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**WORLD BANK POLICY ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION  
EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST  
18 MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

**LEGAL VICE PRESIDENCY**

**December 19, 2012**

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	Access to Information
AIC	Access to Information Committee
AfDB	African Development Bank
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CTR	Controller's Vice Presidency
DFID	Department for International Development, British Government
EAP	East Asia and Pacific Regional Vice Presidency
ESW	Economic Sector Work
EXT	External Affairs Vice Presidency
FY	Fiscal Year
GSD	General Services Department
GSDCP	Corporate Procurement Unit, GSD
HRS	Human Resources Vice Presidency
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAD	Internal Audit Vice Presidency
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMT	Information Management and Technology Vice Presidency
INT	Institutional Integrity Vice Presidency
INTVP	Vice President, Institutional Integrity
ISR	Implementation Status and Results Report
LEG	Legal Vice Presidency
LEGIP	Information Policy Unit, LEG
LEGVP	Senior Vice President and Bank Group General Counsel
OPCS	Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PD	Program Document
PFC	Pension Finance Committee
PIC	Public Information Center
SEC	Corporate Secretary Vice Presidency
USD	United States Dollar
VPU	Vice Presidential Unit

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This Report is endorsed by the AIC.

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## WORLD BANK POLICY ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST 18 MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In November 2009, the Board of Executive Directors approved the World Bank Policy on Access to Information (“AI Policy”). The AI Policy, which is a central element of the Bank’s modernization and Open Development agenda, has enabled the Bank to fully commit to the concept of Open Development by actively working to make the Bank’s operations, data and research more accessible, transparent and accountable, including opening up the way the Bank develops its research and knowledge. The goal of the AI Policy is to make the Bank an even more effective partner to developing countries, other international development institutions, and civil society organizations.

2. As part of the proposal for the new AI Policy, management committed to closely monitor its implementation and report to the Board beginning with a first progress report after the end of 2011. In view of the importance of the AI Policy, management went beyond that commitment by providing the Board three progress reports in FY 2011, and one annual report after the first 12 months of implementation. This report (“Report”) provides the Board with a comprehensive overview of the World Bank’s implementation experience from the AI Policy’s effectiveness on July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011 (“first 18 months”). The Report also discusses the measures that the Bank has taken to strengthen the systems and infrastructure that support the AI Policy, the views of the public on how the Bank has performed, and the impact that the AI Policy has had on the development community. The Report also considers areas of the AI Policy that could be further clarified and developed in view of the Bank’s implementation experiences thus far, and makes recommendations in this respect.

3. ***Proactive Disclosures and the Public’s Access.*** Over the first 18 months, the Bank continued its efforts to increase disclosures and support the public’s access to information. In total, for that period, the Bank publicly released close to 24,000 documents and reports, including 458 Board papers, of which 150 Board papers were released before the Board’s consideration. Also for that period, the Bank’s public *Documents and Reports* database received more than 1.6 million visits. Users viewed approximately 6.8 million pages and downloaded close to 1.3 million documents.

4. ***Public Access Requests for Information.*** Additionally, in the first 18 months, the Bank handled 1,060 cases filed by the public to request information. The Bank completed 89.6 percent of the cases by the end of December 30, 2011. Of the requests that were properly addressed to the Bank and that provided adequate information for the Bank to provide a response, the Bank fulfilled, in whole or in part, 91.5 percent of the cases, denying in whole only 8.5 percent. The Bank completed 74 percent of the public access request cases within the normal 20 working day standard. The other cases broadly required internal and/or external consultations which justified the need for additional processing time.

5. ***Exercise of the Bank’s Prerogatives.*** The Bank, through the Access to Information Committee (“AIC”), exercised the institution’s prerogative to disclose restricted information in 50 percent of the cases that it considered. With respect to the Bank’s prerogative to restrict

access to information that would normally be disclosed, a review of the Bank's records management system shows that only about 0.03 percent of the Bank's records have been restricted on this basis.

6. ***Appeals.*** In the first 18 months, 13 appeals were filed before the AIC, which serves to consider first-stage appeals alleging a violation of the AI Policy, and to decide on appeals asserting a public interest case for overriding certain AI Policy exceptions. The AIC: (a) upheld the Bank's decision to deny access in 12 appeals, including three that were dismissed in part; and (b) dismissed one appeal in whole. The dismissals resulted because either the appeals were not properly placed before the AIC or because they did not provide adequate information for the appeal to be considered. In three of the cases in which the decision to deny access was upheld, the requested information was nonetheless released at least in part: in two cases, the AIC decided to exercise the Bank's prerogative to disclose the information; and in one case, the member country decided to authorize disclosure of the information that had been provided in confidence. No appeals were filed before the AI Appeals Board.

7. ***Lessons Learned and Implementation Enhancements.*** In view of lessons learned, management has taken action in the following areas to enhance and strengthen the business processes and infrastructure that support the AI Policy's implementation:

- Development and dissemination of tools to support units in carrying out and monitoring compliance of records management (completed on March 31, 2012, with on-going support to business units in their improvement of records management results);
- Development and dissemination of tools to support units in carrying out monitoring of staff accuracy in classifying information (completed on June 30, 2012, with on-going support to VPUs in their information classification monitoring activities);
- Continued development of the Bank's access to information case tracking system, and the preparation of plans for a future case management system (requirements document completed on March 31, 2012; new case management system development expected to begin October 2012, and deployment expected before the end of FY 2013);
- Continued work to integrate the mandatory access to information training in the Bank's on-boarding process for new staff (completion expected in FY 2013);
- Development of options for the integration of relevant Bank databases to streamline the processing of safeguards documents for disclosure (completion expected in FY 2013); and
- Alignment of the process for disclosing documents related to recipient-executed activities that are financed by trust funds with the process for disclosing documents related to operations that are financed by the Bank (trust fund business integration initiative begins in FY 2013).

8. ***External Assessment and Impact of the AI Policy.*** The AI Policy and the Bank's performance have been positively assessed by civil society organizations. In 2010, the Center

for Global Development and the Brookings Institution ranked the Bank the highest-performing donor in aid transparency and learning out of 30 major donors. In 2011, the United Kingdom-based organization, Publish What You Fund, rated the Bank two years in a row as the best performer out of 58 donors in terms of sharing aid information. The Bank's adoption of the AI Policy has also impacted the broader donor community by influencing other international financial institutions ("IFIs") in their decisions to adopt similar transparency initiatives. While the assessment of the Bank's efforts has been positive, some civil society organizations continue to express concerns regarding certain interests that are protected under IFI disclosure policies. The Bank is sensitive to these concerns and will continue to closely monitor its application of the AI Policy exceptions and take action as needed.

9. Based on the Bank's implementation experience, Bank management has identified several aspects of the AI Policy that can be clarified or further developed. Executive Directors have been consulted and are providing input on the matters. Following the conclusion of the consultations, Management will present recommendations to the Executive Directors for consideration.



