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Economics

Fiscal Federalism 2022 Making Decentralisation Work

Fiscal Federalism 2022 surveys recent trends and policies in intergovernmental fiscal relations and subnational government. Accessible and easy-to-read chapters provide insight into: good practices in fiscal federalism; the design of fiscal equalisation systems; measuring subnational tax and spending autonomy; promoting public sector performance across levels of government; digitalisation challenges and opportunities; the role of subnational accounting and insolvency frameworks; funding and financing of local government public investment; and early lessons from the COVID-19 crisis for intergovernmental fiscal relations.



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OECD Economic Surveys: New Zealand 2022

The New Zealand economy recovered quickly from the COVID-19 shock thanks to effective virus containment, measures to protect jobs and incomes and highly expansionary macroeconomic policies but is now overheating and house prices have soared. The Reserve Bank has begun to tighten monetary and macroprudential policies with a view to achieving its price and financial stability objectives. Together with policy measures to increase housing supply, this should help moderate housing price inflation. While the fiscal deficit has begun to fall from the highs reached during the first wave of the COVID-19 shock, additional consolidation measures will be needed to put public finances on a sustainable path, including an increase in the pension eligibility age. New Zealand has considerable scope to boost productivity by fostering growth of its digital sector and stimulating digital innovation. This requires strengthening the domestic pipeline of digital skills, making sure that regulations evolve with technological change and facilitating exports by firms exploiting digital technologies. New Zealand has a solid institutional framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but needs to implement additional abatement measures to meet its objectives. The carbon price needs to increase substantially, combined with efficient complementary measures.

SPECIAL FEATURE: BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION

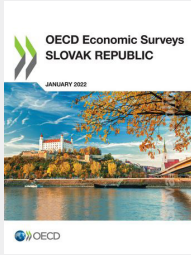


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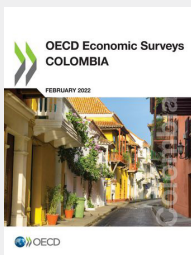
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Economics

OECD Economic Surveys: Slovak Republic 2022

After a deep recession in 2020, economic activity has rebounded. However, supply disruptions and a low vaccination rate are making the future pace of the recovery more uncertain. An ambitious recovery plan and substantial inflows of EU funds provide a unique opportunity to strengthen the economy, but effective and timely implementation will require continued efforts to improve public procurement and public investment management. In the medium-term, rapid population ageing will exacerbate fiscal challenges and weigh on long-term growth. To prepare for an ageing society, pension, health and long-term care, and labour market reforms are needed to extend working lives, improve the health of the ageing population, and enhance the efficiency of public spending. At the same time, population ageing reinforces the need to boost productivity. To reinvigorate the economic convergence process and make growth more inclusive and sustainable, policies to promote adequate skills, foster domestic innovation capacity, and better price environmentally harmful activities are needed.

SPECIAL FEATURE: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FROM POPULATION AGEING

OECD Economic Surveys: Colombia 2022

Colombia's economy has recovered remarkably well from the COVID-19 crisis, and strong fiscal and monetary policy support have averted a stronger contraction of incomes. Solid macroeconomic policy frameworks are laying the grounds for a continuous recovery of domestic demand, although the sustainability of fiscal accounts will require further action. In a longer view, however, both growth and social inclusion are trapped by weak structural policy settings that preclude more than half of income earners from formal jobs and social protection, while preventing firms from growing and becoming more productive. Solving this vicious circle through ambitious reforms would allow a significant leap forward for material well-being in Colombia. Stronger productivity growth will also hinge on making regulations more transparent and more conducive to competition, while embracing internationalisation more thoroughly, including through significant reductions in trade barriers. Institutions could be strengthened further through more effective protection for whistle-blowers and better rules for financing political campaigns. Achieving ambitious climate-related objectives will require stepping up efforts to rein in deforestation.

SPECIAL FEATURES: EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION, REDUCING LABOUR INFORMALITY, RAISING PRODUCTIVITY

Economics

OECD Economic Surveys: Romania 2022

Over the last two decades, Romania has converged rapidly towards the OECD average income per capita. Its economy has also proved resilient: after a deep contraction in 2020 triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, activity has rebounded fast. However, short and medium term challenges remain. The recent surge in inflation and the new pandemic wave require prudent macroeconomic policies. Eventually, fiscal sustainability needs to improve to cope with ageing. Productivity levels remain well below the OECD average, calling for reducing competition barriers, raising human capital, enhancing the regulatory framework, and improving transport infrastructure. Romania should seize the opportunity provided by the NextGeneration EU plan to boost investments for the green and digital transitions. Poverty remains high and some groups have difficulties to join the labour market. Active labour market policies need to be reinforced and access to training is a pre-requisite for addressing skills shortages. Finally, pursuing convergence to the highest OECD standards requires improving the rule of law and fighting corruption.

