



OECD Eurasia Ministerial Conference

**IMPLEMENTING POLICIES
FOR COMPETITIVENESS
IN THE EURASIA REGION**

**27-28 June 2013
Warsaw, Poland**

**OECD
EURASIA**
COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

OECD EURASIA COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES FOR COMPETITIVENESS IN EURASIA

OECD EURASIA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

WARSAW, POLAND

27-28 JUNE 2013

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

WE, the Ministers and Government representatives of countries participating in the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme and its OECD Eastern Europe and South Caucasus (EESCI) and OECD Central Asia Initiatives (CAI), assembled in Warsaw, Poland, on 28 June 2013 for the OECD Eurasia Ministerial Conference,

RECOGNISING

- That competitiveness is a key driver of economic growth;
- That Foreign Direct Investment can create direct, stable and long-lasting links between economies, encouraging the transfer of technology and know-how;
- That the private sector, especially small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is one of the key drivers of growth, job creation and economic development.

RECALLING the previous Ministerial Conferences and Roundtables, namely

- “Investment and Competitiveness in Central Asia” in 2008, launching the OECD CAI;
- “Investment and Competitiveness in South Caucasus and Ukraine” in 2009, launching the OECD EESCI;
- “Beyond the Crisis: Supporting Policies in Central Asia” of the CAI in 2010;
- “Enterprise and Competitiveness Policies in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus” of the EESCI in 2011.

ACKNOWLEDGING

- The recent work of the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme on fostering private sector growth and sustainable development through policy dialogue on:
 - Access to finance;
 - Human capital development;
 - Investment policy and promotion;
 - SME policy development.
- The main findings of the *SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2012* recommending that countries from the EESCI:
 - Actively involve the private sector;

- Develop comprehensive and effective institutional settings for SME policy development;
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of policy tools to promote SME growth;
- Collect more detailed structural statistics to assess the needs of the SME sector.
- The *Private Sector Development Policy Handbooks* developed in co-operation with economies participating in the CAI as tools to support access to finance, human capital development and investment policy and promotion.

REAFFIRMING

- That further efforts are needed to unlock the Eurasia countries' potential for private sector development and sustainable growth, especially to improve access to finance for small and medium enterprises, further develop human capital and entrepreneurship, and establish an environment that attracts quality investment.

CONTINUE to work with the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme to strengthen investment, competitiveness and private sector development through policy dialogue and reform implementation at the country level.

COMMIT to contribute to an OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Roundtable as a forum for policy dialogue (ANNEX 1) by

- Participating in a peer review mechanism on competitiveness reform implementation;
- Sharing knowledge between OECD Member and non-OECD economies;
- Further developing policy guidelines and good practices for private sector development and competitiveness reforms.
- Monitoring progress in competitiveness reform implementation by using existing tools such as the SME Policy Index and Competitiveness Outlooks.

INVITE the OECD to extend country-specific advice to more economies in the Eurasia region in order to support reform implementation through targeted recommendations issued in Private Sector Development Policy Handbooks (ANNEX 2), by:

- Disseminating good practices identified at the regional level to national and sub-national levels;
- Expanding know-how from existing country work in Kazakhstan and Ukraine to other Eurasian countries using established methods and approaches, such as:
 - Sector Competitiveness Strategies to enhance the competitiveness of high potential sectors;
 - Regional Competitiveness Strategies to boost competitiveness at sub-national levels;
 - SME Development Strategies to foster SME growth and employment;

- Regulations for Competitiveness to promote regulatory efficiency and business-friendly service delivery.

AGREE to nominate national country co-ordinators to liaise with the Programme and participate in the above-mentioned activities, including the Roundtable.

CONFIRM the work programme for 2013-2015 proposed at the Ministerial Roundtable discussions on 28 June 2013 and our participation in all the activities outlined therein.

ANNEX 1

OECD EURASIA COMPETITIVENESS ROUNDTABLE

PEER REVIEW AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON COMPETITIVENESS REFORMS

Since its inception in 2008, the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme ('The Programme') promotes policy dialogue in the Eurasia region through regional policy working groups on investment policy and promotion, access to finance, human capital development and SME policy development.

Objective

As part of its strategic orientation for 2013-2015, the Programme aims to further strengthen regional policy dialogue and to expand its country-specific advisory work following partner countries' request for more support in policy implementation. To this end, the Programme proposes to establish an OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Roundtable ('The Roundtable') as a platform for peer review and knowledge sharing on the implementation of reforms in favour of competitiveness. The reviews will be forward looking and will recommend innovative policy responses to obstacles to competitiveness in the region. The Roundtable will serve as an effective policy network, which will promote country-specific approaches and enhance dialogue between OECD members, Eurasia countries and partner organisations on good practices in policy making and work methods.