## WORLD BANK POLICY ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST 18 MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. In November 2009, the Board of Executive Directors approved the World Bank Policy on Access to Information (“AI Policy”) to take effect on July 1, 2010.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of the AI Policy has enabled the Bank to fully commit to the concept of Open Development, as part of the Bank’s modernization agenda. Through the participatory and collaborative objective of Open Development, the World Bank is actively working to make its operations, data and research more accessible, transparent and accountable, and is also actively working to open up the way it develops its research and knowledge. A central element of the Bank’s Open Development efforts is the AI Policy, the goal of which is to make the Bank an even more effective partner to developing countries, other international development institutions, and civil society organizations.

2. The AI Policy was formulated with guidance from the Executive Directors, and the feedback received from Bank staff, management, country authorities and a wide range of external stakeholders.<sup>2</sup> The Board’s adoption of the AI Policy has placed the Bank’s disclosure framework in line with the freedom of information legislation of many of its member countries, and has made the Bank a leader amongst international financial institutions in promoting aid transparency and public involvement in development.

3. ***Commitment to Monitor and Report on the AI Policy’s Progress.*** In proposing the adoption of the AI Policy, management committed to the Board to closely monitor and to keep the Board informed of the AI Policy’s implementation, beginning with a first progress report after the end of 2011, i.e., after 18 months of the AI Policy’s implementation. In view of the challenges involved and the AI Policy’s importance, management went beyond its original commitment to the Board by issuing three progress reports in FY 2011, and an annual report covering the first 12 months of the AI Policy’s implementation. The first report covered the seven months of preparation that took place prior to the AI Policy’s effectiveness, and the first three months following the AI Policy’s effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> The second and third reports covered the quarterly periods of October through December 2010, and January through March 2011, respectively.<sup>4</sup> The fourth report was the Access to Information Annual Report for FY 2011,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Toward Greater Transparency Through Access to Information – The World Bank Disclosure Policy*, dated December 14, 2009 (R2009-0259, IDA/R2009-0273) (hereinafter “2009 Disclosure Policy Board Paper”). The term “World Bank” or “Bank” means the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (“IBRD”) and the International Development Association (“IDA”). The term “World Bank Group” or “Bank Group” means collectively the IBRD, IDA, International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

<sup>2</sup> After the Bank shared a consultation draft of the proposed policy with member country authorities, the Bank carried out face-to-face meetings in 33 countries and solicited public feedback from a dedicated website in the period of March 12, through June 5, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See *World Bank Policy on Access to Information Progress Report – November 2009 through September 2010*, issued December 16, 2010 (SecM2010-0678, IDA/SecM2010-0750).

<sup>4</sup> See *World Bank Policy on Access to Information Progress Report – October through December 2010*, issued March 30, 2011 (SecM2011-0200, IDA/SecM2011-0237); and *World Bank Policy on Access to Information Progress Report – January through March 2011*, issued July 12, 2011 (SecM2011-0368, IDA/SecM2011-0531).

which collectively reviewed the first 12 months of the AI Policy's implementation, covering the period of July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011.<sup>5</sup>

4. **Purpose of this Report.** The purpose of this implementation report ("Report") is to provide the Board with a comprehensive 18-month overview of the World Bank's experience in implementing the AI Policy from its effectiveness on July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011 ("first 18 months"). The Report discusses the lessons that have been learned and the additional measures that management has taken to strengthen the systems and infrastructure that support the implementation of the AI Policy. The Report also discusses how external parties have assessed the AI Policy and the Bank's performance, as well as the impact that the AI Policy has had on the disclosure frameworks of other international financial institutions. Lastly, the Report discusses areas that the Bank is developing in furtherance of transparency.

5. **Structure.** Section II of this Report provides an overview of the Bank's performance in implementing specific undertakings of the AI Policy, highlighting the statistics relating to the Bank's release of information, the public's access to information requested, and the decisions resulting from the appeals mechanism during the first 18 months. Section III discusses specific lessons learned and the related actions that the Bank has undertaken to enhance the systems and infrastructure that support the implementation of the AI Policy. Section IV discusses the AI Policy and the Bank's performance as assessed by external parties, and the influence that the Bank's AI Policy has had since its adoption. Section V discusses the areas that the Bank is further developing in view of its commitment to transparency.

## II. OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS AFTER THE FIRST 18 MONTHS

### A. World Bank's Proactive Disclosures and the Public's Access

6. As part of the implementation plan for the AI Policy, management committed to the Board to carefully monitor the AI Policy and to keep the Board informed of its progress and results. This section of the Report provides a broad overview of the Bank's performance of the core areas of the AI Policy over the first 18 months.

7. **Proactive Disclosures.** A dedicated website on the Bank's Access to Information Policy ([www.worldbank.org/wbaccess](http://www.worldbank.org/wbaccess)) was launched in July 2010 to provide easy access to Bank documents, data, research, finances, and other useful resources, and to enable users to submit online requests. Through the website and a set of mobile applications, information of the Bank is made easy to search, filter, visualize and share.

8. In the first 18 months, the Bank publicly released close to 24,000 documents and reports through the Bank's *Documents and Reports* database.<sup>6</sup> Of these documents and reports, approximately 6,600 are dated before July 1, 2010. The rest – in excess of 17,000 – are recent reports dated within the period of July 1, 2010, and December 31, 2011. In the first 18 months,

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<sup>5</sup> See *Access to Information Annual Report FY 2011 – Moving Forward Transparency and Accountability*, issued February 3, 2012 (SecM2012-0039, IDA/SecM2012-0058).

<sup>6</sup> The number of documents and reports listed in this paragraph does not include the 34,000+ documents and reports that the Bank released immediately prior to July 1, 2010, in preparation for the AI Policy launch.

the *Documents and Reports* database received more than 1.6 million visits, and users viewed approximately 6.8 million pages and downloaded close to 1.3 million documents.

9. ***Disclosure of Board Records.*** Consistent with the Board’s decision to disclose the final decisions and outcomes of its deliberative process, certain records of the Board are routinely disclosed. In the first 18 months, the Bank released 458 Board records as part of the Board’s routine disclosures. Table 1 below indicates the categories and numbers of Board records disclosed.

<b>Type of Board Record</b>	<b>Number of Publicly Disclosed Board Records</b>
Board Minutes	189
Summings Up	68
Summaries of Discussion	103
Green Sheet Summaries	18
Committee Minutes	75
Committee Annual Reports	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>

10. ***Disclosure of Board Papers Before Board Discussion.*** Under the AI Policy, the Bank may disclose operational policy papers, sector strategy papers, Country Assistance Strategies (“CASs”), Project Appraisal Documents (“PADs”) and Program Documents (“PDs”) before Board discussion (commonly referred to as “simultaneous disclosure”).<sup>7</sup> In the first 18 months, the Bank simultaneously disclosed 150 Board papers.

## **B. Public Access Requests**

11. ***Information Made Public on Request.*** In addition to accessing information released by the Bank online and through the Bank’s public information centers, the public can submit public access requests directly to the Bank. As noted above, a dedicated website on the Bank’s Access to Information Policy not only provides the public with easy access to Bank information, but also readily enables users to submit online requests for information.

