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MAKING OECD STANDARDS AND POLICIES COUNT ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Report by the Secretary-General to Ministers on OECD Global Relations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The OECD's "essential mission is to promote stronger, cleaner, fairer economic growth and to raise employment and living standards"¹. To achieve this, it bolsters ***a rules-based international order to which its Members and important partners² are committed***. Developing standards for good policy, founded on evidence-based analysis and supporting the rule of law and open, transparent market economy principles, it helps Members and partner countries to work together and to respond effectively to a rapidly changing world.

Co-operation with partner countries, support for international fora such as the G7 and the G20, and other organisations ("Global Relations") is an essential tool ***to promote and diffuse the OECD's values, and increase the relevance and the acceptance of its standards and best practices globally***. Indeed, the OECD Convention mandates the Organisation to promote policies designed to contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-Member countries. Hence, Members resolved in the Organisation's 50th Anniversary Vision Statement [[C/MIN\(2011\)6/FINAL](#)] to make the OECD a more effective and inclusive global policy network, involving partners in the development and implementation of its standards, without compromising its efficiency or working methods.

In line with this endeavour, reconfirmed in 2013 [[C\(2013\)58/FINAL](#)], the OECD has developed tools for its Global Relations to promote ***the participation of partner countries in its work and the further dissemination of its standards***. To maintain the high quality of its analysis, legal instruments and the objectivity of its rigorous peer review process, the OECD continuously assesses the mutual benefit of strengthened co-operation.

The OECD does not seek to be a universal organisation in terms of its size, but the strategic goal of its Global Relations is to ensure ***that its standards and policies are applied and implemented globally*** and hence beyond its membership³. Pursuing this strategy, the Organisation welcomes co-operation with all countries interested in sharing knowledge and expertise, promoting reform and contributing and adhering to its standards.

Co-operation with ***other global and regional fora*** is part and parcel of the OECD's Global Relations Strategy. Contributing data, analysis and expertise, it works with the G20, the G7 and other international organisations to promote its standards among the latter's constituencies. The Organisation has designated five G20 countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa) as its Key Partners [[C/MIN\(2007\)4/FINAL](#)], thus promoting the alignment of major economies with its standards.

Partners' active participation in OECD bodies, projects and programmes and their adherence to OECD legal instruments, are important ways of promoting the dissemination of OECD standards and policy recommendations. While these options are in principle open to all countries, most Participants and Associates (see box 1) in the OECD's bodies have been chosen among a ***relatively small number of partner economies whose commitment serves a strong mutual interest***. Alongside G20 countries, these partners tend to be prospective Members⁴, partners in Country Programmes (see below) or countries otherwise involved in a country-specific approach.

Over the past year, the relationship with ***Key Partners*** has continued to develop steadily with an uptake in adherence to OECD instruments by Brazil following its membership request and the intensified co-operation, the launch of a new Joint Programme of Work (JPW) with Indonesia and the signature of a Declaration of Intent to develop the first JPW between the OECD and South Africa. The OECD continues to discuss the

components of a new Joint Work Programme of Work with China. Co-operation with India has also expanded in a number of areas.

Country Programmes help selected countries move closer to OECD standards and policy recommendations, providing an anchor for their policy reforms. The past biennium has reconfirmed the Organisation’s ability to do just that (Kazakhstan, Peru and Morocco). Pilot evaluations of these Programmes, involving assessments by Members, have confirmed their relevance in aligning with the countries’ policy priorities and their effectiveness in encouraging follow-up by policy makers. A new Programme with Thailand was launched in 2018; a renewal of the Programme with Morocco has been agreed and will be launched soon. In February 2019, the Council invited Egypt and Viet Nam to engage in new Country Programmes, the contents and modalities of which are being discussed.

Comprehensive Regional Programmes operate for Southeast Asia (SEA)⁵, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and South East Europe (SEE) to disseminate OECD standards and policies in these regions.

Among the regions, *Asia* deserves special attention. It will produce half the world’s output by 2050. Three of the OECD’s Key Partners are there and Southeast Asia is a region of strategic priority for the Organisation. Although this was decided in 2007 [[C/MIN\(2007\)4/FINAL](#)], commitments by the countries concerned to OECD bodies and standards have been uneven over time and among the countries. The OECD should continue to pay close attention to this matter and intensify its efforts aimed at bringing SEA countries closer to its committees and standards.

Accession to the OECD Convention secures countries’ comprehensive commitment to OECD standards and integration into OECD work. A Framework for the Consideration of Prospective Members was agreed in 2017 [[C/MIN\(2017\)13](#)]. Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru and Romania have requested membership and continue to move closer towards OECD standards and policies. A possible decision to open accession discussions with any of these countries remains under consideration by OECD’s Council.

Securing commitments to OECD’s committees and standards remains a priority and there is further potential, not least for the Key Partners and Southeast Asian economies. As to the Key Partners, the engagement with the G20, already successful, is an essential vehicle, alongside other tools like joint work programmes. With respect to Southeast Asia, deepened engagement through the Regional Programme should play a key role, going forward. The Country Programmes with SEA countries should help secure the partners’ durable commitments to the OECD’s bodies and standards.

1 50th Anniversary Vision Statement [[C/MIN\(2011\)6/FINAL](#)].

2 G20 Leaders’ Declaration on Building consensus for fair and sustainable development of 1 December 2018 stated: “We renew our commitment to work together to improve a rules-based international order that is capable of effectively responding to a rapidly changing world.”

3 See *i.a.* the Framework for the Consideration of prospective Members [[C/MIN\(2017\)13](#)].

4 As defined by Members in [C/MIN\(2017\)13](#) (footnote 1), a prospective Member is “a non OECD Member country, which has officially signalled its interest and commitment in becoming a Member of the OECD or a country identified by the Council as a priority for Membership for the Organisation’s relevance and impact”. Currently, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru and Romania are prospective Members.

5 In view of its priority status, this document lists this Programme first; the four other Comprehensive Regional Programmes, of equal status, are included in alphabetical order.

1. OECD contributions to global and regional fora

1.1. Co-operation with the G20 and the G7

1. Co-operation with global governance fora is a crucial element of the OECD's Global Relations Strategy, and underpins it. In 2008, the G20 called on the OECD and other key international organisations to help it respond to the global economic crisis. Ever since, the G20 has been an essential conduit for the OECD to work with its Members and important partner economies to advance agreement on internationally accepted standards in key fields of mutual interest.

