefront of international efforts to promote policy coherence for development (PCD). The OECD has a strong track record in monitoring policy coherence efforts in its Member countries through peer reviews. While PCD has traditionally been seen as the main responsibility of countries that are providers of development co-operation, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States calls for a broader approach to policy coherence. The 2030 Agenda states that the SDGs are indivisible, and that they balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and calls for no one to be left behind. To help make progress toward this balance, the SDGs include SDG Target 17.14, which calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) as an essential means of implementation for all the Goals.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the OECD has been working on aligning its approaches to policy coherence with the principles and nature of the 2030 Agenda, and develop tools and guidance for implementation in collaboration with the European Union, the UN specialised organisations and agencies, and other stakeholders. It is also collaborating with UN Environment and OECD Members to develop methodologies for tracking progress on policy coherence at the global and national levels. The Recommendation on PCSD responds to the growing demand by OECD Members and non-Members to deal with the “how” of coherent 2030 Agenda implementation.

The 2019 revisions of the Recommendation build upon Adherents' experience in implementing the 2010 Recommendation. It is the culmination of more than 20 years of lessons learned in promoting policy coherence. As a joint proposal from the DAC and the PGC, the revisions draw on the DAC peer reviews as well as on country reviews done under the auspices of the PGC.

### ***An inclusive process for revising the Recommendation***

The 2019 revisions were developed through an inclusive process. It benefited from five rounds of consultations involving a number of OECD committees and other bodies, including the DAC, PGC, Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC), Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC), Environmental Policy Committee (EPOC), Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP) and the informal network of National Focal Points for Policy Coherence.

Key stakeholders, including the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration, UN Environment and the members of the PCSD Partnership under the UN Partnerships for SDGs platform, also provided substantive comments. Consistent with the universal and inclusive spirit of the 2030 Agenda, the OECD launched an [online public consultation](#) to reach government officials, civil society organisations, international organisations and interested citizens and stakeholders from all over the world. The public consultation helped to test the relevance and applicability of the guidance and definitions included in the Recommendation on PCSD.

### ***Scope of the Recommendation***

The Recommendation focuses primarily on the enablers that are essential to facilitate governments' efforts to enhance PCSD. It is based on the premise that the ability to consistently develop and implement coherent policies in all areas is dependent on the processes, systems, structures and tools used by governments to manage and co-ordinate policy at all levels.

The Recommendation presents eight principles to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development under three main pillars:

- A strategic vision for implementing the 2030 Agenda underpinned by a clear political commitment and leadership to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development;
- Effective and inclusive institutional and governance mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions between levels of government;
- A set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies.

When implementing the Recommendation, Adherents may tailor the guidance to their specific national realities and capacities. The principles are mutually supportive and efforts should be made in each area in order to enhance PCSD.

### ***Support to implementation and dissemination***

The Recommendation includes provisions where the Council invites Adherents and the Secretary-General to disseminate it and instructs the DAC and PGC to monitor its implementation in consultation with other relevant committees, in particular the Regulatory Policy Committee. To that effect, the Recommendation instructs the DAC and PGC to:

- serve as forum to exchange information on experiences with respect to the implementation of this Recommendation;
- develop, through an inclusive process, an [implementation toolkit](#), which would include an accompanying guidance note with good practice examples, to help Adherents design their own policy coherence strategies and implement this Recommendation according to their specific national circumstances;
- make use of existing OECD reviews, such as the DAC peer reviews and the Public Governance reviews, to promote, assist and monitor the implementation of this Recommendation, in order to avoid duplication and increase synergies;
- report to the Council on the implementation of this Recommendation no later than five years from its adoption and at least every ten years thereafter.

