



THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA

Access to Information

FY 2018 Annual Report



Contents

Introduction	4
Access to Information Directive/Procedure Update	5
Personal Data Privacy Policy	8
Visitor Center	9
Records Management Highlights	6
Proactive Disclosure and Open Access	6
Proactive Disclosure of Historical Records	7
Access to Historical Documents On Demand	8
Historical Timeline	9
Open Data, Access to Board Records and General Inquiries	10
Access to Information Requests Handled	11
Appeals Concluded by the Access to Information Committee	15
Appeals Concluded by the Access to Information Appeals Board	16



Introduction

Introduced in 2010, the World Bank’s Policy on Access to Information (AI Policy) has made the Bank a more effective development partner.

Based on the concept that any information in the Bank’s possession is public, except for that which falls under a defined list of exceptions, the AI Policy remains the standard for international development institutions. It has also provided the basis for the accompanying open initiatives—including Open Data, Open Finances, the Open Knowledge Repository, and the Open Archives—all of which make the Bank’s work more transparent, accessible, and accountable.

For requests that are denied, the public can appeal by alleging a violation of policy and/or public interest. The internal Access to Information Committee serves as the first level for all appeals, and its decisions are final for appeals alleging a public interest ground. A second and final recourse for appeals alleging a violation of policy is available through the external and independent Appeals Board, consisting of three international experts.

In fiscal 2018, the Bank handled 675 public access requests for information and received more than 3.5 million visits to and 20 million downloads from the Documents and Reports database.

675

Public access requests for information

3.5

Million website page visits to Documents and Reports database

20

Million downloads from the Documents and Reports database

Access to Information Directive/Procedure Update

In FY18, the AI Directive/Procedure was updated to reflect the new treatment for documents prepared by member countries/borrowers that are in the Bank's possession under the "*Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence*" AI Policy exception. The changes are in two areas regarding (i) the understanding of confidentiality and (ii) the requirement for express permission to be obtained from the member country or third party.

Changes to the AI Directive/Procedure are part of the Bank's continual efforts to clarify and streamline implementation of the AI Policy. According to the Policy and Procedure framework, the Directive is a statement of substantive directions, within Management's authority, that require, permit, or constrain activities.

Personal Data Privacy Policy

Effective May 25, 2018 the World Bank Group enacted the Privacy Policy. This policy sets forth principles governing the processing of personal data by World Bank Group institutions. According to the policy, personal data refers to both data about WBG staff and contractors, and data on households and individuals used for the purposes of WBG work.

Visitor Center

On November 15, 2017, the new World Bank Group Visitor Center, opened at World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC. The Visitor Center offers not only an extensive display of the Bank Group's history, but also provides an interactive learning experience about the institution's work and mission, including the Bank's work towards ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity for the world's poorest people. The Visitor Center is free and open to the public, Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (closed weekends and U.S. Federal holidays).



Records Management Highlights

Recognizing the importance of information and records management as a vehicle for accountability, openness and transparency, the Bank continued its efforts to expand and integrate business applications systems to allow for the automatic capture and disclosure of records. The introduction of a new eSignature service simplifies operational and administrative workflows for the execution of legally binding transactions, reducing time to sign and thus reducing time to disclose the agreements to the public.

Proactive Disclosure and Open Access

Proactive disclosure and open access are two key aspects of transparency and openness at the Bank. Proactive disclosure is maximized through [Documents and Reports](#), the World Bank's official disclosure mechanism for reports and publications, which currently contains over 319,000 public documents produced by the Bank Group since 1946. The [Open Knowledge Repository \(OKR\)](#), the Bank's official open access repository, is interoperable with other open access repositories and offers a robust range of usage statistics, including those by title, series, country, and author. Both Documents and Reports and the OKR have seen increasing usage and downloads over the past fiscal year.

Highlights include the beta launch of the French and Spanish versions of the OKR to better reach non-English speakers and the addition of a new email alert system on the Bank's external website to help increase the dissemination of recently disclosed Bank content to the public.

DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

PAGE VIEWS	VISITS TO SITE	UNIQUE USERS	DOWNLOADS
6,103,066	3,585,080	2,839,199	15,569,276

OPEN KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

ABSTRACT VIEWS	DOWNLOADS
6,103,066	7,327,074

Proactive Disclosure of Historical Records

The Archives reviewed and disclosed the records related to 43 post-war reconstruction projects in Europe covering the period 1947-1959.

2017 was the 70th anniversary of the signing of the World Bank's first loan – a Reconstruction Loan to France in 1947. To mark the occasion, the World Bank Group Archives publicly released records related to the loan and made digitized versions of the records available through the Projects & Operations website. The digitized records, which consist of correspondence and memoranda related to the negotiation, administration, and repayment of the 1947 loan, evidence the depth and breadth of work involved in the execution of this seminal event in Bank history.

The Archives annually discloses the metadata of restricted reports over 20 years of age and eligible for disclosure. The metadata of reports including the title, author, date, type, country and region is available in the Documents & Reports database to inform the public of the information in the Bank's possession, with instructions on how to request it. Currently, the metadata of 1,831 restricted reports is available in Documents and Reports.



Access to Historical Documents On Demand

The Bank continues to provide greater access to historical information over 20 years of age through the [World Bank Group Archives Holdings](#), and the [Bank's Projects and Operations website](#). At the end of fiscal year 2018, more than 249,000 folders of archival records were listed for some 7,200 projects in the Projects and Operations database and some 1 million pages of archival records were digitized and made available through this database and through the World Bank Group Archives Holdings. The Archives declassified more than 306,000 pages of archival records.

In fiscal year 2018, 46 researchers accessed 486,184 pages of archival records declassified under the Access to Information Policy.

ON-SITE IN READING ROOM IN WASHINGTON, DC

NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS	NUMBER OF PAGES RESEARCHED
34	426,008

ELECTRONICALLY

NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS	NUMBER OF PAGES RESEARCHED
12	60,176

Digital Vault


The Archives took steps to secure a system to manage and preserve its digital assets. The Digital Vault will be designed to mimic the security and sustainability of our methods for protecting analog records, to ensure the long-term retention, protection and access to digital records of the World Bank Group.

Historical Timeline

The Bank launched a new historical timeline that provides concise information on important events in the Bank's history, in addition to resources such as archival photographs, textual records, reports, oral histories, and audio/video clips that illuminate the World Bank's evolution and achievements. Currently, the timeline displays 111 of the most important events in WBG history illustrated by over 540 archival resources.

World Bank Group Timeline

[All Timelines](#) [Search Timeline](#)





NOVEMBER 15, 1947

The United Nations and World Bank formalize relationship

The agreement, approved by the World Bank Board of Governors in September 1947, defines the Bank as an independent organization.

[Learn More](#)






JANUARY 1, 1992

Post-Soviet states join the World Bank Group

Countries seek membership in Bretton Woods institutions following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

[Learn More](#)



JANUARY 1, 1963

Eighteen newly independent African countries join the World Bank Group

The increase in membership follows a wave of independence for African countries.

[Learn More](#)

Open Data

The Development Data Group coordinates statistical and data work and maintains a number of macro, financial and sector databases. Working closely with the Bank's regions and Global Practices, the group is guided by professional standards in the collection, compilation and dissemination of data to ensure that all data users can have confidence in the quality and integrity of the data produced.

Over 96 million Page Views	Over 28,000 Development Datasets, Indicators and Visualizations available	Over 2.5 million files downloaded
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Access to Board Records

During fiscal year 2018, 13 public access requests related to 233 Board records were processed. Of these, 166 Board records were determined to be eligible for declassification and disclosure, of which 151 (mostly transcripts of regular Board sessions) were cleared for public release and posted on the World Bank's external website.

General Inquiries

In fiscal year 2018, the External and Corporate Relations Vice Presidency continued the use of the UserVoice Helpdesk solution to provide efficient service delivery for general public inquiries. The general public can check public information about the World Bank or submit specific questions through the help desk platform. The requests are addressed in a timely manner by redirecting users to the public link where they can find the requested information. The general public is able to find the answers to the most commonly asked questions 94% of the time they visit the site.