12. In the first 18 months, the public filed 1,060 information requests with the Bank. Of the 1,060 cases received, the Bank completed 950 cases (89.6 percent) by December 31, 2011. Of the completed cases, 579 cases (61 percent) were properly addressed to the Bank and provided adequate information to enable the Bank to respond by either fulfilling or denying the request, in whole or in part. With respect to requests that require more information from the requesters to fulfill (e.g., very generic or broad requests), when such requests are received, the front-line (i.e., Archives, InfoShop/PIC) staff contact the requestors to identify a more precise request; in some instances, following such dialogue the requesters find the information directly online.

<sup>7</sup> See AI Policy at para. 23 (b). CASs, PADs, and PDs may be simultaneously disclosed before Board discussion if the member country gives its written consent to such early disclosure. See AI Policy at para. 23 (b) (ii).

Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of all the cases that were completed in the first 18 months.

**Table 2. Resolution of Cases Completed in the First 18 Months**

<b>Total Cases Completed</b>	Requests Properly Addressed to the Bank and with adequate information to enable the Bank to Fulfill or Deny the Request	Requests Required Additional Information from Requesters – Requesters Unresponsive*	Requested Information Covered by Other Disclosure Policy/Regime or Information Held by Other Organizations	Requests Referred to World Bank Data Helpdesk or EXT	Requests for Records Not Found in the Bank’s Possession
<b>950</b>	579 (61%)	224 (23.6%)	27 (2.8%)	75 (7.9%)	45 (4.7%)

\* For requests that require more information from the requesters to fulfill (e.g., very generic or broad requests), the front-line (i.e., Archives, InfoShop/PIC) staff contact the requesters to identify a more precise request; in some instances, following such dialogue the requesters find the information directly online.

13. **Declassification of Restricted Board Records.** In addition to proactively disclosing the Board records discussed in section II.A of this Report, the Bank, in response to 11 public access requests, also declassified and disclosed 75 Board records, including 24 Board transcripts, that were restricted by the *Deliberative Information* exception.

14. **Requests Fulfilled or Denied in the 18-month Period.** Of the 579 cases that were properly addressed to the Bank and had adequate information to enable the Bank to respond, 91.5 percent (530 cases) were fulfilled in whole or in part, and 8.5 percent (49 cases) were denied in whole. Of the 18 requests fulfilled in part: (a) 13 were denied in part because the information is restricted by an AI Policy exception; (b) two could not be fulfilled in part because the records were not found in the World Bank’s custody; and (c) three others could not be fulfilled in part because the requester did not respond to the World Bank’s request for additional information to enable the request to be fulfilled. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the requests that were either fulfilled or denied in whole or in part.

**Table 3. Requests Fulfilled or Denied or Could not be Fulfilled in Part in the First 18 Months**

<b>Total Requests Fulfilled or Denied</b>	Fulfilled (in whole)	Fulfilled* (in part)	Denied (in whole)
<b>579</b>	512 (88.4%)**	18 (3.1%)**	49 (8.5%)

\* Of these 18 cases, 13 were denied in part, and the other five could not be fulfilled in part (which were not denials) because either (a) the records were not found to be in the Bank’s custody (two cases), or (b) the requesters did not respond to the Bank’s request for additional information that would enable the request to be fulfilled (three cases).

\*\* In total, the Bank fulfilled – in whole or in part – 530 cases (91.5% of the total number of requests fulfilled or denied).

15. **Denials.** The Bank allows access to any information in its possession that is not on a list of exceptions as defined under the AI Policy.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the Bank does not provide access to documents that contain or refer to information related to the exceptions set out in the AI Policy. Under exceptional circumstances, the Bank also reserves the right to restrict access to information that it normally discloses.<sup>9</sup> In the first 18 months, of the 579 cases that were properly addressed to the Bank and had adequate information to enable the Bank to respond, only 8.5 percent (49 cases) resulted in a full denial, and 2.2 percent (13 cases) resulted in partial denials. The reasons for the denials are set forth in Table 4.

**Table 4. Requests Denied (in whole or in part) and the Reasons for the Denials**

<b>Total Requests Denied (in whole or in part)</b>		<b>62 /i</b>
<b>Denials Based on the AI Policy Exception(s)</b>	Personal Information	2 /ii
	Security and Safety	2 /iii
	Information Restricted Under Separate Disclosure Regimes and Other Investigative Information	1 /iv
	Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence	7 /v
	Corporate Administrative Matters	8
	Deliberative Information	40
<b>Denials for Other Reasons</b>	Prerogative to Restrict Access	2 /vi

/i The 62 cases reflected in this Table were denied by the Bank pursuant to either one of the AI Policy exceptions or the Bank's exercise of the prerogative to restrict access. Note that Table 3 above reflects five additional cases that could not be fulfilled in part because either (a) the records were not found to be in the Bank's custody (two cases), or (b) the requesters did not respond to the Bank's request for additional information that would enable the request to be fulfilled (three cases). Because the five cases were not actual denials (but rather, were cases in which the Bank could not fulfill the request), they are not reflected in this Table.

/ii One of which is also covered by the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exception.

/iii One of which is also covered by the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exception, as indicated in the case notes.

/iv The information is also covered by *Deliberative Information* exception.

/v Three of which are also covered by the *Deliberative Information* exception.

/vi See paragraphs 17-18 of this Report.

### C. Exercise of the World Bank's Prerogatives

16. **Exercise of the Bank's Prerogative to Disclose Restricted Information.** Under the AI Policy, the Bank reserves the right to disclose, under exceptional circumstances, certain information covered by the *Corporate Administrative Matters*, *Deliberative Information*, and *Financial Information* (other than banking and billing) exceptions, if the Bank determines that the overall benefit of such disclosure outweighs the potential harm to the interests protected

<sup>8</sup> See AI Policy at paras. 6-17. The exceptions, as explained in the Policy, are: (a) *Personal Information*; (b) *Communications of Executive Directors' Offices*; (c) *Ethics Committee*; (d) *Attorney-Client Privilege*; (e) *Security and Safety*; (f) *Information Restricted under Separate Disclosure Regimes and Other Investigative Information*; (g) *Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence*; (h) *Corporate Administrative Matters*; (i) *Deliberative Information*; and (j) *Financial Information*.

<sup>9</sup> See AI Policy at para. 19.

by the exceptions.<sup>10</sup> With respect to documents covered by these exceptions, which have not been provided to the Bank by a member country or third party in confidence: the Board has the authority to exercise this prerogative for Board papers or Board records classified as Confidential or Strictly Confidential; and the Access to Information Committee (“AIC”) has the authority to exercise this prerogative for all other documents of such nature. During the first 18 months, the AIC considered 22 public access requests for this purpose. The AIC exercised the prerogative to disclose in 11 cases (50 percent) involving documents covered by the *Corporate Administrative Matters, Deliberative Information* and/or *Financial Information* (other than banking and billing) AI Policy exceptions.

17. ***Exercise of the Bank’s Prerogative to Restrict Access.*** Under the AI Policy, the Bank reserves the right not to disclose, under exceptional circumstances, information that it would normally disclose if it determines that such information is likely to cause harm that outweighs the benefits of disclosure.<sup>11</sup> The prerogative may be exercised only: (a) by the Board with respect to Board records; (b) by the vice president concerned with respect to Board papers; and (c) by the director concerned with respect to other information.

