

EMERGING CRITICAL RISKS: ANTICIPATION, PREPARATION AND ADAPTATION

23 June 2023

13:45 – 16:00 CEST

Meeting on ZOOM

This document presents the draft agenda for a webinar of the High Level Risk Forum (HLRF) on Emerging Critical Risks. Delegates may share the agenda with colleagues. A separate registration is required for each participant.

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Policy context

1. The global risk landscape is constantly changing with changes in climate, technology and society that alter existing critical risks and give rise to new ones. OECD governments generally have strong capacity to identify and plan for a wide range of extreme events and disaster risks, but unanticipated dynamics or underestimated features still trigger crises, expose gaps in risk ownership, planning assumptions, preparedness capabilities and coping capacity.
2. The OECD Recommendation on Governance of Critical Risks calls on Adherents to build preparedness through foresight analysis and risk assessments to better anticipate complex and wide-ranging impacts. Investing in the understanding of emerging risks helps enable governments to identify where reinforcement of national risk management processes and capabilities would be most useful, and where new authorities to act are needed.

Background

3. This High Level Risk Forum webinar aims to support the strategic planning efforts of Members in preparedness for 'emerging critical risks', understood here as novel risks and recognized hazards/threats that take place in an unfamiliar context, or under new conditions, and therefore whose likelihood and consequences are less well understood. It builds on a first workshop held in June 2022, held in cooperation with the OECD Strategic Foresight Unit, in which participants shared knowledge on risks of artificial intelligence and synthetic biology and ran a dedicated table-top exercise [GOV/PGC/HLRF/M(2022)1].
4. The High Level Risk Forum subsequently organized a pilot study in November 2022 in which risk experts were invited to collectively identify key emerging risks that Member countries ought to have on their radars. The pilot survey explored how much confidence government risk experts had in their assessments of the top risks, as well as how developed the capabilities for coping with them are.
5. Building on results of these collaborative efforts and subsequent discussions at the 12th meeting of the OECD High Level Risk Forum, this webinar provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of foresight tools and methodologies taken from futures studies that can be used to analyse emerging critical risks. Invited speakers will describe their analysis of trends and weak signals that improve understanding of emerging critical risks, and participants will be invited to discuss how to address the complex topic of governance for risks that are either too remote or insufficiently understood to attribute clear roles and responsibilities for risk ownership.

Webinar objectives

6. The webinar will invite experts to present insights on emerging critical risks drawn from 'Foresight studies'. In addition to improving participants' knowledge about such risks, the webinar will reflect on how governments could improve their ability to prepare for and manage a response to emerging critical risks. Members have a mutual interest in their partners' collective capacity to prepare and respond. The webinar will present a proposal to work collectively on an OECD framework that goes beyond the question, "What are the emerging critical risks?" and ask "What can governments begin to do about them now?"

Agenda

OPENING (13:45 – 14:00)

- Ms. Caitlin DURKOVICH, Chair, OECD High-Level Risk Forum, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor for Resilience and Response, National Security Council, United States
- Mr. Janos BERTOK, Director (Acting), OECD Public Governance Directorate

Session Documents : GOV/PGC/HLRF/A(2023)2; meeting draft agenda

Action: HLRF delegates are requested to adopt the draft agenda

SESSION 1: SCANNING THE HORIZON FOR EMERGING CRITICAL RISKS (14:00 – 15:30)

In this session invited speakers will present a range of case studies on emerging critical risks and related risk governance challenges in a civil contingencies context.

Speakers:

- Hans Davies, Director, Toffler Associates
- European Union Joint Research Centre, (Speaker to be determined)
- OECD Strategic Foresight Unit

SESSION 2: OECD PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING EMERGING CRITICAL RISKS (15:30 - 15:55)

THE OECD Secretariat has circulated a proposal to develop an OECD wide framework for managing emerging critical risks through a process that leverages technical expertise found in the High Level Risk Forum and the oversight of the OECD Public Governance Committee [GOV/PGC/HLRF(2023)2]. This session will outline the proposal and answer questions from participants about its aims, intended benefits and the process for its development. Participants are invited to attend a working meeting at OECD on July 7th to develop the framework in more detail with the aim to finish its development in time for adoption at the December meeting of the High Level Risk Forum.

Speaker: Al Bender, Department of Homeland Security, United States

Session Documents:

GOV/PGC/HLRF(2023)2; “Future direction of work on managing Emerging Critical Risks”

SESSION 3: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS (15:55 - 16:00)

The Chair will provide concluding remarks and announce next steps on taking forward work related to ‘Emerging Critical Risks’.