2. At the invitation of the 2018 Argentinian G20 Presidency, the OECD worked with other key international organisations to inform the discussions on The Future of Work, Infrastructure for Development, Sustainable Food Future and Gender Mainstreaming. It delivered in the following areas in particular and contributed thus to the positive outcome of the Buenos Aires Leaders' Summit:

- *Digital economy*: the OECD co-ordinated the development of a Toolkit to measure the Digital Economy by a group of international organisations, and supported the Presidency in producing the G20 Digital Government Principles.
- *Education and skills*: the OECD provided analysis on the future of skills and the governance as well as the effective financing of education and skill systems. The G20 Education Ministerial Declaration highlighted numerous areas where the OECD has undertaken important work.
- *Infrastructure investment*: together with the World Bank, the OECD prepared a Stocktake of Tools and Instruments Related to Infrastructure as an Asset Class.
- As facilitator of the *Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity*, the OECD has played a key role in delivering the forum's technical outputs and helped the discussions among Ministers to reach consensus regarding the next steps towards the removal of market-distorting subsidies.
- *International tax co-operation*: in addition to supporting the implementation of automatic exchange of tax information and the G20/OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project, the OECD delivered an interim report on the implications of digitalisation for taxation, so as to help find a consensus-based solution on this issue.
- *Anti-corruption*: The OECD is also actively promoting the adherence to its Anti-Bribery Convention by G20 countries.

3. At the invitation of the 2019 Japanese G20 Presidency, the OECD is providing substantive support on:

- *Quality infrastructure*: by contributing to the discussion on the development of the G20 Principles on Quality Infrastructure, as well as elaborating relevant guidance materials;
- *Sustainable Development Goals*: by contributing to the discussion of G20 progress on the Agenda 2030;
- *Trade and investment*: by providing inputs on trade barriers, data flows and principles of market openness in digital trade;

- *Steel*: through a continuing role as facilitator of the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity and delivering an update for the Leaders discussion;
 - *Digital economy*: with the pursuit of the “Society 5.0” objective, particularly in the discussion of artificial intelligence, based on ongoing OECD work;
 - *Gender*: by updating countries’ progress in achieving the G20 gender target (25 by 25), together with an additional focus on gender gaps in unpaid work;
 - *Ageing society*: through an analysis of the macroeconomic and fiscal implications of ageing and inputs on adaptations to demographic change, longer working life and new job opportunities, and the economic case for active and healthy ageing;
 - *Environment and energy*: with the promotion of a virtuous circle of environment preservation and restoration, economic growth and business opportunities.
4. In 2019, the OECD is contributing to the global dialogue initiated by the French G7 Presidency on topics such as inequality and climate, digitisation and gender equality. On gender equality, the OECD is contributing to the development of a Biarritz Pact for Equality: a legislative package of best practices on gender equality. The OECD is contributing to the G7 dialogue on artificial intelligence, building on the work of the Going Digital Project and the development of the draft Recommendation of the Council on Artificial Intelligence. The OECD supports the Presidency's goal of strengthening G7 links with Africa, for example to promote access to quality education for girls in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.2. Co-operation with the United Nations

5. The OECD has further strengthened its co-operation with the United Nations (UN). Its engagement with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has included:
- input of data and analysis to the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development;
 - work on new measures of development finance – including Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD);
 - participation in ECOSOC bodies on taxation; partnering with UN, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the Platform for Collaboration on Tax;
 - policy lessons and evidence contributed to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.
6. The OECD’s presence in New York enables the Organisation to participate in work under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. It has monitored resolutions discussed in the Second (Economic and Financial) and Third (Social) Committees with a view to ensuring coherence with OECD standards. It has also engaged with the facilitators of major intergovernmental efforts in order to share OECD evidence and analysis, e.g. the Global Compact on Migration and COP24. Its interface with the operational UN work provides an avenue for broadening the uptake of OECD standards and tools. This includes initiatives with Tax Inspectors without Borders (with the UN Development Programme) to broaden BEPS adherence and awareness, collaboration with UNESCO on PISA for Development, and the hosting of the secretariat of the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth (which promotes the observance of labour standards worldwide, in close partnership with the International Labour Organization – ILO).

7. The OECD also plays an important role in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, to improve efforts by all actors in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is part of the OECD's Action Plan for the SDGs, launched in 2016 [[C\(2016\)166/REV2](#)], which includes a reflection on the implications of the SDG's for its Global Relations as a key area of action. Together with the UNDP, the OECD supports the Japanese G20 Presidency in its preparation for the Osaka Update of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Multi-Dimensional Country Reviews, co-ordinated by its Development Centre take the SDGs as an entry point. Its Country and Regional Programmes are used to share policy lessons and promote dialogue to strengthen the pursuit of the SDGs. A recent report by the Secretary-General to the Council on the implementation of the Action Plan [[C\(2019\)53](#)] provides a more detailed update on the state of play.

1.3. Co-operation with regional organisations

1.3.1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

8. In 2019, the OECD supports APEC host country Chile in delivering on its policy priorities: (i) digital society, (ii) integration 4.0, (iii) women, SMEs and inclusive growth, (iv) sustainable growth. This builds on its support to the 2018 host country, Papua New Guinea, including on the implementation of the APEC Cebu Action Plan (a roadmap for a more sustainable financial future for the region).

1.3.2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

9. Since the launch of the Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP) in 2014, the OECD has intensified its collaboration with ASEAN, formally and in substance. The ASEAN Economic Ministers' statements regularly refer to OECD output results, e.g. the ASEAN SME Policy Index, launched at the 2018 ASEAN Economic Ministers meeting, and the OECD Development Centre's *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India*, released back-to-back with the 2018 ASEAN Summit. Regular contributions are being provided to the meetings of the Senior Economic Officials and the Secretary-General of ASEAN addressed the first SEARP Ministerial meeting (Tokyo, March 2018).

1.3.3. Pacific Alliance

10. Co-operation with the Pacific Alliance progressed during Peru's 2018-2019 *pro-tempore* presidency, and will continue during Chile's presidency as of July 2019. The Global Policy Perspective report on *Pacific Alliance & Observer Countries: An Agenda for Co-operation* was launched at the OECD by the three scholars that authored it, in the presence of delegations of the Pacific Alliance and OECD Members in January 2019. Two projects involving Pacific Alliance countries were delivered in 2019 to the Peruvian presidency: the SME Policy Index for the Pacific Alliance countries and the report on *Making the Digital Transformation work for Latin America*.