18. A review of the Bank’s records management system (“WBDocs”) shows that the use of this prerogative to restrict has been limited. Of the approximate one million records filed in WBDocs, less than 0.03 percent has been restricted through the exercise of this Bank prerogative. In the context of Board records, in order to allow the Executive Directors the opportunity to exercise the prerogative to restrict in exceptional circumstances, as discussed above, management notifies the Board before declassifying Board records. As also discussed above, in the first 18 months, a total of 83 Board records were submitted to the Board for consideration; of which, 75 (91 percent) proceeded to be declassified and disclosed. The Board exercised the prerogative to restrict eight records following a determination that the records’ disclosure would likely cause harm that would outweigh the benefits.

#### **D. Timeliness of World Bank Responses**

19. ***Timeliness.*** The AI Policy states that the World Bank endeavors to provide a comprehensive response to requests within 20 working days, recognizing that additional time may be needed for special circumstances, such as complex requests or requests that require consultation with internal or external parties. Of the 950 completed requests received in the first 18 months, the World Bank provided comprehensive responses to 74 percent of the cases within 20 working days; these cases took an average of 8.5 working days to complete. For the cases that required more than 20 working days to complete, the cases took an average of 61.4 working days to complete. As noted above, the AI Policy recognizes that additional time, beyond the 20 working day standard, may be needed in special circumstances, including for example, those involving complex or voluminous requests, or requests requiring review by or consultations with internal Bank units, external partners, the AIC, or the Board. The requests received in the first 18 months that went beyond the 20 working day standard broadly required consultation with

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<sup>10</sup> See AI Policy at para. 18.

<sup>11</sup> See AI Policy at para. 19.

relevant business units (including locating the documents requested) and, in some cases, additional review by or consultations with the AIC, the Board and/or external parties.

## **E. Appeals**

20. ***The Appeals Process.*** One of the guiding principles of the AI Policy is to recognize a requester's right to an appeals process if the requester is denied access to information by the Bank. A requester may file an appeal on the basis that the Bank violated the AI Policy by improperly or unreasonably restricting access to information that it would normally disclose under the AI Policy, or on the basis that there is a public interest case to override the AI Policy's exceptions that restrict the disclosure of certain information (limited to information restricted by the *Corporate Administrative Matters, Deliberative Information* and *Financial Information*, other than banking and billing information, exceptions).

21. ***AIC.*** The AIC serves as the first level of appeal for those appeals alleging a violation of the AI Policy, and as the first and final level of appeal for those appeals asserting a public interest. In the first 18 months, the AIC considered and ruled on 13 appeals, upholding the Bank's decision to deny access (at least in part) in 12 cases, and dismissing in whole in one case. In three of the 13 cases, even though the AIC found that the denials did not violate the AI Policy and/or the requesters did not provide a compelling public interest case to override the AI Policy exception(s) concerned, the AIC decided to release the information to the requesters through its authority to exercise the Bank's prerogative to disclose restricted information, and based on its determination that the benefit of disclosing the information outweighs the potential harm. In the third case, while certain requested documents were restricted by the *Information Provided in Confidence* exception, the member country concerned subsequently agreed to make the information public.

22. As noted above, one of the 13 appeals was dismissed in whole; three others were dismissed in part. The AIC dismissed the one appeal in whole because the requester filed a public interest appeal asserting that there is a public interest in disclosing an individual Bank staff member's personal financial information. Because the requested information is restricted by the *Personal Information* exception, and the AI Policy limits public interest appeals to requests involving information restricted by the *Corporate Administrative Matters, Deliberative Information* and *Financial Information* exceptions of the Policy, the AIC determined that the appeal was not properly placed before the AIC. In the second case, the AIC dismissed a portion of the appeal because, at the time the appeal was filed, the Bank had not decided on the request (and the subsequent decision did not involve a denial). In the third case, the AIC dismissed the appeal in part because it found that the requester had modified the original request made to the Bank, and thus the Bank had neither considered nor denied the requester's access to the additional information at issue; the AIC dismissed that portion of the appeal and referred the request back to the Archives Unit for processing. In the fourth case, the AIC dismissed the appeal in part because the requester provided no public interest reasons to support the appeal on public interest grounds.

23. **AI Appeals Board.** In the 18-month review period, the World Bank established its first AI Appeals Board, which serves as the second and final level of appeal for those appeals alleging a violation of the AI Policy.<sup>12</sup> The AI Appeals Board convened in Washington, DC, in September 2010. For appeals alleging a violation of the AI Policy that result in an AIC decision to uphold the Bank’s decision to deny access, the decision issued to the requester always provides the requester with an internet link that enables the requester to readily file a second level appeal, if he/she so chooses. In the first 18 months, no appeal was filed before the AI Appeals Board. To better understand the reasons for this, as part of an annual AI survey that the Bank conducts of all individuals who have filed a request for information through the Bank’s access to information system, the Bank intends to seek the views of those who, in FY 2012, filed a first level appeal alleging a violation of AI Policy and received an AIC decision to uphold the original denial on why they chose not to file a second level appeal with the AI Appeals Board.

### **III. LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLEMENTATION ENHANCEMENTS**

#### **A. Additional Monitoring Activities**

24. In addition to management’s monitoring and reporting of the AI Policy’s implementation, as mentioned above, the Internal Audit Vice Presidency (“IAD”) conducted an advisory engagement in 2011 that reviewed the Bank’s implementation progress on the roll-out of the AI Policy. The review recognized that management had undertaken extensive work to put into place infrastructure and related business processes to facilitate the implementation of the AI Policy, and that the AI Policy’s implementation has been strengthened by an effective oversight and governance mechanism (which included the AIC, in its role to broadly oversee the implementation and interpretation of the AI Policy, and the Information Policy Unit, LEG (“LEGIP”), in its role as the anchor for the AI Policy and in preparing and coordinating regular implementation progress reports to the Board). The exercise was useful in giving management the opportunity to take stock of lessons learned and to identify areas for further enhancement, as further elaborated below.

#### **B. Follow-up Actions**

25. Management has taken the following actions to strengthen the business processes and infrastructure that support the AI Policy’s implementation:

(a) **Records Management.** Management acknowledged that the AI Policy represents a substantial shift in how staff manage and handle information in the Bank’s possession. To strengthen the Bank’s records management infrastructure, the Bank’s Information Management and Technology Vice Presidency (“IMT”) has engaged Vice Presidential Units (“VPUs”) across the Bank, by convening a group of information management focal points, composed of high level Bank staff, to meet regularly to discuss records management issues and agree on related actions. This engagement with VPUs helps to ensure unit level ownership and participation to institute

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<sup>12</sup> The AI Appeals Board consists of three persons external to the Bank, who are nominated by the Bank President and endorsed by the Board of Executive Directors.

controls over areas of records management, classification, folders management and the use of network drives, email accounts, websites and other areas where records may be stored. Various tools and training materials have also been developed for the information management focal points to provide to staff and to improve their units' level of records management. VPUs are also provided data to help them monitor compliance with filing and the classification of information. IMT completed these actions on March 31, 2012, and continues to work with the business units to improve their records management results.

