



Areas of Work of the OECD

The OECD provides a setting for reflection and discussion, based on policy research and analysis that helps governments shape policy that may lead to a formal agreement among member governments or be acted on in domestic or other international fora.

The OECD's way of working consists of a highly effective process that begins with data collection and analysis and moves on to collective discussion of policy, then decision-making and implementation.

How the Secretariat Operates

The OECD is comprised of a 'Secretariat' that carries out the work of the Organization. The work of the Secretariat parallels the work of committees, with each directorate (or department) supporting one or more committees, as well as committee working parties and sub-groups.

The Secretariat's work is oriented by OECD members whose representatives participate in some 200 OECD committees and working parties.

OECD Directorates and Main Committees:

The following is a list of OECD directorates and most, but not all, of its principal committees. There are some 200 committees at work in all.



1. Development and Cooperation Directorate

The OECD Development Center is a research-oriented body that promotes better understanding of developing countries' economic and social problems and shares the knowledge, information and experience gained by OECD members with the development process.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) executes the development functions of the OECD. It is an important forum within the OECD in which donor countries coordinate policies and seek answers to common problems on a variety of development issues. American participation in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is led by USAID and the committee is co-chaired by the United States delegate to the DAC.

2. Economics Department

The Economics Department examines economic and financial developments in OECD countries and in selected non-member economies. The department also produces the twice-yearly "OECD Economic Outlook" and supports the work of the Economic and Development Review Committee (EDRC) and the Economic Policy Committee.

American participation in the EDRC is led by the Department of State, the Council of Economic Advisors, the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve. The Council of Economic Advisors also holds chairmanship of the Economic Policy Committee.

3. Directorate for Education

The Education directorate helps member countries achieve high-quality learning for all that contributes to personal development, sustainable economic growth and social cohesion. It focuses on how to evaluate and



improve outcomes of education - to promote quality teaching and to build social cohesion through education.

The directorate produces the annual "Education at a Glance" and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) that provides a direct assessment every three years of the levels of achievement of 15 year olds.

American participation in the Education Committee is coordinated by the Department of Education.

4. Directorate for Employment, Labor and Social Affairs

The Directorate for Employment, Labor and Social Affairs oversees work on the inter-related policy areas that can promote employment and prevent social exclusion. Its activities are focused on four main themes: employment and training, health, international migration and social issues.

The directorate produces the annual "Employment Outlook," "International Migration Outlook," "Health at a Glance" and "Society at a Glance."

American participation in the Employment, Labor and Social Affairs Committee (ELSA) is led by the Department of Labor.

5. Center for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development

The OECD's Center for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development fosters an entrepreneurial society, capable of innovating, creating jobs and seizing the opportunities provided by globalization while helping to promote sustainable growth, integrated development and social cohesion.



American participation in the Cooperative Action on Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) committee is led by the Department of Labor.

6. Environment Directorate

The Environment directorate helps member countries to design and implement efficient, effective policies to address environmental problems and to manage natural resources in a sustainable way. The directorate produces regular peer reviews of member countries environmental performance. The most recent OECD Environmental Performance Review of the United States was released in 2006.

United States participation in the Environmental Policy Committee is led by the Environmental Protection Agency.

7. Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs

The Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs promotes policies and best practices designed to keep markets open, competitive and sustainable while combating market abuses and economic crime through international cooperation. The directorate supports the work of five bodies: Insurance and Private Pensions Committee, Committee on Financial Markets, Competition Committee, Steering Group on Corporate Governance, and the Investment Committee.

A separate intergovernmental body, The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) develops and promotes policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. U.S. representation in FATF is led by the Department of Treasury.



8. Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

The Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries provides analysis and advice to help governments design and implement policies that achieve their goals in effective, efficient and least trade-distorting ways. The work covers three broad areas: agricultural policy reform, agricultural trade liberalization, and sustainable agriculture and fisheries.

The directorate produces three annual reports: the "OECD Agricultural Policies: Monitoring and Evaluation", the "OECD Agricultural Outlook," and the annual "Review of Fisheries."

The U.S. participation in the Committee for Agriculture is led by the Department of Agriculture, while NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, part of the Department of Commerce) leads the U.S. delegation to the Committee for Fisheries.

