



**EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE  
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GROUP OF  
THE WORLD BANK GROUP**

**REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON  
DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS FROM  
THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL**

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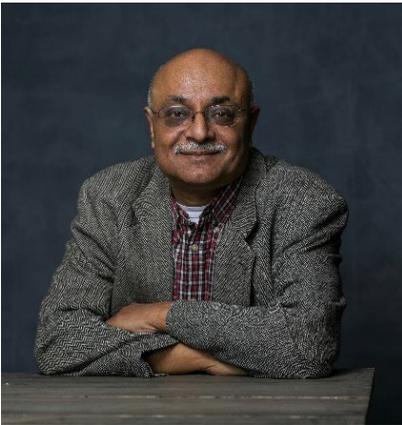


# PREFACE



Photo by Maurice K. Gruenig

**Jörg Frieden** chairs the Board of the Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets, the Swiss development finance institution. He was country director of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development in Mozambique and Nepal, where he also served as Swiss ambassador. He assumed the responsibilities of Vice Director-General at the Swiss Office for Refugees and at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. He was member of the World Bank Group Board of Executive Directors and chaired the budget committee. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conducting this external review of the relevance of the World Bank Group (WBG) Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), our team benefited from the engagement, opinions, information, and suggestions provided by many individuals. Few names can be mentioned, but our gratitude extends to all IEG and WBG staff who generously supported our endeavor. A special thanks goes to country directors and country managers of the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation for their engagement and their capacity to put our questions into the local context, and allowing us to understand how independent evaluations can contribute to the pursuit of development outcomes.

The panel acknowledges the positive attitude of the IEG director-general Alison Evans and her senior colleagues toward the review and expresses its appreciation for their willingness to open doors and allow IEG staff to express their views with confidence. This is also true of the WBG cadres and staff interviewed to write this report. Additionally, the panel thanks the external experts and former WBG personnel it consulted for providing valuable views on evaluations and its present contributions to development and partnership. We are grateful to all of them for their time and their contributions.

Lucy Tacher led us through the labyrinth of a complex organization. She provided us with structured access to a library of documents accumulated in six years of IEG activities and WBG responses to them (we could of course consult only a fraction of them, mainly those published during fiscal years 2020 and 2021). We were effectively supported by the whole Corporate Secretariat team, who arranged virtual meetings across time zones and ensured the proper record of many of them.

We owe a special thanks to Janneth Fernandez Clark, our indefatigable research assistant, who kept intelligent track of our activities, interviews, and readings. She recorded our discussions and participated in the consolidation of our observations and conclusions. She was able to manage innumerable versions of the report and controlled the flows of comments and observations reaching her from a geographically dispersed team.

The production of this report has been a learning and rewarding experience. We thank the Committee on Development Effectiveness for the mandate and

sincerely hope that our conclusions will foster an engaged dialogue among the Board, IEG, and WBG management. Significant improvement will be attained only through their convergent engagement.

Florence Etta, Jörg Frieden, Ravi Kanbur

# ABBREVIATIONS

AIMM	Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring
Board	Board of Executive Directors
CLEAR	Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CODE	Committee on Development Effectiveness
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CPE	Country Program Evaluation
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
DFI	Development Finance Institution
DIME	Development Impact Evaluation
ECD	Evaluation Capacity Development
FCV	Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
FY	Fiscal Year
GEI	Global Evaluation Initiative
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMPACT	Impact Measurement and Project Assessment Comparison Tool
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAR	Management Action Record
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency

OPCS	Operations Policy and Country Services
PIFED	Programme International de Formation en Évaluation du Développement
PER	Project Evaluation Report
RAP	Results and Performance of the World Bank Group
RMES	Results Measurement and Evidence Stream
WBG	World Bank Group
XPSR	Expanded Project Supervision Report

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This external review of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) was instituted by the World Bank Group (WBG) Board of Executive Directors (Board) through the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE). The terms of reference include primarily a forward-looking assessment of IEG's effectiveness in delivering on its mandate, along with an assessment of responses to the recommendations of the last external review in 2015. The External Review Panel conducted its task through an examination of recent documents and through interviews with a range of stakeholders inside and outside the WBG.

Going beyond an overview of the implementation of the last review's recommendations, the External Review Panel adopted an approach that deep dives into five key areas. These areas are timely and imperative in themselves but also help to reveal general and longer-term issues in a forward-looking frame. The specific topics covered are: (i) IEG's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, which accounts for a third of the period covered by the review; (ii) IEG's support to the WBG's outcome orientation agenda, which now frames much of the institution's country-focused activities; (iii) IEG's evaluation of International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) activities, which the 2015 external review largely did not cover; (iv) IEG's contributions to the WBG's knowledge and strategies; and (v) IEG and the enhancement of evaluation capacity development in client countries, one of the last review's recommendations.

Each of these deep dives leads to findings and recommendations that are specific to those issues and will be of interest to those who focus on these areas. However, they also illustrate more general concerns, from which general implications and recommendations flow for IEG, management, and the Board. The report's final section draws out these overall recommendations, which overlap with section-specific recommendations but also provide an overview from a general perspective. We observe that under CODE's guidance and in interactions with management, IEG has made considerable strides since the last external review, especially in emphasizing evaluation's learning dimensions, and it has navigated the turbulence of the COVID-19 crisis well. However, significant opportunities remain for increasing IEG's effectiveness, not just by IEG alone but jointly with management and the Board.

Based on the findings, we submit the following six overarching recommendations and actionable measures, which are detailed further in the report. We believe that these recommendations will build on the gains of the last few years and set IEG on course to greater effectiveness for the WBG and as a leader in evaluation.

- (i) CODE should strengthen its capacity to steer the WBG evaluation system.** The committee faces a difficult task in prioritizing its work program, given its broad mandate. CODE's ability to apply a selectivity filter to its work program is hampered further by the need to address unexpected events that are time sensitive and require the committee's urgent attention. Additionally, the two-year mandate of the CODE chair and recurrent changes in committee composition are significant obstacles to ensuring the work program's continuity and to holding WBG management and IEG accountable for delivering on their commitments beyond CODE's term. The External Review Panel submits recommendations to address these issues, building on processes introduced by the present chairs.
- (ii) The WBG should give visibility and allocate resources to the learning dimension of evaluations.** The WBG independent evaluation system functions under the assumption that the accountability and learning objectives that IEG pursues can be attained simultaneously. We did not find this to be the case. Though remaining logically connected in all evaluations, the two objectives require distinct processes and deserve specific attention. Currently, transparency and governance are satisfactory only in relation to the accountability objective. Learning deserves more visibility and dedicated resources.
- (iii) IEG, IFC, and MIGA should improve their collaboration and foster an evaluation culture.** In IFC and MIGA, with some exceptions, self-evaluations and IEG independent evaluations are often seen as a burden, and staff dispute their merits. This culture needs to be changed. It is essential for IFC's and MIGA's development mandates that this fundamental problem be addressed through a joint effort. IEG could facilitate this evolution by showing more flexibility than it has in the past and the willingness to adapt its methods to outcome-oriented investment policies.
- (iv) The Board should define IEG's role in assessing the WBG's strategic shifts and its response to crisis.** The absence (with a few

exceptions) of management strategies for sectoral, thematic, and global issues poses IEG the challenge of choosing what to evaluate and determining the parameters for holding the WBG accountable. Without those strategies, it seems as though discussions about IEG's thematic evaluations substitute for broad-based discussions of WBG strategies in different areas, which is a mismatch that needs to be addressed. In addition, faced with major global crises and its supervision role hampered by COVID-19-related measures, the Board has repeatedly asked IEG to examine key management decisions and assess ongoing financial and operational processes. This trend for early-stage evaluations, seen in other multilateral development banks, raises questions about methodology and perspective for an essentially ex post evaluation agency. These issues should be discussed openly among CODE, management, and IEG.

- (v) Support the movement toward the outcome orientation of WBG country frameworks and their evaluations.** Outcome orientation is becoming prominent in WBG Country Partnership Frameworks and Country Program Evaluations. Approaches, assessment of performance, and WBG collaboration with governments and other partners must evolve further. The Board, in dialogue with management and IEG, should address the difference in emphasis between aiming for higher-level outcomes and the greater ease of attribution (and therefore accountability) of lower-level outputs. Furthermore, because evaluation in an outcome orientation frame requires clarity on the local institutional context, IEG must be encouraged toward greater use of local expertise and must have the confidence of Board support when it makes factually based statements on difficult political economy issues.
- (vi) IEG should continue promoting evaluation capacity development in developing countries and learn from this engagement.** IEG has expanded its support to evaluation capacity development in developing countries since the last external review. It channeled resources through the Global Evaluation Initiative and collaborated with bilateral and multilateral development partners. It relied on a network of diverse institutions. However, there is scope for IEG to do more, including learning and adapting its methodologies through its interactions with a diverse group of people that understand the local realities better and include local knowledge in their own evaluation work.

# INTRODUCTION

1. This is the third external comprehensive review of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) commissioned by the World Bank Group (WBG) Board of Executive Directors (Board) and overseen by the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE). The first review took place in 2004. The second review in 2015 made major recommendations to improve the relevance of the WBG evaluation system by reforming IEG and its relationships with WBG management and with CODE. This review assesses the implementation of the 2015 recommendations and, in line with its forward-looking mandate, focuses on how “IEG can further enhance its value for the WBG and adapt to changing priorities.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this review examines the utility of IEG’s work and IEG’s role and impact within the WBG evaluation and knowledge system.<sup>2</sup>
2. In developing this review, the External Review Panel focused primarily on IEG’s mandate, CODE’s terms of reference, the 2015 external review, and relevant IEG and Board documents spanning the last four fiscal years (FYs).<sup>3</sup> Earlier documents were also considered if they were found relevant to the task. We met with senior leadership and staff from IEG, Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the Development Economics Vice Presidency and the Corporate Secretariat, members of CODE and the Board, country and global directors, the chair of the 2015 external review, and evaluation units in other development banks. We also met with several stakeholders outside the WBG: implementation partners, international institutions, government officials, evaluation experts, and potential and actual users of IEG outputs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), “Independent External Review Terms of Reference,” IEG, Washington, DC, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), “Independent External Review Terms of Reference.”

<sup>3</sup> Bibliography is presented in Annex IV.

<sup>4</sup> Consultations and interviews are presented in Annex III.

3. Based on the documentation, information gathered from the meetings, and the professional experience of its members, we recommend constructive actions and plausible choices to CODE and IEG. We also emphasize WBG senior management's role and responsibilities for the relevance of a vibrant evaluation system. In line with the terms of reference, the External Review Panel maintained its freedom to present ideas and propose solutions that are not already part of a solid consensus. This review also highlights IEG's intellectual influence within the broad development community and, considered within this perspective, IEG's extended networks, its collaboration with other multilateral development banks (MDBs), and its activities in the public domain.
4. We acknowledge the positive attitude of the IEG director-general and her senior colleagues toward the review and expresses its appreciation for their willingness to open doors and allow IEG staff to express their views with confidence. This is also true of the WBG cadres and staff interviewed to write this report. We also recognize the effective support provided by the CODE Secretariate team and its technical assistant, Janneth Fernandez Clark. Additionally, the panel thanks the external experts and former WBG personnel it consulted for providing valuable views on evaluations and its present contributions to development and partnership. We are grateful to all of them for their time and their contributions.
5. This review is structured in six sections. Section A starts by answering the question: What has been the evolution and trajectory of the WBG evaluation system since the 2015 review? Sections B–F deep dive into five issues around which IEG's utility and contributions to the WBG's development effectiveness are assessed. The deep dives alone are important, but they also act as vehicles for developing a general forward-looking perspective on IEG's evolution. The deep dives cover IEG's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, outcome orientation and its implications for IEG, evaluation of IFC and MIGA activities, IEG's contributions to the WBG's knowledge and strategies, and IEG and evaluation and capacity development.
6. The External Review Panel interacted with IEG, WBG management and staff, the Board, and external stakeholders for many months and acquired an overview that led to formulating overarching recommendations not only for IEG but also for CODE and management. Only the coordinated efforts of the three agents can bring further improvements

to the evaluation system and increase the relevance of IEG's work. The deep dive analyses conducted in sections B–F of this review have also resulted in recommendations—some are specific to the domains analyzed, and others overlap with and contribute to the external review's general conclusions. Repeated recommendations emphasize the key importance of certain issues and were consciously maintained in the text. We present these conclusions, aware of the limits of our insights and that we were unable to fully capture improvements achieved in conducting and using independent evaluations in the WBG during the present year. We are also conscious of the tentative nature of some of our proposals, but we are convinced that implementing most of them would further improve the relevance and effectiveness of an already solid evaluation system.

# SECTION A:

## THE EVOLUTION OF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION IN THE WORLD BANK GROUP SINCE THE 2015 EXTERNAL REVIEW

7. This section begins by presenting the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the 2015 external review.<sup>5</sup> It explores IEG's progress in implementing the 2015 recommendations, aligning its work with the WBG's corporate strategies, ensuring accountability, and promoting learning from its evaluations, noting the influence these activities have on other MDBs' evaluation units. This section also recognizes CODE's contributions to these improvements and identifies remaining challenges. Finally, it introduces this external review's main themes that are analyzed in-depth in the sections that follow.

### Strategy Alignment and New Emphases

8. Over the years, IEG has improved its alignment with the WBG's twin goals and evolving strategic priorities. Stakeholders expect IEG to focus on issues of high relevance for the WBG and to contribute to the design and the implementation of corporate strategies approved by the Board and endorsed by Governors. WBG corporate strategies have evolved, and priorities have often changed during the period under review (2017–22). In this context, to avoid opportunistic changes of direction, IEG introduced a Strategic Framework in FY19 based on six work streams, intended to provide continuity while leaving room for flexibility. The latter has been tested to the limit by the emergence of global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the related requests for advice and just-in-time analyses emanating from management and from the Board.

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<sup>5</sup> The recommendations of the 2015 external review and the status of their implementation are presented in pages 21–23.

9. In response to IEG’s findings and recommendations in its 2012 evaluation *The Matrix System at Work: An Evaluation of the World Bank’s Organizational Effectiveness*,<sup>6</sup> management decided to discontinue the formulation of WBG strategies for sectors (this was not an IEG recommendation).<sup>77</sup> Even without them, IEG organized its work and collected its findings around strategic themes. It also continued to deliver assessments that are relevant for sector and thematic work. However, without the sector and thematic strategies to anchor them, important evaluation results could not be generalized and largely applied. By contrast, where sector strategies still guide the WBG’s activities (as in the gender domain or in dealing with fragile and conflict-affected situations), IEG’s strategy-related evaluations have been more relevant and useful.
10. IEG’s constant efforts to respond to both a changing environment and to WBG shareholders’ shifting demands are documented well in the IEG work programs and budgets of the review period. IEG’s choice of themes, products, and methods reflect the directions included in the strategy *Forward Look: A Vision for the World Bank Group in 2030*, adopted in FY17, and the commitments assumed by management in FY19 to ensure the WBG capital increase.<sup>8</sup>
11. Because of this convergence of the IEG work program and the WBG’s strategic priorities, the Board expects more IEG contributions in assessing choices and policies guiding current WBG activities. Thus, IEG has synthesized past evaluations that conform with its established competences and practices, and these are useful in tracing the way forward. These requests also pushed IEG into a new role. It had to start analyzing processes, management decisions, allocations of resources, and operational designs in a very short time and assess the quality of WBG operations almost as they took place—well before

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<sup>6</sup> Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), *The Matrix System at Work: An Evaluation of the World Bank’s Organizational Effectiveness* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Except for the WBG gender strategy (2015) and the WBG strategy for fragility, conflict, and violence (2019).

<sup>8</sup> World Bank Group, *Forward Look: A Vision for the World Bank Group in 2030* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2016).

the appearance of meaningful results. The review explores the consequences of such just-in-time appraisals in subsequent sections.

## The Trajectory of Accountability

12. The 2020 reforms to the Management Action Record (MAR) were a decisive step in improving management’s accountability for recommendations resulting from major CODE- endorsed evaluations. To achieve this result, IEG agreed to limit the number of its recommendations, with management responsible for translating them into specific actions. Therefore, the number of actionable recommendations has decreased, and the MAR annual report by OPCS, IFC, and MIGA gives a clear and credible overview of the measures taken in response to previous evaluations. Under the new MAR process, the collaboration between IEG and management has increased, leading to close engagement with operational teams on what good evidence looks like and what IEG expects to see as sustainable changes being put in place. It remains challenging to avoid transforming the MAR into a long list of new policies and operational initiatives that address the issues at hand but are seldom able to document what is not working and why, or to clarify at what level additional changes are expected in the way the WBG operates.
13. IEG has expanded its instruments and its approach in assessing project and program performances. The 2015 external review led to the creation of a Methods Advisory Function within IEG, devoted to seizing new technical opportunities and disseminating new techniques for results measurement. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are now used to exploit geospatial data and for extracting lessons from existing evaluative evidence, facilitating the production of new learning materials.<sup>9</sup> IEG has deployed drones and used satellite images for geospatial observations of programs and policies’ impact. In this way, measurement and accountability tend to become more precise but also more anonymous and more challenging for the potential users of IEG

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<sup>9</sup> An example is IEG, “Improving Project Performance in Contexts of Migration,” *In Brief: Lessons from IEG’s Evaluations*, October 27, 2020. See also the podcast interview with Jos Vaessen, IEG methods advisor: Jos Vaessen and Brenda Barbour, “Learning from Data Innovation,” March 28, 2022, in *What Have We Learned? The Evaluation Podcast*, produced by IEG, podcast, 24:05.

analyses to understand. IEG has recognized early that the risk of such data-driven analyses must be countered by clear questions-driven evaluation work.<sup>10</sup>

14. Over the last four years, in response to Board and CODE demands, IEG has established new criteria for assessing the WBG's successes and failures. Thanks in part to its seminal evaluation of the WBG's outcome orientation at the country level,<sup>11</sup> IEG has moved the attention away from outputs generated by single projects and even from the aggregations of their outcomes. Since FY20, IEG's annual reports on results and performance (*Results and Performance of the World Bank Group* [RAP]) have measured success using the WBG's contributions to solving critical development challenges in client countries, assessing these contributions instead of attributions—a more reassuring but limited measure. IEG has assessed development lending operations in line with this approach, establishing their success or failure by determining the overall developmental impact of WBG interventions (including analytical and advisory work). Finally, outcome orientation has shaped a new generation of Country Program Evaluations (CPEs) that focuses more on the contribution of WBG activities in client countries over a 10-year period. A parallel effort led to revising the evaluation criteria for policy lending operations, which are better able to capture, among other things, the circumstances of countries affected by fragility and violence.<sup>12</sup>
15. Systematic self-evaluations of WBG programs and investments provide an essential building block to the organization's evaluation architecture. IEG's 2016 evaluation *Behind the Mirror: A Report on the Self-Evaluation Systems of the World Bank Group* (also known as the ROSES Report) presented a challenging picture of the WBG's self-evaluation and validation practices. It was especially alarming because of the lack of common understanding between IEG and management regarding IFC and MIGA.<sup>13</sup> This led IEG to refocus on the relevance of its valida-

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<sup>10</sup> Jos Vaessen and Brenda Barbour, *Learning from Data Innovation*.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank Group Outcome Orientation at the Country Level* (Washington, DC: World Bank, October 16, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> According to stakeholder responses and the External Review Panel's reading of internal documents.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, *Behind the Mirror: A Report on the Self-Evaluation Systems of the World Bank Group* (Washington, DC: World Bank, July 14, 2016).

tions and commission Ernst and Young in 2020 to perform an external analysis of its microproducts and related processes.