(b) ***Information Classification.*** Staff members' ability to appropriately determine information as public or restricted, and their security classification, is a crucial factor in successfully implementing the AI Policy. IMT conducts a quarterly sampling of the classification of information. According to IMT, sampling results indicate that Bank staff members continue to improve in the accuracy of their classification of information. As noted above, IMT is working to provide all VPUs with data to help them monitor compliance with their unit's accuracy in classifying information. IMT completed implementation of this sampling system on June 30, 2012, and continues to provide data to all VPUs in support of their information classification monitoring activities.

(c) ***Analytics and reporting on case management.*** With the introduction of the AI Policy, the Bank, under the leadership of its External Affairs Vice Presidency ("EXT"), created an interim cost-effective in-house case tracking system for receiving, handling and processing public information requests in support of the AI Policy. Management recognized the importance of prioritizing the development of a more sophisticated case management and tracking system to minimize the need to manually compile AI statistics for one reason. Under the auspices of IMT, the case tracking system has continued to be developed to support the AI work in this respect. Additionally, a requirements document for a new case management system has been prepared for systems development. IMT completed the requirements document on March 31, 2012, and is scheduled to develop of the new case management system according to those requirements starting October 2012. Deployment of the new system is expected before the end of FY 2013.

(d) ***Integration of AI Policy training in the Bank's on-boarding process for new staff.*** To ensure that staff are knowledgeable on how to support the Bank in meeting its obligations under the AI Policy, all Bank staff have been required to complete a mandatory e-learning training program, which consists of three training modules on: (i) the AI Policy; (ii) information classification; and (iii) records management. EXT has worked with the Human Resources Vice Presidency ("HRS") to incorporate the mandatory training into the Bank's on-boarding program to ensure systematic and timely completion of the AI Policy training by all new staff on an on-going basis. The training was enforced for eligible current staff and consultants during FY 2011, attaining a 98 percent completion rate. HRS is developing a mechanism for sending automated reminders to staff regarding mandatory learning; this is expected to take effect in FY 2013.

(e) ***Adequacy of systems for processing safeguard documents for disclosure.*** The automation and integration of certain Bank systems and databases have been identified as a key to help streamline the processing and disclosure of safeguard documents. IMT and EXT are working with the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency ("OPCS") to proceed with the disclosure automation work, which is anticipated for FY 2013.

26. ***Improving Public Availability of Trust Fund Information.*** In applying the AI Policy to operations financed by trust funds, one of the Bank's objectives is to align the process for disclosing documents related to recipient-executed activities that are financed by trust funds with the process for disclosing documents related to operations that are financed by the Bank. In the first 18 months of the AI Policy's implementation, the plans for integrating trust fund documents in the operational systems for Bank-financed operations were still under development. As a result, disclosure of certain trust fund related documents had to be handled on a case-by-case basis. While certain trust fund related documents will continue to be made publicly available only upon request, the sponsoring business units (OPCS, CFP, CTR, IMT and LEG) have agreed on a plan to ensure the further improvement of the public availability of documents related to recipient-executed activities financed by trust funds. The advancement of this trust fund business integration initiative is scheduled to begin in FY 2013.

27. ***Handling of Public Access Requests – Beyond Transition.*** In anticipation of a significant increase in demand for information when the AI Policy took effect, management put into place the following interim arrangements for processing public information requests in the first two years of the AI Policy's implementation: (a) a special team was created within the Archives Unit to process all requests for information created or received before July 1, 2010, the effective date of the AI Policy; and (b) EXT (InfoShop) and/or the communication staff in country offices would process all requests for information created or received after July 1, 2010.<sup>13</sup> This arrangement has proven effective, and the work of the front-line units has been well coordinated.

28. As the first two years of the AI Policy implementation is concluding, going forward, management has decided to have the current arrangements evolve as follows: (a) EXT and the communication units in country offices will process all requests for information created or received in the most recent three years; and (b) the Archives Unit will process all requests for information created or received by the Bank prior to the rolling three year cut-off date, which will be July 1 of each year, starting July 1, 2013.

29. ***Streamlining of the Process for Declassifying and Disclosing Specific Categories of Restricted Documents – After 20 Years.*** The AI Policy indicates that specific categories of documents are declassified and made publicly available 20 years after the date of the document, provided that the document does not contain or refer to information that is not eligible for declassification, namely information covered by one or more of the AI Policy exceptions other than the *Deliberative Information* and the *Financial Information* exceptions.<sup>14</sup> The AI Policy also recognizes that, notwithstanding its broad intent to allow access to any information in the Bank's possession that is not on the list of exceptions, the Bank reserves the right, under exceptional circumstances, to restrict access to information that it normally discloses.<sup>15</sup> The AI Policy provides that, for documents other than Board records, the Bank's prerogative to restrict access may be exercised by the vice president concerned with respect to Board papers,

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<sup>13</sup> See 2009 Policy Board Paper at para. 25.

<sup>14</sup> See AI Policy at paras. 32-33; note that banking and billing information, though covered by the *Financial Information* exception, is also ineligible for declassification.

<sup>15</sup> See AI Policy at para. 6.

and the director concerned with respect to other documents. In implementing this AI Policy provision for the declassification of documents – other than Board records – the Archives Unit has routinely notified the vice president or director concerned of the intended declassifications to give the authorized party the opportunity to consider whether to exercise the Bank’s prerogative to restrict access before a document is declassified and disclosed. The Archives Unit has found this process of notifying and consulting authorized parties creates delays in declassifying and disclosing older documents, and proposed to the AIC that, in the interest of timely disclosure of information and reducing unnecessary requests to vice presidents and directors, when declassifying documents (other than Board records) after 20 years, the Archives Unit will carry out the reviews and discontinue routine notification and consultation unless, in the opinion of the Chief Archivist, there is specific cause to seek the views of the vice presidents or directors concerned.

30. The AIC considered the Archives Unit’s proposal, and in the interest of the AI Policy’s guiding principle of maximizing access to information, the AIC decided that the process for declassifying documents at least 20 years old – but not including Board records or communications between Bank staff and Executive Directors’ offices – should be modified to allow the archivists in the Bank Group’s Archives Unit to determine, under the supervision and authority of the Chief Archivist, the following:

- (a) Whether the documents concerned are eligible for declassification pursuant to the AI Policy, and
- (b) If the documents concerned are eligible for declassification, whether:
  - The content of the documents to be declassified raises issues that require notification of, as relevant, the vice president or director concerned, in order for the authorized party to consider exercising the Bank’s prerogative to restrict access; or
  - To proceed with declassification and disclosure without such notification based on the responsible archivist’s judgment that the content of the document raises no significant issue.

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE BANK’S PERFORMANCE BY EXTERNAL PARTIES AND THE AI POLICY’S IMPACT**

##### **A. External Assessments**

31. *The Bank’s Commitment to Aid Transparency.* The Bank is committed to the view that aid transparency is a crucial component of aid effectiveness. To that end, the Bank adopted the AI Policy to enable it to increase the public’s access to key Bank documents, and to support the achievement of development outcomes through more informed civil society participation around the Bank’s projects and policy reform processes. This raises questions of how the Bank and its efforts are perceived by the public and what impact the AI Policy has had thus far. While the Bank continues to refine its processes and recognizes that the successful implementation of the AI Policy will continue to be a work in progress, based on internal and external assessments to date, the AI Policy’s impact and the results of the Bank’s performance have been positive.

