

Sharing Knowledge

Innovations and Remaining Challenges

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Director-General, Operations Evaluation: Gregory K. Ingram
 Director, Operations Evaluation Department (Acting): Nils Fostvedt
 Manager, Corporate Evaluation and Methods: Victoria Elliott
 Task Manager; Catherine Gwin

Foreword

The World Bank's commitment in 1996 to become a global knowledge bank proposed broad-ranging internal and external changes aimed at expanding the sharing of knowledge among staff, clients, and partners. While the transfer of knowledge and information had always been a dimension of the Bank's role, the knowledge initiative sought to broaden the scope and raise the profile of this function. The purpose was to improve the quality of Bank operations and enhance the capacity of client countries to achieve development goals. Over the period FY97-02, the Bank has spent some \$220 million on corporate, network, and Regional knowledge sharing activities, and over \$60 million on its three main global knowledge initiatives.

Key Findings

Overall, this review finds that the Bank has made good progress in establishing the tools and activities to support its initiative, but it has not established adequate business processes and management responsibilities for achieving the strategic intent of making knowledge sharing a way of doing business and empowering clients. In the six years of the initiative, the Bank has substantially upgraded its information management system, initiated a wide variety of new activities for the aggregation and sharing of knowledge, and fostered a more open, knowledge-sharing culture within its staff. These steps, taken together, have provided staff, clients, and partners faster and easier access to Bank and other development knowledge.

Improved access does not, however, guarantee that the shared knowledge will be adopted, adapted, and applied. For that to happen, knowledge sharing has to be embedded in work processes. And, so far, the Bank's new activities have not been well integrated into core lending and nonlending processes.

Two management shortfalls account in large part for this evaluation finding of weak integration of knowledge sharing with other core business processes. First, although high-level leadership has stimulated innovations in Bank knowledge services, management has not adequately defined the roles and responsibilities of corporate, network, and Regional units for making knowledge sharing a way of doing business. Nor, according to staff, has it established adequate incentives for incorporating knowledge sharing into operational processes. Second, in contrast to good practice in other organizations and other processes of the Bank, there is no systematic monitoring and evaluation of knowledge sharing programs and activities.

Recommendations

To more fully realize the knowledge initiative's potential to contribute to the scaling up of effective Bank interventions and enhance the capacity of clients to achieve development goals, this review recommends that the Bank take three sets of actions:

1. Management should exercise more strategic direction and oversight over the Bank's knowledge processes. For this, management should: define clear responsibilities and accountabilities of corporate, network, and Regional units for integrating knowledge sharing into the Bank's core

business processes; ensure that incentives are aligned with responsibilities, especially at the task manager level; and establish a strategic approach to the Bank's role in existing and any new global knowledge initiatives.

2. Network and Regional units should tightly link their knowledge-sharing activities to lending and nonlending processes. For example, networks should set clear objectives for anchor, thematic group, and advisory services direct support of operational teams; and Regional and country units should make explicit the knowledge objectives and strategies of Country Assistance Strategies and projects.
3. Vice-presidential units should set monitorable outcome objectives and supporting performance indicators for their respective knowledge-sharing programs and activities, and they should agree, Bankwide, on procedures to be established for monitoring and evaluating Bank knowledge-sharing programs and activities.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAA	Analytical and advisory services
AFR	Africa Region
APQC	American Productivity and Quality Center
AROE	Annual Report of Operations Evaluation
AUDI	Arab Urban Development Institute
CAE	Country Assistance Evaluation
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
DEC	Development Economics
DLC	Distance Learning Center
EAP	East Asia & Pacific Region
ECA	Europe & Central Asia Region
ENV	Environment Department
ESSD	Environmentally & Socially Sustainable Development Network
ESW	Economic and sector work
FKIS	Financial Sector Knowledge Information Service
FPSI	Financial and Private Sector Investment Network
GDLN	Global Development Learning Network
GDN	Global Development Network
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDA	International Development Association
ISG	Information Solutions Group
IT	Information technology
LCR	Latin America & the Caribbean Region
LICUS	Low-Income Countries Under Stress
LIL	Learning and Innovation Loan
MAC	Marco de Aprendizaje Continuo
MNA	Middle East & North Africa Regional Office
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCS	Operational Core Services
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
OPE	Overall Performance Evaluation
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PREM	Poverty Reduction & Economic Management Network
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QAE	Quality at entry
QAG	Quality Assurance Group
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
SAR	South Asia Region
TRS	Time Recording System
WBI	World Bank Institute

Executive Summary

In 1996, the World Bank made a commitment to become a global knowledge bank. The Bank's stated intention was to develop a world-class knowledge management system and to improve and expand the sharing of development knowledge with clients and partners. The objectives of this commitment were to improve the quality of Bank operations and enhance the capacity of clients to achieve development results.

Since FY97, the Bank has spent some US\$220 million for corporate, network, and Regional knowledge-sharing activities and more than US\$60 million for its three main global knowledge initiatives, the Development Gateway, the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), and the Global Development Network (GDN). These programs and activities have sparked a lot of innovation, with potentially significant benefits for the scaling up of effective Bank interventions and for empowering clients to improve development outcomes. But new knowledge-sharing programs and activities need to be much better integrated into the Bank's core business processes to achieve the initiative's broad objectives. For this, senior management must provide greater strategic direction and oversight to corporate, network, and Regional units.

Evaluation Scope

The knowledge initiative aims to expand knowledge sharing as a way of doing business—not a separate line of business. It also proposes, appropriately, a comprehensive strategy to bring about both internal and external changes. This evaluation examines the relevance of that strategy and the institutional infrastructure put in place to implement it. It also reviews the effectiveness of the strategy's three main areas of innovation:

- Network and Regional **internal** knowledge-sharing activities among Bank staff
- Regional and country **external** knowledge sharing with clients
- The three Bank-supported **global knowledge initiatives** that have the broadest knowledge-sharing scope (The Development Gateway, The Global Development Learning Network, and the Global Development Network).

Summary Findings

The Bank's commitment to a comprehensive knowledge initiative was timely and appropriate

The transfer of knowledge and information has always been a dimension of the Bank's role. And clients, partners, and the international community at large have long seen the Bank as a main source of high-quality development analysis and expertise. The 1996 knowledge initiative raises the profile of this aspect of the Bank's role, in order to foster the changes inside and outside the Bank needed to leverage knowledge for development more effectively.

The initiative, which was responsive in 1996 to rapid changes in information technology, has become increasingly relevant in the intervening years to changes in international development practices and the Bank's own agenda. Both those changes have put increased emphasis on ownership, partnership, and results—all processes heavily dependent on sharing knowledge.

Bank knowledge has become faster and easier to access

The Bank has made good progress since 1996 in providing staff, clients, and partners with faster access to Bank knowledge and expertise. This improvement has been the result of actions in five areas: (1) substantial upgrades in the Bank's information management system and global connectivity; (2) more systematic collection of Bank information and lessons of experience, and their active dissemination to staff, clients, and partners; (3) greater interaction among staff across the institution and with clients, around shared work areas; (4) innovations in collaborative analytical work and peer-to-peer exchanges across client countries; and (5) leveraging of technology for global knowledge sharing. Both staff and clients report that they value the improved accessibility and timeliness of Bank knowledge and information. This view emerges clearly from a succession of Bank staff surveys undertaken since 1997 and a five-country client survey conducted for this review.

But weak links to operations limit the effectiveness of the new knowledge-sharing activities

So far, the Bank's new activities consist primarily of knowledge aggregation and sharing—processes that by themselves do not guarantee that the shared knowledge will be adopted, adapted, and applied. For that to happen, knowledge sharing has to be embedded in work processes. But, for the most part, the new activities have not been tightly linked to the Bank's core lending and nonlending tasks. As a result, staff and clients do not view the new knowledge-sharing programs and activities as sufficiently relevant to their operational work.

The main **internal** innovations for improved knowledge sharing—thematic groups, advisory services, and expanded Web site use—are not well integrated with operational activities.

- The 80 thematic groups are useful for networking, learning about cutting-edge studies and experiences, and finding experts on particular operational matters, but they do not provide enough direct support to task teams.
- The Bank's 24 advisory services aim to enhance Bank operations, but more than half of the requests serviced come from outside the Bank, and more than half seek help in finding publications or statistics readily available elsewhere. Far less of the advice provided focuses on supporting operational work than was originally envisioned.
- While the Bank's Web sites have become a much-used resource, current usage suggests that the Bank needs to do more to tailor its Web-based content to its multiple audiences. Internally, staff find that the Intranet has not provided enough detailed information relevant to core work processes and practices, and

internationally, people in client countries still account for only some 10-20 percent of the total use of the public site.

There are strong examples of **external** knowledge-sharing innovations in Bank lending and nonlending activities. But, on the whole, knowledge sharing is not being well integrated into country programs and projects. Few country programs contain explicit knowledge objectives and strategies as summarized in recent country assistance strategies (CASs), and most of those programs are in countries where Bank lending is limited by country performance or need. For most countries where lending dominates the Bank's program, knowledge sharing is not yet being treated as a strategic activity. Moreover, only one-third of operational staff interviewed for this evaluation think that the initiative has changed the way projects are designed and supervised; slightly less than one-third think that the initiative has increased support for knowledge capacity building in operations.

Progress in launching the three **global knowledge initiatives** reviewed—the Development Gateway, GDLN, and GDN—has been rapid, and the Bank's leadership has mobilized the participation of partners. It is too soon to see evidence of the contributions of these programs to actual development results. But so far the programs have not met four major challenges that must be surmounted to ensure their success: (1) ensuring their continuing utility in a rapidly changing technological and development environment; (2) achieving financial sustainability; (3) consolidating governance and oversight arrangements; and (4) defining and managing the Bank's evolving role as each program matures. Also, the three programs are only beginning to be integrated into Bank country programs and projects as ways of leveraging Bank and other development knowledge in support of development objectives.

As a result of these weaknesses in reach, content management, and operational linkage, the new knowledge-sharing activities and programs have had limited impact on Bank client countries. Improvements in client access to Bank knowledge can be ascribed primarily to increased use of the Internet and e-mail. Clients also view staff as less arrogant and more open to collaboration and knowledge sharing. Still, dissemination of the Bank's knowledge remains inadequate at the country level, beyond central government personnel and a narrow circle of other individuals. More use of local expertise is needed to align the Bank's knowledge with country conditions. Knowledge capacity building and capacity utilization are, therefore, key to the successful leveraging of knowledge for development. But clients find the Bank more effective in supporting individual training than in helping to build sustainable institutional capacity for acquiring and using knowledge.

Inadequate oversight and incentives are major impediments

High-level leadership in the Bank has stimulated implementation of the knowledge initiative. But there have been three main shortcomings in the institutional infrastructure put in place to support programs and activities. First, management has not adequately defined the roles and responsibilities of corporate, network, and Regional units for making knowledge sharing a way of doing business and embedding it in core lending and nonlending processes. Second, in sharp contrast to

practices of industry leaders, knowledge sharing is largely unmonitored within the Bank, and self- and independent evaluation of knowledge-sharing activities is much less systematic than for other Bank processes. Third, despite the introduction of knowledge sharing in the Bank's mission statement and in staff performance evaluations, staff continue to feel that they lack the incentives needed to make knowledge sharing a routine part of their work.

Conclusions

Overall, the Bank has made more progress in establishing the architecture to support its knowledge initiative than in creating the governance arrangements and work processes for carrying it out. As a result, the strategic intent of making knowledge sharing a way of doing business has been only partly realized—a process that in other leading knowledge management organizations has tended to take from three to five years. The Bank, now entering the seventh year of the knowledge initiative, needs to move deliberately to embed knowledge sharing in its core operational processes by providing more direct support to task teams and more knowledge capacity enhancement for clients, and it needs to manage its knowledge services for results.

Recommendations

To realize more fully the knowledge initiative's potential to enhance Bank operations and empower clients to meet their development goals, three sets of actions are needed:

1. Management should exercise more strategic direction and oversight over the Bank's knowledge processes. To accomplish this, management should: define clear responsibilities and accountabilities of corporate, network, and Regional units for integrating knowledge sharing into the Bank's core business processes; ensure that incentives are aligned with responsibilities, especially at the task-manager level; and establish a strategic approach to the Bank's role in existing and any new global knowledge initiatives.
2. Network and Regional units should tightly link their knowledge-sharing activities to lending and nonlending processes. To achieve this, networks should set clear objectives for anchor, thematic group, and advisory service support of operational teams; and Regional and country units should make explicit the knowledge objectives and strategies of Country Assistance Strategies (CASs) and projects.
3. 3. Vice-presidential units should set outcome objectives and supporting performance indicators for their respective knowledge-sharing programs and activities, and they should agree, Bankwide, on procedures to be established for monitoring and evaluating Bank knowledge-sharing programs and activities.

1. Introduction

In 1996, the Bank made a commitment to expand the sharing of development knowledge among staff and with clients and other development partners. The purpose was twofold: to improve the quality of Bank operations and to enhance the capacity of developing countries to meet development goals. This review assesses the relevance of this knowledge initiative as well as the effectiveness of new knowledge-sharing activities and global knowledge programs undertaken to implement it. The review also examines the institutional infrastructure that has been built over the past six years to support the initiative.

Knowledge Initiative Launch

In his Annual Meetings address of October 1996, Bank President James Wolfensohn emphasized that development knowledge is a global public good that belongs to everyone—and from which everyone should therefore benefit. He also highlighted the potential of new information technology to dramatically increase the reach of development knowledge, and he noted that realizing this potential would require a “partnership for creating and sharing knowledge, and making it a major driver of development.” Citing the World Bank’s unique breadth of development experience, Mr. Wolfensohn proposed that the Bank commit to investing in the necessary systems, in Washington and worldwide, to enhance its ability to gather development information and experience and share it with clients—“to become, in effect, the Knowledge Bank” (Wolfensohn 1996).

The Bank moved quickly over the next several years to implement this knowledge initiative.¹ The initiative was included as one of four pillars in the Bank’s 1997 Strategic Compact for operational renewal and reform (. Knowledge management and sharing became an integral part of the newly created thematic Networks, the Overall Performance Evaluation (OPE) for staff, and the Bank’s first formal mission statement. By the beginning of 1999, the Bank had also taken steps to upgrade its information management system, introduce a variety of new Network and Regional knowledge-sharing tools and activities, and design several global knowledge partnerships.

As a result, the Bank is now recognized as a leading knowledge management institution.² Its knowledge initiative also provides a model for expanded knowledge-sharing activities in other international development agencies (King and McGrath 2002). Monitoring and evaluation processes have not kept pace with leading industry

¹ See Annex A for a detailed chronology of the implementation of the knowledge bank initiative from 1996 through 2002.

² For three consecutive years beginning in 2000, the Bank was recognized as one of the top 20 “Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises,” all but one of the other 19 being private sector corporations. Awards are made by an international panel of corporate executives and knowledge management experts, based on an enterprise’s knowledge culture, knowledge leaders, knowledge-based products and solutions, intellectual capital, collaborative knowledge sharing, organizational learning, focus on customer knowledge, and transformation of knowledge into shareholder value.

practices. Increasingly, knowledge management leaders are instituting metrics for measuring the value added of their knowledge-sharing programs. Despite calls for the Bank to do the same, it has not yet come up with a relevant framework and measures for assessing performance and ensuring accountability of knowledge-sharing programs and activities.³

The purpose of this evaluation is to begin to address this deficit by reviewing the Bank's knowledge initiative and recommending ways to strengthen its programs and assess their effectiveness on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation Design

Scope. Initially, the objective of the Bank's knowledge initiative was described as building a world-class “knowledge management” system that would enable greater knowledge sharing among staff and with clients and partners. Soon after its launch, the terminology changed: “knowledge sharing” replaced “knowledge management” as the phrase used in the Bank to refer to the initiative's strategy and programs. Knowledge sharing is, therefore, the term used in this review, except when referring specifically to the enabling information management systems and budget expenditures, which are coded as knowledge management.⁴ Bank documents identify “knowledge sharing” as one element in a cycle of knowledge creation, sharing, and use. They also describe the knowledge-sharing process as:

The systematic *capture* of knowledge from research and experience;
organization *and storage* of knowledge and information for easy access;
and *transfer/dissemination* of knowledge, often as a two-way exchange.

Early Bank documents emphasized that the knowledge initiative was not a new line of business for the institution, but instead an improved way of doing business, designed to help countries and the wider international development community leverage knowledge in support of development results. Implementation has therefore involved all Bank units—corporate, network, and Regional. This review, as the first evaluation of the implementation process, focuses on the programs and activities introduced by the sector/thematic Networks (which have primary responsibility for development knowledge sharing among staff) and the Regions (which have primary responsibility for the Bank's external knowledge sharing with clients). The review also examines the three global knowledge programs initiated by the Bank with the

³ This was one of 10 main recommendations of an external advisory panel enlisted by the Bank to review progress on implementing the knowledge initiative. Prusak (2001) identified the need for “meaningful metrics to evaluate progress, keep knowledge activities focused on the bottom line, and enable the development of criteria to guide future investments.” Also, since 2001, the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) Annual Reports on Operations Evaluation have highlighted the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation in this area. See, for example, OED 2003b.

⁴ The shift in terminology coincided with the move of the Bankwide knowledge-sharing coordinating unit out of the Information Solutions Group (ISG) to the former Operational Core Services (OCS), both changes reflecting a broadening of emphasis from information technology tools to direct interactions among practitioners as a central feature in the implementation of the knowledge initiative.

broadest program scope—the Development Gateway, the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), and the Global Development Network (GDN).⁵

Framework. In the absence of a framework and metrics for assessing the Bank’s knowledge-sharing programs and activities, OED proposed an evaluation framework and discussed its features with management. To inform the design of the framework, OED consulted a number of experts in the field and commissioned a review of the knowledge management literature.⁶ The literature indicates that successful knowledge-sharing programs require:

- A well-articulated *knowledge strategy* that is tightly aligned with an organization’s business strategy and clients’ needs.
- *Programs and activities* that are linked to core business processes and practices and driven by expressed knowledge needs of staff and clients—whether for tacit knowledge that resides in the mind or for codified knowledge documented on paper. Such programs and activities must be recognized sources of accessible, cutting-edge, operationally relevant knowledge that reaches intended clients and audiences.
- Supporting *institutional infrastructure* based on an integrated approach in three essential areas: technology, people, and processes.⁷

The evaluation framework created for this review uses these characteristics of strategic alignment, quality of shared knowledge, accessibility, and operational usefulness to measure the Bank’s knowledge initiative against the standard OED evaluation criteria of relevance, efficacy, and efficiency. In doing so, the evaluation framework poses three sets of questions:

- *Relevance of the Bank’s knowledge-sharing strategy:* Is the knowledge-sharing strategy aligned with client needs and the Bank’s poverty reduction mission? Does the Bank have a comparative advantage in advancing the knowledge-sharing objective?
- *Efficacy and efficiency of the Bank’s programs and activities:* Are activities designed to achieve the strategic objective? Do they have clearly defined outcome objectives aligned with the Bank’s core business priorities? Do they make quality knowledge more accessible to intended clients in ways that are useful for improving development results? Do they, or are they likely to, achieve their intended outcomes? To what extent have they, or are they likely to, capture and share knowledge in cost-effective ways?

⁵ See Annex B for an inventory of the Bank’s main knowledge-sharing activities, with an indication of the network, Regional, and global programs and activities that are the specific focus of this review.

⁶ Cummings 2002, a background paper to this study, available on request. Additional advice was provided by Gabriele McLaughlin, Director, National Knowledge Practice, Xerox Connect, Inc; and advice sought from Dorothy Leonard, Harvard Business School, a leading scholar on the application of knowledge in public and private enterprise.

⁷ A fuller discussion of these lessons drawn from the literature is presented in Annex C.

- *Adequacy of the Bank's supporting institutional infrastructure:* Has the Bank put in place the governance processes, skills, and incentives as well as the technological capacity needed to implement the knowledge initiative successfully? And has it done so using the least resources necessary?⁸

Approaches. In making its assessment, the review uses several approaches:

- Review of the literature on knowledge management and transfer
- Desk reviews of relevant Bank policy and strategy documents and program reports
- Surveys of 15 network advisory services and 28 thematic group leaders
- Structured interviews of 25 task team members to obtain information on the actual use of various knowledge-sharing activities in improving the design and implementation of Bank-supported programs, and the extent of knowledge capacity building as an explicit project objective
- More than 30 additional interviews with Bank management and staff
- Expert reviews of the degree of innovation, quality, and relevance of the Bank's knowledge and knowledge-sharing efforts in four issue areas—education, power, water, and public expenditure management
- Reviews of the GDLN and the Development Gateway
- Most important, a survey of the views of officials, academics, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), journalists, and representatives from the private sector in five client countries on which Bank knowledge services have proved most useful in their development efforts.⁹

The relatively heavy reliance on surveys and interviews reflects a current weakness in all of the Bank's knowledge-sharing programs and activities—the dearth of monitoring and reporting of inputs and outputs, and self-assessment of outcomes against intended measurable objectives. Indeed, a main finding of this report, as discussed in Chapter 5, is the low evaluability of the overall initiative and its component programs. This necessarily limits the ability of this review to make judgments about the accomplishments of the knowledge initiative. It also leads to the report's recommendation that strengthening monitoring and evaluation should be a priority.

⁸ See Annex D for a more detailed outline of the indicators used in this assessment.

⁹ Annex E provides a more detailed description of the evaluation methodology.

2. A Highly Relevant Strategy

The Bank's knowledge strategy is innovative, broad ranging, and responsive to challenges facing client countries, the wider development community, and the Bank itself. It builds on one of the Bank's widely regarded areas of comparative advantage—its global knowledge of development issues and experiences. And the strategy is much welcomed in client countries.

But shortcomings in the strategy's design pose challenges, to achieving the goals of improving operational quality and empowering clients to acquire and use knowledge more effectively. In particular, the strategy does not adequately link knowledge-sharing programs and activities to core lending and nonlending processes. Nor does it encourage the Bank to adapt its knowledge services continually as technology and the development environment change.

Discerning the Bank's Knowledge Strategy

Since the launch of the knowledge initiative the Bank has produced no overarching document outlining how the initiative's objectives will be achieved. There has, however, been a succession of strategic documents and progress reports. This review considers these documents as providing an informal statement of the Bank's knowledge-sharing strategy.¹⁰

The initial strategic statement, incorporated in the 1997 Strategic Compact, called for "retooling the Bank's knowledge base." The main elements of the plan were to:

- Develop an institutionwide "world-class knowledge management system" to collect, synthesize, and disseminate knowledge and make it more readily accessible to staff, clients, and partners.
- Establish thematic networks that would build help desks and knowledge databases.
- Expand the client capacity-building work of Economic Development Institute (now the World Bank Institute, WBI).
- Change the culture of the institution to encourage a more open, team-based learning environment.

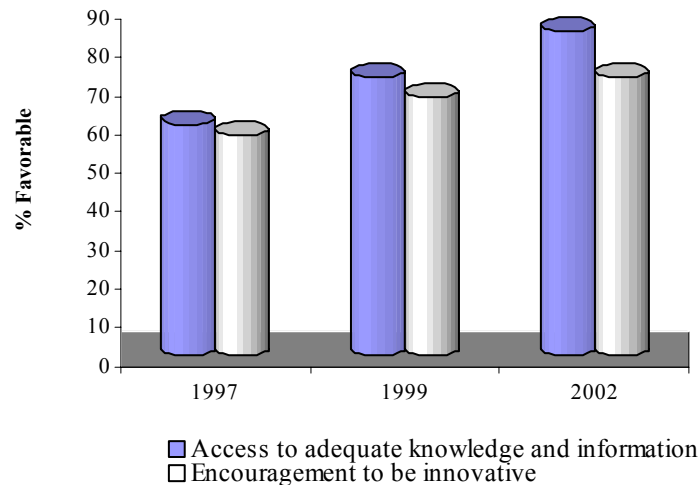
As outlined in the Strategic Compact, implementation of the initiative was to be phased, with a preliminary focus on improving the effectiveness of staff and the eventual goal of meeting the needs of both internal and external users of Bank knowledge. The intended knowledge-sharing improvements were expected to produce four outcomes to support better-quality Bank operations and improved on-the-ground development results, including:

¹⁰ Key documents are World Bank 2002/2001/2000; 2001b; 1997.

- Faster access to relevant development knowledge and information by staff, clients, and partners
- Greater diffusion of best practice from Bank-supported and other operations
- Expanded reach of Bank knowledge services to multiple stakeholders
- Enhanced client capacity for knowledge use.

Subsequent strategic documents have gradually shifted the focus from building the Bank's internal knowledge capture and dissemination capacities to expanding knowledge sharing with clients and other development partners. And, since 2000, the focus has included building client capacity to acquire and use knowledge effectively. In October 2001, these three goals were pulled together in a presentation that responded to a Board request for the Bank to clarify the Knowledge Bank strategy in an effort to serve client and operational needs better.

Figure 2.1. Increasingly Favorable Staff Views on Access to Knowledge



Source: Bank staff surveys, 1997, 1999, 2002.

The Strategy's Strengths

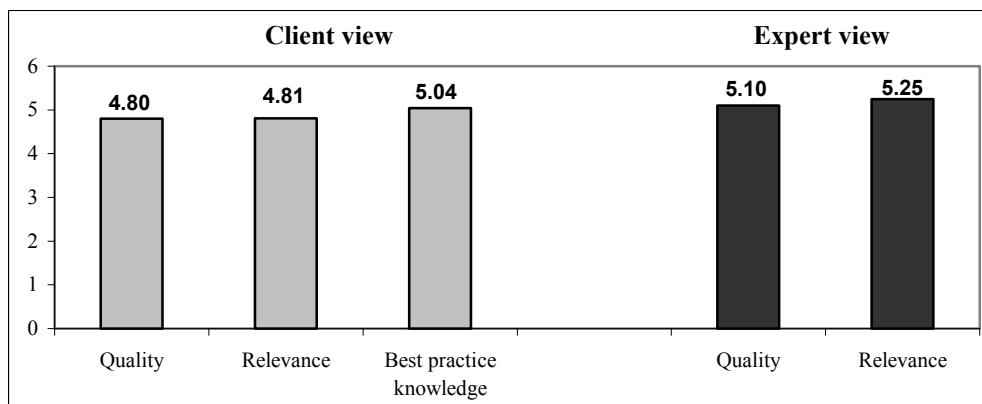
The knowledge strategy responds to challenges facing developing countries, the international development community, and the Bank.¹¹ It aims to reduce developing countries' risk of falling behind in the information technology revolution and to use that revolution to accelerate development outcomes. It supports development changes that put increased emphasis on ownership, partnership, and results—all processes that place a high premium on the exchange of ideas and information. The strategy also reinforces the Bank's own commitment to do a better

¹¹ Those challenges are the focus of the 1998/99 *World Development Report* on knowledge for development (World Bank 1998a). In its concluding Part Three, on policy priorities, there is a discussion of what international institutions and developing country governments can do to "close knowledge gaps and overcome information problems" inhibiting the achievement of countries' development goals.

job of learning from experience in order to improve operational quality. And it responds directly to staff comments that they could not readily access the knowledge required to do their work. (See figure 2.1, which reports on views from a series of staff surveys that begins in 1997.)

The knowledge strategy also builds on the Bank's widely acknowledged comparative advantage as a source of development knowledge. A broad range of stakeholders in client countries, both inside and outside government, holds this view; and they identify leveraging knowledge for development as an important dimension of Bank assistance. Development experts who conducted reviews for this report share the view that the technical quality of Bank knowledge is high. (figure 2.2.)