SPECIAL FEATURES: STRENGTHENING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR PRODUCTIVITY CONVERGENCE; IMPROVING LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS FOR STRONGER AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH



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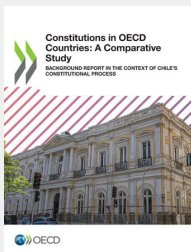
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Taxation

Tax Policy and Gender Equality

Although men and women are typically taxed under the same rules, their different social and economic characteristics (e.g. income levels or labour force participation) mean that the tax system can inadvertently contribute to gender inequalities in society. Understanding and improving the impact of taxes on gender equality is a key dimension that governments need to consider as part of tax design to support inclusive growth. This report provides the first cross-country overview of governments' approaches to tax policy and gender, including reforms undertaken to date and potential areas of explicit and implicit gender bias. Covering 43 countries, it also explores the extent to which governments take into account gender implications in policy development, gender considerations in tax administration and compliance, and the availability and use of gender-disaggregated data. Finally, it also discusses priorities for further work on tax policy and gender issues.

Governance

Open and Connected Government Review of Thailand

This Open and Connected Government Review of Thailand, the first of its kind, assesses Thailand's efforts to build a government that is closer and more responsive to its citizens by using digitalisation, data and stakeholder participation to drive national development. In line with OECD good practices, the Recommendations of the Council on Digital Government Strategies (2014) and on Open Government (2017), and the OECD Digital Government Policy Framework, the review looks at institutional and legal governance, digital talent and skills, public service provision and the strategic use of technologies and data in the Thai government. The review provides policy recommendations to help the government of Thailand fully benefit from openness and digitalisation to build an inclusive, responsive, citizen- and data-driven public administration.

Constitutions in OECD Countries: A Comparative Study Background Report in the Context of Chile's Constitutional Process

Chile has embarked on an ambitious path towards a new constitution. For all countries, drafting a new constitution or amending an existing one is a stimulating challenge, but also a demanding process from both a political and technical standpoint. This report presents the results of a benchmarking exercise conducted by the OECD of possible constitutional provisions, reflecting the experiences of OECD member countries. The components covered include economic and social rights, the system of government, multi-level governance, constitutional review, fiscal governance and the role and functioning of central banks.

Education

Mending the Education Divide

Getting Strong Teachers to the Schools That Need Them Most

Teachers can shape their students' educational careers. Research shows that children taught by different teachers often experience very different educational outcomes. This begs the questions: how are teachers assigned to schools in different countries? And to what extent do students from different backgrounds have access to good teachers? Building on literature identifying the characteristics and practices of teaching that boost student achievement, this report shows how teachers with different characteristics and practices tend to concentrate in different schools, and how much access students with different socio-economic backgrounds have to good teachers. It points out the aspects of different educational systems that influence how teachers are allocated to schools. The report also discusses the consequences that inequitable teacher allocation systems have on students' educational outcomes.

Quality and Equity of Schooling in the German-speaking Community of Belgium

The German-speaking Community of Belgium is in the process of developing an overall vision for its education system (the "Gesamtvision Bildung") to guide reforms across the education sector for greater quality and equity. To support this process, the OECD review offers an independent analysis of the German-speaking Community's school system and assesses the system's strengths and challenges from an international perspective. It provides a description of the system's policies in international comparison and proposes options for future reforms, covering pre-primary to upper secondary education. The analysis addresses the funding and governance of school education, policies to support equity and inclusion, the evaluation system, school leadership and the development of the teaching profession. The report aims to highlight opportunities for the German-speaking Community to build on the strengths of its school system, enhance the effectiveness of its resource use and ensure that the system delivers the best outcomes for all students.

Strengthening Early Childhood Education and Care in Luxembourg

A Focus on Non-formal Education

In supporting children's development, countries invest in the future successes of economies and societies. Awareness of the critical role early childhood education and care (ECEC) plays in setting a strong foundation for children's learning, development and well-being has grown among policy makers worldwide.

The OECD Quality beyond Regulations policy review provides countries with an overview of the different dimensions of quality in ECEC. It also highlights policies that can enhance process quality in particular. From this review, emerged the present report, taking an in-depth look at Luxembourg's ECEC system. It outlines the system's main strengths and challenges, focusing on workforce development and quality assurance through the monitoring system. The report provides tailored policy recommendations to improve provision in line with national goals.