2. Partnerships in OECD bodies and adherence to legal standards

11. Partners' active participation in OECD bodies, projects and programmes is an essential tool for the promotion of policy reforms in accordance with OECD standards. The Organisation encourages partners' active and mutually beneficial involvement in a broad

range of areas including competition, investment and taxation.⁶ In most OECD bodies and projects, the number of countries participating regularly (*i.e.* as Participant or Associate; see box 1) is limited to the strategically important partners where the Organisation sees a strong mutual interest in their commitment and, in case of Associates, adherence to the relevant OECD legal instruments (although no countries are excluded beforehand). Consequently, out of the 307 currently valid invitations⁷ to become Participant or Associate, 269 (88%) concern the 21 countries which are: active accession countries, “prospective Members”, Key Partners and other G20 countries, and partners in a Country Programme or any other country-specific approach (see the list in table 1⁸).

Box 1. Types of Partnership in OECD Bodies

Partners can be invited to participate in OECD Committees in three different capacities:

- **Invitees** are invited to one meeting at a time, for non-confidential items only. A Committee needs a one-off clearance from Council to invite a certain Partner as Invitee and may then decide if and when it wishes to invite this Partner;
- **Participants** are entitled to be invited to all the Committee's non-confidential meetings;
- **Associates** participate in a Committee, a project or the development or revision of a legal instrument with the same rights and obligations as OECD Members, except that they do not attend discussions on the accession of new Members to the Organisation. In some bodies governing Part II programmes, Associates are referred to as members of the Programme.

12. Adherence by partners to OECD legal instruments, of which there are 755 instances at present, show a somewhat similar pattern: the aforementioned countries are responsible for 526 of these instances (70%). The percentage will even increase further once the outstanding requests for adherence (which are concentrated in this group of countries) have been processed, as table 1 shows.

13. Part II programmes deserve mentioning here, as their members are more varied and, in many of them, OECD Members and partners enjoy equal status. Examples are the Development Centre (membership 54, of which 27 are OECD Members), the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes (154 members, of which 36 are OECD Members), the Programme for International Student Assessment

6 The Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes currently has 154 members; the Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) has 129 members, while invitations have been issued to another 55 potential members.

7 These are invitations issued as of 23 April 2019 by virtue of the Revised Council Resolution on Partnerships in OECD Bodies [[C\(2012\)100/REV1/FINAL](#)], except for invitations as Associate in the BEPS project issued after 1-1-2016. Out of these invitations, 225 have been formally accepted to date.

8 Note however that the Partnership numbers in table 1 are higher because these numbers also include participation as member in certain Part II programmes or as Participant in certain education programmes (PISA, PIAAC and TALIS), which are not governed by the standard procedures provided in [C\(2012\)100/REV1/FINAL](#). Furthermore, table 1 only shows formally accepted invitations. Note also that table 1 does not include Colombia, which will become a Member once it has deposited its instrument of accession.

(PISA) (42 Partners in 2018, including 2 Associates). Some other programmes have lower numbers of partners as member or Associate, e.g. the Nuclear Energy Agency (3), the Network on Fiscal Relations across Levels of Government (2), the Local Economic and Employment Development Programme (3), Steel (4), Shipbuilding (2) and the Chemicals Management Programme (MAD, 6). These programmes have made a vital contribution to the OECD's global reach, creating the possibility of participating as members in specific areas of its work and thus demonstrating its relevance and impact worldwide.

Table 1. Key Partners, G20 Countries, Prospective Members and other selected Partners¹: involvement in OECD Bodies, Projects, Programmes, Legal Instruments

	Number of Partnerships in Bodies and Projects:			Number of OECD legal instruments:		
	as Associate/member ¹	as Participant	Total	adherence confirmed	adherence requested ³	Total
Argentina ^{c, e}	11	13	24	45	10	55
Brazil ^{b, c, e}	12	16	28	74	64	138
Bulgaria ^c	5	6	11	18	6	24
China, PR of ^{b, c}	7 ²	5	12	9	0	9
Costa Rica ^a	6	11	17	36	*	*
Croatia ^c	4	6	10	9	6	15
Egypt ^d	5	6	11	20	0	20
India ^{b, c}	7	6	13	13	0	13
Indonesia ^{b, c}	5	3	8	13	0	13
Kazakhstan ^d	5	10	15	33	9	42
Morocco ^d	7	4	11	29	3	32
Peru ^{d, e}	6	6	12	41	4	45
Romania ^c	12	8	20	42	15	57
Russian Federation ^c	8	22	30	26	0	26
Saudi Arabia ^c	3	3	6	6	0	6
South Africa ^{b, c}	7	15	22	23	1	24
Thailand ^d	5	5	10	7	0	7
Tunisia ^f	5	1	6	20	1	21
Ukraine ^f	5	4	9	20	1	21
Viet Nam ^d	2	2	4	6	0	6

Notes: a: active accession candidate b: Key Partner; c: G20 country; d: former, current or prospective Country Programme partner (see text); e: prospective Member (see footnote 4); f: partner in other country-specific approaches (see text).

1 Including memberships not governed by the Revised Resolution of the Council on Partnerships in OECD Bodies [C(2012)100/REV1/FINAL], i.e. of the Development Centre, the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, the Nuclear Energy Agency and the International Transport Forum, and Association status in the International Energy Agency.

2 Includes Working Party 10 of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs.

3 Requests for adherence to the Investment Declaration and related instruments, and to the Anti-Bribery Convention and related instruments respectively, are each treated as single requests, in this table and the rest of this document.

* Costa Rica's position on all legal instruments is being discussed in the context of its accession process.

3. Key Partners

14. In 2007, the Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) invited the Secretary-General to strengthen OECD co-operation with Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa through enhanced engagement programmes with a view to possible membership [[C/MIN\(2007\)4/FINAL](#), item I, i]. The Council would determine whether to open discussions on membership in light of the willingness, preparedness and ability of these countries to adopt OECD practices, policies and standards. Since then, the Organisation has endeavoured to enhance the co-operation with these countries, later designated as Key Partners [[C/M\(2012\)11](#), item 172 h)], in broad ranges of areas. The Council issued guidelines to Committees in 2010, in order to ensure that their Global Relations strategies adequately reflect the Organisation's priority to deepen and broaden the engagement with the Key Partners [[C\(2010\)100/FINAL](#)].