Figure 2.2. Clients and Experts Give Bank Knowledge High Ratings on Quality and Relevance



Source: Thirty Bank Client Feedback Surveys (FY99–02); OED Five-Country Client Survey; OED Expert Sector Knowledge Reviews.

But both clients and experts distinguish between the unquestioned technical soundness of the Bank's shared knowledge and its more limited qualities of objectivity and applicability to country circumstances. (See Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of these issues.)

Overall, the Bank's knowledge strategy is an innovative and appropriately broad expansion of existing Bank knowledge services. Although the transfer of knowledge has always been a key component of the Bank's service to its clients, the strategy raises the knowledge-sharing profile of the Bank's overall role. It therefore envisions both internal changes—for collecting knowledge and connecting staff—and external changes—entailing innovations in the knowledge dimensions of Bank operations and the initiation of global knowledge partnership programs. The strategy also highlights the need for change in the Bank's culture as well as its technology infrastructure.

Since being introduced, the initiative has received continued high-level attention. President Wolfensohn has repeatedly emphasized the importance of knowledge for development and encouraged rapid progress in the implementation of new programs and activities. Knowledge sharing and capacity building have been addressed in each Strategic Forum since 2000. And expenditures of Bank budget and

trust fund resources for programs and activities—coded as “knowledge management”—have totaled US\$220 million from FY97 through FY02.¹² In addition, the Bank has expended some US\$63 million for the three global knowledge initiatives covered in this review. Taken together, the three characteristics—responsiveness to development challenges, grounding in Bank comparative advantage, and level of innovation and appropriate scope—make the knowledge-sharing strategy highly relevant.

The Strategy’s Design Shortcomings

Despite these positive features, the strategy has two major design shortcomings that present challenges to achieving its goals. First, the strategy has not provided an adequate plan for accomplishing the quick transition it envisions from building and championing new knowledge-sharing tools to mainstreaming knowledge sharing as a way of doing business. The experience of other organizations suggests that successful knowledge-sharing programs are built over three to five years, and proceed in stages, from initial advocacy to eventual institutionalization. A successful transformation requires a plan for building new knowledge-sharing tools and activities, creating awareness of their value for key business objectives and integrating the knowledge processes into core business practices. Although a 1999 progress report on the Bank's knowledge initiative recommended that the Bank develop such a plan, the recommendation was not carried out (Prusak 1999). While the Bank has introduced new knowledge-sharing tools and activities, it has not set out objectives for integrating knowledge sharing into core business processes. Moreover, though the Bank began to give increased attention to external knowledge-sharing tasks by 2000, no specific, time-bound objectives have been set for this second phase of the initiative. Nor has the Bank spelled out the external knowledge-sharing roles of the Regions, networks, and the WBI.

The second shortcoming is the lack of a mechanism to benchmark effectiveness and make adjustments. Specifically, the knowledge strategy does not contain a way to check on progress against explicit, monitorable objectives and to alter course as needed. Nor does it contain a way to ensure continuing relevance in a rapidly changing technology environment—and in an increasingly crowded field of development knowledge.¹³ The underlying assumption seems to be that once knowledge-sharing tools and activities are established and staff become active users, knowledge sharing will be built into operations in more systematic ways that will enhance clients use of knowledge in achieving development goals. This assumption is built on an implicit chain of results (portrayed in table 2.1). But without measurable objectives associated with specific business processes, the contribution of individual programs and activities to intended results cannot be made explicit, and the activities' effectiveness assessed.

¹² See Chapter 5 for more detail on these expenditures.

¹³ See Annex F for a description of a sample of players in the knowledge for development field.

Table 2.1. Stylized Results Chain for Knowledge Sharing

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes: Intermediate	Outcomes: Longer term	Impact
Transformation of World Bank into Knowledge Bank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People/culture change • Technology • Knowledge processes • Leadership and support • Relevant knowledge 	Capture, organization, and sharing of knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and synthesis • Storage and maintenance • Dissemination and ready access • Connectivity among peers 	Improvements in quality of Bank operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency through faster access • Greater diffusion of best practices • Expanded reach to multiple stakeholders 	Enhanced client capacity to acquire and use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded access to global knowledge and information • Cross-country connection to experts and peers 	Improved poverty results

3. Internal Knowledge Sharing to Improve Bank Operations

Since the 1996 launch of the knowledge-sharing initiative, new or improved tools and activities have been created to capture and share development knowledge. Staff now have easier access to knowledge relevant to their work. But there are still three challenges to improving the operational effectiveness of the Bank's internal knowledge-sharing activities: linking more directly to core operational work; capturing lessons learned and good practices more systematically; and strengthening content management to ensure the quality and operational relevance of distributed knowledge.

Expanding Network and Regional Knowledge Sharing among Staff

This chapter reviews the evolution of internal knowledge-sharing activities and assesses the contribution of three major new activities—thematic groups, advisory services, and expanded use of the Internet and Intranet—to operational effectiveness. In general, the Bank's internal knowledge-sharing activities aim to improve operational effectiveness by harnessing existing knowledge, disseminating it broadly, and supporting staff in incorporating lessons and good practices into the design and supervision of operations.

Under the Bank's matrix management structure, the task of improving the aggregation and sharing of development knowledge has fallen largely to the new network/sector boards, which have a knowledge management mandate as one of their five core functions. Working on the assumption that a great deal of knowledge existed, but in forms that made it difficult for task teams to access, the networks' initial efforts focused on gathering the Bank's existing formal, codified knowledge and disseminating it as new knowledge products or as Web site content in a mostly supply-driven way. This work generated sector and regional and country repositories of existing, codified knowledge and newly packaged knowledge (in formats such as toolkits, briefs, and newsletters). It also led to a major increase in online distribution of development knowledge and information.

It was quickly recognized, however, that the new knowledge repositories were not well suited to the exchange of the tacit knowledge about operational experiences that staff carried in their heads. Additional processes were created—such as network-led training events, thematic groups, and advisory services—to promote the exchange of expertise. By the end of 1999, these activities and expanded use of the Bank's Internet and Intranet were mainstreamed across networks as key knowledge-sharing vehicles.

The Regions also developed internal knowledge-sharing tools and activities—although in the absence of a mandate defining the Regions' internal knowledge-sharing responsibilities, their scope has varied. And since 2000, the Regions have increasingly focused on extending their knowledge-sharing activities to the transfer and brokering of knowledge with clients (as discussed in the next chapter).

As a result of the new internal knowledge-sharing efforts and the enabling information technology, staff access to Bank information has been considerably improved. This finding is illustrated in the increasingly "favorable" responses in successive Bank staff surveys. (See figure 2.1.)

But there are two aspects of the network and Regional efforts to improve internal knowledge sharing that limit their overall relevance and effectiveness. First, while Bank operations are increasingly multisectoral in approach, the bulk of knowledge capture and sharing is organized by network and sector. In interviews conducted for this review, staff noted that the "silo" structure of the internal knowledge-sharing function does not meet the needs of multisectoral operational work. Second, there is inadequate coordination between network knowledge-sharing activities and country and project teams. Few network internal knowledge-sharing activities are embedded directly in core work processes. More activities are focused on providing *access* to knowledge and expertise than on ensuring that knowledge is shared in ways that promote its *adaptation and use*—for example, by enhancing active team-based knowledge sharing. Also, activities have done more to *push out* knowledge than *pull it in*—thus missing out on opportunities to refresh the Bank's knowledge through ongoing field experience, reduce reinvention of the wheel, and scale up successful programs. As a result, internal knowledge-sharing activities are not sufficiently relevant to the day-to-day operational work of frontline staff. This finding is discussed below in respect to three key knowledge-sharing vehicles: thematic groups, advisory services, and expanded use of Bank internal and external Web sites.

Thematic Groups

The Bank's thematic groups (known outside the Bank as communities of practice) were established to enhance the transfer of tacit knowledge among staff working on shared problems (such as decentralization, early childhood education, or urban poverty) and to gather and disseminate relevant knowledge.¹⁴ Currently there are some 80 thematic groups, down from a peak of 125 in 1999. The peak number came in response to the 1998 introduction of designated budget resources for any group with a workable plan, and the decline followed the scaling back of resources at the end of the Strategic Compact.¹⁵

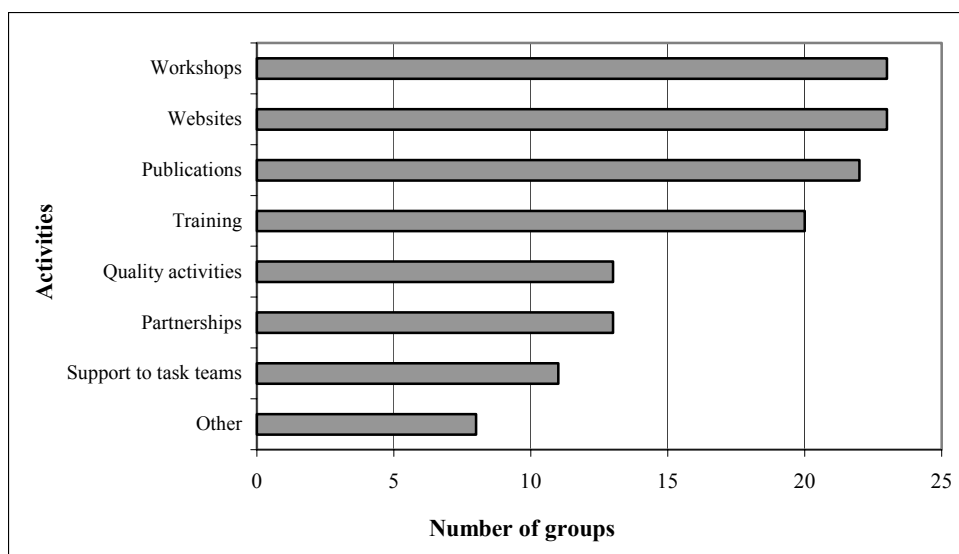
Groups carry out a common array of activities, although the funding they receive and the emphasis they put on the diverse activities vary. Figure 3.1 lists main activities as identified by thematic group coordinators surveyed by OED. Groups range in size

¹⁴ Experience shows that, to be effective, communities of practice need to foster a high level of interaction among members on an ongoing basis. Though they may form out of informal work groups that begin by simply exchanging ideas, those that endure tend to evolve toward more purposeful interactions and more rigorous expectations and accounting of outcomes. See Annex C for a further discussion of lessons from studies on communities of practice.

¹⁵ In FY02, total expenditures amounted to some US\$8 million, of which some US\$7 million was from Bank budget and close to US\$1 million from trust funds. (See figure Chapter 5 for a more detailed description of budget expenditures.)

from 25 to 200. Membership is voluntary and open to all staff, and some groups have a small number of external members. Group leadership is also voluntary; in most cases, limited time is allocated for coordinating group activities.¹⁶

Figure 3.1. Thematic Group Activities Provide More Indirect Than Direct Support to Operations



Source: OED thematic group survey.

In general, staff find thematic groups useful to their work. This finding comes from a variety of thematic group surveys conducted since 1999.¹⁷ Staff identify brown bag lunches and other face-to-face events as useful ways to network, learn about cutting-edge studies and experiences, and find out who has expertise on particular operational matters. Thematic group Web sites are also fairly well regarded as sources of readily accessible sector or thematic information, related Bank knowledge, and, in many cases, links to external knowledge and expertise. But staff report that thematic groups tend to be less effective in ensuring the quality of distributed knowledge, engaging nonheadquarters staff, and providing direct support to task teams.

¹⁶ Fifteen of 23 respondents indicated that they spend 1-5 staff weeks per year on thematic group coordination. Others who reported spending more time did not distinguish between thematic group coordination and anchor knowledge-sharing work (OED survey of thematic group coordinators, 2002).

¹⁷ While these surveys have response rates ranging from 12-60 percent and do not ask identical questions, some findings emerge with enough similarity and frequency to allow for certain broad observations to be made about the efficacy of activities, supplemented by more qualitative evidence from interviews with staff. Bank thematic group and broader network knowledge management surveys, including: Financial and Private Sector Investment Network, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network 1999, thematic group member survey, September 2000; Human Development Network Education Sector Survey March 2001; Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network KM Survey, January 2002; Governance and Public Sector Reform, thematic groups survey, 2002; OED thematic group survey.

Staff views on the value of thematic groups' published materials—papers, notes, and toolkits—are mixed. This appears to reflect, in part, shortcomings in quality control that affect all anchor knowledge products. For example, there are no routine practices for validating lessons learned and promising practices. Only a third of 15 recently surveyed network and Regional units report having lessons learned or good practice validation processes in place. And only one of these units reports having a process for regularly eliminating outdated lessons or good practice cases; four units report that their materials have no time limits.¹⁸ This undercuts the ability of Network knowledge activities, including those of thematic groups, to serve as reliable sources of community knowledge. A notable example of good validation practice is described in box 3.1.

Box 3.1: A Consultative Process for Validating Content

The Administrative and Civil Service Reform Thematic Group has developed a consultative method for assuring the quality of new materials for its Web site. Supported by a partnership among leading organizations in civil service strategy and management, the Web site aims to provide users with access to key principles and current research issues. Quality control for the site is the responsibility of the World Bank, in collaboration with designated staff in partner organizations. When new material is being considered for inclusion on the site, Bank staff ask other partners as well as thematic group members to comment on its quality and relevance. Staff with relevant expertise are asked to validate the material's quality. Strong objection from any partner prevents posting of the material.

Source: OED thematic group survey.

While the size of thematic group membership suggests substantial reach, the number of active participants—one of the key success factors of communities of practice—tells a different story. A little less than a third of thematic group members responding to a 1999 Bankwide survey described their participation as active, and the percentage remained roughly the same (30-35 percent) in subsequent years. Of those who are active, a still smaller number actually contribute to sharing community knowledge. Moreover, headquarters staff make up the bulk of active members.¹⁹ Thematic group coordinators consider this level of staff participation too low for the groups to serve as highly interactive communities that contribute significantly to solving work process problems or scaling up successes. As a result, the systematic capture and sharing of tacit knowledge remains the thematic groups' biggest challenge. As explained by one group coordinator:

We would like to make a more lively and engaged community that will actively contribute knowledge. We are doing okay with explicit knowledge, but need to do more with tacit knowledge, especially capturing it from all Regions and drawing on

¹⁸ These findings are from an OED survey conducted separately from this review. See OED 2003a.

¹⁹ Though some 11 of 28 thematic group leaders surveyed for this review report recent efforts to engage field staff more, these efforts are largely intermittent, involving workshops held in field offices, videoconferences, and thematic group meetings during learning weeks (OED thematic group survey).

the rich experience of the field. This is not being done systematically right now. Either there is a very formal but isolated instance of a product, for example, a PREM Note, or there is a very informal exchange over e-mail that is not recorded. [OED thematic group survey.]

External knowledge management studies show that while tacit knowledge accounts for about 80 percent of the knowledge sought by operational staff, it makes up only 10-20 percent of knowledge shared. For effective capture and sharing of tacit knowledge, organizations need to rely more on peer-to-peer exchanges, iterative knowledge sharing, and team learning than on knowledge briefs, one-shot conferences or videoconferences, and electronic discussion spaces. The challenge is to provide support for team-based, iterative, and face-to-face knowledge sharing. This support is needed on an ongoing basis in all stages of an operation, including design and implementation, and in the capture as well as the transfer of operational experience (APQC 2000b).

Even though staff value the networking and professional development opportunities provided by membership in thematic groups, most do not see the groups as sufficiently relevant to day-to-day operational work (OED survey of thematic group coordinators, 2001). Typically, groups provide more indirect than direct support to task teams (as indicated in figure 3.1), although when teams are directly supported—through such activities as on-demand peer reviews of projects, support for project workshops, or help in locating expertise—the practice receives strong staff support (see box 3.2).

Box 3.2. Task Teams Welcome Direct Support of Project Implementation by Thematic Groups

The Community-Based Rural Development Thematic Group, which aims to ensure that best practices inform ongoing operations, holds field-based workshops for task teams and clients working on community-based rural development projects. With input from strong practitioners (identified by the Quality Assurance Group as having outstanding performance), thematic group members help workshop participants address operational issues. Client feedback indicates that lessons learned in workshops help to expedite ongoing project implementation. Task teams underwrite workshop costs out of their own project funds.

Source: OED interviews.

Thus, the most frequent recommendation made by staff is that thematic groups should increase the operational relevance of their activities:

- A 2000 thematic group self-assessment highlighted that groups provided only limited operational support.
- Staff feedback from a 2001 Human Development Network survey emphasized that groups should strive to meet the real-time demands of task managers and make stronger linkages between knowledge management and lending operations.

- More than half of the respondents to a 2002 survey by the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) Network indicated that thematic groups didn't meet, or only partly met, staff operational needs.

Increased networking among staff facilitated by thematic groups has been enabled by the Bank's enhanced communications technology—especially the Web-based and e-mail connections discussed below. But other institutional supports needed for effective thematic group activities are limited. In particular, the support, management direction, and monitoring of many thematic groups fall short of leading practice. Over the last three to five years, leading industry practice has moved from simply enabling communities of practice to exchange ideas to more purposeful interactions that include regular accounting of activities and outcomes. The Bank has not made this shift.

After an initial phase in which the Bank “let a thousand flowers bloom,” the end of the Strategic Compact budget “hit knowledge management in general and thematic groups in particular like a ton of bricks” in the words of one interviewee. The resulting consolidation of thematic groups in 2002 and 2003 was probably inevitable and not in itself a problem. But the resulting configuration of groups appears to reflect diverse enabling environments, and not a deliberate matching of thematic groups to the Bank's evolving business strategy. For example, each of the three departments in the Environmentally & Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) Network has taken a different approach to the role of thematic groups. The Environment Department (ENV), an important area for the Bank, has decided not to support thematic groups and, instead, to carry out knowledge-sharing activities through seven anchor thematic teams. The Agriculture and Rural Development Department, after a significant drop in 2001-02 in thematic group participation and budget, has committed to a reinvigoration of groups in 2003; and the Social Development Department has differentiated between four formal groups managed by anchor staff and five informal groups that receive less support. While both formal and informal communities of practice also exist within other organizations—with clear differences in objectives, modes of operation, and extent of management support—, there is no comparable strategic clarity about the purpose, functions, and level of support of thematic groups across the Bank. On the one hand, it is assumed that thematic groups will contribute significantly to improving the quality and effectiveness of Bank operation. On the other hand, they are not necessarily held accountable for achieving specific business goals or provided with corresponding resources and incentives.

Budgeting, programming, and reporting vary considerably across groups, and there has been no attempt to agree on performance standards (see box 3.3). The public sector thematic groups are among the few that use funding guidelines and a transparent mechanism to establish strategic focus and accountability. On the whole, thematic groups have not been expected to pursue explicit outcome objectives, monitor outputs against those objectives, and assess and report on results. In addition, staff point to a lack of management support, in terms of time and incentives, as a

major constraint to thematic group participation.²⁰ There is, in other words, a significant mismatch between perceived roles of thematic groups and actual management support and performance requirements. A representative view of thematic group coordinators is that: "Thematic groups either need to be drastically re-thought or re-sourced—Or else the Bank needs to drop the pretense that they are doing more than they are doing now"(OED thematic group survey). Inadequate management support and oversight, a shortcoming that cuts across not just thematic groups but the entire knowledge initiative, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Box 3.3. There Is No Shared Practice for Budgeting, Programming, and Reporting of Thematic Group Actions

Among the 28 thematic groups surveyed by OED:

- There is a clear association between a thematic group's sector and whether it receives budget resources, but there is no clear link between the type of activities undertaken and the provision of budget resources.
- While half of the thematic groups receive direct allocations of budget resources and prepare work programs, only three-quarters of those funded prepare formal work programs detailing deliverables and expenditures for which they can be held accountable.
- For the most part, reporting is limited to inputs and outputs. Only 2 of the 28 groups reported specific indicators of progress toward stated outcome objectives.

Source: OED thematic group survey.

Advisory Services

The Bank's advisory services (sometimes called help desks) are low-cost mechanisms designed to serve as one-stop shops for access to Bank information and expertise. By the end of 2002, there were 24 advisory services: 3 Regional services and the rest at the corporate, network, or sector level.

All advisory services operate on a small scale. Out of 15 services surveyed for this review, the 12 that reported the size of their staff had an average of 1.5 full-time-equivalent staff (and some had additional short-term consultant or intern time).²¹ The nine services that provided annual budget figures for FY02 reported budgets in a range of US\$20,000 to US\$173,000, for an average of US\$87,000 (taking out one outlier that operates on a distinctly different basis, as described in box 3.4).²²

²⁰ In response to the various thematic group surveys that have been conducted in the last few years, including the one conducted for this review, staff specifically cite three factors as constraints to their participation: (1) thematic group budget cuts of the last three years; (2) participation on their own time, not as part of their Time Recording System (TRS); and (3) lack of recognition of thematic group work in Overall Performance Evaluations.

²¹ Joint OED/WBI survey of 15 advisory services/help desks, March 2002, with 12 of 15 participating services responding to question on staff size.

²² Bankwide, the total expenditure for all advisory services in FY02 was US\$2.2 million, as indicated in the data presented in Chapter 5.

Most advisory services cite contributing to internal quality and efficiency gains as their primary objective and identify Bank network and Regional staff as their primary clients. A majority of advisory services also identify designated external groups as either primary or secondary clients.

While their main activity is to respond to queries, many services also produce and maintain knowledge databases and Web sites that provide frequently requested information. Some advisory services also produce proactive products and services, such as weekly topical e-mail updates. Most try to respond to all queries within 48 hours, an exception being the financial sector service (FKIS), which provides in-depth responses only to selected queries. And at least one advisory service—Rapid Response—provides both free and fee-based services related to private sector investment to a targeted external audience (see box 3.4). All services track incoming requests and virtually all have experienced increases in the number of requests received for at least an initial two-three years of operation. The increases suggest that the advisory services are helping to make Bank information more readily accessible.

Box 3.4: Free and Fee-Based Access to Knowledge Through Rapid Response

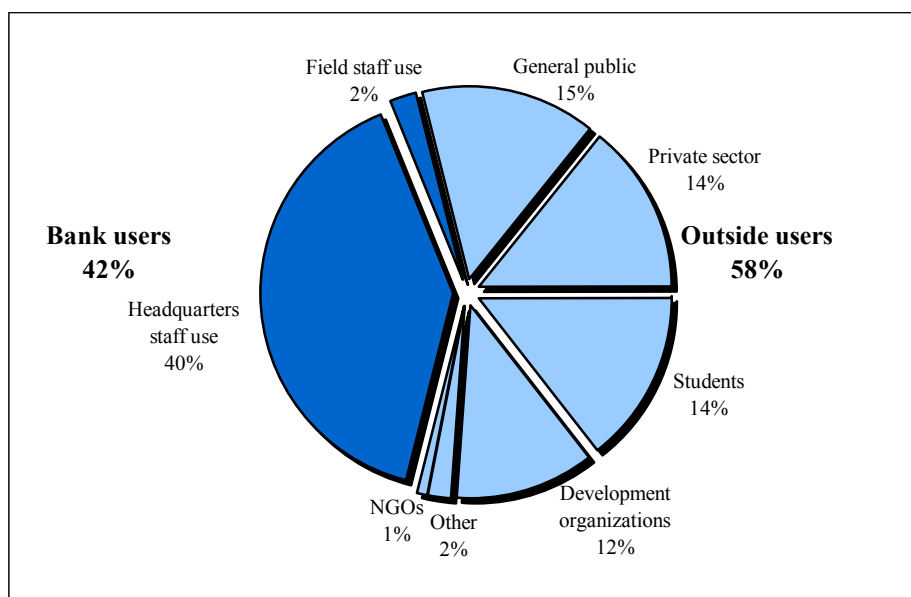
The goal of the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) is to improve public policy design and implementation on privatization and investment climate issues by providing clients with access to the Bank's knowledge resources and expert advice. For the general public, free services include access to a database of papers, case studies, and Web sites; a forum for discussing policy issues; and a monthly electronic newsletter. Fee-based services, in the form of small advisory transactions that require up to five days to complete, are offered to Bank member governments, NGOs, and multilateral institutions.

The nature and origin of requests indicate, however, that the advisory services play a different role from that intended—of more limited contribution to Bank operational effectiveness. Staff report that they find advisory services useful primarily in meeting requests for information on document references, available experts, and specific data—as opposed to requests for more synthesis or in-depth presentation of substantive knowledge supportive of operational work.²³ Furthermore, an external review of all advisory services requests and responses (29,000) in FY00-01 shows that over half (58 percent) of the requests came from outside the Bank (Fonseca 2003). Of those external users, 43 percent were from six developed countries. And a large majority (83 percent) of all those making requests were one-time users (though some services had distinctly higher rates of repeat users than others). In addition, just over half the queries sought help in finding publications and statistical data that are readily available elsewhere (see figures 3.2 and 3.3 for summary data on the origin and type of requests).

²³ OED task team survey and Project Appraisal Document review of a sample of projects; Bank surveys; OED thematic group survey.

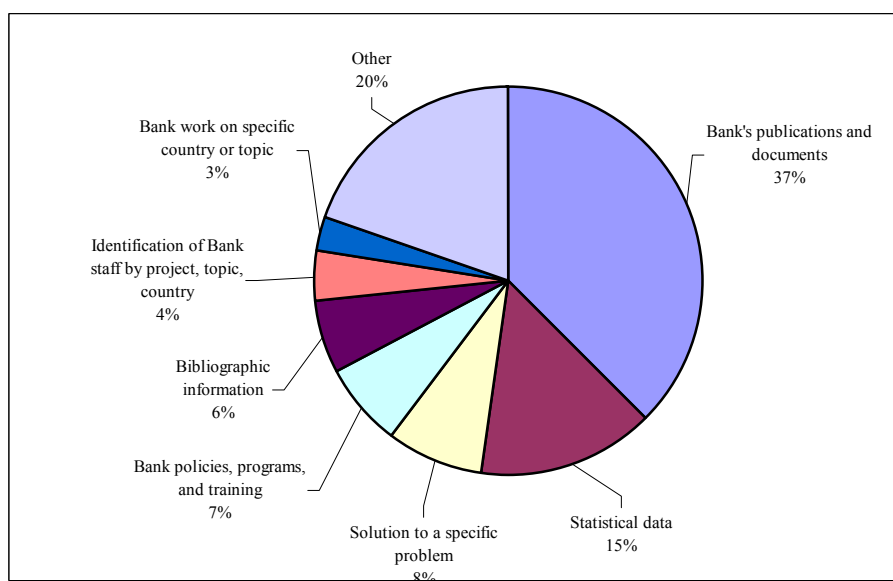
These numbers suggest that even though the advisory services were created as a new knowledge-sharing structure, the majority of queries might have been handled by previously existing structures, such as Bank libraries, or by expanded use of Web sites. The advisory services have provided only a limited amount of operationally

Figure 3.2. External Requests Dominate Advisory Services



Source: Fonseca 2003.

Figure 3.3. Most Requests Are for Publications and Data



Source: Fonseca, 2003.

focused, synthesized knowledge. While they do not cost much, it should be understood that they serve more as referral than as advisory services. In addition, they serve a wider range of audiences and purposes than is intended by their primary objective of enhancing operational effectiveness.

Expanded Use of Bank Internal and External Web Sites

Since 1994, when the Bank launched its Web-based Intranet and Internet services, Bank Web sites have become a much used resource, both across the Bank and globally.²⁴ In addition, feedback—from inside and outside the Bank—indicates that some 90 percent of all users of the Bank's public site find it useful to their work. These aggregate usage statistics confirm the value of the Bank Web sites as an essential tool of the Bank's knowledge initiative.²⁵ Nevertheless, disaggregated patterns of internal and external use of the Web sites reveal shortfalls in reach, content quality, and, operational usefulness.

