

Declaration on Data Confidentiality
2023/090

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
(“the OECD” or “the Organisation”)
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France

The OECD will receive microdata from the Directorate-General Statistics – Statistics Belgium (“Statbel”), to be used for the OECD project entitled “*Evaluation of Belgium COVID-19 responses: Economic and Fiscal Measures*” (the “Project”) as described in the Project description attached in Appendix 1 to this declaration.

Microdata provided to the OECD by Member countries on a confidential basis, will be protected as confidential official information in accordance with the OECD Council Resolution on Classification and Declassification of Information [C(97)64/REV1/FINAL] (the “Resolution”).

OECD “official information” falling within the scope of protection under the Resolution, includes documents and other material received from Member countries. Such documents and other material received by the Organisation on a confidential basis should be treated in the same manner as official documents bearing the “*Confidential*” classification, i.e. as “*information the unauthorised disclosure of which would seriously prejudice the interest of the Organisation or any of its Member countries.*” More particularly, market-sensitive and commercially sensitive material fall within this classification category.

The Resolution further provides that “*The Member countries and the Secretary-General will take the necessary measures to ensure the security of official information.*”

Furthermore, the OECD Regulations, Rules and Instructions applicable to Officials of the Organisation (“Staff Regulations”), to which all OECD officials are subject in accordance with their employment contract, bind OECD officials to an obligation of confidentiality. Regulation 4 provides in the relevant part:

“*Officials shall: [...]*”

f) protect the confidentiality of sensitive, unpublished information that has come to their attention in the course of their official duties;

g) continue to be bound by the obligation referred to in f) above after leaving the Organisation.”

Any violation by OECD officials of their obligations under Regulation 4 are expressly designated as being misconduct that may result in disciplinary action.

All microdata files provided by Statbel for the purpose of the Project must be destroyed within thirty (30) days of completion of the Project. The obligation to destroy data does not apply to non-confidential outputs/results/aggregated data derived during the lifetime of the Project including non-confidential or aggregated data presented in published reports or other publications.

Protection of personal data

“OECD Data Protection Rules” means the OECD internal rules on data protection, which are the only rules governing Personal Data protection that are applicable to the OECD. They are currently set out in the *Decision of the Secretary-General on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of their personal data*, Annex XII of the Staff Regulations, Rules and Instructions applicable to Officials of the Organisation;

“Personal Data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual;

“Processing” means any operation which is performed on Personal Data whether or not by automated means. “Process/Processed” shall be construed accordingly.

The parties intend that Personal Data may not form part of the data provided by Statbel for the Project.

As an independent intergovernmental organisation, the OECD is not subject to any national or regional legislation and the only rules governing personal data protection that are applicable to the OECD are the OECD Data Protection Rules. In the event that any Personal Data is Processed by the OECD in relation to the Project, the OECD is the controller of such Personal Data and shall comply with the OECD Data Protection Rules.

Nothing in this Declaration shall be construed as a waiver of the OECD’s privileges and immunities as an international organisation.

For STATBEL

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(Signature)

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For the OECD

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Print Name: Paul Schreyer

Title: OECD Chief Statistician

Date:

28/08/2023

Appendix 1: Project description

Evaluation of Belgium COVID-19 responses: Economic and Fiscal Measures

Project objective

At the request of the Federal Government of Belgium, the OECD is conducting an evaluation of the processes, resources and measures put in place to address the COVID-19 crisis and draw lessons to help strengthen Belgium's capacity for crisis management. Within this project, the data are requested to assess the implementation, targeting and impact of the economic and fiscal measures put in place to support firms during the COVID-19 crisis. The analysis will be released in December 2023.

The analysis will evaluate the targeting and impact of the economic and fiscal measures by quantifying the impact of the COVID crisis and the effect of the support measures on firms' performance. In particular, the analysis will look at:

- **Beneficiaries' characteristics:** which firms were supported, when and how, beneficiaries' main characteristics before, during and after the crisis;
- **Beneficiaries' outcome variables:** liquidity, solvency and debt.

For this purpose, the OECD is seeking access to administrative data on the beneficiaries of the economic and fiscal measures (firms' characteristics such as sector, size, subsidiaries, support received when and for how long) to be linked to annual accounts of firms.

No firm will be identified and the OECD expects to work on pseudonymized data that will be used for the sole purpose of drawing lessons on targeting and effectiveness through the use of a micro-simulation accounting model and difference-in-difference estimation strategy.

Project methodology

The data will be used to estimate two models:

1. **Micro-simulations accounting framework:** the framework will quantify the impact of the measures provided at the federal level and available to all firms: temporary unemployment, tax reductions and exemptions, federal guarantees, etc. As there is *de facto* no control group, that is, a group of firms that was affected by the crisis but not targeted by support measures, the impact of these policies can only be measured using micro-simulations. Accordingly, the framework simulates a counterfactual scenario with accounting equations, in which firms would have been subjected to sanitary restrictions without any support from Belgian institutions. This approach was followed to estimate the impact of the COVID-19 support measures in Luxembourg.
2. **Differences-in-Differences approach:** the Belgian context also offers a unique opportunity to assess the impact of direct support more finely, as grants and subsidies were distributed on different bases across regions and sectors. The data requested will allow for estimating the marginal impact of receiving each extra euro for instance. Results will help assess targeting and drawing lessons for the design of support measures, and for optimizing the use of resources.