



ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDFIRES

COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL

BACKGROUND

The observed and projected increase in wildfire frequency, magnitude and intensity, coupled with a continued expansion and development of communities and economic activities in areas prone to wildfires, is increasing the severity of environmental, social and economic impacts during and after wildfire events. Climate change also adds a significant degree of uncertainty to future wildfire risk. Wildfire management needs to adapt to rapidly evolving fire regimes. Recent wildfire events have revealed the need for a better understanding of wildfire risk as well as for enhanced management practices, with a renewed focus on risk assessment, risk awareness, and risk prevention. These challenges have also been highlighted by several countries during the OECD-PLACARD Conference on Wildfires¹ held in early 2020, as well as during the dedicated discussions and roundtables organised in the context of the OECD Task Force on Climate Change Adaptation².

Against this backdrop, OECD Member countries have identified the adaptation of wildfire management to climate change as a priority of work under the OECD Programme of work and Budget (PWB) 2021-2022. On the basis of this mandate, the OECD Environment Directorate seeks to inform and guide better policies to help countries build resilience to wildfire risk in the context of climate change. On the basis of a comprehensive review of state-of-the-art knowledge on wildfire trends, drivers, costs and policies, the OECD proposes to undertake 3-6 country case studies, which seek to assess and support countries in making their wildfire policies, institutional arrangements and practices fit for future challenges. Ultimately, the case studies will inform OECD policy recommendations on wildfire management in the context of climate change, which will be designed to inspire and guide OECD countries and beyond.

CASE STUDY OBJECTIVES

Each case study aims to document how wildfire management in the case study country is being adapted to the challenges posed by climate change. While the case study aims at being comprehensive of all relevant wildfires management steps (e.g. including emergency preparedness efforts), a special emphasis will be given to understanding the existing efforts and remaining policy gaps in wildfire risk prevention. In particular, the case study seeks to elicit current policies and practices that focus on understanding and assessing wildfire hazard and risk, on the communication thereof to relevant actors, and on the prevention measures taken *ex ante* (e.g. risk reduction measures) and *ex post* (i.e. measures adopted when recovering and rehabilitating after a wildfire).

The case study will serve as an input to the overall OECD project, which will be documented in the OECD flagship report on *Adapting to a changing climate in the management of wildfires*, to be published in spring 2023.

OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

The OECD proposes three options to undertake the case study, which vary on the basis of the desired level of country involvement in the case study work:

¹ <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/conferenceonadaptingtoachangingclimateinthemanagementofwildfires.htm/>

² <https://www.oecd.org/climate-change/adaptation-task-force/>



Option 1: Information sharing

This option aims at eliciting information on specific policies, institutional arrangements and practices from the case study country in the form of examples, on the basis of policy documents or information shared online. A special focus is placed on providing information on the country's approaches to wildfire risk prevention.

This option does not aim to bring together nor assess wildfire management comprehensively. Information shared by the country will be used selectively and will inform the policy overview chapter, which will draw on and feature specific country examples, in the form of boxes or in-text references.

Process: the country will be invited to share information guided by a questionnaire.³ Key stakeholders (e.g. government officials, sub-national authorities, sectoral agencies, as relevant) can be invited by the focal point to share information on the existing or planned policies, institutional arrangements or practices, including policy gaps and lessons learned.

Deliverable: the information gathered by the country's focal point can be shared with the OECD in a document that presents material in the form of bullets, as well as links to additional documents or online resources. The information does not need to be developed into a note. The OECD will then extract the relevant information and integrate them in the OECD flagship report, without adding a case study note as an annex to the report. The OECD may ask for follow-up information if need be.

Country involvement: the engagement of the case study country is limited to providing information to the OECD Secretariat.

Option 2: Case study note led by the country

This option aims at providing a more comprehensive assessment of the fit of the current wildfire risk management structures in the case study country for future climate-related challenges. On the basis of a questionnaire provided by the OECD, the country will be tasked with developing a case study note that provides two distinct sections:

- **Section 1:** this section will provide an overview of the current context (and planned reforms) in terms of policies, institutional arrangements and practices in wildfire management across different agencies and stakeholders at both the national and sub-national level. This section will be standardised across different case studies to allow for comparability and benchmarking on how countries are gearing up their wildfire management to tackle climate-induced changes.
- **Section 2:** this section will provide a "deep dive" into one or more selected policies, institutional arrangements or practices that focus in particular on wildfire risk reduction. It should highlight what has worked well and where the key gaps and challenges are, acting as an inspiration or benchmark for other countries. For example, this section can include innovative practices with regard to wildfire hazard and risk assessment, its integration in spatial planning and spatial development practices in wildfire zones, risk awareness actions, fuel management, other organisational or physical prevention measures, prevention in the process of rehabilitating or rebuilding after a wildfire event, etc.

³ The country questionnaire template will be developed by the OECD to ensure a level of consistency across the different case studies. The questionnaire can be shared with relevant national and sub-national policy-makers, practitioners and stakeholders. The questionnaire will gather information on current policies, institutional arrangements, measures, practices and capacities to adapt to climate change and other socio-economic and environmental conditions in wildfire management.



Process: The country is invited to prepare a short (5-10 pages) case study note summarising the information elicited through the questionnaire. The OECD Secretariat can provide feedback and support (e.g. facilitating complementary stakeholder discussions), but will not provide any country-specific analysis or policy recommendations.

Deliverable: the case study note will be included in the OECD report, alongside other countries' case study notes. Information from the note might also be integrated in the policy chapter of the OECD flagship report in the form of in-text examples, boxes featuring country highlights, or tables.

Country involvement: This option requires the country to gather and draft information in the form of a country note.

Option 3: Case study led by the OECD Secretariat

This option aims to deliver the same outcome as option 2, with the difference that the OECD Secretariat will gather the information, develop the case study note, and facilitate dialogues with stakeholders to complement the information gathering process.

Process: the OECD recommends that the country appoints a country focal point with whom the Secretariat will liaise throughout the process. The country will have opportunities to provide feedback on the case study note.

Deliverable: as in option 2. For this option, the country is invited to provide the OECD Secretariat with a financial contribution (EUR 40,000) to cover for the Secretariat's time in putting the case study note together.

Cross-country peer learning workshops

The OECD will organise two international workshops to facilitate exchange and discussion across the countries engaged in the project. Countries will have an opportunity to discuss, help develop and provide feedback on the OECD guidance being developed in the project.

Additional country engagement options

In addition to undertaking the case study and engaging in the two international workshops, countries can choose to further engage with the OECD through a national policy dialogue, which can be convened to (i) review and discuss the draft findings and policy recommendations emerging from the policy analysis, and (ii) share experiences, knowledge and lessons learned on wildfire management with different in-country actors and stakeholders. The national policy dialogue offers an opportunity for stakeholders (including sectoral and sub-national authorities) to reflect and exchange on the emerging findings of the case study, on existing challenges and good practices, as well as on how to effectively adapt wildfire management to climate change. The modalities for the organisation of the national policy dialogue can be discussed between the OECD and interested countries.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

Case studies will start by March 2022 and shall be completed by September 2022.