3.1. Brazil

15. The new government has reaffirmed Brazil's commitment to strengthening its co-operation with the OECD, and reconfirmed its May 2017 expression of interest in OECD membership, currently under consideration by the OECD Council.⁹

16. Pending a Council decision on its accession request, Brazil is intensifying its co-operation with the OECD to ensure broad convergence with the Organisation's standards and seeking to upgrade its Partnerships in OECD bodies. In 2018, it joined the OECD Network on Fiscal Relations across Levels of Government as Associate and the Committee on Digital Economy Policy as Participant. Its status in the Competition Committee was upgraded to Associate in March 2019. Since May 2017, it has adhered to 39 new legal instruments, bringing the total to 74, and has strengthened its participation in OECD bodies and projects to bring its tally to 28, including twelve as Associate or member. A large number of requests to adhere to other legal instruments, including the two Codes of Liberalisation and the Recommendation of the Council on Good Statistical Practice, are being considered by the relevant Committees.

17. The OECD also supports Brazil's main policy priorities, including pension and fiscal reforms and the further integration into global value chains. In 2018, with the support of the United Kingdom, Brazil started an open dialogue with the OECD regarding its transfer pricing methodology, a subject of considerable mutual interest for Brazil and OECD Members. A review in this field is to be completed in 2019. Brazil and the OECD have recently concluded policy reviews on digital government, competition, education and skills, and innovation in the public service. Reviews on SMEs, Going Digital and Broadband are underway. Work on the OECD Economic Survey of Brazil is starting this year, with its conclusion foreseen in early 2020.

3.2. China

18. OECD Members continue to encourage China to collaborate more closely with the Organisation by sharing knowledge and expertise, promoting reforms and adhering to OECD legal instruments. OECD Reviews, such as the 2019 Economic Survey of China, can inform such collaboration by identifying areas for policy improvement. Building on

⁹ At Davos (January 2019), President Bolsonaro stated the government's aim of "integrating Brazil into the world by incorporating the best international practices, such as those adopted and promoted by the OECD."

the implementation of the first OECD-China Joint Programme of Work (JPW) for 2015-16 and the co-operation in the G20, the OECD and China maintain an open and valuable dialogue in a number of policy domains. These include macroeconomic management, trade, investment and responsible business conduct, anti-bribery, green growth, corporate governance, taxation, education and agriculture.

19. A new, 2019-2021 JPW is being discussed, with a view to taking the co-operation further in a number of mutual priority areas. China has expressed interest in closer co-operation *e.g.* with respect to the Competition Assessment Toolkit, the Anti-Bribery Convention, TOSSD, Due Diligence Guidance on the Responsible Management of Minerals. It has adhered to OECD standards on automatic exchange of tax information and BEPS as well as the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance. China is also prepared to join the OECD Global Revenue Statistics project and enhance its collaboration with the OECD on the application of the Services Trade Restrictiveness Index.

20. The Secretary-General was invited by Premier Li Keqiang to the third edition of the 1+6 Roundtable meeting in November 2018, with the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the ILO, the WTO and the Financial Stability Board (FSB). He also participated in China's Development Forum and the China International Import Expo.

3.3. India

21. The OECD's work in support of India's domestic reform agenda is being consolidated in a document reflecting ongoing and planned areas of co-operation. A secondment programme and an annual India-OECD Forum are envisaged, to coincide with the launch of the 2019 OECD Economic Survey of India.

22. Selected areas of recent collaboration include: *(i)* Responsible Business Conduct with a view to developing due diligence guidelines for the garments sector; *(ii)* preparations for the Economic Survey with a focus on opportunities and challenges arising from India's global integration and better housing for all; *(iii)* assisting India's 15th Finance Commission in developing recommendations on the devolution of revenues between the central and state governments, and *(iv)* a commencement of official preparations for India to undertake the PISA assessment in 2021. Last October, India joined the NEA Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities as Participant.

23. In 2018, the OECD launched, along with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), a review of Agricultural Policies in India. India will also be covered by the recently launched OECD Clean Energy Finance and Investment Mobilisation (CEFIM) programme. Co-operation is also ongoing in the areas of taxation, competition, corporate governance and steel.

3.4. Indonesia

24. The implementation of the 2017-18 Joint Programme of Work has considerably increased OECD engagement with Indonesia in priority areas, including those defined by its President and the Secretary-General in 2016: infrastructure, education, tax policy and good regulatory practice. In 2018, the Economic Survey of Indonesia and the SME and Entrepreneurship Policy Review were completed, while the second Investment Policy Review and the Review on Local Job Creation were started. Reviews of Indonesia's Green Growth Policy, the Social Protection System and Integrity will be finished in 2019. Other reviews in priority areas are expected to commence soon, including the Services Trade

Restrictiveness Index (STRI) Country Study, the Infrastructure Governance Review and the Review of Risk Management Policies.

25. Tangible benefits to Indonesia are derived from the OECD tax instruments that Indonesia has joined, particularly the Automatic Exchange of Information and, more recently, the BEPS Multilateral Instrument. These are helping to raise tax revenues, supporting *e.g.* the recent successful tax amnesty programme. The recommendations of the SME and Entrepreneurship Policy Review are directly supporting the development of the government strategy for SMEs. The ongoing Green Growth Policy Review contributed to the efforts by the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) to the greening of Indonesia's next national development plan for 2020-2024.

26. The third OECD-Indonesia Joint Work Programme for 2019-2021, launched by the Secretary-General and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati in Bali, in 2018, pursues high priority work and includes new priorities, such as infrastructure financing, human capital development, harnessing the opportunities of the digital transformation and promoting sustainable tourism, as well as fostering a vibrant business and investment climate. It places greater emphasis on further increasing Indonesia's participation in OECD bodies and instruments.

3.5. South Africa

27. Following the signature of a Declaration of Intent to develop a Joint Work Programme at the 2018 MCM, the OECD and South Africa have been developing a programme that would target a range of areas that contribute to making economic growth stronger and more beneficial to all South Africans, including competitiveness, trade and investment, SME and skills development, and stronger institutions.

28. South Africa joined the Environment Policy Committee as a Participant in 2018, bringing its Partnerships in bodies total to 22. It adheres to 23 OECD legal instruments, having added two in 2018¹⁰. South Africa's adherence to the OECD Code of Liberalisation of Capital Movements is in process at the Investment Committee. In 2019, the OECD will conduct its biennial Economic Survey of South Africa.