32. **Quality of Official Development Assistance.** In 2010, the Brookings Institution and the Center for Global Development assessed the quality of official development assistance of donor countries and bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Under the indicator of aid transparency and learning (i.e., provision of timely and comparative information about aid spending, in support of better coordination amongst donors and recipient countries, to enable them to improve their planning, and to learn from actual experience), the assessment ranked the Bank as the highest-performing donor out of 30 major donors.<sup>16</sup>

33. **Aid Transparency Assessment Ranking.** In 2010, the independent United Kingdom-based organization, *Publish What You Fund*, conducted an aid transparency assessment that rated donors on their overall commitment to aid transparency, and the extent to which the donors provide aid information to recipient governments and to civil society organizations.<sup>17</sup> *Publish What You Fund*, which is a coalition of civil society organizations working on governance, aid effectiveness and access to information, assessed the Bank as the highest-performing donor amongst 30 major donors, rating the Bank well above average in nearly all indicators and ranking the Bank the highest overall in making available specific aid information to recipient countries and to civil society.

34. **Aid Transparency Index Ranking.** In 2011, *Publish What You Fund* issued a pilot aid transparency index, which ranked 58 donor agencies according to how much information they provide across 37 different indicators. According to the index, the Bank was determined to be the best performer out of 58 donors.<sup>18</sup> Though the index report noted that Bank systems could be better streamlined to allow easier access and comparison of information, it recognized the Bank's broad publication and disclosure of its operational and institutional information. The index report also recognized the Bank's participation in and implementation of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, which provides a common standard for publishing data and has the potential to transform the way aid is managed.

35. **Criticisms.** While acknowledging the positive developments of the Bank's AI Policy, certain external groups have expressed some criticism. Specifically, while some members of civil society recognize that international financial institutions ("IFIs") have taken significant steps to develop their information disclosure policies to represent a real presumption of disclosure, they have expressed concern with respect to the IFIs' policies to protect two types of interests, namely the commercial interests of third parties and internal deliberations, fearing that the protections are too broad.<sup>19</sup> As reflected in the results of the Bank's implementation record thus far, the number of public access requests that have been denied on the basis of the *Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence* and the *Deliberative*

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<sup>16</sup> See Brookings Institution and Center for Global Development, *Quality of Official Development Assistance Assessment*, Aid Transparency and Learning indicator, at [http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/aid\\_effectiveness/quoda?p=b&d=t](http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/aid_effectiveness/quoda?p=b&d=t).

<sup>17</sup> See Publish What You Fund, *Aid Transparency Assessment* at <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/files/Aid-Transparency-Assessment.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> See Publish What You Fund, *2011 Pilot Aid Transparency Index* at <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/resources/index/2011-index/world-bank/ida/>. (Update: In 2012, Publish What You Fund gave the Bank its highest aid transparency rating of "good"; out of 72 donor organizations, the Bank was one of only two organizations to be rated "good," ranking second behind DFID.)

<sup>19</sup> See Centre for Law and Democracy, *Openness Policies of the International Financial Institutions: Failing to Make the Grade with Exceptions*, July 2012.

*Information* exceptions has been relatively small (see Table 4 of this Report). The Bank is, nonetheless, sensitive to these concerns, and is committed to monitoring the application of these exceptions under the AI Policy. The Bank will take action as needed to ensure their reasonable application.

36. Other points of criticism voiced by some interlocutors in civil society pertain to outreach at the country office level to make stakeholders aware of the AI Policy, and to review its approach to translations. Several country offices have taken the initiative to engage with their stakeholders on the broader Open Development agenda, including the AI Policy, and management (through a partnership of EXT, OPCS, World Bank Institute, Development Economics Vice Presidency, Controller's Vice Presidency, LEG and the Regional Vice Presidencies) is making a concerted effort to encourage more country offices to do so.

37. With respect to the Bank's approach to making certain information available in languages other than its working language of English, Bank management recognizes that, while the translation of documents is a matter that extends beyond the AI Policy, it is an important element of ensuring proper public access to Bank information. In 2009, when the AI Policy was proposed to the Board, management took note that the new policy might create a higher demand for document translation; in that context, management noted the need to examine the adequacy of the Bank's existing Translation Framework to respond to the potential demand. While management acknowledges that some members of civil society have expressed concern with the Bank's approach to translations, overall, the Bank has not experienced a perceptible increase in demand for translations since the implementation of the AI Policy. In that respect, the existing Translation Framework – which vests responsibility for translation decisions in the business sponsor of each document – is possibly providing business units with the needed flexibility to determine how limited resources can be spent to ensure that relevant information reaches, as widely as possible, the audiences who need to know.<sup>20</sup> However, Management recognizes that translation is an important factor in communications and information access, and, in turn, effective development; in this light, and as a standalone matter, management will continue to monitor the Bank's implementation of the existing Translation Framework to ensure its effectiveness.

## **B. Impact of the World Bank's AI Policy on Access to Information**

38. *Other IFIs' Adoption of Similar Transparency Initiatives.* One impact that the Bank's adoption of the AI Policy has had is to set in motion the adoption of similar transparency initiatives by other IFIs. In the spirit of collaboration and harmonization of IFI policies, the World Bank has been consulted by and has shared with interested IFIs the Bank's experience in preparing, rolling out and implementing its AI Policy. Below are some highlights of the access to information initiatives of other IFIs that followed the Bank's adoption of its AI Policy:

- In 2010, the Inter-American Development Bank (“IADB”) adopted a new Access to Information Policy, which took effect in 2011. The policy reflects principles similar to

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<sup>20</sup> See *A Document Translation Framework for the World Bank Group*, August 6, 2003; see also *Translation Framework for the World Bank: Progress in Implementation*, December 8, 2006.

those of the Bank’s Policy. It takes a negative list approach, presuming disclosure of the institution’s information subject to a narrow list of exceptions, and introduces a two stage review mechanism if a requester wishes to challenge a denial.

- In 2011, the Asian Development Bank (“AsDB”) adopted a new Public Communications Policy, which took effect in 2012. The institution’s new policy also takes a negative list approach. It clarifies its list of exceptions to disclosure, increases the public’s access to the institution’s Board decision making process, including the simultaneous disclosure of Board papers, and the declassification of Board transcripts after 10 years. The policy also provides an independent appeals panel for review of denials.
- In 2012, the African Development Bank (“AfDB”) adopted a new Disclosure and Access to Information Policy, to take effect in 2013. The institution’s new policy also adopts a negative list approach, disclosing any information that it produces not contained on its list of exceptions.

Annex A of this Report provides detailed comparative information on some aspects of the respective policies of the World Bank, IADB, AsDB, AfDB, and the International Monetary Fund (“IMF”).

