

Terms of References for The Thematic Evaluators of Research Projects

Background

The objective of the evaluation is to assess whether and how World Bank research has achieved two objectives: (1) to generate new knowledge on development and (2) to contribute to broadening the understanding of development policy.

The evaluation will encompass all research activities of the World Bank over the past 8 years (1998–2005). It will be carried out by an Evaluation Panel consisting of Angus Deaton (Chair), Professor of Economics, Princeton University; Kenneth Rogoff, Professor of Economics, Harvard University; Abhijit Banerjee, Professor of Economics, M.I.T.; and Nora Lustig, Director, Center for Studies on Globalization and Development, Tecnologico de Monterrey.

The Evaluation Panel will rely on individual reports prepared by 18 to 20 thematic evaluators on a randomly selected sample of research projects. Once it receives the evaluators' reports, the Panel will summarize their results and prepare a report for the Bank's Board of Executive Directors and Bank management. All evaluators will also be invited to a one-day conference in April during which the evaluators will have an opportunity to discuss their results with Bank staff, the Evaluation Panel, and each other. The edited results of the report are expected to be published after the discussion of the evaluation report by the Bank's Board of Directors.

Each thematic evaluator will be asked to evaluate approximately 10 World Bank projects in their area of expertise. The sample encompasses both completed and ongoing projects. For each project sampled, reviewers will get a list of output that is as complete as possible. Researchers have been asked to indicate which one is their best output (e.g. published paper, unpublished paper, report or book) for each sampled project.

In addition, for middle-sized projects, evaluators will be given up to 2 additional outputs, and for large projects up to 4 additional outputs, for totals of 1,3,5 products across the size categories. These outputs will also be prioritized by the researcher. Larger projects with more outputs are expected to be given more consideration than smaller projects.

Evaluators will not be expected to review all outputs in depth. They are expected to look at them to get an idea of the range of the product produced and to review in-depth the publication chosen by the researcher and any others that they feel able to and that will enhance their assessment.

Evaluators will also be provided with copies of abstracts of recent Bank publications (1998–2005) in their area of expertise.

Deliverables

1. You are asked to produce a report (including [Annex 3](#) – Research Quality Indicator Form) on each one of the sampled projects that you receive, paying particular attention to reliability, rigor, completeness, and relevance relative to other work in the field at the time (see [Annex 1](#)).

2. You are also asked to produce a draft report giving your overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Bank research in your area of expertise based on the sample, abstracts, and your general knowledge of Bank research (see [Annex 2](#)).
3. You will be invited to a one-day conference in April at the World Bank to discuss your report with the Panel and World Bank staff.
3. You will also be asked to produce a final version of the report revised in response to possible comments of the Evaluation Panel. Your responses to the comments of the Evaluation Panel are expected to be complete and comprehensive.

Deadline

Your individual reports and the draft overall report are expected by the end of **March 2006**. Your final report is expected to be complete two weeks after the Evaluation Panel provides you with comments.

Annex 1: Questionnaire for Individual Research Projects

Note: For ongoing projects with limited or incomplete outputs, please adjust report to reflect the stage of the project.

A. Objectives

1. What specific questions or hypotheses did the study seek to answer?
2. Are the topics and objectives critical for policy in the developing or post-socialist country?

B. Design and Implementation

1. Was the methodology appropriate and well-executed? Was it innovative?
2. Does the project reflect awareness of existing knowledge from other research available at the time and does it adequately reflect a good understanding of the country(s) in question?
3. How reliable were the data? If appropriate, were surveys properly designed and executed? Was data compiled properly from appropriate sources and aggregation? Were data limitations considered in the analysis?
4. Are the conclusions consistent with the research findings? Were problems/concerns noted and reviewed?

C. Accessibility

1. Were project reports and publications presented in a manner appropriate for and accessible to the intended audience(s)?
2. If applicable, are policy recommendations commensurate with findings?

D. Results and Cost-effectiveness

1. What are the key findings of the study? How do they advance country policy in the field?
2. Were the results consistent with the costs? Did the project take adequate time to complete?

Annex 2: Questionnaire for draft report on strengths and weaknesses of Bank research

1. In your area of expertise, has the Bank made a significant contribution?
2. In your area of expertise, has Bank research focused on the most important policy issues for developing countries? Do you feel Bank researchers have appropriate incentives to allow identification of the most important issues?
3. In your area of expertise, has Bank research reflected awareness of substantive knowledge from other research available and in progress and sufficient knowledge of subject countries?
4. Has the Bank made appropriate selection of topics for data collection and surveys? Have data and surveys been well-maintained and disseminated?
5. In your area of expertise, how could future Bank research better serve developing country objectives?
6. Particularly for ongoing projects that you have evaluated, please comment on the proposal review, revision and selection process.
7. What is your overall assessment of Bank research?

