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THE OECD GOING DIGITAL INTEGRATED POLICY FRAMEWORK 2026

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The OECD Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework 2026



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Abstract

Digital transformation has widespread and complex effects across the economy and society, making trade-offs between public policy objectives difficult to navigate. The OECD Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework (the Framework) helps governments and stakeholders to develop an integrated approach to policy making to shape an inclusive digital future. The Framework has seven interrelated policy dimensions that have stood the test of time: Access to communications infrastructures, services and data; effective use of digital technologies and data; digital and data-driven innovation; good jobs for all; social prosperity and inclusion; trust in the digital age; and market openness in digital business environments. The Framework also identifies transversal policy issues (e.g. skills, digital government, small and medium-sized enterprises, and data) that cut across several policy dimensions. Moreover, the Framework provides guidance on putting a whole-of-economy and society approach to digital policy making into practice.

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Executive summary

The OECD Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework (the Framework) helps to guide policymakers, regulators, and other actors in the digital policy ecosystem towards designing and implementing effective digital policies that foster innovation, growth and well-being. It builds upon the extensive research and analysis the OECD has conducted in this area and benefits from contributions from a wide range of OECD committees and other bodies.

Since the Framework was developed in 2017-18, digital transformation has only continued its steady acceleration into all facets of daily life. As a result, the 2026 version incorporates the latest expertise from across the OECD on how digital technologies and data have affected policy domains – which can be thought of as mapping to commonly established functions within government ministries or regulatory agencies – as well as rapidly evolving areas such as data and data flows, artificial intelligence (AI), emerging technologies, and online safety. Transversal considerations, such as those related to sex, data and data flows, and technology have been added to reflect their salience to all aspects of digital transformation. Finally, updated practical guidance on how to organise digital policies and regulations for maximum impact, based on best practice from OECD Member countries and partner economies, concludes the document.

The Framework is comprised of seven interrelated policy dimensions that have stood the test of time since its initial development:

- Access to communications infrastructures, services and data;
- Effective use of digital technologies and data;
- Digital and data-driven innovation;
- Good jobs for all;
- A prosperous digital society for all;
- Trust in the digital age; and
- Market openness in digital business environments.

Collectively, these dimensions provide the necessary policy building blocks to unleash digital technologies and data in support of prosperous and innovative economies and societies. Individually, these policy dimensions comprise distinct domains related to digital transformation that should be considered jointly, rather than in silos. Developed in a multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary approach, the Framework is flexible and recognises that a wide range of factors influence the most suitable policy environment.

The structure of the Framework encourages policymakers to consider the many ways in which different aspects of digital policies interact and intersect across policy domains. It promotes a holistic, whole-of-government approach to digital transformation that takes account of the needs of various stakeholders to maximise the positive benefits of digital transformation. Alongside the OECD Going Digital Measurement Roadmap (the Roadmap) (OECD, 2026^[1]) and the OECD Going Digital Toolkit (the Toolkit) (OECD, 2026^[2]), this triptych of tools provides a structure around which to design, construct, and continuously improve digital policies to boost innovation, growth and well-being.

Introduction

Digital technologies and data have transformed how people, firms and governments live, interact and work. As digital technologies continue to advance, these changes accelerate further. The complex and interrelated economic and societal aspects of digital transformation make traditional borders between policy domains less relevant and trade-offs between public policy objectives more difficult to navigate. As a result, stronger co-ordination and collaboration across policy silos is essential to ensure a whole-of-government response. At the same time, international collaboration becomes even more important, as many digital policy issues are global in nature and scope.

The Framework was developed to support governments' development of integrated policies fit for the digital age. It is a blueprint to ensure that innovation, growth and well-being remain at the heart of digital transformation. The Framework recognises technologies, data and new business models as driving forces underlying digital transformation. It promotes a coherent and comprehensive whole-of-government approach to realise the potential of digital transformation and address its challenges.

The Framework is flexible and recognises that a wide range of factors influence the creation of the most suitable policies. It was developed in a multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary approach, and it is complemented by a measurement roadmap to ensure the policy and measurement communities work in tandem to reap the benefits and solve the challenges of a highly digital economy and society (Box 1).

Box 1. Background on the Framework

The OECD Going Digital project supports policymakers in better understanding digital transformation and the effects of digital technologies. The first phase of the project (2017-2018) concluded with three key horizontal outputs: initial versions of the Framework and the Roadmap, as well as the online and interactive Toolkit. These outputs benefitted from the expertise and insights of fifteen¹ OECD committees participating in the first phase of the project, as well as its sister bodies (the International Transport Forum and the International Energy Agency).

The Framework and the Roadmap are mutually reinforcing, and they underpin the Toolkit which provides coherent links between the OECD's digital policy and measurement frameworks. These horizontal guidance documents have contributed to defining a common vision for how to develop and implement well-suited policies for the digital age and measure various aspects of digital transformation in cross-country comparable ways. They are also notable in that they were developed in a rigorous, collaborative and multi-stakeholder process under the auspices of the Committee on Digital Policy (DPC, formerly the Committee on Digital Economy Policy), which acted as the Lead Committee for the project in its first three phases.

When the Framework and the Roadmap were developed, it was envisaged that they would be revised in five years in tandem to ensure that the OECD's policy and measurement priorities continue to be well-aligned with the fast pace of technological development. As a result, the DPC began reviewing both guidance documents in 2024, in collaboration with other OECD committees and bodies, as appropriate. This review was supported by a joint meeting of the DPC and the OECD

Working Party on Digital Economics, Measurement and Analysis with the participation of other relevant OECD bodies and stakeholders in April 2024.

