

**Unclassified****English/French****10 June 2022****COUNCIL****Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level, 9-10 June 2022****RECOMMENDATION OF THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL  
INFORMATION AND REPORTING****(Adopted by the Council at Ministerial level on 10 June 2022)****JT03497455**

**THE COUNCIL,**

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

**CONSIDERING** OECD's work on environmental information and reporting since the adoption of the first international standard on this issue in 1979, as well as the experience and good practices that emerged from the implementation of the Recommendation of the Council on Reporting on the State of the Environment [[OECD/LEGAL/0170](#)]; the Recommendation of the Council on Environmental Indicators and Information [[OECD/LEGAL/0257](#)]; and the Recommendation of the Council on Environmental Information [[OECD/LEGAL/0296](#)], which this Recommendation updates and replaces;

**HAVING REGARD** to the standards developed by the OECD in the area of chemical accidents, pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs), material flows, resource productivity, good statistical practice, open government as well as the access to and sharing of data;

**HAVING REGARD** to the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/70/1);

**HAVING REGARD** to the work and standards of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in particular on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;

**RECOGNISING** international work on the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (commonly referred to as SEEA);

**RECOGNISING** the work of the OECD on environmental information and indicators and on environmental performance reviews that reveals the need to further progress on the development, use and dissemination of environmental data and indicators, and on related monitoring and reporting in order to allow effective international comparison by policy-makers;

**CONSIDERING** the need to promote sustainable development at national and international level;

**CONSIDERING** the need to fully integrate environment and economic policies and decision-making and the need to fully integrate environmental considerations in sectoral policies and decision-making;

**UNDERLINING** the importance of the relationships between pressures on the environment induced by human activities, environmental conditions, the state of natural resources, the quality of human life and well-being;

**RECOGNISING** the need for a better knowledge of the state of the environment and its changes over time, for the purpose of a better assessment of the results of past actions, and the need for high quality environmental information to support the development, harmonisation and implementation of policies concerning the environment and sustainable development and to integrate environmental considerations in decision-making;

**CONSIDERING** that transparency and openness in information, and wide availability and timely dissemination of public information on environmental issues are conducive to i) more cost-effective policies, ii) greater accountability to all stakeholders concerned and iii) increased public awareness and participation; and that public awareness of environmental conditions and risks is essential to protection of human health and the environment;

**CONSIDERING** the need to further develop, exchange and disseminate internationally comparable data on the environment and promote more accurate projections in order to improve the basis for environmental management;

**UNDERLINING** the need for intensified efforts (both domestically and in the international context) to upgrade the extent and quality of environmental data, indicators, accounts and information dissemination systems to support the preparation and the implementation of result-oriented strategies and effective policies concerning the environment, the economy and sustainable development, and to facilitate public participation in the decision-making process;

**NOTING** the close co-operation on environmental matters between the OECD and other international organisations;

**CONSIDERING** that the development, use and dissemination of environmental information is a shared responsibility across national and sub-national levels of government; that this responsibility should be co-ordinated across all levels of government; and that this Recommendation is accordingly relevant to all levels of government.

**On the proposal of the Environment Policy Committee:**

**I. AGREES** that the purpose of this Recommendation is to support Members and non-Members having adhered to this Recommendation (hereafter the “Adherents”) in improving environmental information and reporting along the entire information chain, and in providing objective, reliable, policy-relevant and accessible information on the environment and sustainable development to the public, decision-makers and authorities.

**A. General principles on environmental information and reporting**

**II. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **take a comprehensive approach to environmental information and reporting considering the entire information chain.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Reinforce their co-operation within the OECD with a view to improving environmental information and reporting, and related information systems and measurement frameworks.
2. Improve scientific knowledge, information, statistics, accounts and indicators on the environment and sustainable development, in order to contribute to the evaluation of:
  - a. the state of the environment;
  - b. activities that affect or are likely to affect the environment;
  - c. policies, plans, actions and programmes that affect or are likely to affect the environment;
  - d. environment policies themselves.
3. Better inform the public, decision-makers and authorities on environmental and sustainable development conditions and issues, and ensure adequate dissemination of and timely and user-friendly access to environmental information.

## **B. Data and statistics**

**III. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **improve the quality and policy relevance of data, statistics, and derived indicators on the environment and sustainable development, and of related economic variables.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Improve monitoring and data collection concerning environmental pressures, conditions and responses, including explanatory information about environmental changes, and economic and financial information on the environment and environmental management.
2. Encourage all appropriate levels of government to collect environmental data in order to enable them to monitor progress in policies related to the environment which they implement.
3. Improve the quality of existing data, including official statistics, and pay particular attention to their comparability, to the length and coherence of time series, and to the documentation of the data.
4. Develop new statistics to fill gaps in information concerning environmental pressures, conditions and responses, including by using new and alternative data sources such as big data, by combining existing and new data sources as input for official statistics; and by combining environmental and economic data through work on environmental accounting.
5. Develop cost-effective and innovative methods and techniques of environmental monitoring and data collection.

## **C. Accounting**

**IV. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **further develop and use environmental accounts to measure environmental performance and progress towards sustainable development, and to integrate environmental and economic decision-making.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Implement the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).
2. Link environmental and economic information through work on environmental expenditure and revenue, government support measures and other transfers, benefits of environment policies, environmental damage costs, flows of pollutants and other residuals, flows and stocks of natural resources, material flows, ecosystem services, environmental goods and services, and macro-economic aspects of environment policies.