*For further information please consult: [www.oecd.org/pcsd](http://www.oecd.org/pcsd).*

*Contact information: [pcsd.contact@oecd.org](mailto:pcsd.contact@oecd.org).*

## **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 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter the '2030 Agenda') adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/70/1) in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, Target 17.14 on "enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development" adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/70/1);

**CONSIDERING** the OECD Ministers' call for the OECD to support the Members and international community in the achievement of the SDGs, including through its role in fostering policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) [C/MIN(2015)14/FINAL], and the updated OECD Action Plan on the SDGs [C(2016)166/REV2];

**RECOGNISING** that PCSD is essential at a local, regional, national and global level to advance both domestically and internationally synergistic actions; to manage trade-offs across the SDGs; and to address the transboundary and long-term impacts that policies may have on sustainable development, including on poverty reduction;

**RECOGNISING** that PCSD is needed to promote different forms of financing from public, private, domestic and international sources that better leverage inclusive sustainable development impact, and to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda while leaving no one behind;

**CONSIDERING** the experience gained by Members and Partners in promoting mutually supportive policies for the benefit of all countries through improved institutional frameworks and policy coherence in a wide range of areas covered by the 2030 Agenda, as well as the OECD experience in promoting public governance practices to address multidimensional challenges;

**CONSIDERING** that the principle of policy coherence for development (PCD) is of fundamental importance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and an important contribution to PCSD;

**RECOGNISING** the need to establish institutional frameworks that support governments at different levels and across branches to promote PCSD and advance the 2030 Agenda;

**RECOGNISING** that engagement with diverse stakeholders beyond government is required to implement PCSD, including civil society, the private sector, and foundations; and that these stakeholders can capitalise on their respective roles and expertise to promote and support efforts to enhance PCSD, in accordance with the principle that "all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan" (2030 Agenda [A/RES/70/1]);

**RECOGNISING** that in addition to national governments, cities and regions have a crucial role to play in the achievement of the SDGs as they are often responsible for societal services, and that therefore national governments need to engage and coordinate with local and regional entities;

**CONSIDERING** the valuable collaboration between the OECD and a range of international organisations, including the United Nations, in the development of guidance and methodologies for promoting, implementing and monitoring PCSD;

**RECOGNISING** that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to PCSD, that the actions taken by Members and non-Members having adhered to this Recommendation (hereafter the "Adherents") need to be adapted to different national realities, capacities, levels of development, territorial context, and other constraints through place-based policies and structures;

**RECOGNISING** that Adherents have different national legal, policy, and institutional frameworks and institutional capacities relevant to the implementation of this Recommendation.

**On the proposal of the Development Assistance Committee and Public Governance Committee, in consultation with other relevant committees:**

**I. AGREES** that for the purpose of the present Recommendation, the following definitions are used:

- *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD)*: an approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policy-making. Its objectives in the context of the 2030 Agenda are to advance the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda by: (i) Fostering synergies and maximising benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas; (ii) Balancing domestic policy objectives with internationally recognised sustainable development goals; and (iii) Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries;
- *Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)*: a principle of International Development policy that aims to take into account the objectives of development co-operation in external and domestic policies in areas which are likely to affect developing countries;
- *Policy Integration*: a process by which institutions align their mandates, policies and sectoral objectives to the Sustainable Development Goals, and make their policy decisions taking into account the interactions (synergies and trade-offs) among economic, social and environmental areas with a view to addressing the multiple dimensions of sustainable development challenges in a more balanced manner;
- *Institutional and organisational mechanisms*: structures, systems, processes and working methods applied by the government across all branches and levels of government as well as by key stakeholders;
- *Stakeholder*: any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals and national, regional, or international institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, and from civil society, foundations, academia, the media or the private sector.
- *Transboundary impacts*: Any effect – intended or not – originated in one country that crosses national borders through flows of capital, goods, human and natural resources, and that is able to affect positively or negatively the sustainable development prospects of another country.