Page visits	Average answers per month	Unique users	First-time answers through web portal
13,115	3,292	1,280	94%

Access to Information Requests Handled*, FY2018

Fiscal year in which the AI request was created	Number of AI requests Handled	Number of AI requests Closed	Percentage of AI requests closed (%)	Number of AI requests which remained open
FY 2018	675	644	95	31
FY2017	31	31	100	0
FY2016	2	2	100	0
FY2015	2	2	100	0
FY2014	0	0	-	0
FY2013	0	0	-	0
FY2012	0	0	-	0
Total	710	679	96	31

*Handled – The request was created in FY2018 or was carried over from previous fiscal years as an open case



Requests Fulfilled (in Whole or in Part) or Denied, FY2018

Of the 679 requests closed in FY2018, 494 requests provided sufficient information and were handled by the AI system. 477 requests were fulfilled in whole or in part, and 17 requests were denied in whole without fulfilling any part of the request. The manner in which the remaining 185 were handled is described in the table titled "Manner in Which the Remaining Cases Were Handled".

AI Requests Fulfilled (in Whole or in Part) in FY2018

Indicator	Requests Fulfilled in Whole	Requests Fulfilled in Part	Total Number of Requests Fulfilled in Whole or in Part
Total number	424	53*	477
% of total	89	11	100%

*Of the 53 requests that were fulfilled in part, the outcomes were due to the following reasons:

- The requester was unresponsive (fifteen requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Deliberative Information" exception (three requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Information Restricted Under Separate Disclosure Regimes and Other Investigative Information" exception (four requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence" exception (one request)
- Part of the information was restricted by the "Personal Information," "Corporate Administrative Matters" and "Financial Information" exceptions (one request)
- Part of the information was restricted by the "Deliberative Information," "Corporate Administrative Matters," "Financial Information" and "Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence" exceptions (one request)
- Part of the request was handled through the Open Data Initiative (fifteen requests)
- Some of the records were not in the Bank's custody (six requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence" and "Attorney-Client Privilege" exceptions (two requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Attorney-Client Privilege" and "Deliberative Information" exceptions (one request)
- Part of the information was restricted by the World Bank's Exercise of Prerogative to Restrict (three requests)
- Part of the request was handled through the World Bank Publishing Unit (one request)

Requests Denied (in Whole or in Part), FY2018

Of the 494 requests handled by the AI system and closed in FY2018, 17 requests were denied without fulfilling any part of the request.

Indicator	Requests Denied	Denial and Records Not in Custody	Total
Total number	15	2	17
% of total	88	12	100

*Of the 17 requests that were denied in whole or in part without fulfilling any part of the request, the outcomes were due to the following reasons:

- The information was restricted by the "Deliberative Information" exception (seven requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Security and Safety" and "Corporate Administrative Matters" exceptions (two requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Attorney-Client Privilege" exception (four requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence" exceptions (three requests)
- The information was restricted by the "Corporate Administrative Matters" exception (one request)



Manner in Which the Remaining Cases Were Handled, FY2018

As mentioned on the previous page, of the 679 requests closed in FY2018, 494 were handled by the AI system and a response was provided. The remaining 185 requests were handled as follows:

Indicator	Number of Requests
Request for World Bank Data	66
Information Covered by AI Exception: Information Restricted Under Separate Disclosure Regimes and other Investigative Information	40
Referrals to IFC and ICSID	4
Additional Information Needed or Unresponsive Requester	26
Records not Found in World Bank Custody	30
Records not Found in World Bank Custody and Request for World Bank Data	2
World Bank Publishing Unit*	17
Total	185

* Information related to copyright, requests to post or use a World Bank document.

