

## APPENDIX J: DETAILED MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

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This appendix provides a more detailed response to the IEG review. The review seeks to assess training for capacity development provided through Bank-financed projects and by the World Bank Institute (WBI). Management appreciates IEG's attention to client training programs that the Bank sponsors and believes that the evaluation report contains much of value regarding training design and implementation. However, this is an ambitious effort, given what are typically substantial differences in objectives, scale, and form between project-financed training and WBI training. In Management's view, the evaluation could have better acknowledged these differences, and it finds issues regarding the comparisons of outcomes and impact between the two fundamentally different cases. Additionally, the Bank has many other important training programs—those provided through partnerships such as the Cities Alliance; the program for building statistical capacity in the Development Economics (DEC) group; the Treasury's Reserve Asset Management Program; and the growing volume of nonproject external training provided by Regions and Networks—most of which are closer to the type and intent of training provided through WBI than is project-financed training. Regrettably, this review missed the opportunity to examine these programs. This appendix presents Management's general observations on WBI and training provided through operations supported by the Regions. A related document with specific chapter-by-chapter comments on the review is available on this evaluation's Web site at <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg>.<sup>1</sup>

### **Management's Views on the Overall Analysis and Conclusions**

The report provides an informative summary of

design and implementation issues related to training for capacity development. Management concurs that improvements are needed with respect to pedagogical design; linking training to follow-up and other support for change; and designing content and determining participation, when feasible, on the basis of diagnoses of organizational and other capacity constraints. Many of these points are relevant for most learning activities. Management also agrees with IEG's assessment that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of client training should be improved, but it would note that this M&E can be done only by the partner countries where the training takes place. The role of the Bank (and of other donors) is to help countries strengthen their capacity for M&E. Management notes that strengthening M&E capacity is a general issue that goes beyond training and is part of the Bank's overall results agenda.

***Reservations with Regard to the Findings and Conclusions.*** Despite the evaluation's contributions, Management has serious reservations about a number of the findings and conclusions in the report.

- ***Training versus capacity development.*** As the review notes, the Bank and other donors support capacity development in many ways in addition to training, including support for policy and institutional change, technical assistance, long-term sectoral engagement often linked to operations, joint economic and sector work (which is becoming the norm), and physical investment in buildings and equipment. Improved capacity is measured by, among other things, higher quality of public services, reduced transaction costs, more efficient ser-

vice delivery, and achieving international performance standards. Despite the review's acknowledgement of the wider scope of capacity development, it tends to define its measure of changes in workplace behavior as measuring capacity development.<sup>2</sup>

- **The evaluation framework.** IEG's evaluation framework assumes that training should always achieve monitorable and measurable changes in workplace behaviors. Such an assumption is inappropriate for the many activities that provide clients with information about policy options or emerging global issues and that are likely to contribute to development objectives in the long run.<sup>3</sup>
- **Methodological foundation.** Outcomes and impact are judged mostly on the basis of client surveys with a low response rate and a limited number of field visits.<sup>4</sup>
- **Evidence basis.** Interpreting and using the data go beyond what the data can show.

**Evaluation Model.** Management considers IEG's evaluation model to be inappropriate for evaluating the different types of training provided with Bank support. The evaluation sets out to examine training that had "as its ultimate goal building the capacity of organizations or institutions to achieve development objectives, rather than individual learning for its own sake." The evaluation sought to answer the question, "To what extent did Bank-financed training have an impact on the capacity of target institutions and organizations?" Management agrees that project-supported and WBI-provided training is not for individual learning for its own sake. Nonetheless, individual learning is a key foundation for building capacity, and the way in which training translates into behavioral change and workplace performance varies substantially across different training methods, immediate training objectives, and the timeline expected for institutional and organizational impact.

**Context and Tone.** Finally, Management is concerned about the omission of valuable contextual information that puts the Bank's efforts into perspective and about the way some of the evidence is presented. Management

agrees that there is room for improvement, but the evaluation does not provide benchmarks that place the Bank's efforts and outcomes in perspective. It does not report comparative data from other organizations' training results with respect to organizational impact, the Bank's and WBI's own historical trends (how the results compare with what was achieved before), or information about the difficulty of the work itself. Although the evaluation provides a review of benchmark organizations, it does not compare the results to any objective standards of acceptable level of results for the type of work performed. As the *Standards for Evaluation in the UN System* notes, an "explanation of context contributes to the utility and accuracy" of evaluations.<sup>5</sup> Describing and acknowledging the challenges of this context would put the Bank's accomplishments—as well as the opportunities for improvement—into perspective.