The Framework is relevant to OECD Members and partner economies. It has been used as a guide to developing national digital strategies, including Australia's Tech Future strategy (Australian Government, 2018^[3]), Canada's Digital Charter (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 2019^[4]), and Brazil's "E-Digital" digital transformation strategy (Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Brazil, 2018^[5]), among others. It has also been used as an analytical tool for shaping Norway's recent national digital strategy (Norwegian Ministry of Digitalisation and Public Governance, 2024^[6]) (OECD, 2024^[7]) and in Going Digital national reviews of Sweden (OECD, 2018^[8]), Colombia (OECD, 2019^[9]), Latvia (OECD, 2021^[10]), and Brazil (OECD, 2020^[11]). The Framework has further been used as a tool to identify policy gaps and priorities by the UN Institute for Training and Research for their CIFAL Global Network.²

Other use cases of the Framework involve assessing the comprehensiveness of national digital strategies by applying the Framework as a benchmark (Gierten and Leshner, 2022^[12]). National digital strategies usually promote a government's highest digital policy priorities and goals and are conceived to shape the digital transformation of a country's economy and society. The Framework can thus be used as a guide to develop comprehensive and well-co-ordinated national digital strategies.

Recognising that the ecosystem of digital technologies is advancing fast, the Framework has remained sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes to the digital technology landscape since its inception. At the same time, transformative technological breakthroughs in fields such as generative AI, immersive technologies, and others on the near horizon, raise fundamental new questions about how policy frameworks may need to adapt in response. Our collective understanding of the role of data and data flows in underpinning digital transformation has also grown significantly, as well as the policy actions that need to be taken to promote effective data governance (OECD, 2022^[13]). The 2026 version of the Framework reflects adjustments to address these issues and other updates to ensure that the Framework remains a key reference for policymaking.

The OECD Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework 2026

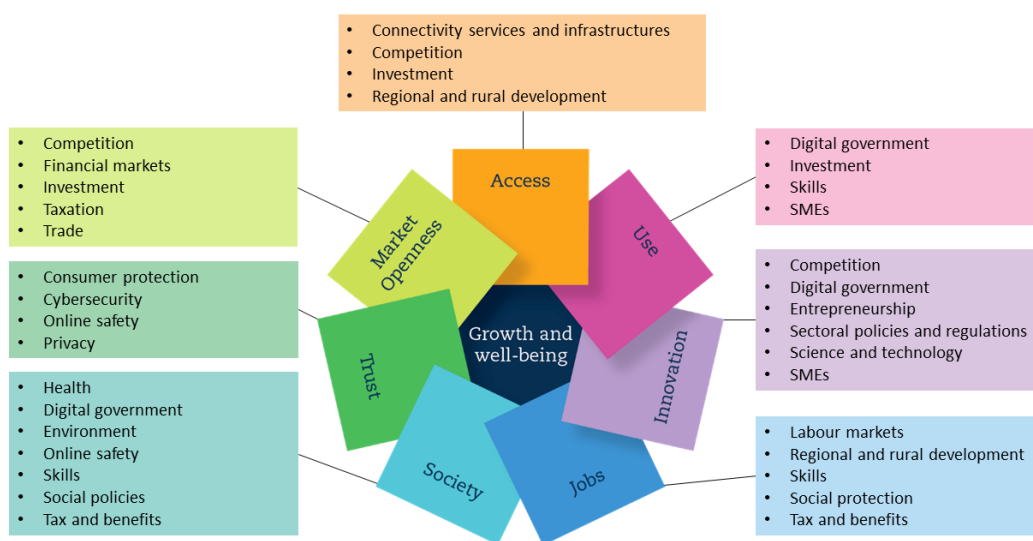
Digital technologies and data hold many promises to spur innovation, generate efficiencies, improve services and, in doing so, boost productivity growth. Digital technologies also make it easier for individuals to participate in economic and societal activities, including by creating new avenues for entertainment and education. Yet such benefits come with new challenges as digital transformation changes the nature and structure of organisations, markets and communities, and raises concerns around jobs and skills, privacy and security, consumer protection and empowerment, as well as risks to mental health and well-being, including for children and young people. Realising the opportunities and addressing the challenges is not automatic, and therefore policy action is required to make digital transformation work for innovation, growth and well-being.

A review of the Framework determined that its seven interrelated policy dimensions remain fit for purpose: Access to communications infrastructures, services and data; effective use of digital technologies and data; digital and data-driven innovation; good jobs for all; a prosperous digital society for all; trust in the digital age; and market openness in digital business environments. At its core, each policy dimension brings together multiple policy domains³ that must be considered jointly, rather than as separate policy silos, thereby facilitating co-ordination, while still allowing flexibility for policies and/or regulations to evolve in response to changes to the digital technology ecosystem (Figure 1).

Issues of data and data flows, technological change and equality between men and women permeate across almost all of the Framework's seven dimensions. While they are not distinct domains, discussion of some of the policy considerations they elicit are relevant throughout the Framework.

Figure 1. Mapping the Framework's policy dimensions and domains

The Framework's 35 policy domains across its seven dimensions



Access to connectivity services and infrastructures and data

Connectivity services and infrastructures underpin the use of digital technologies and facilitate interactions between connected people, organisations and machines. They serve as the basis for an open, interconnected and distributed Internet that enables the global free flow of information. Increasingly, countries consider access to the Internet as a fundamental service for citizens, and most OECD Member countries include broadband as part of their universal service framework (OECD, 2024^[14]).

Access to high-quality connectivity at affordable prices and resilient networks and services is a key condition for ensuring that digital technologies benefit all people, places and firms. Connectivity services and infrastructures include communication broadband networks (fixed or mobile). In addition to this physical architecture, complementary enablers underpin the Internet's functioning (e.g. the Domain Name System (DNS), the routing system and the uptake of Internet Protocol addresses (IPv6) Internet addresses). Together, these elements form the technical foundation for an open, interconnected and distributed Internet that enables digital transformation (OECD, 2011^[15]).

Access to data is also critical. Data are a driver of economic activity and a general-purpose input into production in many contexts. Yet these benefits are predicated on data availability and accessibility. Multiple policy domains need to be considered to ensure access (Table 1). OECD policy standards and tools related to Access can be found in Box 2.

Table 1. Access: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Competition	Foster competition in communication markets
Connectivity services and infrastructures	Support high-quality and affordable connectivity infrastructures (including broadband networks) and services
Investment	Encourage private and public investment in the connectivity ecosystem
Regional and rural development	Close spatial digital connectivity divides for all people and places

Box 2. OECD Standards and Tools on Access

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Access dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Access. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/access>].