Its objective is to:

- Carry out peer reviews on competitiveness reform implementation at the country level;
- Exchange good practices between OECD members, Eurasia countries and partner organisations;
- Develop policy guidelines and recommendations;
- Monitor progress with the implementation of competitiveness reforms.

Peer review process

The Roundtable will carry out peer reviews on competitiveness reform implementation at the country level with participation of member countries' experts (including permanent delegates to the OECD) and national experts from Eurasia countries. The peer review process follows five steps: i) preparation and planning, ii) competitiveness assessment, analysis and report writing, iii) peer review meeting, iv) publication of final report, and v) monitoring.

Preparation and planning

The Roundtable will carry out peer reviews of a country's competitiveness reform implementation upon partner countries' request and based on high-level political commitment, the

availability of funding, and programme capacity. The exact scope and timing of each country review will be defined in consultation with the country under review.

Competitiveness assessment, analysis and drafting

The peer review will be prepared by the Programme through an in-depth competitiveness assessment which will last approximately one year. Data will be collected through data requests to the government and the private sector, surveys and public-private working groups at the country level. At the end of each country assessment, the Programme will prepare a draft country report including guidelines on how to address main policy barriers to competitiveness identified through the assessment for the country under review.

Generally, the scope of the peer review will vary by Initiative:

- For **Eastern Europe and South Caucasus**, peer reviews will initially focus on how to promote SME competitiveness in priority sectors of the economy looking at selected policy areas derived from the Small Business Act for Europe and building on the recommendations issued by the *SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2012* (EU, ETF, EBRD, OECD, 2012).
- For **Central Asia**, peer reviews will initially focus on how to promote competitiveness reforms in priority sectors of the economy looking at the three policy areas identified by the *OECD Central Asia Competitiveness Outlook* (OECD, 2011) – human capital development, access to finance for SMEs, and investment policy and promotion. Specific implementation actions will be proposed building on the findings of three policy handbooks developed during phase I of the Central Asia Investment and Competitiveness Project (2009-2012): i) Developing skills in Central Asia through better vocational education and training systems; ii) Promoting investment and job creation in Central Asia through business linkage programmes; and, iii) Improving access to finance for SMEs through credit guarantee schemes.

For both Initiatives, the Programme will identify other areas of work focusing on innovative approaches to enhance competitiveness and address policy barriers in the region.

Peer review meeting

In preparation of the peer review meeting, the Programme will provide the Roundtable with the assessment results and the draft report for comments. At the meeting, the main findings will be presented by the lead examiners who will be composed of Roundtable members.

A delegation of high-level government officials from the country under review will be given the opportunity to present its response to the report and to outline its competitiveness reform agenda. Roundtable members will be invited to raise questions, comment on the draft report and on the draft guidelines.

Publication of final report

After the peer review meeting, the partner country and Roundtable members will be given the opportunity to provide additional comments on the draft report in writing. The Programme will ensure to adjust the draft report, as appropriate, and prepare a final publication.

Monitoring

The Roundtable will ensure ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations issued after a peer review:

- At the country level, each country which underwent a review procedure will be re-examined one year later to discuss which policy reforms have been put in place.
- At the regional level, progress in reform implementation will be assessed through regional monitoring tools already in place, such as the OECD SME Policy Index and OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Outlooks.

Main outputs of the Competitiveness Roundtable

Main outputs of the Roundtable will include:

- **Country reports** – A draft country report on competitiveness reform implementation will be examined by the Roundtable based on a peer review procedure. The results will be published in a final country report including guidelines and recommendations on how to address main policy barriers to competitiveness.
- **Database on good practices** – Good practices presented during Roundtable discussions will be collected in a common database on competitiveness reform implementation.
- **Policy guidelines and approaches** – The Roundtable will aim to develop policy guidelines on competitiveness reform implementation and establish common approaches for country reviews.
- **Monitoring tools** – Existing monitoring tools, such as the *OECD Competitiveness Outlook* and the *SME Policy Index* will be further developed to monitor progress in competitiveness reform implementation in all countries of the Eurasia region.

Sessions

Meetings of the Roundtable are expected to take place at least once per year and can be held at the OECD, in an OECD member country or in a partner country. Each meeting will have three sessions organised in the following format:

1. **Sessions of the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Initiative** focusing on peer review examination of a country from the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus region and regular monitoring of results;
2. **Sessions of the Central Asia Initiative** focusing on peer review examination of a country from the Central Asia region and regular monitoring of results;
3. **Joint sessions** focusing on exchanging good practices between OECD members, Eurasia countries and partner international organisations, developing policy guidelines and monitoring progress in competitiveness reform implementation at the regional level.

Governance

The Roundtable will be jointly overseen by the Steering Committees of the Central Asia Initiative and of the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Initiative.

