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EPOC'S STRATEGIC VISION

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EPOC'S STRATEGIC VISION

EPOC's Strategic Vision is to work towards ensuring global economic growth that is environmentally sustainable.

EPOC will contribute to this by supporting the OECD countries in their efforts to develop and implement efficient and effective policies that address selected environmental challenges through the sharing of knowledge and best practices and by producing policy relevant analyses, noting Ministers' conclusions that increased efforts will be required if member countries are to meet their national and international environment commitments.

To this end, EPOC's work over the medium and long-term will focus on:

- Globalisation
- Integration
- Implementation
- Accountability
- Partnerships

To achieve its purpose, EPOC will use the tools of the OECD – peer reviews, harmonised data and indicators, model-projections, policy-relevant analysis and recommendations. Further, EPOC will enhance co-operation with other OECD bodies, with stakeholders and non-member countries, and it will strengthen communication of its messages.

THE PURPOSE

To assist EPOC in its biennial discussion of its programme, Delegates called for a deeper review of the mission and goals of EPOC. This Strategic Vision is a response to that call.

EPOC has developed this Strategic Vision for its environment programme in order to:

- Provide strategic guidance for the development of its work over the next 5-10 years.

- Promote the implementation of the OECD Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century¹ and EPOC's Mandate² through its work programme.
- Support countries in their efforts to turn environmental challenges into economic opportunities and increased well-being, and to meet their national and international environmental commitments.
- Reinforce EPOC's work on the integration of environmental issues in economic and other policies, and contribute toward the achievement of sustainable development, which is an overarching goal of the OECD and its member countries.
- Assist EPOC and its subsidiary bodies in identifying work priorities, new work areas, and lower priority activities for gradual phase-out, in order to better focus resources as the priorities and EPOC's ability to add value evolve.
- Define and improve the "brand", product, and process of EPOC's work.
- Enhance communication of EPOC's key messages to target audiences, as a means to strengthen support for EPOC's work in the OECD Council and in capitals.

THE VISION

I. EPOC and the key environmental challenges

1. Environment and economic policies are closely interrelated: successful economic growth depends on a healthy environment, and progressive environmental policies can provide opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

2. Through the *OECD Environmental Strategy*, OECD Environment Ministers identified the key challenges OECD countries are facing in achieving environmental sustainability. They also agreed to 71 national actions to move towards this goal, as well as 55 specific work items for which they invited OECD's support.

3. Environment Ministers met in April 2004 to review their progress in implementing the *OECD Environmental Strategy*. They noted that progress had been made in some areas, but concluded that "further action is needed urgently to ensure environmental sustainability in a cost-effective and socially equitable way".³ Furthermore they concluded that OECD countries are not on track to meet their national

¹ *OECD Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century*, adopted by OECD Environment Ministers and endorsed by the OECD Council at Ministerial Level in 2001, [www.oecd.org/env/min/2001].

² Resolution of the Council Concerning the Renewal of the Mandate of the Environment Policy Committee [C(2004)99/REV1].

³ Chair's Summary, Meeting of the OECD Environment Policy Committee at Ministerial Level, 20-21 April 2004 [www.oecd.org/envmin2004].

and international environmental commitments and that they need policies that more effectively and efficiently achieve environmental goals. A brief overview of EPOC's current work is given in the Annex.

II. EPOC's priorities over the medium to long-term

4. EPOC has defined its key priorities for new or enhanced work utilising the specific strengths of the OECD, with the aim to identify those opportunities to ensure environmental sustainability while contributing to global economic growth. Future work of EPOC and its subsidiary bodies will focus on:

Globalisation

- Contributing an environmental perspective to economic globalisation. This will be done by focussing on:
 - Identification of further opportunities for policies to promote economic competitiveness while achieving environmentally positive results.
 - Linkages between investment and environment.
 - Linkages between trade and environment.
 - Environment and technology change and diffusion.
 - Innovation which promotes efficiencies in energy and materials use.

Integration

- Reinforcing the integration of environmental aspects in other policy areas (e.g. finance, health, agriculture, energy, transport, chemicals), including by co-operating with other OECD bodies. This will include work on:
 - Costs of environmental policy inaction.
 - Linkages between health and environment, including a focus on vulnerable groups, such as children.
 - Environmental outlook (providing economy-based projections of environmental pressures and conditions).
 - Distributive and employment aspects of environmental policies.

Implementation

- EPOC will enhance its analytical work in support of the successful implementation of national policy instruments and policy mixes. This will include work on:
 - Encouraging the use of market-based economic instruments to support environmental objectives taking into account the social impacts.
 - Developing methods for improved natural resource management, including climate change,

- Analysing the “3R” initiative (reduce, reuse, recycle), sustainable materials management and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Analysing possibilities for improving sustainable consumption and production and for creating “green” markets.
- Integrating the principles of sustainable development in country policies and programmes.
- Enhancing environmental governance and incentives for compliance with and enforcement of environmental policies at national and international levels.
- Supporting the efficient implementation of tools regarding the safety of chemicals, pesticides and biotechnology.
- Addressing the opportunities and challenges posed by new technologies, such as those involving genetically modified organisms and manufactured nano-materials.
- Supporting the provision of environment-related infrastructures, for example, for water supply and sanitation.

Accountability

- Strengthening the OECD monitoring function of country environmental performance. Environmental Performance Reviews are one of EPOC’s “brand” products. Their peer review value will be enhanced by:
 - Further increasing the focus and influence of Environmental Performance Reviews.
 - Drawing common lessons, benchmarking environmental performance and increasing accountability both nationally and internationally.
 - Developing further specific environmental indicators and their use (for example, material flows and resource productivity).
 - Extending the knowledge base on environmental issues and policies, and further harmonising environmental data in relation to indicators use and environmental performance assessments done at the national and international levels.