16. The World Bank, under OPCS's guidance, has continued to submit all concluded projects to a self-evaluation, which IEG validates through a desk review. IEG validations rate results and WBG performance as highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, and very unsatisfactory. IEG consolidates those project ratings in the annual RAP, which is a key component of management's accountability to the Board and shareholders.
17. Self-evaluation and validation processes have been disputed more in IFC and MIGA. IFC has argued that the investments portfolio under management often differs substantially in orientation and approaches from the active portfolio of five to seven years earlier, used for sampling the 40 percent of IFC projects to be self-evaluated. Furthermore, difficulties in programming the work have led to a concentration of requested self-evaluations in the fourth quarter of the FY (April to June), adding pressure to IFC staff engaged in delivering investments and services before the end of June. In FY17–21, the IEG ratings of IFC project performance remained unsatisfactory more than half of cases and showed a declining trend, despite a small uptick in the performance of projects included in the cohort of calendar years 2017–19, registered in the FY21 RAP.
18. The progressive introduction of the Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring (AIMM) system, a new selection and planning tool in IFC, has posed an additional challenge for the self-evaluation and validation processes of private investments. The unresolved tensions between the established self-evaluation methodology preferred by IEG (the Expanded Project Supervision Report [XPSR]) and the new planning and monitoring tools adopted by IFC (AIMM) and MIGA (Impact Measurement and Project Assessment Comparison Tool [IMPACT]) have undermined the rating credibility and further weakened staff motivation to engage in this essential task. However, it is encouraging that IEG used the AIMM classification of projects effectively in its 2021 RAP to analyze the success and the failure of investments in specific sectors and geographies.

19. Confronted with rapid change in the development environment and the emergence of a new and challenging major crisis, the Board (through CODE) has increasingly relied on IEG to produce assessments of recently started processes and programs, well before operations close, making it difficult to verify and assess the achievement attained (for example, the WBG response to the COVID-19 crisis). CODE and the Board have also asked IEG to analyze complex issues through early-stage evaluations (for example, the International Development Association's [IDA] Sustainable Development Finance Policy),<sup>14</sup> or to examine instruments that have been introduced to face specific challenges (the IDA Private Sector Window, for instance), hoping to obtain evidence and to enable timely course corrections.
20. Such requests have also expanded independent evaluation units' mandates in other MDBs and asked them to analyze issues and instruments that other services or units (Development Economics, Development Impact Evaluation [DIME] and its impact evaluations, or Group Internal Audit) may be better suited to analyze because of their tools, capacity, and mandates. Furthermore, we were unable to determine whether IEG currently has the personnel and methodologies in place to take on a growing number of just-in-time mandates with confidence and authority. Moreover, given an unavoidable budgetary constraint, these studies are effectively competing with established products and processes, especially those requesting substantial time and resources. Therefore, it is our opinion that at present, CODE and the Board do not pay enough attention to a central contribution of IEG: promoting effectiveness through learning from the implementation of policies, programs, and projects.

## The Trajectory of Learning

21. Accountability and learning from IEG evaluations have made significant progress since the last review. The advances in accountability are apparent and well documented.<sup>15</sup> The progress in learning *from* IEG evaluations, however, has been sparsely documented and is therefore

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, World Bank, *The International Development Association's Sustainable Development Finance Policy: An Early-Stage Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 10, 2021).

<sup>15</sup> As reported by World Bank, *Management Action Reform; IEG's Validation Report* (Washington, DC: World Bank, August 31, 2020); the 2017–21 *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group* annual reports (and management responses); and the 2017–21 IEG Annual Reports.

less visible. The many results obtained in this domain over the last years are due, to a considerable extent, to a change of vision from IEG leadership and to the growing conviction within IEG that to promote learning, evaluators must engage with the rest of the organization while maintaining their independence. Certainly, intraorganizational learning must be based on confidence and trust, and it is sustained by the interests and demands of the people concerned.

22. This learning space is characterized by dialogue rather than by a judgement dynamic that creates distance and undue tensions between the evaluators and the evaluated. As IEG stated, “Dialogue between evaluators and operational staff is essential for evaluation to nurture learning, deeper understanding, and encourage buy-in and implementation traction.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we note that mixed working groups and focused IEG engagements have enabled IEG and WBG operational staff to identify knowledge gaps, analytical needs, and sources of experience and learning.<sup>17</sup> The learning engagements that IEG staff have organized in close collaboration with the relevant WBG operational units,<sup>18</sup> for example, demonstrate the evaluators’ willingness to leave the intellectual isolation of distant judgements behind and work closely with the evaluands, leading to more learning and buy-in from operational staff. This new dynamic has encouraged IEG staff to analyze, with operational units, the key challenges they face and carry out impartial assessments with them using solid evaluation methodologies and evidence of past development initiatives.
23. CPEs have also evolved, becoming important learning opportunities for country teams. Country directors and country managers are consulted at the beginning of the evaluation process, and with the evaluators, they identify the main challenges they face in helping the country achieve the desired outcomes. To ensure the timelines of these evaluations, IEG now coordinates the production of CPEs with the strategic planning of the WBG’s new Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) so the CPEs’ findings can inform the new CPFs. IFC and MIGA contribu-

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank, *Management Action Record (MAR) Review: Progress Toward Achieving Results and Outcomes (FY 18–22): An Independent Validation of the MAR Report* (Washington, DC: World Bank, July 26, 2022), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Key stakeholders from OPCS, WBG, IFC, and MIGA identified working groups and strategic engagements with IEG counterparts as a valuable source of learning and dialogue.

<sup>18</sup> IEG, “FY23 Work Program and Budget, FY24–25 Indicative Plan,” IEG, 2022.

tions to country program outcomes are part of the assessments, and Country Private Sector Diagnostics are also considered. The present validation of country learning brings additional observations that are useful to understanding the opportunities and constraints of World Bank actions in specific contexts. In these documents and in line with the outcome orientation agenda,<sup>19</sup> IEG no longer formulates recommendations or provides ratings to previous WBG engagements at the country level. IEG's new approach and its new CPE process are to foster learning and support country teams. The majority of World Bank country directors that were interviewed confirmed the timeliness, relevance, and utility of this approach.

24. However, we identified that a lack of trust and a lack of a constructive relationship between private sector-oriented operations and IEG can be serious obstacles for learning from evaluations. The difficult relations between IEG and IFC and IEG and MIGA (which are well documented in the still relevant 2016 *Behind the Mirror* evaluation) illustrate these tensions.<sup>20</sup> A significant number of IFC managers and staff believe that the critical self-evaluation of 40 percent of IFC's portfolio (based on a sampling independently performed by IEG and reflecting the composition of the portfolio at entry in a chosen year) was performed at IEG's request, thus demonstrating a lack of IFC ownership. The subsequent validation and rating of the chosen investments through XPSRs is accepted as just an unavoidable moment of accountability to be prudently performed, given its possible consequences for the organization's image. Many learning opportunities are lost in these processes, which

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<sup>19</sup> See the following: World Bank, *The World Bank Group in Bangladesh, Fiscal Years 2011–20: Country Program Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 30, 2022); World Bank, *The World Bank Group in Chad, Fiscal Years 2010–20: Country Program Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 28, 2022); World Bank, *Approach Paper: World Bank Group Engagement with Morocco, 2011–21* (Washington, DC: World Bank, December 13, 2021); World Bank, *Approach Paper: Mozambique Country Program Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 16, 2021); World Bank, *Approach Paper: Madagascar Country Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, February 17, 2021); World Bank, *Approach Paper: Ukraine Country Program Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, October 15, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Additional sources of documentation include management responses to the following recent major evaluations: World Bank, *The International Finance Corporation's and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency's Support for Private Investment in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations, Fiscal Years 2010–21* (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 11, 2022); World Bank, *Creating Markets to Leverage the Private Sector for Sustainable Development and Growth: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Experience through 16 Case Studies* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 26, 2019); Results and Performance (RAP) management responses in *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group, 2017–21*.

are conducted without substantial communication and engagement on both sides. The introduction of the AIMM tool as the main IFC planning instrument in FY19 expanded the differences between IEG and IFC’s understanding and measurement of developmental impact in the private sector, depriving the dialogue between the two institutions of a common language and criteria of success, despite serious attempts to address differences and find a common way forward. Senior managers of both institutions engaged in an important dialogue between the end of FY19 and the beginning of FY21 and sought to establish a mid-course correction mechanism and to revise and update the framework for evaluation deferrals in two dedicated joint working groups. No significant progresses were achieved, and the effort was discontinued. A joint working group on market base benchmarking started in June 2021 has made encouraging progress. It is urgent to build on a positive dynamic and to overcome this central stalemate and restore learning opportunities from past IFC investments and from MIGA guarantees.

25. In the last five years, IEG has adapted many of its products or created new ones to respond to the operational demand for learning.<sup>21</sup> IEG’s working program for FY23–25 sustains this trend and developed new learning products, such as the clusters of Project Performance Assessment Reports that will explore specific challenges faced by WBG operations. IEG has also introduced Evaluation Insight Notes, which consolidate evidence and lessons (in areas of high interest for operational units and the Board) from validation pieces, projects evaluations, and thematic evaluations.
26. Paradoxically, as the 2015 IEG external review had already emphasized, lessons from major evaluations have been the most difficult to absorb. One of the External Review Panel’s respondents noted that “there is no system that allows for broader absorption of knowledge since many of them do not have a clear intended audience.” Still, major evaluations have generated learning processes that are mostly undetected, through the analyses of specific findings and observations, that are spread across large documents and attract the interest of concerned medium-level managers. The situation could possibly be improved

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<sup>21</sup> Product examples include IEG’s Country Program Evaluations for Chad (2010–20) and Bangladesh (FY 2011–20); *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group* FY20 and FY21; IEG Work Program and Budgets FY17–23; and IEG Learning Engagements FY17–23.

by defining—within IEG approach papers for major evaluations—the researched balance between accountability and learning objectives.

27. Management and IEG could specify the learning expected from a thematic or sector evaluation, and estimate the resources—mainly staff time—needed to achieve those objectives. This information would be useful for assessing the working program’s feasibility and for defining the best mix between accountability- and learning-oriented products. To strengthen a culture of learning from evaluation, especially in IFC and MIGA, at least one major evaluation could be conducted annually, mainly with learning objectives in sight. Design, inclusive exchanges, analytical conclusions, and use of the evaluation would be the results of an intense collaboration between management, operational staff, and the IEG team. In the latter, personnel trained in participatory processes would assist sector specialists, fostering learning by doing. The value and contribution of such evaluations would be assessed with specific criteria and methodologies, with the results obtained in learning and knowledge as the main criteria for success.
28. Learning from IEG work is certainly making progress. IEG has deployed innovations and resources for disseminating its findings through extensive use of information technologies, publishing blogs, and circulating reports effectively through a renewed and user-friendly web page, creating videos to transmit conclusions and key messages, and using podcasts to explore central development challenges from an evaluator’s perspective.<sup>22</sup> The interest in these products and messages is growing in the development community. They foster interest in evaluations’ results and contribute to educating a larger audience of development agents. However, IEG’s own learning and openness to learn from other sources—especially from evaluations conducted by local institutions or independent evaluators in client countries—is unclear. We did not find evidence that the increased monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity present in the developing world has influenced IEG’s approaches or findings that it published

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<sup>22</sup> IEG also developed a knowledge action plan in FY22 to establish a cohesive, efficient process to capture and share IEG’s knowledge. See IEG, “FY23 Work Program and Budget.”

and disseminated. Although the introduction of new methods for collecting data and analyzing them with new techniques and an extensive use of information technologies is well documented across IEG's reports, the recognition of different evaluation cultures and sensitivities in the evaluation domain is not apparent in IEG's intellectual space.

29. The clients surveys that IEG conducted FY21–22 support this assessment overall. The number of respondents (which was particularly low in FY22), their professional heterogeneity, and the variation of their backgrounds over time certainly affected the rigor of the results, making it problematic to fully rely on them to draw certain conclusions. Some responses have remained constant over time, however, and are in line with this panel's observation. The surveys reflect a broad satisfaction with IEG contributions to the WBG's mission. Board members, with their focus on accountability, have a more positive view of IEG's influence and contributions than operational staff. Among the latter, managers are more positive than project implementers and investors, who are especially interested in learning. IEG macro products (thematic evaluations, CPEs, and so on) are more appreciated than microproducts (validations of self-evaluations and project evaluations). IFC operational staff are less positive than World Bank staff about IEG engagement, approaches, and evaluation results. IEG's dissemination efforts are recognized and appreciated: web pages, blogs, and podcasts are used and consulted frequently. However, a clear and increasing majority of staff do not consider IEG results useful for project design, and their number has grown continually over the last four years. A large consensus has emerged about the desire for stronger IEG engagement with operational staff, including at evaluations' design stage, to promote the developmental relevance of IEG contributions.

## IEG Contribution to Evaluation Capacity Building

30. Evaluation capacity development (ECD) occupies a peripheral position in the WBG, as it does in many other MDBs. The 2015 external review recommended that "IEG's work should be broadened to build M&E capacity in client countries, in partnership with the WBG, other MDBs, development organizations, and the countries themselves."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Independent External Panel (IEP), *External Review of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group: Report to CODE from the Independent Panel* (Washington, DC: IEP, June

31. Almost all persons interviewed during this external review confirmed the critical importance of this recommendation. In line with this recognition, the 2019 *World Bank Group Evaluation Principles* state that “development of evaluation capacity is a major strategic focus of the World Bank Group internally, at the client level, and in international forums on evaluation.”<sup>24</sup> However, the next sentence in this important document places the responsibility of building internal M&E capacity in management’s hands. The evaluation policy—a result of the 2015 IEG external review—provides that “*within* [authors’ emphasis] the World Bank Group, capacity- building efforts include ongoing activities through the Results Measurement and Evidence Stream [RMES], the World Bank’s community of professionals and practitioners working in M&E functions.”<sup>25</sup>
32. We found that the objectives of two of the three RMES focus areas—to establish M&E standards and to support professionalization—have not been fully achieved so far.<sup>26</sup> Still, RMES has promoted the creation of a vibrant community of practice comprising many M&E staff in operations, Global Practices, and other units of the WBG. OPCS, which coordinates RMES, is responsible for promoting evaluation capacity in the WBG and receives IEG support in this context within the RMES arrangement. The IEG Academy (created in 2018) is well-designed and articulated to cater to IEG staff. It has consistently responded to staff demands and equipped them with new skills, knowledge, and opportunities for personal mentoring. In addition to the academy’s activities, IEG has organized staff learning days and held dedicated brown bag lunches and learning engagements for operational staff across WBG units.
33. The WBG promotes ECD in client countries in three ways: “supporting and undertaking specific initiatives to train client institutions and their staff...in evaluation methods and processes; working with clients to conduct evaluations and build and

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2015), 40.

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Group Evaluation Principles*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 2019), 15.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, *Evaluation Principles*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> According to stakeholder interviews. See also World Bank Group Evaluation Framework—Meeting of May 15, 2017 (CODE2017-0021), 13.

implement M&E systems; ...and involving representatives from clients and partners as well as professional members of M&E communities in countries in World Bank Group evaluation processes.”<sup>27</sup> These mechanisms, some of which have been more successful than others, will be analyzed further in the section devoted to the ECD.

34. Per its mandate, IEG has some ECD responsibility in building capacity within World Bank client countries and, in collaboration with other institutions, for developing evaluation standards, best practices, and systems. In 2016, in response to a 2015 external review recommendation, IEG proposed to deepen its engagement in capacity development while maintaining its core focus on independent evaluation. Since then, evaluation capacity building has undoubtedly received greater attention, mobilizing approximately 5 percent of the IEG budget and a larger amount of Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) donors’ trust funds. However, the initiative’s financial sustainability over the medium term is a task that GEI needs to address because it is not guaranteed.
35. During the last two decades, IEG has supported ECD at the client level through a synergetic and organic system of three separate but thematically connected initiatives: the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) and its French language equivalent Programme International de Formation en Évaluation du Développement (PIFED), the Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) phases 2 and 3, and since 2020, the GEI. All these programs have drawn lessons from their predecessors, and although the audiences are slightly different for each, their combined influence has ensured the improved M&E skills of individuals, governments, and to a smaller degree, other evaluation stakeholders.
36. At the international level, IEG is considered a good partner, pioneer, and team player within the Evaluation Cooperation Group, the United Nations Evaluation Group, EvalPartners, and similar networks.

## Challenges and Opportunities Shared with the Evaluation

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<sup>27</sup> World Bank, *Evaluation Principles*, 16.

## Units of Other Multilateral Development Banks

37. IEG's strategy and activities have evolved as part of an internationally connected effort to improve MDBs' effectiveness. In this context, IEG has often set new trends and introduced innovations. Decisions and changes at IEG have influenced the entire multilateral evaluation system. Therefore, new initiatives must be understood and promoted with that larger impact in mind. Similarly, the experiences of other institutions' evaluation units have presented IEG with valuable learning opportunities and innovations.<sup>28</sup>
38. Interviews conducted with the heads of evaluation units of the major development banks revealed common challenges and opportunities. Prominent among them is the urgency to clarify the role of evaluation units in early assessments of innovative programs and in the response to unexpected global crises. In fact, shareholders have called on almost all evaluation services to appraise the effectiveness and efficiency of important initiatives just months after their deployment, raising methodological and governance issues that are common to all institutions. The lessons learned by these activities could lead to a new understanding of the specific role of evaluation services in such endeavors and to the conscious management of the correlated risks. Evaluation units of other MDBs have also shared the struggle to promote a culture of learning from self-evaluation in their organizations, and not only for accountability.
39. Major development challenges and crises have created an unavoidable pressure to act and to lend expeditiously, reducing the time and the attention necessary to ensure quality at entry and durable impacts. This has been especially true for the investment of public money in private companies and projects. All development banks aim at improving M&E capacity in client countries and assign to their evaluation's unit a role in these initiatives (African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank, for instance, provide support for ECD and to Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluation in their regions). There is a clear need for strong

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<sup>28</sup> According to interview respondents, "External reception is dependent on TTL [task team leader] connections in the development world, and these connections have heavy influence to major evaluations. If IEG strengthens such connections, their evaluations will be meaningful and interesting."

coordination in this domain, with a comparative advantage for the regional development banks in the promotion of results-based policies in governments and specialized organizations.

## CODE Influence and Responsibilities

40. CODE is at the center of the WBG's evaluation system and has achieved important results in recent years. It ensured that IEG's work program is aligned with the WBG's strategic direction, and it supported World Bank and IFC capital increases and exceptional replenishments of IDA resources through just-in-time products. It shifted the focus of evaluations to outcomes and to the ambition of creating markets in the poorest countries, inducing management to adopt similar perspectives. Additionally, it ensured the adjustment of WBG approaches to the special circumstances of fragility and conflicts. CODE had a role in improving management's accountability through the MAR reform, and it effectively promoted the expansion of IEG evaluation capacity-building initiatives.
41. CODE expectations and its decisions are key in shaping and influencing IEG's work program. It calls attention to questions, processes, and products and creates incentives for IEG's leadership team and staff by indicating areas of special interest to the Board. However, it is not obvious to us that such influence has been exercised with a clear purpose and defined priorities. As the previous external review noted, CODE has a heavy workload with a complex work program dictated by corporate obligations and emerging priorities. At times, it is heavily focused on reviewing and strengthening environmental and social governance and accountability. In addition to these responsibilities, CODE also selectively discusses major thematic and sectoral evaluations and some country evaluation reports. In recent years, CODE has shifted its attention to issues of urgent concerns, such as the WBG response to COVID-19, the use of the IDA Private Sector Window, and the debt sustainability of IDA countries. Just-in-time products and early assessments of recently established programs have necessarily captured attentions and energies, with the risk of de facto neglecting the slower, systematic collection of evidence from past experiences and their translation into behavioral change and operational innovations.
42. We find that CODE has faced and only partially overcome the difficult challenge of setting priorities and selectivity to guide the WBG's

evaluation system. The rotation of chairs and membership every two years tends to disrupt continuity of purpose and interrupt progress in important domains. It makes it more difficult to provide guidance to WBG management on thematic and sector strategies, monitor their quality, and assess their results through IEG evaluations.<sup>29</sup> Another consequence is that some important follow-up issues identified in controversial evaluations (for instance, the mobilization of private capital by the World Bank, IFC, and MIGA) were lost in the transition from one CODE tenure to the next. We also believe that learning from evaluations has not received enough attention, and that this is particularly true for the self-evaluation and validation systems, which have faced continuous motivational and technical difficulties, especially regarding IFC investments and MIGA political risk guarantees. CODE has also been slow to seize the assessment and steering new opportunities created by the introduction of the IEG Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan that incorporates a results framework.<sup>30</sup>

## Implementation of the 2015 External Review Recommendations

43. The following is a short assessment of what was done in response to the 2015 external review's recommendations. The measures proposed a few years ago are considered in their narrow specificity. Their wider meaning and the actions taken in the spirit of those recommendations are discussed in the text.
  - a. The Independent Evaluation Group should remain an independent unit within WBG with both clear accountability and learning responsibilities.
44. The IEG Policy,<sup>31</sup> approved by the WBG Board in 2018, sets out IEG's mandate and its functions. Section 13 of the policy safeguards the independence of evaluation through clearly articulating IEG's structural, institutional, and managerial independence. This has enabled a shift in

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<sup>29</sup> See Annex C, Terms of Reference of the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), Section 2.2 in Resolution No. 2009-0002; Resolution No. IDA 2009-0002; Resolution No. IFC 2009-0037 and Resolution No. 2009-0002.

