



THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

On The World Bank & International Monetary Fund

Parliamentarians & Development Series

The World Bank's Access to Information Policy

Evolution of the World Bank's Open Development Agenda

The new Open Access Policy and simultaneous launch of the Open Knowledge Repository (OKR) represent the most recent progress in the World Bank's Open Development Agenda. They are becoming an integral part of the World Bank's Access to Information Policy.

The **Access to Information Policy** comprises today the Open Data Initiative, access to project-specific information and the brand-new Open Knowledge Repository (OKR). In July 2010, the Access to Information policy took its first steps to make available a wide range of World Bank documents to the general public, particularly related to Board decisions and projects under implementation. Since the launch of this policy in 2010, the World Bank moved considerably from its previous approach under which it specifically defined the information that can be disclosed. Today, the World Bank can make public any information in its possession that is not on a [clear list of exceptions](#) (i.e. personal information; information subject to attorney-client privilege; information that would compromise security and safety; deliberative information).

Open Data Initiative: access to general country information

The Open Data Initiative is part of the Access to Information Policy initiative. More information can be found on <http://data.worldbank.org/>, including statistics and data for specific countries and regions, but also population surveys and trends that have been identified by researchers. Free access is available to more than 8,000 development indicators regrouped in 17 different categories such as Aid Effectiveness, Economic Policy & External Debt or Energy & Mining, as well as a wealth of information on World Bank projects and financing.

Access to project-related information and the right to appeal

The [homepage](#) of the Access to Information Policy regroups the World Bank's efforts in making documents, reports and publications (OKR) as well as project-specific documentation available to the public and interested stakeholders. The Project Information Documents (PIDs) provide information basis and definition of the activities that are foreseen in a World Bank project, including its goals and financing. During discussions between the Parliamentary Network delegation and the World Bank at the 2012 Spring Meetings, it was decided to make this information available to the public.

Whereas most World Bank information can be found on the website according to the new Access to Information Policy, for all other information that is not readily accessible, members of the public and

interested stakeholders can submit information requests at www.worldbank.org/wbaccess. The site links to a new tracking system that will automatically assign a case number to a request and will track and flag that request to the appropriate unit for response. Under this system, the World Bank will then acknowledge receipt of a request within 5 working days and will normally provide a detailed response or, depending on a complexity of the inquiry, the status of the request within 20 working days. The new policy also introduces the right of appeal in the case the requestor believes that he or she has been improperly or unreasonably denied access to information that should be available under the new policy, or that there is a mandatory public interest to override certain policy exceptions that restrict the information requested.

Open Access Policy and Open Knowledge Repository (OKR)

The most recent evolution of the World Bank's Open Development Agenda consists of a reform of the previous dissemination and sharing policies of World Bank publications. Under a new form of licensing, the World Bank publications can be distributed, reused, and built upon the Bank's published work, even commercially. There is only one single condition: the World Bank is given credit for the original creation. The OKR became the new home for all of the World Bank's research outputs and knowledge products. The OKR —available at openknowledge.worldbank.org – currently contains works from 2009-2012 (which amount to more than 2,100 books and papers) across a wide range of topics covering all regions of the world. This includes – among others – the World Development Report, and other annual flagship publications, academic books, practitioner volumes, and the Bank's publicly disclosed country studies and analytical reports. The OKR also contains journal articles from 2007-2010 from the two World Bank journals (World Bank Research Observer and World Bank Economic Review). New publications and research products will be updated on a continuous basis. Starting in 2013, the repository will also provide links to datasets associated with research. While the vast majority of the works are published in English, translated editions will also be added. The goal in reforming the existing policies was also to make the knowledge access interoperable with other repositories, research and metadata bases and harvesting. Last but not least, and although implicitly mentioned by the World Bank, new solutions have to be found of how to fill the existing gap between Internet users and some parts of the population that have no or limited Internet access: the World Bank's efforts in enabling access for everybody therefore goes through third party intermediaries at the current stage (printing companies and publishers).

The July 2012 approach will be fundamental for upcoming technological advances and possibilities to create new web-based content, which will then be easily accessible for the general population. For instance, a specific climate change competition has been launched recently in order to encourage scientists, software developers and development practitioners to create applications that use open data to help solve the development problems posed by climate change. But until these new tools arrive and are ready to be marketed, stakeholders will be more or less dependent on training in order to learn how to efficiently make use of the new open access policy.

Relevance for Parliamentarians

The Access to Information Policy can be useful to legislators in several ways. Data, research and analysis are required for the smooth process of running communal human activities, including public institutions such as the legislative body. Access to the most up-to-date and objective research and data sets enables not only to make right decisions, but to make well-argued and justified choices

before the respective constituencies. In particular, the 2010 Open Data Initiative and the access to projects provide Parliamentarians with valuable tools for policy-making during their mandates, because they gain access to objective research as well as project-specific documents. Through the Open Data Initiative, Parliamentarians are given better understanding of the more general approach the World Bank might take for a given country strategy, based on conducted World Bank or independent expert research. The Project Information Documents (PIDs) are particularly significant for Parliamentarians, because they shape Parliamentarians' understanding of the most recent projects that are to be implemented by the World Bank. Hence, they can monitor the goals and financial activities of a given project. During the 2012 Spring Meetings it was decided to make this information available to the public. If Parliamentarians are denied access to allowed information, they have the right to appeal.

