

GETTING ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM THE WORLD BANK

Toolkit Update

In August 2001, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a new Policy on Disclosure of Information. The following outlines major changes in the policy and updates the guidelines for accessing information from the World Bank found in this toolkit. For more details on changes in the World Bank's policy, please see "The World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information" and "The Disclosure Handbook". (On the World Bank website at: <http://www1.worldbank.org/operations/disclosure/index.html>)

Board of Executive Directors

- **Biannual Executive Directors' Work Program Overview:** The Work Program outlines the objectives on which the Board will be focusing in the coming year along with some general strategies to approach those objectives. The Work Program is disclosed after Board approval.
- **Monthly Update of Board Schedule:** This day-by-day calendar lists some of the loan, strategy and policy matters scheduled to be discussed by the Board of Directors.

Country Economic and Sector Information

- **Economic and Sector Work Report:** ESW reports (or "gray cover reports") provide the basis for the Bank's diagnosis of a given country's development prospects. ESW reports that have been seen by the Bank's Board are publicly available. Other ESW reports may be available from the World Bank's relevant country or regional director.

- **Sector Strategy Paper:** A SSP reviews the Bank's experience in a particular sector and sets out the strategy for future work. A *draft SSP*, along with a *draft Concept Note* and a *Consultation Plan*, may be disclosed in order to facilitate consultations on a given strategy. The final SSP is disclosed, along with the *Chairman's Concluding Remarks* of the Board's discussion, following Board approval of the SSP.

- **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper:** In the fall of 1999, the World Bank announced a new approach to lending to countries seeking IDA funding or debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative. The new approach requires governments seeking concessional lending and debt relief to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in consultation with civil society. PRSPs and I-PRSPs (Interim-PRSPs) outline the government's strategy for poverty relief within the country.

Under the new Disclosure Policy, the Bank releases the draft PRSPs and I-PRSPs in the borrowing country before Board consideration. The *Joint Staff Assessment (JSA)*, which is the evaluation of the PRSP (or I-PRSP) conducted by the World Bank and IMF, is disclosed after it has been discussed by the Board. The *Chairman's Summary* of the Board's discussion of the PRSP (or I-PRSP) is also disclosed.

The PRSP process also led to the creation of Poverty Reduction Support Credits (PRSCs), which are a kind of structural adjustment loan that is directly related to the goals set out in the PRSP.

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)

- **Program Document:** The PD is prepared for all adjustment operations and replaces what used to be called the *President's Report*. The PD describes in detail the Bank's goals and justification for a loan and may also contain informative annexes or attachments. This is the document used by the Board of Executive Directors when considering approval of a SAP. For PRSCs, PDs are publicly available after the operation is approved by the Board. But, for non-PRSC adjustment lending, PDs are only available after the borrowing government concerned has given consent to disclosure.
- **Letter of Development Policy:** LDPs are written by the borrowing government and presented to the Board of Directors along with the PD during loan approval. LDPs outline measures that the borrowing government has agreed to take in exchange for the loan. The LDP is available with the consent of the borrower concerned after the loan has been approved by the Board of Directors of the World Bank.
- **Tranche Release Document:** TRDs are the Bank's reports on the fulfillment of conditions tied to the release of funds, typically called "tranches". These documents are disclosed after the release of a tranche is approved by Bank management and the Board has been informed. But, like PDs, TRDs for adjustment loans other than PRSCs, are only released after the borrowing government gives its consent.

Project Information

- **Factual Technical Documents, List:** A list of Factual Technical Documents (FTDs) is attached to every Project Information Document (PID). Such a list may not be available at the time of the initial PID. However, as project preparation evolves, the list of factual technical documents is included in the updated PID. (See the main text of the Toolkit for more information on PIDs and FTDs.)

Environmental and Social Information

- **Environmental Assessment Report:** An EA report can be an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), a regional or sectoral EA, an environmental audit, a hazard or risk assessment, or an Environmental Management Plan (EMP). Previously, only EA reports for projects determined by the Bank to have the highest potential social or environmental impacts (Category A projects) were publicly available. Under the new Disclosure Policy, medium-impact projects (Category B projects) also require the release of EA reports.

An EA report for Category B (and A) projects is released in the country by the borrower, before the Bank begins a formal project appraisal.

- **Integrated Safeguard Data Sheets:** ISDSs are prepared for every investment project and sector adjustment operation and identify the major environmental factors and analyses that should be taken into consideration for the project. They are prepared when the first formal review of a proposed operation is held by Bank management and are made publicly available at this time. As the project evolves, the ISDS is updated.

Evaluation Documents

- **Implementation Completion Reports:** ICRs are the Bank's review and assessment of a project. They are developed at project completion for every lending operation and are available to the public after distribution to the Board, which is no later than six months after the close of a project.
- **OED (Operations Evaluation Department) Evaluations:** OED is an independent unit of the Bank that reports directly to the Executive Directors. OED prepares several kinds of reports after the completion of certain projects including *Project Performance Assessment Reports* and *Impact Evaluation Reports*, both of which are publicly available after they have been distributed to the Board.

OED also prepares *Country Assistance Evaluations* (CAEs) which analyze the effectiveness of Bank operations in a country. CAEs are disclosed after they have been discussed by the Board. Lastly, *sector and thematic evaluations* are completed by OED. If the Board does not object, these evaluations are also disclosed along with *Management's response* to the evaluation and the *Chairman's Concluding Remarks* on the discussion of the Board concerning the evaluation.

- **QAG Synthesis Reports:** In 1996, the Bank launched the Quality Assurance Group (QAG) which was charged with providing timely assessments of the performance of the Bank (staff and management) in major operations. QAG Synthesis Reports may cover such topics as Quality at Entry Assessments, Quality of Economic and Sector Work, and Quality of Supervision.

QAG Synthesis Reports are disclosed after the Board has been notified or, in the case of annual reports, after they have been discussed by the Executive Directors. ■