Development
Impact Fund

TRANSFORMING
EVIDENCE
INTO ACTION

At a time when development faces tighter resources and rising expectations, there are new opportunities to leverage **real-time data, scientific methods** and **adaptive delivery** to unlock progress and tackle today's complex challenges. The focus is shifting toward strategic investments that deliver **faster results, greater value,** and **scalable, lasting impact.**

For over two decades, the World Bank's Development Impact department under the Development Economics Vice Presidency (DEC) has pioneered a more scientific approach to development. By integrating tools like randomized trials, real-time data, behavioral science, and AI into project design and delivery, we've helped teams test what works, adapt quickly, and scale effective solutions. As a result, the **supported projects have delivered faster and more impactful results, achieving up to 2x greater impact.**

As the World Bank systematically adopts this way of working— **to learn, adapt and scale what works** — we created the **Development Impact Fund (DIF)** to closely collaborate with development partners along this journey.

DIF expands the scale and reach of evidence-based adaptive delivery, amplifying impact and creating opportunities to share lessons and shape practices across institutions. It provides financial and technical support to ensure development investments are not only well designed, but also dynamic and grounded in the best available evidence.

Together with our partners, **we are reshaping how development is done—turning evidence into action for a more effective and equitable future.**

A NEW PLAYBOOK
FOR DEVELOPMENT

The World Bank is embracing a new approach—one that **moves faster, delivers at scale,** and uses **data to drive smarter decisions.** DIF embodies this shift. It equips development actors with a new playbook: one rooted in **science, adaptive delivery, and a relentless focus on results.** Through DIF, we are building not just better projects, but **better systems**—creating the pathways to **deliver more impact, more collaboratively, and more sustainably.**

ABOUT **DIF**

The **Development Impact Fund (DIF)** is a World Bank multi-donor trust fund that helps make development more **adaptive, evidence-driven, and results-focused.**

Managed by the World Bank's Development Impact department under the Development Economics Vice Presidency (DEC), DIF brings together global partners committed to transforming development through science, learning, and collaboration.

OUR REACH **SO FAR**

OVER
$38 BILLION
IN DEVELOPMENT FINANCE
supported through evidence-informed project design and adaptive delivery

ACTIVE IN
65+
COUNTRIES

SUPPORTING OVER
200
PROJECTS GLOBALLY

This growing portfolio lays the foundation for even greater results ahead.

WHY JOIN **DIF**

SHAPE THE AGENDA
Collaborate on the global knowledge agenda and help steer evidence-based priorities

ACCELERATE REAL-TIME LEARNING
Test, adapt, and scale solutions through proven scientific methods, data analytics, and Artificial Intelligence

BOOST RETURNS ON INVESTMENT
Rigorous trial-and-adopt methods deliver greater impact and faster implementation, improving cost-effectiveness

LEVERAGE GLOBAL COLLABORATION
Join a trusted platform for collective learning and co-financing across development institutions

OUR **APPROACH**

DIF supports the World Bank's **LEADS framework** —*Learn. Adapt. Scale.*—a structured yet flexible approach to improving development outcomes through scientific methods and real-time learning.

This approach enables teams to test solutions early, adapt quickly, and scale what works in three dimensions:

LEARN

LEADS

ADAPT

SCALE

1
FLEXIBLE DESIGN
Projects are designed as adaptive, evidence-informed strategies:

- Embed proven solutions at entry
- Build in testable alternatives for future course correction
- Strengthen design to boost effectiveness from the start

2
SCIENCE-BASED ADAPTIVE DELIVERY
Implementation is improved through rigorous learning and experimentation:

- Use A/B testing and behavioral insights to improve delivery
- Reduce delays and strengthen execution
- Increase impact through trial-and-adopt and build feedback loops to course-correct

3
SYSTEM-WIDE ENABLERS
Scalable impact is achieved by creating the conditions for adaptive delivery and promoting smart replication, including:

- Portfolio-wide use of AI tools (e.g., *ImpactAI*) and real-time data systems (e.g., *MEGA*)
- Government support to establish data standards, digital systems, and enabling policies

This model makes development smarter, faster, and more scalable—ensuring that what works becomes the new norm.

5

DEMOSTRATED **IMPACT**

Projects supported through DIF have delivered stronger development outcomes —**achieving up to 2x greater impact**— by using trial-and-adopt learning loops to test and scale what works.

Learn More ❯

Adaptive, evidence-ianformed approaches have helped **accelerate implementation and improve delivery**, enabling teams to achieve faster, more effective results on the ground.

Learn More ❯

Collaborative project design workshops with teams and government counterparts have led to **greater efficiency, stronger project readiness, and smarter investment planning** —improving value-for-money from the outset.