OECD Recommendation on Broadband Connectivity (2021)

The OECD Recommendation on Broadband Connectivity outlines a set of policy principles to support ubiquitous access to high-quality broadband connectivity at affordable prices. It recognises the role of the private sector in facilitating the expansion of communications infrastructures and development, where a sound regulatory and institutional framework underpin broadband development. There are five key pillars or provisions: 1) fostering competition, investment, and innovation in broadband development; 2) eliminating digital divides and reducing barriers to broadband deployment; 3) ensuring resilient, reliable, secure, and high-capacity networks; 4) minimising negative environmental impacts of communication networks; and 5) regularly assessing the state of connectivity through the collection, analysis, and publication of data.

OECD Recommendation on Competitive Neutrality (2021)

The OECD Recommendation on Competitive Neutrality outlines a range of actions governments should take to ensure a fair playing field between companies and state-owned enterprises. This includes ensuring competitive neutrality in the legal framework, including competition, merger control, and bankruptcy law. In addition, the Recommendation sets out advice on how to avoid creating market-distorting effects through the design of public policy interventions such as loans, loan guarantees and state investment in capital

OECD Recommendation on International Mobile Roaming Services (2012)

The OECD Recommendation on International Mobile Roaming Services presents a set of measures that aim to ensure effective competition, consumer awareness and protection, and fair prices in international roaming markets. These policy principles were developed in response to high wholesale charges for international roaming, which in turn had resulted in high retail charges. Since the Recommendation, significant progress has been made in reducing international mobile roaming prices through either regulation or increased competition.

Source: (OECD, 2021^[16]) (OECD, 2012^[17]) (OECD, 2021^[18])

Effective use of digital technologies and data

Realising the power and potential of digital technologies and data for individuals, governments and firms depends on their effective use. Promoting adoption, diffusion and proficient use of advanced digital tools is crucial, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Policies aimed at training people to use digital technologies effectively, and at promoting the adoption and diffusion of advanced digital tools, can boost productivity growth in firms and enhance the reach and quality of public services.

Widespread diffusion and effective use of digital technologies and data require awareness of the opportunities they bring, investment in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and complementary assets, including knowledge-based capital and skills. To encourage the effective use of digital technologies and data, multiple policy domains need to be considered (Table 2). OECD policy standards and tools related to Use can be found in Box 3.

Table 2. Use: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Digital government	Encourage digital service delivery and use technology to pursue a user-driven approach to government services
Investment	Encourage firm investments in ICTs and intangible assets (e.g. knowledge-based capital)
Skills	Foster general and advanced ICT skills
SMEs	Promote the use of digital technologies

Box 3. OECD Standards and Tools on Use

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Use dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Use. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/use>].

OECD Recommendation on SME Financing (2023)

The OECD Recommendation on SME Financing emphasises the need to strengthen SME access to traditional bank financing, while also promoting non-bank finance. It includes both macro-level principles, such as providing guidance on the regulatory framework, and micro-level principles, such as addressing policy design and implementation in SME financing policies. It seeks to encourage the collection of granular data on SME access to finance. It also aims to encourage dialogue, exchange of experiences and co-ordination, including regulatory co-ordination, among stakeholders in SME finance, including policymakers, financial institutions, research institutions and SME management. It also provides guidance on risk sharing between public and private actors.

OECD Recommendation on the Governance of Digital Identity (2023)

The OECD Recommendation on the Governance of Digital Identity provides a framework that promotes the development of reliable and trusted access to digital identity that is portable across platforms, sectors, and borders. It addresses challenges at national and international levels to implement this ambition, including public perception, user experience and adoption, data sharing, interoperability, liability, data privacy and security, governance, and international co-operation.

OECD Digital Government Policy Framework (2020)

The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework (DGPF) consists of six dimensions that comprise a fully digital government: 1) digital by design; 2) data-driven public sector; 3) government as a platform; 4) open by default; 5) user-driven; and 6) proactiveness. Progress against each of these dimensions is measured in the OECD Digital Government Index (DGI) (OECD, 2024^[19]). The DGI serves as a resource for policymakers to support comprehensive policy reforms in the digital transformation of government to increase government productivity, enhance government services, and improve people's lives.

OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies (2014)

The OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies lays out a framework for the use of digital technologies and data by governments that increase the openness and transparency of government processes and operations for all. The Recommendation outlines in particular a set of policy principles that focus on the need to take steps to address existing digital divides and avoid creating new ones, to encourage the engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery, and to open government data.

Source: (OECD, 2023^[20]; OECD, 2023^[21]); (OECD, 2014^[22]).

Data-driven and digital innovation

Digital and data-driven innovation pushes out the frontier of what is possible in the digital age, driving job creation, productivity, and growth. It leads to profound changes in the ways people interact, create, produce, and consume. Digital innovation not only gives rise to new and novel goods and services, but it also creates opportunities for new business models and markets, smart cities, and it can drive efficiencies in the public sector and beyond.

Digital technologies are reshaping all stages of science, from agenda setting, to experimentation, knowledge sharing, and public engagement. They likewise spur innovation in a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, education, energy, finance, fisheries, health, manufacturing, retail, and transportation, as well as the ICT sector itself. Multiple policy domains need to be considered to foster innovation (Table 3). OECD policy standards and tools related to Innovation can be found in Box 4.

Table 3. Innovation: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Competition	Level the playing field to allow innovative and dynamic firms to compete fairly with incumbents and disrupt existing markets
Digital government	Promote innovation in digital government such as GovTech and open government data
Entrepreneurship	Create a culture that encourages entrepreneurship
Sectoral policies and regulations	Encourage innovation in all sectors by building regulatory frameworks that enable experimentation and risk taking
Science and technology	Encourage basic research
SMEs	Build an ecosystem that helps start-ups and scale-ups to thrive

Box 4. OECD Standards and Tools on Innovation

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Innovation dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Innovation. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/innovation>].

