

World Bank Access to Information and Stakeholder Engagement

Written update to the 28th Working Group of the Parties meeting

July 2024

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Bank's Policy on Access to Information completed 14 years on July 1, 2024. The Policy led to groundbreaking change in how we make information publicly available. The public has access to more of our information than ever before, including details about projects under preparation or implementation, analytic and advisory activities, and Board proceedings. In the last 14 years of the AI Policy, the Bank has received more than 8,000 information requests. For requests that are denied, the public can appeal by alleging a violation of policy and/or the public interest. The internal Access to Information Committee (AIC) serves as the first level of 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 Access to Information Appeals Board (AIAB). In the 14 years until the end of June 2024, the AIC decided on 96 appeals up, averaging 6.8 appeals per year. All AIC decisions on appeals are publicly available ([click here](#)). The AIAB has decided on 18 cases up to June 2024, averaging 1.2 cases per year. The decisions of the AIAB are also publicly available ([click here](#)).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS (ESF) AND BETTER BANK

In 2018, after two years of stakeholder consultations on ways to improve upon and modernize the World Bank's previous E&S safeguard policies, and another two years of internal preparations, the ESF went live as the Bank's new approach to pursuing inclusion and sustainability in its investment lending projects. The ESF, which is the Bank's sustainability framework, has strengthened the emphasis on inclusion and sustainable development across the Bank's investment lending, and ultimately aims to have impact beyond Bank-financed projects by helping strengthen client E&S management systems. A key emphasis of the ESF – reflecting the central importance of inclusion - is effective stakeholder engagement and the use of grievance mechanisms, to improve both project design and implementation.

The requirement to prepare a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which considers different types of project stakeholders and appropriate ways of engagement and information disclosure, has provided the basis for taking into account the on-going the views and suggestions of a range of project stakeholders. As part of the recent initiative to make project processing more efficient, there has been further work to strengthen the support given to clients in designing and conducting stakeholder engagement and establishing and operating grievance mechanisms. Further guidance has been provided to clients on monitoring and implementation of a project Stakeholder Engagement Plan, including through consideration of the use of participatory and third-party monitoring, and ways to report back to stakeholders. In terms of capacity building, the Bank has also provided clients with an illustrative list of indicators that can be tailored to each project and examples of a monitoring and reporting framework and stakeholder engagement budget.

We hope that through systematic application of the ESF standard on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure and the latest initiatives to streamline and improve project implementation we can help both clients and stakeholders to contribute to the successful achievement of project outcomes, and the Bank's key aim of supporting sustainable development.