



Recommendation of the Council on Artificial Intelligence



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Background Information

The Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) (hereafter the “Recommendation”) – the first intergovernmental standard on AI – was adopted by the OECD Council at Ministerial level on 22 May 2019 on the proposal of the Committee on Digital Economy Policy (CDEP). The Recommendation aims to foster innovation and trust in AI by promoting the responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI while ensuring respect for human rights and democratic values. In June 2019, at the Osaka Summit, G20 Leaders welcomed G20 AI Principles, drawn from the Recommendation. The Recommendation was revised by the OECD Council on 8 November 2023 to update its definition of an “AI System”, in order to ensure the Recommendation continues to be technically accurate and reflect technological developments, including with respect to generative AI.

The OECD’s work on Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a general-purpose technology that has the potential to: improve the welfare and well-being of people, contribute to positive sustainable global economic activity, increase innovation and productivity, and help respond to key global challenges. It is deployed in many sectors ranging from production, finance and transport to healthcare and security.

Alongside benefits, AI also raises challenges for our societies and economies, notably regarding economic shifts and inequalities, competition, transitions in the labour market, and implications for democracy and human rights.

The OECD has undertaken empirical and policy activities on AI in support of the policy debate over the past two years, starting with a Technology Foresight Forum on AI in 2016 and an international conference on *AI: Intelligent Machines, Smart Policies* in 2017. The Organisation also conducted analytical and measurement work that provides an overview of the AI technical landscape, maps economic and social impacts of AI technologies and their applications, identifies major policy considerations, and describes AI initiatives from governments and other stakeholders at national and international levels.

This work has demonstrated the need to shape a stable policy environment at the international level to foster trust in and adoption of AI in society. Against this background, the OECD Council adopted, on the proposal of CDEP, a Recommendation to promote a human-centric approach to trustworthy AI, that fosters research, preserves economic incentives to innovate, and applies to all stakeholders.

An inclusive and participatory process for developing the Recommendation

The development of the Recommendation was participatory in nature, incorporating input from a broad range of sources throughout the process. In May 2018, the CDEP agreed to form an expert group to scope principles to foster trust in and adoption of AI, with a view to developing a draft Recommendation in the course of 2019. The AI Group of experts at the OECD (AIGO) was subsequently established, comprising over 50 experts from different disciplines and different sectors (government, industry, civil society, trade unions, the technical community and academia) - see <http://www.oecd.org/going-digital/ai/oecd-aigo-membership-list.pdf> for the full list. Between September 2018 and February 2019 the group held four meetings. The work benefited from the diligence, engagement and substantive contributions of the experts participating in AIGO, as well as from their multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary backgrounds.

Drawing on the final output document of the AIGO, a draft Recommendation was developed in the CDEP and with the consultation of other relevant OECD bodies and approved in a special meeting on 14-15 March 2019. The OECD Council adopted the Recommendation at its meeting at Ministerial level on 22-23 May 2019.

Scope of the Recommendation

Complementing existing OECD standards already relevant to AI – such as those on privacy and data protection, digital security risk management, and responsible business conduct – the Recommendation focuses on policy issues that are specific to AI and strives to set a standard that is implementable and flexible enough to stand the test of time in a rapidly evolving field. The Recommendation contains five high-level values-based principles and five recommendations for national policies and international co-operation. It also proposes a common understanding of key terms, such as “AI system” and “AI actors”, for the purposes of the Recommendation.

More specifically, the Recommendation includes two substantive sections:

1. **Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI:** the first section sets out five complementary principles relevant to all stakeholders: i) inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being; ii) human-centred values and fairness; iii) transparency and explainability; iv) robustness, security and safety; and v) accountability. This section further calls on AI actors to promote and implement these principles according to their roles.
2. **National policies and international co-operation for trustworthy AI:** consistent with the five aforementioned principles, this section provides five recommendations to Members and non-Members having adhered to the draft Recommendation (hereafter the “Adherents”) to implement in their national policies and international co-operation: i) investing in AI research and development; ii) fostering a digital ecosystem for AI; iii) shaping an enabling policy environment for AI; iv) building human capacity and preparing for labour market transformation; and v) international co-operation for trustworthy AI.

