

Pandemic recovery plans neglecting green economy: OECD

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The OECD on Monday faulted governments for neglecting the green economy in multi-trillion recovery plans against the impact of COVID-19, thus threatening to leave the planet worse off than before.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development acknowledged that a combined \$312 billion earmarked by governments for environmentally-friendly spending was sizeable in itself.

But the sum paled in comparison with a total of \$9 trillion of budgetary spending designed to rebuild economies devastated by anti-virus measures such as lockdowns.

"Many governments have included 'green' recovery measures in their crisis recovery packages," the OECD said in a statement.

"But so far the balance between green and non-green spending is not favourable in terms of the support towards positive environmental outcomes,"

it said.

More than 30 OECD members or partner countries are planning to invest directly in measures designed to reduce emissions, such as clean transport, the [circular economy](#) or the renovation of buildings.

But at least 24 national governments are using the post-COVID measures "to roll back existing [environmental regulations](#) and taxes, and increase fossil-fuel intensive infrastructure and electricity", it said.

The bottom line was that "the balance between green and non-green spending is so far not favourable in terms of the volume of support towards positive environmental outcomes", the OECD said.

As governments rush to get their economies back on their feet many default to investments, technologies and investment plans that are familiar, the OECD said.

This reflects "a certain amount of inertia in the system, a lack of understanding on the factors behind unsustainable growth, and a lack of information on alternative, sustainable options," it said.

The OECD called on governments to accept that "the recovery is an opportunity to 'build back better', combining an emphasis on restoring growth and creating jobs with the achievement of environmental goals and objectives".

Otherwise they may "ultimately exacerbate existing environmental challenges", it said.

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