Learn More ❯

> *This isn't just improving projects—it's setting a new standard for development delivery.*

Arianna Legovini,
Director for Development Impact, World Bank

STRATEGIC THEMES & **CROSS-CUTTING TOOLS**

DIF supports evidence generation and scaling across thematic areas:

PEOPLE

- Education
- Health, Nutrition & Population
- Gender
- Social Protection
- Jobs
- Fragility, Conflict & Violence

PLANET

- Agriculture & Food Security
- Water
- Natural Resources

PROSPERITY

- Private Sector Development
- Governance
- Public Finance

INFRASTRUCTURE & DIGITAL

- Energy & Extractives
- Transport
- Digital Transformation

SUPPORTED BY CUTTING-EDGE CROSS-SECTORAL TOOLS

- Behavioral Science
- Artificial Intelligence
- Data Analytics & Reproducibility

WHAT DIF **FUNDS**

DIF finances activities that strengthen the use of evidence in development:

ANALYTICAL PRODUCTS
Impact evaluations, diagnostics, and data tools

CAPACITY BUILDING
Training, technical assistance, and support for data systems

KNOWLEDGE SHARING
Workshops, publications, and communities of practice

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
Governance, coordination, and reporting

> " *What matters even more than what governments spend on is how they spend it: how well projects are designed, how flexibly they adapt as we learn, and how rigorously they are implemented using evidence.* "

Indermit Gill, World Bank Chief Economist, speaking at the 2025 LEADS Workshop in Togo

GOVERNANCE & COLLABORATION

As a World Bank multi-donor trust fund, DIF is governed by the **Development Impact Global Partnership Council**, which brings together partner agencies and World Bank representatives The Council meets annually to review progress, shape strategy, and promote innovation in evidence-based development.

The inaugural meeting, held in Berlin on May 23, 2025, gathered current and prospective partners to reflect on DIF's first year and chart a shared path forward. Discussions focused on scaling impact, institutional adoption, and positioning evidence as a global public good.
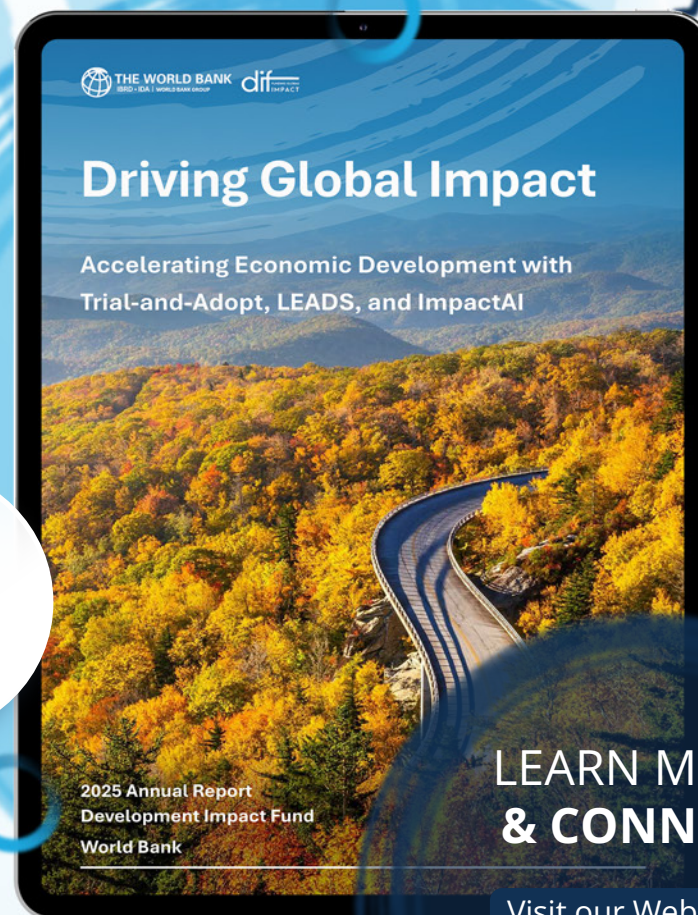
❯ OUR **TEAM**

DIF is powered by a multidisciplinary team within the World Bank's Development Impact department under DEC VPU. The team includes economists, data scientists, behavioral experts, program managers, and field coordinators. Together, we deliver **evidence-based results** across development sectors.

To meet all of our experts, **visit our website.**

❯ OUR SHARED VISION:
A BETTER BANK,
A BETTER WORLD

DIF represents a shift toward a **new standard in international development**. We aren't just improving individual projects; we are changing how development is done.

This is not just about better projects.
It's about **building systems that improve themselves.**
It's about **scaling a culture of learning.**
It's about **transforming development—together.**

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

dif IMPACT

Driving Global Impact

Accelerating Economic Development with Trial-and-Adopt, LEADS, and ImpactAI

2025 Annual Report
Development Impact Fund

World Bank

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Check our 2025 Annual Report ❯