**II. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents develop a **strategic vision for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in an integrated and coherent manner**, in particular by:

**1. Building a strong, inclusive political commitment and leadership** at the highest political level to foster whole-of-government action for PCSD. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Enhance whole of government approaches to PCSD by defining priority areas, time-bound action plans and key performance indicators for making progress on PCSD and communicating results to the public;
- b) Systematically apply a poverty, gender and human rights perspective to PCSD frameworks in line with the 2030 Agenda ambition of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, empowering all women and girls and achieving gender equality;
- c) Introduce measures to promote PCSD within government structures so that commitment to PCSD outlives electoral cycles and changes in government, cabinet compositions or government programmes, including identifying a lead institution, responsible for promoting, overseeing and implementing PCSD;
- d) Build leadership capacity in the public service to consistently formulate, implement, and monitor policies coherent with sustainable development in across sectors.

**2. Defining, implementing and communicating a strategic long-term vision that supports policy coherence** and orients the government and stakeholders towards common sustainable development goals. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Develop a strategic long-term vision that defines desired sustainable development outcomes, scenarios and actions to enhance coherence across sectors and government levels, and between external and domestic policies in areas that are likely to affect developing countries;
- b) Use existing tools such as strategic foresight, scenario development and systems thinking approaches in the formulation and implementation of policies, to identify, prevent and mitigate actual and potential adverse impacts on the wellbeing and sustainable development prospects of future generations.

3. **Improving Policy Integration** to better incorporate sustainable development into policy and finance, and in that respect capitalise on synergies and benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas as well as between domestic and internationally-recognised Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Make strategic use of policy planning mechanisms and tools, including the budget process and public procurement, to manage synergies and trade-offs and integrate sustainable development into sectoral policies;
- b) Incorporate a PCSD lens, as appropriate, into national development plans, sustainable development strategies, and financing plans and develop supporting tools, such as guidelines or regulations, as well as coordination mechanisms for ministries and government agencies to align their mandates, policies and sectoral objectives with broader sustainable development goals;
- c) Integrate regional and territorial development into sectoral policies to achieve greater synergies with long-term strategic planning for the implementation of the SDGs;
- d) Take a whole-of-government approach to development policy and finance to diversify the resources and linkages beyond official development assistance that support sustainable development impact, including domestic resources, private investment, remittances and philanthropic flows as well as non-financial drivers of sustainable development such as trade and corporate business models.

**III. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents develop **effective and inclusive institutional mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions among levels of government**, in particular by:

1. **Ensuring whole-of-government coordination** to identify and mitigate divergences between sectoral priorities and policies, including external and domestic policies, and promote mutually supporting actions across sectors and institutions. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Use high-level coordinating mechanisms, whether located within the Centre of Government or a lead line ministry as appropriate, to promote PCSD and the integration of sustainable development across central agencies, line ministries and other public institutions;
- b) Establish clear mandates, capacities and mobilise adequate resources, as appropriate, for PCSD to identify policy divergences and conflicts related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- c) Encourage formal governance arrangements and informal working methods that support effective communication between ministries and departments, and between ministries and other public sector bodies under their aegis;
- d) Build capacity in public administrations for PCSD, and align training strategies and programmes for public actors with the principles and integrated nature of the SDGs.

2. **Engaging appropriately sub-national levels of government in areas where they have a role in policy coordination** to promote coordinated actions and enhance coherence across levels of governments for sustainable development. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Promote PCSD at different levels of government and work with key stakeholders to develop tools that support local and regional governments in applying PCSD in their legal frameworks, plans and actions for localising the SDGs;
- b) Promote synergies among national, regional and local policies to better align with and contribute to relevant economic, social and environmental goals, including international commitments and international development co-operation objectives, within the scope of their responsibilities and in a balanced manner.

3. **Engaging stakeholders effectively** to sustain broader support for PCSD and its implementation. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Engage proactively with stakeholders in different phases of the policy cycle, including through the exchange of knowledge and expertise, to develop and prioritise initiatives for enhancing PCSD, making specific efforts to reach out to the marginalised and vulnerable groups in society and to advance inclusive social and economic development, in line with the aspirations of the SDGs;
- b) Work with stakeholders to raise public awareness and mobilise support on sustainable development and government commitments supporting PCSD, through campaigns, policy dialogue, capacity building and information sharing.

