

Management Response

Management finds the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) review¹ to be an informative presentation on design and implementation issues related to training for capacity development. Management concurs with a number of the conclusions and, for the most part, with the recommendations. However, Management does have issues concerning the analytic framework and the reach of some of the conclusions, relative to the evidence presented.

Management Views on IEG's Analysis and Conclusions

Management believes that the review contains much of value. It provides an informative summary of design and implementation issues related to training for capacity development. Management concurs that improvements are needed in its support for partner countries' training activities 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. These points are relevant for most learning activities. Management also agrees with IEG's assessment that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) around partner training needs to improve; indeed, M&E needs to be strengthened across the board in most developing countries. This implies a need for stronger support from the Bank and other donors to strengthen country M&E capacity—a major element of the Bank's results agenda.

Points of Disagreement. Despite these many points of agreement, Management has serious reservations concerning the evaluative framework and data limitations that affect a number of findings and conclusions in the review:

- The choice of evaluative framework. IEG's evaluation framework assumes that training should

always achieve monitorable and measurable changes in workplace behaviors. Such an assumption is unrealistic and inappropriate for the many activities that provide partners with information about policy options or emerging global issues and that are likely to contribute to development objectives in the longer run.²

- A methodological foundation that judges outcomes and impact mostly on the basis of client surveys with a low response rate and a few field visits³ (see box below).
- Analysis and conclusions that seem to go beyond what the data can show (see box below).

In Management's view, given these study limitations, some of the key findings and conclusions in the IEG review must be interpreted cautiously. (A more detailed discussion is provided in appendix J.)

Recommendations

Management is in agreement with the overall thrust of the first two recommendations (see the attached Management Action Record), with one caveat: the recommendation regarding guidelines is well-taken, but the general recommendation and the response to it require nuancing. The guidance to staff must be scaled to the objective of the training, its size and cost, and the utility of the recommended steps for the activity in question. Management takes note of IEG's recommenda-

Data Concerns

The evaluation bases its findings on two main sources of data: a survey of participants in six countries and field studies in only four countries. Data from these sources provide a very limited basis for the review's sweeping conclusions (see appendix J):

- A survey of participants with a response rate as low as 11 percent (in Mexico). In three of the other five countries, response rates ranged from 21 to 30 percent. In Tunisia, a higher response rate was achieved but with a small number of respondents. The 548 respondents combined in all six countries represent a raw response rate of 23 percent, with 37 of those 548 then dropped for reasons related to their job responsibilities. The danger of substantial bias with this response rate calls for caution in making broad generalizations to the population of interest (participants in training supported by the Bank), especially given the wide variation in the purposes and types of training reviewed.
- A sample size of only 29 projects and 8 WBI activities in four countries, among which, the review notes, only 18 projects

and 3 WBI activities were assessed for drawing conclusions on the impact of Bank-supported training.^a

In several instances the report presents information and interpretations that go beyond what the data can support or that need further contextualization. Examples:

- The study's authors interviewed task team leaders (TTLs; 28 in 15 focus countries) about their collaboration with WBI without first establishing that their responsibilities matched WBI's areas of support in the countries in which the TTLs worked.^b
- The evaluation's executive summary concludes unequivocally that WBI training was found to be insufficiently targeted to client needs, but the evaluation (chapter 3) notes the absence of differences in several important respects between project-based and WBI training regarding targeting of client needs, and WBI's lead in some respects.
- The review reported country-level statistics without attention to the large margins of error attendant on very small sample sizes.

a. IEG notes that field studies were primarily used to examine the extent to which standard Bank training management practices and procedures conform to international best practice. Management notes that despite being few in number, field studies feature prominently in the discussion regarding training outcomes and are a primary source for information on level of impact in chapter 2.

b. IEG notes that the TTL interviews were used to determine the prevalence of WBI-TTL collaboration, including the extent to which TTLs rely on WBI as a resource for expertise on project training activities. Therefore, a random sample of TTLs was drawn for interviewing. Management notes that WBI-TTL potential for collaboration exists for countries and areas in which WBI works. Thus, the TTL random sample should have been drawn from countries and areas in which WBI works to assess the prevalence, nature, or quality of WBI-TTL collaboration. Simply assessing prevalence, without taking into account whether collaboration is a distinct possibility, provides little information.

tion concerning WBI and notes that WBI has work under way on several of the topics mentioned, including better aligning its country-focused and long-term programmatic work with Bank operations. The discussion about the precise

nature of WBI's mandate is beyond the scope of this study. As the Bank reviews, adopts, and implements its long-term strategy, notably with regard to its knowledge role, it will also review the mandate of WBI.

Management Action Record

Major IEG recommendation	Management response
<p>Develop guidance</p> <p>The Bank should develop guidance and quality criteria for the design and implementation of training, to enable the quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation of all its training support. This guidance should be applied to all training financed by the Bank, including that directly provided by units such as WBI. Design guidance should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnosis and training-needs assessment requirements for training initiation; • Participant selection criteria; • Standards for use of practical exercises and other action-learning techniques within training; • Use of follow-up support; and • Provisions for monitoring and evaluation, including specification of performance change objectives and key monitorable indicators. 	<p>Agreed with clarifications</p> <p>Management will ensure the development and dissemination of guidance for staff on training support. The guidance will cover the components noted by IEG, as appropriate to the scope, objectives, and costs of the training. The guidance will indicate, with examples, how these components should be tailored to the purpose and size of the training activity being supported, to be flexible and cost-effective and to avoid undue burden on partner countries. Management will also seek the views of partner agencies to ensure that it is not unnecessarily imposing constraints on joint support. The guidance will be drafted by the end of FY08 and put into use at the start of FY09. This action will be considered complete with the dissemination of the guidelines.</p>
<p>Provide expertise</p> <p>The Bank should make available to its Regional staff and borrowers resource persons with technical expertise in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of training.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Management will ensure the compilation and maintenance of a roster of resource persons with these skills and a system for assigning these resource persons to assist task teams and partner countries. These will be in place for use by staff and partner countries by the end of FY08. This action will be considered complete with the posting of the roster and the announcement of the assignment mechanism.</p>
<p>Clarify WBI's role and re-engineer training processes</p> <p>Management should clarify the WBI's mandate on provision of training with capacity-building goals. If the WBI is to play a capacity-building role in client countries, its training processes should be substantially re-engineered to ensure that training will be likely to contribute to sustainable change. New WBI training processes should ensure that all its training meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be based on a comprehensive capacity assessment of the target organization(s)/institution(s), done in cooperation with clients, and identifying (a) clear and specific capacity-building objectives, (b) the human, institutional, and organizational capacity support that is necessary in order to achieve these objectives, and (c) measurable indicators of success. 	<p>Not agreed in the context of this review</p> <p>The Bank has begun the process of developing, reviewing, and implementing an updated long-term strategy. WBI's business lines include training, knowledge exchange, and technical assistance, among others, but IEG considered just a specific type of training in its evaluation. Management will consider WBI's overall mandate, including its business lines, in the context of the knowledge component of the long-term strategy.</p>

(Continues on the following page.)

Management Action Record (continued)	
Major IEG recommendation	Management response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and secure in advance the resources for all capacity-building support needed to achieve objectives, including, where needed, (a) multiyear training programs, (b) follow-up technical assistance, and (c) organizational and institutional support measures, such as policy support and financing of implementation of learning. • Be subject to external quality review and evaluation of results. 	