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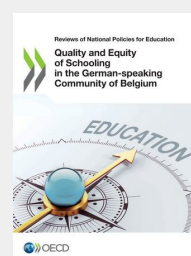
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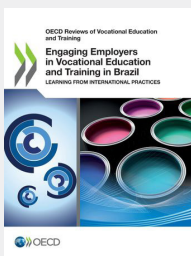
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Education

Disability, Work and Inclusion in Slovenia Towards Early Intervention for Sick Workers

One in seven working-age adults identifies as having a disability in OECD countries. Many of them are excluded from meaningful work and have low levels of income and social engagement. Becoming sick or disabled often leads people to leave the labour market even if they still can and want to work. Governments can help create an environment that supports a return-to-work for such people. This report reviews the Slovenian sickness and disability system and proposes recommendations to promote the employment of people with disability. Frequent long-term sickness absences are a growing issue in Slovenia, in part due to the design of the sickness insurance programme: workers falling ill get relatively high payments, for an unlimited time, with no activation or return-to-work offers. This report shows that intervening early is key to preventing sickness claimants from exiting the labour force. For this to occur, employers and occupational experts have to be involved sooner than at present, in a structured vocational rehabilitation process. Sickness insurance reform should provide the right work incentives, align sickness and disability assessment for long-term sickness claimants, and cap the maximum sickness benefit payment period. Cooperation between all key stakeholders in different phases of the process is critical. Such cooperation will allow the much-needed creation of a joint body responsible for the assessment of sickness, disability and vocational rehabilitation needs.

Engaging Employers in Vocational Education and Training in Brazil Learning from International Practices

One of a series of studies on vocational education and training (VET), this report focuses on how international evidence can inform reforms of the VET system in Brazil. The reforms aim to considerably expand provision of initial VET, tripling enrolment between 2014-2024. Today, few upper-secondary students participate in VET in Brazil as compared to many OECD countries. The reform is a welcome initiative, provided that the expansion is coupled with investments in quality. Expansion of VET is likely to diversify the students attending VET programmes and increase the demand for VET teachers, and schools will need the support to make this work while ensuring that the programmes they offer are relevant for the labour market. By international standards, employers in Brazil provide limited input into VET policy and very few VET students have an opportunity of training with employers, and the reforms could be an opportunity to strengthen their involvement. Moreover, the reform could reinforce assessment strategies, as a lack of reliable assessment may decrease the value of VET qualifications. To support reform efforts in Brazil, this report brings in international evidence and discusses how other countries are addressing various related challenges encountered in their VET systems.

Education

How Learning Continued during the COVID-19 Pandemic Global Lessons from Initiatives to Support Learners and Teachers

This report brings together 45 of the education continuity stories that were jointly documented by the OECD, the World Bank, Harvard's Global Education Innovation Initiative and HundrED during the first wave of school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It covers a variety of different examples on how governments and non-governmental organisations quickly responded to school closures to implement a strategy for learners around the world to continue to study. While often based on the use of digital solutions, those solutions target specific solutions aimed at academic learning, socio-emotional support, teacher professional development, etc. The book covers examples from low, middle and high income countries on all continents and draws some lessons of these fast-paced responses to reimagine a post-pandemic education across the world.



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Employment

Career Guidance for Adults in Canada

In the context of considerable labour market change, many adults in Canada are being challenged to consider alternative career paths, and to upskill or retrain. Career guidance has the potential to facilitate employment transitions: not only from the education system to the labour market, but also from unemployment to employment, and from declining to growing sectors. This study assesses the career guidance services that are available for adults in Canada, and puts them into an international perspective. New survey data show that Canada performs well in an OECD comparison with respect to the quality of career guidance, but there is room to strengthen the provision and accessibility of services. The report provides concrete recommendations to encourage greater and more inclusive use of adult career guidance, and to promote high-quality service provision.



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Future-Proofing Adult Learning in Berlin, Germany

After a long period of employment growth that led to the lowest unemployment rate since the German reunification, Berlin's labour market is now tightening. Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, global labour market megatrends such as the automation of production processes and the increasingly advanced digital skills required to perform many jobs pose new challenges to Berlin's policymakers. Preparing and improving its adult learning system to adapt to the rapidly changing demand for skills will be vital for the future competitiveness of Berlin's economy and socio-economic mobility. The report Future-Proofing Adult Learning in Berlin, Germany analyses strengths and bottlenecks in Berlin's adult learning programmes. It stresses the importance of developing a long-term vision for continuing education and training in Berlin that brings together different actors from an adult learning landscape that offers a wide range of diverse services. It further highlights the need to expand local adult learning programmes that account for the city's highly dynamic population and labour market.