<sup>30</sup> IEG, "FY22 Work Program and Budget, FY23–24 Indicative Plan," IEG, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank Group, *IBRD/IDA/IFC/MIGA Policy: Independent Evaluation Group Mandate* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, February 8, 2018).

the understanding of evaluation's independence. The latter is no longer understood as institutional and personal distance from management and operations but as a self-conscious and informed engagement with staff in identifying key challenges and promoting solutions. CODE has also been key in protecting IEG's independence by discussing evaluations and endorsing their findings and recommendations.

- b.** Regular independent external reviews of IEG should be conducted every five years.
45. In February 2016, CODE recommended that the Board approve the first three recommendations of the 2015 external review, including that regular, independent external reviews of IEG be conducted every five years.<sup>32</sup> However, the current review started six years and six months after publication of the previous review in June 2015 because of CODE's heavy work load and because of the effect of the COVID-19 restrictions on WBG operations and IEG.
- c.** A single five-year nonrenewable term for the director-general of IEG should be put in place, with no possibility of entry or reentry into the Bank Group.
46. In 2018, the Board approved *Revised Procedures for Selecting the Director-General, Evaluation*.<sup>33</sup> The revised procedures changed the term for the director-general, Evaluation, from a five-year renewable term to a nonrenewable six-year term. The current IEG director-general was elected for six years, applying the revised procedure.
- d.** The WBG should develop an institution-wide, principle-based living evaluation policy; establish terms of reference for IEG; and perform a skill mix assessment. IEG should develop a 4–5-year strategy.

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<sup>32</sup> CODE/GS2016-0005 Report to the Board from CODE—External Review of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group Proposed Road Map and Action Plan—Meeting of February 1, 2016 (green sheet) 07/14/2016.

<sup>33</sup> CODE/GS2018-0016 Report to the Board from CODE—World Bank Group Evaluation Framework—Meeting of July 13, 2018 (green sheet) 12/20/2018.

47. The Board approved the WBG evaluation principles and IEG’s terms of reference, and CODE endorsed the WBG evaluation framework.<sup>34</sup> The skill mix assessment was conducted. IEG introduced a recruitment strategy and performs a strategic staffing exercise biannually. We found minimal references to these documents in the interviews we conducted. We also could not find evidence that IEG and management updated the Board on the use of evaluation principles two- years after their adoption.<sup>35</sup> IEG has not introduced multiyear strategies, but it has aligned its program to the WBG’s strategy. The three-year rolling working programs presented to CODE and the Board every year have a clear strategic orientation.

e. CODE’s oversight function should be strengthened.

48. The MAR reforms (introduced in 2020) and the IEG Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning System are important M&E tools at the committee’s disposal.<sup>36,37</sup> However, aside from these, CODE has not introduced any significant change in the way it assumes its oversight responsibilities.

f. The quality, relevance, usefulness, credibility, and influence of IEG’s work should be enhanced.

49. This external review documents many significant improvements in the relevance, usefulness, credibility, and influence of IEG attained over the last six years. Some of those were achieved by measures the previous review suggested, and others were introduced by the current director-general, Evaluation, including changes in the organization’s institutional culture and a sustained dialogue with management and operations. Less progress was visible in the relations between IEG and IFC, reflecting differences in self-evaluation practices and unresolved methodological questions.

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<sup>34</sup> World Bank Group Evaluation Framework—Meeting of June 18, 2018 (CODE2018-0030).

<sup>35</sup> CODE/GS2018-0016, 12/20/2018.

<sup>36</sup> Implementing IEG Recommendations FY15–19 A World Bank Group Management Report—Meeting of September 25, 2020 (CODE2020-0040) and Management Action Record Reform IEG’s Validation Report— Meeting of September 25, 2020 (CODE 2020-0041).

<sup>37</sup> The World Bank Group Outcome Orientation at the Country Level—Meeting of October 28, 2020 (CODE2020- 0054); See World Bank, *Outcome Orientation*, 52–57; and IEG, “FY 22 Work Program,” 54.

- g.** The process for major, thematic, and sectoral evaluation should be adjusted.
- 50. Although there were a few pilots that led to the MAR 2020 reforms,<sup>38</sup> IEG has not fully adopted the model that the 2015 external review proposed. However, IEG has included management and operational staff more in identifying key issues and often collaborates with them in preparing the corresponding approach papers. IEG also reduced the number of recommendations it formulates, and their implementation is tracked transparently through the annual MARS. It is still challenging to transmit the knowledge produced by major evaluations to operational staff and motivate them to learn from these studies.
- h.** IEG’s work should be broadened to build M&E capacity in client countries, in partnership with the WBG, other MDBs, development organizations, and the countries themselves.
- 51. IEG reviewed its strategy and work program for ECD in 2016, at CODE’s request.<sup>39</sup> Since then, clear progress has been made in this domain through the GEI and other forms of collaborations among multilateral and bilateral institutions. Substantial challenges remain in integrating local experts and local perspectives in implementing evaluations. Promoting credible M&E functions in client’s government and institutions is also a challenge, and the same is true for ensuring sustainable financing of the connected ECD initiatives.

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<sup>38</sup> IEG-WBG Management Joint Pilot Initiatives for Process Improvements on IEG’s Major Thematic and Sectorial Evaluations Addressing Recommendation #7 of the External Review of IEG—Meeting of June 27, 2016 (CODE2016-0033).

<sup>39</sup> Background Note on IEG Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy: Addressing Recommendation 8 of the Independent External Review of IEG—Meeting of June 27, 2016 (CODE2016-0030).

# SECTION B:

## IEG'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS—EFFECTIVENESS AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

52. The COVID-19 crisis occurred in the final quarter of FY20 and had a profound impact on the world and on the WBG. IEG was no exception. It significantly adjusted its work program in response to the pandemic in at least two ways. First, it had to provide insights into the pandemic's implications for development outcomes and for WBG operations. Second, pandemic-related travel restrictions meant that evaluations could not be conducted in the traditional way. IEG has recorded significant successes in both adjustments. Furthermore, these accomplishments—and some issues raised by the adjustments of evaluation practices—hold lessons for the future work of IEG and similar evaluation units. This section explores three categories of lessons. First, it looks at how IEG quickly pivoted to draw insights from its past evaluations. Second, it considers the changes to IEG's evaluation methods during the crisis and their implication for future noncrisis times. Third, it explores the subject of future crises, regardless of their nature.

### Generating Insights for Crisis Response

53. IEG's rapid insights for addressing the COVID-19 crisis through WBG operations came through several perspectives. In the early stages of the crisis, IEG mined past findings of existing evaluations of WBG operations to provide targeted conclusions. For example, in July 2020, a few months into the crisis, IEG produced *Support and Financing to the Formal Private Sector in Response to COVID-19*. This drew on evaluations and experiences in addressing past major crises such as the global economic crisis of 2008–10, the food crisis of 2007–08, and the East Asian crisis of 1998. It also drew on evaluations that assessed the WBG's response to natural disasters and the establishment of instruments to support the private sector. More than 20 previous reports by IEG and several more from other agencies were synthesized to produce a seven-page note that was distilled further into a blog post for

dissemination. Certainly, the findings themselves, their generality, specificity, and the extent to which the recommendations are actionable can be discussed further, as with any evaluation. However, such COVID-19 insight notes from the *IEG Lesson Library* illustrate the basic instrument of using the trove of IEG evaluations to speak to a breaking crisis through a sharply focused synthesis.<sup>40</sup>

54. Later in the crisis, IEG began producing a second type of note that provided the perspective of ongoing WBG actions to address the consequences of the crisis. *Lessons from the Review of Health and Social Innovations in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Response*, produced in March 2022, “collected and reviewed innovations promising new approaches and practices reported by World Bank operational teams supporting COVID-19 responses in country.”<sup>41</sup> The standard IEG portfolio review procedure identified 222 examples from 253 projects from 67 countries. Crowdsourcing from World Bank task teams added 66 examples from 46 countries. IEG extracted an additional 88 examples from 43 countries from internal World Bank sites, including Global Practice databases. Additionally, eight case studies from a then ongoing IEG evaluation (*Early Evaluation of the World Bank’s COVID-19 Response to Save Lives and Protect Poor and Vulnerable People*) were also included in the overall synthesis.<sup>42</sup>
55. The definition of innovation can be analyzed, and the various criteria used to develop the complete list of more than 350 innovations from 100 countries can also be tested and refined. But what is interesting—particularly for the second type of note—is that IEG has gone beyond its own evaluations and acted as a synthesizer of emerging WBG-wide knowledge, which is expressed through different platforms. Even though this knowledge is subject to various limitations (lack of direct IEG vetting through its own rigorous evaluation protocols,<sup>43</sup> and possi-

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<sup>40</sup> Additional examples include: IEG, “Food and Nutrition under the COVID-19 Crisis: Lessons for Protecting the Vulnerable and Facilitating Recovery,” *IEG Lesson Library*, March 31, 2021; IEG, “Lessons from Evaluations on Supporting Trade Facilitation and Trade Finance in Response to COVID-19,” *IEG Lesson Library*, April 9, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> IEG, “Lessons from the Review of Health and Social Innovations in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Response,” *IEG Lesson Library*, March 29, 2022, 1.

<sup>42</sup> World Bank, *Approach Paper: Early Evaluation of the World Bank’s COVID-19 Response to Save Lives and Protect Poor and Vulnerable People* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 30, 2021).

<sup>43</sup> However, each relevant Global Practice has vetted this knowledge.

ble selection bias in the universe from which these items were drawn), IEG is cognizant of these shortcomings, and its publications acknowledge them. However, cautiously and with considerable room for increased rigor, the rapid response during the COVID-19 crisis opens a role for IEG to collate and synthesize ongoing WBG responses from a bird's-eye view and to learn from them.

56. A third perspective on IEG's input to the WBG's response to a crisis comes from the war in Ukraine. The April 12, 2022, report by the WBG for CODE, *World Bank Group Response to Global Impacts of the War in Ukraine: A Proposed Roadmap*, draws on the lessons learned from IEG evaluations of WBG responses to past crises. It made explicit and detailed reference to IEG's 2013 evaluation of the food price crisis of 2008,<sup>44</sup> its two-part evaluation in 2011 and 2012 of the global financial crisis,<sup>45</sup> and its 2017 synthesis evaluation *Crisis Response and Resilience to Systemic Shocks: Lessons from IEG Evaluations*.<sup>46</sup> Beyond the war in Ukraine, the CODE report also draws on IEG's 2021 evaluation on the WBG's contribution to addressing country-level fiscal and financial sector vulnerabilities,<sup>47</sup> and the ongoing CPE for Ukraine.<sup>48</sup> The WBG's report for CODE shows that the WBG is consulting IEG evaluations when formulating a strategy for the next crisis beyond COVID-19.
57. Ultimately, the quality of IEG evaluations forms the basis of their utility in a crisis context or in any other context. However, there is a long-standing concern that these evaluation reports begin to gather dust and are soon forgotten. The crisis period of the last three years shows that this need not be the case. IEG evaluations of past global crises provided the foundations for a WBG road

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<sup>44</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank Group and the Global Food Crisis: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group Response* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2014).

<sup>45</sup> World Bank, *The World Bank Group's Response to the Global Economic Crisis: Phase 1* (Washington, DC: World Bank, January 1, 2010); IEG, *The World Bank Group's Response to the Global Economic Crisis: Phase 2* (Washington, DC: World Bank, February 12, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> World Bank, *Crisis Response and Resilience to Systemic Shocks: Lessons from IEG Evaluations* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 12, 2017).

<sup>47</sup> World Bank, *Addressing Country-Level Fiscal and Financial Sector Vulnerabilities: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Contributions* (Washington, DC: World Bank, July 21, 2021).

<sup>48</sup> World Bank, *Approach Paper: Ukraine*.

map to address the consequences of an emergent crisis, such as the COVID-19 and war in Ukraine crises. It is possible that evaluations of WBG responses to those two crises will be used in formulating responses to future crises, but WBG staff's willingness to use the learnings from available evaluations in strategy formulation is needed first. IEG staff, with adequate resources, then must be willing to provide timely syntheses of lessons from past evaluations and speak to emergent issues in a just-in-time way. CODE and the Board could also explore the possibility of IEG staff (on specific topics) going beyond their narrow remit of relying on their own evaluations and use their World Bank-wide perspective to be synthesizers of information and knowledge from across the WBG, complementing IEG evaluations. These three avenues were followed during the recent crisis period and could be considered for future exploration and exploitation.

## Evaluation in a Crisis

58. As the COVID-19 crisis unfolded through March 2020, it became clear that IEG had to rethink conventional evaluation methodologies and protocols. Primarily and most important, it would no longer be possible to conduct field missions to countries and projects being evaluated or hold discussions and conduct validations with governments and civil society stakeholders. As is clear from their public communications through social media and blogs as early as April 2020, IEG staff immediately began a conceptual, technical, and operational discussion on the implications of these new realities. Similar discussions had also started among other evaluation agencies and among evaluators in general, but it is evident that IEG staff were among those at the forefront of debating this issue.
59. IEG staff raised important issues on evaluation in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, starting with the recognition that the constraints evaluators faced were in fact nothing new. Evaluation processes had faced similar challenges in conflict zones. As the first IEG blog on this topic on April 1, 2020, noted, "World Bank teams with experience working in 'no-go' areas with high risks to personal security have much to teach about M&E in the face of COVID-19."<sup>49</sup> Thus, once again IEG drew on and synthesized World Bank-wide experience. The first

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<sup>49</sup> Jeff Chelsky and Lauren Kelly, "Bowling in the Dark: Monitoring and Evaluation during COVID-19 (Coronavirus)," IEG blog, April 1, 2020.

issue raised was the ethical dimension of using third-party (largely local) monitoring. Sending others into harm's way—as much into COVID-19-affected areas as into conflict zones—requires serious contemplation. IEG staff were at the head of the discourse in addressing these difficult issues.

60. It should be clear that in such a rapidly moving environment, blogs were a better instrument of communication than a weighty report, whose moment would have passed by the time it was produced. IEG blogs that followed went into greater specificity on the evaluation challenges, and these thoughtful entries by IEG staff showed an institution trying to think through how to do the right thing in full awareness that evaluators in other institutions had similar struggles of thought. The blog of April 8, 2020, identified four methodological challenges: convenience sampling and selection bias as a result of travel restrictions; the inability to do on-site data collection, with telephone interviewing only a partial answer; accentuation of central government bias because contact with other stakeholders and areas outside the capital becomes even more difficult; and using new forms of data and information that can speak to the field-level reality, even though visiting or even by locally based evaluators are not really collecting it from the field level.<sup>50</sup>
61. Many blogs followed up this framing with specifics. For example, a striking note in a July 22, 2020, blog introduced geospatial data as a substitute for an evaluator's site visit, saying that constructing “a geospatial data set for evaluating a project provides a unique opportunity for a robust quantitative assessment of project effectiveness.”<sup>51</sup> Certainly, this statement holds more generally, independent of whether there is a crisis that prevents physical access to sites. But the current crisis has brought the issue to the forefront and focused attention on alternative data sets. These data sets go beyond the geospatial to those emanating from social media or machine learning from textual analysis of local newspaper publications, and all of these were discussed as part of evaluating during the COVID-19 crisis.

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<sup>50</sup> Jos Vaessen and Estelle Raimondo, “Conducting Evaluations in Times of COVID-19 (Coronavirus),” IEG blog, April 8, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Joachim Vandecastelen, “When Evaluators Cannot Make It to the Field, They Can Always Observe from Space,” IEG blog, July 22, 2020.

62. Such advancements to new forms of information and big data should be considered as an addition to the evaluator’s toolbox, and even though the movement was already under way, the necessities of the COVID-19 crisis gave a strong push toward incorporating these new methodologies. The FY22 and FY23, IEG work programs presented to the Board highlight data science scale-up as a major component, with demonstrated increases in the use of these new methodologies in evaluations.
63. Observing from space and accelerating the use of other data sources, including big data techniques, was one response to the evaluation challenges of the crisis. The use of local evaluators was the other major type of response, minimizing the need for IEG staff and their consultants to fly in from outside, typically from developed countries. Certainly, local evaluators need to be given all the same protections, and digital technologies should also enhance their working practices, as discussed in IEG’s first blog on evaluation methods during the pandemic.<sup>52</sup>
64. In IEG’s April 22, 2020, blog, “Adapting Evaluation Designs in Times of COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Four Questions to Guide Decisions,” IEG staff provide a very useful structured guide to the challenges of and responses to evaluation during COVID-19. Under question 3, “Can you find ways around what is infeasible?” the authors considered using local researchers and posed additional questions and issues.<sup>53</sup> However, regarding the use of new forms of data, using local evaluation capacity should be a deep and ongoing concern for IEG, whether there is a crisis or not. This reflection must include the ability of firms (especially those associated with IFC and MIGA) to assess their development impact and the social and environmental consequences of their operations. IEG’s work program already includes major components of helping to develop evaluation capacity in client countries through platforms such as the GEI, and these will be discussed later in this report. Still, it is striking that IEG’s work programs include little discussion on using local evaluators in IEG’s evaluations,<sup>54</sup> not only during the crisis

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<sup>52</sup> Chelsky and Kelly, “Bowling in the Dark.”

<sup>53</sup> Estelle Raimondo, Jos Vaessen, and Mariana Branco, “Adapting Evaluation Designs in Times of COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Four Questions to Guide Decisions,” IEG blog, April 22, 2020.

<sup>54</sup> According to IEG’s FY22 and FY23 work programs and budgets approved by the Board.

but as an ongoing priority. This contrasts with the emphasis placed on saving mission costs through remote interviews from headquarters and the expansion of new data methods as a major initiative.

65. There is little in quantified assessment of the extent to which IEG's evaluations use local evaluation capacity. There is also the question of the level at which local capacity is engaged—as low-level assistance or at the higher level of formulating and helping to lead evaluations. One relatively quantifiable window into using high-level input in evaluation reports comes through the list of external peer reviewers in each evaluation that IEG conducts. From the names and institutional affiliations of these reviewers, a reasonable effort can be made at allocating each reviewer to a male or female and North or South category. The southern origin category can be divided further into those who are with institutions based in the South or the North. For the completed evaluations listed for FY20 and FY21 and for forthcoming evaluations listed for FY23, we found that 36 percent of the external peer reviewers listed are female, and 15 percent are reviewers based in Southern institutions.
66. IEG is contributing to global efforts to develop evaluation capacity in developing countries, the use of local capacity in its own evaluations needs improvement. Of course, such use has challenges. Besides the question of quality, using local analysts will raise its own issues of local conflicts of interest and partiality, especially at the senior level. But surely protocols can be developed to help staff steer their way through these questions. Regardless, IEG should collect data on the use of local and Southern-based expertise at different levels in IEG evaluations and observe the influence these recruitments have on approaches and results.