OECD Going Digital Guide to Data Governance Policy Making (2022)

The OECD Going Digital Guide to Data Governance Policy Making (the Guide) aims to help policymakers navigate three fundamental policy tensions and objectives that characterise most, if not all, efforts to develop, revise and implement policies for data governance in the digital age. The tensions and objectives relate to balancing data openness and control, while maximising trust; managing overlapping and potentially conflicting interests and regulations related to data governance; and incentivising investments in data and their effective re-use. For each, the Guide outlines underlying issues and presents promising approaches that can help address them. The Guide also contains a checklist of questions to orient policymakers as they develop and revise effective policies for data governance. Finally, it includes a number of policy approaches and real-life policies as examples.

OECD Recommendation on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data (2021)

The OECD Recommendation on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data sets out general principles and policy guidance on how governments can maximise the benefits of enhancing data access and sharing arrangements while protecting individuals' and organisations' rights and taking into account other legitimate interests and objectives. The proposals include steps governments can take to stimulate investment in data and incentivise data access and sharing, as well as foster effective and responsible data access, sharing, and use across society. Specific measures include supporting long-term investments in data access and sharing arrangements, promoting the development and adoption of interoperable specifications for effective data access, sharing and use, and promoting the development of the data-related skills and competences needed to harness the benefits of data access, sharing and use throughout the data value cycle.

OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation (2019) and the Innovation Playbook (2022)

The OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation is a legal instrument based on five principles and associated actions that governments or public organisations can use to inform and enhance innovation and its management: Embrace and enhance innovation within the public sector, encourage and equip all public servants to innovate, cultivate new partnerships and involve different voices, support exploration, iteration and testing, and diffuse lessons and share practices. The OECD has also produced the *Innovation Playbook*, which offers an accessible and actionable instrument to translate the Declaration on Public Sector Innovation into practical guidance on how its principles can be applied to solve public sector challenges. Specifically intended for top officials and middle-managers, it helps users assess and expand their awareness on innovative challenges, identify opportunities for improvement in public sector systems and translate the innovation principles and commitments into concrete action.

OECD Innovation Strategy (2015)

Innovation underpins growth and dynamism of all economies, and provides a foundation for new businesses, new jobs and productivity growth. The updated OECD Innovation Strategy (2015) sets out five policy priorities: 1) strengthen investment in innovation and foster business dynamism, 2)

invest in and shape efficient systems of knowledge creation and diffusion, 3) seize the benefits of the digital economy, 4) foster talent and skills and optimise their use, and 5) improve the governance and implementation of policies that promote innovation. The Innovation Strategy underscores that a mix of policies, which will vary depending on the context and go beyond narrowly defined research and innovation policies, are needed to promote innovation. It also highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluation, learning from experience, and adjusting policies over time to ensure that government action is efficient and reaches its objectives at the least possible cost.

Source: (OECD, 2022^[13]) (OECD, 2021^[23]) (OECD, 2019^[24]) (OECD, 2022^[25]) (OECD, 2015^[26]).

Jobs fit for the digital age

Digital transformation has already begun to change organisations and markets, raising important questions about how jobs and occupations will change, which jobs might disappear and where new ones will come from, what they will look like, and which skills will be required. At the same time, issues around who might be most affected, and what can be done to foster new job creation and to align skills development with the changing job requirements have emerged.

The realisation of digital technologies creating more and higher-quality jobs will depend on policies in many different domains, as well as on effective social dialogue (Table 4). For some countries, social dialogue – which refers to all types of negotiations and other exchanges of information between or among representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy – has contributed to positive labour transitions (International Labour Organization, 2022^[27]). OECD policy standards and tools related to Jobs can be found in Box 5.

Table 4. Jobs: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Labour markets	Facilitate the transition of workers across businesses, industries, and regions, including through effective social dialogue around the adoption and use of new technologies in the workplace
Regional and local development	Promote opportunities for employers and their workers in all types of local labour markets
Skills	Foster complementary skills (e.g. problem solving, teamwork) and encourage lifelong learning
Social protection	Enhance work-related social protections for workers and the unemployed, including by ensuring social dialogue
Tax and benefits	Extend or adapt work-related benefits to ensure all workers are provided with minimum protection, including through social dialogue mechanisms

Box 5. OECD Tools on Jobs

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Jobs dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Jobs. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/jobs>].

OECD Skills Strategy (2019)

To develop a holistic approach to improving education and training systems, governments need to invest strategically. The OECD Skills Strategy provides an integrated, cross-government framework to help countries identify the strengths and weaknesses of their national skills systems, benchmark them internationally, and develop policies that can transform better skills into better jobs, economic growth, and social inclusion. The OECD Skills Strategy identifies three strategic imperatives – 1) lifelong learning; 2) fostering equitable opportunities and outcomes; and 3) making better use of digital technology as a learning device. It advocates for three core areas of policy action: 1) developing relevant skills across the life course; 2) using skills effectively in all facets of work and society; and 3) strengthening the governance of the skills system.

OECD Jobs Strategy (2018)

The OECD Jobs Strategy consists of a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to promote more and better jobs. Since its launch in 1994, it has become a key reference for guiding national labour market policies in Member countries and partner economies. The 2018 revision of the Jobs Strategy emphasises job quality and inclusiveness as central policy priorities, and highlights resilience and adaptability for good economic and labour market performance in a changing world of work. It recognises that policies aimed at increasing flexibility in product and labour markets are necessary but not sufficient. Policies and institutions that protect workers, including trade unions and social dialogue, foster inclusiveness, job quality, and fair wages, and allow workers and firms to make the most of ongoing challenges are also needed to promote good outcomes. The new Strategy also promotes a whole-of-government response, embedding the Strategy in the OECD Inclusive Growth Initiative.

Source: (OECD, 2019^[28]) (OECD, 2018^[29]).