## **D. Indicators**

**V. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **develop, maintain and use sets of policy-relevant and reliable indicators to measure environmental performance and progress towards sustainable development, and integrate environmental and economic decision-making.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Establish indicators of progress concerning implementation of national and subnational policies on the environment, resource efficiency and sustainable development, including indicators that monitor potential environmental pressures associated with final demand.

2. Establish and maintain indicators of progress concerning environmental quality, well-being and risk exposure, and distributional aspects of environmental quality and of policies related to the environment.
3. Establish and maintain indicators that contribute to integrating environmental considerations into sectoral policies.
4. Systematically compare achieved results with relevant policy objectives and, where appropriate, related international commitments.
5. Pay particular attention to the availability, reliability and international comparability of indicators concerning international environmental issues.
6. Link and integrate these indicators through appropriate measurement frameworks and integrated environmental-economic accounts.
7. Make full use of these indicators in national policies and assessments concerning the environment and sustainable development.

### **E. Reporting and assessments**

**VI. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **establish effective reporting mechanisms to inform the public, decision-makers and the authorities on environmental and sustainable development conditions and issues**. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Communicate environmental information through periodic national assessments and reports on the state of the environment and its changes over time, key indicators, environmental forecasting and other means. In doing so, each Adherent may determine under which form such reports and information will be prepared and disseminated.
2. Promote effective and periodic assessments by regional or local authorities of environmental situations in their jurisdiction.
3. Encourage appropriate levels of government to monitor progress in policies related to the environment that they implement; and to make publicly available reports on the results of public policies and related actions.
4. Promote effective and periodic reporting by enterprises of appropriate and timely information on environmental implications of their activities, for example, on pollution emission levels, on use of natural resources and resource productivity, and on potential risks from hazardous activities and products, as well as information on environmental progress and achievements by enterprises.
5. Promote the dissemination of relevant information to enable the public to assess environmental consequences of activities of enterprises and individuals to take effective preventive measures, e.g. in case of emergency.

### **F. Access to information**

**VII. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **take all necessary actions to increase the availability to the public of environmental information held by public authorities and ensure adequate dissemination and timely and user-friendly access**. To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Determine which information needs to be widely distributed and under which form it will be disseminated.

2. Use effective information communication methods to enable timely, easy and inexpensive access to large volumes of information.
3. Provide all relevant environmental information to any natural or legal person, in response to any reasonable request, without that person having to prove an interest, without unreasonable charges and as soon as possible, taking into account protection of privacy, industrial and commercial confidentiality, national security or other legitimate causes as provided under national law.
4. Provide public access on request to non-confidential information on non-compliance as well as on sanctions levied for violation of environmental laws.
5. Support educational efforts towards enabling the public to make use of available environmental information.

### **G. Institutional arrangements and governance**

**VIII. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **strengthen legal and institutional frameworks, as well as financial arrangements, for environmental information and reporting.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Promote co-operation on environmental data and reporting among different administrations, including institutions of the national statistical system, and among different government levels, as well as with non-governmental organisations concerned.
2. Put in place a clear legal and institutional framework for official data and statistics on the environment and sustainable development.
3. Put in place coherent data governance frameworks and adopt a strategic whole-of-government approach to ensure that data access and sharing arrangements help meet environmental policy objectives effectively and efficiently.
4. Ensure adequacy of human, financial and technical resources available for the production and dissemination of official data and statistics on the environment and sustainable development.
5. Share experience on environmental information and reporting with all relevant ministries and departments of government, research and other non-governmental organisations, and members of the private sector.

### **H. International co-operation**

**IX. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **actively co-operate internationally on environmental information and reporting.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Reinforce co-operation between Adherents on environmental indicators and information systems, including co-operation on sharing methodologies and improving the comparability of data and collection systems.
2. Co-operate with non-Adherents to strengthen their capacity for environmental information and reporting, including monitoring, statistics, indicators, accounts and their communication.

**X. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **provide environmental information to the OECD in order to support its work in this area.** To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Provide periodic reports and information on the environment, on the basis of national reports, statistics, accounts and indicators so as to contribute to maintaining a core set of comparable and reliable environmental information at international level, including core sets of indicators on environmental performance, green growth and sustainable development, policy integration, well-being and the effects on the environment of final demand.
2. Provide periodic reports and information on national activities and good practices related to environmental information and reporting so as to contribute to the sharing of experiences and enable monitoring of progress.

\*\*\*

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

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

**XIII. INVITES** non-Adherents to take account of, and adhere to, this Recommendation.

**XIV. ENCOURAGES** stakeholders, in particular from the private sector, to disseminate and follow this Recommendation in their approach to environmental information and reporting.

**XV. INSTRUCTS** the Environment Policy Committee, through the Working Party on Environmental Information, to:

- a) Serve as a forum to exchange information, good practices and innovative experiences with respect to the implementation of this Recommendation.
- b) Support and facilitate Adherents' efforts to implement this Recommendation, in co-operation with other relevant international organisations and stakeholders, including through the development of an implementation toolkit and the use of OECD reviews of environmental performance.
- c) Agree on an Action Plan to continue and strengthen its work on data, indicators, accounts and information in the area of this Recommendation and maintain a core set of comparable environmental information, including data and indicators, for Adherents.
- d) Report to Council on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of this Recommendation no later than five years following its adoption and at least every ten years thereafter.