



The Wikipedia-World Bank Pilot Project

Sharing knowledge worldwide



What is innovative?

The **Wikipedia** pilot project provides relevant, reliable and up-to-date knowledge on development-related topics to professionals and other users in an easily accessible, interactive, and systematically structured format.

What is it?

The pilot project consists of a series of **country topic overviews** posted on Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia. Currently it covers **water supply and sanitation** and **electricity** in all major countries in Latin America and some key countries from other regions. The project has expanded to **water resources management, urban water management** and **irrigation** in Latin America countries.

Each note contains information on the responsibilities of key institutions in the sector; a brief institutional history of the sector; a summary of recent developments; data on access and quality of service; tariffs, affordability and cost recovery; investment and financing; external assistance; and useful external links. The format and coverage thus is similar to standard information in **Bank ESW (Economic Sector Work)**. The content is drawn from publicly available Bank and non-Bank sources. There are many links to Bank analytical work and projects.

Who does it?

The Wikipedia pilot project team involves operational staff and consultants in the LCR Sustainable Development Department working in the water/sanitation and urban development, environment and energy clusters. The team is being supported by the region's knowledge and learning group.

When was it started?

The pilot project was initiated in December 2006. It received an innovation award at the February 2007 LCR Ideas Fair. In October 2007 it received seed funding from the competitive regional climate change fund in LCR, in order to expand the country topic overviews to climate change adaptation. The pilot project is expected to grow organically and to be independently evaluated after its initial phase.

How are the contributions from different authors monitored?

The beauty of Wikipedia is that anybody around the world can add or update information to articles any time. Contributors to articles can put their articles on a "watch list", which allows easy monitoring. Experience has shown that malicious manipulation of articles under the pilot project is uncommon, limited

Hits for selected articles (September 2010)

Water Supply and Sanitation

- U.S. (5282)
- India (5398)
- Mexico (1096)
- Brazil (1483)
- Guatemala (480)
- Haiti (1146)
- Argentina (718)
- Nicaragua (524)
- Bolivia (717)

Electricity Sector

- Mexico (1898)
- Argentina (1148)
- Nicaragua (430)
- Colombia (653)
- Haiti (669)
- Bolivia (333)

in scope and rather innocent in its nature. Moreover, such “vandalism” is quickly and easily corrected, “reverted” in the language of Wikipedia, with two mouse clicks.

In what languages is the pilot available?

Articles of the pilot project are available both in **English** and in the language of the country that the respective article covers. Most articles are available in English and **Spanish**. Articles on Brazil are available in **Portuguese** and on Haïti in **French**.

How does one know if an article on Wikipedia is part of the pilot project?

So far articles on Wikipedia created as part of the pilot project are not recognizable as such. However, there is an internal webpage on the World Bank’s website linking to Bank-created Wikipedia articles.

What are some of the benefits for the Bank?

The benefits for the Bank are multiple, both for staff, managers and the institution as a whole.

Staff beginning to work on a new country or seeking to understand issues in sectors other than their own would benefit. **Managers** benefit from a succinct, up-to-date assessment similar to briefing notes. The **institution** benefits from better dissemination of its analytical work (through links from Wikipedia articles). Finally, in contributing in an honest, factual and unbiased way to Wikipedia, the Bank can enhance its credibility with outside **stakeholders**.



Is the Bank responsible for the content of Wikipedia pages established under the pilot?

No. The Bank is not responsible for any content on Wikipedia. Users cannot identify the articles as having been written partly by Bank staff. Even if links from Bank web pages should be established to articles from the pilot project, the links would contain standard disclaimers.

How many hits does the pilot project get?

There are approximately 41 water supply and sanitation articles, 12 electricity articles, 16 water resources management articles, 9 Urban Water Management and 7 irrigation articles in the pilot project. According to <http://stats.grok.se> the average monthly hits for the entire pilot project in 2008 are estimated at around 35,000 per month.

Is the pilot replicable?

The pilot could be replicated to other development topics and other regions, ultimately forming a global knowledge platform covering more than 150 developing countries and at least 30 key topics per country.

Wikipedia pilot project core team

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