Timeliness of Requests Closed, FY2018

Indicator	Number of Requests	Percentage of Requests (%)
Requests closed within 20 working days	553	81
Closed within more than 20 working days	126	19
Total number of Requests Closed	679	100

Appeals Concluded by the Access to Information Committee (AIC), FY2018

	Case number and information requested	Type of Appeal		Upheld or reversed World Bank decision to deny access	Applicable exception(s)
		Violation of AI Policy	Public Interest		
1.	AI4955 Documents regarding the proposing, development and release of this video on Alberta's climate change plan		X	Not considered/Moot Since the information had been made publicly available, the AIC did not need to consider the appeal	Deliberative Information
2.	AI5197 Nepal Report prepared by the Consensus Building Institute ("CBI") on energy projects in Nepal ("CBI Report")	X	X	Upheld on both grounds	Deliberative Information
3.	AI5255 Bangladesh Certain information on the Bangladesh Safety Net Systems for the Poorest, Project ID P132634	X	X	Part not considered (information is public)/ Part dismissed (not in Bank's possession)	Deliberative Information
4.	AI5257 Bangladesh Certain information on the Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (SUFAL), Project ID P161996	X	X	Part not considered (information is public)/part dismissed (information not in the Bank's possession)	Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence

Dismissed means that the appeal is not considered on its merits and is, therefore, rejected, because (a) the requester failed to file the appeal within the required time; (b) the requester failed to provide sufficient information that would reasonably support the appeal; or (c) the requester appealed a matter that the AI Committee does not have the authority to consider (e.g., decisions by the Board).

Reversed means that the AI Committee has decided to provide access to the information, overturning the World Bank's initial decision to deny access to the information.

Upheld means that the AI Committee has confirmed the World Bank's initial decision to deny access to the information.

Not considered/Moot means the AIC did not have to consider the appeal on the ground(s) the appeal was filed because the information was made public after the appeal was filed and prior to the AIC consideration.

Appeals Concluded by the Access to Information Appeals Board, FY2018

	Case number and information requested	Upheld or Reversed AI Committee's decision upholding World Bank Decision to Deny Access	Applicable Exception(s)
1.	AI4459 The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) dataset for IDA and IBRD countries, from 2000 to date	Dismissed For failure to provide sufficient information in support of the appeal	Deliberative Information
2.	AI5197 Nepal The Consensus Building Institute's (CBI) report on "Conflict Management and Mitigation for Energy Projects in Nepal" (the CBI Report)	Reversed Found the information not to be deliberative	Deliberative Information

Dismissed means that the appeal is not considered on its merits because (a) the requester failed to file the appeal within the required time; (b) the requester failed to provide sufficient information that would reasonably support the appeal; or (c) the requester appealed a matter that the AI Appeals Board did not have the authority to consider (e.g., decisions by the Board).

Reversed means the AI Appeals Board has decided to provide access to the information, overturning the AI Committee's decision to uphold the World Bank's initial denial of access to the information because there was no violation of policy.

Upheld means that the AI Appeals Board has confirmed the AI Committee's decision to deny access to the information on appeals alleging a violation of the policy; thus, the AI Appeals Board confirms the World Bank's initial decision to deny access to the information.



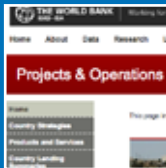
Documents & Reports

is the official disclosure mechanism for more than 319,000 documents starting from the 1940s that enables sharing of the institution's extensive knowledge base and implementing its access to information policy.



The World Bank Group Archives

offers a variety of online historical resources and information products, such as ISAD(G) finding aids, transcripts of oral history interviews, and exhibits featuring the Archives' collection and World Bank history.



Projects & Operations

provides access to basic information on all of the World Bank's lending projects from 1947 to the present.



The Open Knowledge Repository

is the Bank's official open access repository and is interoperable with other open access repositories. It offers a robust range of usage statistics, including those by title, series, country, and author.



The Open Government Partnership

is a multilateral initiative that secures concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens and fight corruption.



International Aid Transparency Initiative

is a global campaign to create transparency in the records of how aid money is spent. The World Bank is an IATI member and publishes data on a quarterly basis.



World Bank Group Finances

makes data related to the WBG's financials available to everybody in a social, interactive, visually compelling, and machine readable format.



Open Data Initiative

provides free and open access to thousands of development data indicators.



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