A prosperous digital society for all

Digital transformation affects society in complex and interrelated ways because digital technologies dramatically change the ways in which individuals, firms, and governments interact among and with one another. These effects are often complex because overall impacts may not be clear-cut and vary across countries. For example, digital technologies provide opportunities to enhance access to information (a free and interconnected Internet) improve health care (e.g. telemedicine) and can help advance environmental resilience. On the other hand, challenges arise related to work-life imbalances and negative mental health outcomes such as cyberbullying and other harmful online behaviours, including among children and young people.

From a digital perspective, a consideration of multiple policy domains is needed (Table 5).⁴ OECD policy standards and tools related to Society can be found in Box 6.

Table 5. Society: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Health	Improve care experience/outcomes and reduce costs and inequity through the use of digital technologies, tools and data
Digital government	Promote human-centred public services and civic tech
Environment	Mitigate negative impacts on the environment
Online safety	Protect against online harms, including those related to negative behaviours online (e.g. impacts on mental health)
Skills	Foster foundational skills
Social policies	Ensure social prosperity for all
Tax and benefits	Support those negatively affected by digital transformation

Box 6. OECD Standards on Society

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Society dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards related to Society. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/society>].

OECD Recommendation on Digital Technologies and the Environment (2025)

The Recommendation on Digital Technologies and the Environment aims to support countries in leveraging digital technologies and their underlying infrastructure for environmental sustainability goals while mitigating their environmental footprint. It provides a comprehensive analytical framework to assess the environmental impact of digital technologies across their life cycle, including their direct, enabling and systemic effects. The Recommendation consists of eight principles: a foundational principle on comprehensive assessment of environmental impact throughout the digital technology life cycle; five operational principles (innovation, skills and public awareness, leveraging digital technologies to advance environmental sustainability, reducing their environmental footprint, advancing a harmonised measurement approach), and two policy principles (whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach, international co-operation).

OECD Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment (2021)

The Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment sets out key principles and provides concrete guidance to governments and other actors for finding a balance between protecting children from risk and promoting the opportunities and benefits that the digital environment can provide. The Recommendation focuses on the challenges for policy making in this area with respect to managing the digital environment's complexity, adopting an evidence-based policy making approach, and fostering international co-operation to improve the efficiency of national policy frameworks. It notes that all policies made to make the Internet safer and more beneficial for minors should aim to remain flexible, proportionate, and respectful of rights, and that they should foster the empowerment and resilience of children and parents.

OECD Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence (2019, last revised in 2024)

The Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence is the first intergovernmental standard adopted by governments for the responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI. The Recommendation identifies five values-based principles: 1) AI should drive inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being, 2) AI systems should respect the rule of law, human rights, democratic values and diversity,

and they should include appropriate safeguards, 3) there should be transparency and responsible disclosure around AI systems, 4) AI systems must function in a robust, secure and safe way, and 5) organisations and individuals developing, deploying, or operating AI systems should be held accountable for their proper functioning. In addition to, and consistent with, these value-based principles, the Recommendation provides five recommendations to policy-makers pertaining to national policies and international co-operation for trustworthy AI.

OECD Recommendation on Health Data Governance (2016)

The Recommendation on Health Data Governance lays out the framework conditions to encourage greater availability and processing of health data within countries and across borders for health-related public policy objectives, while ensuring that risks to privacy and security are minimised and appropriately managed. The Recommendation is based on 12 high-level principles, ranging from engagement and participation of a wide range of stakeholders, to effective consent and choice mechanisms, to the collection and use of personal health data, to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These principles set the conditions to encourage greater cross-country comparison and harmonisation of data governance frameworks, so that more countries are able to use health data for research, statistics, and health care quality improvement.

OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (2015)

The Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life outlines a strategy that governments may wish to implement, mechanisms regarding accountability and sustainability of initiatives related to men and women, and tools to inform policy decisions. It also outlines policy options to boost equal access to public life, including politics, judiciaries, and public administrations for women and men from differing backgrounds.

Source: (OECD, 2024^[30]); (OECD, 2021^[31]); (OECD, 2024^[32]); (OECD, 2016^[33]); (OECD, 2015^[34]); (OECD, 2025^[35]).

Trust in the digital age

To fully embrace and benefit from digital transformation, individuals, firms, and governments need to be reasonably confident that engaging in digital environments to conduct their activities will bring more benefits than downsides. Such downsides can arise from various sources of uncertainties related to digital technologies, business models, and data, including cross-border data flows and cybersecurity incidents, including via compromised encryption or other privacy enhancing technologies. Other downsides relate to the misuse of personal data that can affect all actors' reputation, finances, freedom, autonomy, health, well-being, safety, competitiveness, and efficiency, which reduce trust and engagement in digital environments.

As individuals increasingly go online to buy, rent, access, or share goods and services, protecting consumers, including those at particularly high risk, from harms is critical to ensure trust in digital environments. Trust in the information ecosystem is another issue that has risen in tandem with the Internet as an important information source. Indeed, the creation and dissemination of deliberately manipulated and/or misleading content online reduces trust in democratic societies (OECD, 2024^[36]) (OECD, 2024^[37]). To ensure trust in digital environments, multiple policy domains need to be considered (Table 6), with special attention to those who are most at risk, including children and SMEs. OECD policy standards and tools related to Trust can be found in Box 7.

Table 6. Trust: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Consumer policy	Protect and empower consumers
Cybersecurity	Strengthen digital security*
Online safety	Create safe online spaces for all and reinforce information integrity
Privacy	Protect personal data

Note: * Digital security refers to the economic and social aspects of cybersecurity, as opposed to purely technical aspects and those related to criminal law enforcement or national and international security (OECD, 2022^[38]).

Box 7. OECD Standards and Tools on Trust

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Trust dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Trust. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/trust>].

Declaration on Protecting and Empowering Consumers in the Digital and Green Transitions (2024)

The Declaration on Protecting and Empowering Consumers in the Digital and Green Transitions recognises that, while benefitting consumers through easy access to goods, services, and information, many digital markets are not functioning in ways that allow consumers to realise their full benefits. Adherents to the Declaration commit to: identifying and taking action against ongoing and emerging consumers harms in digital markets; encouraging businesses in digital markets to pay due regard to the interests of consumers and act in accordance with fair business, advertising and marketing practices, as well as the general principles of good faith; and protecting and empowering all consumers, including those who may be particularly at risk of harm.