Bank staff are regular and heavy users of the Intranet—more for information about Bank transactional services (such as requests for badges) than for development knowledge, which is mostly published on the external site, or work process information related to operational tasks. This is one explanation for field staff accounting for a smaller proportion of Intranet usage (10 percent) than their proportion of total staff (30 percent) (World Bank 2002b, p. 38). According to staff, the Intranet does not provide enough detailed information relevant to core work processes and practices. A typical staff survey response is:

The data on the Web sites are the kinds of information that are easily available to all—it does not reflect the degree of detail necessary for operational work. For example, in privatization of railways, what kinds of social mitigation measures worked? Who was affected? What happened to unemployment?[OED task team survey and Project Appraisal Document [PAD] review.]

Staff also say that it takes too long to find what they want. This is due, in large part, to many units having established their own Web site structures instead of using

²⁴ This section covers Web use for internal and external knowledge sharing because the Bank's external site is important for both and there are crosscutting issues of audience focus and content management that pertain to both the internal and external sites. Most of the section draws on data from Forum One Communications (World Bank 2003b, 2002b).

²⁵ In the last five years, the Bank has also increased the use of e-mail newsletters as a vehicle for dissemination of information, knowledge, and ideas. According to the Forum One report (World Bank 2003b), by mid-FY03, the Bank had 50 e-mail newsletters with some 90,000 subscribers, at least 20 percent in developing countries. Many of these are maintained by thematic groups and network or Regional knowledge coordinators as a way to create communities of practice around the world related to a specific development issue. No evaluation of their impact was made as a part of this review. The growth in the number of subscribers as well as the specificity of their subject matter suggest that they are an important additional vehicle for Bank knowledge dissemination. And, as the Forum One report indicates, e-mail newsletters serve as a method of disseminating World Bank resources especially to audiences who have limited Internet access.

more standardized, Bankwide frameworks for knowledge aggregation and dissemination.

The Bank's external Web sites now reach 700,00 users a month from a wide variety of audiences, including Bank staff, development specialists, and the general international development community.²⁶ Bank staff are especially heavy users of the external Web sites, accounting for less than 2 percent of all users but 16.5 percent of the amount of material requested. Although developing country use has grown by as much as 300 percent over the 2000-02 period, residents from all developing countries combined account for some 10-20 percent of total usage, while those from the United States account for about 25 percent.

It is hard to say how effective the external Web sites are in serving priority audiences because much of the Web-based material is not designed, segmented, or tracked for distinct user groups, though several particular client areas exist (for example, for journalists, bond investors, NGOs and civil society, and children). The current usage numbers are a reminder of the continuing digital divide as a limitation on the web as a means of reaching developing country audiences. Current usage has also led external experts to recommend that the Bank "improve its audience focus and understanding of audience needs and interests, with a particular emphasis on external users" (World Bank 2002b). This improvement will require the Bank to better tailor its Web-based content to its multiple audiences. Box 3.5 illustrates the dilemma of using the Bank's external Web sites for both the distribution of state-of-the art knowledge and client capacity building.

Box 3.5: Targeting Web Content to Intended Audiences Poses Challenges

World Bank staff and local researchers jointly produced several papers on power sector reform, with the aim of building local research interest and capacity. This material was subsequently posted on the Bank's external Web site and earned the praise of targeted local audiences. But an expert review of the papers found shortcomings in their quality and broad applicability. Even though the papers were relevant for capacity-building purposes, posting them on the Bank Web site without a clear indication of their purpose obliged users to determine their utility. The example illustrates the need for the Bank's Web sites to do more to guide users to materials relevant to their needs.

Source: OED expert review and follow-up interviews with staff.

These findings suggest that the Bank is not adequately managing its Web content. The Bank's Information Solutions Group (ISG) has recently assessed the external Web sites of all Bank departments and provided advice to each department on how to improve the structure, labeling, and presentation of their Web-posted materials. The purpose of these content assessments is to increase both the quality of

²⁶ Available in English, French, Russian, and Spanish, the external sites are used with far more frequency than the external Web sites of the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral development banks, though surpassed by those of the United Nations and European Union (World Bank 2003b, 2002b).

the individual Web sites and consistency across sites. But left unaddressed are the broader issues of knowledge needs assessment, quality control, and audience focus.²⁷ The Environmental Department has done a more searching assessment (based on both an external review and an electronic client feedback survey) that examined these broader issues. The outcome was a plan to consolidate and redesign the ENV Web sites and establish guidelines, standards, and responsibilities for maintaining individual Web sites. The plan also envisions a long-term Web strategy, defined in coordination with the other departments in the network, that aims at distinct purposes: strengthening operational work, aligning activities to sector strategies, and serving a broad international audience. Yet, as emphasized in the ENV Web assessment, if its Web strategy is to be effective it needs to be set within an overall strategy for network knowledge sharing. That overall strategy is, however, still a work in progress in ESSD; and, in other networks, no such strategy building has been attempted.

Linking to Learning and Research

On the whole, knowledge-sharing activities are not closely linked to the Bank's learning programs. Although knowledge staff play a role in the design of learning events and courses, overall coordination in setting priorities and planning programs is closely linked in only some network and Regional sector departments. A recent effort under the Learning Framework has piloted a team-based learning process that has generated considerable interest among operational staff. This pilot effort may offer new ways of providing active knowledge sharing that both links closely with staff learning processes and increases support of task teams. But on a broader scale, there is a need to better integrate knowledge and learning processes across the institution.

Nor is there sufficient linkage with the Bank's research program. A recent PREM-Development Economics (DEC)-WBI initiative is a deliberate attempt to strengthen linkages across knowledge creation, sharing, and learning, and to connect directly to the knowledge needs of country teams. But it is too early to assess its impact on either the quality of operations or the enhancement of knowledge sharing with clients.

Remaining Challenges

It is difficult to assess the costs and benefits of the Bank's efforts to improve knowledge sharing among staff because the inputs and outputs are not adequately monitored and reported. Assessing impact on operational effectiveness is even more difficult because there are no well-defined, monitorable, and time-bound intermediate outcome goals and accompanying performance indicators. For example, internal knowledge-sharing activities have not set distinct goals and related performance indicators for such varied knowledge-sharing objectives as individual skill building, team-based support and problem solving, or sector or institution-wide knowledge building. This shortcoming is discussed further in Chapter 5.

²⁷ See Annex C for a further discussion of the requirements of effective content management.

The quality of Bank lending and nonlending operations has improved since the introduction of the knowledge-sharing initiative, with sustained improvement in most quality indicators for the project portfolio and economic and sector work (ESW) since 1997.²⁸ Obviously many factors have fostered these improvements, making it impossible to show direct causality between knowledge sharing and improvements in the quality of operations. It seems reasonable to conclude that the heightened efforts to harness and share Bank knowledge and experience have been a contributing factor. But in the absence of clear outcome objectives and systematic monitoring of outputs, it is difficult to measure the extent of the contribution or value for money. Improvements in operational quality can be achieved by upgrading skills of individual staff, improving how teams work together, building up the knowledge base of professional groups, or making innovations in institutional policies or practices. The objective of any knowledge-sharing activity needs to be expressly linked to one of these four ways of improving quality.

Overall, the record of the Bank's efforts to improve knowledge sharing among staff suggests the need for three specific improvements. First, knowledge-sharing activities need to do more to make knowledge accessible to staff in ways directly supportive of core work processes—for example, by increasing direct support of task teams by network and thematic groups; rethinking the role and mode of operation of advisory services; and making Intranet information more readily useful to operations. Second, network and Regional sector departments need to manage content more actively to ensure the quality, intended reach, and operational relevance of distributed knowledge. Third, networks and Regions need to work together to achieve more systematic capture, feedback, and sharing of lessons learned and good practice.

²⁸ The Quality Assurance Group reported improvements in quality at entry from 82 percent satisfactory in FY96 to 94 percent satisfactory in FY01 and a drop in FY02 to 86 percent satisfactory. Quality of supervision increased from 63 percent in FY96 to 89 percent in FY02. The Quality Assurance Group's quality ratings on ESW also showed steady improvement, from 72 percent satisfactory in FY96 to 94 percent satisfactory in FY02 (World Bank 2003e, table 3.4, p. 1).

4. Sharing Knowledge with Clients and Partners

While the transfer of knowledge to clients and the wider international development community has always been part of the Bank's role, the knowledge initiative aims to expand this function through innovation in the knowledge dimensions of country programs and projects and Bank support of global knowledge initiatives.

These efforts, particularly over the last two years, are providing an increasing number of promising practices. Still, improvements in leveraging knowledge for development have not been mainstreamed across country programs. And operational staff are only gradually coming to see themselves as knowledge brokers and to view knowledge sharing as a core part of their work. The result is that while client access to Bank knowledge and information has improved, weaknesses remain in the Bank's in-country knowledge dissemination, adaptation of global knowledge to local circumstances, and support for strengthening of client institutional capacity to acquire and use knowledge.

Regional Approaches to Leveraging Knowledge for Development

The aim of expanding knowledge sharing with clients and partners has involved primarily two sets of activities: Bank activities at the Regional and country levels and the Bank's support for several global knowledge initiatives.²⁹ This chapter reviews the extent to which the Regional and country activities have intensified the Bank's knowledge interface with its clients and explores the start-up of three global knowledge initiatives and their integration into Bank operations.

Since 2000, the Region's knowledge-sharing activities have increasingly shifted their focus from knowledge sharing among their staff to a more outward orientation. This has involved extending the reach of their internal knowledge-sharing tools and activities—for example, Regional and country Web sites, newsletters, and databases—to client audiences. In addition, Regional units have designed new knowledge-sharing activities aimed at strengthening the Bank's exchange of knowledge with clients in the context of country programs and projects. For example, the Africa Region (AFR) has developed a debriefing program that aims to capture and distribute combined tacit knowledge of Bank staff, clients, and partners. The Latin American & Caribbean (LCR) Region has introduced a highly interactive “continuous learning framework” as a way to leverage knowledge better through client and staff learning (described in box 4.1). The Middle East & North Africa (MNA) Region is piloting a new ESW programmatic instrument for countries that do not borrow from the Bank, but seek advisory services, training, or diagnostic work. And the Europe & Central Asia (ECA) and East Asia & Pacific (EAP) Regions have concentrated on

²⁹ Outside the scope of this review, various country programs have also given increased attention to helping countries build up their information and communication technology (ICT) capabilities and become more competitive in the global knowledge economy. This growing knowledge-economy work involves both analytical work and lending that aims to increase the capacity of countries to acquire and use knowledge effectively.

regionwide knowledge-sharing programs focused on helping countries improve their competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.

Box 4.1: A Continuous Learning Framework Provides for Exchange among Project Teams

The Continuous Learning Framework, or *Marco de Aprendizaje Continuo* (MAC), is an LCR collaborative process designed to improve implementation of ongoing projects by sharing expertise among practitioners. MACs bring together key practitioners to perform such tasks as producing a detailed assessment of project implementation, conducting a technical assessment mission, or presenting a technical workshop. A MAC can take place during project preparation, supervision, or implementation. Initiated at the request of governments, MAC exchanges require only limited funding from the Bank, mainly in the form of staff time to participate in MAC meetings.

Source: LCR documentation.

While the reflection of different Regional conditions in these initiatives gives the programs broad strategic relevance, the Bank's knowledge initiative must have impact at the country level if it is to contribute to greater development effectiveness. For this, knowledge sharing as a way of doing business needs to be systematically embedded in Country Assistance Strategies (CASs) and projects, so that relevant knowledge gets to those who need it, at the right time and in a useful form; and, where needed, sustainable capacity is created for acquiring and using knowledge. Furthermore, systematic feedback of operational experience is necessary to build country and Bank capacity to adjust, scale up, and innovate.

Increasing the Knowledge Dimensions of Country Programs and Projects

To assess the efficacy and efficiency of knowledge initiative integration into CASs, this review examined all 60 CASs (or CAS progress reports) presented to the Board in FY02 and in the first three-quarters of FY03 to determine the extent to which the CASs set out a strategic approach to knowledge. Although all 60 CASs identify areas of knowledge generation and policy dialogue, only 20 percent treat the transfer of knowledge as a strategic objective. Most of the CASs that do propose a significant shift in the focus of the Bank's program from lending to knowledge services. This is true for middle-income countries such as Brazil, China (see box 4.2), and Thailand, as well as a number of Middle Eastern countries where International Bank for Reconstruction & Development financing is not in high demand. It is also true in Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) clients, such as Yemen, where financing is limited by weak country performance. But for most countries where lending still dominates the Bank's program, knowledge is not yet being treated as a strategic tool.

Box 4.2: Shifting the Emphasis from Lending to Knowledge

As stated in the China CAS 2002: “Operationally, the program would be shaped by factors reflecting the changing nature of the relationship between China and the World Bank Group. In particular (a) the growing importance of the Bank's advisory services relative to lending in the coming years. . . and (b) the potential gains to both sides, with China positioned not only to receive the Bank Group's assistance, but also share lessons of its successful experiences more broadly and contribute to the thinking on global development issues.”

Source: World Bank 2002a, p 30.

A random sample of 21 (10 percent) of the projects approved in FY01 was also examined, and 19 project task managers and additional task team members were interviewed to determine the impact of the Bank's knowledge initiative on how knowledge was being built into operations.³⁰ Virtually all projects included elements (or, in investment projects, components) focused on building client knowledge capacity (OED task team survey and PAD review). And most projects revealed the use of a wide variety of knowledge transfer vehicles to reach different client groups. In discussing these components, staff emphasized that knowledge transfer had always been part of Bank operations. But most staff did not describe the activities as part of an overall project knowledge-sharing framework aimed at creating conditions for generating, acquiring, and using knowledge (Fonseca 2003). Nor did most staff report that they had changed the way they work as a result of the Bank's knowledge initiative. Rather, some two-thirds (64 percent) of the sample of task members interviewed reported that they do not think the Bank's knowledge initiative and related new tools and activities have changed the way projects are being designed and implemented. While they see efficiency gains from new knowledge-sharing tools, they do not see a fundamental change in the way staff are operating. Lack of time and adequate incentives were the most frequent reasons given for this response.

Nonetheless, there are examples from all Regions of specific efforts to build knowledge into operations in new ways.

- ***Making ESW a process, not just a product.*** There are recent examples in Regions of designing ESW to engage clients in more fully generating analytical reports, including the collection and analysis of data and in disseminating and debating the reports.³¹ One example, the 2003 Guatemala Poverty Assessment, has been designed as a multiyear program of analytical work and technical assistance and has involved the establishment of long-term working relations with in-country organizations. Regional staff note that this collaborative process has helped improve the realism of the study's analysis and the relevance of its recommendations.

³⁰ See Annex E for a description of the methodology used in this review and interview survey.

³¹ Based on regular Quality Assurance Group reviews of samples of ESW, this type of highly participatory ESW increased from about 30 percent in FY00 to nearly 45 percent in FY02.

- ***Building structured institutional relations.*** In several countries, Bank teams are attempting to provide sustainable knowledge sharing and transfer by establishing long-term partnerships with national or local institutes. The MNA Region, for example, has established such a relationship with the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), a Regional organization that brings together mayors and government officials from more than 400 towns and cities. MNA has worked with AUDI to develop the institute's help desk and Web site on urban development and to organize the Children and Cities Conference held in December 2002.
- ***Expanding peer-to-peer knowledge sharing:*** Practitioners from Bank-supported projects in one country are increasingly being used for knowledge sharing with peers in other countries. For example, the 2002 Thailand CAS proposes to help Thai experts disseminate lessons from Thailand's social investment fund and land titling programs to those working on similar projects in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.
- ***Brokering knowledge to support reforms:*** Some country teams have employed a battery of knowledge-sharing mechanisms, including study tours, videoconferences, and cross-country dialogue to build client ownership of sectorwide reforms. To help build understanding and informed dialogue for a major reform in Eritrea's telecommunications sector, for example, the Eritrea Telecommunications technical assistance project made it possible for Eritrean officials to observe information technology applications in the Andhra Pradesh State in India and in Silicon Valley in the United States. The Bank also maintained intensive dialogue with officials through the regular use of videoconferences. Eritrean officials praised the adaptation of knowledge to their country's circumstances and the utility of the knowledge made available to them.

The CAS and project findings indicate that the Bank's knowledge-sharing initiative is not yet well integrated into CAS objectives or operations, although the number of examples of promising practice is growing.³² Client views of current knowledge services confirm this finding.

Effectiveness of Bank Knowledge Sharing with Clients

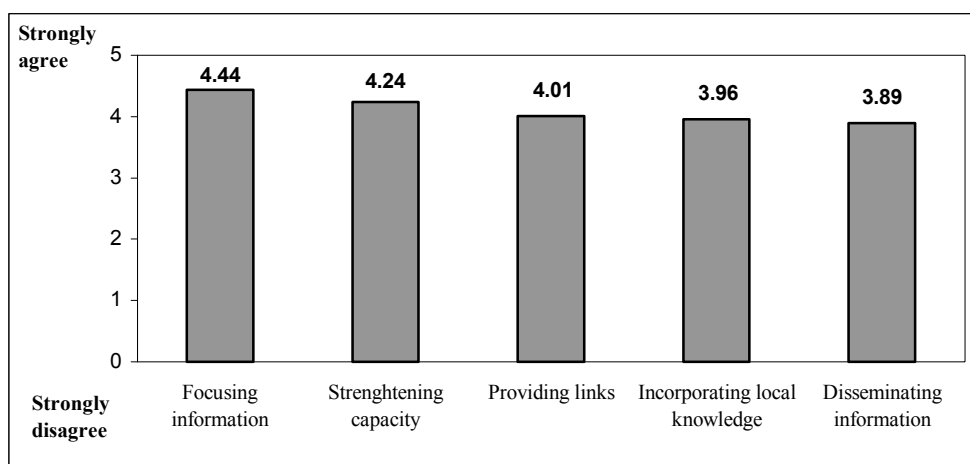
A key element in assessing the effectiveness of the Bank's external knowledge sharing is clients' perceptions of the quality, reach, and usefulness of the Bank's knowledge initiative and knowledge services. For this evaluation, a five-country survey of some 120 influential persons (from government, NGOs, the media, and the private sector) was conducted through face-to-face interviews. Although the survey's main findings, together with those from a follow-up workshop, show strong support for the Bank's knowledge initiative, they also identify persistent weaknesses in the Bank's delivery of its knowledge services, which a majority of clients urge the Bank to improve.

³² This same point is made by implication in the *Strategy Update Paper for FY03-05* (World Bank 2003c), which emphasizes the need for more integrated packages of knowledge and lending in country programs.

Overall, clients interviewed affirm the importance of leveraging knowledge for development, and most commend the Bank's efforts to intensify the knowledge dimensions of country programs. A majority of the respondents to OED's survey (as well as participants in the follow-up workshop) agree that the Bank is moving in the right direction.³³ Specifically, they cite improvements in the accessibility and timeliness of Bank information and identify the Internet as the biggest contributor to this progress. In addition, they note that staff have become less arrogant and more open to collaboration and knowledge sharing.

As reported in Chapter 1, clients rate highly the technical soundness of the Bank's knowledge initiative. But the views of survey respondents are less positive on reach and applicability in individual country circumstances. Moreover, while they value the Bank's role in the transfer of knowledge, they would like the Bank to do more to help build knowledge capacity within their countries (see figures 4.1 and 4.2).

Figure 4.1: Shared Knowledge Is Well Focused, But Not Well Adapted or Disseminated



Source: OED client survey.

Inadequate dissemination of the Bank's knowledge at the country level is the area respondents most commonly cite as needing improvement. Beyond central government personnel and a narrow circle of other well-informed persons, the reach of Bank knowledge is said to be limited. Two contributing factors that clients cited frequently are that Bank information is easily accessible only by computer, and is not available in local languages.³⁴ Clients indicate that there is also a "government bias"

³³ See Annex G of this study. Survey included 121 respondents from 5 countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Poland, Senegal, and Tanzania; and OED Workshop on Leveraging Knowledge for Development. See Annex G for the summary report of the five-country client survey. A summary report of the workshop is available on request.

³⁴ The issue of translation has been recently addressed in a management proposal for a World Bank Group translation framework, discussed by the Board on July 3, 2003 (World Bank 2003f).

in disseminating information.³⁵ Stakeholders from Poland and Senegal suggest, however, that governments have the primary responsibility for disseminating Bank information and making it accessible on a countrywide basis. These stakeholders maintain that the absence of government motivation to disseminate knowledge is a significant part of the distribution problem.

Adaptation of global knowledge to country contexts is a second area clients view as weak. The majority of survey respondents say that the Bank presents “ready-made” solutions that are not adapted to individual country circumstances. They argue that the Bank is reluctant to consider alternatives to the models and solutions that it outlines in policy advice and documentation. Most respondents suggest that increased use of local expertise as well as more local involvement in generating knowledge would improve the alignment of Bank knowledge with country circumstances.³⁶ Several stakeholders also note that adapting global knowledge to country circumstances is easier when there is acknowledged indigenous capacity for doing so. Therefore, respondents from Brazil, for example, see the adaptation of global knowledge as a responsibility of their officials.

Capacity building—individual and institutional—is viewed as essential. But clients perceive the Bank as more effective in supporting individual training (through study tours, workshops, and other forms of project-related training) than in helping to build sustainable institutional capacity for acquiring and using knowledge. They therefore emphasize that an enhanced focus on institutional capacity building would be catalytic—contributing to improved client-country ability to adapt and use Bank information, as well as to increase accessibility and credibility of Bank information through collaboration with national institutes. One respondent’s view is representative: “We cannot place reliance on the Bank forever. The local institutions have to be assisted in expanding their capacity. This will require a lot more from the Bank in the area of transferring skills and knowledge at the institutional level.”³⁷ But some respondents also stress the need for greater government ownership of this process, noting that their governments underemphasize project components related to capacity building.

In offering views on how to make improvements, clients interviewed urge the Bank to accelerate changes in the knowledge dimensions of project design and implementation, and to reduce the variation in the emphasis on knowledge work

³⁵ This same point is highlighted in the recent OED *Brazil Country Assistance Evaluation* (OED 2003c), which notes that the government sees an important role for the Bank “in informing society about long-term structural issues, their potential solutions, and the trade-offs involved. To play this role, effectively, however, the Bank must make a greater effort to disseminate its work among the several potential audiences and to the population at large.”

³⁶ While in-country respondents may have vested interests in this issue, it should be noted that international experts participating in the OED workshop emphasized the same point, noting that knowledge is local and contextual, and needs to be actively absorbed to be used effectively.

³⁷ Tanzanian academic respondent to OED client survey. Respondents’ views regarding the weaknesses in dissemination, adaptation, and institutional capacity building are consistent with findings from across the Bank’s 30 client feedback surveys conducted over FY99-02.

among Bank task managers. To achieve these changes, clients suggest that a strategy for knowledge dissemination and capacity building be clearly defined in project plans. As figure 4.2 illustrates, clients give particular emphasis to enhanced efforts by the Bank to incorporate local knowledge and collaborate with local experts, strengthen institutional capacity, and expand in-country knowledge dissemination.

Figure 4.2: Where Clients Would Like the Bank To Do Better

<i>Client views of Bank effectiveness</i>	High	Focus on clients' knowledge needs Provide knowledge in ways that strengthen individual capacity	
	Low	Provide links to international expertise and knowledge	Incorporate local knowledge & collaborate with local expertise Provide knowledge in ways that strengthen institutional capacity Disseminate knowledge to people who need it most in country
		Sufficient	More
<i>Client demand for more Bank emphasis</i>			

Source: OED client survey.

Development and Integration of Global Knowledge Initiatives

In addition to its other knowledge-related efforts, the Bank has designed and launched several global knowledge initiatives. These programs aim to expand knowledge sharing and help client countries build their capacities for acquiring and applying knowledge relevant to their core development goals.³⁸ A recent management-commissioned report reviewed the Bank's overall handling of this "portfolio" of knowledge initiatives. The report, which examined the degree of innovation and relevance of the initiatives to Knowledge Bank objectives, made several recommendations for improvement that are now under management consideration.³⁹ The review here of the global knowledge initiatives has a somewhat narrower focus: It examines the start-up and likely long-term effectiveness of each of the three global initiatives with the broadest knowledge-sharing scope. They are the Development Gateway, the GDLN, and GDN (see also OED 2002b, forthcoming).

While the initiatives each have unique program features, they share three characteristics: they are multicountry in scope; they aim to expand knowledge sharing both within and across countries and to build client capacity; and they rely on

³⁸ See Annex B, which includes a list of the Bank's six global knowledge initiatives.

³⁹ Currently under review are recommendations to: (1) establish a "gated decision process" for Bank innovation and development of ICT and knowledge initiatives; (2) concentrate on the Bank's role as a "content aggregator;" and (3) create an innovation fund to support new start-ups. See Digital 4Sight 2002.

partnerships for program activities and funding. In 2001, responsibility for two of the initiatives—the Development Gateway and GDN—was transferred to independent governing bodies, although the Bank remains involved. The GDLN is still administered as a department of WBI and led by the Bank (see table 4.1 for country locations of each initiative).

Table 4.1: Location of Global Knowledge Initiatives (by number of country-level entities per Region as of June 30, 2003)

Region	GDLN ^a	Development Gateway	GDN
Africa	9	6	1
East Asia and Pacific	11	4	1
Europe and Central Asia	11	15	2 ^b
Latin America and the Caribbean	14	13	1
Middle East and North Africa	3	2	1
South Asia	3	4	1
Europe and North America	10	1	3
Total	61	44	10

a. These numbers of GDLN-affiliated centers were provided by WBI's GDLN division, and differ from listings provided by several Regions. See footnote 48 for an explanation of the discrepancies.

b. While in each Bank Region GDN has established a partnership with one institution that implements programs regionwide, Europe and Central Asia are treated as two Regional areas.

The Bank has had two objectives in promoting these initiatives: to expand the availability of development knowledge as a global public good and to improve its own effectiveness by incorporating these initiatives in country operations. Progress in achieving the first objective is discussed in the following summaries of the initiatives. Progress on the second objective is considered in a single section, as an issue that cuts across all three initiatives.

The Development Gateway

The Development Gateway is an Internet portal on development issues, through which users can access studies and information, exchange services, and collaborate on new strategies and programs (Walker 2003). Its business plan identifies four categories of beneficiaries: governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, and donor organizations. Since its inception in 1999, the Development Gateway has launched four portal-based knowledge services—*Knowledge/Topics*, *DgMarketplace*, *AiDA*, and *Country Gateway*. In addition, the Development Gateway has supported the start-up of 44 country-based Gateways. It has also developed an open-source technology platform and applications for the management and exchange of knowledge and information related to its core services. All four of the Development Gateways' knowledge services have become fully operational in a short period of time and show evidence of reaching intended beneficiaries. They vary, however, in the degree of value they add. Brief reviews of each knowledge service follow.

Knowledge/Topics assembles and publishes Web content on some 30 development issues, including e-government, HIV/AIDS, the knowledge economy,

and the link between trade and development. As of June 30, 2003, there were some 24,000 registered users, with the site receiving about 93,000 visitors monthly (the Bank's Internet site, after nearly 10 years of existence, has more than 600,000 unique visitors monthly). Content is contributed by roughly 130 organizations, and content editors from inside and outside the Bank manage each topic area. Many topic areas also have advisory committees that bring diverse perspectives to the aggregation of material.⁴⁰

This approach has delivered credible and high-quality content. Although some outside groups continue to object to what they view as the role of the Bank in “filtering” global dissemination of development knowledge,⁴¹ the controversy that accompanied early plans for the Development Gateway has declined as the Gateway has widened the site's base of contributors, editors, and advisers. Nevertheless, in the context of a landscape crowded with other knowledge aggregators that have a specific topical, regional, or audience focus,⁴² *Knowledge/Topics* lacks strategic uniqueness.⁴³ It has difficulty differentiating its offerings from those of other development portals and in directing its limited resources to distinguish its value, and will need to sharpen its focus to increase its usefulness.