## Preparing for the Next Crisis

67. There appears to be considerable agreement in the WBG that IEG moved quickly and effectively to address the demands of the COVID-19 crisis. It used the platform of its past evaluations to synthesize lessons for ongoing WBG responses, and its timely communications were appreciated within and outside the WBG. Some of its responses have lessons for the longer term, particularly on using new forms of data and local capacity.

68. However, it would be surprising if these achievements did not come at some cost. IEG's pivot to responding to the demands of the crisis meant some delays in delivering the more conventional promised output.<sup>55</sup> How does one prepare for the likelihood of another crisis in the future at an unknown time, origin, length, and magnitude? Conceptually, the answer is to have adequate contingency resources available for deployment. Such resources may appear to be lying idle, but of course they are not, given their role of being ready to spring into action as needed. Of course, IEG, like other units, carries a contingency fund. However, carefully considering the level of such contingency funding within the overall context of the World Bank's budgetary procedures would seem an appropriate step for IEG, given the experience of navigating the COVID-19 crisis. The lack of adequate contingency funding and a nearly full programming of human and financial resources will indeed lead to some promised outputs being delayed or dropped. Consequentially, this brings into question the principles and framework according to which these decisions are made. Therefore, developing a protocol for such actions would seem to be an essential part of preparing for the next crisis.
69. There is an aspect of the crisis that originates not so much from the need for new methods or sufficient contingency allowance in IEG's work program but from CODE's expectations during a rapidly changing situation. The WBG promptly mobilized significant funds for addressing the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences. The funding's emergency basis and the unequaled nature of the crisis meant that conventional systematic analysis could not be applied to COVID-19 interventions. However, the Board has asked IEG for an early evaluation of the WBG's crisis response. Although the necessity to evaluate emergency interventions and their associated (significant) expenditures is a legitimate one that will undoubtedly manifest itself when major future crises emerge, the question is: How should an agency with ex post perspectives and methodologies adapt itself to the task of evaluating interventions with unknown (or unmaterialized) outcomes?<sup>56</sup> This is new

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<sup>55</sup> Of course, as IEG pointed out to us, there were other factors as well: the impact of COVID-19 and of home-based work on IEG staff, delays in evidence gathering linked to the massive surge in COVID-19-focused work in the WBG, difficulties reaching client counterparts for interviews, finding alternative data sources to compensate for the lack of mission travel, and delays in management comments.

<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that the Evaluation Cooperation Group is considering this question and is planning a working group to assess and compare approaches to real-time evaluations to

territory, and expectations will need to be moderated and modulated accordingly. The preparations for early evaluations of future crises are crucial, and the dialogue on the best way to do them should begin among CODE, management, and IEG.

## Main Findings and Recommendations on Responses to Crisis

### 70. Main findings:

1. IEG's response overall to the COVID-19 crisis, especially its rapid pivot to providing timely syntheses of lessons based on its bank of evaluations, has been greatly appreciated within the World Bank and externally.
2. IEG went beyond its own evaluations in some of its synthesis work to provide an overview of findings from other World Bank platforms and other evaluation agencies.
3. The crisis accelerated a trend toward methodological advancements, especially in the use of new forms of data and information, driven during the crisis by the inability to carry out in-country missions.
4. The crisis highlighted the improvement needed in IEG's use of local capacity in its own evaluations, despite IEG's support for global efforts in ECD.

### 71. Recommendations:

1. IEG should prepare for the next crisis by developing an argument for an appropriate level of contingency funding, and a protocol for prioritizing conventional types of output when not all can be delivered in the face of crisis demands.
2. The methodological advances occasioned and accelerated by the crisis should be welcomed, and more work is needed to fully assess and incorporate them into the evaluation process.

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propose more harmonized approaches across the MDBs.

3. IEG should develop protocols using local and Southern-based evaluators in its own evaluations and monitor this use at the junior and senior levels of expertise.
4. CODE, management, and IEG should establish a dialogue and discuss the methodologies and expectations for early-stage evaluations of crises while outcomes are still being generated.

# SECTION C:

## OUTCOME ORIENTATION—IMPLICATIONS FOR IEG

72. Outcome orientation as a concept and an operational framework is now central to the WBG and is a key priority for CODE and the Board. Management’s ongoing engagements with the Board have clarified and developed the concept while setting out the operational implications. IEG responded to this process through an overall evaluation of the new directions and by reorientating its own evaluations. This section of the report provides an account and an assessment of the interactions between IEG and management in this domain, while drawing some lessons for future engagements under three headings. First, we examine the question of possible alternative perspectives and definitions of outcome orientation. Second, we examine the new style CPEs, which are viewed as a major vehicle for outcome-oriented evaluation, because outcome orientation is now present in most IEG outputs. Third, the review highlights the possible tension between accountability and aiming for higher-level outcomes through outcome orientation.

### What is Outcome Orientation?

73. To achieve a meaningful and successful evaluation, there must be a common understanding of what is being evaluated, so it is appropriate to start by discussing how outcome orientation is understood in WBG management and IEG documents. The focus on outcomes is not new, but it has been newly emphasized and highlighted in the WBG in recent years at the insistence of CODE and the Board. In its road map for outcome orientation in 2020, the WBG defines outcome orientation as follows: “Outcome orientation: a continuous focus, in all public and private development activities, on helping the poorest and most vulnerable people to realize their full potential.”<sup>57</sup> It then develops the concept with a results chain going from outputs, to immediate outcomes, to intermediate outcomes, and to high-level outcomes,

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<sup>57</sup> World Bank, *Strengthening the World Bank Group Outcome Orientation: A Roadmap* (Washington, DC: World Bank June 2021), iv.

which are “transformative changes required to achieve the country’s long-term vision for development.”<sup>58</sup> This is illustrated through the example of the launch of a health insurance program with dedicated financing, to an increased percentage of children enrolled in health insurance, to increased child use of health and nutrition services, to reduced child stunting. It is also clear that the context in which this results chain is elaborated is at the country level, not wholly but primarily. What is interesting for an external review of IEG is the extent to which this framing draws, with attribution, on IEG’s classification presented in that year’s RAP.<sup>59</sup> It is one illustration of a pattern of intensive interaction between IEG and the World Bank on implications and implementation of outcome orientation, which we noted in our meetings across the institution.

74. How does IEG understand outcome orientation from its perspective? IEG’s 2020 evaluation of outcome orientation, which led to a stream of productive engagement with management, defines the concept as follows: “Outcome orientation: The organization’s ability to generate feedback on what works, what does not, and why; use this feedback to engage clients and adapt country programs; and ultimately bolster its contribution to country development outcomes.”<sup>60</sup> The difference between the two definitions of outcome orientation, stated clearly and boldly in the glossaries of two key foundational documents (the WBG’s road map and IEG’s first evaluation of outcome orientation) is seemingly jarring and raises the question of whether a common object is in sight for the evaluator and the evaluand, as it was intended when CODE began the conversation on outcome orientation in 2018.
75. Discussions with the two sides of this apparent disconnect elicited a common perspective that the WBG definition focuses on the *what*, and the IEG definition focuses on the *how*. The WBG’s road map notes that “an outcome-oriented approach aims to address barriers toward well-being, generate evidence on what works and does not work for helping the poor and vulnerable realize their full potential, and why, and use this evidence to help country teams adapt their engagements

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<sup>58</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Roadmap*, 4.

<sup>59</sup> World Bank, *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group 2020* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 30, 2020).

<sup>60</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Evaluation*, ix.

to enhance their contribution to achieving those high-level outcomes over time.”<sup>61</sup>

76. Based on our interviews, from IEG’s perspective, it is important to make the *how* central in the outcome orientation approach and to use this to evaluate the WBG’s own performance in achieving the *what*. The exchanges between IEG and World Bank management (which again have been intensive and productive in increasing mutual understanding) further illustrate the different perspectives on outcome orientation. In its evaluation of WBG outcome orientation at the country level, IEG produced very clear recommendations under the categories of what to keep, what to discontinue, and what to introduce. Most striking, IEG recommended discontinuing “current requirements of developing a CPF results framework with a complete set of measurable indicators and targets at the design stage” and instead recommended to “adopt a new approach and enable country teams to develop a MEL [monitoring, evaluation, and learning] plan at the CPF design stage that can be revised throughout the country cycle.”<sup>62</sup>
77. Management’s response to these major recommendations highlights some convergence but also some differences in perspective about which discussions are still ongoing: “While sharing the report’s view of the results frameworks’ limitations in terms of quantitative metrics, focus on attribution, and arbitrary time-boundedness anchored to World Bank processes, management believes that they have still played an instrumental role in instilling a more robust culture of results in both country teams and client counterparts.”<sup>63</sup> It is encouraging that ongoing dialogue between OPCS and IEG is advancing common understanding, and pilots are being developed in which alternative routes to anchoring outcome orientation can be tested. However, IFC’s and MIGA’s senior managements were invited late, and their involvement in this conversation has been weak. The evolving CPE is one important vehicle for advancing evaluation of outcome orientation, and the pan-

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<sup>61</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Roadmap*, 5.

<sup>62</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Evaluation*, xvi.

<sup>63</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Evaluation*, xviii.

el now examines this as a case study of ongoing interactions between WBG management and IEG.

## The New Style of Country Program Evaluations

78. Interviews with WBG staff revealed dissatisfaction with old-style country-level evaluations, especially with their emphasis on ratings. The concern about ratings and the often conflicting and unproductive interaction they lead to between evaluators and evaluands is observed frequently across the range of IEG evaluation products, but it is particularly discernible at the country level. To paraphrase one World Bank staff interviewee, “We give a rating, they give a rating one point below that, then we argue and sometimes it changes, sometimes it doesn’t, but we don’t learn anything on how to do things better.” In response to concerns about ratings and outcome orientation, but also within the context of pandemic-related evaluation difficulties, IEG developed and implemented a new style of CPE. Specifically, IEG “has enhanced approaches to some products to increase outcome orientation. The CLRR [Completion and Learning Report Review] template was refined to improve the focus on outcomes and on lessons. CPEs shifted from rating performance to focusing on identifying WBG contributions to addressing major country-level binding constraints.”<sup>64</sup>
79. Our interviews and review of internal documents have indeed shown a concerted effort by IEG senior leadership to put a new style of CPE in place. Similarly, the interactions between IEG and World Bank management about outcome orientation have accelerated and influenced the evolution of CPEs. Our assessments that follow are based on interviews with IEG staff, a reading of the new style CPEs and IEG guidance to staff, and interviews with World Bank and IFC country directors and managers from a selection of countries for which the new CPE process has been completed, almost completed, or targeted.
80. IEG’s presentations to its leadership and its task team leaders lay out the parameters of the new style CPEs. These include the important issues of timing and coverage. CPEs are timed so that they inform the preparation of a new CPF for the country. They are focused on a small number of key questions and are not a comprehensive and mechanical review and assessment of the entire portfolio during the long review

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<sup>64</sup> IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” 12.

period. The use of a broad range of tools is encouraged where relevant, including advanced methods based on data science. They emphasize the use of staff from across IEG, with fewer short-term consultants.

81. The evaluation of outcome orientation focuses on processes: “Are the feedback mechanisms working well? Is the whole greater than the sum of the parts?” In keeping with this perspective, task team leaders were advised that “CPEs should assess the extent to which WBG engagement demonstrated an outcome orientation (that is, adapting strategies, priorities, and interventions in response to new information and analysis, lessons from experience, and changing priorities and conditions)” rather than simply looking at outcomes on key socioeconomic dimensions, as might be suggested in a pure results framework. Thus “CPEs should illustrate the main outcome areas of the WBG-supported country strategy at the start of the evaluation period, the main constraints identified by key diagnostics (that is, Strategic Country Diagnostic, Country Private Sector Diagnostic, Risk and Resilience Assessments, and so on), and the subsequent strategy. The document should also track how the country strategy evolved over time. The evolution should be interpreted and discussed *in the text*, not left for the reader to decipher.”<sup>65</sup>
82. In our discussions with country directors and managers (which covered a spectrum of IEG activities and products), recent CPE processes received a range of reactions. Country directors and managers appreciated IEG’s practice of sending (upon their appointment) a package of distilled lessons from recent evaluations. But a CPE—now timed to coincide with the start of preparations for a new CPF—would perhaps be the first major country-wide engagement of IEG with the country director and their team. Most country directors and managers interviewed emphasized the importance of IEG systematic engagement with the country team before the development of the approach paper as a key ingredient of a successful CPE process. This relates also to IEG staff reactions that the most successful evaluations (not just CPEs but more broadly) are demand driven. A new country director preparing for a CPF should feel that they would benefit from a CPE and should provide input to the questions the CPE will examine (which is now a small number of key questions). In all cases, the IEG and country teams

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<sup>65</sup> According to the External Review Panel’s reading of internal, unpublished documents.

need time and work to arrive at a common basis so that the evaluation outcomes will be better absorbed.

83. Given IEG's conceptualization of outcome orientation, there is naturally a significant emphasis on attributing outcomes to the World Bank's performance. A range of qualitative and quantitative methods for such attribution are suggested, though ultimately, judgment will be qualitative in nature: it is more art than science. However, there is one ever-present issue in IEG's country-level assessment that appears even more sharply in the reformulated CPE. IEG staff guidance clearly states that CPEs are an evaluation of the WBG's performance, not that of the country authorities. Yet the guidance also says that a CPE should start by asking these two questions: What was the political, social, and economic context during the evaluation period? What were the main development challenges and constraints to making progress on those challenges? The CPEs we examined do follow these guidelines and consider the country and institutional context. This is clearly correct from the analytical perspective. How can the WBG's performance be assessed without being clear and forthright about the context in which it is operating?
84. However, clarity and sharpness in measuring an infrastructure gap or in proposing improvements of a statistical system are relatively straightforward, but the analysis of institutional constraints, governance, and indeed political economy contexts leads to potential tensions with the country teams, whose relations with the government are highly important. These issues are not new, but they appear prominently in the reformulated CPEs, which are not simple rating exercises based on the mechanical use of portfolio performance ratings but rather devices to better understand how the World Bank performed in a specific context and whether and how it could have been done better.
85. The issue of understanding and setting out the political economy context, broadly interpreted, raises two issues. First, deep knowledge of local context is more likely to be found among local specialists, and IEG should make every effort to use such expertise, subject to the constraints that arise from capacity and issues of independence. Second, we maintain that IEG should have the confidence of Board support when it makes factually based and rigorously researched statements on institutional quality in a country, although such statements in a publicly accessible evaluation could be sensitive. Clearly, IEG should

use appropriate language, but a CPE should not avoid critically and constructively exploring the context in which the WBG is operating, leading to a discussion of what the WBG should and could do in these circumstances. Similarly, a fact-based account of governance and institutional constraints, if presented appropriately, should help rather than hinder the WBG team’s dialogue with its country counterparts. This is indeed largely done in the CPEs we examined.

## Outcome Orientation, Higher-Level Outcomes, and Accountability

86. IEG has influenced the WBG’s outcome orientation agenda through several products, beyond the reformed CPEs. This includes, for example, reforming the Completion and Learning Report Review template to focus more on outcomes. It also includes thematic evaluations such as the FY22 disaster risk reduction and IFC additionality in middle-income countries evaluations— both of which, following the approach papers,<sup>66</sup> will take the country-level perspective that is at the heart of their outcome-orientation analysis. The RAP, IEG’s major annual output, has also changed its focus in the 2020, 2021, and 2022 publications to reflect this new orientation.<sup>67</sup> This review examines the 2020 RAP and uses it to highlight the issue of possible difference in emphasis between accountability and higher-level outcome targets.
87. The 2020 RAP begins in the usual way by presenting ratings data: “Independent Evaluation Group project data for fiscal year (FY)19 show that 79 percent of World Bank lending operations were rated moderately satisfactory or above (MS+) at completion. This compares with 81 percent in FY18.”<sup>68</sup> The usual trends and breakdowns are also presented and discussed. However, part II of RAP 2020 is focused on outcomes and provides a hierarchical classification already mentioned: outputs, early outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes. Projects objectives are then allocated to these categories, and a very

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<sup>66</sup> World Bank, *Approach Paper: Reducing Disaster Risk from Natural Hazards: An Evaluation of World Bank Support, FY10–20* (Washington, DC: World Bank, August 30, 2021); World Bank, *Approach Paper: International Finance Corporation Additionality in Middle-Income Countries* (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 2, 2022).

<sup>67</sup> World Bank, *Concept Note: Results and Performance of the World Bank Group 2022* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 26 2022).

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, *RAP 2020*, VI.

interesting set of analyses is carried out on patterns across sectors, type of project, and relation to project rating. The overall conclusion is that “the Bank Group often has limited evidence of its higher-level outcomes and can improve how its incentives and results measurement systems support outcome orientation.”<sup>69</sup>

88. Management’s response to these findings shows an active and ongoing dialogue with IEG on outcome orientation, which our interviews also confirmed. We already noted how IEG’s classification has influenced the World Bank’s own thinking, as reflected in documents developing outcome orientation conceptually and operationally. The issue of attribution is at the forefront, for example, when management responds to RAP 2020 as follows:

“Identifying objectives that can be attributed to World Bank interventions continues to be important for accountability and transparency. It is also part of applying the theory of change rigorously and consistently and requires elaborating objectives at lower levels, where attribution is typically stronger. This underpins the report’s finding that approximately 72 percent of IPFs [investment project financing] state their outcome objectives at level 2, and another 26 percent at level 3. These level 2 outcomes (for example, improved quality or access to social- or infrastructure-related public services) are relatively easier to attribute to World Bank support by the time the project closes, and clients often favor that.”<sup>70</sup>

89. Such responses and associated issues raise an important set of questions for the Board. If outcome orientation is indeed meant to be a line of sight to higher-level outcomes, and if it is more difficult to locate attribution to the WBG for these outcomes, then how is the outcome orientation objective to be reconciled with accountability? There is no easy answer to this question. IEG’s evaluations and management’s responses to them are grappling with these differences in emphases in what we see as a productive dialogue. The Board’s views on these emphases are important, and a joint dialogue is essential to advance the discussion.

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<sup>69</sup> World Bank, *RAP 2020*, X.

<sup>70</sup> World Bank, *RAP 2020*, XII.

## Main Findings and Recommendations on Outcome Orientation

### 90. Main findings:

1. IEG has moved purposively to align its evaluation activities and products with the World Bank's move toward outcome orientation. There is an ongoing, productive dialogue with World Bank management on operationalizing IEG's contribution to this orientation. However, more dialogue is needed to reach a common understanding of key concepts and objectives, especially with IFC and MIGA senior management.
2. Country directors and managers largely welcomed the new style CPEs, which embody IEG's move toward outcome orientation. What is particularly welcomed is the upstream consultation and input in framing the key questions. Such dialogue, which feeds into the country team's early strategic thinking, is itself an important output of the CPE.
3. The new style CPEs bring to center stage an elaboration of the political economy context of World Bank operations. This highlights the issue of whether there is sufficient use of local expertise in CPEs. It also raises the issue of sensitivities in presenting key aspects of political economy that are relevant to the World Bank's work.
4. IEG's classification of outcome levels—outputs, early outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes—is useful, and the World Bank has used it in its own conceptualization of outcome orientation. However, it raises the issue of tensions between aiming for higher-level outcomes versus accountability through attribution, which may be easier for outputs and early outcomes.

### 91. Recommendations:

1. The productive dialogue between IEG and WBG management on conceptualization and operationalization of outcome orientation should continue and intensify, for example, as experience with the new style CPEs begins to accumulate.

2. IEG should intensify upstream consultation with country teams on CPEs to ensure that the evaluation has strong demand-driven elements to it rather than being viewed as an outside imposition to be tolerated.
3. IEG should aim to increase its use of local expertise at every level in its CPEs and in evaluations in general. It should develop protocols to address the constraints and issues that arise with local expertise and provide data to monitor its use of local evaluators.
4. IEG should have the confidence of Board support when it makes factually based and rigorously documented statements on institutional quality in a country, though such statements in a publicly accessible evaluation report could be sensitive.
5. The tension between accountability (which is more easily achieved by targeting outputs and immediate outcomes) and a focus on the higher level, long-term outcomes (which are the hallmark of an outcome orientation) are as much a matter for the Board as for management and IEG. The Board should lead a dialogue on this issue so it can give guidance on how to address the tensions.