OECD Recommendation on Information Integrity (2024)

The OECD Recommendation on Information Integrity aims to strengthen information integrity and address threats posed by information manipulation. It outlines practical steps for governments to take to strengthen societal resilience to digital information manipulation, reinforce information integrity in the creation and dissemination of information by enhancing the transparency, accountability, and plurality of information sources, and upgrade their institutional architecture to strengthen information integrity, while reinforcing transparency and checks and balances on governments' actions in this field.

OECD Policy Framework on Digital Security (2022)

The OECD Policy Framework on Digital Security focuses on the economic and social dimension of cybersecurity. It addresses issues such as national cybersecurity strategies, vulnerability management, incident reporting, policies that support the cybersecurity of critical activities, outreach campaigns and training programmes, and international co-operation arrangements. This framework draws on the full suite of OECD digital security recommendations: The OECD Recommendation of the Council on National Digital Security Strategies, the OECD Recommendation on the Treatment of Digital Security Vulnerabilities, the OECD Recommendation on Digital Security of Critical Activities, the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Security Risk Management, and the OECD Recommendation on Electronic Authentication. It also identifies linkages with other policy domains to ensure a holistic approach to digital security policy.

Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities (2022)

The Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities embodies the commonality in safeguards put in place by countries for government access to personal data held by non-government entities. The Declaration helps to ensure that government access is in accordance with democratic values, safeguards for privacy and other human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law. As the first intergovernmental agreement on common approaches to safeguard privacy and other human rights and freedoms when accessing personal data for national security and law enforcement purposes, it seeks to promote trust in cross-border data flows, a critical enabler of the global economy.

OECD Recommendation on Consumer Product Safety (2020)

The OECD Recommendation on Consumer Product Safety recognises that consumers have a right to expect that products put on the market are safe under reasonably normal or foreseeable consumer use or misuse. It considers that consumer trust in global and digital supply chains may be affected by a number of safety challenges, such as inadequate information disclosures about safety risks, the changing nature and safety of technology-driven products throughout their lifetime, and the availability in domestic and global e-commerce of products that have been banned or recalled from traditional consumer markets. It highlights the need to consider the impact of digital technologies on consumer product safety.

OECD Recommendation on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce (2016)

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce covers business-to-consumer e-commerce. It underscores that consumers buying online are entitled to the same level of protection as with conventional transactions. More specifically, the Recommendation addresses challenges relating to information disclosure, misleading and unfair commercial practices, confirmation and payment, fraud and identity theft, product safety issues, and dispute resolution and redress. Revisions in 2016 expanded the scope to include business activities that enable peer-to-peer transactions, and to cover non-monetary transactions. They also adapted its provisions to address recent challenges related to digital content, consumer reviews and ratings, new payment mechanisms, and the use of mobile devices to conduct transactions.

OECD Recommendation Concerning Guidelines Governing the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data (1980, last revised in 2013)

The OECD Privacy Guidelines – the first international set of privacy principles, last revised in 2013 – provides a set of eight principles that apply to both the public and private sectors: the collection limitation principle; the data quality principle; the purpose specification principle; the use limitation principle; the security safeguards principle; the openness principle; the individual participation principle; and the accountability principle. Two themes run through the Privacy Guidelines: a focus on the practical implementation of privacy protection through approach grounded in risk management, and the need to address the global dimension of privacy through improved interoperability.

Source: (OECD, 2024^[39]) (OECD, 2022^[38]) (OECD, 2022^[40]) (OECD, 2022^[41]) (OECD, 2020^[42]) (OECD, 2019^[43]) (OECD, 2015^[44]) (OECD, 2007^[45]) (OECD, 2016^[46]) (OECD, 2013^[47]).

Market openness in digital business environments

Digital technologies transform the environment in which firms compete, trade, and invest. Market openness enables digitalisation to flourish by creating a business-friendly environment that allows foreign and domestic firms to compete on an equal footing, and without excessive restrictions or burdensome regulations. Open trade and investment regimes can create new avenues to rapidly upgrade technologies and skills, and increase specialisation, as frontier technologies, applications, and processes diffuse through open markets.

Market openness also fosters competition, and helps firms, domestic and foreign, reap the benefits of trade and investment, contributing to economic growth. Market openness requires attention to multiple policy domains (Table 7). OECD policy standards and tools related to Market Openness can be found in Box 8.

Table 7. Market Openness: Key policy domains

Policy domain	Objective
Competition	Foster a level playing field for all firms
Financial markets	Promote open financial markets and fintech
Investment	Boost foreign direct investment (FDI)
Taxation	Adapt the tax system to the challenges of digital transformation
Trade	Reduce barriers to digital trade and promote data free flow with trust

Box 8. OECD Standards and Tools on Market Openness

The OECD has developed a range of policy standards and tools related to the Market Openness dimension of the Framework. This box includes a non-exhaustive list of existing policy standards and tools related to Market Openness. Please see the OECD Going Digital Toolkit which provides a more comprehensive list [<https://goingdigital.oecd.org/dimension/market-openness>].

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (1976, last revised in 2023)

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) have been a leading standard to promote responsible business conduct since 1976. At the heart of the Guidelines are a set of 15 recommendations from governments to multinational enterprises operating in or from Adherents. The guidelines provide voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct in areas such as employment and industrial relations, human rights, environment, information disclosure, combatting bribery, consumer and worker interests, science and technology, competition and taxation. The guidelines aim to ensure that the operations of enterprises are in line with government policies, to strengthen mutual confidence between enterprises and societies, and help improve the foreign investment climate and sustainable development by multinational enterprises. Adhering governments are required to set up a national contact point whose main role is to further the effectiveness of the guidelines by undertaking promotional activities, handling enquiries, and contributing to the resolution of issues that may arise from the alleged nonobservance of the guidelines in specific instances.