DgMarketplace, which offers procurement listings from the World Bank and other development agencies, provides value to buyers by making the tender process more competitive, and to sellers by providing ready access to information on business opportunities. While much of the information on *DgMarketplace* is available elsewhere, it is unique in its aim to expand opportunities for nontraditional bidders, particularly small and medium-size enterprises in developing countries. Having recently begun to charge a fee for some of its services, the market will provide feedback on who is actually served and the value of the services provided.

AiDA, a unique service in the development community, publishes a comprehensive directory, in searchable form, of data on World Bank, other multilateral, and all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)–member bilateral projects. While there are other sources of project information, there is no comparator that aggregates information on the same scale. Also, by promoting standardized reporting of development projects and providing an

⁴⁰ OED staff participated in the design of the Development Gateway, and two OED staff currently serve as guides for the Aid Effectiveness topic section, which involves review and approval of material submitted for publication, development of policies and guidelines for what will be covered in the section, and work to stimulate interest in and use of the material by development practitioners and researchers.

⁴¹ One of the most vocal critics of the Bank's role in the Development Gateway has been the Bretton Woods Project <www.brettonwoods.org>

⁴² For example, Eldis, an online gateway managed by the Institute of Development Studies, offers content for the research and academic communities; and OneWorld, an independent Web portal, has created a global communications network for NGOs and has found an innovative means of addressing inequalities in Internet access by partnering to provide local radio programming.

⁴³ It has been most effective when a topic has a well-defined application or purpose (as in the case of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Gateway) or has created an interactive community.

easy mechanism for contributing data, the program encourages expanded participation and use.

The *Country Gateway* is a centralized service that provides advisory services, technical support, and help in mobilizing funds for the establishment of country-based knowledge portals that are operated as independent organizations. The 44 individual Country Gateways, now at varying stages of development, aim to support country-level knowledge aggregation and dialogue, improve access to skills and resources, and facilitate cooperation and partnerships at the local level.⁴⁴ Some have formed partnerships and or other forms of collaboration with local comparators early in their start-up, and have thereby been able to complement local efforts rather than compete with them. Still, as the Internet becomes more pervasive and information technology develops in these countries, the Country Gateways will have to continue to evolve and differentiate their services. In addition, their financial sustainability beyond an initial period of seed financing is currently being tested. While financial requirements over time are likely to require Country Gateways to make tradeoffs between commercial and development objectives, it is too early to gauge the impact of those decisions on the role that the Country Gateways will play in meeting the Development Gateway's overall development knowledge-sharing objective.

The Bank has provided a total of US\$15.5 million for the startup of the Development Gateway, of which US\$7 million was spent before its transfer to the Development Gateway Foundation in 2001. Following that transfer, the Bank, as a member of the board of the foundation, agreed to provide an additional US\$5 million over the next three years through its Development Grants Facility. Also, in FY01-FY02, the Bank provided some US\$3.5 million in grants through *infoDev*⁴⁵ for the Country Gateway program. It now operates the Development Gateway through a service agreement with the foundation that costs the foundation US\$6 million (none of which can come from the funds provided to the foundation from the Development Grant Facility).

The creation of the Development Gateway Foundation as an independent, not-for-profit organization has attracted more than US\$70 million in additional funding and has forged a number of strategic partnerships. But both governance and funding arrangements pose issues for three reasons. First, while the Bank has been crucial to the mobilization of support for the Development Gateway, its role in the governance of the foundation, through control of the positions of president and treasurer, as well as of three seats on an 18-member board, has fueled criticisms of undue influence. Second, all but one member on the current board are financial contributors. This

⁴⁴ A strong feature of the start-up of the Country Gateways has been the transparent and phased approach by which they have been supported. This has involved an open call for proposals for small-scale grant funding, and seed financing provided through a two-stage planning and implementation process. The approach contrasts with the nontransparent approach to establishing GDLN-affiliated centers, which has involved the Bank in direct negotiations rather than an open proposal process.

⁴⁵ *InfoDev*, which receives World Bank funding from the Development Grant Facility, is a global program that provides grants and technical assistance to encourage policies that increase connectivity and to support innovative use of ICTs for development at global, Regional, national, and local levels.

composition has limited board service by representatives from the strategic partnership organizations whose program involvement is valuable. But new governance arrangements that would encompass partnership organization involvement would not help advance the third issue: establishing a financial strategy and attracting the funds to ensure continuity of programs over time. At present there is no endowment to generate income, and the existing three-year drawdown of most donors' funds ends in 2004.

Moreover, both the Bank and the foundation have to resolve how to manage the Bank's future role as a Development Gateway partner. For Bank programs to derive benefit from the Development Gateway, the Bank has more to do to integrate the innovation and learning provided by the Development Gateway into its own operations. At the same time, the Development Gateway must strike a balance between serving as an effective instrument of the Bank's own operational activities and distancing itself from the Bank in order to consolidate its credibility and encourage inclusive partnership and participation across the development community. Ensuring that the Development Gateway activities are demand driven at the country and global levels is essential to managing this relationship over time.

The Global Development Learning Network

The GDLN is a partnership of mostly independent Distance Learning Centers (DLCs), funders, and content providers that support knowledge sharing and learning through distance learning courses, seminars, and cross-country dialogues among decisionmakers dealing with development issues of common concern (Romiszowski 2003). The core idea is that of a network linking DLCs around the globe that deliver programs in languages and formats consistent with the information and skill needs of targeted audiences, and that are operated independently under various business models and by different agencies or institutions in each country. The DLCs affiliated with the GDLN have the technology to run interactive knowledge-sharing and learning events through a combination of videoconferencing across several sites, e-mail or Web-based discussions, and face-to-face or self-study instruction. This multimedia capacity is the GDLN's particular value. Examples of a GDLN global dialogue program and a training course are provided in box 4.3.

Box 4.3: GDLN Programming Links City Officials

East Asia: A total of 64 City Development Strategies were prepared in China, Indonesia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. GDLN facilities provided access to technical expertise, funding, and city-to-city knowledge sharing within and across countries.

Latin America: A course on open and participatory municipal governance was delivered in partnership with Mexico and Spain to 60 sites in the region.

Source: GDLN documentation.

fully functioning armates of the network. ~ while this expansion represents a rapid

⁴⁶ This number, provided by WBI's GDLN division, excludes four centers listed in information submitted to OED by Regional units (one each in AFR, EAP, ECA, and South Asia [SAR]). The discrepancy appears to derive from the absence of a common definition of what constitutes a GDLN

start-up of the initiative, this review finds a lack of precision in the monitoring and reporting of GDLN activities and related Bank expenditures. The review also finds a substantial disparity across countries in the nature of the Bank's support for centers, and the absence of a clearly articulated strategy for fostering the sustainability of individual centers and the GDLN as a global network.

Total spending by the Bank for its support of the GDLN's start-up has been estimated by the Bank's GDLN team to be on the order of US\$30-\$45 million since June 2000.⁴⁷ This amount includes the actual administrative budget of WBI's GDLN division, along with costs incurred by the Regions and by ISG in support of GDLN, which are only estimated.

Table 4.2: World Bank Lending for GDLN Distance Learning Centers (as of June 30, 2003)

Source/country	US\$ millions
IDA credits	
Benin (LIL)	1.8
Côte d'Ivoire (LIL)	2.0
Ethiopia (LIL)	4.9
Ghana (as part of larger project)	1.6
Mauritania (LIL)	3.3
Senegal (LIL)	2.1
Tanzania (as part of larger project)	1.8
Uganda (as part of larger project)	2.7
Bolivia (as part of a larger project)	0.7(est'd)
Sri Lanka (LIL)	2.0
Total IDA credits	22.9
IBRD loans	
Dominican Republic	3.4
Thailand (part of larger project)	1.1
Total IBRD loans	4.5

Note: LIL = Learning and Innovation Loan.

Centers in African countries and a few other countries are financed differently from centers elsewhere. As shown in table 4.2, the Bank has lent a total of US\$23 million in International Development Association (IDA) credits for the startup DLCs in 11 poor countries. This financing covers initial capital costs and a declining share of operating costs over four-to-five years (estimated in the case of the African centers to be about US\$300,000-\$400,000). An additional two countries have received IBRD financing for GDLN DLCs. No equivalent financial obligations to the Bank have been incurred by other GDLN DLCs. Six DLCs in China, Brazil, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Timor Leste, and Vietnam, which have been co-located in Bank offices,

center. Differences in definition relate to issues of whether a center should achieve a number of successful activities and have a minimum number of activities per year before being regarded as a full GDLN center.

⁴⁷ This figure was provided to OED in the third quarter of FY03 by the Bank's GDLN team.

have been financed out of the Bank's capital budget and, in the case of Vietnam, additional donor grants. DLCs in other countries have received grants from various bilateral and multilateral agencies, or financed by a local agency out of recurrent costs, usually for limited upgrading or use of existing facilities.

While the Bank's efforts over three years have led to growth in the network of DLCs and involvement of external partners, the sustainability of the global network of DLCs is not yet assured. As shown in table 4.3, the amount of programming shows fairly modest growth as measured both in participant training days and number of sessions.⁴⁸ For the independent DLCs that currently rely heavily on GDLN programming, facility utilization rates remain, on average, below that required for financial sustainability. And this low level of utilization has called into question the business strategy on which those DLCs have based their planning.⁴⁹

Table 4.3: Mixed GDLN Trends, FY01-midFY03

Output	FY01	FY02	mid-FY03
Activities: total	273	259	142
WBI	184	155	52
Bank	46	35	12
External partners	43	69	78
Participant training days ^a	90,580	111,300	45,680
DLCs	26	37	45

a. Estimate based on experience of courses of 5 days with 25 participants.

Source: GDLN data provided by staff.

Experience shows that DLCs must operate at 50-60 percent capacity to break even. At present, the GDLN centers average rates of 10-20 percent, although some are at 40 percent or more. To achieve a break-even level of utilization, many centers are looking to combine GDLN decisionmaker dialogues (the main focus of the original GDLN strategy) and interactive learning events involving course offerings geared to broader audiences (who self-pay or are subsidized). This approach has developed in response to expectations that decisionmaker dialogues are unlikely to account for more than a small percentage of a center's utilization capacity and that there is potential demand (based in some countries on actual needs assessments) for core skills training for lower-level officials and representatives from the private sector or civil society.

⁴⁸ Though programmed events declined in number from approximately 273 in FY01 to 259 in FY02, they were at a level of 142 by mid-FY03, indicating an upward turn. Moreover, despite fewer discrete events in FY02, they involved multiple sessions and, therefore, an estimated increase in number of participant training days. Yet the latter trend appears to have reversed in the first part of FY03.

⁴⁹ This is the finding of the background report on GDLN prepared for this evaluation and it is a main point in a GDLN presentation (World Bank 2003a).

To reach sustainable levels of operation following this approach, a large volume of content will be required.⁵⁰ Moreover, because the value added of GDLN facilities lies in their interactive capabilities, a structured content that relies on interaction among participants is required to make full use of the DLCs. But little development content in that format exists. So far, the Bank has been the main source—either directly, in the form of courses and events organized by the Bank, or indirectly, by stimulating other content providers. But there is no clear plan in place for generating the volume of content needed for meeting the rising demand of a growing network. If it is to come from the Bank, more resources will be required.

Ultimately, the centers need to generate and market their own programs, but few are currently able to do so. In Latin America, GDLN has built on existing university or other distance learning facilities and experience. Centers that have chosen to affiliate with the GDLN to expand their offerings tend to generate content themselves or obtain it from other organizations in their countries.⁵¹ They are also largely independent of the GDLN for revenue and for connectivity, and have increasingly strengthened Regional interactions. But in countries with less established distance learning capacities and less-developed information technology (IT) capacities, the management skills and revenue-generating markets do not yet exist. These weaknesses endanger the GDLN's network-scale effect and its global knowledge-sharing function.

The Bank's GDLN team has proposed that the network become a vehicle for the sizable amount of capacity-building assistance currently provided by donors. This assistance could benefit from the interactive capacities of GDLN facilities and be a ready-made source of programming on a level sufficient to meet the DLCs' sustainability gap. Demand for such use of GDLN centers would, however, have to be generated through a considerable marketing effort, since it is not yet widespread.

Moreover, questions remain about GDLN governance and the future of the Bank's multiple roles in the network. At present, centers are affiliated with the GDLN through individual memoranda of understanding. There is no council or advisory body of partners to provide overall strategic guidance and oversight of the network, no GDLN mechanism for quality assurance of content and program provision, and no process for evaluating the performance of any of the partners of the GDLN.

Broadly stated, the Bank's role has been to create the global network of affiliated centers, assist new centers in the startup of operations, and facilitate program interactions among all centers in the network. Yet no one unit within the Bank has been assigned responsibility for oversight and management of GDLN, quality assurance, and accounting for GDLN financial and operational data. Nor are

⁵⁰ If DLC use were scheduled at 50 percent maximum use (that is, sustainability level according to the current business model), an estimated sixfold increase in the number of events fielded in FY02 would be needed in FY03 (World Bank 2003a, p. 18).

⁵¹ An innovative approach to supporting them is the LCR Content Development Fund. With resources from the Spanish government, this fund finances content development from sources of expertise in the Region.

GDLN-related activities well coordinated among relevant Bank units. GDLN Services, which is a unit of WBI, has responsibility for the administration of the network, but the extent of its responsibilities in relation to other units in the Bank and in relation to affiliated DLCs is not well defined. ISG provides technical support and connectivity to DLCs, but these arrangements are not fully transparent. The Regions promote and, in some cases, finance the establishment and affiliation of DLCs, but coordination with GDLN services in fostering the business development and financial sustainability of individual centers is inadequate. Although a draft business plan states that the Bank has a commitment, if implicit, to also generate the input—that is, to gather together the experts, practitioners, and trainers necessary to organize and deliver knowledge sharing activities in numbers and types sufficient for the DLCs to raise enough revenue—the nature and extent of that commitment have not been made explicit.

The Global Development Network (GDN)

The World Bank launched GDN in December 1999 at a first annual conference in Bonn. In 2001 it was incorporated as an independent, not-for-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., and its relocation to a developing country is now proposed for 2004.

Initiated in the World Bank's Development Economics Vice Presidency, GDN has received strong support from both the Vice Presidency and from Bank President James Wolfensohn. Since 1999, the Bank has provided a total of US\$18.3 million to GDN. This represented almost all initial GDN funding, and in FY02 accounted for US\$5.2 million, or some 58 percent of total GDN financing (composed of a Development Grant Facility allocation of US\$4.7 million and an additional US\$500,000 from the Bank's administrative budget). Mr. Wolfensohn has also pledged that the Bank will underwrite up to US\$1.8 million of GDN's annual administrative costs through 2006.

GDN's stated objectives are to support the generation and sharing of knowledge for development; strengthen the capacity of research and policy institutions in developing countries and transition economies to undertake high-quality, policy-relevant research; and help bridge the gap between the development of ideas and their practical implementation. In advancing these objectives, GDN mobilizes and provides funding to seven regional research networks⁵² for research grants to individuals and institutions, allocated through regional research competitions.

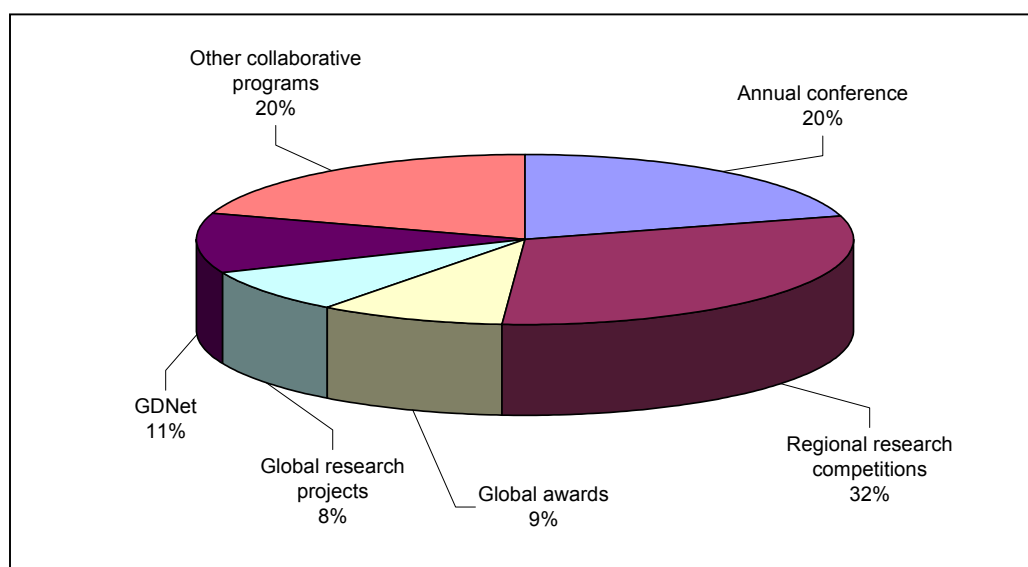
Each of these networks has its own management structure and program agenda, is governed by an independent board, and obtains funding from a variety of sources. All seven existed prior to the establishment of GDN, and except for the Latin

⁵² Africa Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education (CERGE-EI), East Asian Development Network (EADN), Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC), Economic Research Forum-Middle East and North Africa (ERF), Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA), and South Asian Network of Economic Institutes (SANEI).

American and Eastern European networks, were previously supported by the Bank's Research Support Budget. GDN's interactions with these independent research networks focuses on supporting research in individual countries within the Regions; fostering collaboration among countries within the Regions; promoting exchange on such issues as research methods, quality control, and research findings; and ensuring a focus on policy impact. Regional hubs in Europe, North America, and Japan have also been established to complement developing country networks, and a fourth network is being formed in the South Pacific Region.

In FY02, this core Regional research support function accounted for 32 percent of GDN's annual activities expenses of US\$6.8 million (see figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: GDN Expenses by Core Activities (FY02)



Source: *Financial Performance—Report of Independent Auditors, September 13, 2002.*

The other 68 percent of annual expenditures were for GDN's additional global activities, which entail: an annual Global Development Conference, of which there have been four since 1999; global research projects; other collaborative programs; and electronic knowledge-sharing tools—a monthly e-mail newsletter, online discussions, and a Web site (GDNNet) (see box 4.4 for further detail on these activities).

While GDN is still a program in formation, external views and ongoing evaluation point to a number of issues confronting its relevance, long-term sustainability, and relationship to the World Bank. GDN used a broadly participatory, web-based, consultation process in establishing its governance structure. The process led to the creation of a 17-member governing board composed of 10 individuals selected from each of the 10 participating regional networks; one individual selected from each of the three international economic, political science, and sociology associations; two at-large; and one each from the World Bank and the UNDP. Nonetheless, GDN is still seen by some “as a child of the World Bank” (Stone 2003,

pp. 43-61). A possible reason for this is that initial legwork for establishing GDN was carried out by a member of the Bank's staff, who later retired from the Bank to become GDN's director.

Box 4.4: GDN Major Activities since 1999

- Regional Research Competitions—Some US\$13 million has been allocated to fund just over 400 projects.
- Annual Development Conferences—the fourth conference, held in Cairo in early 2003, was attended by some 500 participants from 95 countries.
- Global Research Project—Explaining Growth project, near completion, has two overview volumes and seven regional volumes. Two new projects are Bridging Research and Policy and Understanding Reform.
- GDN's Web site provides a monthly electronic newsletter to some 11,000 subscribers, access to some 2,000 researcher and organization profiles, and just over 6,000 publications.
- Other collaborative projects (with the World Bank, U.S.-based National Institutes of Health, and scholarship program with IMF).

A number of donors and some in the international research community further criticize what they view as GDN's "loyalty" to too narrow a set of ideas and institutes it knows (Stone 2003). One specific criticism, of the GDN's exclusive focus on economics, led to a decision of the Board in 2002 to encourage regional networks to adopt a more multidisciplinary orientation to future research funding. The speed at which GDN would move to a broader social science focus remains a heavily debated issue, with officials of the regional networks, which were deliberately created to strengthen economic research, voicing concern that they were not consulted on this decision.

In 2001, GDN management commissioned a study of the regional research competitions in six networks (and an independent DGF-required evaluation is scheduled for FY04). The study concluded that GDN regional hubs grant research awards in a competitive manner and that research has been of high quality and policy-relevant, with the "potential to contribute to development." The review noted that transparency could be enhanced by providing detailed selection criteria, with each call for proposals and competition improved by making grants available to "researchers from countries with weak economics scholarship"; and capacity-building impact could be increased through addition of a training and mentoring program for researchers. It also suggested that steps should be taken to improve the impact of research.

Both that study and interviews of a large number of actors involved in GDN, conducted as part of an ongoing case study of GDN, provide insights into a global program that is in a formative period. The case study, which is part of phase 2 of OED's review of World Bank global programs (World Bank forthcoming), is exploring questions of GDN's relevance and effectiveness, such as the program's relationship and value added vis-à-vis other regional research organizations; its prospects for long-term sustainability; and its relationship with the World Bank and

the Bank's role in program oversight within the context of GDN's "spin-off" from the Bank.⁵³

Crosscutting Issues

Although still at early stages of implementation, all three initiatives—the Development Gateway, the Global Development Learning Network, and the Global Development Network—have demonstrated that they can enhance knowledge sharing and client capacity to acquire and use knowledge. Progress in the initial implementation of each initiative has been quite rapid, and the Bank's weight in the international development community has been significant in mobilizing the participation of partners.

But four major challenges remain to be met to ensure the long-term sustainability and distinct program value of each of the initiatives:

- The utility of each program—at the country, Regional, and global levels—needs clarification and continual review in a rapidly changing technology and development environment.
- The financial sustainability of each program and the independent, country/Regional components of each program need to be secured.
- Consolidation of each program's governance arrangements is needed to ensure effective strategic direction and oversight, commensurate with available resources.
- As the initiatives mature, they and the Bank need to define and better manage the Bank's evolving roles and responsibilities.

Early experience suggests that integration of the Development Gateway and GDLN into the Bank's country programs can facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and iterative knowledge sharing that is important for programmatic lending, participatory ESW, and poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and CAS preparations aimed at building country ownership of development strategies and processes. These processes require cost-effective means of holding dialogues, exchanging good practices, and involving multiple stakeholders—and for all of these operational activities, the global knowledge initiatives can provide useful platforms. In addition, the research capacity building supported through GDN potentially reinforces the greater collaboration and use of local expertise that clients and international experts have recommended.

Anecdotal evidence from LCR indicates further that events involving stakeholders in similar Bank (or other donor) projects across countries that are carried out in conjunction with existing knowledge networks and use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capacity in order to sustain and deepen dialogue have more impact on clients than real-time GDLN learning activities conducted as stand-alone events with little follow-up. There is also some experience to suggest

⁵³ This summary provides preliminary observations from a GDN review being conducted as part of OED's evaluation of the Bank's global programs.

that, given the complementary nature of the initiatives, the reach and efficiency of knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities can be extended by joint undertakings (for example, of country-based GDLN and Development Gateway organizations) built around Bank projects and knowledge networks within and across countries. For example, LCR has organized collaboration between the GDLN and the Development Gateway, with support from an internationally respected NGO, that has fostered problem solving among dispersed and marginal groups of indigenous people across the Region.

Despite their promise, use of these capacities in operations has, however, been very limited, for the following four reasons:

- Many country-based partner institutions are not yet fully established (especially Country Gateways and DLCs still in their planning or implementation phases).
- Use of ICT for development “has not penetrated the agenda of Regional Bank staff” (Walker 2003).
- Clear articulation of country knowledge demands is essential to move the initiatives from a supply-driven to a demand-driven mode. With a clear handle on demand, country staff should be in a position to identify the right instrument to build into programs and relevant units (WBI, networks) and capacity (GDLN, Development Gateway, thematic groups) to mobilize in meeting the demand.
- But Bank processes, resource allocations, and electronic systems are not yet in place to make this response to country demand as seamless as possible. In interviews, some operational staff emphasized that bureaucratic and funding hurdles to the use of these capacities (notably GDLN) are a disincentive.

For each of the initiatives, as well as for the independently owned country partner organizations, there is the further complication that “involvement with the Bank may pose tradeoffs,” given civil society organizations’ concerns about the directive nature of the Bank’s role (Walker 2003). While the examples cited above indicate that such concerns need not discourage partnerships, this view reinforces the importance of consolidating governance arrangements and management processes to effectively address the Bank’s evolving role in each initiative.

Integrating knowledge sharing

From the outset, the knowledge initiative envisioned a rapid transition from building a better knowledge management system to expanding knowledge sharing with clients and partners. This transition remains incomplete.

Knowledge sharing is increasingly becoming a way of doing business, as indicated by the growing number of innovations in the Bank’s interactions with clients. But most CASs still do not make explicit what their knowledge objectives are, or how they propose to help countries leverage knowledge to achieve overall development objectives. The knowledge dimensions of operations are only gradually intensifying, and project teams only gradually enhancing their role as knowledge brokers. Moreover, the three global knowledge initiatives reviewed, which have started up quickly, face issues of financial sustainability, governance, and unclear

partnership roles and responsibilities. As a result, the impact of the initiative—as perceived by clients—is still limited, although much welcomed and seen as moving in the right direction.

5. The Supporting Institutional Infrastructure

Over the past six years, the Bank has built up its information technology system; fostered a more open, knowledge-sharing culture for itself; and established new knowledge and learning staff positions at various levels across the institution. But it has not established adequate governance arrangements, nor adequate processes and incentives for institutionalizing knowledge sharing as a way of doing business. A main conclusion of this review is that these management shortfalls account in large part for the evaluation findings of uneven progress in the implementation of the initiative, and for its limited impact thus far on the Bank's service to its clients.

Experience from a broad array of institutions outside of the Bank shows that, to be effective, a knowledge-sharing system needs to be tightly linked to the institution's core business strategy. It also needs to take an integrated approach to technology, people, and processes. This chapter examines the adequacy and efficiency of Bank performance in establishing these core institutional support elements.

Resources and Governance

Resources. Bank expenditures on knowledge sharing programs and activities over the FY97-02 period total just under US\$220 million in combined budget and trust funds resources.⁵⁴ For the three years the Strategic Compact was in place (FY98-00), knowledge management budget expenditures (exclusive of trust funds) averaged about 3.4 percent of total direct expenditures, declining to an average of about 2.4 percent in FY01 and FY02. Network knowledge expenditures over the period have been more than double those of the Regions (exclusive of those incorporated within project budgets).⁵⁵ Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 provide further elaboration.

Governance approach. From the outset, the Bank has taken the stance that knowledge sharing is not a line of business, but a way of doing business, for which all units have responsibility. This decentralized approach to the governance of the knowledge-sharing process has allowed for considerable program innovation. But the approach has been accompanied by two governance shortcomings: a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities and an absence of systematic monitoring and

⁵⁴ Expenditures cited in this report are based on data from the Bank's Business Warehouse RM 2.3-2.6 and 5.1 (Supervision) and (Lending) reports. These figures retroactively incorporate budget reform changes made in FY02 to include direct costs only, and the FY03 changes in business process coding, which alter the way knowledge management expenditures are reported. Comparator data from a benchmarking study conducted by the American Productivity and Quality Center suggest that the level of dedicated staffing for knowledge-sharing activities in the Bank is about twice that of the other best practice organizations. (APQC 2002a, Annex B-1.) A different set of comparators cited in early Bank documentation for the knowledge initiative reported staff levels similar to or larger than the Bank's current level, but the basis of selection of this second set of comparators was not indicated.

