

# Foreword

This OECD report comes at a time when governments around the world are being challenged by the COVID-19 crisis, which is likely to generate a profound reflection on production and consumption habits. A number of provinces and territories across Canada declared a state of emergency in March 2020, and the subsequent shutdown of the economy to protect public health has led to a labour market shock. As measures related to travel and social distancing are gradually easing, the longer-term labour market impacts will become clearer.

The COVID-19 crisis could accelerate automation, as firms look to expand their use of technology to reduce the number of workers that have to physically be at work. Robots may be in even greater demand to help mitigate future disruptions. Productivity could also be negatively impacted, as the costs of doing business go up. Within this context of increasing costs, firms may also change their hiring practices and look to part-time employees or independent contractors to cut costs and be more nimble.

This OECD report sheds light on the threats and opportunities facing local labour markets in Canada in the face of the future of work. It also highlights needed actions to prepare people, places and firms. The report includes a special focus on the Province of Ontario, which represents almost 40% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product. Even before COVID-19, automation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence were re-shaping local labour markets across Canada. These trends offer the opportunity to boost productivity, increase prosperity and raise living standards. They can, however, also create losers, as workers who lose jobs may not always have the skills needed in a changing labour market and might struggle to find a new job.

This report is part of the OECD Review on Local Job Creation Series within the Programme of Work of the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme. Created in 1982, the LEED Programme aims to contribute to the creation of more and better jobs in more productive and inclusive economies. It produces guidance to make the implementation of national policies more effective at the local level, while stimulating innovative practices on the ground. The OECD LEED Directing Committee, which gathers governments of OECD member and non-member countries, oversees the work of the LEED Programme. This report was approved by written procedure by the OECD LEED Directing Committee on 24 June 2020 [CFE/LEED(2020)11].



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