2023 revision to update the definition of an “AI System” and next steps

The Recommendation instructs the CDEP to report to the Council on its implementation, dissemination and continued relevance five years after its adoption and regularly thereafter.

Accordingly, the CDEP, via the AIGO, has begun work towards the preparation of this report to Council. In the context of these discussions, a window of opportunity was identified to maintain the relevance of the Recommendation by updating its definition of an “AI System”, and the CDEP approved a draft revised definition in a joint session of the Committee and the AIGO on 16 October 2023. The OECD Council adopted the revised definition of “AI System” at its meeting on 8- November 2023.

The update of the definition included edits aimed at: (i) clarifying the objectives of an AI system (which may be explicit or implicit); (ii) underscoring the role of input which may be provided by humans or machines; (iii) clarifying that the Recommendation applies to generative AI systems, which produce “content”; (iv) substituting the word “real” with “physical” for clarity and alignment with other international processes; (v) reflecting the fact that some AI systems can continue to evolve after their design and deployment.

The CDEP, through AIGO, is now pursuing its work to prepare the report to the Council on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the Recommendation which is expected next year.

For further information please consult: oecd.ai.

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Implementation

In addition to reporting to the Council on the implementation of the Recommendation, the CDEP is also instructed to continue its work on AI, building on this Recommendation, and taking into account work in other international fora, such as UNESCO, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the initiative to build an International Panel on AI (see <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/12/06/mandate-international-panel-artificial-intelligence> and <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/france-and-canada-create-new-expert-international-panel-on-artificial-intelligence>).

In order to support implementation of the Recommendation, the Council instructed the CDEP to develop practical guidance for implementation, to provide a forum for exchanging information on AI policy and activities, and to foster multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary dialogue.

To provide an inclusive forum for exchanging information on AI policy and activities, and to foster multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary dialogue, the OECD launched i) the [AI Policy Observatory](#) (OECD.AI) as well as ii) the informal OECD Network of Experts on AI (ONE AI) in February 2020.

OECD.AI is an inclusive hub for public policy on AI that aims to help countries encourage, nurture and monitor the responsible development of trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for the benefit of society. It combines resources from across the OECD with those of partners from all stakeholder groups to provide multidisciplinary, evidence-based policy analysis on AI. The Observatory includes a live database of AI strategies, policies and initiatives that countries and other stakeholders can share and update, enabling the comparison of their key elements in an interactive manner. It is continuously updated with AI metrics, measurements, policies and good practices that lead to further updates in the practical guidance for implementation.

The OECD.AI Network of Experts (ONE AI) is an informal group of AI experts from government, business, academia and civil society that provides AI-specific policy expertise and advice to the OECD. The network provides a space for the international AI community to have in-depth discussions about shared AI policy opportunities and challenges.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises [[OECD/LEGAL/0144](#)]; Recommendation of the Council concerning Guidelines Governing the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data [[OECD/LEGAL/0188](#)]; Recommendation of the Council concerning Guidelines for Cryptography Policy [[OECD/LEGAL/0289](#)]; Recommendation of the Council for Enhanced Access and More Effective Use of Public Sector Information [[OECD/LEGAL/0362](#)]; Recommendation of the Council on Digital Security Risk Management for Economic and Social Prosperity [[OECD/LEGAL/0415](#)]; Recommendation of the Council on Consumer Protection in E-commerce [[OECD/LEGAL/0422](#)]; Declaration on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth and Social Prosperity (Cancún Declaration) [[OECD/LEGAL/0426](#)]; Declaration on Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth [[OECD/LEGAL/0439](#)]; as well as the 2016 Ministerial Statement on Building more Resilient and Inclusive Labour Markets, adopted at the OECD Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting;

HAVING REGARD to the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/70/1) as well as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

HAVING REGARD to the important work being carried out on artificial intelligence (hereafter, “AI”) in other international governmental and non-governmental fora;

RECOGNISING that AI has pervasive, far-reaching and global implications that are transforming societies, economic sectors and the world of work, and are likely to increasingly do so in the future;

RECOGNISING that AI has the potential to improve the welfare and well-being of people, to contribute to positive sustainable global economic activity, to increase innovation and productivity, and to help respond to key global challenges;