# SECTION D:

## THE EVALUATION OF IFC AND MIGA ACTIVITIES

92. The 2015 external review did not assess the evaluation of WBG investments in the private sector of developing economies or the provision of advisory services related to these activities. Therefore, IFC and MIGA participation in the independent evaluation system of the WBG was not explicitly analyzed.<sup>71</sup> Since then, the international community has stressed even more the private sector's role in growing equitable and sustainable economies. MDBs' main strategic documents in recent years have emphasized this dimension of development, and more public resources— including IDA contributions—were invested in private companies and private ventures. Meanwhile, the success of impact and green investments—lucrative labels for mobilizing finance in the global markets—create an urgency to assess the actual results of private investments.
93. IEG inputs in these domains are therefore meaningful beyond the specific results of evaluations devoted to IFC and MIGA activities. They could contribute to methodological improvements and capacity building among development financial institutions, institutional investors, equity funds, and commercial banks operating in developing countries. This section critically assesses the present collaboration between IEG and IFC and, to a lesser extent, IEG and MIGA. It highlights the urgent need to reach consensus on a new self-evaluation and validation system adapted to the private sector's particularities and that is aligned with the outcome orientation of IFC and MIGA strategies (expressed in the AIMM and IMPACT planning and monitoring tools). It recognizes the challenge of extending the use and relevance of major IEG evaluations devoted to IFC and MIGA activities and stresses the importance

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<sup>71</sup> The 2015 external review noted a major evaluation (*Behind the Mirror: A Report on the Self-Evaluation Systems of the World Bank Group*), which presented a realistic view of the challenges faced by the IEG and IFC collaboration. However, to our knowledge, the evaluation did not lead to any adjustment of the collaboration between IEG and the WBG's private sector-oriented institutions.

of independent evaluations for public and private investors eager to measure and ensure development impact.

94. The culture and habits of self-evaluation and independent evaluations are ingrained in traditional development work. Private investors used to measuring success mainly through monetary returns and financial sustainability (a perception shared by most investment officers in IFC and MIGA underwriters) cannot take the value of self-evaluations for granted. This value must be acquired through rewarding experiences, conducted in an atmosphere of trust, in the respect of competencies, and considering the divergent incentives and the time pressure under which the operational staff works. The 2016 IEG evaluation on self-evaluation systems (*Behind the Mirror*) clearly demonstrated the challenges of such positive evolution. Six years later, the situation has not improved substantially, despite some encouraging examples of collaboration between IEG and IFC on narrow thematic evaluations (see, for instance, the recent evaluation of IFC involvement in primary and secondary education),<sup>72</sup> some learning engagements,<sup>73</sup> and MIGA's systematic learning events based on project evaluations, with IEG participating in the events.
95. Only a determined engagement of IFC and MIGA senior management in favor of the evaluation work can induce positive changes. It must be accompanied by IEG willingness to review the self-evaluation and validation methods and processes applied to WBG investments in the private sector. Similarly, the design of major evaluations of WBG and private sector collaboration and how the evaluations are conducted also deserve important adjustments. Including IFC and MIGA contributions more in country strategies and their evaluation would confirm the outcome orientation of their activities. IEG and its studies would win recognition in IFC and MIGA if they were better known and used by international networks dedicated to impact investments, in which the organizations play a significant role. International visibility could

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<sup>72</sup> World Bank, *An Evaluation of International Finance Corporation Investments in K–12 Private Schools* (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 8, 2022).

<sup>73</sup> IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” appendix D.

motivate staff adherence to the self-evaluation, validation, and evaluation procedures.

## Toward a Better Self-Evaluation System

96. Self-evaluation is the foundation of any evaluation system. It provides evaluators operating at the micro, meso, and macro levels with essential information and reflection. It communicates the basic evaluation tools and approaches to operational staff, thus establishing the system's legitimacy and credibility. Unfortunately, in IFC and partially in MIGA, these objectives have not been achieved satisfactorily. In fact, the self-evaluation of private sector-oriented operations currently functions with the unenthusiastic collaboration of operational staff, as if IEG owned the process and was responsible for its results.
97. A few factors aggravate this impression. IEG unilaterally chooses (by sampling) the projects that operational staff must self-evaluate each year. The process is time consuming, and a large part of it is conducted in the fourth quarter of the FY, when operational staff struggle to achieve their lending targets and to meet deadlines. Additionally, there is often a mismatch between the sectoral composition and the objectives of the projects to be self-evaluated in a given year (they were mainly approved five years earlier) and the portfolio characteristics that staff are concerned about when the self-evaluation of the earlier investments takes place. Furthermore, from the standpoint of staff who often see fortunes fluctuate because of market instability and unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic, the results achieved by investments five or more years after approval seldom present a convincing and final demonstration of a company's success or failure.
98. Only a clear engagement of IFC and MIGA managements to raise recognition of self-evaluation processes as indispensable learning moments for their organizations could initiate a change in the mindset of medium-level managers and staff. This engagement should be accompanied by an explicit allocation of time and budget to self-evaluations and to constructive engagements with IEG. Above all, it is urgent to overcome duplication of efforts and the methodological disarray created by the overlap of different planning and monitoring tools. Indeed, IFC and MIGA have introduced new planning, monitoring, and evaluation methods aligned with their strategies for creating markets, but IEG (though invited) has not contributed to their design in the name

of its independence. It has instead continued to implement a dated system for self-evaluations and validations.<sup>74</sup> The competition between the established XPSR methodology and the new AIMM system that IFC introduced in 2019, and the one between the Project Evaluation Report (PER) methodology and the IMPACT system that MIGA initiated in 2020, have both shaped the discussion on these central matters for too long. Although all parties involved recognized the urgency to find a constructive way forward, no coherent and consensual conclusion has been reached so far in this central question.

99. This External Review Panel does not have the mandate to present a specific proposal in this regard, and it would not be able to do so. Based on the information and the opinions collected on this matter over the past several months, we believe the following principles can foster a suitable solution:
- The AIMM system and the IMPACT tool should be at the core of the new self-evaluation procedures. These approaches define the purpose of IFC and MIGA engagement at the outcome level—that is, the contribution of each investment and guarantee project to overcoming critical obstacles to a country’s development. They structure the information and shape the expectations that management and the Board use in their decision-making. Both are well established, measure staff performance, and provide them with coherent incentives. Also, the XPSR methodology for assessing single investments considers the contribution of IFC investments to creating markets, but it does not put it at the core of the analysis or make any reference to AIMM and its conclusions.
  - IFC managers and task team leaders should assume full ownership of the self-evaluation process while cultivating a constructive collaboration with IEG. The positive experiences of constructive engagement currently made in evaluating IFC advisory services can be an example and inspiration.
  - The process should aim to be as efficient as possible. Ideally, it would be conducted mainly in the first two quarters of the

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<sup>74</sup> The current system was developed more than 20 years ago (IFC prepared its initial XPSRs in 1999), and the current XPSR guidelines were updated in 2015.

financial year and take advantage of existing information while remaining neutral about its format. This is particularly true for data illustrating the performance of the companies in which IFC invested and the financial returns obtained by IFC.

- The financial and developmental additionality of IFC and MIGA investments must remain central to the assessment of their operations. The XPSR and PER methodologies offer solid guidance for this judgment.
- Compliance and progress made in handling environmental and social aspects of private sector operations must continue to be part of any self-assessment of investments in the private sector and political risks insurance.
- IEG should continue to assess in its Evaluation Notes the performance of the teams that initiated, realized, and accompanied the investments. It should also consider examining the quality of each self-evaluation and the potential learning it generated, improving the recognition for these important but unglamorous tasks.
- Self-evaluations and the connected validations must find a way to avoid the randomness of the assessed results, determined largely by the time of the analysis (five years after the Board's approval, for most cases). Markets conditions fluctuate constantly and make it difficult to judge the success and impact of private investments by examining their performance only at a specific time. The comparison with similar investments and enterprises that were assessed using the XPSR methodology partially corrects this shortcoming when the available data allow it, but it cannot eliminate it fully. To partially correct this arbitrariness, IFC and MIGA may suggest at entry a time that would be better suited for measuring the impact of their contributions (in years after their commitment). For equity investments, the financial results achieved at exit, when IFC sells its assets, should be considered in measuring the operations' success. AIMM appears well suited to this task because of its focus on contextualized outcomes and measuring the likely obstacles to reaching them.

100. Furthermore, IEG’s present rating system relies heavily on the quantitative and qualitative objectives pursued by the investments presented in the proposal sent to the Board. These are often overoptimistic, by definition. IEG itself observed how a modest reduction of ambitions at entry would have systematically improved the rating of IFC operations over the years. The new system should be less deterministic and appreciate the actual outcomes achieved in conditions that largely could not be anticipated at entry. The client company’s capacity (supported by IFC or MIGA) to adapt to changing market conditions and a measure of performance that better considers the evolution of the macroeconomic and business environment would provide a more realistic measure of success or failure. The range of expected outcomes defined by AIMM and IMPACT would constitute a useful reference in this respect.

### Improve the Relevance of Major IEG Evaluations Devoted to IFC and MIGA Activities

101. The discussion of some recent major evaluations of IFC and MIGA activities has been difficult. The tone and content of management responses to the evaluation on private capital mobilization and the evaluation of IFC and MIGA activities in fragile contexts, for example, or to MIGA’s experience with non-honoring financial obligation guarantees,<sup>75</sup> have been particularly defensive.<sup>76</sup> In some cases, CODE could not solve the dispute and asked management to pursue the dialogue with IEG.<sup>77</sup> It is possible to draw some lessons from these difficult moments, perhaps more than from evaluations that reached consen-

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<sup>75</sup> World Bank, *MIGA’s Experience with Non-Honoring of Sovereign, Sub-Sovereign, and State-Owned Enterprise Financial Obligation Guarantees* (Washington, DC: World Bank, May 19, 2022).

<sup>76</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Group Approaches to Mobilize Private Capital for Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, January 20, 2021). Management updated the Board on progress in this domain in the spring of 2022. IEG recommendations are considered and discussed in the report. See SecM2022-0058 IDA/SecM2022-0057 IFC/SecM2022-0036 MIGA/SecM2022-0021 Update on Private Capital Mobilization The World Bank Group and Maximizing Finance for Development—Meeting of March 1, 2022—2/23/2022.

<sup>77</sup> See, for instance, CODE/GS2020-0025 Report to the Board from CODE—World Bank Group’s Approaches to Mobilize Private Capital for Development: An IEG Evaluation—Meeting of September 16, 2020 (green sheet) 10/29/2020. To our knowledge, the expected reconciliation of positions in CODE announced in the note never took place. In the case of the FCS evaluation, IEG agreed to receive its recommendations and included additional details after the CODE discussion for IFC and MIGA.

sual conclusions, such as the recent evaluation of IFC contributions to basic and middle-level education.<sup>78</sup>

102. The results of major evaluations are more likely to be accepted—even if they are critical of the results achieved by IFC or MIGA—if the methodologies adopted to assess performances and results were agreed to and were well-understood by the evaluands. Other decisive factors influencing the acceptance of the evaluations’ results are the technical competence, the previous private sector exposure, and the seniority of IEG evaluators. Moreover, the rationale for the evaluation and its main concerns and questions should significantly reflect the concerns and operational intentions of the units and staff involved. We observed substantial progress in this regard, especially for evaluations conducted at the sector or country levels.
103. The dialogue between IEG and IFC or MIGA management has been more difficult regarding corporate evaluations when assessing strategic results such as creating markets, mobilizing private capital for development, or ensuring the private sector’s contribution to reducing fragility in challenging environments. Also in this area, consultations with the interested operational units before assigning key evaluative tasks may create a better environment to receive and process critical messages from the studies, especially when the evaluation addresses delicate and critical issues of high relevance for the WBG’s shareholders. Such improvements would not compromise the independence of the evaluation processes and their findings. It is likely that the conclusions of major evaluations devoted to IFC or MIGA core missions would be better accepted and absorbed if operation teams would own the self-evaluation and validation system and if evaluations were aligned with current planning and monitoring approaches; and the methods and results would be trusted, especially by middle-level managers.
104. For some major evaluations of IFC and MIGA activities, the official management responses discussed in CODE often differ from how managers at the operational level received the results, particularly managers responsible for a partial aspect or for the mandate the report analyzed. Official management responses focusing on accountability were often defensive, contested IEG’s conclusions, and dismissed recommendations, but operational-level managers, who were interested in

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<sup>78</sup> World Bank, *IFC in K–12 Private Schools*.

learning, considered and absorbed useful analysis, factual assessment, and pragmatic recommendations from the same evaluations. In other words, the usefulness and relevance of complex evaluations addressing multiple issues depend on their contribution to learning, but these issues are seldom reflected in higher-level recommendations presented to the Board. MARs are important accountability instruments because they present policy decisions, adjustments of strategies, and the introduction of new tools in response to IEG recommendations.<sup>79</sup> However, they seem insufficient for capturing genuine learning by medium-level managers and staff. They need to be expanded and monitor the dissemination of operational learning from major evaluations.

## The International Relevance of IEG Evaluations of IFC Operations

105. IFC is the largest development financial institution in the world, embedded in a major, sophisticated development organization. Its leadership role in creating markets fosters the emergence of a responsible private sector in developing economies, and it promotes impact investments. The methods IFC adopts to select, conduct, and assess investments in private companies establish standards that are relevant for the entire network of development finance institutions (DFIs) active in this domain. Therefore, IEG evaluations of IFC performance and their findings and recommendations could provide useful knowledge to the broad DFI community. Unfortunately, this does not happen often enough because disseminating evaluation findings and lessons learned is left mainly to IEG and its specialized channels of communication: publications, blogs, and podcasts.
106. Other organizations, partners governments, and civil society would find major meaning and relevance in IEG evaluations if IFC and MIGA (for their specific mandates) would critically embrace their results and explicitly include their messages and the consequences they draw for their operations in their regular communication with development partners. We observed that this is seldom the case. Even in contexts in which such sharing of knowledge acquired through evaluations would

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<sup>79</sup> “The MAR focuses on how IEG evaluations are contributing to outcomes that matter in key priority areas.” See Enhancing Evidence-based Learning for Outcomes through the Management Action Record A World Bank Group Management Report on Implementation of IEG Recommendations—Meeting of September 7, 2022 (CODE2022- 0037), 2.

appear logical and natural (such as the DFI Forum on Fragility,<sup>80</sup> or the network of financial institutions that are signatories of the impact principles),<sup>81</sup> IFC is not forthcoming and does not spontaneously share with its partners what it learned and acted upon as a result of evaluation findings and recommendations. These are missed opportunities that have consequences for IEG's recognition and the incentive to collaborate with it: if IFC management included the lessons learned through evaluations more frequently in its external communication, it would improve its credibility and increase the evaluation system's prestige among its skeptical staff.

## Main Findings and Recommendations for IEG and the Private Sector

### 107. Main findings:

1. The relations between IEG and IFC and between IEG and MIGA have been marked by mistrust and contentions, despite recent attempts to engage at the highest levels on a quarterly basis. The positive collaboration in the evaluation of advisory services and some recent sectoral evaluations, and the successful coordination of learning engagements show the potential for better collaboration.
2. IFC and MIGA managers and staff largely perceive the current self-evaluation and validation processes of investments and guarantees as imposed accountability exercises in the hands of IEG, and IEG believes that it co-owns the self-evaluation process. Clarity on ownership and accountability would be helpful. Moreover, the self-evaluation should produce results that are useful to the implementation of IFC investments and MIGA guarantees and meaningful for the technical people conducting them.
3. Rating investments in private ventures and in guarantees relies too much on the objectives set at entry and the circumstances

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<sup>80</sup> DFI Fragility Forum 2022, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, May 3–4, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> International Finance Corporation (IFC), *Operating Principles for Impact Management* (Washington, DC: IFC, February 2019, updated June 2021).

prevailing in the markets at the time of the self- evaluation. Therefore, rating five years after Board approval is approximate and should not be taken as an undisputable measure of success. More flexibility in sampling projects for self-evaluation and in defining the best moment to conduct their self-evaluation are warranted. The system needs to be redesigned for accountability *and* for learning.

4. Some of the major evaluations devoted to corporate policies and global results achieved by IFC or MIGA have been particularly controversial. Management responses have often been defensive, focusing more on rejecting critical conclusions than on implementing positive findings and suggestions. Learning from such evaluations has taken place discreetly in the organizations but has not received much recognition. CODE has been mostly unaware of the learning processes that major evaluations generated and has not assessed them.
5. Central findings from evaluations of IFC and MIGA activities are relevant for the DFIs community and for commercial institutions engaged in impact investing. Yet IFC and MIGA have not actively disseminated these finding in their operational networks. IEG has partially compensated this situation through its own communication efforts, but its outreach in the world of finance is necessarily limited.

#### 108. Recommendations:

1. IFC and MIGA management should stress the importance of self-evaluations and their IEG validation for their organizations' credibility and the constant improvement of operations.
2. IFC, MIGA, and IEG should urgently propose to CODE consideration of a new self- evaluation methodology (led by management) and validations methodology for IFC investments and MIGA guarantees (led by IEG), centered on AIMM and IMPACT. The strengths of the current XPSR system in assessing financial performance and environmental and social indicators should be preserved in the new approach, but processing time should be reduced, and more flexibility should make it easier to adjust to the specific circumstances of each operation. Existing data on

financial performance and respect for environmental and social standards should be used to all extent possible.

3. The selection of projects to be self-evaluated (and therefore validated by IEG) should consider the learning needs of the organizations involved and not just follow the logic of the approximate rating of a representative portfolio.
4. Equities investments should also be assessed at the exit, when private investors acquire the IFC shares. The result of IFC involvement should be compared with the investments' performance, assessed through self-evaluations, mostly five to seven years after their approval by the Board.
5. Major corporate evaluations (such as the recently initiated evaluation of IFC additionality in middle income countries or the planned evaluation of IFC country diagnostics and strategies under IFC 3.0) should be designed and conducted with clear learning objectives in mind and with full management involvement. Management should estimate the resources necessary to pursue those objectives and define appropriate processes with IEG. CODE should endorse these plans.
6. CODE should assess the learning impact of IFC and MIGA self-evaluations and of their IEG validations every two years.<sup>82</sup>
7. The planned evaluation of AIMM in FY24 should contribute to improving the self- evaluation and validation system for IFC and MIGA operations and therefore include a critical assessment of the corresponding IEG methods and processes.
8. IFC and MIGA, in collaboration with IEG, should actively share with other MDBs and DFIs the major conclusions of the evaluations of their activities, particularly those related to operations in fragile contexts.

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<sup>82</sup> This practice was abandoned after 2013. We could not find a formal CODE decision on this matter.

# SECTION E:

## IEG CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND STRATEGIES OF THE WORLD BANK GROUP

109. IEG is interlinked with the WBG as a “knowledge bank” and is included as part of the WBG’s strategic framework for knowledge, *Realizing the World Bank Group’s Knowledge Potential for Effective Development Solutions: A Strategic Framework*. At the same time, the move away from thematic and global strategies (with some exceptions) has implications for the focus of IEG evaluations and the triangular relationship among CODE, management, and IEG. This section explores these issues, starting with *knowledge*, followed by *themes* and then *strategies*. Under the heading of *knowledge*, we consider learning from evaluations, IEG’s role in the global evaluation discourse, and its place in the strategic framework for knowledge. Under *strategies*, we lay out the consequences for evaluation in the absence of Board-approved management strategies.

### IEG, the World Bank Group, and Knowledge

110. Generation and use of knowledge are central to the WBG’s self-stated concept of its role in development as a knowledge and a solutions bank.

