

Scorecard

OECD Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying

About OECD Principles

COVERAGE OF COMPANIES

Global

LAUNCH DATE

2009

FOCUS

Transparency in lobbying

LINK:

https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/doc-server/gov_glance-2015-35-en.pdf?expires=1732116201&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=B8A057BB5F6308027734327565B897E9

OECD Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying

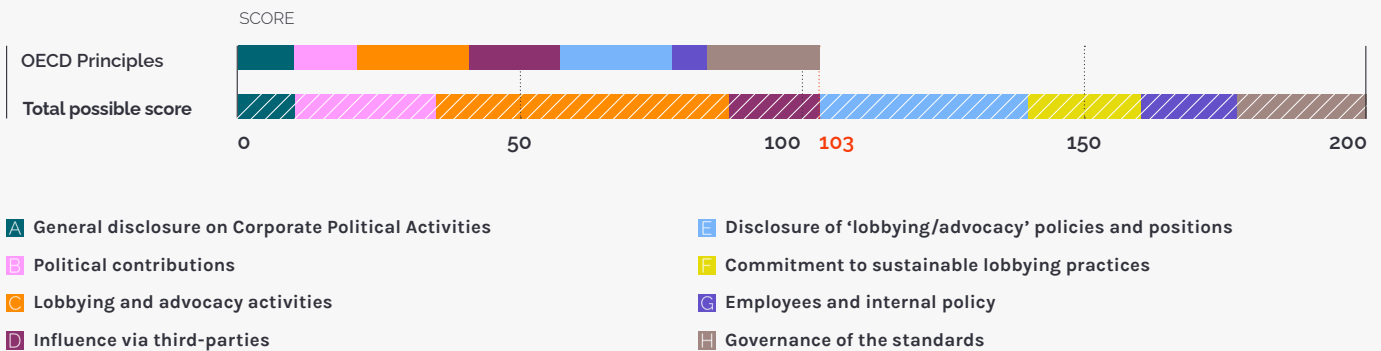


Rank 5 /27

Tracker Rank and Score for OECD Principles

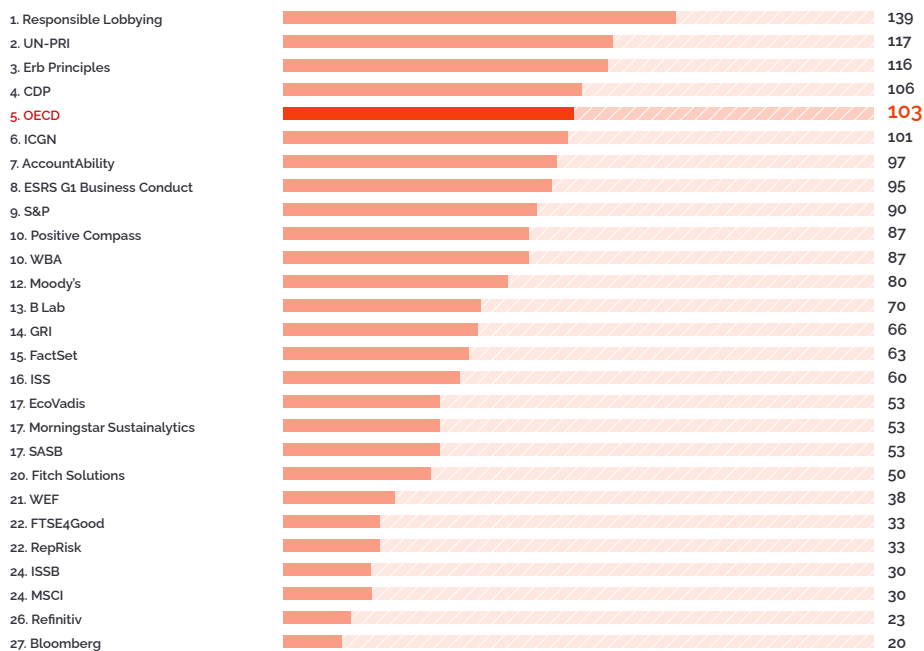
The score is out of a total of 200 and the rank describes the standards position in the 27 standards assessed by the Tracker.