4. Regional Approaches

29. Regional approaches facilitate the participation of countries from a region as a group in selected OECD activities. They provide a way of reaching large numbers of countries, while anchoring into existing regional structures. Meetings are often organised in the regions themselves, with local sponsorship. Regional approaches follow the Council's strategic guidance [[C\(2006\)168/FINAL](#)], which includes different possible models. Increasingly, they have taken the form of Comprehensive Regional Programmes¹¹,

10 The Declaration on Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth, and the Recommendation of the Council on Global Events and Local Development.

11 The oldest regional programme still in existence is the Sahel and West Africa Club (1976). The mandate of the South-East Europe Regional Programme goes back to 1999 and is open-ended. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development dates from 2005 [current 2016-2020 mandate [ERC\(2015\)12](#)], the Eurasia Competitiveness Programme in 2008 [current 2016-2020 mandate [ERC\(2015\)13](#)]. The Southeast Asia Regional Programme was established in 2013

with mandates from the Council or the External Relations Committee. Such Programmes cover broad ranges of issues, have formal governance structures and mechanisms to involve partners in the priority setting for, and monitoring of, the Programmes' activities.

4.1. Southeast Asia – strategic priority region

30. Under the Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP), the OECD continues to strengthen its engagement with this region, designated by the Council as one of strategic priority, with a view to identifying countries for possible membership [[C/MIN\(2007\)4/FINAL](#)]. The First SEARP Ministerial Conference (Tokyo, March 2018) was a milestone: it saw the handover to the new co-chairs Korea and Thailand. High-level representatives from OECD and Southeast Asian countries gave a strong political mandate to the next phase of SEARP, calling for mainstreaming horizontal issues such as connectivity and gender across its work streams.

31. In 2018, the Programme continued to make substantial contributions to the OECD's engagement with the region. Notably, the ASEAN SME Policy Index 2018 was launched at the 50th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting (2018) in Singapore. The *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India* was released at the 2018 ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in Singapore. The *Investment Policy Reviews* on Southeast Asia, Viet Nam and Cambodia were published in 2018. Furthermore, seven Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) participated in PISA in 2018.

32. The SEARP Forum and the meeting of the Steering Group were held in Paris on 11-12 March 2019 on the theme of "Connecting Southeast Asia". This followed the mandate of the 2018 Ministerial Conference to mainstream "Connectivity" throughout the eleven work streams of the Programme.¹² The participation of high-level representatives from the region as well as ASEAN, APEC, ADB and BIMSTEC¹³ underlined the increasing visibility of OECD in Southeast Asia. The participants affirmed the important role of the SEARP as a policy dialogue platform to enhance the collaboration between the OECD and the region on improved physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity.

4.2. Eurasia Competitiveness Programme

33. Like other Regional Programmes, the Eurasia Competitiveness Programme (ECP) supports the implementation of reforms by encouraging the use of OECD standards and participation in OECD bodies. Five Eurasia countries (Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Ukraine) have joined the BEPS Inclusive Framework; six are members of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. Armenia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have signed the BEPS Multilateral Instrument. Kazakhstan and Ukraine have adhered to the Investment Declaration and related instruments, and Georgia has recently requested an Investment Policy Review.

34. The latest annual OECD Eurasia Week was held at OECD Headquarters in Paris on 19-21 November 2018. Marking the 10th anniversary of the Programme, it reflected on

[[C\(2013\)34/REV2](#)]; the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Programme in 2016 [[C\(2016\)1/FINAL](#)].

12 Six Regional Policy Networks (Tax, Investment, Good Regulatory Practice, Infrastructure, SMEs, Education and Skills), four Initiatives (Gender, Trade, Innovation, Competition), and the *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India*.

13 The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

how the main lessons learnt over a decade of challenge and reform in the region could help shape policies for the years ahead. Participants included Afghanistan’s Chief Executive Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, three Deputy Prime Ministers, 25 Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and 14 Ambassadors. Two countries, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan, underwent peer reviews for the first time. Thematic sessions were devoted to gender equality and to trade and transport connectivity.

35. The Eurasia Week 2018 also provided the occasion for the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the OECD and Kazakhstan (see subsection 5.1.1). In addition to focusing on competitiveness issues, since 2016, the ECP has given increasing emphasis to *connectivity* and *inclusiveness*. The first major publication emerging from the project by the ECP and the International Transport Forum (ITF) on trade and transport connectivity in Central Asia is being launched in May 2019, while country-level projects in Eurasia have increasingly focused on the potential of skills and gender policies to promote more inclusive growth.

4.3. Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme

36. The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme (LACRP) is closing its first three-year cycle (2016-2018) under the co-chairmanship of Chile and Peru. An end-of-cycle evaluation survey to Steering Group members confirms that the Programme has allowed the OECD to increase its impact and relevance in support of reforms in the region and provide a platform for high-level strategic policy dialogue.¹⁴ As mandated in its Programmatic Document 2016-2019, the programme organised three Ministerial Meetings focusing on its three thematic priorities: increasing productivity, enhancing social inclusion and strengthening governance and institutions. 93% of the Steering Group members state that these are the relevant priorities and hence should be continued.

37. The third International Conference and Ministerial Meeting on “Integrity for Good Governance” (Lima, 18-19 October 2018) with the OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa, launched a “LAC Action Plan on Integrity and Anti-corruption“ with 103 concrete actionable recommendations which build on the “Lima Commitment” endorsed at the XVIII Summit of the Americas. A new Programmatic Document to guide the Programme’s substantive activities over the 2019-2022 cycle will be submitted for the Steering Group’s consideration by the end of 2019.

38. The OECD and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) contributed to the EU Regional Facility for Development in Transition for Latin America and the Caribbean. Launched by the EU, this facility “promote(s) sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, while countries transition to higher levels of income.” Demand-driven, this joint effort supports a number of policy reviews for LAC countries. It will also strengthen LACRP core activities. This includes the OECD Development Centre’s *Latin America Economic Outlook 2019* on Development in Transition, as well as projects on well-being indicators for LAC, on fiscal policy and domestic resource mobilisation, and on better sharing of paid and unpaid work between men and women.