9. Center for Co-operation with Non-Members

In addition to its work with Members, the OECD has extensive contacts with non-member economies and it maintains co-operative relations with more than 70 countries. The Center for Co-operation with Non-Members serves as the focal point for policy dialogue between the OECD and non-member economies around the world, including the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The United States is represented on the External Relations Committee by the State Department.



10. Public Affairs and Communications Directorate

The OECD attaches great importance to cooperation and communication with business, labor, parliamentarians, civil society, media and the general public. The Public Affairs Division is the Organization's focal point for this cooperation in the OECD's efforts to build trust in public institutions and promote understanding of economic and social change.

The Public Affairs directorate organizes annual consultations in collaboration with the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC), Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), Council of Europe and Economic Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and with civil society at large through the annual **OECD Forum**.

11. Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate

The Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate helps countries to adapt their government systems and policies to the changing needs of society. This involves improving government efficiency while protecting and promoting society's longer-term governance values. In addition, the Working Party on Regulatory Reform looks at issues of regulation across a range of member and non-member countries and industries.

The U.S. participation in the Public Governance Committee is led by the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Commerce represents the United States in the Territorial Development Committee.



12. Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry

The Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry helps OECD countries adapt to the challenges of the “knowledge-based” economy, technological change and globalization. It provides statistics and analysis to underpin government policies on emerging scientific, technological and industrial issues, and offers a forum for policy dialogue which often leads to the adoption of commonly agreed standards, or “rules of the game”.

United States participation in the science and technology committees is led by the National Science Foundation.

13. Statistics Directorate

Statistics underpin the whole fabric of the OECD’s work and the Organization has become one of the world’s largest and most reliable sources of statistical, economic and social data. This data is standardized to make them internationally comparable and are published in both print and electronic form.

U.S. representation on the Statistics Committee is led by the Office of Management and Budget.

14. Center for Tax Policy and Administration

The Center for Tax Policy and Administration examines all aspects of taxation, including international and domestic tax issues, direct and indirect taxes and tax policy and administration. It has a well-developed program of cooperation with non-OECD economies.



U.S. representation on the Committee on Fiscal Affairs is led by the Treasury Department.

15. Trade Directorate

The Trade Directorate's work supports a strong, rules-based multilateral trading system that will maintain momentum for progressive trade liberalization and rules-strengthening while contributing to rising standards of living and sustainable development in OECD and non-OECD countries. The directorate is involved in analysis and preparation for ongoing and future trade negotiations that may cover new categories of trade rules.

U.S. participation in the OECD's Trade Committee is led by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

Other OECD Bodies:

1. Center for Educational Research and Innovation

The Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) is a pioneer in educational research. Its primary aims are to encourage better links between research, policy innovation and practice, and enrich knowledge about education trends internationally. CERI works closely with the Education Directorate.

U.S. participation in CERI is provided by the Department of Education.



2. International Energy Agency (IEA)

The IEA acts as an energy advisor for member states in their effort to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for their citizens. Its role is to coordinate joint measures in times of oil supply emergencies, and its policy-making focuses on energy security, economic development and environmental protection.

U.S. participation in the IEA is led by the Department of Energy.

3. Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA)

The mission of the NEA is to assist its members in maintaining and further developing, through international co-operation, the scientific, technological and legal bases required for the safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

United States participation is led by the Department of Energy.

4. Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC)

The Sahel and West Africa Club promotes links between OECD Members and the eighteen countries of the Sahel and West Africa, in both the public and private sectors. Its primary objective is to increase the impact of development aid in this region, which is home to 43% of the total population of sub-Saharan Africa.

U.S. participation in SWAC is provided by USAID.



Advisory Bodies:

Business Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC)

BIAC is an independent organization officially recognized by the OECD as being representative of the business community in Member countries. Its role is to provide the OECD and its members with constructive comments and advice based on the practical experience of its members.

The U.S. is represented at BIAC by the U.S. Council for International Business (USCIB). BIAC is currently chaired by a member of the United States business community.

Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC)

TUAC is an international trade union organization that has consultative status with the OECD and its various committees. It acts as an interface for labor unions with the OECD.

United States representation at TUAC is led by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) which currently holds the TUAC presidency.