Category scores of OECD Principles



*Categories where the standard received no points do not appear in the colour-coded graph

Rank and scores for all standards



Description

The OECD Principles, launched in 2009, are primarily directed at decision makers in the executive and legislative branches of government, and are relevant to both national and sub-national levels of government. The launch of the Principles was motivated by lobbying during the Global Financial Crisis.¹ Although the OECD Principles are designed to guide governments, they are included in the Tracker as a globally important set of soft law standards relating to the regulation of corporate lobbying conduct. The expectations have not been revised since their launch, reflecting the need for OECD member governments to catch up with new approaches to disclosure on corporate political activities and other lobbying.

In June 2024, the OECD issued updated recommendations relating to the Principles.² These are important but the recommendations contain major gaps and do not actually update the Principles themselves. This represents a missed opportunity over a decade on from their publication. The new recommendations seek to address challenges to the integrity of public policymaking that were not acknowledged when the OECD issued its first draft of the Principles. The recommendations call for strengthened transparency and more integrity for corporate delegations participating in inter-governmental decision-making processes. The recommendations also acknowledge new forms of influence, including disclosure requirements for sponsored media content and advertising, and alignment between responsible business goals and lobbying activities. The recommendations provide a starting point for updates and a more complete set of OECD Principles.

Score summary

The OECD Principles receive a **Tracker score of 103 out of 200**. The Principles receive this score based on their high-level recommendations in a number of key areas. The Principles recommend that all disclosure of lobbying activities “should provide sufficient, pertinent information on key aspects of lobbying activities to enable public scrutiny.” This expectation on complete and transparent disclosure receives points in Tracker Category C, ‘Lobbying and advocacy activities’. The OECD Principles also expect information on third party lobbying and the oversight of lobbying and corporate political activities at companies. According to the Principles, “core disclosure requirements [should] elicit information on in-house and consultant lobbyists, capture the objective of lobbying activity, identify its beneficiaries, in particular the ordering party, and point to those public offices that are its targets.” These criteria earn points in Tracker Category D, ‘Influence via third parties.’

The Principles recommend that governments should facilitate public scrutiny by indicating who has sought to influence legislative or policy-making processes, for example by disclosing a ‘legislative footprint’ that indicates the lobbyists consulted in the development of legislative initiatives. These criteria are important and earn points in Tracker Category E on ‘Disclosure of ‘lobbying/advocacy’ policy and position’

The OECD Principles go further and recommend that voluntary corporate disclosures should include social responsibility considerations about a business entity’s participation in public policy development and lobbying: “To adequately serve the public interest, disclosure on lobbying activities and lobbyists should

be stored in a publicly available register and should be updated in a timely manner in order to provide accurate information that allows effective analysis by public officials, citizens and businesses.” These recommendations are important and remain to be acted upon by OECD member governments in a consistent and transparent manner.

Opportunities for improvement

The OECD Principles should aspire to be comprehensive and set a higher standard of expectations for governments and countries, and be accompanied with an action plan and intended implementation timeline. A challenge for the OECD is to show genuine leadership to enhance the regulation of corporate political activities in its member states. The ongoing challenges associated with corporate political activities in a number of OECD countries highlights the need for enhanced standards in this area. An updated version of the OECD Principles would be strengthened with a full review of each of the Tracker categories and consideration of how corporate political activities in the years since the original publication of the Principles.

Endnotes

- 1 Igan et al (2008) ‘A Fistful of Dollars: Lobbying and the Financial Crisis:’ <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2009/wp09287.pdf>
- 2 OECD (2024) ‘Recommendation of the Council on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying and Influence:’ <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/256/256.en.pdf>

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