

Foreword

Lobbying is a natural part of the democratic process. By sharing expertise, legitimate needs and evidence about policy problems and how to address them, different interest groups can provide governments with valuable insights and data on which to base public policies. Information from a variety of interests and stakeholders helps policy makers understand options and trade-offs, and can lead, ultimately, to better policies. Nevertheless, sometimes public policies may be influenced only by specific interest groups or through covert and deceptive evidence, resulting in sub-optimal outcomes and undermining citizens' trust in democratic processes.

In 2010, the OECD adopted the Recommendation on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying – the first international instrument to address undue influence and inequities in the power of influence. Since then, the Principles have guided many countries that have since adopted regulations or standards on lobbying. In 2020, the OECD carried out a survey on the implementation of the Recommendation by all OECD and other selected countries, spanning a range of topics relevant to the 10 principles of the Recommendation. New data were also collected through two separate OECD surveys addressed to legislators, lobbying associations and lobbyists.

Based on the survey results, and at the request of the OECD Council, this report takes stock of progress in implementing the Principles. It shows that countries have made strides in providing transparency, integrity and access, but at different speeds and in a continuously evolving landscape.

However, in the majority of countries, there is limited transparency on the targets of lobbying across branches and levels of government and on the actors conducting lobbying activities, with a restricted view of lobbying activities in most countries. Little attention has been paid to emerging risks such as foreign influence. When such transparency exists, the information disclosed is usually not sufficient to allow for public scrutiny. For example, there is limited information on the objectives of most lobbying activity. In addition, public officials, lobbyists and companies need integrity standards tailored to the specific risks of lobbying and this is lacking in most countries. As a result, risks of undue influence and monopoly of influence are high, and increase in a crisis situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the lobbying landscape has evolved. The advent of digital technologies and social media has made lobbying and influence more complex than the way it has been traditionally defined in regulations. The report suggests that a more comprehensive approach to defining lobbying is necessary to cover the influence of policy-making and electoral processes in all its forms.

As a result, in the next two years the OECD will review and prepare an update of the Principles to reflect the evolving lobbying and influence landscape, and to guide efforts by all actors across government, business and civil society to reinforce the frameworks for engagement between governments and all stakeholders for better lobbying for better policies for better lives.

This publication reproduces in part the Report on the Implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying [[OECD/LEGAL/0379](#)], which was approved by the OECD Public Governance Committee via written procedure on 16 April 2021 [GOV/PGC/INT(2020)9/FINAL], declassified by the OECD Council at its 1423rd Session on 6 May 2021 [[C\(2021\)74](#) and [C/M\(2021\)10](#)].

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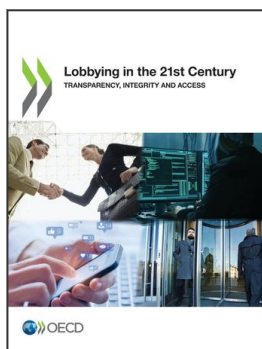
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