OECD Competition Assessment Toolkit (2019)

The OECD's Competition Assessment Toolkit, consisting of three parts, was revised and extended in 2019. Volume 1 gives examples of the benefits of competition, provides an introduction to the Competition Checklist, and shows ways that governments assess the competitive effects of their policies, Volume 2 provides detailed technical guidance on key issues to consider when performing competition assessment, and Volume 3 was issued to provide an operational manual and a step-by-step process for performing competition assessments. The toolkit can be used in three main ways to evaluate: draft new laws and regulations (for example, through regulatory impact assessment programmes); existing laws and regulations (either in the economy as a whole, or specific sectors); and the competitive impacts of regulation (either by the government bodies that develop and review policies or the competition authority).

OECD Code of Liberalisation of Capital Movements (1961, last revised in 2024)

The Code provides a framework for countries to progressively remove unnecessary barriers to the movement of capital, while providing flexibility for countries at different levels of development and in times of economic distress and financial disturbance. As an OECD Decision, it is binding for all Adherents. The Code is based on a range of premises, including: 1) an open multilateral regime for international capital flows, 2) the entitlement of an adhering country to benefit from the liberalisation of other adhering countries regardless of its own degree of openness, and 3) the reintroduction of capital flow restrictions that can be justified in specific circumstances.

OECD Recommendation on Principles for Internet Policy Making (2011)

The OECD Recommendation on Principles for Internet Policy Making includes 14 high-level principles that are designed to help preserve the fundamental openness of the Internet and the free flow of information, while ensuring that privacy, children and IP are adequately protected. Addressing security challenges and finding ways to enhance trust in the Internet are also key objectives. The principles are not an attempt to harmonise global law, but rather to provide a

common framework for companies and governments as they consider new initiatives with respect to access to information, its distribution, portability and the use of online platforms and networks.

Source: (OECD, 2023^[48]) (OECD, 2019^[49]) (OECD, 2019^[50]) (OECD, 2019^[51]) (OECD, 2024^[52]) (OECD, 2011^[15]).

Putting the Framework into practice

As digital transformation continues to impact all aspects of the economy and society, it is important for policymakers to consider not just “what” policies and regulations to put in place, but also “how” to do so effectively, in light of frequent changes to the digital technology ecosystem. Effective governance of digital transformation requires having the right organisational structures in place to ensure effective co-ordination across multiple ministries, while still maintaining a coherent vision and a laser-focus on implementation.

Putting a whole-of-government approach to digital transformation into practice generally requires a national digital strategy (NDS). An NDS should be comprehensive in addressing the range of interrelated policy issues discussed above, ensure coherence and co-ordination of policies across all domains and sectors that shape digital transformation, and involve all relevant stakeholders in its development and implementation. While each country’s specific context is unique and there is no one-size-fits all approach to designing effective digital policies, there are several aspects of governing, developing, and implementing holistic digital policies and emerging regulatory techniques for digital policy.

Establish a governance approach that supports effective co-ordination

Digital policies need to be co-ordinated among all policy domains and actors affected by and affecting digital transformation. Co-ordination is critical for the coherent design and effective implementation of cross-cutting priorities, such as data and data flows technology and data policies (OECD, 2015^[26]). Such co-ordination implies involving a wide range of actors in multiple parts and at different levels of government, as well as non-governmental stakeholders and international partners. As the effects of digital transformation become more widespread, the digital policy ecosystem becomes more crowded, and therefore effective and coherent governance of digital policies becomes more critical than ever.

Articulate a strategic vision and ensure coherence

To develop a coherent NDS, it is important to articulate a strategic vision (or direction) for the digital transformation of the country. A strategic vision should identify how digital transformation contributes to reaching overarching objectives such as innovation, growth and well-being, and how it can help address global “grand challenges.” The NDS also needs to be co-ordinated with existing national strategies in key areas, such as broadband development, digital security, innovation, skills, jobs, and social prosperity for all. Given the rapid pace of technological change, NDSs tend to be revised frequently, and it is therefore important to ensure the linkage between the NDS and existing digital policy initiatives (and vice versa) remain up to date.

Assess key digital trends, related policies and regulations, and consider new regulatory techniques

Understanding a country’s state of digital development requires comprehensive monitoring and analysis of relevant trends and evaluation of related policies. Any new strategy should require monitoring and evaluation to improve the quality and effectiveness of policies and expenditures (OECD, 2015^[26]). Measurement, monitoring, and evaluation allow policymakers to: assess progress, understand drivers of,

and obstacles to, digital transformation, and evaluate the effectiveness of past and current policies. Resulting insights are essential to make informed decisions about strategic priorities, the choice of policy measures and instruments, and the allocation of funds. The Toolkit (OECD, 2026^[2]) helps countries self-assess and benchmark domestic trends internationally with a set of key indicators for each of the seven policy dimensions of the framework.

Enable inclusive strategy development

Leveraging a policy approach that supports effective co-ordination, a strategic vision that ensures coherence, and insights from monitoring and evaluation that underpin strategic priorities and objectives, the development of the NDS should be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders. Key actors to involve include officials from all relevant parts and levels of government, international partners, and non-governmental stakeholders, including business associations, civil society organisations, trade unions, and technical and scientific communities. International partners can also play an important role in determining outcomes of an NDS, for example related to issues such as trade policy, cross-border data flows, foreign direct investment, regulation, and Internet governance.

Cover the Framework comprehensively

While individual digital transformation initiatives may be narrow and targeted in scope, for an NDS to be effective at advancing innovation, growth and well-being it should comprehensively cover all areas of the Framework. To help countries better understand the comprehensiveness of their NDSs, the OECD has developed the National Digital Strategy Comprehensiveness Indicator (Gierten and Leshner, 2022^[12]) which enables countries to benchmark their NDS against others and consider which areas may warrant greater focus in future revisions. A comprehensiveness assessment should form part of the design phase to assess how effectively will the NDS achieve its overarching goal.

