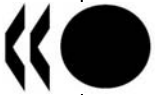


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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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**English/French**

**COUNCIL**

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**Council**

**A GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR FUTURE ACCESSIONS**

**(adopted by the Council at its 1155th session of 10-13 May 2007)**

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**English/French**

1. As the OECD Council has reiterated on several occasions, each country wishing to become an OECD Member has to be considered on its own merits and according to a procedure adapted to the particular case.

2. The accession process should serve, among other purposes, as a tool to increase the policy convergence of countries considered for membership with existing Members. On the one hand, it is important that it be dynamic and flexible enough to adapt to different countries and to evolving situations and circumstances. On the other hand, the Organisation must maintain in all circumstances the integrity and objectivity of the accession process and its tradition of high standards for membership.

3. This note presents the common framework and main elements of a possible procedure for future accessions.

#### **A. The governance of future accession processes**

4. OECD Members collectively, both in Council and in the substantive committees, fully control the process on a continuing basis. The invitation made to the Secretary-General to launch the examination of the terms and conditions of membership with any country wishing to become an OECD Member and the content of the process designed to carry out this examination need to be agreed by Council by consensus. With respect to the final invitation to accede to the OECD Convention, this needs to be agreed unanimously by Council in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention.

5. Moreover, Council may, at any point in the process, address any political issues that arise or decide to hold direct discussions with representatives of a candidate country, as it deems appropriate.

6. The Secretary-General prepares a document proposing an Accession Roadmap tailor-made for each candidate and setting out the specific process of accession contemplated for it. This is done after Council has invited the Secretary-General to examine the terms and conditions of membership of the candidate in question. This Accession Roadmap is submitted to Council for its approval by consensus.

7. The Secretary-General updates the Council regularly -- and at least every three months -- on his discussions with a candidate country and, more generally on progress made in the accession process.

8. Throughout the process, the Secretariat:

- assists the candidate country in complying with the requirements of the procedure and provides the country's authorities with any clarifications they may seek in this respect;
- provides Members, through the Council or the Committees, with any material they require for the consideration of the country's application for membership;
- facilitates coordination between Members and the candidate country.

9. Substantive Committees and other relevant subsidiary bodies are consulted in accordance with the specific Accession Roadmap for the candidate concerned and requested to assess its willingness and ability to assume the obligations of membership. Such assessment is based on the country's position with respect to the relevant OECD instruments, standards and benchmarks, and on the adequacy of the country's policies regarding the economic and social situation of the country in question. It should be noted that Council may modify the Accession Roadmap at any stage and decide to consult other Committees, where appropriate.

10. At the level of the substantive Committees consensus is not strictly speaking required and the formal opinion to Council could, in theory, present a majority and a minority view. Divergent views will need to be reconciled in any case at the level of Council in order for it to come to a decision on accession.

11. When all the formal opinions are finalised, the Secretary-General prepares a document thereon for Council's consideration. Council will then discuss and take a final decision on the possible accession of the country concerned. This will help preserve the fairness of the process and ensure that Members are in a position to take a fully informed decision based on the overall position of the candidate country.

## **B. The general procedure of future accession processes**

### The common framework

12. As indicated above, a document setting out the tailor-made process of accession in respect of each candidate (the "Accession Roadmap") is prepared by the Secretary-General and approved by the Council by consensus. This marks the effective launch of an "accession process".

13. The Accession Roadmap contains the following elements:

- a general description of the accession process envisaged for the country concerned;
- a list of the Committees to be consulted; the rationale underpinning the choice of committees involved in the process; the level of consultation required and a short description of how the examination would be carried out in each Committee;
- an indicative schedule of Committee meetings, taking note of the fact that the timing of the examinations will depend on the availability of the required information and on the progress made by the country in question;
- a list of areas where the Secretariat will be invited to review directly the position of the country concerned;
- a description of the formal steps required to conclude the accession process;
- an indication of the amount of resources required for the accession process which should in principle be covered by the country concerned.

14. In the course of the accession process, the candidate country will be provided with information on the arrangements concerning the financial obligations of Members as well as the indicative cost of membership for that country.

### Political issues and additional requirements

15. The document "Accession Roadmap" will remain technical and procedural in nature and will address only issues directly linked to the technical "standards" of OECD membership. In addition, Council may decide to complement such document with terms and conditions of a more political nature and not related to any specific OECD instrument. This could be done in a separate document adopted by Council.

16. In that context, Council could ask the Secretary-General to raise these political issues with the candidate countries, as appropriate. Council could also invite representatives from candidate countries individually to discuss various political issues. Council should review progress on these issues regularly during and at the end of the negotiation (i.e. when Council is ready to adopt its decision in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention).

17. Political issues that Council may want to discuss with candidates could be matters not discussed in the substantive committees. Such matters (for example on democracy, rule of law, human rights, etc.) may be considered as particularly important parameters for judging whether a candidate country ultimately should be invited to join OECD in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention.

18. Other political issues for discussion with candidates could be matters emanating from substantive committees where different views on best practices or norms can raise major concerns in one or more Member country.

19. Finally, Members might want to exchange views with a candidate on any major political or economic issue, whether or not directly linked to the accession negotiation.

#### Committees

20. The expansion of OECD work into new areas (e.g. anti-bribery, corporate governance, health) clearly calls for the involvement of a rather large number of Committees.

21. While a number of Committees will always be consulted, a tailor-made procedure means that the exact list of Committees that the Secretary-General will propose as part of the Accession Roadmap will be drawn in light of the particular situation of the country in question.

22. If it does not appear necessary or practical to request all Committees to provide a formal opinion, the Secretary-General may propose to Council, at an early stage of the accession process, to hold consultations with the Chairs of the Committees not being formally consulted. In these consultations, Chairs would convey to the Secretary-General their views on the policies of the country in question in their area of competence.

23. Consultations of Committees will be carried out in parallel. Indeed, a candidate's position examined by all the Committees independently of the progress made in the examination process in other Committees has the advantage of not building in delays in the process and of preserving the technical nature of the discussions.

24. Examination of candidates' positions in various fields was traditionally carried out within the regular sessions of the Committees concerned and included in their programme of work. Depending on the number of accession procedures that would be unfolding at any one period, Committees might be invited to adjust their working methods. Decisions in this respect will be taken at a later stage.

#### Optional activities

25. As part of the accession procedure, the candidate country is invited to state whether it intends to participate in some or all of the Organisation's optional activities or wished to be considered for membership in OECD bodies with special membership criteria. This concerns, the International Energy Agency (membership of this Agency implies acceptance of specific obligations in the field of energy and would have to be negotiated directly with the Agency), the NEA (which requires a Recommendation of the Steering Committee to Council) and the Development Assistance Committee as well as all the other Part II bodies and programmes (e.g. the Development Centre).

26. A list of such activities will be provided to the candidate country's authorities for their consideration. Should the country express its intention to join some of these activities, the relevant bodies of the Organisation would be informed and involved, as appropriate, in the accession procedure.