## V. POLICY ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION – FURTHERING TRANSPARENCY

39. **Making Certain Corporate Administrative Matters Publicly Available.** Management has taken steps to make publicly available certain corporate administrative information that has been restricted under the AI Policy’s *Corporate Administrative Matters* exception. For example, the Pension Finance Committee (“PFC”), the governing body responsible for the Bank’s pension and other retirement benefit plans, has been in discussions with Bank management regarding the types of information about the plans that could be made available to the public through websites and other means. Bank management will support the PFC in this effort. Additionally, the General Services Department, Corporate Procurement Unit (“GSDCP”), is taking measures to publish corporate administrative procurement awards and operational consultant procurement awards above USD250,000, with the exception of only those cases involving information covered by an AI Policy exception other than the *Corporate Administrative Matters* exception (e.g., *Security and Safety* exception) or if the Bank determines that the disclosure is likely to cause harm that outweighs the benefits of disclosure.<sup>21</sup> GSDCP is currently reviewing the systems, staffing and organizational considerations necessary to implement these additional disclosures at the earliest.

40. Based on the Bank’s implementation experience, Management has identified several aspects of the AI Policy that can be clarified or further developed. Executive Directors have been consulted and are providing input on the matters. Following the conclusion of the

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<sup>21</sup> See AI Policy at para. 19.

consultations, Management will present recommendations to the Executive Directors for consideration.

## **VI. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

41. Since the effectiveness of the AI Policy in July 2010, the Bank has made great strides in becoming a greater force of transparency and accountability. This is reflected in the Bank's performance in the first 18 months, and the assessments conducted by external parties. However, the Bank recognizes that the successful implementation of the AI Policy will continue to be a work in progress. To that end, the Bank continues to refine the systems and infrastructure that support its implementation of the AI Policy. Moreover, based on its determination of certain aspects of the AI Policy that can be further clarified and developed, Management will continue to consult with Executive Directors and will present recommendations to the Executive Directors for formal consideration at a later date.

## Annex A: Comparison of the Information Access Policies of Select IFIs

Key Features	World Bank	IDB	AsDB	AfDB	IMF
<b>Policy Title</b>	Policy on Access to Information	Access to Information	Public Communications Policy	Disclosure and Access to Information	1. Transparency Policy 2. Archives Policy
<b>Date of Approval and Effectiveness</b>	Approved November 2009. Effective July 1, 2010.	Approved May 2010. Effective January 1, 2011.	Approved October 2011. Effective April 2, 2012.	Approved May 2012. Effective 9 months after approval by the Board (i.e., February 2013).	Both approved December 17, 2009. Effective March 17, 2010.
<b>Main Policy Statement</b>	The Bank allows access to any information in its possession that is not on a list of exceptions set out in the Policy.	IDB will disclose any information not contained on a list of exceptions.	The policy is based on a presumption in favor of disclosure. All documents that ADB produces or requires to be produced may be disclosed unless they contain information that falls within the exceptions of the policy.	The AfDB will aim to maximize access to information that it produces by disclosing any information not contained on the list of exceptions (negative list).	The IMF will strive to disclose documents and information on a timely basis unless strong and specific reasons argue against such disclosure. (Transparency Policy)
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximize access to information</li> <li>2. information</li> <li>3. Clear list of exceptions.</li> <li>4. Safeguard the deliberative process.</li> <li>5. Clear procedures for making information available.</li> <li>6. Right to appeal.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximize access to information.</li> <li>2. Narrow and clear exceptions.</li> <li>3. Simple and broad access to information.</li> <li>4. Explanations of decisions and right to review.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proactive disclosure.</li> <li>2. Presumption in favor of disclosure.</li> <li>3. Right to access and impart information and ideas.</li> <li>4. Country ownership, before disclosing certain documents, the views of developing member countries are considered.</li> <li>5. Limited exceptions.</li> <li>6. Right to appeal.</li> <li>7. In the event of conflict with other policies, the disclosure requirements of the Policy prevail.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maximum disclosure.</li> <li>2. Enhanced access.</li> <li>3. Limited list of exceptions.</li> <li>4. A consultative approach.</li> <li>5. Proactive disclosure.</li> <li>6. Right to appeal.</li> <li>7. Safeguarding the deliberative process.</li> <li>8. Provision for review.</li> </ol>	See above. The principle respects, and will be applied to ensure, the voluntary nature of publications of documents that pertain to member countries is consistent with the need for the IMF to safeguard confidential information. A member's consent to publication of documents is "voluntary but presumed," allowing the member to notify the IMF that it objects, needs additional time to decide, or consents subject to an agreement on deletions. (Transparency Policy)

<b>Key Features</b>	<b>WB</b>	<b>IDB</b>	<b>AsDB</b>	<b>AfDB</b>	<b>IMF</b>
<b>Policy contains positive list of publicly available information</b>	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES. Subject to consent of the member concerned for some documents, or consent of the World Bank for joint documents. (Transparency Policy)
<b>List of Policy Exceptions</b>	<p>YES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal Information</li> <li>2. Communications of EDs' Offices</li> <li>3. Ethics Committee</li> <li>4. Attorney-Client Privilege</li> <li>5. Security and Safety</li> <li>6. Info Restricted Under Separate Disclosure Regimes and Other Investigative Information.</li> <li>7. Information Provided in Confidence</li> <li>8. Corporate Administrative Matters</li> <li>9. Deliberative Information</li> </ol>	<p>YES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal information</li> <li>2. Legal, disciplinary or investigative matters</li> <li>3. Communications involving Executive Directors</li> <li>4. Safety and security</li> <li>5. Information provided in confidence; intellectual property; and business/financial information</li> <li>6. Corporate administrative information</li> <li>7. Deliberative information</li> <li>8. Certain financial information</li> <li>9. Country-specific information</li> <li>10. Information relating to non-sovereign guaranteed operations</li> </ol>	<p>YES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliberative and decision-making process.</li> <li>2. Information provided in confidence.</li> <li>3. Personal information.</li> <li>4. Financial information.</li> <li>5. Security and safety.</li> <li>6. Legal or investigative matters.</li> <li>7. Internal audit reports and trust fund audit reports.</li> </ol>	<p>YES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliberative information and incomplete reports</li> <li>2. Communications involving the Bank Group's President, Executive Directors and Governors</li> <li>3. Legal, disciplinary or investigative matters</li> <li>4. Information provided in confidence by member countries, private-sector entities or third parties</li> <li>5. Administrative information</li> <li>6. Financial information</li> <li>7. Safety and security</li> <li>8. Personal Information</li> </ol>	<p>YES.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal documents and records maintained by the Legal Department that are protected by attorney-client privilege</li> <li>2. Documentary materials furnished to the Fund by external parties, including member countries, their instrumentalities and agencies and central banks, that bear confidentiality markings, unless such external parties consent to their declassification</li> <li>3. Personnel files and medical or other records pertaining to individuals</li> <li>4. Documents and proceedings of the Grievance Committee. (Archives Policy)</li> </ol>