Implement the strategy successfully

Even if an NDS is well co-ordinated, challenges to implementation may arise, for example, from poor strategy design, such as unrealistic objectives, or from rigid institutions and organisational structures that impede efficient resource allocation and effective action. Administrative capacity, a clear division of labour, and complementarity among different parts and levels of government are crucial for successful implementation, as is broad-based support for the strategy. Effective communication, constructive negotiation, and co-operation with stakeholders during the implementation is likewise crucial. In addition, the targeting and sequencing of measures must be well-thought-out (OECD, 2018^[29]) and all policy measures in the action plan that involve public spending or investment should identify the required amount and the source(s) of funding. Finally, a successful strategy requires a clear time-frame for implementation and quantifiable targets with related indicators to monitor progress. More effective use of digital technologies can also contribute to successful implementation (OECD, 2019^[53]).

OECD standards and tools on regulatory governance

Alongside considering how the policy and evidential context may help shape strategic priorities (or “what” to focus on), policymakers should consider whether using a mix of policy and regulatory approaches may lead to better outcomes, especially in the case of policy interventions concerning innovative or rapidly evolving areas (or “how” to achieve the desired outcome). The OECD has produced guidance on when to consider such approaches, and how they can be used to maximum effect (Box 9).

Box 9. OECD Standards and Tools on regulatory governance

The OECD Framework for Anticipatory Governance of Emerging Technologies (2024)

Across all sectors, AI and emerging technologies such as synthetic biology, advanced materials, and quantum technologies promise the potential to provide transformational positive societal outcomes if harnessed correctly. But these same technologies could also cause unanticipated damage. It is therefore important that governments consider policy frameworks to encourage the development of emerging technologies, while at the same time mitigating potential harms. For this reason, the OECD has developed a Framework for Anticipatory Governance of Emerging Technologies. This framework provides guidance and tools to help countries establish effective governance mechanisms for emerging technologies.

OECD Recommendation on International Regulatory Co-operation (IRC) to Tackle Global Challenges (2022)

The Recommendation sets forth an overarching vision on IRC and provides the basic tools for governments to include an international lens in their regulatory policy and governance tools, bringing their rulemaking up to date with the global opportunities and challenges they currently face. The Recommendation aims to help governments strengthen their abilities and skills to achieve regulatory outcomes that better address global challenges and, ultimately, put in place the governance and regulatory arrangements necessary to better promote welfare of the population and reinforce trust in global co-operation. The key elements on IRC are divided into three building blocks: Taking a whole-of-government IRC approach, with a common vision and clear roles and responsibilities; Introducing IRC at all stages of the domestic rulemaking process, throughout the domestic regulatory design, development and delivery; and co-operating internationally (bilaterally, plurilaterally and multilaterally) for rulemaking.

OECD Recommendation for Agile Regulatory Governance to Harness Innovation (2021)

The OECD Recommendation for Agile Regulatory Governance to Harness Innovation sets out a range of measures policymakers should adopt in order to build regulatory systems that encourage innovation, such as: developing more adaptive, iterative, and flexible regulatory assessment cycles, enabling greater experimentation, testing, and trialling to stimulate innovation under regulatory supervision, and putting in place mechanisms for public and stakeholder engagement in the regulatory process, including citizens and innovative SMEs as well as start-ups, from an early stage and throughout the policy cycle to enhance transparency, build trust, and capitalise on various sources of expertise. The Recommendation is accompanied by practical guidance to help aid its implementation.

Source: (OECD, 2024^[54]) (OECD, 2022^[55]) (OECD, 2021^[56]) (OECD, 2021^[57]).

Annex A. Glossary of terms

Table A A.1. Glossary of terms related to digital transformation

Term	Definition	Source
Digitisation	Digitisation is the conversion of analogue data and processes into a machine-readable format.	OECD (2019), <i>Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives</i> , OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264312012-en .
Digitalisation	Digitalisation is the use of digital technologies and data as well as interconnection that results in new or changes to existing activities.	OECD (2019), <i>Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives</i> , OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264312012-en .
Digital technologies	Digital technologies refer to different types of communication networks and systems, including information processing and compute capacity and the technologies used in them. This entails both the underlying “physical layer” (e.g. communication infrastructures and devices, including semiconductors, network equipment, data centres, servers, smart sensors, Internet exchange points) and the “digital layer” (e.g. cloud and edge computing, software) of technologies, goods and services that enable the digital technology ecosystem.	OECD (2025), <i>Recommendation on Digital Technologies and the Environment</i> , https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0380 .
Digital transformation	Digital transformation refers to the economic and societal effects of digitisation and digitalisation.	OECD (2019), <i>Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives</i> , OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264312012-en .

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Notes

¹ The Committees involved in the Going Digital Phase 1 Horizontal Project included: the Committee on Digital Economy Policy (CDEP) (Lead Committee), the Competition Committee (CC), the Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP), the Committee on Fiscal Affairs (CFA), the Committee on Industry, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE), the Committee on Financial Markets (CMF), the Committee on Statistics and Statistics Policy (CSSP), the Committee on Scientific and Technological Policy (CSTP), the Economic Policy Committee (EPC), the Education Policy Committee (EDPC), the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), the Insurance and Private Pensions Committee (IPPC), the Public Governance Committee (PGC), the Trade Committee (TC), and the Strategic Foresight/NAEC unit.

² The CIFAL Global Network is composed of 22 international training centres for authorities and leaders across Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

³ For the purpose of this document, a policy domain is defined as a distinct area of government activity that addresses a common issue or problem. Policy domains can be thought of as mapping to commonly established government ministries or regulatory agencies. The policy domains listed are not intended to reflect a comprehensive list of all policy domains implicated in a particular policy dimension, but rather an indication of the major policy considerations a government should consider for each dimension.

⁴ The OECD Well-being Framework covers a broader range of dimensions for current well-being and for sustaining well-being in the future (OECD, 2020_[58]). Recent work has looked at the consideration of digital technologies and their impacts on well-being (see the OECD Digital Well-being Hub) and on the well-being of children (OECD, 2024_[60]) (OECD, 2025_[59]).