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Social issues/Migration/Health

Evolving Family Models in Spain A New National Framework for Improved Support and Protection for Families

Spanish society values families and family life highly, but the way that families look and live has been changing drastically over the past decades. From being one of the countries with the highest fertility rates in Europe, Spain now has the lowest rate in the region and the legalisation of divorce and social acceptance of co-habitation has led to a decline in the traditional nuclear family model. At the same time, the share of mothers who are employed increased by more than 50% over the past two decades, though it remains below the OECD average. While family law has evolved quite strongly alongside these societal changes, family policy – i.e. the combination of benefits, services, tax breaks and leave arrangements that support family members in raising and providing care to minor children and other dependent persons – has undergone some changes but few major reforms. This report suggests ways to adapt Spain’s family policy to incorporate family diversity into the national policy framework, improve family well-being, reduce child poverty and make family life easier for all.

Environment

Global Plastics Outlook Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options

While plastics are extremely useful materials for modern society, plastics production and waste generation continue to increase with worsening environmental impacts despite international, national and local policy responses, as well as industry commitments. The urgent need to make the lifecycle of plastics more circular calls for an expansion of national policies and improved international co-operation to mitigate environmental impacts all along the value chain.

The first of two reports, this Outlook intends to inform and support policy efforts to combat plastic leakage. The report quantifies the current production, use, disposal and key environmental impacts throughout the entire plastics lifecycle and identifies opportunities for reducing the negative externalities. It also investigates how plastics use and waste have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic across sectors and regions. The Outlook identifies four key levers for bending the plastics curve: stronger support for recycled (secondary) plastics markets; policies to boost technological innovation in plastics; more ambitious domestic policy measures; and greater international co-operation.

Environment

OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Finland 2021

Finland has a strong reputation as a leader in environmental policy and sustainable development. It committed to become carbon neutral by 2035 and to pioneer the world's first circular economy. However, it is not fully on track to meet its ambitious goals. Greenhouse gas emissions fell in the last decade, but they need to decline at a much faster pace to meet the target. Waste generation, material consumption and nutrient losses to water bodies have continued to rise. Agriculture and a large forestry sector exert pressures on the country's biodiversity. Targeted policy measures are needed to provide adequate incentives, boost investment and innovation and steer the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis towards the green transition. Finland should move from good strategy making to effective and coherent implementation. It needs to get the right policies in place, to secure sufficient resources and ensure continued and broad public consensus.

This is the third Environmental Performance Review of Finland. It evaluates progress towards green growth and sustainable development, with a special chapter focusing on climate change mitigation and well-being.

Development

Development Co-operation Report 2021 Shaping a Just Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is revolutionising economies and societies with rapid technological advances in AI, robotics and the Internet of Things. Low- and middle-income countries are struggling to gain a foothold in the global digital economy in the face of limited digital capacity, skills, and fragmented global and regional rules. Political stability, democracy, human rights and equality also risk being undermined by weak governance and the abuse of digital technology.

The 2021 edition of the Development Co-operation Report makes the case for choosing to hardwire inclusion into digital technology processes, and emerging norms and standards. Providing the latest evidence and policy analysis from experts in national governments, international organisations, academia, business and civil society, the report equips international development organisations with the latest guidance and good practices that put people and the sustainable development goals at the centre of digital transformation.



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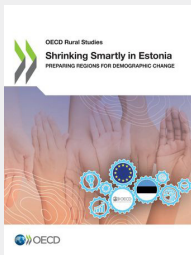
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Development

OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Spain 2022

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) conducts peer reviews of individual members once every five to six years. Reviews seek to improve the quality and effectiveness of members' development co-operation, highlighting good practices and recommending improvements. Spain has put the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its foreign policy and development co-operation. It works in alliances to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, internationally and in partner countries. Spain is valued for its work in horizontal and inclusive partnerships, and its ability to mobilise public sector expertise to capture and share knowledge. As Spain embarks on a comprehensive reform of its development co-operation strategy and architecture, this peer review provides a set of recommendations to improve strategic steering, streamline its administrative framework, strengthen human resources and fully mobilise its financial co-operation.

Urban, Rural and Regional Development

Shrinking Smartly in Estonia Preparing Regions for Demographic Change

Many lower density regions in the OECD face shrinkage, with projections suggesting that half of Europe will need to manage decline in remote regions by 2050. Half of Estonia's counties experienced population decline greater than 25% since 1991. Shrinkage leads to problems including lower municipal revenues, ageing, and greater per capita costs of service and infrastructure provision. Estonia is also the most carbon-intensive economy in the OECD, and heavily utilises its forests and land. To tackle these challenges, the report provides analyses in a number of policy areas to respond to demographic change in a smart and sustainable manner. A policy framework that emphasises a spatially oriented, coordinated approach for responding to shrinkage is developed. The report provides policy recommendations to make land use more efficient and spatial planning more coherent. It suggests ways to improve the transfer system and strengthen the municipal revenue base while encouraging inter-municipal cooperation. It also discusses education, the municipalities' largest spending responsibility, providing recommendations that adapt the school network to shrinkage while ensuring access to high-quality education for all students.

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