“The WBG’s unique comparative advantage lies in the synergies between knowledge and financing: knowledge supports the design of operations the WBG finances, and these operations in turn generate knowledge about what works, informing subsequent operations. The WBG’s convening power as an independent generator and broker of global knowledge allows it to inform development policy makers and take a lead role in setting the agenda for global discussions on development.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> World Bank Group, *Realizing the World Bank Group’s Knowledge Potential for Effective Development Solutions: A Strategic Framework* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, March 2021), I.

111. At the most fundamental level, justification for the WBG’s operations, both small and large, depends on the claim that they advance development, poverty reduction, and sustainable inclusive growth. But establishing the claim requires sufficient knowledge to validate the causal link. Moreover, once the operations are under way, their implementation and impact can generate additional knowledge for the WBG and the development community at large. Beyond its own operations, the WBG can contribute more generally to development knowledge, particularly in areas where it can be a promoter and convener for global public goods. The WBG’s most recent framing and assessment of its role as a source of development knowledge addresses the multifaceted contributions it makes and can make in this domain.<sup>84</sup>
112. Exactly where and how does IEG interact with and fit into the WBG’s knowledge strategic framework? The most obvious interaction is that it evaluates different aspects of the WBG’s direct knowledge creation activities. More important and prevalent, however, is its evaluation of WBG operations through Implementation Completion Report Reviews, IFC XPSRs, MIGA PERs, Evaluation Notes, Project Performance Assessment Reports, validation Completion and Learning Reviews for CPFs, CPEs, and major corporate thematic and sectoral evaluations.
113. Each of the IEG validation reviews and evaluation exercises carry an accountability component. The accountability function is clearest in the ratings that are validated at the project and country level, which are then reported and analyzed in the annual RAP report. For example, the 2021 RAP leads with the findings that “for the World Bank, the percentage of projects rated moderately satisfactory or above (MS+) in FY20 rose to 88 percent—a historic high. For IFC, the percentage of investments rated MS+ rose from 42 percent in calendar years (CY)16–18 to 47 percent in CY17–19. For MIGA, 68 percent of projects were rated satisfactory or better in the cohort FY14–19.”<sup>85</sup>
114. The accountability function is also present in major corporate, thematic, and sectoral evaluations, though not in the form of an overall rating, as illustrated by the findings of the recent evaluation of World Bank Support to Reducing Child Undernutrition: “The evaluation

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<sup>84</sup> World Bank Group, *Knowledge Potential: Strategic Framework*.

<sup>85</sup> World Bank, *Results and Performance of the World Bank Group 2021* (Washington, DC: World Bank, December 23, 2021).

confirms that the World Bank’s approach to nutrition—addressing dimensions of underlying and immediate nutrition determinants, social norms, behaviors, and institutional strengthening—provides a plausible pathway to improve nutrition outcomes. ...Although World Bank interventions generally address country needs at the national level, significant gaps remain in addressing social norms and WASH [water, sanitation, and hygiene].”<sup>86</sup>

115. Similarly, the accountability function of IEG’s evaluations creates necessary knowledge for the Board in its supervisory role. But learning is as important as accountability. It is important to know not only how well or badly WBG interventions performed as expressed through ratings or more qualitative assessments but why the outcomes were what they were and how they could be improved. It is this element of knowledge creation—for the WBG but also for the development community at large—that should be central to IEG.

## Learning through Evaluations

116. The accountability function understandably creates tensions between evaluator and evaluand. This is seen very clearly in management responses to IEG evaluations, in which good news is welcomed wholeheartedly, but a defensive stance is adopted toward criticisms. We also saw this in our extensive interviews across the WBG: the “ratings game” is viewed with suspicion, cynicism, and resignation and as an auditing measure, “rather than an exercise whereby IEG can assist the WBG in improving its development outcomes.”
117. The same does not seem to be true of the learning function of evaluations when separated from the accountability dimension. The interviews conducted have largely shown a refreshing openness to the knowledge that evaluations can bring to operations. WBG staff are self-selected to have a concern for development and for the well-being of the most vulnerable, and they should therefore be open to changes and modifications to approaches and methods for advancing these goals. IFC investors and MIGA guarantee holders share these values. How can the knowledge potential of evaluations be improved and promoted? The first key requirement is that the analyses underpinning the

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<sup>86</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Support to Reducing Child Undernutrition* (Washington, DC: World Bank, October 26, 2021), ix.

evaluations meet professional standards at the highest level. But the second key requirement is that the knowledge generated be absorbed by those for whom it is intended. Fulfilling the second condition is often more challenging than fulfilling the first.

118. Maintaining excellence in evaluation capacity within IEG has undoubtedly received greater attention since the last external review in 2015. This dynamism led to a new effort in 2018 to invest in staff skills and competencies that would keep them up to date with new evaluation methods and approaches relying on data science. The IEG Academy, designed with these objectives in mind, is reported to be well organized and appreciated because it responds to staff’s expressed needs. We hope that the academy will continue to receive support from both IEG and management and enjoy continuing IEG staff interest. It could benefit from cross-fertilization of facilitators and course providers from other sections of the WBG.
119. From interviews and examinations of recent evaluations, we conclude that IEG strives to remain at the frontiers of evaluation methodology.<sup>87</sup> Along with conventional mixed method approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative analysis, IEG has introduced new approaches using geospatial data and big data more generally. In FY22, IEG strengthened its data science capacity significantly and expanded the application of data science in its evaluations. The strengthened workforce includes two full-time data scientists, a methods specialist extended-term consultant, and an increased number of analysts with basic to intermediary skills in data science applications and use.<sup>88</sup>
120. Recent reports illustrate the range of methods IEG has used. For example, IEG used ethnographic techniques in the evaluation of support for natural resource management,<sup>89</sup> and machine learning for portfolio identification and the Georeferenced Global Data Set

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<sup>87</sup> One caveat regards evaluations of private sector investments, discussed in section D of this review. In addition, the issue of impact evaluation is discussed later in this section.

<sup>88</sup> IEG, “FY23 Work Program.”

<sup>89</sup> World Bank, *The Natural Resource Degradation and Vulnerability Nexus: An Evaluation of the World Bank’s Support for Sustainable and Inclusive Natural Resource Management (2009–19)* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 19, 2021).

in the evaluation of World Bank engagement in conflict situations.<sup>90</sup> The COVID-19 crisis accelerated the use of innovative methods, and methodological prowess is important for keeping evaluations at the frontiers of the profession. However, when conducting a thematic or sectoral evaluation, deep knowledge of the sector or the theme in question is also needed. This is where an issue can arise because the WBG has world-leading technical experts in many sectors. The exchange between IEG and World Bank management in the child undernutrition evaluation illustrates this. The evaluation recommended that the World Bank “rebalance investments to have greater emphasis on nutrition-specific interventions.”<sup>91</sup> However, management argued that “global evidence, compiled in *The Lancet Series* (2008, 2013, 2021), suggests that nutrition-specific interventions may be more effective when complemented with nutrition-sensitive interventions, and vice versa, and this is the approach that the World Bank plans to continue pursuing, depending on specific country contexts. Management therefore finds the word rebalancing somewhat ambiguous, as it suggests that greater emphasis on nutrition-specific interventions is required.”<sup>92</sup>

121. World Bank management and IEG largely agree on most of the undernutrition evaluation’s findings and recommendations. But the exchange quoted in the previous paragraph is potentially a major difference in perspective with significant implications for operationalizing support for reducing child undernutrition, which turns on a difference in technical assessment of the broad literature.<sup>93</sup> We cannot of course adjudicate on such technical matters, but it makes the general point that confidence in IEG’s level of technical expertise is important for each of the themes and sectors with which it engages.
122. Beyond technical excellence, findings that sit on the shelf or in a folder in a laptop do not provide knowledge for change. For this to happen, knowledge must be absorbable and be absorbed. This requires a different set of processes and resources both before and after and to some

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<sup>90</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Engagement in Situations of Conflict: An Evaluation of FY10–20 Experience* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 3, 2021), 96.

<sup>91</sup> World Bank, *Reducing Child Undernutrition*, xv.

<sup>92</sup> World Bank, *Reducing Child Undernutrition*, xix.

<sup>93</sup> Elements of dissonance are also seen, for example, in the evaluation on public finance and debt management: World Bank, *World Bank Support for Public Financial and Debt Management in IDA-Eligible Countries* (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 17, 2021).

extent during the preparation of the evaluation—in other words, there must be engagement with the knowledge users.

123. After ample consultation and careful examination of documents, we conclude that IEG is making major strides in moving away from an isolation model focused on just the evaluation report to a model of engagement and collaboration with the users throughout the full evaluation cycle. The review finds that there is general appreciation for the major corporate, sector, and thematic evaluations that use the latter approach; the new CPEs; and the IEG Approach Papers that engage management in upstream consultations. The process itself helps to trigger self-examination and more dialogue by the WBG. Furthermore, as WBG staff we interviewed argued, providing input to the formulation of evaluation questions is highly valuable to them, and it increases their receptivity to findings and recommendations.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, staff across WBG institutions consistently asked for intense IEG upstream engagements, understanding that such initial consultations need not and should not compromise IEG’s independence. Some even called for consultation at an intermediate stage to gain an early sense of findings and lessons learned.
124. The review also finds that IEG has significantly intensified and improved communication of evaluation results to the intended users and the broader development community. Besides the meetings to launch a report, IEG staff give thought to purposive interventions in different World Bank forums. IEG’s website statistics are often cited to support this argument.<sup>95</sup> Our interviews corroborated this. IEG learning engagements were often mentioned as useful for introducing issues and stirring thinking. To quote one respondent, “Learning is better in the learning engagement since it brings aggregated information about the sector.” However, some interviewed wished that IEG gave more visibility to management responses to evaluation findings and recommendations. Furthermore, Just-in-Time Notes are appreciated as capturing major findings in short, readable pieces. “A 100-page report will not be

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<sup>94</sup> The 2015 external review reached similar conclusions: “The panel also finds that IEG’s application of independence has lessened its effectiveness. We often heard that in IEG’s case, independence manifests itself as isolation and as an obstacle to effective engagement with management” (IEP, *External Review*, 18).

<sup>95</sup> According to IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” there were 291,343 IEG website sessions in FY21 and 647,678 total IEG page views.

read by anybody” was a common response when calling for and appreciating sharp and directed summaries. Similarly, the IEG blogs are recognized as a source of quick access to complex issues and intricate evaluations. Again, this appreciation accelerated during the COVID-19 crisis, but the review finds that appreciation has also grown for the dissemination of major evaluation findings.

125. The 2015 review recommended that WBG management and IEG, with support from CODE and the Board, “design, build, and continue to strengthen an overarching evaluation, learning, and accountability policy and system.”<sup>96</sup> This recommendation led to formulating an evaluation policy (2019) and the WBG Evaluation Framework (2018).<sup>97</sup> Many of the individuals interviewed believed that World Bank OPCS therefore is responsible for promoting learning within the WBG. Indeed, OPCS manages more than 100 academies and clinics, offers training, and produces guidance notes to staff. It created the RMES to bridge the gap between theory and implementation in M&E. Yet in the opinion of many staff we interviewed, RMES—conceived in 2013 and launched two years later in 2015 for the hundreds of M&E professionals and practitioners—has not “lived up to expectations.”
126. We also found that only one of the objectives for the three RMES focus areas was achieved: the establishment of an active and vibrant community of practice for M&E staff in operations, Global Practices, and other sections of the WBG, which offers a valued space for connecting and knowledge sharing. The other two focus area objectives—to establish a professional M&E career in the group and to develop M&E standards across the institution—have not materialized. Interview respondents were almost unanimous in the opinion that the learning in this space is not organized adequately or systematic.
127. Beyond the background and training to understand, appreciate, and absorb evaluation findings (which can be focused through key personnel in units), budgeted time for operational staff to engage with IEG’s evaluation process is also an issue. As noted in this review, IEG has made significant progress in dissemination and outreach throughout the evaluation cycle. Though greatly appreciated, our sense from the

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<sup>96</sup> IEP, *External Review*, 14.

<sup>97</sup> World Bank Group Evaluation Framework—Meeting of June 18, 2018 (CODE2018-0030).

interviews is that overstretched operational staff have difficulty finding the time to benefit fully from the engagement.

128. Improved dissemination focuses on the “supply side” of translating evaluation results into a form that users can absorb more easily. However, there is also the “demand side,” in which a key element is the WBG staff’s capacity to absorb findings, even when they were engaged in upstream consultation and when results are presented in an attractive, user-friendly fashion. The basic question is whether WBG staff have the background in evaluation and enough time to interact with IEG findings and recommendations that apply to them and then to learn from them. Without these key factors, IEG’s findings will inevitably be ignored or received badly.<sup>98</sup>
  
129. In the discussion of learning through evaluation, our interviews also raised the role of impact evaluation, an evaluation sub-branch. Definitions of impact evaluation are available in many places, but there is an overall consistency. For example, Paul J. Gertler and others, in their 2011 book *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, characterize impact evaluations as “a particular type of evaluation that seeks to answer cause-and-effect questions. Unlike general evaluations, which can answer many types of questions, impact evaluations are structured around one particular type of question: *What is the impact (or causal effect) of a program on an outcome of interest?*”<sup>99</sup> IEG conducted an evaluation of impact evaluation in the WBG in 2012.<sup>100</sup> Since then, impact evaluation’s prevalence in the evaluation community has grown, and it received professional recognition through the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics awarded to Michael Kremer, Esther Duflo, and Abhijit Banerjee for their pioneering work in implementing the approach worldwide. A recent report by the Center for Global Development provides an overview of

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<sup>98</sup> There is some evidence that this is the case in operations, despite IEG’s efforts. For example, the 2021 IEG client survey reveals that the utility of IEG reports for project design among staff is trending downward (40 percent in 2020 to 32 percent in 2021), mainly because of a perceived disconnect with operational reality. Additionally, perception of evaluation quality decreased among staff (from about 81 percent in 2021 to 77 percent in 2022), as reported by IEG’s 2022 client survey.

<sup>99</sup> Paul J. Gertler, Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings, and Christel M. J. Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011), 7.

<sup>100</sup> IEG, *World Bank Group Impact Evaluations: Relevance and Effectiveness* (Washington, DC: IEG, June 2012).

the latest developments in impact evaluation, especially from a policy and implementation perspective.<sup>101</sup>

130. Impact evaluation is practiced within the WBG primarily by DIME. According to its website, “The group conducts research in 60 countries with 200 agencies leveraging a \$180M [\$180 million] research budget against \$18B [\$18 billion] in development finance. It also provides advisory services to 30 multilateral and bilateral development agencies in the world.”<sup>102</sup> The work is characterized by a focus on learning through investigating causality between intervention and outcome, along with establishing a credible counterfactual of what would have happened without the intervention, often designed as part of the intervention itself. Randomized control trials are often but not always part of the analytical tools used. The funding for this work comes primarily from outside donors, not from the WBG’s budget.
  
131. IEG’s methods guide sets out the broad nature of methodological constraints faced by independent evaluation offices found in multilateral development organizations such as the WBG:

“Most evaluations are conducted either after the intervention (for example, project, sector program, or policy) has been completed (retrospective or ex post evaluation) or during an ongoing program or portfolio of interventions. By definition, *independence* implies that the evaluators are not directly involved in the design or implementation of the organization’s projects, programs, or policies. Furthermore, independence often requires that the IEO [independent evaluation office] has little control over the operational arm of the organization and the kinds of information (useful to retrospective evaluation) that are collected during project design or implementation. Finally, IEO [independent evaluation office] evaluations often operate at higher levels of analysis (for example, country or regional programs, thematic strategies), which influence the extent to which participatory methods can be (comprehensively) applied. Also, there is often a trade-off between breadth and depth of analysis that influences evaluation design and the scope for in-depth (causal) analysis. For these reasons, a number of approaches and methods—some of which are included in this guide (for example,

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<sup>101</sup> Center for Global Development (CGD), *Breakthrough to Policy Use: Reinvigorating Impact Evaluation for Global Development* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2022).

<sup>102</sup> “DIME Overview,” Development Impact Evaluation, World Bank Group, n.d.

experimental designs)—are often less suited and less commonly applied in IEO [independent evaluation office] evaluations.”<sup>103</sup>

132. For the reasons stated in the quoted material, impact evaluation cannot necessarily be a dominant component of IEG evaluations, but it can still be a useful complement to the array of methods deployed, especially as new forms of data and new types of analytics are brought into evaluation. This is happening to some extent, and broader IEG evaluations use the results of impact evaluation conducted by others as an input.
133. However, our interviews indicated that this complementarity and synergy remains underused. Impact evaluation practitioners in the World Bank seem to have little knowledge and appreciation of IEG’s work. At the same time, impact evaluation’s vastly expanded scope in the World Bank should provide more input to IEG evaluations, and IEG should purposively seek out and exploit the detailed impact evaluation work being done in the World Bank. Building bridges between these two streams of evaluation in the World Bank should be a priority for both streams and will benefit them and the WBG, particularly as the WBG develops its strategic framework for knowledge (discussed in the final part of this section).

## IEG and the Global Evaluation Discourse

134. From its mandate,<sup>104</sup> IEG’s orientation regarding generating and disseminating knowledge is primarily internal, toward the WBG. However, the mandate has two elements of outward orientation. First, among its functions is listed, “Encouraging and assisting member countries to build effective monitoring and evaluation partnerships, capacities, and systems.”<sup>105</sup> Section F of this review will discuss this part of the mandate (on ECD). The second element is directly relevant to this section of the review: “IEG works closely with development partners and member countries in order to foster international evaluation harmonization, to

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<sup>103</sup> Jos Vaessen, Sebastian Lemire, and Barbara Befani, *Evaluation of International Development Interventions: An Overview of Approaches and Methods* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 2020), 5.

<sup>104</sup> World Bank Group, *IBRD/IDA/IFC/MIGA Policy: Independent Evaluation Group Mandate* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, February 8, 2018).

<sup>105</sup> World Bank Group, *Policy: IEG Mandate*, 3, 5a.

develop evaluation capacity in member countries, and to encourage best practice in international development evaluation.”<sup>106</sup>

135. Interviews with a range of external stakeholders, including evaluation practitioners from developing countries and the heads of evaluation agencies from various MDBs, establish IEG largely as a leader in the evaluation discourse. One head of evaluation at an MDB said that IEG is a global standard setter in evaluation, and that the WBG should recognize and encourage this.
136. IEG has achieved this standing in the international evaluation community through the excellence of its work but also through active dissemination and participation in evaluation events worldwide. For example, an IEG staff member was a keynote speaker at the biennial conference of the European Evaluation Association in June 2022, and other IEG staff chaired and took part in sessions.<sup>107</sup> Such participation reflects IEG’s standing in the global community, but it also shows IEG staff’s efforts to engage in the global discourse. Another example is highlighted in the submission to CODE of the FY23 work program as an achievement:

“The Tokyo N4G [Nutrition for Growth] Summit presented the opportunity for IEG to host a related event on the findings of the Child Undernutrition evaluation. ...The event achieved diverse geographical participation, which was encouraged by promoting the event in French and providing simultaneous translation of discussions.”<sup>108</sup>

137. As a final example of IEG outreach through other institutional platforms, in October 2021, IEG’s director-general joined *Evaluation Headlines* (an online interview series launched by the Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank) and discussed the role of evaluation in moving toward a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.<sup>109</sup> She was joined by Saleha Waseem of Asian

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<sup>106</sup> World Bank Group, *Policy: IEG Mandate*, 3, 5b.

<sup>107</sup> The 14th European Evaluation Society Biennial Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark, June 6–10, 2022.

<sup>108</sup> IEG, “FY 23 Work Program,” 13.

<sup>109</sup> Saleha Waseem, Alison Evans, and Marvin Taylor-Dormond, “Moving towards a Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient Recovery,” October 27, 2021, in *Evaluation Headlines*, produced by the Independent Evaluation Department of Asian Development Bank, video, 13:44.