⁵⁵ Not included in these numbers is the Bank's substantial investment in its information and communication systems that support the knowledge-sharing activities as well as other Bank processes. Over the period FY00-02 alone, total ICT expenditures amounted to just over US\$183 million, of which information and communication technology accounted for some US\$111 million.

evaluation. These shortcomings account in large part for the unevenness in the pace of knowledge-related change across the institution and for the weak linkage between knowledge sharing and other core business processes.

Figure 5.1: Bankwide Expenditures on Knowledge Management Rose through the Strategic Compact period

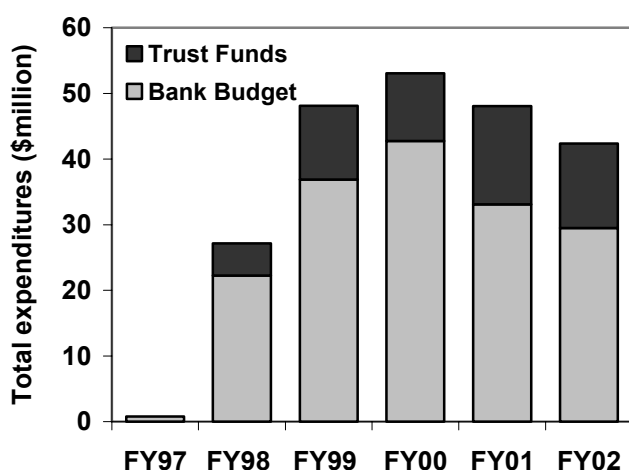
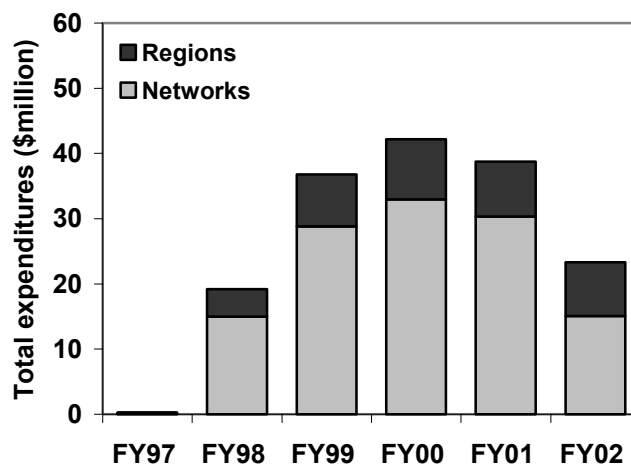
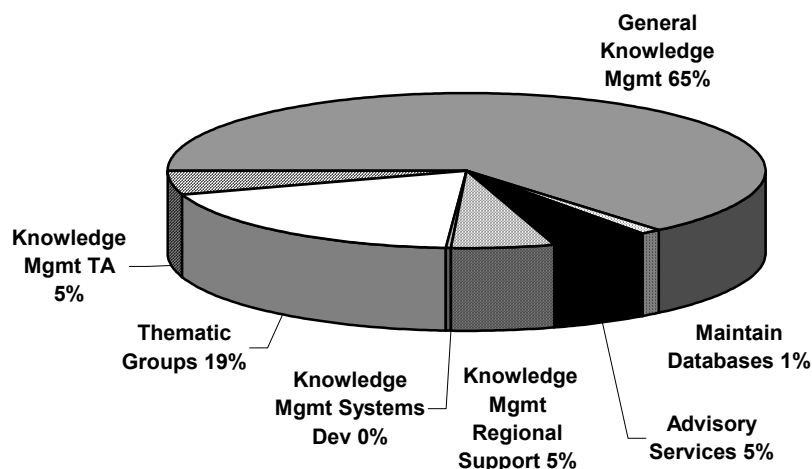


Figure 5.2: Network Expenditures on Knowledge Management Exceed Those of the Regions



5.3: The Majority of Expenditures in FY02 Were for General Knowledge Management Activities



Source: SAP/Business Warehouse (BW).

Roles and responsibilities. At the corporate level, a senior-level Knowledge and Learning Council met regularly from 1998 to 2000, but its focus was on allocating centrally provided resources for staff learning. The council never functioned as a significant governance mechanism for knowledge sharing, and there has been limited corporate-level strategic direction and oversight. From the start of the knowledge initiative, there has been a small coordinating unit that has served to promote the buildup of tools and activities and their mainstreaming across the

institution. This role as the champion of knowledge sharing is different from the monitoring and standard-setting role played by other Bank units responsible for fully mainstreamed activities—for example, units responsible for leveraging safeguards or assuring financial accountability.

Responsibility for the networks' knowledge-sharing function rests with the sector boards, which have provided minimal direction and oversight.⁵⁶ At best, knowledge-sharing strategies at the network or sector department level have been implicit, not explicit. Knowledge management activities are neither executed in the most efficient, cost effective way, nor do they achieve their full potential, largely because there is a lack of management and coordination. In such a decentralized system, each group has a different perspective, different methodologies, and uses different tools, which can lead to duplication of effort.

Although the Regions' knowledge-sharing responsibilities are largely client oriented, policy guidelines have not been established for inserting knowledge-sharing strategies into CASs, analytical and advisory services (AAA), or lending operations. In the absence of both clear guidelines on what's expected at Regional and country levels and measurable Regional and country objectives, there is no way to know if goals are being achieved. Moreover, the respective roles of the Regions, networks, and WBI in enhancing external knowledge sharing have not been spelled out or systematically coordinated.

Since 2002, management has taken steps to revise organizational responsibilities for knowledge sharing. WBI has been tasked with the catalytic role of ensuring effective integration of Network and Regional efforts, and with becoming the locus for strategic direction for the Bank's knowledge agenda. In addition, a steering committee has been created at the vice-presidential level to provide corporate guidance and oversight of the knowledge strategy's implementation. A new staff-level steering committee will foster coordination among activities and bring issues to the vice presidents. Despite these organizational measures, explicit clarification of roles and accountabilities is still lacking. And without clear roles and responsibilities, objectives needed for monitoring and evaluation are not likely to be well defined.

Monitoring. In contrast to good practice in other organizations, knowledge sharing remains a largely unmonitored process at the Bank. The task force that reviewed the knowledge initiative's progress in 1999 emphasized the need to devise a system of metrics that would track future progress (Prusak 1999). While subsequent management documents have repeatedly made a commitment to carry out this recommendation, the evaluability of all new knowledge-sharing programs and activities remains limited—beyond its broad statement of goals, the Bank has not set monitorable and time-bound goals at the corporate or **vice-presidential** levels. As

⁵⁶ The Quality Assurance Group is currently carrying out a first assessment of sector boards and their contribution to the quality of Bank operations, including the contribution of their knowledge management function, which may lead to movement toward certain common standards, but none currently exist as benchmarks for the assessment.

noted above, the most recent (2001) strategic framework for the knowledge initiative emphasized three broadly directional objectives—improving the quality of operations through internal knowledge sharing; expanding knowledge sharing with clients and partners; and enhancing client capacity to acquire and use knowledge effectively. But the framework did not set specific outcome objectives, intermediate targets, or milestones. Networks do not have common standards or procedures for tracking, reporting, and monitoring the progress of programs and activities. Nor have Regions developed a systematic way to track knowledge-sharing activities undertaken as part of country lending and nonlending operations within existing operational reporting.⁵⁷

Evaluation. Self-evaluation of knowledge-sharing activities is much less systematic than self-evaluation of other Bank work (OED 2003b). The one-off assessments of specific tools and activities, such as review of Bank internal and external Web sites and network and sector staff feedback surveys, do not make their assessments against stated outcome objectives nor allow for comparisons over time or across units. For example, they do not ask comparable questions about usefulness of activities. Existing self-evaluation frameworks and procedures at the country and project levels also do not adequately address knowledge-sharing processes. Nor do OED's independent country assistance and project evaluations; most fail to look beyond the quality of underlying AAA work to the adequacy of knowledge-sharing processes and their impact on Bank programs.

Outside the Bank, most organizations with leading knowledge management systems introduce performance indicators not in the early stages of implementing their systems, but as part of a second stage. Even though the Bank has progressed beyond the tool-building early stage to the second stage of institutionalizing knowledge-sharing activities, it lags in monitoring and evaluation—not only in comparison to other public and private enterprise leaders, but also in relation to practice typical of other areas of innovation in the Bank (for example, the Comprehensive Development Framework [CDF] and PRSP)—and indeed, to its own knowledge initiative plans.

Technology

From the start, the knowledge initiative has included a heavy emphasis on the Bank's information technology, with the dual aims of improving Bankwide connectivity and speeding access to Bank information by staff clients and the wider development community. The 1997 Strategic Compact envisioned an IT system that would replace what had become antiquated systems—for example, no shared drives, a plethora of fragmented applications, and inadequate connectivity between headquarters and country offices.

Many improvements have been made. The Bank now has a high-speed global network with standardized applications in about 100 sites; a consolidated store of

⁵⁷ An attempt to develop and use knowledge flags as a way to accomplish this tracking has stalled because of lack of agreement on how to devise a system that serves the purposes of enhancing performance but that is not excessively onerous.

quantitative business data; and electronic capture and storage of qualitative data, with 24/7 access and customer support. People both inside and outside the Bank now have faster access to institutional information and geographically broader connectivity.

But these discrete improvements do not add up to a fully articulated strategy for meeting the Bank's core business objectives, and there is need for additional technology improvements in support of the Bank's operational work. Information technology (IT) staff need to work with operational staff to enhance knowledge capture and sharing through the Bank's internal and external Web, the Development Gateway, or other means. ISG's strategic framework for FY03-05, which focuses on this issue, includes as main components e-business partnerships to facilitate knowledge sharing with clients and IT improvements in support of internal business simplification.⁵⁸

Before moving forward, however, there should be a comprehensive external evaluation of how well the initial strategy and its achievements are aligned with core business needs and processes. The ISG's FY03-05 strategy extends the steps taken so far and addresses outstanding issues from the current strategy; yet there has been no validation of the overall strategic choices of the past. Most ongoing data tracking and surveys are at the level of individual initiatives such as e-mail, videoconferencing, and discussion spaces, but they do not assess the effectiveness of the components *taken together*, in contributing to staff needs for collaborative tools and the Bank's overall mission. Before launching into new technology applications or other improvements, it would be useful to consider to what extent all tools currently available have actually promoted better team-based work practices and increased efficiency. Given that ISG is now moving to a new set of objectives, this would seem to be an opportune moment for such an overarching assessment.

The ultimate effectiveness of intended technological improvements does not depend on the information systems, however, but on better content management. The quality, timeliness, and tailoring of knowledge and information on the Web were discussed above in Chapter 3. In addition, there is need for agreement across the institution on common policies and practices for managing distributed content. Questions to be answered include, "What kinds of operational (lending and nonlending) information will be posted on the Intranet?" And "How will Web-based knowledge be validated, how often will it be updated, and how and when will it be archived?" The point is not to standardize the content but to clarify processes for disseminating and maintaining it. For this, corporatewide processes for ensuring higher-quality content management are needed.

⁵⁸ In July the Bank launched a Web-based application for project teams, the "Project Portal," to facilitate team efforts to access and create documents. In particular, the Project Concept Note (PCN) and Project Appraisal Document will be launched in Microsoft Word, so document sharing and editing will be easier.

People

The initiators of the Bank's knowledge initiative emphasized that the key to improved knowledge sharing was to change the internal culture of the Bank.⁵⁹ This emphasis reflected the widely expressed view, seen in the knowledge management literature, that while technology is an important enabler, people's behaviors are what make for effective knowledge sharing and use. As a result, several steps were taken to create a work environment in which staff would be encouraged to share knowledge routinely. Positions of knowledge coordinator and information analyst were created in networks and Regions, with responsibilities for developing and championing new tools and activities. Knowledge sharing was made part of the Bank's performance evaluation criteria for all staff in 1998, and incorporated into the Bank's first formal mission statement in 1999.

Although staff feel a greater openness in the Bank,⁶⁰ the changes in culture have not been enough to create the incentives and other conditions required for staff to contribute to the capture, exchange, and application of operationally relevant knowledge and experience. Two out of three task team managers interviewed for this review indicated that adequate incentives do not exist for supporting the knowledge initiative, and 60 percent of those respondents pointed to time constraints as the major barrier. Because knowledge-sharing programs are informal—that is, not given task designations for the Time Recording System (TRS)—staff participation in internal knowledge-sharing activities is voluntary. It carries no explicit expectations for

Box 5.1: Conditions for the Effective Use of Shared Knowledge

An in-depth study of Bank project preparation and supervision shows that “accessing shared knowledge does not necessarily improve the quality of projects. Instead, the three conditions of team autonomy, workload, and team composition moderated the effects of distributed knowledge on team performance.... More autonomy enables teams to overcome political pressures exerted by those who provide the knowledge. Lower overload enables teams to manage the time demands involved in using distributed knowledge without incurring excessive opportunity costs. And [the combination of] cosmopolitan and local team members enable teams to interpret knowledge that they access more appropriately.”

Source: Has 2002.

⁵⁹ As stated in a 1998 paper explaining the concept of the Knowledge Bank: “While communications will be facilitated by electronic means, the knowledge management system is about people, not about machines. The challenge is to harness the technology to link people together and to leverage its impact for development.... The technology is the relatively easy part.... The more difficult part of the Knowledge Bank will be the necessary organizational culture shift away from an individualistic mode of working and storing knowledge, towards a sharing team-based mode of work.” See World Bank 1998c, pp. 3-4).

⁶⁰ See figure 2.1 in Chapter 2.

actively contributing to the exchange of knowledge before, during, or after operations. Moreover, it is not enough for organizations to simply facilitate the collection and sharing of knowledge. An outside study of Bank knowledge sharing, described in box 5.1, emphasizes the importance of creating conditions—specifically, team autonomy, appropriate workload, and a combination of “cosmopolitan and local” team composition—in order to empower teams to *apply* and *feed back* operational knowledge.

Summing up

The Bank has made more progress in establishing the architecture to support its knowledge initiative than in creating the governance arrangements and work processes for carrying it out. As a result, the strategic intent of making knowledge sharing a way of doing business has been only partly realized. What remains to be done is to clarify roles and responsibilities; develop stronger linkages among the three knowledge processes of research, knowledge sharing, and learning, and between knowledge-sharing activities’ core operational processes of CAS preparation, lending, and nonlending services; and establish frameworks for monitoring and evaluation.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Bank did the right thing in committing itself to a major knowledge initiative. The rationale—to improve development outcomes by fully exploiting both the revolution in information technology and the Bank's comparative advantage as a source of development knowledge—is highly relevant to changing client needs, international development practices, and Bank interactions with its clients.

Since the start of the initiative in 1996, the Bank has moved quickly to upgrade its information technology capacities, establish new knowledge-sharing programs and activities, launch several global knowledge partnership programs, and create a more open and knowledge-sharing organizational culture. Both staff and clients have gained faster and easier access to knowledge and information as a result.

While the fundamental thrust of the knowledge initiative is on target, there are two shortcomings that, if left unaddressed, will prevent the initiative from achieving its purpose of enhancing client use of knowledge to achieve development goals.

The first is the failure to take the strategy's knowledge aggregation and general dissemination phase to the next level—providing direct support for task teams in their operational work. Or, in other words, to institutionalize the knowledge strategy by applying its tools directly to the Bank's core business processes. Three changes are needed to move to this higher level: network knowledge-sharing activities (especially those of thematic groups and advisory services) need to devote more time and attention to working with frontline staff in support of lending and nonlending services; operational teams need to do more to capture and feed back more systematically lessons and good practices from on-the-ground work; and Bankwide efforts need to be made to improve content management of distributed knowledge to ensure quality, timeliness, and—most important—operational relevance.

The second shortcoming is the failure of the Regional units, country teams, and task managers to develop a more strategic approach to the knowledge dimensions of the Bank's service to its clients. Knowledge strategies should be made more explicit in CASs and operations, and task teams should be given the explicit responsibility and accompanying incentives for implementing the strategic objectives. This systematic integration of knowledge into country programs and projects includes the incorporation of the global knowledge initiatives, which needs to occur not as an end in itself but as an enhancement to CAS or project objectives aimed at building clients' capacities to acquire and use knowledge effectively. So far, no specific objectives or timetables have been set regarding this second—external knowledge-sharing—phase of the Bank's knowledge initiative. Nor has effective coordination in implementing the knowledge initiative become routine among corporate, network, and Regional units.

Greater strategic direction by senior management across the Bank is needed to guide this mainstreaming of the knowledge initiative and to ensure that individual programs and activities, which are the responsibilities of the various units, cohere in a

way that achieves the Bank's intention to make knowledge sharing a way of doing business.

To realize more fully the knowledge initiative's potential to enhance the operations of the Bank and empower clients to meet their development goals, this review recommends three sets of actions:

- ❖ While recognizing that all units across the Bank have responsibilities for making knowledge sharing a way of doing business, management should exercise greater strategic direction and oversight over the institution's knowledge processes. More specifically, management should:
 - Define clear responsibilities and accountabilities of corporate, network, and Regional units for integrating knowledge sharing into the Bank's core business processes and better integrating knowledge and learning programs.
 - Ensure that incentives are aligned with responsibilities, especially at the task manager level.
 - The proposed Global Programs and Partnerships Council should articulate a strategic approach to the Bank's role in existing and in any new global knowledge initiatives, and the Bank should prepare and institute a long-term plan for the GDLN—including a financial plan as well as clarification of the Bank's forward involvement and the responsibilities of different Bank units for managing that involvement and the integration of the GDLN into Bank country programs.
- ❖ Network and Regional knowledge-sharing activities should tightly link to core business processes and move beyond knowledge aggregation and access to increased focus on knowledge adoption, adaptation, and use. For example:
 - Networks should set clear objectives for anchor, thematic group, and advisory service support of operational teams.
 - Regional and country units should make explicit the knowledge objectives of CASs and projects and the strategies to be used in leveraging knowledge in support of the achievement of overall development goals.
 - Networks and Regions should strengthen their respective responsibilities in the capture, validation, and application of lessons learned and good practices.
- ❖ Frameworks should be established for monitoring and evaluating network, Regional/ country, and global knowledge-sharing programs and activities. This involves:
 - Setting outcome objectives and supporting indicators (baselines, monitorable targets, and benchmarks of progress).
 - Defining procedures, roles, and responsibilities for monitoring progress and evaluating achievements against the stated objectives.
 - Also, depending on the outcome of its ongoing baseline assessment of the performance of sector boards, the Quality Assurance Group

(QAG) should continue to review at appropriate intervals the quality of the networks' knowledge sharing. OED country assistance, sector and thematic, and project evaluations should look beyond the quality of underlying analytical work to the adequacy of the knowledge transfer processes and their impact on the development effectiveness of Bank-supported programs. And both the Quality Assurance Group and OED should build client feedback into their assessments.

Annex A. Knowledge-Sharing Chronology (1996-02)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Strategy milestones	President's Annual Meeting speech features "Knowledge Bank"	Strategic Compact focuses on retooling knowledge base	<i>World Development Report</i> focuses on knowledge for development	Knowledge management included in World Bank mission statement	Strategic Forum identifies knowledge sharing as key action area	Knowledge-sharing framework proposed	
Individual programs & activities	Thematic groups & advisory services launched		100 thematic groups and 16 advisory services established: 4 of 6 Regions have databases and knowledge-sharing activities	Global Development Network launched	Global Development Learning Network launched	Development Gateway launched	
Institutional infrastructure Governance	Networks established with knowledge management mandate; knowledge management unit established in Information Solution Group	Knowledge and learning council established		Knowledge management unit moved from ISG to Operational Core Services		Strategic Compact assessment of progress; knowledge management unit moved to World Bank Institute	VP Knowledge Steering Committee established
Technology	External Web site posted		Field offices linked to global communications system	Intranet revamped; Lotus Notes launched			
People/resources		Budget for knowledge management allocated	Knowledge sharing becomes indicator in staff Overall Performance Evaluations				

Annex B. Inventory of Bank Knowledge-Sharing Activities

(Activities in *italics* are included in the evaluation)

Regional/Country Activities

Publications, newsletters, and Web sites

Databases

Knowledge events (conferences, workshops, continuous learning events)

Country global knowledge initiatives

Knowledge-sharing components of CAS/PRSP processes and country operations

Network/Sector Activities

Thematic groups

Publications, newsletters, and Web sites

Databases

Networking and knowledge-sharing events (Brown bag lunches], workshops)

Direct support to task teams (informal advice, peer reviews)

Advisory services/Help desks

Request response

Knowledge aggregation

Direct support of task teams, Network/sector management

Anchors

Publications, newsletters, and Web sites

Databases

Direct support to task teams

Knowledge events (sector weeks, other)

Knowledge partnerships

Global Knowledge Initiatives

Development Gateway

Global Development Learning Network

Global Development Network

Infodev

WorldLinks

African Virtual University

Corporate

OED

DEC

WBI

World Bank Internet, databases, public information

Publication sales and dissemination

World Bank libraries

Annex C. Lessons from the Literature on Knowledge Management

Knowledge management was just emerging as a major organizational strategy when the Bank announced its knowledge initiative in 1996. Many corporations and a number of large public organizations had recently established, or were in the process of establishing, knowledge management programs based on the view that organizations needed to be smarter, faster, more innovative, and more agile in the emerging global knowledge economy.

Since then, a substantial literature has built up that documents experiences in implementing knowledge management programs. In addition, there has been a growing body of research on the determinants of successful knowledge transfer. Five key messages from that literature provided useful insights for OED's evaluation of the implementation of the Bank's knowledge-sharing initiative.

Knowledge sharing is a process, not a line of business

Much of the early practice and writing on managing knowledge focused on explicit knowledge—"knowledge one can see and document"—and on how to capture, organize, and disseminate it. The core aim was defined as "knowing what we know, capturing and organizing it, and using it to produce returns" (Stewart 1997, p.112). Knowledge was understood as a substance to be engineered—produced, catalogued, warehoused, and shipped. And knowledge management was seen as an activity that could be assigned to a designated few in an organization that would be responsible for "decanting the human capital into the structural capital of an organization" (Skyme 2000, p. 4).

Over the past 10 years, experience with knowledge management programs has led to a shift away from this view of knowledge as an entity that exists independent of people or context and that can be moved about and manipulated for organizational advantage. The core concept is increasingly seen as "a process for optimizing the effective application of intellectual capital to achieve organizational objectives" (U.S. Department of the Navy 2001, p. 7). Greater attention is being paid to tacit knowledge and how it can be effectively shared. Also, studies have shown that programs cannot assume that the transfer of knowledge will come automatically with knowledge sharing. Rather, tools and activities need to make sure that what is shared can be adopted, adapted, and used. With the change in thinking has come a change in terminology—with the designation *knowledge sharing* tending to replace *knowledge management*.

Organizations have begun, therefore, to reframe the way they approach the practice of knowledge sharing, the key change being a move away from building knowledge repositories to integrating knowledge sharing into core business processes. In other words, knowledge-sharing programs are being focused squarely on the core processes of an organization, with those processes taken as the target points for applying knowledge-sharing tools and activities. And the purpose is being defined as

empowering process managers with the means to achieve performance objectives by embedding knowledge-sharing tools and capacities into their work processes and practices. This, in turn, requires that knowledge-sharing programs be built on a clear view of the points in the business processes where knowledge can be leveraged for greatest value. With this change to a more integrated or operational approach, knowledge sharing is increasingly being seen not as a function of an organization but as a competency of its people.

Success lies in the application—not just the aggregation and sharing—of knowledge

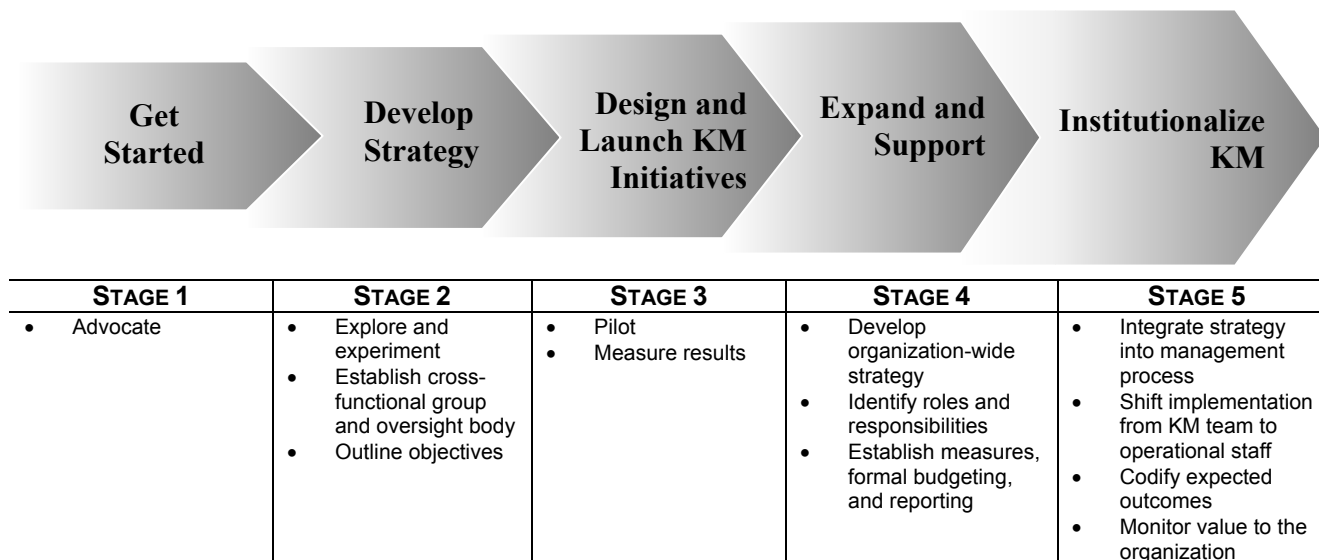
Studies that deal with what makes for the successful transfer of knowledge emphasize that knowledge has to be “internalized” if it is to be used effectively. While it can be disseminated globally at great speed, it has to be adapted locally by “incumbent firms” or the “local doers of development.” And that adaptation has been shown to involve active, extended learning rather than simple communication processes.

A survey of the literature indicates that the extent to which knowledge is effectively transferred, absorbed, and applied depends on how well knowledge-sharing efforts handle three dimensions of the knowledge-sharing process:

1. Accurate assessment of the type of knowledge that is needed—whether explicit or tacit and whether embedded in tools, routines, or networks of people
2. The appropriateness of the arrangements—or rules of engagement—by which the knowledge is exchanged: in particular, the extent of agreement on the goals of the knowledge exchange, differences in capacities of the parties involved and how those differences are taken into account, and understanding of the circumstances in which the knowledge sharing takes place
3. The applicability of the knowledge-sharing activities to the kind of knowledge needed and the context within which it is exchanged (Cummings 2002).

Implementation of knowledge-sharing initiatives requires a planned transition from advocacy to institutionalization, and typically occurs over a period of about three years

In a benchmarking study of how various organizations (including the World Bank) have implemented knowledge-sharing programs, the American Productivity and Quality Center identified five stages that organizations typically go through, and the key steps in each of those stages (APQC 2000a). The progression is illustrated in the following diagram.



One of the overarching findings from that study was that the most successful efforts have involved a plan for how to transition from building new knowledge-sharing tools and activities and creating awareness of their value for core business processes to actually embedding knowledge sharing into those processes throughout the organization. While experience has shown that this transition tends not to be strictly linear, the evolution from “advocacy to institutionalization” in many reported cases has taken some three to five years.