RECOGNISING that, at the same time, these transformations may have disparate effects within, and between societies and economies, notably regarding economic shifts, competition, transitions in the labour market, inequalities, and implications for democracy and human rights, privacy and data protection, and digital security;

RECOGNISING that trust is a key enabler of digital transformation; that, although the nature of future AI applications and their implications may be hard to foresee, the trustworthiness of AI systems is a key factor for the diffusion and adoption of AI; and that a well-informed whole-of-society public debate is necessary for capturing the beneficial potential of the technology, while limiting the risks associated with it;

UNDERLINING that certain existing national and international legal, regulatory and policy frameworks already have relevance to AI, including those related to human rights, consumer and personal data protection, intellectual property rights, responsible business conduct, and competition, while noting that the appropriateness of some frameworks may need to be assessed and new approaches developed;

RECOGNISING that given the rapid development and implementation of AI, there is a need for a stable policy environment that promotes a human-centric approach to trustworthy AI, that fosters research, preserves economic incentives to innovate, and that applies to all stakeholders according to their role and the context;

CONSIDERING that embracing the opportunities offered, and addressing the challenges raised, by AI applications, and empowering stakeholders to engage is essential to fostering adoption of trustworthy AI in society, and to turning AI trustworthiness into a competitive parameter in the global marketplace;

On the proposal of the Committee on Digital Economy Policy:

I. **AGREES** that for the purpose of this Recommendation the following terms should be understood as follows:

- *AI system*: An AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different AI systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment.
- *AI system lifecycle*: AI system lifecycle phases involve: *i)* ‘design, data and models’; which is a context-dependent sequence encompassing planning and design, data collection and processing, as well as model building; *ii)* ‘verification and validation’; *iii)* ‘deployment’; and *iv)* ‘operation and monitoring’. These phases often take place in an iterative manner and are not necessarily sequential. The decision to retire an AI system from operation may occur at any point during the operation and monitoring phase.
- *AI knowledge*: AI knowledge refers to the skills and resources, such as data, code, algorithms, models, research, know-how, training programmes, governance, processes and best practices, required to understand and participate in the AI system lifecycle.
- *AI actors*: AI actors are those who play an active role in the AI system lifecycle, including organisations and individuals that deploy or operate AI.
- *Stakeholders*: Stakeholders encompass all organisations and individuals involved in, or affected by, AI systems, directly or indirectly. AI actors are a subset of stakeholders.

Section 1: Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI

II. **RECOMMENDS** that Members and non-Members adhering to this Recommendation (hereafter the “Adherents”) promote and implement the following principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI, which are relevant to all stakeholders.

III. **CALLS ON** all AI actors to promote and implement, according to their respective roles, the following Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI.

IV. **UNDERLINES** that the following principles are complementary and should be considered as a whole.

1.1. Inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being

Stakeholders should proactively engage in responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI in pursuit of beneficial outcomes for people and the planet, such as augmenting human capabilities and enhancing creativity, advancing inclusion of underrepresented populations, reducing economic, social, gender and other inequalities, and protecting natural environments, thus invigorating inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being.

1.2. Human-centred values and fairness

- a) AI actors should respect the rule of law, human rights and democratic values, throughout the AI system lifecycle. These include freedom, dignity and autonomy, privacy and data protection, non-discrimination and equality, diversity, fairness, social justice, and internationally recognised labour rights.
- b) To this end, AI actors should implement mechanisms and safeguards, such as capacity for human determination, that are appropriate to the context and consistent with the state of art.

1.3. Transparency and explainability

AI Actors should commit to transparency and responsible disclosure regarding AI systems. To this end, they should provide meaningful information, appropriate to the context, and consistent with the state of art:

- i. to foster a general understanding of AI systems,
- ii. to make stakeholders aware of their interactions with AI systems, including in the workplace,
- iii. to enable those affected by an AI system to understand the outcome, and,
- iv. to enable those adversely affected by an AI system to challenge its outcome based on plain and easy-to-understand information on the factors, and the logic that served as the basis for the prediction, recommendation or decision.