Development Bank and the former director-general of evaluation at Asian Development Bank. Such participation and many others by IEG staff explain IEG's high visibility in global evaluation circles.

138. IEG has used its website and social media more generally to achieve a prominent presence in the global evaluation discourse. We already noted how its blog posts during COVID-19 were greatly appreciated both within the WBG and by external stakeholders. IEG has also launched a new podcast series, *What Have We Learned?* Conventional data on website views and downloads are also available, but our qualitative assessment, based on our range of interviews, is that these efforts are paying off and confirm that the global evaluation community recognizes IEG as a leader in evaluation.

### IEG's Evaluations of WBG Knowledge Processes and the WBG Strategic Framework for Knowledge

139. IEG's evaluations in general are (or should be) an important source of knowledge generated by WBG operations. The review examined how these evaluations can be better purposed to generate useful knowledge for the WBG. But there are also a few IEG evaluations that look at the WBG's direct knowledge-generating activities. These have included evaluations of knowledge-based activities in country programs, knowledge flow and collaboration after the last major reorganization, and the WBG's convening power.<sup>110</sup> The interview process also made us aware of an evaluation that CODE requested from IEG of the controversial *Doing Business* report of the World Bank, which was also subject to several other reviews.<sup>111</sup> The request from CODE shows its confidence in IEG for assessing important topics that require Board deliberation.
140. The series of IEG evaluations that addresses WBG knowledge products and processes has made its way into WBG management's think-

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<sup>110</sup> World Bank, *Knowledge-Based Country Programs: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group Experience* (Washington, DC: World Bank, July 2013); World Bank, *Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank's New Operating Model* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 2, 2019); World Bank, *The World's Bank: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Global Convening* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 1, 2020).

<sup>111</sup> World Bank, *The Development Effectiveness of the Use of Doing Business Indicators, Fiscal Years 2010–20*. (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 15, 2022).

ing, as shown by the 2021 strategic framework for knowledge.<sup>112</sup> The framework is grounded in three pillars and two cross-cutting issues: “(1) strengthen *systems* for greater prioritization, evaluation, quality control, and effective strategic outreach; (2) strengthen *incentives* at all levels of management and staff for enhanced emphasis on knowledge; and (3) strengthen *human capital* through strong recruitment, clearer career paths, and appropriate training. ...Cutting across all three pillars is a need for an outcome orientation and better metrics of performance, as well as greater exploitation of new technologies and platforms.”<sup>113</sup>

141. The series of evaluations and others (for example, the evaluation of outcome orientation and of the WBG’s self-evaluation systems),<sup>114, 115</sup> referenced in the strategic framework for knowledge are also used in the diagnosis and in developing the argument leading to the framework (see especially the use of IEG evaluations in annex 2 of the report). Interviews conducted as part of this review indicated that IEG had a productive involvement with the WBG team that prepared the strategic knowledge framework, which is then reflected in the document.
142. Management committed to the strategic knowledge framework as part of the 2018 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and IFC capital increase and presented it to the Board in March 2021. After the discussion, at CODE’s request, management developed a table of key actions relating to the three pillars and two cross-cutting issues structuring the framework. Following on from the framework document, these actions help locate IEG’s position in the WBG’s knowledge architecture as perceived by WBG management. We find that IEG appears twice in the table of actions—both times under the first pillar, “Strengthen systems to ensure relevance, quality, and impact” in the subsections “Learning from Projects”:

“The WB [World Bank] will continue to enhance ICR [Implementation Completion and Results Report] and use of CLR [Completion and Learning Review], and associated IEG- validations, to systematically

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<sup>112</sup> World Bank Group, *Knowledge Potential: Strategic Framework*

<sup>113</sup> World Bank Group, *Knowledge Potential: Strategic Framework*, II.

<sup>114</sup> World Bank, *Outcome Orientation Evaluation*.

<sup>115</sup> World Bank, *Behind the Mirror*.

capture lessons learned. ...Establish thematic workshops and specific project-type clinics to synthesize learning for new projects and operationalize evidence for adoption, including via using IEG thematic and synthesis evaluations. ...[At IFC], strengthen learning engagements with IEG and internal review exercises to capture lessons learned through early identification of pathfinder projects. ...[At MIGA], continue, in coordination with IEG, joint Green Bag Lunch seminars to learn from operations.”<sup>116</sup>

143. We note that although IEG provided technical input and contributed evidence from IEG evaluations to the strategic framework for knowledge, collaboration should continue when framing and discussing key actions. IEG has crucial experience across a range of areas, and as the experience with CPEs has shown, close interaction and dialogue on the framework for actions can take place without compromising IEG’s independence.

## Strategies, Themes, and IEG Evaluations

144. In an important 2016 paper, “A Modernized Approach to Presenting Sectoral and Thematic Priorities,” World Bank management examined the two-decades-long practice of preparing Thematic Strategy Papers and proposed “formally discontinuing” them.<sup>117</sup> The argument referenced and relied on a 2012 IEG evaluation of the effectiveness of Sector Strategy Papers (SSPs) as part of a broader evaluation of matrix management.<sup>118</sup> Specifically:

“IEG summarized the SSPs as being of limited operational value. The report highlighted the disconnect between the SSPs’ sectoral strategic priorities and country-specific strategic priorities....SSPs were not found to be useful guides to identifying specific solutions to clients’ development challenges...The IEG report also evaluated SSPs as not cost-effective....The IEG review concluded: ‘The combination of high cost and lengthy preparation of SSPs, and the need to complement

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<sup>116</sup> SecM2021-0083/1, IDA/SecM2021-0083/1, IFC/SecM2021-0059/1, MIGA/SecM2021-0042/1, July 30, 2021.

<sup>117</sup> A Modernized Approach to Presenting Sectoral and Thematic Priorities—Meeting of September 12, 2016 (CODE2016-0052).

<sup>118</sup> IEG, *Matrix System at Work*.

them with additional regional strategies, gives rise to questions about the effectiveness of SSPs as vehicles for setting strategic priorities.”<sup>119</sup>

However, note that IEG did not recommend that they be discontinued but rather “repurposed” to increase their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the formulation of sector strategies was practically suspended.

145. The core focus of a country-based operational model guided by outcome orientation at the country level has intensified the move away from broad corporate, sectoral, and thematic strategies. Certainly, the WBG’s global twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity are corporate objectives meant to guide all operational work, but no specific sector or thematic strategy documents were presented to the Board in recent years except for the gender strategy in 2015 and the strategy for fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) in 2019 (the gender strategy is currently being updated). Among the very few global perspectives that bear some similarity to the old strategy papers but are not defined as strategies are the Climate Action Plan and the strategic framework for knowledge.<sup>120</sup> For the strategic framework for knowledge, the label “strategic framework” rather than “strategy” is significant, as was made clear during our interviews. It is not clear to us if this differentiation has any effect on the Board’s role in endorsing or providing guidance in a framework versus a strategy.

146. WBG sector and thematic strategies once provided a framework for organizing IEG evaluations with a broad perspective. Few such strategies that now exist continue to provide an entry point, as exemplified by the FCV evaluation or the Mid-Term Review of the gender strategy.<sup>121</sup> A reading of these two evaluations shows that IEG is bringing a country-level perspective in its diagnostics and recommendations, thereby addressing management’s concern that these broad thematic evaluations run the risk of being divorced from the WBG’s country engagement model. Perhaps for this reason, there appears to be a

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<sup>119</sup> CODE2016-0052, September 12, 2016, 4.

<sup>120</sup> World Bank Group, *Climate Change Action Plan 2021–2025: Supporting Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2021); World Bank Group, *Knowledge Potential: Strategic Framework*.

<sup>121</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Engagement in Situations of Conflict: An Evaluation of FY10–20 Experience* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 3, 2021); World Bank, *World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review* (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 8, 2021).

higher degree of agreement and receptivity, as shown in management responses to these two evaluations.

147. However, because only a few WBG-wide global strategies for sectors or themes exist, two related questions arise. First, how can the Board define an overall global perspective on the WBG's operations, and how can CODE fulfill its role and responsibility of providing guidance on the WBG's strategic issues? Second (and critical from the perspective of this external review), how should IEG structure the selection of its sector and thematic evaluations? The FY23 IEG work program illustrates the process that has been under way recently. IEG identified six work streams to guide its selection and defined its theory of change for each stream: gender; FCV; Mobilizing Finance for Development; human capital; climate change and environmental sustainability; and jobs, growth, and shared prosperity. There are three cross-cutting themes: governance and institutions, WBG corporate effectiveness, and increased and balanced country focus. Most of these can be easily mapped into the previous sectors and subsectors and into the current Global Practices, which are a key part of the World Bank's matrix structure. Within this framework, for FY23, IEG proposes thematic evaluations on private sector participation in climate action, learning crisis, financial inclusion, and universal digital inclusion and usage. To illustrate further, gender strategy, blue economy, and jobs were among the evaluations IEG proposed for FY24.<sup>122</sup>
148. Our interviews illustrated and clarified World Bank management's concerns about such major sectoral and thematic evaluations, which account for about 25 percent of IEG's budget, and these concerns are no different from those that led to World Bank management's proposal to discontinue Sector Strategy Papers in the first place. In summary, the argument is that although each sector and thematic evaluation can reveal issues for that sector or theme, it cannot identify the trade-offs that a country program will have to face across sectors, and it cannot guide the WBG's central focus on outcome orientation at the country level. Furthermore, such evaluations typically result in suggesting more interventions, actions, and resources for the sector being evaluated. Management remains concerned that IEG's analytical results

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<sup>122</sup> It is interesting to observe in this context that the MARs are structured around broad strategic objectives that IEG defined in its work program, and that the first chapter of the MAR published in 2022 is titled, "Learning Lessons from Past Evaluations to Shape Future Strategic Direction."

and recommendations— endorsed by CODE—expand the WBG agenda instead of consolidating a strategic focus, which reflects the WBG’s actual capacity and a realistic division of responsibilities with other development partners. A lack of country focus compounds this further.

149. However, the WBG is a global institution with corporate priorities that cut across individual country programs. It also has spheres of engagement that are not country based. It appears to this panel that the Board is interested in getting an overall perspective on key sectoral and global themes in development and is asking for a sense of the WBG’s global approach and convener role in these issues. This is particularly important because many global challenges emerge quickly, affecting the World Bank’s country operations but also requiring the WBG to provide inputs—as a knowledge bank—on these matters to the global discourse. SSPs and broad thematic strategies used to have this role, but they are no more or are very rare. It seems remarkable to us that this space for Board consideration and guidance is greatly diminished. Without it, IEG is filling the void by producing major sector and thematic evaluations. Discussions of these evaluations appear to be playing the role of discussions of strategy. And yet, these evaluations create tensions with management because, it is argued, they do not fit with the World Bank’s country engagement model, even though they can be managed to some extent, as seen in the interactions between IEG and WBG management in the FCV and the gender evaluations. The differing perspectives on major thematic and sectoral evaluations need to be discussed, with expectations clarified through an open exchange among the three parties on the pros and cons of the current approach.
150. A final issue on major evaluations that needs to be managed has emerged in recent years. The Board has expressed that it wants and needs to have an early read and assessment of major initiatives.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Early-stage assessments include: World Bank, *Program-for-Results: An Early-Stage Assessment of the Process and Effects of a New Lending Instrument* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 16, 2016); World Bank, *World Bank Group Country Engagement: An Early-Stage Assessment of the Systematic Country Diagnostic and Country Partnership Framework Process and Implementation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, April 17, 2017); World Bank, *Approach Paper: COVID-19 Response to Save Lives*; World Bank, *Approach Paper: Evaluation of the World Bank Group’s Early Response in Addressing the Economic Implications of COVID-19* (Washington, DC: World Bank, October 22, 2021); World Bank, *The International Development Association’s Sustainable Finance Policy: An Early-Stage Evaluation* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 10, 2021); World Bank, *The World Bank Group’s Experience with the IDA Private Sector Window: An Early-Stage Assessment* (Washington, DC: World Bank, July 8, 2021).

The WBG's greatly expanded activities and resource use during the COVID-19 crisis sharpened this tendency, as exemplified in the call to evaluate the WBG's response to the COVID-19 crisis at a point when the crisis has barely subsided. The issue raised is of course the nature of an evaluation so early in the process that the outcomes themselves are not fully in view. There is an ongoing debate in standard ex post evaluation of projects or country programs about whether these evaluations are completed too late to be useful in a rapidly changing environment, the answer to this being that history always has lessons if analyzed and interpreted properly. But now the opposite concern is raised: whether an evaluation can be too early to be useful. Instead, the concern is that of necessity, it becomes an evaluation of the process itself—without the information provided by the outcomes of the process, which it is too early to gauge. As one head of evaluation for an MDB noted, “This is more like assessing quality at entry rather than a proper evaluation.”

The comment also illustrates a general finding in our interviews: that the development community generally is facing this issue.

151. Is there a sweet spot between an evaluation conducted too soon or one done too late? We suggest that the right way to think about this is to realize that evaluation will be very different depending on when it is conducted. The expectations of what can be learned and the appropriate methods to be used should necessarily be very different. A problem would arise if expectations from one end are applied to the other or if methods relevant in an ex post frame are applied to a time frame when the process has not yet concluded. We suggest careful monitoring of early-stage evaluations that IEG is currently launching, along with thought and further experimentation on whether and how a conventional ex post evaluation framework can best be applied to evaluations very early in the project or intervention cycle. An IEG self-assessment would be a useful input, in time.

## Major Findings and Recommendations for Knowledge and Strategies

152. Major findings:

1. Accountability is a crucial component of evaluation and generates knowledge for the Board in its oversight and

supervisory functions, but there has to be a balance between accountability and generating knowledge in the sense of learning about what works in development.

2. Generating knowledge about development through major and thematic evaluations requires excellence in methodology and deep knowledge of the sectors and themes being evaluated. IEG is striving—with success—to be at the frontiers of evaluation methodology. It also needs to ensure that the technical knowledge it brings to the table matches the world’s leading specialist expertise present in the World Bank on a range of issues.
3. It is not sufficient to generate knowledge; users must assimilate and internalize this knowledge. IEG has made great strides in engaging with users throughout the evaluation cycle, both in formulating evaluation questions through early consultations and in disseminating the findings through online, social media, and in-person channels. But users also require time and bandwidth to absorb knowledge, and it is not clear that a sufficient time budget is allocated to World Bank staff for this purpose. Timing is also crucial—if the evaluation is tied to a strategic discussion, WBG management is bound to pay more attention and translate the knowledge in the form of staff guidance.
4. The global evaluation community recognizes IEG as a leader and a standard setter.
5. Impact evaluation has expanded significantly in the World Bank, but the complementarity and synergy between impact evaluation and IEG’s work remains underused.
6. IEG’s major corporate, sector, and thematic evaluations are filling a gap left by the discontinuation of SSPs and thematic strategies. The evaluations provide the Board with an entry point for oversight on broad global themes. But there is a tension between the recommendations of sector and thematic global evaluations and management’s country- focused outcome orientation.
7. The Board’s increasing calls for early-stage evaluations of global and corporate issues raises the question of the appropriateness

of an evaluation model based on conventional ex post methods and perspectives.

153. Recommendations:

1. IEG should continue and intensify its engagement with World Bank staff throughout the evaluation cycle.
2. IEG should continue to invest in its methodological, technical, and sectoral excellence and in its engagement with the global evaluation arena to maintain its role as a leader in evaluation.
3. The WBG should look carefully at the time needed for staff to properly absorb the learning from evaluations and budget for this accordingly.
4. WBG management and IEG should communicate more on impact evaluation and build bridges to explore the synergies between the different streams of evaluation.
5. Management and IEG, under the Board's guidance, should work together and ensure that thematic evaluations provide accountability and learning from global perspectives, combined with country-level operational insights, in an outcome-orientation framework.
6. The time is ripe to assess how the WBG can best learn from IEG's work on critical global issues. CODE should discuss with management and IEG how this learning can be most effective, whether by reviewing the role of broad thematic strategies in light of the recent experience of the gender and the FCV strategies or through other approaches.
7. The Board should lead a dialogue on the possible mismatch between the growing demands for early-stage evaluations and methodologies based on conventional ex post approaches to evaluation.

# SECTION F:

## IEG AND EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

154. This section of the report discusses how IEG has promoted ECD in client countries; describes the major strategies adopted in the period under review; and questions the value of the investments, the nature of its commitments, and the results achieved to date.
155. “Capacity development is the process by which individuals, groups, and organizations improve their ability to perform their functions and achieve desired results over time.”<sup>124</sup> An organic process of change that involves experimentation and learning, capacity development is a requirement of all organizations and is particularly critical in development to ensure the appropriate translation of development intentions through activities into results.

### Why Evaluation Capacity Development?

156. ECD is important in the context of international development for at least three reasons: for ensuring sustainability of results, to manage institutional and organizational change for dealing with innovations in tools and techniques, and in response to the politics of development. ECD is expected to improve the abilities of individuals, groups, and organizations to undertake and implement development interventions. With appropriate skills and competencies in ECD and with adequate M&E, the successes and failures of development projects, policies, and programs will be better understood, and this understanding would translate into improved development practices.
157. Development assistance has not been as effective as expected for several reasons, inadequate monitoring and evaluation among them. ECD is now considered to be at the heart of development efforts and a critical ingredient for success. The 2015 external review recommended that

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<sup>124</sup> Douglas Horton, *Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Capacity Development*, ISNAR Briefing Paper 50, July 2002, 1.

IEG's work be "broadened to build M&E capacity in client countries, in partnership with the WBG, other MDBs, development organizations, and the countries themselves."<sup>125</sup> The IEG mandate was revised in 2018, after the Board approved the 2015 external review's recommendations. The new mandate defined IEG's responsibility for "the assessment of the relevance, efficacy, and efficiency of World Bank Group operational policies, programs and activities, and their contribution to development effectiveness."<sup>126</sup> The new policy identified IEG's functions as follows:

- Carrying out all independent evaluation work and appraisal of other evaluation systems and methods, including self-evaluation methodologies and results
- Identifying, disseminating, and promoting evaluation findings and lessons to help the WBG achieve its goals
- Encouraging and assisting member countries to build M&E capacities and to establish effective evaluation systems
- Foster the international harmonization of evaluation practices, in collaboration with development partners.

Two of these functions are directly related to supporting ECD efforts in member countries and internationally. Many of our interview respondents recognized the importance of evaluation capacity building and of IEG's contributions in this domain, although some expressed reservations about the sustainability and funding arrangements of two of the initiatives: CLEAR and the current GEI initiative.

158. IEG's theory of change summarizes its role, responsibilities, and to a lesser extent, its modes of operation for promoting evaluation capacity in client countries. The latter postulates that the association of local stakeholders to IEG evaluations will strengthen their competence to design, conduct, and use evaluations in assessing WBG interventions and other development initiatives. This should result in enhanced relevance and effectiveness of

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<sup>125</sup> IEP, *External Review*, 40.

<sup>126</sup> World Bank Group, *Policy: IEG Mandate*, 2.

institutions and programs.<sup>127</sup> This theory of change appears adequate except for the identification of critical contextual elements. The expected results depend on an unstated critical assumption: that evaluations will be used by client countries and will strengthen relevance and effectiveness of WBG interventions. Unfortunately, the current nature and pattern of incentives do not support that assumption, and the use of IEG evaluations in client countries remains weak and uneven.

## Evaluation of Capacity Building in Client Countries

159. IEG has deployed three mechanisms for ECD in client countries: providing evaluation training, engaging local and national researchers and evaluators, and supporting the development of clients' evaluation systems.<sup>128</sup> In the last two decades, these strategies have been implemented through three distinct but thematically connected programs: IPDET, CLEAR, and GEI.