Communities of practice can play a variety of roles within organizations, but all need to demonstrate value and be accountable

Increasingly, private and public sector organizations are providing resources, time, and collaborative tools to formal and informal networks of workers—often called communities of practice—to increase the sharing of lessons learned and experience. While the value of these communities to organizations was initially taken largely on faith, expectations about their roles and scrutiny of their performance have tended to increase commensurate with organizations’ investments of staff time and funding for community activities.

Over the past decade, at least three different types of communities have emerged within large organizations. The first is *communities of interest*, which are groups of individuals with a common interest that may or may not relate to their day-to-day work, but that share ideals and communicate or collaborate. The second is *communities of practice*, which are groups of individuals who share a common work practice over time. These groups tend to cut across traditional organizational boundaries and enable individuals to acquire new knowledge or new skills at an accelerated rate. For the most part, they build and apply the same practices, and negotiate which methods work best and when they are most useful. They are guardians of competence in that practice within an organization and they help each other to develop the competence to contribute individually within their business units. The third is *intentional communities of practice*, which are groups with some specific

business goal that the community is collectively accountable to deliver and which have a fixed lifespan—until what they are aiming for has been delivered.

While all may exist in an organization at the same time, recent studies of practitioner communities emphasize the importance of clearly differentiating among their potential contributions to organizational objectives and the ways they will, therefore, be managed, supported, and assessed. In at least one corporation, this evolution toward more rigorous expectations of the role and performance of communities has led to the establishment of general guidelines and “community charters.” Typically, a charter explains what type of community has been formed and why; identifies how the community will support long-term business objectives; states what the primary and secondary objectives of the community are and how progress toward those objectives will be measured; outlines what the principle activities will be for achieving the objectives; and indicates the expected benefits of those activities for each category of community participant.

Although early efforts to monitor community performance attempted only to measure activities (for example, by counting Web site hits, attendance at meetings, and responses to e-mail queries), a more recent approach starts from the proposition that communities typically aim to help individual members, strengthen the practices of a community (or other business units or teams), and build broader organizational capacity. The assessment framework is, therefore, built on examining outcomes and value added in terms of which of these objectives a specific community aims to achieve and the relevance of its stated objective(s) to specified measures of business performance (Fontaine and Millen 2002; McDermott 2002).

Effective knowledge-sharing programs require comprehensive approaches to content management

To be effective, knowledge-sharing programs need to ensure that the knowledge and information that are made available are not only easily accessible but also readily applicable. For this, programs need to take an active and comprehensive approach to managing their content, putting knowledge or information together in such a way that it can be immediately adapted and used.

Although many knowledge management programs, in their early phases, have tended to view this process of content management in a narrow, technological perspective of online presentation and navigation, experience has shown that more is needed if the right knowledge is going to get to the right place in the right time to contribute to intended outcomes. Specifically, knowledge-sharing programs need to encompass processes for assuring quality, freshness, and applicability of distributed knowledge, with the aim of ensuring the availability of operationally relevant knowledge and information at the point and time of need. This entails processes of *content assessment*, or identification of knowledge gaps; *content aggregation*, including the validation and packaging of knowledge and information in ways that best enable their adaptation and customization to specific users’ needs; and *content maintenance*, based on clear indications of who is responsible for keeping knowledge

and information up to date and at what intervals, taking into account that information loses value over time and storage is not cheap.

Corresponding criteria that some organizations now use for assessing the effectiveness by which they aggregate, store, and disseminate their knowledge are:

- **Relevance:** systematic, ongoing knowledge assessment and inventory of knowledge assets
- **Accuracy:** determined by peer validation, not on an ad hoc basis, but anchored in the regular workflow of staff
- **Access:** based on ability of intended users to obtain the knowledge or information they need to make decisions or complete tasks relevant to their work
- **Currency:** judged according to policies and procedures for retiring and archiving out-of-date content and for maintaining a deep understanding of users' changing knowledge needs.

Annex D. Evaluation Framework for Knowledge-Sharing Programs and Activities: Criteria, Indicators, and Evidence

The evaluation framework used by this review in assessing the Bank's expanded internal and external knowledge-sharing activities is summarized in the following table.

Criteria	Indicators (illustrative)	Evidence (illustrative)
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs and activities anchored in corporate and country priorities Programs and activities built on Bank comparative advantage Institutional support aligned with knowledge-sharing strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge-sharing strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to corporate, sector and thematic, country assistance strategies, and core business processes
Quality and timeliness of knowledge products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregated knowledge is tailored and timed to client needs, clearly presented, technically sound, and state-of-the-art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff, client, expert reviews and surveys Bank content management processes
Accessibility and reach of tacit and codified knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended users/clients have ready access to up-to-date knowledge and expertise needed to do their jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination tracking, usability testing, usage monitoring of published and on-line knowledge and information and knowledge services Staff, client participation in knowledge-sharing events Staff, client feedback surveys, focus groups, reviews
Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge products and knowledge-sharing activities incorporated into core business processes Shared knowledge adapted and applied by clients in policies, programs, and institutional developments Lessons learned and good practices captured and feedback to Bank and client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge strategy articulated in CAS/Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and operations Knowledge products and activities built into staff and client (team) learning activities Staff and client feedback surveys Program and activity self-assessments QAG and OED assessments of knowledge-sharing process in country programs, and lending and nonlending services
Likely impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank and client knowledge bases and capacities enhanced Targeted improvements in Bank portfolio performance Interim and longer-term development objectives achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing knowledge assessments Self-, independent assessments of program and activity outcomes relative to stated objectives
Cost effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs and activities carried out without more resources than necessary to achieve objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking and benchmarking of the costs of programs or activities

Source: OED 2002a.

Annex E. Methodology Note

This note describes the approach followed for each of the evaluation surveys and background reviews undertaken for the knowledge-sharing evaluation. The reliance on surveys, which is greater than usual in OED evaluations, reflects in part the scarcity of reporting, monitoring, and self-assessment that currently characterizes the individual knowledge-sharing programs and activities.

Client Survey and Workshop

A survey was conducted to seek client views on the relevance, quality, and usefulness of Bank knowledge-sharing efforts. A total of 121 individuals participated in survey interviews—in roughly equal numbers from each of five countries—over the period June-September 2002. Participants were from government, the private sector, research and academia, NGOs, and media. The countries were Bangladesh, Brazil, Poland, Senegal, and Tanzania.

Each survey respondent participated in an in-person interview conducted by a resident expert commissioned by OED. Interviews were based on a common guideline prepared by OED with the help of an external survey expert. The guideline included open-ended, qualitative questions and quantitative questions that asked respondents to rate specific attributes of Bank knowledge products and services. Verbatim reports from all interviews provided the input for a synthesis report prepared by the external consultant to OED. Aggregate quantitative ratings presented in the synthesis report were based on unweighted averages of responses. A possible source of bias is that the interviewers were identified and a list of interviewees constructed with the help of country offices. But this bias is mitigated by OED's role in the final selection of the interviewers, specification of categories of interviewees, and final selection of names from lists provided, as well as by the preparation of the interview protocol and synthesis report by an outside consultant.

A follow-up workshop was held at Bank headquarters, November 25-26, 2002, to deepen understanding of the results obtained from the client survey and to seek recommendations on ways to strengthen the Bank's knowledge products and services. Participants included nine survey participants and four external experts, as well as OED and other World Bank staff.

Advisory Services Survey

OED and the World Bank Institute conducted a joint survey of 19 Bank advisory services/help desks in February-March 2002 to obtain information on their activities, outputs, and outcomes. Fifteen services responded, for a response rate of 75 percent (see list of respondents below).

The e-mail-based survey covered five main topics: (1) descriptive information (such as objectives, reporting structure, resources, services, client definition, and

operating principles); (2) number, sources, and nature of queries; (3) areas of growing demand and expansion plans; (4) quality assurance procedures; and (5) challenges.

Analyses of the responses were separately prepared by OED and WBI and compared, and a report of survey findings was presented and discussed at a retreat of Advisory Services in March 2002.

The participating Advisory Services were: Data Help Desk, Education Advisory Service, Energy Help Desk, ESSD Advisory Service, Web Feedback, Financial Sector Knowledge and Information Service, OED Help Desk, OPCPS Advisory Service, PREM Advisory Service, Rapid Response Unit (Private Sector Advisory Service), Safeguard Policies Help Desk, Social Protection Advisory Service, Transport Help Desk, Urban Help Desk, and Water Help Desk.

Thematic Group Survey

OED surveyed 28 thematic groups, one-third of the Bank's FY02 total, in May-June 2002 (see list below). Participating groups were selected for the survey by means of a stratified random sample. The sample was drawn from strata representing each Bank sector, with the number of thematic groups selected from a sector reflecting its proportion of the Bank's total number, with no sector having less than one group selected.

The survey was conducted by means of structured interviews with the thematic group coordinators of all 28 groups, based on a common interview protocol. The interviews, which lasted approximately 45 minutes, covered four main topics: 1) descriptive information (such as date of origin, size and composition of membership, objectives); 2) activities and their effectiveness; 3) management processes for programming, budgeting, reporting, and determining group knowledge needs; and 4) procedures for monitoring and evaluation. Information from the surveys was supplemented by materials provided by thematic group coordinators or sector managers, or available on the Web sites of individual groups.

A draft synthesis of survey findings was distributed to all survey participants for comment.

The participating thematic groups were: Biodiversity; Child Labor; Civic Engagement; Coastal and Marine Resource Management; Community-Based Rural Development; Debt Markets; Disability; Early Child Development; E-Government; Gender and Rural Development; Growth; Involuntary Settlement; Nutrition; Payment Systems; Population and Reproductive Health; Ports, Rails, Aviation and Logistics; Poverty Impact Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation; Private Delivery of Public Services; Public Expenditure Management; Quality of Fiscal Adjustment; Rural Microfinance and Small and Medium-Size Enterprises; Rural Private Sector, Markets, Finance and Infrastructure; Rural Water and Sanitation; School Health; Secondary Education; Social Analysis and Policy; Urban Economics and Development Strategy; and Urban Environment

Staff User Survey

OED conducted an interview survey of a sample of Bank operational staff to elicit information on how staff obtain information needed to do their jobs and how lessons from experience are built into and captured from operations. The staff surveyed were selected from the task teams of a random sample of 21 projects (18 investment and 3 adjustment) approved in FY01, representing 10 percent of the total approvals of that year. A total of 30 staff were surveyed, including the task manager of each of 19 projects and a second team member in half of all investment projects. In addition, the Appraisal Documents or the Memorandum and Recommendations of the President were reviewed for information on the knowledge dimensions of the respective projects.

A common protocol was used for the interviews and document review that addresses as four sets of questions: (1) sources of information used in the design of the projects (Bank and external analysis and documentation, databases, thematic groups, advisory services, Web sites, peer reviews, informal contacts); (2) knowledge-sharing activities undertaken in the course of project implementation; (3) knowledge capacity-building components of projects; and (4) views on overall improvements in Bank knowledge sharing, utility of different knowledge-sharing activities, and adequacy of incentives for staff participation.

A draft synthesis of survey findings was distributed to all survey participants for comment.

Expert Reviews

External experts commissioned by OED reviewed the quality, relevance, and innovativeness of the Bank's shared knowledge in four issue areas: power sector reform, primary and secondary education, public expenditure management, and rural and urban water supply. Two criteria were used in selecting the issues: (1) diversity across sectors and themes and (2) extensive Bank involvement across a wide range of both IBRD and IDA countries. Three of the four experts have served as consultants to the Bank, but none has been a Bank employee.

The materials reviewed, selected by OED in consultation with the relevant sector units of the Bank, included research and analytical reports, country-specific economic and sector work, and supporting materials for major conferences or workshops in each field. The experts were also asked to review the quality and accessibility of material on related World Bank Web sites. In addition, they were asked to look at a sample of projects to determine how adequately projects were building in cutting-edge knowledge.

The experts were asked to use a common set of six criteria in making their evaluations. These were (1) *relevance*: was the material relevant to clients' needs? (2) *comprehensiveness*: was the material appropriately *comprehensive* in its treatment of the subject matter? (3) *level of knowledge*: did the material provide clients with the

best and most up-to-date knowledge on the issue? (4) *clarity*: were the ideas and recommendations in the materials stated clearly? (5) *objectivity*: did the materials present information in an objective manner (indicating, where pertinent, existing differences of viewpoint)? and (6) *practicality*: did the materials provide information of practical usefulness to decisionmakers?

Each item reviewed was rated separately as input into an overall synthesis assessment. Draft reviews were shared with Bank staff and revised to take account of their comments.

Consultant Reviews of the Development Gateway and the Global Development Learning Network

Independent consultants were commissioned by OED to prepare desk reviews of the design and startup of the two knowledge initiatives. The reviews, conducted within limited consultancy periods of three weeks, were based on examination of program documents, interviews with relevant Bank staff, and selected telephone interviews with partners in each program.

Using standard OED evaluation criteria (relevance, efficacy, and efficiency), each program was reviewed in terms of its: (1) clarity of objective and the importance of the objective to achieving the Bank's overall mission; (2) early evidence of extent to which it is likely to achieve its intended objectives; and (3) the cost-effectiveness of the program as an instrument for knowledge sharing and the sustainability of the program, given the existing business model and the level of support currently being provided.

Specifically, the review of the Development Gateway covered the four Gateway services (Knowledge/Topics, AiDA, dgMarket, and the Country Gateways), the integration of the program into Bank operations, the governance of the program, and the role of the Bank. Consultants for this review were staff of an independent knowledge and information services consulting firm in Canada. The consultants were previously part of a team that had prepared a report for the Bank on the management of its portfolio of global knowledge programs.

The GDLN review, which covered the program's affiliated Distance Learning Centers, central GDLN Services, and integration of the program into Bank operations, was conducted by a distance learning expert on the teaching staff of Syracuse University Training Systems Institute and staff of a technology and training systems institute in Brazil. The reviewer has worked as a consultant on Bank education projects.

Draft reviews were shared with each program's core Bank staff and revised to take account of their comments.

Annex F. Examples of Comparator Knowledge Initiatives

	Mission/ objectives	Activities/ services	Governance/ funding	Stakeholders	Key programs
British Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To connect people worldwide with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK, and to build lasting relationships between the UK and other countries To leverage UK experiences for global development Development priorities: education, arts, science, governance, information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link UK schools with partner schools in developing countries Provide venue for shared curriculum development for teachers Provide Internet access, distance learning, videoconferencing facilities Maintain global network of libraries and information resource centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated as a charity in the UK, operates as an executive nondepartmental public body Overseen by a board of trustees UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides annual grant; additional funding from UK government agencies, international bodies, private sector; approx. 40% revenue (£170M) from selling services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding partner: UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Program partner: World Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montage Windows on the World school-linking database Knowledge and Learning Centers Project Global Library and Information Network
Virtual Colombo Plan (AusAID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create opportunities to improve education and access to knowledge across the developing world for everything from primary school teacher training to advanced courses for policymakers Use Australian expertise to deliver distance education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher education, including 200 scholarships for trainee teachers Plan to establish 8 multipurpose IT teacher training centers Extending access to information in underserved regions and contributing to policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint initiative of AusAID and the World Bank \$1.5 billion partnership; Australian government pledged AUS\$400 M—\$38 M to teacher training, \$22M to improve access to knowledge, \$10M for Development Gateways, \$18M to promote policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: educators, students, policy-makers, researchers Partners: IBRD (GDLN, Gateway), Australian universities, Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Australian government sponsor) Target countries: Asia Pacific, Africa (12 countries targeted) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training Content development Teacher scholarship Distance Learning Centers
Bellanet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International initiative working with the development community to increase collaboration and provide advice and assistance on effective use of ICTs Development priorities: Capacity building, technology enablement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as a vehicle for governments and development agencies to cooperatively experiment with ICT initiatives Monitors and supports technology innovations with applications for development Provides hosting and online workspace applications for more than 20 organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is approximately US\$1.5M International nonprofit initiative governed by a steering committee representing several donor institutions and Hosted by IRDC Functions as a secretariat with 10 full-time staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: donors, development agencies, end beneficiaries Funding partners: CIDA, Danish International Development Assistance, IRDC, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNDP, Rockefeller & MacArthur Foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDML (markup language initiative) WAVE Web-browsing through e-mail) Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) Virtual Activities iTrain Online

	Mission/objectives	Activities/services	Governance/ funding	Stakeholders	Key programs
Leland Initiative (USAID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year effort to extend Internet connectivity to 20+ African countries, building on existing capacity Objectives: enabling policy environment; sustainable supply of Internet services; enhanced Internet use for sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with governments to design a national gateway; define an e-readiness strategy; and procure, partner, and implement connectivity solutions Hopes to train 5,000 regulatory staff over the next 3 years Leland School-to-School Program focuses on connectivity for education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is US\$15M over 5 years USAID and host country sign an MOU for collaboration and codevelopment of a plan of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: African governments benefit from readiness assessments and implementation coordination End beneficiaries and country telecommunication providers benefit from increased connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leland subinitiatives: Leland School-to-School connectivity program Other USAID initiatives include the Global Technology Network
Imfundo (DFID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFID initiative to create and manage ICT partnerships for education in Africa A resource for DFID's country offices to identify and broker private sector partnerships DFID launched 13 ICT programs in 2001 with budgets over £100,000; 39 have been launched in total since 1998 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Bank, to assist governments and staff to access resources and expertise from the private sector Knowledge Bank, focused on sharing DFID experiences with education initiatives and identifying and addressing gaps in applied research or analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is £7 million over 5 years Initiative is an integral part of DFID's Africa Division DFID created comprehensive ethical guidelines for partnerships and requires shared understanding and MOU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: DFID country staff, governments and policymakers 3 categories of partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Bank partners (private sector suppliers) Liaison partners (shared objectives) Local delivery partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other programs from DFID include "Significance of ICT for Reducing Poverty" study and "Building Digital Opportunities" initiative
Markle Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation devoted entirely to the development of ICTs, taking a leadership role in establishing and maintaining partnerships Commitment to use capital funds in order to increase impact of ICT investments Priorities: health, children, policy for a networked society, public engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs: Policy for a Networked Society; Interactive Media for Children, Information Technologies for Better Health Sample investments: Joint project with Oxygen Media, PBS curriculum-based Internet project; Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A private not-for-profit philanthropy and grant-making organization, at times actively manages ongoing projects Foundation has US\$200 million in assets; plan to invest US\$100 million over 3-5 years Opportunity Fund: Grants have ranged from US\$1,000 to US\$3.5 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: NGOs, development agencies, policymakers, donors GDOP partners: broad-based memberships including approx. 50 private and public sector organizations Grant recipients and their beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Digital Opportunity Program Digital Opportunity Summit Founding partner, Global Network Readiness & Resource Initiative
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN's principal provider of development advice and grant support ICT for Development agenda is focused on stimulating the enabling environment, acting as a catalyst for the application of ICT, innovating new projects to leverage ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as a coordinating mechanism at the global level (DOI, Dotforce) Partners to provide country-level assistance in defining ICT strategies, as well as to support programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by a 36-member executive board, representing both developing and developed countries Voluntarily funded organization US\$2.2 billion in total resources from OECD donors, multilateral partners or program country governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: governments and policymakers, end beneficiaries Initiative partners: Bellanet, Cisco, Markle Foundation, IBM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT for Development Programme to increase awareness and pilot telecenters WIDE platform for south-south cooperation UN Volunteers UNITeS (United Nations Information Technology Service) NetAid (see below)

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDNP
	Mission/objectives	Activities/services	Governance/funding	Stakeholders	Key programs
Netaid (Cisco, UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To mobilize direct support to local development projects to fight extreme poverty and provide a connection between (nontraditional) donors and delivery organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides transaction marketplace for donations (individual or corporate) to directly support local development organizations Evaluates and monitors project quality and accountability "Dollar in=dollar out" donation policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NetAid Foundation functions as an independent nonprofit company, based in NY Overseen by a board of directors Majority of core operating and development costs are funded by original partners (Cisco, UNDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: donors, development agencies, end beneficiaries Delivery partners: Cisco, UNDP joint venture Also: UN Volunteers, UNICEF, CARE, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NetAid World Schoolhouse Launched with a high-profile rock concert
Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To foster private sector leadership and private-public sector cooperation in the development of information networks and services to advance global economic growth, education and quality of life Development priorities: global electronic commerce, GII development, education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a vehicle for participation for the private sector and a discussion forum for a range of international organizations Develop a research agenda on information infrastructure and hold consultative meetings on regional infrastructure issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An independent, nongovernmental initiative involving leaders from developing as well as industrialized countries 11-member board of directors sets overall direction, including budget for operations; Managing Director is responsible for implementing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience: private sector (particularly IT), policymakers, donors Members: 50 CEOs and presidents of major international corporations, policymakers, and academics from around the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIIC Africa GIIC Asia

Source: Digital 4Sight 2002.

Annex G. Client Survey Report

Perspectives on World Bank Knowledge Products and Services:

Findings from a Five-Country Survey

Prepared by David Shirley, Consultant

November 12, 2002

Background

This report summarizes the findings from a five-country client survey conducted by the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank in mid-2002. The survey, which was part of a broad-ranging OED evaluation of World Bank knowledge products and services, examines clients' views on the quality and usefulness of knowledge and information provided by the Bank. The five participating countries were Bangladesh, Brazil, Poland, Senegal, and Tanzania.

A. Objectives

The aim of the survey was to gain understanding of how diverse constituencies view the relevance, accessibility, and applicability of development knowledge and expertise that the World Bank has helped them to acquire and use, and the impact that exchange of knowledge has had on their work. The survey examined the following questions:

- The current use of World Bank information and advice, and how it is obtained
- Overall views on the quality and applicability of information and analysis provided by the Bank
- The effectiveness of different modes of exchanging knowledge supported by the Bank, including not only written reports and advisory services, but also training and exchanges across countries
- The key factors that contribute to or inhibit effective knowledge sharing
- The perceived impact of Bank knowledge products and services.

B. Methodology

A total of 121 individuals participated in survey interviews, in roughly equal numbers from each of the five countries. They included representatives from government, the private sector, research and academic communities, NGOs, and media—all with significant development expertise and familiarity with the World Bank.

Each survey respondent participated in an in-person interview conducted by individuals from within the respective country. Interviews were based on a common guideline prepared by OED, which included open-ended, qualitative questions and quantitative questions that asked respondents to rate specific attributes of Bank knowledge products and services. Verbatim reports from all interviews have provided the input for this synthesis report. Table 1 presents the number of respondents by country, profession, and sector.

TABLE 1: Number of Respondents

<i>By Country</i>		<i>By Profession</i>		<i>By Sector</i>	
Bangladesh	23	Academic	22	Econ./General	85
Brazil	27	Government	69	Education	13
Poland	25	Media	9	Power	13
Senegal	25	NGO	7	Water	10
Tanzania	21	Private Sector	11		
		Other	3		

Summary of Main Findings

The majority of respondents from all countries, professions, and sectors spoke favorably of the World Bank information that they use in their work. In spite of their generally positive assessment of Bank information overall, however, respondents were critical of specific aspects of Bank information and delivery (for example, adaptation to local circumstances, dissemination, collaboration, and support for institutional capacity building). Predictably, respondents' overall views of and previous experience with the Bank played an important role in their assessment and use of Bank information.

Main findings included:

- Tension between Technical Soundness and Applicability to Local Circumstances.** The majority of respondents from all countries, professions, and sectors agreed that the information provided by the World Bank is of unquestionably high quality—as long as quality is defined strictly in terms of technical soundness and sophistication. When discussing the quality of Bank information, however, respondents were often critical of the Bank's ability to provide information that is realistic in light of local circumstances and responsive to local needs. Many insisted that technical soundness is meaningless apart from applicability to the local context. Figure H.2 indicates the degree to which respondents were more critical of the realism of Bank information in light of local circumstances than of other specific attributes of Bank information (“relevance,” “timeliness,” and “technical soundness”) and the quality of the information overall.
- Frustration with the Bank's Failure to Consider Alternative Perspectives.** The majority of respondents complained that the Bank is too narrowly focused in the analyses and “best practices” that it presents, with little or no attention to alternative perspectives. Many respondents expressed frustration about the Bank's insistence that its models and solutions represent the only viable approach to solving economic and social problems in their country. Several respondents complained that the Bank's insistence that its approach is the only correct approach generates mistrust and suspicion of the Bank and substantially decreases receptivity to Bank information overall.

- **Poor Record in Dissemination.** Virtually all respondents criticized the Bank's weakness in disseminating information to people who need it. The majority of respondents blamed the Bank's poor dissemination on its traditional practice of communicating primarily or exclusively with government officials. Governments lack either the institutional capacity to disseminate information throughout the country or fail to share it with other groups that could benefit from it. Respondents agreed that, in order to optimize the impact of its information on a countrywide level, the Bank must abandon its "top-down," government-focused approach to information dissemination and be more proactive in its efforts to reach previously underserved individuals and groups.
- **Mixed Reviews on Collaboration.** Respondents' views diverged about the degree to which the Bank collaborates—or fails to collaborate—with local expertise in their countries. A substantial number of respondents criticized the Bank's poor record of collaboration, along with its condescension toward their own knowledge and experience. A comparable number of respondents spoke favorably of the Bank's collaboration and use of local expertise within their countries. Many respondents—even some of those who were highly critical of the Bank's poor record in the past—observed that the Bank's level of collaboration has improved in recent years.
- **Distinction between Analytical and Institutional Capacity Enhancement.** Respondents were also divided in their assessment of the Bank's contributions to analytical and institutional capacity in their countries, as well as the importance of Bank efforts in these areas in the future. Many credited the Bank with having made substantial contributions to their personal analytical capacities, but viewed the Bank's contributions to institutional capacity as negligible, particularly outside governmental institutions.
- **Overall Perception of Positive Change.** The majority of respondents, including many who were openly critical of Bank information overall, described positive changes in the Bank's recent knowledge products and services. Respondents named a variety of factors (for example, increased transparency, increased reliance on the Internet, increased collaboration with and use of local expertise, overall shift in focus from a lending to a knowledge institution) that have contributed to this change. Virtually all respondents, however, agreed that the Bank still has a long way to go in meeting their information needs.

Use and Acquisition of Bank Information

A. Wide variety of information used

Respondents described a wide variety of Bank information that they use in their work, including:

- Annual reports (for example, the *World Development Report* and appendices)
- Procedural guidelines (for example, credit agreement, procurement, donor coordination, employment, and so forth)
- Sector-specific reports and analyses
- Policy briefs and discussions

- Specific Bank reports and publications (for example, “Taming the Leviathan,” “Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries”)
- Information and analyses available exclusively through the Bank Web site (for example, sector-specific expert analyses, comparative data from the World Bank Institute, and so forth).

B. Varied access to Bank information

Reading formal publications (ranging from annual reports to sector-specific and comparative analyses) was by far the most common method of gaining access to Bank information. The majority of respondents also identified a variety of other, often interrelated methods through which they actively pursued the Bank information used in their work (depending on their availability). The following is a list of the most commonly used sources of Bank information in order of frequency of mention:

- Bank publications (studies, reports, surveys, comparative analyses)
- Bank Web sites
- Direct contact with Bank staff (interactions with task managers, advisory consultations)
- Attending Bank training events (workshops, seminars, conferences, study tours)
- Visiting Bank facilities (country office, library, resource center, teleconference center, sales outlet).

