World Bank
Access to Information
Survey
2011

November 10, 2011
The Information Policy Unit of the World Bank’s Legal Vice Presidency (Lisa Lui, with the support of Frances Allen and Patricia Miranda) prepared this paper.

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The World Bank conducted a survey directed to all members of the public who had electronically submitted an access to information (“AI”) request to the World Bank in the first year of implementing its Policy on Access to Information (“AI Policy”). The 2011 survey covered the period of July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011 (“2011 Survey”). The objective of the 2011 Survey was to obtain public feedback that could help ascertain client satisfaction, and identify opportunities for additional enhancement of the World Bank’s AI systems and processes. The survey had a response rate of 34% (215 respondents out of 635 persons surveyed).

The 2011 Survey sought to determine the respondents’ satisfaction with respect to the following topics, and survey respondents’ comments were grouped into categories related to satisfaction and dissatisfaction as listed below under each topic:

(a) The adequacy of the World Bank’s information systems:
   (i) AI is a useful initiative and information can be easily found (e.g., breadth of information; information systems are modern and easy to use);
   (ii) difficulty in using Documents and Reports website (long time to drill down; no help menu or road map);
   (iii) slow response time/lack of response;
   (iv) document not found/not available;
   (v) older/historical material not scanned/not available/not catalogued;
   (vi) publications should be catalogued and available by country/topic/year;
   (vii) requests for transcripts of Board meetings is different than general archives request;
   (viii) requester incorrectly looked for data in Documents and Reports;
   (ix) submitting through AI site does not give requester a record of what was requested;
   (x) more information needed on funding opportunities for NGOs.

(b) The World Bank’s quality of service in support of the public’s requests for information:
   (i) competency and professionalism of World Bank staff;
   (ii) satisfaction with speed of response;
   (iii) general dissatisfaction with slowness of response/unresponsiveness;
   (iv) requested documents (in whole/part) not provided (other than denials);
   (v) general dissatisfaction with response;
   (vi) documents not available due to an excessively wide interpretation of confidentiality;
   (vii) lack of understanding on the denial/redaction;
   (viii) documents not available in digital format;
   (ix) disconnect between EDs library and Archives;
   (x) document links provided by the Bank cannot be opened by the public;
   (xi) World Bank AIP more cumbersome than IMF AIP;
   (xii) reason for the denial not applicable to information requested;
   (xiii) website comprehensive but does not include recent publications;
   (xiv) dissatisfaction with Bank staff.

(c) The World Bank’s ability to meet the requesters’ information needs:
   (i) timely response to AI request;
   (ii) general satisfaction (e.g., very helpful, documents available);
   (iii) did not receive information at all;
(iv) inconsistency in information available on WB website / website content not kept up to date;
(v) World Bank should translate all their information and websites;
(vi) need more information on internal Bank organization and staff functions;
(vii) older documents in demand and take a long time to receive;
(viii) requests from researchers and librarians should be given professional priority;
(ix) dissatisfaction with process related to request for Board Meeting transcripts;
(x) World Bank should provide Xerox copies of older documents;
(xi) appellant requests and decisions should be posted on the WB website;
(xii) lack of historical records on point.

Additionally, respondents were requested to provide information about their demographics, the topics related to their information requests, and how they have used the information obtained from the World Bank.

The chart below provides a summary of the survey respondents’ satisfaction levels with respect to the above-listed categories. Overall public satisfaction appears to be reasonably high for the first year of policy implementation. The “Quality of Service” category gave particular focus to those survey respondents whose requests for information had been denied by the World Bank, and their related responses had significant weight on the category’s result.

The full survey results are set out in the summary report. Also made publicly available are the full sets of comments received on four questions, which sought specific views of the survey respondents on their satisfaction and on the use of information.
The World Bank Access to Information - 2011 Survey

SUMMARY REPORT

| Dates of survey: | August 12 - October 3, 2011 |
| Sent to:         | 635 members of the public who had made an access to information request, between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, through the Bank’s AI Request Form |
| Total No. Respondents: | 215 respondents |
| Response Rate:    | 34% |

Sections A-C. In these sections, survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction, by selecting one of the following six options: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, and Not Applicable. For the purposes of this summary report, the data for each “question” have been aggregated into two categories: “Total – Satisfied” consisting of responses that indicate Very Satisfied, Satisfied, and Somewhat Satisfied, and (ii) “Total – Dissatisfied” consisting of responses that indicate Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. The percentages discount the number of respondents that identified the respective question as “not applicable.” See Annex for a detailed breakdown of the responses for each question, based on the total number of responses, including those that indicated “not applicable” (N/A).