1.4. Robustness, security and safety

- a) AI systems should be robust, secure and safe throughout their entire lifecycle so that, in conditions of normal use, foreseeable use or misuse, or other adverse conditions, they function appropriately and do not pose unreasonable safety risk.
- b) To this end, AI actors should ensure traceability, including in relation to datasets, processes and decisions made during the AI system lifecycle, to enable analysis of the AI system's outcomes and responses to inquiry, appropriate to the context and consistent with the state of art.
- c) AI actors should, based on their roles, the context, and their ability to act, apply a systematic risk management approach to each phase of the AI system lifecycle on a continuous basis to address risks related to AI systems, including privacy, digital security, safety and bias.

1.5. Accountability

AI actors should be accountable for the proper functioning of AI systems and for the respect of the above principles, based on their roles, the context, and consistent with the state of art.

Section 2: National policies and international co-operation for trustworthy AI

V. RECOMMENDS that Adherents implement the following recommendations, consistent with the principles in section 1, in their national policies and international co-operation, with special attention to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

2.1. Investing in AI research and development

- a) Governments should consider long-term public investment, and encourage private investment, in research and development, including interdisciplinary efforts, to spur innovation in trustworthy AI that focus on challenging technical issues and on AI-related social, legal and ethical implications and policy issues.
- b) Governments should also consider public investment and encourage private investment in open datasets that are representative and respect privacy and data protection to support an environment for AI research and development that is free of inappropriate bias and to improve interoperability and use of standards.

2.2. Fostering a digital ecosystem for AI

Governments should foster the development of, and access to, a digital ecosystem for trustworthy AI. Such an ecosystem includes in particular digital technologies and infrastructure, and mechanisms for sharing AI

knowledge, as appropriate. In this regard, governments should consider promoting mechanisms, such as data trusts, to support the safe, fair, legal and ethical sharing of data.

2.3. Shaping an enabling policy environment for AI

- a) Governments should promote a policy environment that supports an agile transition from the research and development stage to the deployment and operation stage for trustworthy AI systems. To this effect, they should consider using experimentation to provide a controlled environment in which AI systems can be tested, and scaled-up, as appropriate.
- b) Governments should review and adapt, as appropriate, their policy and regulatory frameworks and assessment mechanisms as they apply to AI systems to encourage innovation and competition for trustworthy AI.

2.4. Building human capacity and preparing for labour market transformation

- a) Governments should work closely with stakeholders to prepare for the transformation of the world of work and of society. They should empower people to effectively use and interact with AI systems across the breadth of applications, including by equipping them with the necessary skills.
- b) Governments should take steps, including through social dialogue, to ensure a fair transition for workers as AI is deployed, such as through training programmes along the working life, support for those affected by displacement, and access to new opportunities in the labour market.
- c) Governments should also work closely with stakeholders to promote the responsible use of AI at work, to enhance the safety of workers and the quality of jobs, to foster entrepreneurship and productivity, and aim to ensure that the benefits from AI are broadly and fairly shared.

2.5. International co-operation for trustworthy AI

- a) Governments, including developing countries and with stakeholders, should actively co-operate to advance these principles and to progress on responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI.
- b) Governments should work together in the OECD and other global and regional fora to foster the sharing of AI knowledge, as appropriate. They should encourage international, cross-sectoral and open multi-stakeholder initiatives to garner long-term expertise on AI.
- c) Governments should promote the development of multi-stakeholder, consensus-driven global technical standards for interoperable and trustworthy AI.
- d) Governments should also encourage the development, and their own use, of internationally comparable metrics to measure AI research, development and deployment, and gather the evidence base to assess progress in the implementation of these principles.

VI. INVITES the Secretary-General and Adherents to disseminate this Recommendation.

VII. INVITES non-Adherents to take due account of, and adhere to, this Recommendation.

VIII. INSTRUCTS the Committee on Digital Economy Policy:

- a) to continue its important work on artificial intelligence building on this Recommendation and taking into account work in other international fora, and to further develop the measurement framework for evidence-based AI policies;
- b) to develop and iterate further practical guidance on the implementation of this Recommendation, and to report to the Council on progress made no later than end December 2019;
- c) to provide a forum for exchanging information on AI policy and activities including experience with the implementation of this Recommendation, and to foster multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary dialogue to promote trust in and adoption of AI; and

- d) to monitor, in consultation with other relevant Committees, the implementation of this Recommendation and report thereon to the Council no later than five years following its adoption and regularly thereafter.

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