14 Out of 55 responses, 88 and 86 per cent of the respondents agreed with these respective assessments.

4.4. MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development

39. The MENA-OECD Initiative promotes the exchange of best practices and the dissemination of OECD standards to support national reforms that address the region's needs and challenges. Its Steering Group has defined inclusive growth, resilient economies and transparent and efficient institutions as its strategic priorities.

40. Gender equality is a critical, cross-cutting component. Indeed, the Initiative promotes further legal reforms to give women throughout the region better access to the labour market, a stronger political voice and greater autonomy. In 2018, the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum was held in Tunis, attended by OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa. Its 175 participants included Ministers and Ambassadors.

41. The Secretary-General participated in the 6th annual World Government Summit in Dubai, where he made a strong pitch for good governance in the region, as well as the CEDRE¹⁵ Conference in support for reforms and development in Lebanon.

42. The Initiative launched eight publications in 2018, including the *Giving Citizen Voice Reviews* of Morocco and Tunisia and the 2018 SME Policy Index Interim Assessment. Other achievements of the OECD's work in the region, include support for:

- the creation of Tunisia's Committee on Individual Freedoms and Equality, which drafts proposals to advance women's rights, *i.a.* in sensitive areas like inheritance;
- the drafting by the Tunisian government of a methodology for Citizen Charters, which has led to several legislative changes;
- the update of Morocco's Code of Good Corporate Governance Practices, based on the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance; and
- Egypt's investment dispute settlement and prevention, which led to its establishment of dedicated mechanisms and bodies.

4.5. South-East Europe Regional Programme

43. Over the past year, the OECD South-East Europe Regional Programme (SEERP) has continued to implement its work programme aimed at fostering economic competitiveness and growth in the region. The 2018 edition of the flagship publication *Competitiveness in South East Europe: A Policy Outlook* was released, providing policy recommendations for six economies across 17 policy areas. Key findings and recommendations were presented by the Secretary-General and were discussed at the annual *OECD SEE High-level Conference* in April 2018. More than 200 participants from the region and OECD Members, including Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers, supported its recommendations.

44. The Programme continues to offer tailored support in a broad range of policy areas to governments in the region. It assists them in designing and implementing their annual Economic Reform Programmes, contributing analysis and helping to build capacity. The programme has contributed to high-level regional fora, including the "Berlin Process" and will continue to do so, in co-operation with its 2019 Polish Presidency. The Process

15 *Conférence économique pour le développement du Liban par les réformes et avec les entreprises* (Economic Conference for the Development of Lebanon through Reforms and with the Private Sector).

involves selected EU members, as well as six Western Balkan economies aiming to boost integration in a number of areas such as economic governance.

45. Data collection and analysis for the 2019 *Small Business Act Assessment (SBA)* of the region has been completed. Parallel work has continued in support of the implementation to be given to the recommendations from the previous edition.

4.6. Africa

46. The OECD has a long track record of promoting development with countries in Africa (and other developing countries), initially via the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the OECD Development Centre and the Sahel Club (now Sahel and West Africa Club), but since 2002, when co-operation with NEPAD was started, more broadly based. In 2017, Ministers at the MCM encouraged further progress in the OECD's engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa [[C/MIN\(2017\)9/FINAL](#)]. A document for the 2018 MCM [[C/MIN\(2018\)9](#)] identified progress and next steps in domains such as: (i) domestic resources mobilisation, (ii) investment environment, competitiveness and structural transformation, (iii) migration flows and impacts, (iv) education policies and learning outcomes, and (v) statistical systems for evidence-base policy making.

47. In 2018, several impactful activities were undertaken with African countries and organisations. The Development Centre struck a partnership with the African Union to publish a new report on *Africa's Development Dynamics*, which, in 2018, focused on growth, jobs and inequalities. The Africa Initiative of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, grown to 29 members, published its first annual report of progress achieved in improving tax transparency in Africa. OECD work on investment in North African countries contributed significantly to the G20 Compact with Africa. The OECD is working on this Compact with the African Development Band, the IMF and the World Bank by contributing its knowledge of investment standards to the improvement of the investment environment in compact countries. Studies conducted with Nigeria and Senegal showed the critical role that TOSSD can play in supporting greater transparency on development finance flows. A joint Poland-Tanzania-OECD project on water policies and governance was successfully piloted. A study with Cabo Verde captured the key transition finance challenges facing countries leaving the group of the least-developed countries, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing states. Mauritius stepped up its engagement on tax, financial markets, competition, anti-corruption and corporate governance. The OECD leadership engaged extensively with African interlocutors in the G7 context and is working with France on the advancement of sustainable development in Africa during the French 2019 G7 presidency.

5. Country-specific Approaches

48. While the OECD has included many countries in its work, it has developed more comprehensive approaches in some strategically important cases. It has developed Country Programmes, based on a common framework [[C/MIN\(2013\)12](#)], aimed at assisting select countries in anchoring their policy reforms in OECD standards and practices. Such Programmes have been implemented with Kazakhstan, Morocco and Peru. The Morocco Programme has subsequently been renewed for another three years and the Organisation is currently working with Kazakhstan and Peru to ensure an appropriate follow-up to maintain the momentum. Pilot evaluations of these Programmes, involving assessments by

Members, have confirmed their relevance in aligning with the countries' policy priorities and their effectiveness in encouraging follow-up by policy makers.

49. A Country Programme with Thailand is ongoing and the Council invited Egypt and Viet Nam on 20 February 2019 to elaborate similar Programmes with the OECD [[C\(2019\)22/REV1](#); [C/M\(2019\)4](#)]. With yet other countries, the Organisation is working on the basis of memoranda of understanding (MoU) or action plans. It also makes special efforts with the prospective Members (see footnote 4) in view of their commitments to move closer to the OECD.

5.1. Completed Country Programmes

5.1.1. *Kazakhstan*

50. The Kazakhstan Country Programme (KCP) [[ERC\(2014\)20/REV1](#)], signed in January 2015, ended on 31 December 2018. It was the vehicle for some 30 OECD reviews and capacity-building projects. It helped Kazakhstan upgrade its Partnerships in seven OECD bodies and adhere to 33 legal instruments, such as the Investment Declaration and attendant instruments and tax standards on transparency and exchange of information.

51. A 2018 evaluation [[ERC\(2018\)8](#)] collected positive feedback from the government and OECD embassies in Kazakhstan. It showed that many recommendations from OECD reviews conducted under the KCP led to legislative and policy changes and the evaluation indicated a need for continued focus and monitoring of implementation.