SECTION A. ADEQUACY OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

(1) If you used the World Bank’s website (e.g., Documents and Reports database) to conduct a search for information, rate your satisfaction with WB search engine in providing you with at least some of the documents/information that you were trying to obtain: (210 respondents)

| Total – Satisfied: | 85.2% |
| Total – Dissatisfied: | 14.8% |

(2) If you used the WB’s website to conduct a search, rate your satisfaction with the ability of the search engine to further identify (e.g., narrow the scope of) the information that you were trying to obtain: (198 respondents)

| Total – Satisfied: | 80.3% |
| Total – Dissatisfied: | 19.7% |

(3) When submitting a request through the WB’s AI Request Form, rate your satisfaction with the Request Form’s design in terms of its ease in allowing you to specify the information that you were trying to obtain: (199 respondents)

| Total – Satisfied: | 85.4% |
| Total – Dissatisfied: | 14.6% |

Survey respondents were asked to comment on the WB’s information systems. Comments were received from 80 respondents. Relevant comments can be generally grouped into the following categories:

Related to Satisfaction:
- AI is a useful initiative and information can be easily found (e.g., breadth of information; information systems are modern and easy to use) – 14 comments.

Related to Dissatisfaction:
- Difficulty in using D&R website (long time to drill down; no help menu or road map) – 23 comments;
- Slow response time/lack of response – 8 comments;
- Document not found/not available – 9 comments;
- Older/historical material not scanned/not available/not catalogued – 2 comments;
- Publications should be catalogued and available by country/topic/year – 2 comments;
- Requests for transcripts of Board meetings is different than general archives request – 1 comment;
- Requester incorrectly looked for data in Documents & Reports – 1 comment;
- Submitting through AI site does not give requester a record of what was requested – 1 comment;
- More information needed on funding opportunities for NGOs – 1 comment.

The remainder of the comments (18) did not respond to the issue presented.
SECTION B. QUALITY OF SERVICE

(1) If the WB contacted you after you submitted your AI Request Form, rate your satisfaction with the WB’s efforts to assist you (e.g., narrow scope of interest, clarify area of interest, and/or identify specific documents that might satisfy request):

Total – Satisfied: **79.7%**  
Total – Dissatisfied: **20.3%**  
(192 respondents)

(2) Rate your satisfaction with the WB’s efforts either (a) to address your request within 20 days, or (b) if the request needed more time to handle, to keep you informed of the process:

Total – Satisfied: **73.2%**  
Total – Dissatisfied: **26.8%**  
(198 respondents)

(3) If your AI request was denied, either in whole or in part, rate your satisfaction with the WB’s clarity in explaining the denial:

Total – Satisfied: **52.3%**  
Total – Dissatisfied: **47.7%**  
(88 respondents)

(4) If your AI request was denied and you filed an Appeal, rate your satisfaction with the clarity of the decision on the Appeal:

[The data for this issue are invalid because 53 respondents provided ratings, though only 12 appeals were filed for the period surveyed. For this reason, the data are not included in the overall results calculation or the detailed Annex.]

Total – Satisfied: **62.3%**  
Total – Dissatisfied: **37.7%**  
(53 respondents)

Survey respondents were asked to comment on WB’s service in support of information disclosure. Comments were received from 61 respondents. Relevant comments can be generally grouped into the following categories:

**Related to Satisfaction:**
- Competency and professionalism of World Bank staff – 11 comments;
- Satisfaction with speed of response – 7 comments.

**Related to Dissatisfaction:**
- General dissatisfaction with slowness of response/unresponsiveness – 13 comments;
- Requested documents (in whole/part) not provided (other than denials) – 4 comments;
- General dissatisfaction with response – 3 comments;
- Documents not available due to an excessively wide interpretation of confidentiality – 2 comments;
- Lack of understanding on the denial/redaction – 2 comments;
- Documents not available in digital format – 1 comment;
- Disconnect between EDs library and Archives – 1 comment;
- Document links provided by the Bank cannot be opened by the public – 1 comment;
- Bank AIP more cumbersome than IMF AIP – 1 comment;
- Reason for the denial not applicable to information requested – 1 comment;
- Website comprehensive but does not include recent publications – 1 comment;
- Dissatisfaction with Bank staff – 1 comment.