Partnerships

- Developing successful partnerships with others, including with and among ministries, OECD countries, non-member countries, stakeholders (including business, trade unions, environmental NGOs) and other parts of the OECD. To develop better partnerships, EPOC will increase its work on:
 - Enhancing co-operation with selected non-members through implementation of its Outreach Strategy⁴, for example by widening the participation of non-members in the Mutual Acceptance of Data system (in chemicals).
 - Strengthening coherence and increasing the synergies between development and environment policies.
 - Enhancing the contribution of business to developing innovative solutions to environmental challenges.
 - Making use of the experiences provided by the stakeholders.

III. Communication of EPOC's main messages

5. In order to maximise the influence of OECD environment work on policy making and implementation at the national level, and to support further environmental improvements in countries, EPOC will further strengthen communication of its main messages. This involves:

- Highlighting the policy relevance of EPOC's work. All EPOC reports will include policy-relevant executive summaries. EPOC will also make efforts to raise the visibility of its work with the OECD Council. EPOC members will seek further opportunities to engage national and international media coverage of its work.
- Better targeting of communication activities to ensure that the right messages are provided at the right time and to the right audiences. In addition to the traditional key audiences, more attention will be given to also reach other parts of government such as Ministries of Finance and sectoral Ministries, selected non-member countries and other stakeholders. For each of these audiences, different communication styles and strategies will be used to ensure that appropriately targeted and timely messages reach them.
- Making better use of existing OECD communication tools. This will include enhancing the visibility of the OECD Environment website, and continuing to issue publications, policy briefs, flyers, newsletters and making them accessible to a broader public.

6. Both EPOC Delegates and the Secretariat will contribute to enhanced communication efforts. Their specific roles, and suggestions for improved communication activities, will be integrated explicitly into future programmes of work. EPOC will increase its communication efforts.

⁴The Outreach Strategy can be found in document [ENV/EPOC(2005)5/FINAL] "Strategy for the Participation of Non-Members in Meetings of the Environment Policy Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies" which discusses how non-members can be involved in the work of EPOC and its Subsidiary Bodies.

IV. Implementation and review of the Strategic Vision

7. When implementing the Strategic Vision and considering work priorities, EPOC will use the following questions as guidance:

- What environmental problem or policy issue is being addressed and what is its economic and social dimension?
- What practical results will this work provide with respect to the environment and the economy?
- Is similar work being done elsewhere or are there linkages with work being done in other institutions or forums?
- Is EPOC or one of its subsidiary bodies best placed to carry out this work and provide added value?
- Are adequate resources and time available to undertake this work?
- Can the envisaged results contribute to enhancing EPOC's influence and visibility?

8. The Strategic Vision is a living document. Priorities will be reviewed at least after each Meeting of EPOC at Ministerial Level, beginning with the meeting planned for 2008.

9. The Strategic Vision will guide EPOC and its subsidiary bodies' biennial programmes of work by focussing on activities with the greatest potential for adding value to intergovernmental discussions. It will also support medium-term planning in the Secretariat, in order to build core competencies and networks.

ANNEX

EPOC'S WORK

EPOC is already supporting countries in a large number of key areas. Examples of this include work on:

- Maintaining the integrity of ecosystems, addressing climate change and exploring the economic aspects of biodiversity.
- Decoupling environmental pressures from continued growth through work on policy instruments and mixes.
- Ensuring that environmental policies and globalisation objectives are mutually supportive; this includes work on multinational enterprises, investment and trade in relation to environment.
- Providing the foundation for national regulations regarding the safety of chemicals, pesticides and biotechnology.
- Monitoring country environmental performance through peer reviews, data and indicators.
- Identifying future environmental challenges and the costs and benefits of policies to address them, as well as evaluating the costs of inaction.
- Using OECD's environmental and economic modelling capacity to provide projections of environmental pressures and policy analysis which also support the OECD Environmental Outlook.
- Providing analysis which can inform environmental policy debates in broader international fora.

In doing so, EPOC is:

- Working together with non-member country partners and other institutions (such as the UN, the World Bank and Regional Development Banks) to achieve common and shared environmental goals, and to develop good policy practices in specific areas.
- Working on horizontal policy linkages in co-operation with other OECD bodies and affiliated Organisations, such as the IEA.

Some of the Benefits of OECD Work on Environment

As an inter-governmental organisation with a strong economic focus, the OECD has a unique role to play in identifying the economic benefits and costs of environmental policy action and inaction, as well as in “getting the prices right” by promoting the internalisation of environmental externalities. OECD also develops policy instruments and practical tools to assist countries in achieving environmental objectives at least cost and to reduce unnecessary barriers to trade between countries. OECD work on environment helps countries create opportunities for economic development, taking into account environmental consequences. Through the country environmental performance reviews, EPOC provides a forum for accountability among peers for the achievement of environmental commitments.

OECD countries work together through EPOC in a spirit of co-operation, to find solutions to environmental challenges. Drawing on the multi-disciplinary nature of the OECD, EPOC’s work provides an opportunity to reflect environment priorities in other policy areas in the OECD. This work contributes to the OECD reputation and “brand” as a convening forum for policy-makers to discuss policies and lessons learned in a coherent manner.

The OECD environment programme facilitates dialogue and sharing of experiences and best practices on national and international policy issues, including with non-member countries. OECD, as a forum for developed countries, can play a unique and important role in building momentum for strategic policy shifts which provide global benefits and are supported by multilateral consensus and action. EPOC’s work is of use to member countries as support in international negotiations related to environmental problems and policy issues.