52. On 21 November 2018, the Secretary-General and the Minister of National Economy, Mr Timur Suleimenov, signed an MoU establishing a framework for co-operation over 2019-2022. Key priorities for co-operation include productivity and regulation, reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and privatisation, pursuit of the SDGs and tourism development. Kazakhstan has also been increasingly active in supporting the promotion of OECD approaches and policy recommendations in the wider region, most notably via its support for multilateral tax initiatives (BEPS, Global Forum) and for OECD work on trade and transport connectivity in Central Asia.

5.1.2. *Peru*

53. The Peru Country Programme [[ERC\(2014\)20/REV1](#)], started in 2015, was formally concluded in 2017 and subsequently evaluated. However important activities are still ongoing and Peru continues to engage actively in OECD work. While engaged in the Programme, Peru accepted new Partnerships in four bodies. In August 2018, it became Party to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Tax Matters and the Anti-Bribery Convention (Phase 1 review ongoing since March 2018), having had these Conventions ratified in an opposition-led Congress. Furthermore, Peru has since 2017 been examined as part of its adherence to the Codes of Liberalisation, tentatively scheduled for completion in 2019. It currently adheres to 41 legal instruments and has requested adherence to another six.

54. Peru formally expressed its interest in accession to the OECD in November 2016 and continues to pursue this ambition with high priority. Peru is preparing a "Strategic Plan for Engagement with the OECD" taking advantage of the internal co-ordination group established for the Country Programme, with a view to advancing co-operation in priority areas including integrity, anti-corruption, environment, corporate governance, statistics, employment and trade. As co-chair with Chile of the OECD LACRP, Peru has also played a leading role in regional efforts to fight corruption, notably since the Summit of the

Americas in April 2018, which endorsed the “Lima Commitment” (see section 4.3) and paved the way for the launch of the OECD-LAC Action Plan on Integrity and Anti-Corruption. Peru is also discussing with the OECD the establishment of a Regional Competition Centre.

5.2. Current and future Country Programmes

5.2.1. Morocco

55. A renewal of the Country Programme with Morocco (MCP) [[ERC\(2019\)6](#)] was agreed in March 2019 for a three-year period [[ERC/M\(2019\)3](#)] and will soon be launched. This responded to a request by the authorities [[ERC\(2018\)11](#)] to deepen their co-operation with the OECD, following the initial, 2015-2018 phase of the MCP [[ERC\(2015\)3/REV1](#)]

56. In line with the priorities identified by the Moroccan authorities, this second-phase MCP will build on four pillars: (i) public governance, integrity and the fight against corruption, (ii) economic growth, investment and taxation, (iii) human capital, including education and gender equality, and (iv) territorial development. Within these four pillars, the Programme will include 15 projects and public policy reviews, alignment with and possible adherence to 20 OECD legal instruments, and greater participation in six OECD bodies.

57. The evaluation of the initial MCP [[ERC\(2019\)5](#)] found that the Programme had been both relevant and effective in supporting the government’s reform agenda, while also indicating the need for further work on the implementation of nascent reforms. In particular, the Programme had supported the enforcement of critical elements of the Constitution of Morocco, strengthened the articulation and coherence of public policies, encouraged a participatory and open government approach, supported evidence-based policies, reinforced a culture of evaluation and monitoring and showed clear synergies and complementarities between the MCP and the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness.

58. The initial phase of the MCP helped Morocco participate regularly and upgrade its status in seven OECD bodies and adhere to six legal instruments, taking its total to 29. It reinforced Morocco’s capacities in education, statistics, public administration and local development, investment attractiveness and revenue statistics. Morocco is increasingly active in promoting OECD approaches and policy recommendations in its region through its participation in the MENA-OECD Initiative.

5.2.2. Thailand

59. Launched in May 2018, the Thailand Country Programme (TCP) [[ERC\(2018\)7](#), [ERC\(2018\)7/ADD](#)] is being implemented over three years (2018-2020). Work is ongoing on the 15 projects covering four key areas: (i) governance and transparency, (ii) business climate and competitiveness, (iii) “Thailand 4.0” and (iv) inclusive growth. The TCP will encourage Thailand to upgrade its level of participation in eight OECD bodies and move towards adherence to nine OECD legal instruments.

60. In the TCP’s first year, the Development Centre launched Phase 2 and 3 of the Multidimensional Country Review. The Investment Policy Review of Thailand was started in Q3 2018 with a planned peer review at the Investment Committee in March 2020. In addition, Thailand has recently become a Participant in the Committee on Digital Economy Policy and it has been invited as Associate to the PISA Governing Board. As co-chair of the SEARP, concurrently with the Chair of ASEAN in 2019, Thailand has taken a leading

role in raising the awareness of OECD standards in the region. It will host a meeting of the Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct in Bangkok in June 2019.

5.2.3. *Egypt*

61. Egypt is pursuing a reform agenda supported through the IMF's Extended Fund Facility to achieve higher growth, reduce the budget and current account deficits and stabilise public debt. It has repeatedly stated its interest, including at the highest political levels, to take these reform efforts further through a structured co-operation with the OECD in the form of a Country Programme. In February 2019, the Council agreed on an invitation to engage in such a Programme [C/M(2019)4, Item 32].

62. Egypt and the OECD have a long and broad ranging history of collaboration. It has been very involved in the MENA-OECD Initiative since its inception. This co-operation currently encompasses projects on strengthening the rule of law, promoting women's participation in parliaments and policy making, and enhancing the investment climate. Egypt also benefits from three EU-OECD strategic programmes on investment promotion, the development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone and on exchange of tax information. It adheres to the Investment Declaration and attendant instruments, and is an Associate or Participant in eleven OECD bodies, projects and programmes. Egypt is also incorporated into several OECD databases and statistical tools.

5.2.4. *Viet Nam*

63. Viet Nam has participated actively in the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme since its launch and has recently shown increasing interest in strengthening its co-operation with the OECD. It has carried out several OECD Policy reviews, notably on agriculture and investment. On several occasions, the government has expressed its interest in a Country Programme. In February 2019, the Council agreed on an invitation to engage in such a Programme [C/M(2019)4, Item 32]. Discussions on the possible content of this Programme are revolving around governance, business climate and productivity/industry 4.0.