Nevertheless, it would be more than desirable if Members of the Parliamentary Network could benefit from specific training aimed at teaching them how to quickly access World Bank information. The World Bank Institute – under its knowledge and capacity development role – would probably be the most appropriate forum for exchange. Another point that should not be forgotten is the gap between English speakers and non-English speakers in accessing information. At least during the first years of the new Open Access Policy and Open Knowledge Repository, non-English speakers will have a hard time accessing the information they really need. Current existing translations for publications are most common in French and Spanish, but they do not exist for Project Information Documents (PIDs).

The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & International Monetary Fund

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Annex: homepages

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Access to Information

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Photo: Willie Heinz/Inter-American Development Bank

The World Bank Policy on Access to Information sets forth a groundbreaking change in how the World Bank makes information available to the public. Now the public can get more information than ever before—information about projects under preparation, projects under implementation, analytic and advisory activities, and Board proceedings.

Underlying the new policy is the principle that the World Bank will disclose any information in its possession that is not on a list of exceptions. [Read More](#)

All Documents and Reports Projects and Operations Publications

Searches the entire web site of the World Bank

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<http://data.worldbank.org/>: a country map showing all projects and sectors

SENEGAL 30 financed activities working in 184 mapped locations

BASE MAP MALNUTRITION ACTIVITIES: BY SECTOR

Information and communications

Title	Project ID	Amount	Sector	Approval Date	Product Line
Dakar Diarmadio Toll Highway	P087304	\$105 million	Transportation	Jun-2009	IBRD/IDA
Senegal Tertiary Education Governance and Financing For Results	P123673	\$101.3 million	Education	May-2011	IBRD/IDA
Senegal EFA-FTI Catalytic Fund	P116783	\$81.5 million	Education	Jul-2009	Recipient Executed Activities
Local Authorities Development Program	P084022	\$80 million	Transportation	Jul-2006	IBRD/IDA

Access to the PIDs via the [homepage](#) of the Access to Information Policy

Burundi - Energy Efficiency Project

Burundi

Overview | Financial | Procurement | Implementation & Results | News & Related Info

Project ID: P117225 | Project Status: Active

Abstract* last updated 13-MAR-2012

The objective of Energy Efficiency Project for Burundi is (i) to develop and adopt selected policy frameworks for energy efficiency and (ii) to selectively improve the energy efficiency of households and buildings in Bujumbura city. Project has four components. Component 1. Distribution and promotion of compact fluorescent lights will focus on: (a) distribution compact fluorescent lights; (b) development and implementation of media communication and public awareness for energy efficient lights; ...[More»](#)

Keywords

Project-At-A-Glance	
Approval Date	08-MAR-2012
Closing Date	N/A
Total Project Cost**	24.72
Region	Africa
Major Sector (Sector) (%)	Energy and mining (Energy efficiency in power sector) (100%)
Themes (%)	Climate change (67%) Infrastructure services for private sector development (33%)
Environmental Category	B
Bank Team Lead	O'Sullivan, Kyran
Borrower/Recipient	GOVERNMENT OF BURUNDI
Implementing Agency	REGIDESO (NATIONAL WATER AND ELECTRICITY UTILITY)

Project Goals
To view the project outcomes and goals click [here](#).

Available Project Documents	
Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Vol.1 of 1	13-FEB-2012
Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (ISDS), Vol.	21-DEC-2011
Project Information Document (PID), Vol.1 of 1	31-OCT-2011

[More»](#)

Related Country Information
To view information on the country where the project is implemented click [here](#).

General Lending Information

- [Statement of Loans and Credits](#)
- [Estimated Debt Information](#)
- [Country Lending Summaries](#)

Useful links

- [Glossary](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Project Cycle](#)
- [Procurement/Tenders](#)
- [Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Information on Executive Directors](#)
- [Inspection Panel](#)

Project Implementation and Completion

- [Measuring Results](#)
- [Status of Projects in Execution](#)
- [Project Profiles](#)
- [Monthly Operational Summary](#)

* The project abstract is drawn from the PAD, SAR or PGD and may not accurately reflect the project's current nature.
 **Total project cost includes funding from World Bank and non-bank sources in US\$ millions. Active and Closed projects show commitment at Board approval. It does not reflect any cancellations. Proposed (pipeline) and dropped projects show the forecast amount. The commitment amount for projects in the pipeline is indicative and may be modified during the project preparation.

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New Publications



Title: Inclusive Green Growth : The Pathway to Sustainable Development
Author: The World Bank
Date: 2012-05-09
Abstract: As the global population heads toward 9 billion by 2050, decisions made today will lock countries into growth patterns that may or may not be sustainable in the future. Care must be taken to ensure that cities and roads, ...