### Management's Views on Analysis and Conclusions Relating to WBI

WBI supports the development of country capacity by addressing constraints in three areas: (a) the enabling environment or societal level; (b) institutions and policies; and (c) organizational resources. WBI's instruments include training, learning that blends online training with face-to-face exchanges, nonlending technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning, knowledge-exchange sessions, publications, web portals, workshops, and networking events. These activities and products are usually targeted at individuals and groups who can serve as catalysts for change, and they aim to expose participants to, and raise their awareness of, innovative approaches to development; disseminate best practices; and consider policy alternatives. The literature on adult learning, including much of the literature mentioned in the evaluation, shows that raising awareness is a valid objective for training and is often the first step in the process of organizational change. The box below describes some of WBI's nontraditional training work.

**Choice of Activities for Review.** The evaluation does not distinguish among the different

### Box J.1: Examples of WBI's Nontraditional Learning Programs

WBI facilitated the efforts of the government of Madagascar to prioritize and initiate action on its poverty reduction strategy through a series of cabinet retreats, workshops, and peer exchanges that fundamentally changed the government's approach to implementation of its strategy. Similarly, WBI has supported the establishment of parliamentary networks such as the African Parliamentarians Network against Corruption, which facilitates information exchange among parliamentarians. An

example of a WBI program aimed at organizational capacity development is its support to the Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic, which aims to build capacity at the regional/local government levels to implement intergovernmental fiscal reforms outlined in the proposed poverty reduction strategy grant. The IEG study fails to cover these kinds of programs, which are typical of WBI's portfolio of work.

objectives and modes of WBI's activities. IEG limited its focus to training that (a) has specific learning objectives; (b) is held away from settings other than where knowledge is to be applied; and (c) is conducted by lecturers, trainers, or facilitators; and it specifically excluded "on-the-job technical assistance, learning among peers, and events whose primary purpose is networking, rather than learning." Application of these criteria led IEG to exclude many of the objectives and modes of WBI's learning programs. However, in the end, the review examined many activities that do not appear to match IEG's criteria. For example, IEG examined 60 randomly selected Activity Information Summaries (AISs) that summarize the purposes of each WBI activity. However, almost 50 percent of IEG's sample included AISs that seemingly did not meet IEG's initial criterion because the events were "knowledge-exchange" activities whose primary objective was the exchange of information, knowledge, and experience among peers rather than having a specific learning objective.<sup>6</sup> Judging activities on whether they contribute to an "ultimate" goal of building organizational and institutional capacity regardless of their immediate objectives is akin to judging all projects on their "ultimate" impact on poverty reduction and growth, regardless of their immediate objectives. These sampling issues may affect the survey sample as well, which was developed on the basis of lists of participants, without first assessing the objectives of the activities they attended.

**Coding of Activities.** The origins of the differences in understanding regarding the purpose of WBI

activities may lie in the fact that during most of the evaluation period all of WBI's activities were coded within the Bank as External Training (TE), regardless of their primary purpose. This situation has been addressed, and WBI now uses a broader and more accurate range of work codes than were used during the evaluation, including nonlending technical assistance (NLTA) and "knowledge products" (KP).

#### **Comparison of Project-Supported and WBI Training.**

The IEG evaluation compares project-supported and WBI training and finds a 10 percentage point difference in the training's contribution to "substantial" positive changes to work performance. Yet the evaluation does not thoroughly examine the critical contextual differences between project-funded and WBI training. The report rightly highlights the fact that "successful capacity building often requires a multipronged approach that addresses resource, incentive, and human capacity," and that "it is difficult to disentangle the impact of training from the impact of other interventions enabling the achievement of capacity building goals." Project-supported training is embedded in other interventions that typically provide additional resources (for example, buildings and equipment) and powerful incentives for change (project agreements and long-term engagement), whereas WBI's interventions may not be directly linked with such interventions. Although the data indicate that resource support is clearly an important condition, there is little analysis about how other resources support capacity development. Furthermore, the evaluation

ignores the considerable differences in cost and size among training events and also between WBI training and Bank-supported projects that, in most cases, have wider objectives supported by several components besides training, and therefore it does not consider the cost-effectiveness of either.