<b>Key Features</b>	<b>WB</b>	<b>IDB</b>	<b>AsDB</b>	<b>AfDB</b>	<b>IMF</b>
<b>Prerogative to Restrict Access</b>	<p>YES. If the potential harm of disclosure outweighs the benefits of disclosure. This prerogative may be exercised only by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Board, with respect to Board records;</li> <li>- The vice president concerned, with respect to Board papers; and</li> <li>- The director concerned, with respect to other information.</li> </ul>	<p>YES. IDB may decide to exclude normally available information from access based on the premise that access would occasion more harm than benefit. Requests to override the policy requires written authorization from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Access to Information Committee authorization; or</li> <li>- The Board for Board records.</li> </ul>	<p>YES. AsDB reserves the right not to disclose, under exceptional circumstances, if it determines that such disclosure would or would be likely to cause harm that outweighs the benefit of disclosure. This prerogative may be exercised only by the Board.</p>	<p>YES. AfDB reserves the right not to disclose, under exceptional circumstances, information which it would otherwise make public. Exercised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Board with respect to Board papers or records</li> <li>- Written consent of member country or third party for information provided in confidence</li> <li>- The Information Disclosure Committee with regard to other information.</li> </ul>	
<b>Prerogative to Disclose Restricted Information</b>	<p>YES. If the benefit of disclosure outweighs the harm. Only for administrative, deliberative or financial information. Exercising this prerogative requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Board approval for Board papers and records.</li> <li>- Written consent by the party concerned for information provided to the Bank by a third party.</li> <li>- AIC approval for other restricted information</li> </ul>	<p>YES. In extraordinary circumstances, limited to information restricted by the corporate administrative, deliberative and financial information exceptions, if the IDB determines that the benefit of disclosure would outweigh the potential harm, and IDB is not legally or otherwise obligated to non-disclosure and has not been provided information with the understanding that it will not be disclosed. Written authorization required from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to Information Committee; or</li> <li>- Board for Board records.</li> </ul>	<p>YES. If the AsDB determines that the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the harm that may be caused by disclosure. Recommendation by the Public Disclosure Advisory Committee to disclose or deny information requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of the Board for Board records;</li> <li>- Approval of the President for all other documents;</li> <li>- For documents given with an express legal commitment to keep the informational confidential, the party given the commitment must consent.</li> </ul>	<p>YES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Board approval, for early disclosure of Board papers or records</li> <li>- The written consent of the party concerned for early disclosure of information provided to the AfDB in confidence, and</li> <li>- The approval of the Information Disclosure Committee for early disclosure of any other restricted documents.</li> </ul> <p>The AfDB also has the right to disclose certain restricted corporate administrative, deliberative and financial information if it determines that the overall benefits of such disclosure outweigh the potential harm.</p>	

<b>Key Features</b>	<b>WB</b>	<b>IDB</b>	<b>AsDB</b>	<b>AfDB</b>	<b>IMF</b>
<b>Declassification Schedule for Restricted Documents</b>	<p>YES.</p> <p>For information under either deliberative and/or financial exceptions (other than banking and billing information), depending on document type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 years,</li> <li>- 10 years, or</li> <li>- 20 years.</li> </ul>	<p>YES.</p> <p>The classification level assigned to information will determine the schedule for disclosure: 5, 10 or 20 years.</p> <p>Information classified under the strictest confidentiality standard will not be disclosed even after 20 years.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Any information concerning AsDB-assisted projects, programs, policies, strategies, and general operations held by AsDB for more than 20 years, other than information relating to Board proceedings, are disclosed on request unless the information falls within the exceptions.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Five, 10, 20 years or more depending on its sensitivity and harmful effect.</p> <p>Information subject to declassification will be defined in the Information Disclosure Handbook. Some “Restricted” information will not be declassified.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive Board documents – over 3 years old,</li> <li>- Minutes of Executive Board meetings, BUFF and BUFF/EDs statements, and certain other Board records – over 5 years old; and</li> <li>- Other documentary materials maintained in the IMF’s archives – over 20 years old.</li> </ul> <p>If documents are classified as “Secret” or “Strictly Confidential” as of Policy’s approval date, access only granted if the Managing Director consents. (Archives Policy)</p>
<b>Board Records</b>					
<b>Disclosure of Board and Board Committee Minutes</b>	<p>YES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minutes created on or after April 1, 2005, public after Board deliberations.</li> <li>- Created before April 1, 2005, declassified after 5 years for Regular sessions and after 20 years for Executive or Restricted Executive Sessions.</li> </ul>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Records or portions thereof relating to confidential matters or documents are excluded from disclosure.</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>– for minutes of regular Board meetings – disclosed upon approval of those minutes by the Board and no later than 60 calendar days after the Board meeting.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Minutes of the Board are eligible for disclosure, but subject to the exclusion of records or portions thereof relating to confidential matters or documents or deliberative information.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Minutes of Executive Board meetings and Executive Board Committee Minutes that are over 5 years old.</p>

Key Features	WB	IDB	AsDB	AfDB	IMF
<b>Disclosure of Board Papers Before Board Discussion</b>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Following Board papers whose preparation may have involved consultations with affected parties, civil society groups, and other stakeholders are posted before the Board discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operational policy papers and sector strategy papers, if the Executive Directors have already reviewed a draft version of the paper.</li> <li>- Country Assistance Strategy papers, Project Appraisal Documents, and Program Documents, if the member country consents to early disclosure.</li> </ul>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Information sent to the Board and classified as “Public” will be disclosed at the time it is distributed to the Board (e.g., draft country strategies, operational policies, loan proposals, and technical cooperation plans of operation).</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Proposals of policy and strategy papers that have undergone a public consultation process will be posted on the AsDB website at time of circulation to the Board.</p>	<p>NOT CLEAR.</p> <p>Correspondence, draft reports or other documents prepared for, or exchanged during the course of its own internal deliberations including documents pertaining to Board deliberations are not disclosed because they fall under the Deliberative Information exception.</p>	<p>Most IMF Board documents cannot be published before Board discussion or the adoption of the relevant lapse-of-time decision. However, some documents circulated to the Board for information only may be published immediately after their <i>circulation</i> to the Executive Board. Joint Staff Advisory Notes circulated for information only may be published after the stated period within which an Executive Director may request that the document be placed on the agenda of the Executive Board. (Guidance note on the Transparency Policy)</p>
<b>APPEALS MECHANISM</b>					
<b>Review/Appeal Mechanism when information denied</b>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Two-stage appeals mechanism. The first stage of appeals alleging a violation of policy (and final stage of public interest appeals) is considered by the Access to Information Committee. The second stage of appeals alleging a violation of policy is considered by an impartial AI Appeals Board, consisting of three external persons who are independent of the Bank. The decisions of the Board are not subject to appeal.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Two-step review mechanism. First review by an interdepartmental Access to Information Committee (and final step for appeals to override a policy exception). If the request is denied, requester can appeal to three-member external panel.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Two stage appeals process. First stage and for public interest cases: Public Disclosure Advisory Committee, an internal body. Second stage: independent appeals panel.</p>	<p>YES.</p> <p>Persons with legitimate concerns about the AfDB’s omission or refusal to disclose information in accordance with this Policy will have access to effective and responsive two-stage appeals mechanisms within the AfDB. “Restricted” documents specified in the list of exceptions are not eligible for disclosure and will not be subject to the second stage of appeals.</p>	<p>NO.</p>