C. Growing impact of the Internet

The majority of respondents reported that the increased availability of Bank information online through the Bank Web site has dramatically improved the overall availability, relevance, and timeliness of Bank information. Overall, respondents praised the potential of the Internet, both in providing a more comprehensive body of information and in enhancing their capacity to compare and integrate information from related areas and sectors. A number of respondents worried, however, about the potentially negative impact of the Bank’s increasing emphasis on online products and services, including the potential for:

- Decline in the availability and responsiveness of Bank personnel
- Decline in the quality of print publications
- Neglect of populations who currently lack easy access or are not responsive to new digital technology.

D. Timely Bank response to specific requests

Respondents reported an extensive list of reports and other information that they had recently requested from the Bank for use in their work. Of those respondents who had made specific requests to the Bank, an overwhelming majority reported that they received the information in a timely and helpful manner.

“Whenever I need a document, I give a phone call saying that I need such element, and generally I receive it the same day.” [Government respondent from Senegal]

E. Additional information needs

Respondents identified several areas in which they would like to receive additional information from the Bank, including:

- Additional reports and analyses on sector-specific information
 - Assistance in tracking changes (for example, trends, evaluations of programs and strategies, and so forth) over time
 - Ability to correlate information on related topics (for example, women and poverty).

Other respondents, however, complained about the overabundance of information that they receive from the Bank and other sources—and the lack of adequate guidelines, summaries, or search tools with which to quickly identify the information that they need to do their work.

“I just can’t digest everything that comes into my office. Maybe five percent.”
[Government respondent from Brazil]

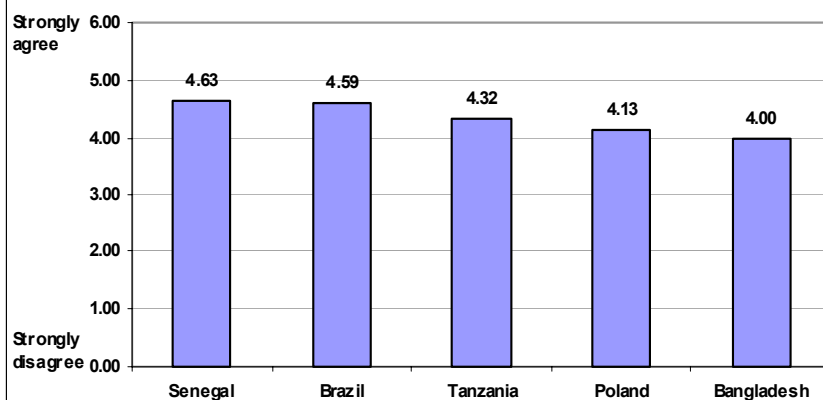
Overall Assessment

The majority of respondents praised the quality of Bank information overall, with many describing the unrivaled comprehensiveness and sophistication of Bank information materials and expertise.

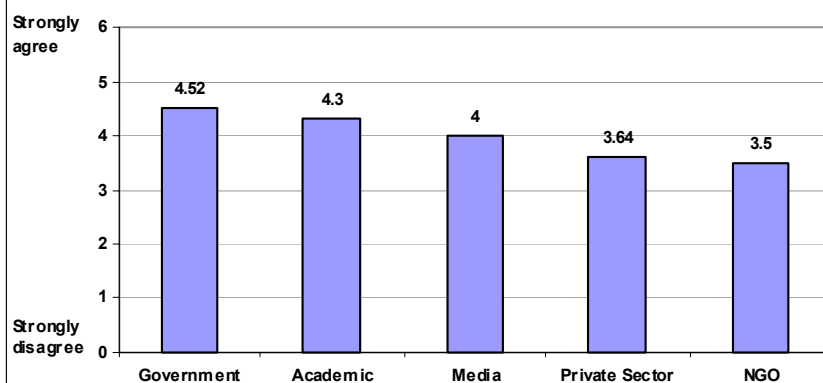
*“The Bank is **the** institution which we address when we need some kind of information or advice. Don’t underestimate this fact. If you really need an expert on a certain issue related to development, the WB is where you go.”* [Government respondent from Brazil]

The three figures below illustrate respondents’ overall assessment of Bank information according to country, professional, and sector affiliation.

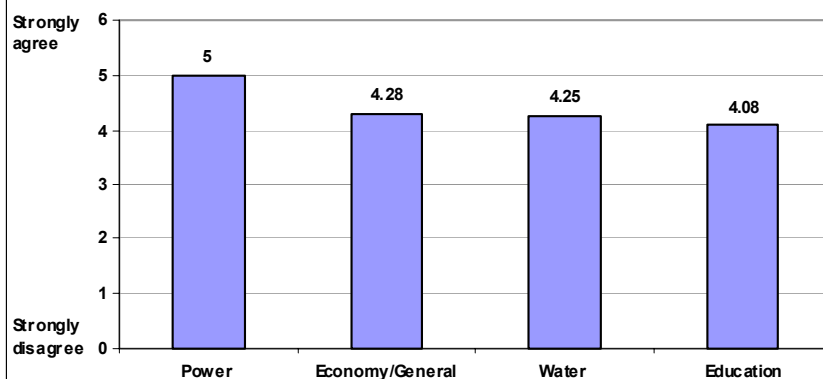
**Figure 1: Overall, the Bank Effectively Meets Client Knowledge Needs
(by Country)**



**Figure 2: Overall, the Bank Effectively Meets Client Knowledge Needs
(by Profession)**



**Figure 3: Overall, the Bank Effectively Meets Client Knowledge Needs
(by Sector)**



Assessment of Quality of Bank Information

The majority of respondents from all countries, professions, and sectors praised the quality of Bank information, expressed in terms of “relevance,” “timeliness,” and “technical soundness.”

“In terms of quality, the reports are always 100 percent—well founded, detailed, focused, always concerned with consistency, always the best quality.”
[Government representative from Brazil]

“The technical soundness of World Bank information is unquestionable.”
[Journalist from Tanzania]

A. Technical soundness commended

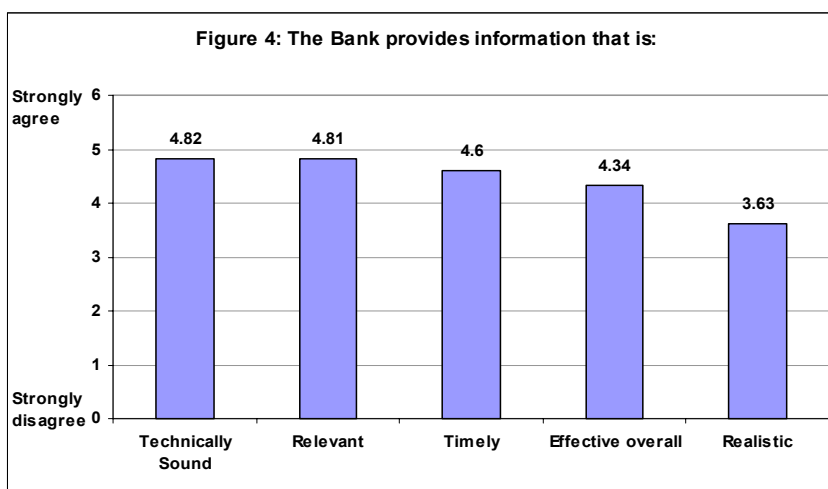
As shown in figure H.4, aggregate ratings for the attributes of relevance, timeliness, and technical soundness were substantially higher than the overall rating, with technical soundness receiving the highest rating of all (4.82, compared to 4.81 for relevance, 4.6 for timeliness, and 4.34 for the overall assessment).

Respondents repeatedly used the following interrelated factors to describe the quality of World Bank information:

- Comprehensiveness
- Detail
- Expertise (including the knowledge and expertise displayed by Bank team leaders and staff in their direct interactions with respondents)
- Consistency and reliability
- Theoretical soundness
- Analytical strength.

B. Inadequate attention to local circumstances

In contrast, respondents criticized the quality of Bank information when it was expressed in terms of the degree to which Bank information is “realistic in the light of local circumstances.” Respondents rated the “realism” of Bank information in relation to local circumstances substantially lower than the effectiveness of Bank information overall (figure H.4).



“It’s one thing for the presentation to be theoretically sound, but it cannot be considered “best practice” until it is tested for relevance, implementability, and benefit to people on the ground.” [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

“What happens is that these “best practices” come to us as norms; they become guidelines. They could bring a very positive effect, but also a negative one. If I’m in Brazil, living with Brazilian reality, implementing projects, and I observe that there’s not a correct vision of the situation, then I begin to question this best practice. Is it really true that this “best practice” is the exact, correct, and real vision?” [Government respondent from Brazil]

C. Different views among respondent groups

The different respondent groups were remarkably consistent in their assessments of each attribute of the Bank’s information, with the following exceptions:

- Respondents from Bangladesh were less likely to rate Bank information as “technically sound” than were other respondents (4.18 compared to 4.82 overall),
- Respondents from Bangladesh and NGO respondents were less likely to regard Bank information as “realistic in the light of local circumstances” than were other respondents (2.82 and 2.17 respectively, compared to 3.63 overall),
- Private sector respondents were much more critical of the “timeliness” with which Bank information is provided than were other respondents (3.40 compared to 4.60 overall).

Failure to Consider Alternative Perspectives

The majority of respondents described the Bank as narrowly focused in the analyses and “best practices” that it presents, with little or no attention to alternative perspectives. Respondents tended to evaluate the Bank’s approach differently, depending on their country affiliation.

A. Majority/minority views

The majority of respondents were critical of the Bank’s unwillingness to consider alternative perspectives in providing models and solutions. For many respondents, the Bank’s narrow focus reveals its bias in favor of macroeconomic solutions and general inflexibility in considering local circumstances—as well as its condescension toward the experience and expertise of country institutions and personnel. By failing to present alternative perspectives, they believe the Bank precludes access to potentially useful models and solutions that fail to conform to its overall development objectives.

“My general impression is that the Bank presents information and perspectives that support its own policy agenda.” [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

“The Bank often ignores potentially useful solutions from other parts of the world which were not sponsored or supported by the Bank (for example, rural electrification in Morocco).” [Journalist from Senegal]

For a number of respondents in Brazil and Poland, however, the Bank’s singular orientation to models and solutions represents a constructive approach to sharing information—and one that is consistent with the Bank’s legitimate objectives in their countries. The legitimate role of the Bank, argue these respondents, is to make the best case possible for models and solutions that conform to its promarket approach to economic and social development. It is the responsibility of end users to adapt the information and models provided by the Bank to local circumstances and local needs.

“[The Bank’s solutions] are not always appropriate, but they always make you think. Even if a given idea wouldn’t work in Polish circumstances, it makes you think; it’s a kind of fertilizer.” [Government respondent from Poland]

“I think [adapting the information to local needs] is our task. If you want to have a good adaptation to fit specific Brazilian conditions, this is something that we have to do.” [Government respondent from Brazil]

B. Presumption of correctness

Still, both respondent groups criticized the Bank’s insistence that the models and solutions it provides represent the only viable approach to solving economic and social problems in their countries. For a majority of respondents, this insistence that the Bank’s way is the only way underlies most reports, strategic models, and policy analyses. Many respondents from Poland and Brazil, however, described the Bank’s singular approach as a typical and understandable characteristic of international lending and knowledge institutions—and one that does not ultimately undermine the information’s usefulness.

C. Varying degree of flexibility by topic

Many respondents reported that the Bank’s flexibility in considering alternative approaches tends to vary according to topic. For instance, the Bank was described as flexible in its treatment of international trade and globalization, but utterly inflexible in its treatment of resettlement, the environment, and poverty in developing countries.

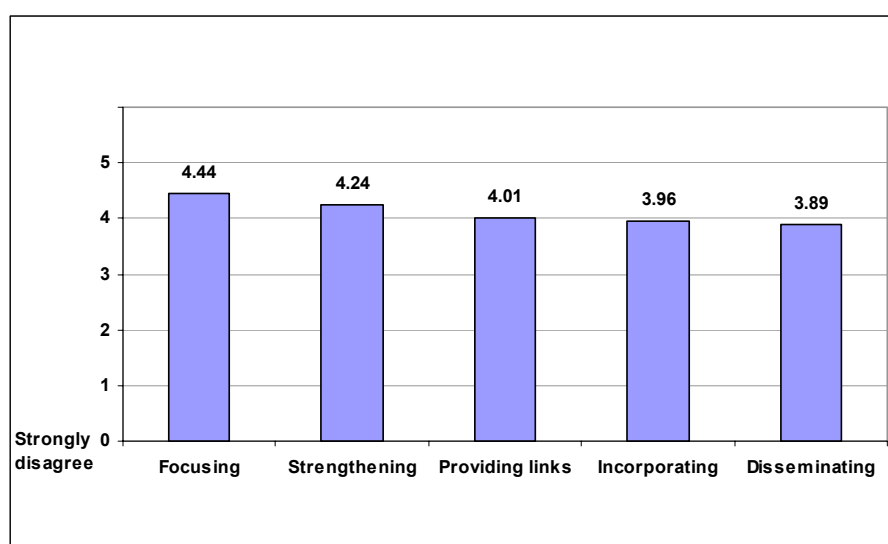
D. Distinction between Bank publications and personnel

In discussing the Bank's willingness to consider alternative perspectives, a substantial number of respondents distinguished between the information provided through Bank publications (both in print and digital) and the information presented directly by Bank personnel. Respondents were inconsistent, however, in their evaluation of these respective resources. Some respondents described Bank personnel as more open and less doctrinaire than official Bank publications, while others complained about imperious pronouncements of staff members who were out of touch with the less rigid and dogmatic approach of the Bank's recently published materials. There was no discernible correlation, however, between respondents' perceptions in this area and country, professional, or sector affiliation.

Effectiveness of Bank Knowledge Sharing

Generally speaking, respondents were more critical of the Bank's performance in delivering information than they were with the general quality of Bank information. Overall, respondents provided similar assessments of the World Bank's performance in delivering knowledge and information to users in their countries, along with the importance of increased effectiveness in the future.

As figure H.5 illustrates, respondents were most critical of the Bank's performance in the areas of dissemination, incorporation of local knowledge and collaboration, and providing links to counterparts in other countries. Respondents spoke more positively of the Bank's performance in focusing knowledge where it is most needed and strengthening analytical capacity. Still, respondents stressed the need for improvements in all of these aspects of Bank knowledge sharing.



Consistent with their overall assessment of Bank information, respondents from Bangladesh and NGO respondents were consistently more critical of the Bank's performance in each area.

- NGO respondents were most critical of the Bank’s weaknesses in providing “links to information from other countries” (3.17, compared to 4.01 overall).
- Respondents from Bangladesh were most critical of the Bank’s efforts to “incorporate local knowledge” (3.13, compared to 3.96 overall).

The following sections provide detailed views on four of these dimensions of Bank knowledge sharing: dissemination, collaboration, providing links, and capacity enhancement.

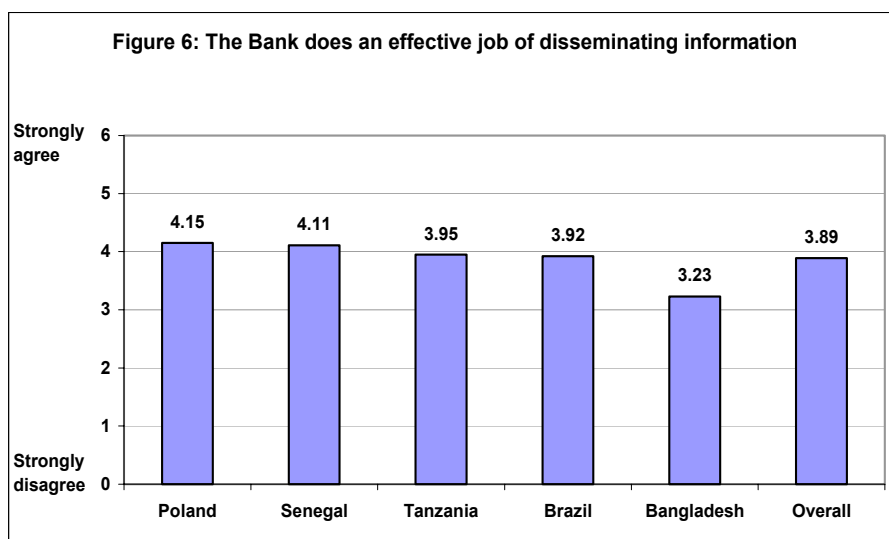
A. Poor record on dissemination

Virtually all respondents were critical of the Bank's weaknesses in disseminating the information that it provides to people throughout the countries who need it most.

“No, it doesn’t [do enough to disseminate its information]. That’s for sure.”
[Academic respondent from Poland]

“The Bank communicates very poorly with the public; in fact it doesn’t communicate with the public.” [Journalist from Brazil]

Figure H.6 illustrates respondents’ assessments of the Bank’s dissemination in their countries.



The majority of respondents blamed the Bank’s poor record in disseminating information on the institution’s traditional practice of communicating primarily or exclusively with government officials. In far too many cases, they said governments lack the institutional capacity to disseminate information throughout the country or in some cases deliberately withhold it from those who could benefit from it.

“In order to have a transfer of knowledge between more capable and less capable, it’s necessary to have interaction. It’s the opposite of water – if you have a big tank and a small tank, then you have a difference of pressure and water flows. But in order to have knowledge flow, the difference can’t be too high, too big.” [Government respondent from Brazil]

“Information should be made accessible at ALL levels. It is currently accessible at only the highest levels.” [Government respondent from Tanzania]

In addition to the Bank’s excessive reliance on the government as an information conduit, respondents repeatedly identified a litany of factors that currently inhibit the Bank’s information dissemination, including:

- Excessive reliance on the Internet in countries and regions where the majority of people still lack easy access to the Internet
- Lack of transparency and open discussions with stakeholders
- Lack of proactive educational initiatives (for example, workshops, seminars, and public forums) with the general public
- Lack of adequate translations
- Overcentralization and the lack of distribution and sales venues on the local level
- Lack of adequate mailing and distribution lists
- Lack of comprehensive listings and year-end summaries of information provided by the Bank
- Poor dissemination of Bank information to libraries and universities
- Lack of collaboration with the national and local media
- Absence of proactivity and motivation on the receiving end
- Excessive costs (including any cost at all in less developed countries such as Senegal and Bangladesh).

“If you are concerned with reducing infant mortality and [increasing] water supply/sanitation, but you don’t disseminate these works [on the topics] in Portuguese, you will not reach a broad audience.” [Government respondent from Brazil]

“First of all, it should prepare a sound mailing list of people and institutions and send them relevant information regularly. This is such a simple thing but they don’t do this.” [Academic respondent from Poland]

“But this is sometimes OUR problem; we do not always exploit the information that we do receive.” [Government respondent from Senegal]

“Few people realize that the Bank has a wealth of information [because] few people have access to the Internet with which to access the Bank’s Web site.” [Academic respondent from Tanzania]

Poor dissemination to the general public is seen by many respondents as the root of popular misperceptions and mistrust of the Bank and its objectives and programs.

“Most people associate the Bank with privatization and with the poor results achieved by privatization practices in Brazil. That makes things difficult. So the Bank should work to change that view, and the way to do this is through more communication.” [Government respondent in Brazil]

Respondents identified several ways in which the Bank might enhance its ability to provide information throughout their countries, including:

- Abandon the current “top-down,” government-focused approach to dissemination (assuming that government officials will forward information to individuals and groups throughout the country).
- Work with government, academic, media, NGO and private sector representatives to identify exhaustive lists (for example, postal, e-mail, and institutional) of the people who could benefit from Bank information.
- Publish and distribute periodic (annual, biyearly, quarterly) listings and summaries of newly available Bank information.
- Provide more translations of Bank information.
- Work collaboratively with the media to translate important information into language that is accessible to the general public.
- Provide information to schools, universities, and libraries, with links to curricula where possible.
- Actively support the development of regional information relays throughout the country (for example, local documentation and resource centers).
- Provide clearer links to or suggestions for applicability at the national or local level.

B. Mixed views on collaboration

Respondents often differed in their evaluation of the degree to which the Bank collaborates—or fails to collaborate—with local expertise in their countries.

A substantial number of respondents—representing all countries, professions, and interest sectors—were highly critical of the Bank’s poor record of collaboration and resentful of its implications about their own knowledge and experience.

“Some Bank experts are biased, based on their experiences of what has worked elsewhere in the world, with little attention to local needs or ideas.” [Government respondent from Tanzania]

However, a comparable number of respondents—again representing the full range of countries, professions, and interest sectors included in the study—spoke favorably of the Bank’s collaboration and use of local expertise within their countries.

“Yes, it does, and I think that it's quite good. The World Bank applies or bases itself on the knowledge of our experts.” [Government respondent from Poland]

These contrasting views of Bank collaboration seem to be substantially informed by the respondents' direct, first-hand experience, or lack of experience, with the Bank. Respondents who have had positive first-hand experiences with the Bank tend to speak favorably of the Bank's practices in their country.

"When I was making the Invitation to Tender for the Local Electrification Plan Studies, I had even asked the Bank to propose [an outside] consulting firm, but it refused, insisting it was my responsibility. They were completely open to the fact that a local consulting firm was the successful bidder." [NGO leader from Senegal]

Conversely, respondents who feel as if they have been snubbed or ignored in the past are more likely to speak critically of the Bank.

"We know this country, we know the enterprises, we have a contribution [to make] for the economy, and for this kind of relationship. Not to consider [our contribution] as at least a first approximation, I think is a loss." [Government respondent from Brazil]

Many respondents indicated that Bank collaboration needs to expand beyond the hiring of local staff and consultants. Generally speaking, respondents were more likely to speak favorably—and provide positive anecdotes—of the Bank's hiring practices on the local level (both in its use of consultants and its staffing of country offices) than of the institution's willingness to collaborate on other levels. Many respondents complained about the Bank's reluctance to listen and respond to local expertise on the policy, project implementation, and educational levels. Additionally, respondents suggested that the effectiveness, accessibility, and credibility of Bank information and training could be strengthened through active collaborations with national and local institutions, including:

- Academic institutions
- NGOs
- Libraries and learning centers.

"Its interaction with local experts through dialogues on various policy prescriptions is almost nil." [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

"Yes, the Bank does a good job of recruitment in the country office and in consulting assignments, but to what extent local perspectives are incorporated in development programs, it is difficult to tell." [Government respondent from Poland]

Respondents who criticized the Bank's poor record of collaboration were quick to name a variety of international institutions whose current level of collaboration exceeds that of the Bank, such as:

- ☐ United Nations Development Programme
- ☐ The European Union
- ☐ Asian Development Bank
- ☐ Bilateral aid agencies (for example, France, United States).

Many respondents—even some of those who were highly critical of the Bank’s poor record in the past—indicated that the Bank has begun to improve its efforts to collaborate in their countries. All agreed, however, that there is still plenty of room to do more. Some respondents viewed the Bank’s willingness to collaborate skeptically, however—as a result of bowing to pressure and competition at the local level, rather than internal policy changes on the institutional level.

C. Providing links to other countries

Respondents as a group had inconsistent assessments of the Bank’s ability to provide useful links with other countries. During the qualitative portion of the interview, the majority of respondents described the Bank’s unrivaled position as a source of comparative information and expertise, and its ability to provide useful examples and solutions from other countries. Several respondents from Poland and Brazil also described the Bank’s role in providing examples and expertise from their own country to users in other countries.

“No other organization provides so much comparative information from so many different settings.” [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

“For instance, Chilean insurance solutions have been recommended to Poland. Now Polish solutions are being recommended to other countries. Thus, they encourage the flow of good ideas, like for example the way of assessing inflation in Brazil or Chile. The Bank recommends solutions to different countries and if their governments accept those solutions, then they can only benefit.” [Government respondent from Poland]

In the quantitative evaluations, however, respondents provided comparatively low ratings (4.01, compared to 4.34 for Bank information overall) for the Bank’s ability to provide links to other countries. This apparent contradiction may be linked to respondents’ criticisms of the Bank’s failure to present alternative approaches in presenting examples and solutions (described above). For many respondents, the usefulness of the Bank’s expansive repertoire of comparative examples and expertise is compromised by the Bank’s tendency to present “best practices” and comparatives as the only valid way of confronting a problem.

“[The Bank’s comparative recommendations] should come to us as advice, rather than as compulsion.” [Government respondent from Poland]

Respondents provided the following suggestions for increasing the usefulness of the international linkages and comparative information provided by the Bank:

- A less dogmatic style of presenting comparative examples and solutions (including open forums for discussing and criticizing Bank solutions)
- Increased opportunities for travel to and exchange with other countries (through which local representatives can make their own assessments and comparisons)
- A more proactive role for local users in adapting and testing the validity of comparative recommendations provided by the Bank

D. Analytical vs. institutional capacity

Respondents also disagreed in their assessments of the World Bank's contributions to analytical and institutional capacity in their countries, as well as the importance of Bank efforts in these areas in the future.

Many respondents drew a sharp distinction between Bank support for analytical and institutional capacity enhancement. Generally speaking, respondents were much more likely to applaud the Bank's contributions to local analytical capacity and knowledge than the Bank's efforts to strengthen actual institutional capacity.

"Yes, on the level of analytical insights and techniques; no, on the institutional level, where the Bank doesn't go beyond project frameworks." [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

"The World Bank provides excellent training [on the analytical level]. The workshops (on rural sanitation) allowed us to bring together small, very well trained groups to advance on conceptual matters, on strategies for carrying out certain actions. The reports are able to systematize a set of important reflections." [Government respondent from Brazil]

A substantial number of respondents complained about the Bank's heavy concentration on the capacity enhancement of government officials and institutions. Many who spoke positively of the Bank's current efforts in capacity enhancement cautioned that the Bank continues to place too much emphasis on the training and support of government officials and institutions. More emphasis should be placed on training and advisory support to strengthen capacity on the local level and across a wider range of institutions.

"Yes, progress is definitely being made through the work of the Distance Learning Center, but training should be provided to representatives of other institutions, not just the state." [NGO leader from Senegal]

"They should also provide training to teachers and public servants—not just economists and managers—using television, the Internet, and other media." [Government respondent from Brazil]

However, many respondents warned that even the most aggressive initiatives by the Bank may fall short of the existing need, given the absence of local staff and infrastructure to benefit from the Bank's contributions.

“Yes [they do what they can], but too often there is a dearth of local capacity to make use of the Bank’s contribution.” [Government respondent from Bangladesh]

Respondents consistently identified training as a critical area for strengthening analytical and institutional capacity. Specific innovations in training suggested by respondents included:

- More use of e-learning for training and retraining
- Short-term exchange programs with the Bank
- Increased opportunities for attending workshops and seminars sponsored outside the country
- Increased training opportunities for NGO leaders, journalists, academics, and other nongovernmental personnel (including train-the-trainer workshops)
- Collaborating with other institutions to sponsor public awareness-building seminars (to encourage reliance on the private sector, instead of the state, in achieving social and economic goals)
- Shifting the focus of training from mainstream economics to areas of more critical concern locally (for example, the environment, nonprofit economy, and institutional economics)
- Specialized training events (in databases, policy formulation, elaboration and planning, and so forth)
- Longer training periods (at least every two-three months, in addition to the three-four events now used).

Impact of World Bank Information

The majority of respondents acknowledged an ongoing impact of World Bank information in their work. Many struggled to identify the specific area (or areas) in which Bank information had been most useful, however, suggesting that their interaction with the Bank over time had influenced their work in ways that were subtle and difficult to describe.

The most commonly cited impact by far was that of increased individual capacity. Overall, respondents were most likely to acknowledge the ways in which Bank information had enhanced their individual analytical skills and capacity, and the increased confidence and effectiveness that Bank data and analytical models bring to their work.