**IV. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents develop **a set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies to advance SDGs**, in particular by:

1. **Analysing and assessing policy and financing impacts** to inform decision-making, increase positive impacts and avoid potential negative impacts on the sustainable development prospects of other countries, in particular on developing countries. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Introduce, where possible, regular assessments to identify and assess potential positive and negative impacts on sustainable development, building on any existing tools such as Regulatory, Environmental, Gender and Social Impact and Strategic Assessments;
- b) Adopt ex-ante and ex-post impact assessment practices that take into account transboundary impacts, paying particular attention to the economic, social, gender and environmental impacts on developing countries as well as the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. **Strengthening monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems to collect qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of policies and financing, and report progress on PCSD**. To this end, Adherents should, as appropriate:

- a) Monitor and report back on policy and financing impacts drawing on national, regional and local sources, where available, and publish regular reports about progress on PCSD outlining progress made on addressing impacts on sustainable development at home and abroad;
- b) Identify existing reliable and timely data, indicators and information, disaggregated by sex and geographically and territorial level as well as other aspects such as income, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant that can help better capture economic, social and environmental externalities imposed beyond national borders (transboundary impacts); and understand the country's contribution towards global efforts for implementing Agenda 2030;
- c) Report regularly on PCSD and, where needed, build capacity and skills to strengthen data collection, management, storage, and reporting processes;
- d) Embed a policy coherence dimension in evaluation systems to inform decision-making regarding the linkages and potential trade-offs between sectoral policies as well as transboundary impacts.

**V. INVITES** the Secretary-General to disseminate this Recommendation.

**VI. INVITES** Adherents to disseminate this Recommendation at all levels of government.

**VII. INVITES** non-Adherents to take into account and adhere to this Recommendation.

**VIII. ENCOURAGES** stakeholders to disseminate and follow this Recommendation in their approaches to promoting PCSD.

**IX. INSTRUCTS** the Development Assistance Committee and the Public Governance Committee, in consultation with other relevant committees to:

- a) serve as a forum to exchange information on experiences with respect to the implementation of this Recommendation;
- b) develop through an inclusive process an implementation toolkit with detailed guidance and good emerging practices to help Adherents implement this Recommendation;
- c) make use of existing OECD reviews, such as the DAC peer reviews or Public Governance reviews, to promote, assist and monitor the implementation of this Recommendation, to better assist in improving PCSD;
- d) report to the Council on the implementation of this Recommendation no later than five years from its adoption and at least every ten years thereafter.

## Adherents\*

| OECD Members    | Non-Members   | Other |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|
| Australia       | United States |       |
| Austria         |               |       |
| Belgium         |               |       |
| Canada          |               |       |
| Chile           |               |       |
| Czech Republic  |               |       |
| Denmark         |               |       |
| Estonia         |               |       |
| Finland         |               |       |
| France          |               |       |
| Germany         |               |       |
| Greece          |               |       |
| Hungary         |               |       |
| Iceland         |               |       |
| Ireland         |               |       |
| Israel          |               |       |
| Italy           |               |       |
| Japan           |               |       |
| Korea           |               |       |
| Latvia          |               |       |
| Lithuania       |               |       |
| Luxembourg      |               |       |
| Mexico          |               |       |
| Netherlands     |               |       |
| New Zealand     |               |       |
| Norway          |               |       |
| Poland          |               |       |
| Portugal        |               |       |
| Slovak Republic |               |       |
| Slovenia        |               |       |
| Spain           |               |       |
| Sweden          |               |       |
| Switzerland     |               |       |
| Turkey          |               |       |
| United Kingdom  |               |       |

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- **Recommendations:** OECD legal instruments which are not legally binding but practice accords them great moral force as representing the political will of Adherents. There is an expectation that Adherents will do their utmost to fully implement a Recommendation. Thus, Members which do not intend to do so usually abstain when a Recommendation is adopted, although this is not required in legal terms.
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- **International Agreements:** OECD legal instruments negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several ad hoc 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.