**WBI's M&E Functions.** Management further notes that although the report emphasizes the importance of M&E, IEG is critical of the advanced M&E functions that do exist within WBI.<sup>7</sup> Like all of the “benchmark” organizations that IEG identifies as models of best practice, WBI's evaluation group (WBIEG) is internal to WBI, and its methods appear to be equal to or better than those of the comparator organizations cited by IEG. In fact, IEG's own approach to measuring outcomes is similar to the one that WBI pioneered in 2001. More importantly, IEG states that WBI *systematically* monitors at the program level only the number of participant training days. This is incorrect. WBI completed five program-based evaluations of outcomes between FY03 and FY07, and another is scheduled for completion in early FY08. Systematic evaluation does not imply universal coverage. IEG criticizes the lack of specific program-level learning functions of the evaluations WBI has conducted and fails to mention the internal accountability and management such evaluations also support. IEG does not acknowledge the variety of purposes that evaluations are intended to address.

### Management's Views on IEG's Recommendations

Management agrees with the broad thrust of the report's recommendations in principle. However, Management notes that they require further analysis on the way to implementation.

**Guidance to Staff.** IEG recommends that the Bank develop guidance for training, including the assessment and evaluation of training. Management sees the need to nuance the recommendation on the basis of cost, objectives, and utility under different circumstances and types of training functions. In its analysis of training M&E

in chapter five, for example, IEG does not distinguish among the different types of activities under review, and therefore among the appropriate levels of M&E. Specification of performance indicators and skills to be taught may be neither feasible nor appropriate for a three-day knowledge-exchange activity on policy alternatives for high-level public officials. In contrast, performance indicators would be essential for an extended in-service teacher training program. Rather than applying a standard approach to every activity, regardless of objectives, what is vitally important for every operation is to work with partner countries (including through training) on the quality of their design and implementation of the components; to assist them in designing cost-effective measures of key outputs and outcomes that are commensurate with the training objectives; and to assist them in impact analysis where appropriate and cost effective.

**WBI's Mandate.** Management acknowledges IEG's contribution to the discussion on WBI's mandate. However, the discussion and debate about the nature of WBI's mandate is a long-standing one and will not be resolved by this review. WBI's mandate will, of course, be covered in the process of formulation, review, and roll out of the Bank's long-term strategy, specifically its “knowledge business line.”

**Detailed Recommendations for WBI.** Management finds the recommendations regarding WBI appropriate for some of WBI's lines of business but not for all training. In particular, the recommendation that all of WBI's training must be based on comprehensive assessments of target organization(s)/institutions(s) done in cooperation with clients, and only after securing financing for implementation of learning, is inapplicable under many circumstances. For example, WBI sponsors knowledge-exchange forums and policy debates whose objective is to raise awareness and provide policy options for the client to consider on a quick-turnaround, on-demand, and fee basis; in such cases, comprehensive assessments are neither feasible nor appropriate.

**WBI Work on Improvements.** Management agrees that improvements are needed in the Bank's support to client training, and WBI is already addressing pedagogy, learning-needs analysis, design, and follow-up. WBI's country-focused and long-term programmatic work is also evolving. Both were designed to improve alignment and synergy with Bank operations and to capitalize on information already available (notably priorities in Country Assistance Strategies and sector and organizational needs) to design relevant and ongoing capacity-building services.

**Results Framework for WBI Activities.** Finally, in consultation with Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS), WBI has recently developed

and is piloting a results framework for assessing the design, monitoring, and evaluation of all its activities, including those directly aimed at organizational and institutional capacity building. The framework captures six outcomes of external training and knowledge sharing: awareness raising; skill enhancement; facilitating consensus and teamwork; helping clients formulate strategies, policies, and plans; helping clients implement strategies, policies, and plans; and fostering networks. Elements of the framework are being institutionalized Bankwide for external training and knowledge-sharing activities in FY08. The framework will also be used to extend M&E for assessing WBI's nonlending technical assistance work beyond the systematic evaluations conducted by WBIEG.