Annex 3: Research Quality Indicator Form

S	Superior
AA	Above Average
A	Average
BA	Below Average
U	Unacceptable

	S	AA	A	BA	U
<i>Please rate the following aspects of the project outcomes (or in the case of ongoing projects, design and intermediate outputs)</i>					
Topics					
Importance of the issues addressed					
Clarity of the project focus and stated objectives					
Analysis					
Theoretical/conceptual framework					
Empirical application					
Statistical and econometric methods					
Use of existing knowledge and resources					
Data					
Awareness of other data sources					
Data compilation, cleaning and cataloging					
Survey design and sampling					
Output Quality					
Writing quality (clarity, organization, etc.)					
Clarity of conclusions and recommendations					
Extent to which conclusions are based on analytic evidence					
Appropriateness of the recommendations					
Appropriateness of output form (working paper, book, database, etc.) for intended audiences					
Availability of translated outputs where appropriate					
Extent to which research:					
Increases knowledge and understanding of the issues					
Provides a sound basis for policy					
Actual or likely impact of research on:					
Government policy					
Future analysis					
The development community in general					
Overall Quality of Research					

Terms of Reference for “Flagship” Reports

Deliverables

1. You are asked to produce a report on each flagship report that you are assigned (see Annex 1 and Annex 3 – Research Quality Indicator Form).
2. You are also asked to produce a draft report giving your overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Bank research in your area of expertise based on the sample, abstracts, and your general knowledge of Bank research (see Annex 2).
3. You will be invited to a one-day conference on May 19 at the World Bank to discuss your report with the Panel and World Bank staff.
3. You will also be asked to produce a final version of the report revised in response to possible comments of the Evaluation Panel. Your responses to the comments of the Evaluation Panel are expected to be complete and comprehensive.

Deadline

Your individual reports and the draft overall report are expected by the end of **April 2006**. Your final report is expected to be complete two weeks after the Evaluation Panel provides you with comments.

Annex 1: Questionnaire for Flagship Projects

A. Objectives

3. Are the topics and objectives critical for policy in the developing or post-socialist country?

B. Design and Implementation

5. Does the project reflect awareness of existing knowledge from other research available at the time and does it adequately reflect a good understanding of the country(s) in question?
6. Is the project design appropriately anchored in a sound and coherent analytical and empirical framework?
7. Are the conclusions consistent with the research findings? Were problems/concerns noted and reviewed?

C. Accessibility

3. Were project reports and publications presented in a manner appropriate for and accessible to the intended audience(s)?
4. If applicable, are policy recommendations commensurate with findings?

D. Results and Cost-effectiveness

3. What are the key findings of the study? How do they advance country policy in the field?

Annex 2: Questionnaire for draft report on strengths and weaknesses of Bank research

8. In your area of expertise, has the Bank made a significant contribution?
9. In your area of expertise, has Bank research focused on the most important policy issues for developing countries? Do you feel Bank researchers have appropriate incentives to allow identification of the most important issues?
10. In your area of expertise, has Bank research reflected awareness of substantive knowledge from other research available and in progress and sufficient knowledge of subject countries?
11. Has the Bank made appropriate selection of topics for data collection and surveys? Have data and surveys been well-maintained and disseminated?
12. In your area of expertise, how could future Bank research better serve developing country objectives?
13. Particularly for ongoing projects that you have evaluated, please comment on the proposal review, revision and selection process.
14. What is your overall assessment of Bank research?

Annex 3: Flagship Research Quality Indicator Form

S	Superior
AA	Above Average
A	Average
BA	Below Average
U	Unacceptable

	S	AA	A	BA	U
<i>Please rate the following aspects of the project outcomes (or in the case of ongoing projects, design and intermediate outputs)</i>					
Topics					
Importance of the issues addressed					
Output Quality					
Writing quality (clarity, organization, etc.)					
Clarity of conclusions and recommendations					
Extent to which conclusions are based on analytic evidence					
Appropriateness of the recommendations					
Appropriateness of output form (working paper, book, database, etc.) for intended audiences					
Extent to which research:					
Increases knowledge and understanding of the issues					
Provides a sound basis for policy					
Actual or likely impact of research on:					
Government policy					
Future analysis					
The development community in general					
Overall Quality of Research					

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