The remainder of the comments (12) did not respond to the issue presented.
SECTION C. MEETING YOUR INFORMATION NEEDS

(1) For requests made through the AI Request Form, rate your satisfaction with the WB’s accuracy in providing you with documents in line with your request: (178 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total – Satisfied</th>
<th>Total – Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience in requesting information from the World Bank: (197 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total – Satisfied</th>
<th>Total – Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey respondents were asked to comment on the WB’s efforts to meet the public’s information needs. Comments were received from 47 respondents. Relevant comments can be generally grouped into the following categories:

**Related to Satisfaction:**
- Timely response to AI request – 6 comments;
- General satisfaction (e.g., very helpful, documents available) – 3 comments.

**Related to Dissatisfaction:**
- Did not receive information at all – 13 comments;
- Inconsistency in information available on WB website / website content not kept up to date – 2 comments;
- WB should translate all their information and websites – 2 comments;
- Need more information on internal Bank organization and staff functions – 2 comments;
- Older documents in demand and take a long time to receive – 1 comment;
- Requests from researchers and librarians should be given professional priority – 1 comment;
- Dissatisfaction with process related to request for Board Meeting transcripts – 1 comment;
- World Bank should provide Xerox copies of older documents – 1 comment;
- Appellant requests and decisions should be posted on the WB website – 1 comment;
- Lack of historical records on point – 1 comment.

The remainder of the comments (13) did not directly respond to the issue presented.

SECTION D. ABOUT YOURSELF

(1) How familiar are you with the World Bank: (209 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unfamiliar</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfamiliar</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) How many times did you visit the WB’s website in the period between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011: (207 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10 times</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11-20 times):</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21-50 times):</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51-100 times):</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(101+ times):</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) How many times did you submit an information request, using the AI Request Form, in the period between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10 times:</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11-20 times):</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21-50 times):</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51-100):</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(101+):</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Note: some of the numbers provided in response to this question are likely flawed considering that the Bank received, in total for this period, 705 AI requests from 635 requesters.] (204 respondents)
(4) What topic(s) relate(s) to the information that you requested: (181 respondents*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Fishing &amp; Forestry</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration, Law &amp; Justice</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Mining</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, Sanitation &amp; Flood Protection</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and Trade</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Other Social Services</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Communications</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 181 respondents answered this question. Because respondents were allowed to select more than one topic, the data above reflect 427 selections.

** Respondents selecting the “Other” category were asked to write in relevant topics. Write-in topics include the following: economics and development; Bank governance and policies; fragile states; urban development; gender; indigenous people; poverty; disaster prevention/management; post-conflict reconstruction; country assistance strategies.

(5) The World Bank is interested in knowing the impact of the AI Policy. Please share how you were able to use the information that you received, and whether the information was used in matters concerning development. Responses were received from 144 respondents. Relevant responses can be generally grouped into the following categories:

- Education/ academic purposes – 31 responses;
- Development (e.g., program/project evaluation, conference, research, interest of project-affected party, work as a resettlement practitioner, aid effectiveness, CSO work, feasibility studies) – 24 responses;
- Research – 19 comments;
- Publications (not specifically development related) – 9 responses;
- Journalism – 2 responses.

Twenty-seven (27) respondents stated that they did not receive requested information. Seven (7) stated that they decided not to use the information. The remainder of the comments (25) did not directly respond to the question presented.

(6) Please let us know what country you are located in (grouped by regional categories for the purpose of this report): (192 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States and Canada</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia &amp; Pacific</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia &amp; New Zealand</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East &amp; North Africa</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) Please indicate your affiliation: (204 respondents*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Education</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/CSO</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or private enterprise</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Agency</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international organization</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Survey respondents were allowed to select more than one affiliation; the data above reflect 257 selections.
Annex

Survey Sections A-C: Detailed Breakdown of Percentages (including N/A indications)

Section A. Adequacy of Information Systems

1. Satisfaction with WB search engine to provide at least some relevant documents/information of interest

2. Satisfaction with ability of search engine to further identify information of interest

3. Satisfaction with AI Request Form’s design, i.e., ease of specifying information of interest
Section B.  Quality of Service

1. Satisfaction with the WB’s efforts to assist, if requester was contacted after submitting AI Request Form

![Graph showing satisfaction levels]

2. Satisfaction with WB’s efforts to address request within 20 working days or to keep requester informed if more time was needed

![Graph showing satisfaction levels]

3. Satisfaction with WB clarity in explaining denial, if AI request was denied

![Graph showing satisfaction levels]

Section C.  Meeting Your Information Needs

1. Satisfaction with the WB’s accuracy in providing documents in line with request

![Graph showing satisfaction levels]
2. Overall satisfaction with experience in requesting information from the WB