It will be chaired by an OECD member. The chairperson should be jointly elected by the Steering Committees of each Initiative on a rotational basis. The role of the chairperson of the Eurasia Competitiveness Roundtable will be to support raising awareness amongst all thirteen countries in the region on the importance of this Roundtable, and to provide his/her guidance to ensure the implementation of recommendations take place.

Roundtable members will be invited on a rotational basis to lead the peer review examination in an area of their expertise and to contribute to the Roundtable discussions.

Participation

Participation in the Roundtable will be open to all Eurasia countries, OECD members, other countries with an interest and expertise in the region, business associations as well as partner organisations. In particular, the following modalities for participation will apply:

- OECD members are invited to participate in all Roundtable sessions;
- Eurasia partner countries, including their National Co-ordinator, are invited to participate in all Roundtable sessions;
- Other countries with an interest in the region and expertise on the topics to be discussed can be invited on an *ad hoc* basis to participate in specific Roundtable sessions;
- Business associations from Roundtable members are eligible to attend all Roundtable sessions;
- Partner organisations such as international organisations and development agencies will be invited to participate in all Roundtable sessions to co-ordinate activities, seek synergies, and draw on the experience of experts and professionals from these organisations.

Partners

The Roundtable will be implemented in close collaboration with international organisations and development agencies, such as the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), European Commission, European Training Foundation (ETF), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and World Economic Forum.

Roundtable sessions of the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Initiative will be implemented in close collaboration with the SME Panel under the EU Eastern Partnership platform 2 on “Economic integration and convergence with EU policies”, and East Invest.

Next steps

The constituent meeting of the Roundtable will be held in December 2013 in Paris at which the procedural terms and peer review methodology are expected to be discussed and endorsed.

ANNEX 2

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY HANDBOOKS

As part of its efforts to support policy makers in the Eurasia region in the implementation of policy reforms, the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme has developed a new tool: *Private Sector Development (PSD) Policy Handbooks*. As opposed to traditional reports which deliver regional, sectoral, thematic or country assessments¹, PSD Handbooks provide policy makers with practical guidance (“turnkey solutions”) on how to implement recommended competitiveness reforms in a specific area or sector. Although they build on initial assessments, handbooks are action-oriented roadmaps focusing on the “how to” make reform happen, rather than the “what” or “why”.

Main principles

PSD Policy Handbooks are structured around the following main principles:

- **Providing guidance on how to implement policies:** Although policy handbooks provide a concise summary of key recommendations stemming from preceding assessments, they are action-oriented and focus on how to implement policies. Their aim is to provide practical and step-by-step guidance to policy makers on which reforms to undertake and in what sequence.
- **Addressing one specific policy area:** Policy handbooks do not aim to cover a broad or general policy area, they rather focus on a narrow topic where actions can be clearly defined. For example, a handbook can focus on credit guarantee schemes as one specific tool to enhance access to finance or on vocational education and training as a specific tool to foster human capital development.
- **Collecting data through policy assessments or private sector surveys:** Qualitative and quantitative data is collected on the current implementation status to evaluate the tool’s performance and provide a critical assessment of existing policy measures. Key success factors are established to identify gaps and provide sound recommendations based on rigorous analysis and previous analytical work.
- **Providing clear, relevant and feasible policy recommendations:** Recommendations are designed to be specific enough for policy makers to act upon and thus follow a logical sequence of actions. Typically, policy handbooks contain a draft action plan and budget estimates for their implementation. Overall, recommendations should be easily understandable, substantial and relevant for the situation on the ground, and feasible to implement, considering both structural and budgetary constraints, as well as political constraints.

¹ E.g. SME Policy Indexes, Competitiveness Outlooks, Sector Competitiveness Reports, etc.

Existing PSD Policy Handbooks on Eurasia

To date, the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme developed 10 policy handbooks:

Central Asia, 2013

- “Improving Access to Finance for SMEs in Central Asia through Credit Guarantee Schemes”
- “Promoting Investment and Job Creation through Business Linkage Programmes”
- “Developing Skills in Central Asia Through Better Vocational Education and Training Systems”

Kazakhstan, 2013

- “Promoting Investment in Kazakhstan’s Agribusiness Value Chain”
- “Improving Access to Finance in Kazakhstan’s Agribusiness Sector”
- “Enhancing Skills through Public-Private Partnerships in Kazakhstan's Information Technology Sector”

Ukraine, 2012

- “A Corporate Governance Assessment of Ukraine’s State-Owned Aviation Sector – The case of Antonov”
- “Implementing Credit Guarantee Schemes in Ukraine – The Case of Agribusiness”
- “Enhancing Skills Through Public-Private Partnerships in Education in Ukraine – The Case of Agribusiness”
- “Attracting Investment in Renewable Energy in Ukraine”

Implementing Policies for Competitiveness in the Eurasia Region

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