5.3. Countries having applied for OECD membership¹⁶

5.3.1. *Argentina*

64. Argentina has had a longstanding co-operation with the OECD since the mid-1990s. President Macri's administration has strengthened its engagement with the OECD through an "OECD-Argentina Action Plan" comprising 16 policy areas. As a result, Argentina has increased its Partnerships in OECD bodies, projects and programmes from eight in 2016, to 24 currently, and the OECD legal instruments to which it adheres from 16 to 45. It has expressed interest in adhering to ten more instruments.

65. Argentina has consistently confirmed its willingness and ability to adopt OECD instruments and policy recommendations, including when, in 2018, the Secretary-General and his Chief of Staff visited Argentina to attend G20 Finance Ministers and Leaders meetings. Examples are the entry into force of the Law on Corporate Liability of Legal Persons (March 2018), the development of a manual on good governance practices for SOEs, drawing on the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned

16 These countries formally applied for OECD membership in 2016-2017, like the two other prospective Members, Brazil and Peru, which are discussed in sections 3.1 and 5.1.2, respectively.

Enterprises, and the ongoing reforms on financing of political parties and public ethics in line with recommendations from the ongoing Integrity Review. Five studies were launched in the second quarter of 2019, including the Economic Survey, the Agricultural, Regulatory and Integrity Policy Reviews and the SME Policy Index. The reviews of Open Government and Digital Government are due in June 2019.

5.3.2. Bulgaria

66. In 2018, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov of Bulgaria expressed his country's willingness to develop an OECD-Bulgaria Action Plan to support Bulgaria in a range of policy reforms in accordance with OECD standards. Co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such an Action Plan is now being developed. Ongoing and upcoming OECD work will be incorporated into the Plan (including the Economic Survey, an SOE review, an Investment Policy Review, work on adherence to the Codes of Liberalisation), as well as relevant new work to support the country's domestic reform priorities.

67. Bulgaria is currently an Associate, member or Participant in eleven OECD bodies, projects and programmes. It has adhered to 18 legal instruments and has requested adherence to six more, including the Codes of Liberalisation. An inter-ministerial working group on OECD co-operation meets regularly at the level of Deputy Ministers. Bulgaria has actively supported high-level policy dialogue with the Western Balkans, including in the context of its 2018 EU Presidency.

5.3.3. Croatia

68. Croatia has a longstanding co-operation with the OECD which is co-ordinated by a dedicated inter-ministerial working group. It is an Associate or member in four bodies, projects or programmes, and a Participant in six bodies. Croatia has adhered to nine legal instruments and has expressed interest in adhering to six more, including the Codes of Liberalisation.

69. In 2018, an Investment Policy Review of Croatia was carried out. Given its important role in the region and its recent experience with EU accession, Croatia actively shares its experiences with non-EU SEE economies through the OECD's SEERP.

5.3.4. Romania

70. Over the past year, Romania has undertaken steps to further structure and intensify its co-operation with the OECD, paving the way for further reforms and progress towards OECD standards and values. It has started working on an OECD-Romania Action Plan, co-ordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister. Romania is a Partner in 20 OECD bodies, projects and programmes. It has adhered to 42 legal instruments and requested adherence to another 15, including the Codes of Liberalisation.

71. In 2018, Romania initiated several OECD policy assessments, including an Economic Survey and a multi-year Public Governance Review and related work on public integrity, digital government and open government. Romania is co-ordinating with the OECD throughout its EU Presidency in the first semester of 2019, in particular through its strong ongoing engagement with the SEERP and active participation in related high-level policy dialogue.

5.4. Other country-specific approaches

5.4.1. Tunisia

72. Tunisia has enhanced its collaboration with the OECD through both the MENA-OECD Initiative and activities under the MoU signed with the OECD in 2012. In 2016, it became co-chair of the MENA-OECD Initiative and in November 2018 it hosted the Women Economic Empowerment Forum in Tunis. Tunisia has adhered to the Investment Declaration and ten attendant instruments, as well as to nine other OECD legal instruments. It recently obtained its first Participant status in an OECD body, the Public Governance Committee. The OECD carried out an Economic Survey of Tunisia in 2018.

73. Following a request by Mr Zied Ladhari, Minister of Development, Investment and International Co-operation, the renewal of Tunisia's MoU with the OECD is being discussed. During a visit to the OECD in February 2019, Tunisia's Head of Government, Mr Youssef Chahed, explained that a renewed agreement would be seek to expand Tunisia's engagement with OECD bodies, with special attention to integrity and anti-corruption, productivity, education and skills development. Tunisia's improved engagement with the OECD also supports the Organisation's work in the MENA region.

5.4.2. Ukraine

74. Work continues under the OECD-Ukraine Action Plan for implementation of the MoU with the Government of Ukraine, which was first signed in October 2014 and has since been prolonged to October 2020. The Action Plan covers (i) anti-corruption, (ii) governance and the rule of law, and (iii) investment and business climate. The Plan included over 20 OECD reviews and projects, set explicit goals and led to an uptake in participation in OECD bodies and adoption of OECD standards.

75. Overall, 2017-18 witnessed a marked upgrade in the level of Ukraine's political engagement with the OECD, as Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers participated in OECD meetings and other events with increasing frequency. The revised version of the Action Plan (December 2018) reflects key government priorities, including work on anti-corruption, SOE reform, business environment reforms and energy efficiency.

6. Concluding observations

76. The OECD continues to make headway towards the prime strategic objective of its Global Relations: ensuring that its high standards and policies are applied and implemented globally, without compromising the Organisation's efficiency and working methods. Among its principal partner countries, there has been an increased interest in engagement with OECD bodies and movement towards its standards. This has found expression notably in applications for OECD membership, willingness to engage in Country Programmes, implementation of joint work programmes, action plans for engagement and other structured forms of co-operation, leading to a significant uptake in requests for Partnerships in OECD bodies and adherence to OECD legal instruments.

77. The OECD faces the task of bringing about further progress in securing commitments to its committees and standards, notably by the Key Partners and Southeast Asian economies, which have been strategic priorities for twelve years. With respect to the Key Partners, the engagement with the G20, which already has secured important results, is an essential vehicle, alongside other tools like joint work programmes. With respect to Southeast Asia, deepened engagement through SEARP – building on recent progress –

should play a key role. The fact that one country in the region has embarked on a Country Programme, and a second may soon follow, signals the potential for further progress. A key point is that these, and any other, Country Programmes should have staying power, so they help secure the partners' durable commitments to the OECD's committees and standards.