“It’s definitely had an impact on my work, especially in the area of analysis, but it’s extremely difficult to measure [how and in response to what World Bank input] I’ve changed.” [Academic respondent from Tanzania]

“The quality of statistical information provided by the Bank allows me to do my work much more efficiently than in the past.” [Government respondent from Senegal]

Respondents provided the following examples of ways in which Bank information has increased their individual analytical skills and capacity:

- Help in identifying specific analytical resources (for example, using Bank reports to identify rate of returns on investments)
- Assistance in defining and identifying specific populations (for example, the poor, underserved rural populations, and so forth)
- Assistance in developing indicators for evaluation of the performance of the national information system (through direct dialogue with Bank staff)
- Development of simulation models (for example, for anticipating the impact of shock on the terms of trade)
- Assistance in the development of benchmarks for evaluating projects and institutional progress.

Respondents also described other areas in which Bank information has had an impact on their work, including:

- Specific operational procedures and know-how (for example, completing surveys and designing terms of reference)
- Changing views on both the policy and operational levels (for example, toward road management and financing, institutional setup, contracting methods, and project financing)
- Enhancement of institutional capacity (for example, organizing and systematizing information systems, computerizing libraries and information facilities, developing Web sites, and so forth)
- Broad innovations in policy and infrastructure development (for example, decentralizing and modernizing urban transportation in Brazil and achieving universal schooling in underpopulated areas of Senegal).

“Revamping its information/documentation into a systematic documentary network [has been a tremendous improvement].” [Academic respondent from Senegal]

“The World Bank was the pioneer on the idea that it’s not enough to build new infrastructure; it’s necessary to have the social and institutional apparatus to operate this infrastructure in a sustainable way. This led to new laws, new institutions, a new way to deal with water supply and water quality problems.” [Government respondent from Brazil]

Key Emerging Issues

Three overarching issues emerge from these findings as needing the greatest attention.

1. Adapting global knowledge to local circumstances

As described above, the findings reveal a widespread ambivalence toward World Bank information—with respondents struggling to balance their appreciation of the technical soundness of Bank information with their frustrations regarding the Bank’s record in adapting its knowledge to local circumstances.

Respondents repeatedly identified a wide variety of factors that inhibit the usefulness and applicability of the Bank’s information and analysis.

- ☐ Overgeneralization
- ☐ Exclusive focus on macro—to the exclusion of micro—economic issues
- ☐ Single-mindedness and selectivity in presenting models and strategies
- ☐ Lack of understanding and adaptation to the needs and concerns of local circumstances
- ☐ Emphasis on extremes (in the presentation and evaluation of solutions).

“[The Bank’s presentation] is too generalized to be useful. Like other international bodies, the Bank uses standardized, stereotyped methods to solve specific problems.” [NGO leader from Senegal]

“[The Bank places too much emphasis on showing] something that has gone badly wrong, or something which was very successful. For one country to learn from another, there has to be a reflection in the middle.” [Government respondent from Brazil]

For some respondents, the Bank needs to do a better job of adapting global knowledge to local circumstances, whereas for others, adaptation is a job for countries themselves.

2. Expanding dissemination and dialogue

Dissemination was by far the most commonly mentioned area in which the Bank must improve its knowledge services. Respondents identified numerous ways in which the Bank might enhance its ability to provide information and analyses throughout their countries, including:

- Abandon the current top-down, government-focused approach to dissemination, which assumes that government officials will disseminate information to individuals and groups throughout the country.
- Work with government, academic, media, NGO, and private sector representatives to identify wider lists of people and groups who could benefit from Bank information.
- Publish and distribute periodic (quarterly, annual, biannual) listings and summaries of newly available country- and sector-relevant knowledge products.
- Provide more local language translations of Bank information and analyses.
- Work collaboratively with the media to translate important information into language accessible to the general public.
- Provide information to schools, universities, and libraries, with links to curricula where possible.

- Actively support the development of regional information relays within countries (for example, local documentation and resource centers).

Respondents also suggested that receptivity to and use of Bank information in their countries would be dramatically enhanced by more opportunities for open, critical discussions of Bank information and the format and context in which it is provided. This could be achieved both through public seminars and discussion groups sponsored by the Bank itself *and* through the external monitoring and evaluation of Bank information and activities on the national level.

“[The Bank should identify and] pay representatives from nongovernmental organizations to conduct regular monitoring and criticism of the Bank. The other day in the workshop with the Bank I mentioned that, in the Netherlands, they pay people all over the world to criticize them. This would be a good experience for the World Bank, to add some resources so that institutions like Rede Brazil can continue to monitor and criticize the Bank, recognizing that the most important information is about what is wrong.” [NGO leader from Brazil]

3. Capacity enhancement

Many respondents urged the Bank to place more emphasis on enhancing the capacity of clients to acquire and use knowledge and information—especially in the area of institutional capacity.

Specific suggestions included: more and better on-the-job training; linkages with counterparts from other countries; and more active institutional collaboration in the generation and sharing of knowledge. Many respondents, however, did not expect the Bank to play as important a role in this area as other international organizations already more invested in support for capacity building. Most agreed that considerable dialogue is needed between the Bank and end users in their countries before real progress can be made in this area.

Country-Specific Findings

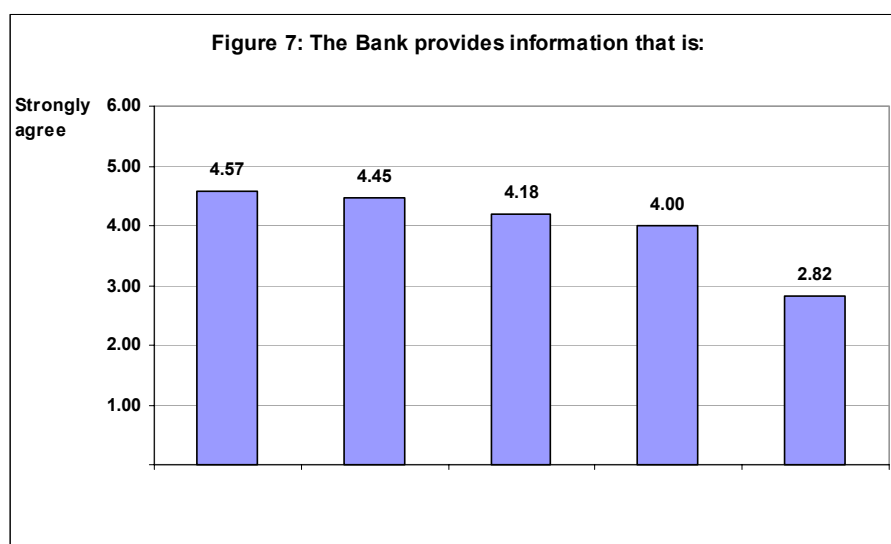
A. Bangladesh: Key Findings

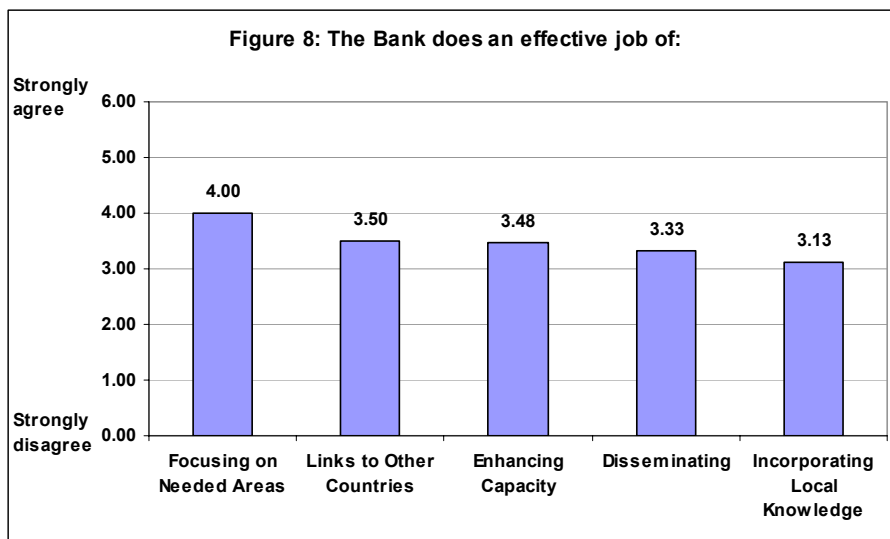
- Highly Critical of Bank Information. Respondents from Bangladesh were more critical of Bank information than were other country respondents included in the study (a 4.00 rating, compared to a 4.34 rating by respondents overall). Respondents from Bangladesh were also more critical of the ability of Bank information to deliver specific benefits (technical soundness, relevance, realism in light of local circumstances, timeliness).
- Limited Access to and Use of the Internet. The availability of the information provided through the Bank Web site has had little effect in Bangladesh. The most common way of accessing Bank information in Bangladesh continues to be through hard copies. The present generation of senior officials and researchers

exhibit limited exposure and receptivity to the use of electronic media in their work.

- Negligible Impact of Bank Information on Respondents' Work. Consistent with the negative attitudes expressed toward Bank information overall, respondents from Bangladesh reported the lowest level of impact of any of the country respondent groups. The majority of respondents reported either that information from the Bank has had no discernible impact on their work or that they were unable to identify the precise ways in which Bank information has helped them.
- Specific Limitations to Country Office Facilities. A number of respondents were critical of the limited resources available at the Bank's country office in Bangladesh. Though the office's library is accessible during weekdays to anyone wishing to use it, the resource is poorly advertised and few people outside the government are aware of its availability. The library provides a broad variety of Bank and non-Bank resources—all in English. There is only one computer terminal with online links in the entire facility.

Bangladesh: Assessments of Bank Information and Delivery

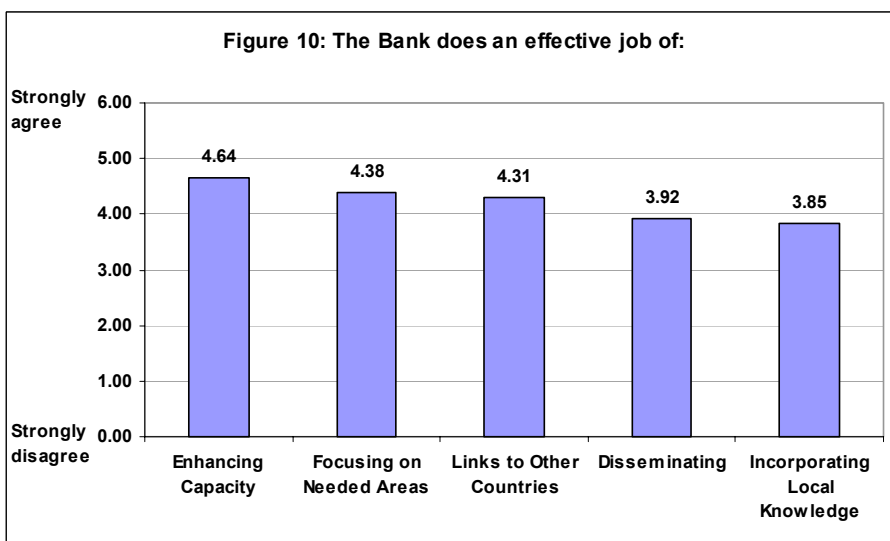
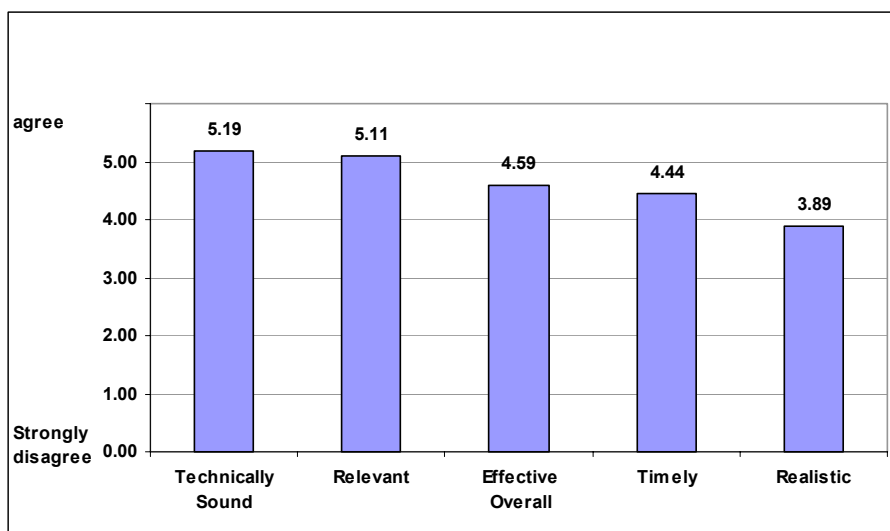




B. Brazil: Key Findings

- Comparatively Favorable Assessment of Bank Information. Respondents from Brazil provided comparatively favorable evaluations of both the Bank's overall mission in their country and the information that it provides for use in their work (a 4.59 rating for the effectiveness of Bank information, compared to a 4.34 rating for respondents overall).
- Less Need for Improvement in Bank Information Delivery. Respondents from Brazil were less likely than were respondents from other countries to indicate the need for improved effectiveness in all areas of the Bank's information delivery. For instance, Brazilian respondents provided a 4.33 need rating for "strengthening institutional and analytical capacity," compared to 5.16 for respondents overall.
- Importance of a Region-Specific Approach. The lack of adequate regional studies and analyses emerged as a key theme among Brazilian respondents, given the size and complexity of the country, in comparison to other countries served by the Bank. As one respondent explained: *"With all respect for Costa Rica, you can't treat Brazil like Costa Rica. You have to be much more regionalized. If poverty is concentrated in the northeast of Brazil, you need to have studies of private economic sectors, state by state, with this information."*
- Specific Problems with Bank Dissemination. While Brazilian respondents also expressed less concern than did other respondents about Bank dissemination (4.44, compared to 5.10 overall), they were nevertheless consistently critical of the Bank's poor dissemination policies in several specific areas, particularly: the absence of communications on a regional basis in favor of a centralized, government-focused approach to information sharing; and the conspicuous absence of adequate translations of documents and reports (both online and in print) into Portuguese and Spanish.

Brazil: Assessments of Bank Information and Delivery



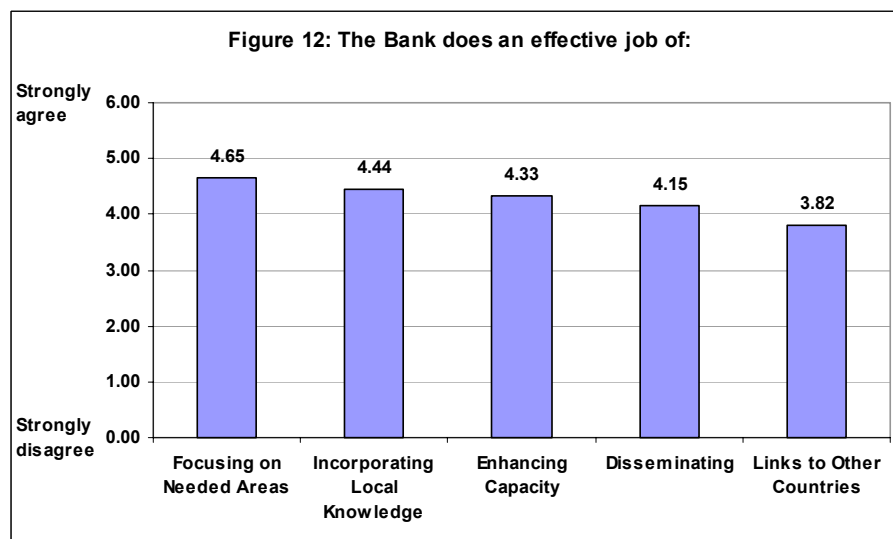
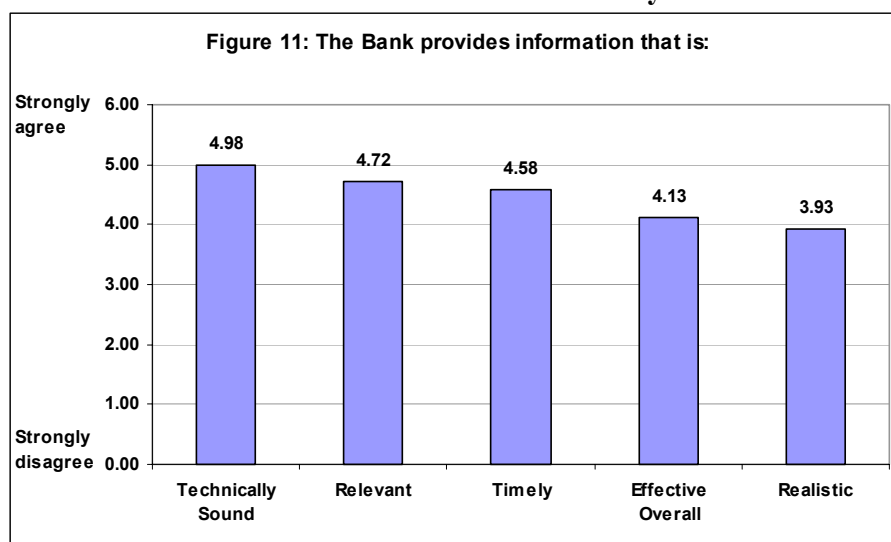
C. Poland: Key Findings

- Critical of Bank Information Overall. Respondents from Poland were more critical of Bank information overall than were other respondents (a 4.13 effectiveness rating for Bank information, compared to 4.34 for respondents overall).
- Comparatively Low Assessment of Bank Information Delivery. Consistent with their critical views of Bank information overall, Polish respondents also provided comparatively low need ratings in the areas of “dissemination” (4.67, compared to 5.10 overall), “incorporating local knowledge” (4.52, compared to 5.10 overall), and “providing links to information from other countries” (4.15, compared to 4.94 overall).
- Perceptions of Improvement. In spite of their comparatively low rating of Bank information overall, the majority of Polish respondents reported positive change in the ways that they seek and receive information from the Bank. Most

respondents were highly appreciative of the Bank Web site and the increased role of the Internet as a way to access information about the Bank's activities, both in Poland and in other countries. A number of Polish respondents also described the increased responsiveness of the Bank mission in Warsaw in providing information.

- **Self-Criticism.** Respondents from Poland were much more likely than were other country respondents to speak critically—and pessimistically—of their own country's role in the perceived failure to access Bank information, contribute local knowledge to Bank reports and analyses, and work collaboratively on Bank-sponsored projects. As one respondent explained: *"There is this English saying that you can take a horse to the water but you can't make it drink. This is a huge problem in Poland. The World Bank should make more effort to get closer to various communities in Poland. But if those communities are not willing to absorb, it is not going to work."*

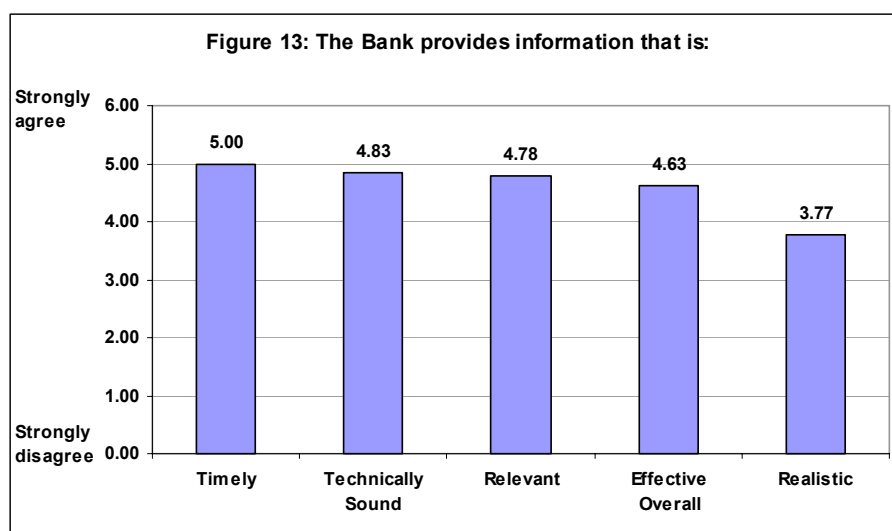
Poland: Assessments of Bank Information and Delivery

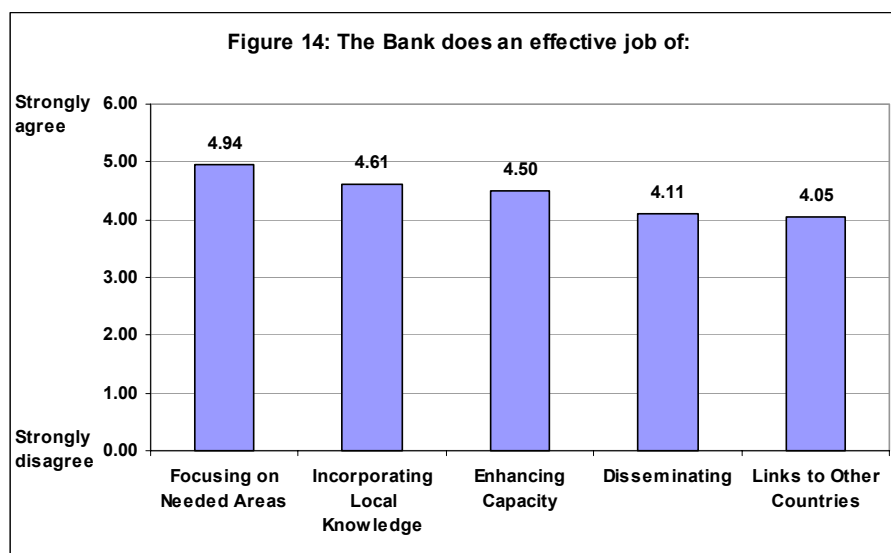


D. Senegal: Key Findings

- Comparatively High Rating of Bank Information Overall. Respondents from Senegal were somewhat more likely than were other country respondents to speak favorably of Bank objectives and Bank information in their country. Senegalese respondents provided the highest general rating of the effectiveness of Bank information (4.63, compared to 4.34 overall), and also provided moderate or high ratings to each of the benefits and attributes of Bank information examined by the research.
- Comparatively High Need for Improved Bank Effectiveness. Senegalese respondents also provided the highest need ratings for improving the effectiveness of Bank information in the future in relation to every attribute included in the study, with a particular emphasis on “incorporating local knowledge” and “strengthening capacity” (5.96 and 5.92, respectively on a 6.0 scale).
- Perceptions of Improvement. Respondents from Senegal were more likely than were other respondents to speak of positive change in the way the Bank provides information in their country—and to provide specific illustrations of improvements made by the Bank. These included: increased availability of the Bank Web site; increased training (for example, restitution and validation seminars); videotape conferences and teleconferencing; upgrades at the Bank’s Documentation Center; and the Bank’s ongoing collaboration with the Distance Learning Center.
- Self-Criticism. Along with Polish respondents, Senegalese respondents were much more likely than were other country respondents to speak critically of their own failure to identify and use available Bank information and expertise in an effective manner, including the failure of government offices to share information with one another. A number of respondents described the need to increase proactivity as a two-way street—a responsibility that must be accepted both by the Bank (in its strategies for dissemination and collaboration) and end-users in Senegal (in taking the initiative to identify and exploit existing resources).

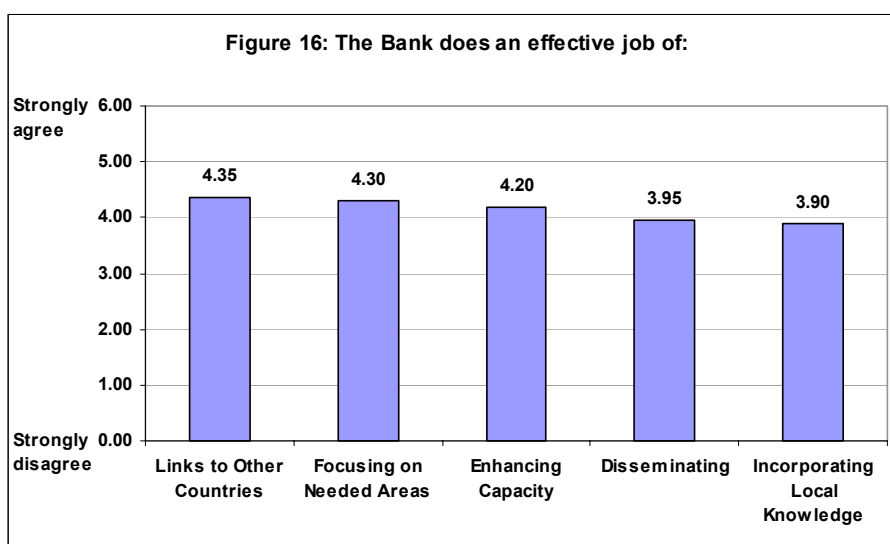
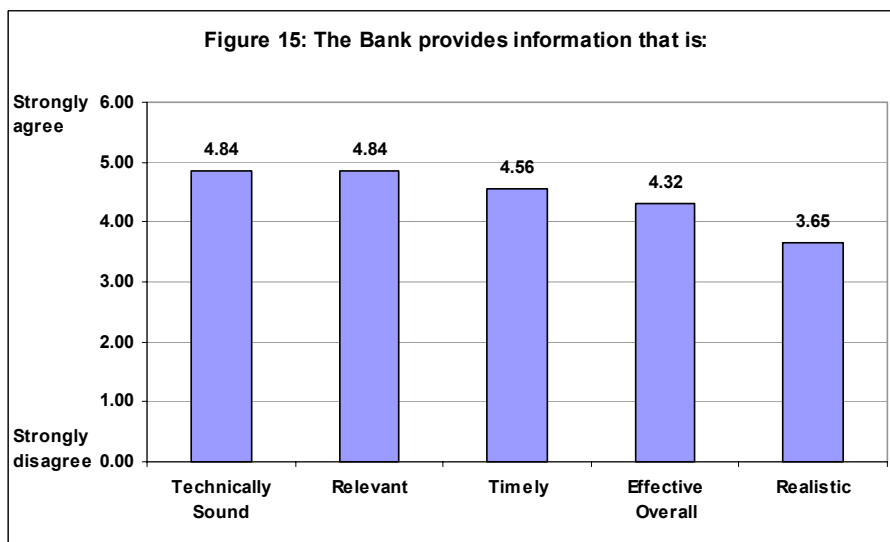
Senegal: Assessments of Bank Information and Delivery





E. Tanzania: Key Findings

- Moderate Assessment of Bank Information and Benefits. Respondents from Tanzania represented the most moderate group in their attitudes toward the information provided by the Bank. Tanzanian respondents provided ratings that were virtually identical to the average ratings overall—in their evaluations of both the general effectiveness of Bank information and the specific information benefits examined by the study.
- Divided Assessment of the Internet. For many government respondents, the Bank Web site provides a significant improvement in the availability and timeliness of information from the Bank. Outside of the government, however—and even among several government respondents—the impact of the Internet was perceived as limited almost exclusively to the governmental level. Some feared that the Bank’s increasing reliance on the Internet might actually be reducing the amount of information available to those without Internet access.
- Divided in Perceptions of Change. Many government respondents praised the Bank’s increased responsiveness, the availability of more and better information through the Internet and a more collaborative, knowledge-oriented approach from the Bank overall. Other respondents viewed these changes with suspicion—arguing either that the recent improvements in Bank information were cosmetic and nonsubstantive or aimed at increasing the Bank’s control on developmental policy.
- Comparative Benefits of Bank Information. Respondents from Tanzania were more likely than were other respondents to criticize shortcomings of Bank information in relation to the comparative benefits provided by other international institutions. Organizations whose information services compared favorably to the Bank’s included: UNDP, KFW, and EU (more effective collaboration at the local level); CIDA (more effective capacity building); and the UN (more open to alternate approaches).

Tanzania: Assessment of Bank Information and Delivery

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