### The International Program for Development Evaluation Training

160. IPDET was launched in 2001 and is now in its second phase. It emphasizes individual training, which is the first of three IEG ECD strategies. Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, hosted IPDET in its first phase and rose to global prominence with its leading executive evaluation training program. It was planned as an on-site experience at a time when the global landscape for such training was relatively free and open, with very few competitors. A 2015 strategic review of IPDET reported that it “has had a great deal of success, growing substantially since its inception, and enjoying high regard from many in the field.”<sup>129</sup> IPDET welcomed more than 3,500 participants from 125 countries in its first 15 years,<sup>130</sup> and in 2022, the number is said to be about 4,000, according to our stakeholder interviews. However, this number pales in comparison to the scarcity of evaluation practitioners and professionals in the developing world.

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<sup>127</sup> IEG, “Summary Theory of Change,” World Bank, Washington, DC, July 2021, 1.

<sup>128</sup> World Bank, *Evaluation Principles*.

<sup>129</sup> Tessie Catsambas and Beeta Tahmassebi, *IPDET Strategic Review, Abridged Public Version* (Rockville, MD: EnCompass, July, 2016).

<sup>130</sup> Catsambas and Tahmassebi, *IPDET Strategic Review, Abridged Public Version*, 1.

161. In 2017, the long-term IPDET co-implementer Carleton University disengaged from the partnership. The two-institutions consortium of the Center for Evaluation in Germany and the University of Bern, Switzerland, began hosting the program in 2018. This second phase revised the governance structure and curriculum, adding new courses such as cultural sensitivity in evaluation and gender responsive evaluation. The 2015 IPDET review urged the new partners to ensure “increased rigor; more varied, creative, and tailored offerings; south-centered presence; and prestigious, south-friendly leadership.”<sup>131</sup> Although the request to locate IPDET in a South-based institution did not materialize, the program is cognizant of the growing demand for evaluation of development skills and competencies and is already responding to it.
162. The École Nationale d’Administration Publique in Quebec has hosted the French language equivalent for IPDET (PIFED) since 2011. In addition to its trainings, it has recently launched TAQYEEM, an evaluation training program in Arabic for North Africa and the Middle East and North Africa Region. Both PIFED and École Nationale d’Administration Publique are now GEI implementing partners and are important anchors for executive evaluation training.
163. The global development evaluation environment is changing rapidly and has many more actors, new methods, and tools. Under these circumstances, IPDET will need to work hard to maintain its leadership. The consortium’s new role as a GEI implementing partner will ensure financial resources and strengthen its position. However, it is important to encourage and support attendance from developing countries to guarantee the training program’s diversity, equity, and enrichment.

### The Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results

164. The limitations of IPDET’s individual evaluation trainings became evident after the initiative’s first decade because the successes achieved in training specialists were not being transmitted to national institutions. As a response, IEG launched the CLEAR initiative in 2010 to promote institutionally grounded, locally driven, and locally owned ECD efforts.<sup>132</sup> Currently, there are six CLEAR Centers and two affiliat-

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<sup>131</sup> Catsambas and Tahmassebi, *IPDET Strategic Review, Abridged Public Version*, 20.

<sup>132</sup> Maurya West Meiers, “The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank Group: Influences on Evaluation Structures and Practices Globally and in the Americas,” in *The Insti-*

ed ones embedded in carefully selected universities and think tanks in Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal, and South Africa. This integration into local institutions is a source of both strength and tension because the CLEAR Centers must balance their responsibilities to the universities in which they are embedded and their association with the WBG.

165. Furthermore, although the universities (which are IEG grantees) pay staff salaries, the CLEAR Centers' financial future is still uncertain. Many of the centers' grants have already expired, and others will expire by December 2023, making the centers financially unstable, and they cannot be compensated sufficiently through consultancies or by offering services to governments. The positive note in this context is that the centers have now become GEI implementing partners. As partners, they receive grants from the GEI trust fund. There is, however, no guarantee that the grants alone will make the centers financially sustainable.
166. The CLEAR Centers' method of operation is fundamentally different from IPDET's. In addition to providing individual skills enhancement and training, the centers focus on institutions and national M&E systems. They seek to understand specific evaluation environments and strengthen national cultures of evidence-based decision-making. The centers are regionally differentiated and offer training, technical assistance, advisory services, mentoring, and support for knowledge production and sharing. Because their perspectives are national, regional, and linguistically allocated (each center responds to a cluster of countries in a region), none are exactly alike, even though they pursue similar goals and offer similar services. The centers build their actions according to local contexts and identified needs, while working with governments through ministries, departments, and agencies.
167. Moreover, the CLEAR Centers implement commendable initiatives. For example, the Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan provides customized training for more than 5,000 civil society organizations and brings its expertise in qualitative research to governments. In India, CLEAR South Asia provides customized and cross-subsidized training to governments and with their host, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty

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*tutionalisation of Evaluation in the Americas*, eds. Reinhard Stockmann, Wolfgang Meyer, and Laszlo Szentmarjay (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), Chapter 15.

Action Lab, supported the Tamil Nadu government in establishing an innovation fund for research and M&E. The CLEAR Center in Mexico designed and implemented the International Fund for Agricultural Development’s Program in Rural Monitoring and Evaluation for rural M&E. In Brazil, the Clear Center for Brazil and Lusophone Africa works closely with the country’s M&E network. Similarly, CLEAR Anglophone Africa has made co-creation, co-production, and responsiveness to local and national contexts a central pillar of its work and is committed to amplifying voices and actions of evaluators through its gLOCAL events held in collaboration with GEI. CLEAR Anglophone Africa, thanks to its openness to local realities, is working to decolonize evaluation practice and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.<sup>133</sup>

168. CLEAR Centers are making the transition to GEI implementing partners and are bringing their lessons and insights. Our interviews with key stakeholders found that the centers have supported and contributed to raising awareness and demand for the development of national capacities, structures, and policies across several countries. In addition to enhanced demand for evaluation, interview respondents reported that evaluation capacities are no longer in short supply within developing countries, as often presumed. To quote one respondent, “There is now robust evaluation capacity in the South.” The presence of these capacities suggests that there are now local actors steeped in the national and regional languages, cultures, and contexts of at least some client countries. We hope that IEG will use this growing local capacity resource within client countries in its evaluation practice.

## The Global Evaluation Initiative

169. After more than 20 years of promoting evaluation through IPDET and CLEAR, IEG combined its experience and knowledge into creating the GEI, which incorporates both of these earlier programs as implementing partners. “The Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) is a global partnership that is committed to supporting countries to develop monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and capacities. The underpinning objectives are to promote the effective use of evidence in public decision-making, enhance accountability, and achieve better development results in line with national strategies, and, where relevant, global

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<sup>133</sup> Currently, CLEAR Anglophone Africa is supporting the publication of a volume of *African Journal on Evaluation* on decolonizing evaluation.

instruments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, the GEI works with regional and local partner institutions and responds to increasing demands from national governments and the international community to strengthen national M&E systems and enhance the use of evidence in policy making.”<sup>134</sup> Like CLEAR before its integration into GEI, the GEI is financed mainly through a multido-nor trust fund, which currently receives contributions from IEG, nine bilateral donors,<sup>135</sup> one MDB, and two United Nations agencies.<sup>136</sup>

170. The GEI’s purpose is to strengthen governance and accountability systems at the country level through the generation and use of evidence. In the words of one interviewee, the GEI “puts the country government in the driving seat.” The GEI is on a mission to change the fragmentation of previous donor-financed ECD initiatives and bring ECD to scale. GEI is considered the largest global program for promoting evaluation capacities in developing countries. Demand for M&E services has grown and with it the potential contribution evaluation can make to promote governance and development outcomes in low-income countries.
171. GEI is an ambitious plan for the current donor partners, who have ensured an initial budget of about \$25 million for four years. In March 2022, they had disbursed approximately \$10 million from a total commitment of \$15 million.<sup>137</sup> Although the effort is substantial, the available resources look modest compared with the task.
172. According to its theory of change,<sup>138</sup> the GEI brings innovation into IEG through the following four lines of work:
  - Develop a culture of evidence-informed decision-making in developing countries

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<sup>134</sup> Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), *MESA: Diagnostic Tool for a Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis*. (Washington, DC: GEI Guidance Note, February 2022), 11.

<sup>135</sup> Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland.

<sup>136</sup> The Inter-American Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the United Nations Development Programme.

<sup>137</sup> See IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” 24.

<sup>138</sup> IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” 47.

- Strengthen a cadre of evaluators, M&E specialists, and other evaluation stakeholders in developing countries
  - Generate M&E knowledge
  - Share M&E knowledge
173. In addition, GEI focuses particularly on the four cross-cutting themes of youth; gender and inclusion; climate change and the environment; and FCV to ensure that these issues are addressed in the development of national evaluation strategies and the consolidation of their practices. The initiative works with the entities responsible for government M&E systems or with institutions that conduct M&E activities. These include ministries of planning and finance; presidents' and prime ministers' offices. Although GEI is only in its second year, the initiative developed a promising diagnostic tool for M&E systems analysis (Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis Tool) as an initial client country engagement vehicle in the WBG tradition. At the country level, the tool brings the benefit of diagnostics to M&E. Its process ensures country collaboration and ownership with an output that forms a legitimate and valuable baseline of national M&E practice and systems.
174. IEG's decades-long engagement in ECD through IPDET and the CLEAR initiatives has revealed some critical realities about ECD, which GEI is preparing to improve through targeting governments and focusing on national M&E ecosystems. In choosing to work mainly but not exclusively with governments, GEI has taken the more difficult route to ECD. Government bureaucracies are slow to change. By choosing this approach, GEI has committed itself to the long haul and to ensuring local ownership. A stronger association with evaluation civil society organizations such as Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluations and private sector agents would seem a logical extension of this effort.
175. Looking ahead, we see three important issues for GEI: financial sustainability, managing its relationship with implementing partners, and finding its independent space between the country demands and the WBG's operations. Financial sustainability is a major determinant of program continuity. Even though the GEI's financial plan hinges on the multidonor trust fund that initiated it, GEI is challenged to ensure the initiative's financial sustainability by expanding the number of its trust

fund contributors and by having client countries pay for the CLEAR centers' M&E services, or through securing grants for GEI.

176. For GEI to succeed, it needs to work hard at building relationships. Collaboration and working cooperatively is notoriously difficult among the many partners the GEI is pulling together (including the Partnership Council, IPDET, CLEAR Centers, and governments). Activities can stagnate because of different work processes and procedures among partnership council members or implementing partners. Similarly, navigating the spaces between countries and WBG policies and operations demands sensitivity, diplomacy, and tenacity.

### IEG ECD-Specific Adaptations and Characterization in Client Country Evaluations

177. IEG adapted its evaluation practice very quickly during the COVID-19 crisis, and this was also true for its ECD training methods and strategies. Training and workshops migrated online, and many of the offerings report increased numbers of participants, especially among women. The extent to which countries' level of technological capabilities influenced the intensity of participation is unclear, but it is our opinion that this would follow the availability of proper infrastructure within countries. We found the GEI's new FCV strategy and approach, which aim to meet FCV countries' specific ECD needs, positive. GEI plans to roll out the new FCV approach in the first quarter of FY23.<sup>139</sup>
178. The practice of IEG evaluations in client countries does not often strengthen skills and competencies among partners and project implementers. To quote some respondents, "IEG does not outsource evaluations" and "doesn't do participatory evaluations." Similarly, real-time evaluation and knowledge generation are not part of traditional IEG evaluation practices; the common practice is predominantly to conduct ex post evaluations. However, two examples of recent practices suggest that some change is occurring. First, the new CPEs are slowly altering the nature of country-level engagements. Second, some of IEG's thematic evaluations have included the use of local expertise. For example, IEG's natural resource degradation evaluation,<sup>140</sup> which

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<sup>139</sup> IEG (Independent Evaluation Group). "IEG Quarterly Report to CODE FY22 Quarter 3." IEG, 2022.

<sup>140</sup> World Bank, *Resource Degradation and Vulnerability Nexus*.

reportedly engaged local researchers, was catalytic, according to the evaluator. “If you’re not working with people locally, then you are not understanding the context in which these activities are grounded. ... There is no other way to do it.” Although these changes are not yet large or significant, the breadth and depth of GEI’s ECD approach suggest that innovation in this direction could be imminent. The assumption here is that IEG is open to change in its current evaluation practice and culture through learning from the practices of others, such as its own “satellite” programs. While not advocating for the outsourcing of evaluations, and acknowledging the evaluation expertise in IEG, experimentation and new ideas generated from outside (for example, in client countries) are legitimate and potential sources of new knowledge. Awareness of and engaging with these new ideas could enhance the outcome orientation in the WBG, especially through the contemporary CPEs. The addition of new practices enhances learning for IEG and learning through evaluations for client country representatives.

179. Involving country representatives, program partners, and local M&E experts in the evaluations of WBG activities is still limited. The current percentage of local consultants hired in 2022 is reported to be 11 percent, with a three-year average of 12 percent.<sup>141</sup> Because of this practice, the opportunities for learning that many evaluations provide become lost—and the loss is mutual, affecting both the excluded local professionals and an IEG distant from field realities and local evaluation knowledge. The COVID-19 pandemic forced IEG to use more local expertise to conduct its activities, and IEG should continue to pursue this experience for at least three reasons: it strengthens local capacities and skills, deepens IEG’s contextual knowledge, and improves the usability of its evaluations.<sup>142</sup> The current global engagement with issues of democratizing knowledge, decolonizing evaluation practice, and use of local and indigenous knowledge make it imperative for IEG to move in this direction.

## Major Findings and Recommendations on Evaluation Capacity Development

180. Major findings:

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<sup>141</sup> See IEG, “FY23 Work Program,” 55.

<sup>142</sup> Independent experts we interviewed reported limited use of and familiarity with IEG reports.

1. Learning is critical for transforming the WBG into a solutions bank. For this to happen, localization, indigenous knowledge, and endogenous knowledge must complement and influence the abundantly available and internal World Bank evaluation knowledge.
2. Country expertise in IEG evaluations proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic and was deployed to great mutual benefit. This shows the value and critical importance of engaging and involving local evaluation practitioners and professionals in IEG's work. Although not currently practiced widely, using country experts will ensure co-creation and co-production, which will support and elevate learning through evaluations. Learning from doing encourages utilization.
3. Valuable learning and lessons from IPDET and CLEAR have been integrated into the GEI. They provide IEG with innovation opportunities. GEI nurtures and manages new relationships among partner countries and many donors.
4. Donors seldom perceive ECD as a priority, and it does not receive substantial financial support. This is also true for IEG's ECD initiatives. CLEAR Centers have struggled financially, and GEI is likely to experience similar challenges.
5. GEI, in its two years of existence, has brought together institutions and individuals who are able to transform evaluation capacity building, the generation of evidence from evaluations, and its use in MDBs and client countries. The success achieved by IPDET and some of the CLEAR centers is encouraging for the eventual success of the GEI.

181. Recommendations:

1. The WBG needs to be more open and encourage learning from sources other than itself. Local experts should be substantially involved in evaluation processes. Co-creation should become a common approach.
2. IEG recruitment of evaluation experts in client countries should become common practice. It should be piloted in conducting

CPEs. GEI should develop a database of local, national and regional evaluation experts, practitioners, and researchers to support this effort.

3. IEG should encourage the development of a financial sustainability plan for GEI and its implementing partners as a matter of urgency.
4. The pool of GEI development partners (that is, council members) should be expanded to ensure that planned activities are conducted. The initiative should continue to include IPDET and the CLEAR centers and manage partners carefully to support GEI's continued growth.
5. The WBG should invest additional resources in the development of evaluation capacity and provide resources to encourage, support, and deepen evaluation use through learning.

# OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

182. As noted in the beginning of this report, rather than covering all possible issues with a limited investigation of a broad range of topics, this review adopted the strategy of conducting deep dives into five areas that are timely but also reveal general and longer-term issues in a forward-looking frame. Each of the five deep dives generated specific findings and recommendations that are of interest in themselves, but these findings and recommendations also have general implications. The report's final section draws out overall recommendations, which overlap with some of the section-specific recommendations, but it also suggests new overarching enhancements to the activity of CODE, management, and IEG.

## CODE should strengthen its capacity to steer the WBG evaluation system

183. CODE faces a difficult task in prioritizing its work, given its broad mandate and the need to manage an ambitious corporate agenda and IEG work program.<sup>143</sup> Trade-offs are not immediately apparent, and CODE's ability to apply a selectivity filter to its activities is hampered further by the need to address unexpected events that are time sensitive and require the committee's urgent attention. Additionally, the two-year mandate of the CODE chair and recurrent changes in committee composition are significant obstacles to ensuring the work program's continuity and to holding WBG management and IEG accountable for delivering on their commitments beyond the committee's term. In this context, we believe there is scope to strengthen CODE's governance and oversight by institutionalizing innovations that were adopted in the recent years, such as the introduction of a handover note from one CODE chair to the next, or the organization of retreats that help to set goals and priorities for the committee's activities. In this regard, the committee could consider adopting the following practices:

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<sup>143</sup> World Bank Group, "Terms of Reference of the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE)," World Bank Group, Washington, DC, July 15, 2009, Annex X.

- The committee would benefit from agreeing on a limited number of objectives it wants to achieve during its two-year tenure, while allowing flexibility. These priorities would shape CODE’s agenda and identify which IEG products and proposals it should discuss and which could be tacitly accepted if no objection arises.
- The outgoing CODE should critically review its achievements and formulate concrete recommendations to the incoming committee, to ensure continuity despite changes in Board and committee composition.
- CODE could also achieve continuity by the outgoing chair preparing a hand-over note from to the new chairperson that stresses key decisions the committee made and commitments assumed by IEG and WBG management in the previous two years. The CODE Secretariat can assist the committee in formulating priorities by transmitting its institutional knowledge of priorities, debates, and commitments agreed by previous committees.
- The Committee, with support of the CODE Secretariat, could organize a retreat to sharpen CODE’s work program and support the Board in focusing on the most essential development effectiveness issues by (i) taking stock of the development context and of the WBG’s strategic directions; (ii) identifying key issues for the WBG’s policies, business models, and choice of instruments; (iii) defining IEG contributions in this context; and (iv) reaching an understanding among committee members, WBG management, and IEG on CODE priorities for the ongoing term.

### **Management should ensure visibility and explicitly allocate resources to the learning dimension of evaluations**

184. The WBG independent evaluation system functions under the assumption that the accountability and learning finalities that IEG pursues can be attained simultaneously. We did not find this to be the case. Though remaining logically connected in all evaluations, the two objectives require distinct processes and deserve specific attention. Currently, transparency and governance are satisfactory only in relation to the accountability objective. Learning deserves more visibility and dedicated resources, as stressed by the following recommendations:

- The WBG should look carefully at the time needed for WBG staff to properly absorb the learning from evaluations and budget for this accordingly. CODE should consider this information when providing guidance on IEG’s work program and budget.
- The approach papers devoted to major IEG evaluations should present with clarity the learning results agreed with management and the resources the WBG will allocate to the task.
- CODE, in line with its mandate, should periodically assess methods and effectiveness of the self-evaluation and validation systems adopted by the World Bank, IFC, and MIGA and verify that they provide honest findings and learning opportunities.<sup>144</sup>
- Few major evaluations of high corporate significance should pursue learning objectives as a priority. Their design and implementation will reflect that finality. For this purpose, it is imperative that mid-level operational managers and staff be closely involved in all stages of the analysis and in the formulation of its conclusions, while safeguarding IEG’s independence.
- CODE should encourage informal discussions of evaluation results conducive to learning, consensus building, and the search of innovative solutions rooted in staff experiences.

### IFC and MIGA should improve their collaboration with IEG and promote an evaluation culture

185. In IFC and MIGA, with exceptions, self-evaluations and IEG inquiries are endured more than they are embraced. Independent evaluations are often seen as a burden, and staff disputes their merits. Critical results of major evaluations, especially those tackling core IFC and MIGA mandates, are easily contested. Senior management does not pay sufficient attention to the absorption of evaluation findings by mid-level managers and operational units. It is essential for IFC’s and MIGA’s development mandates that IEG, IFC, and MIGA—at the high-

<sup>144</sup> As stated in World Bank Group, “CODE Terms of Reference,” annex C, paragraph 2.1.3. Until 2013, IEG produced the “Biannual Report on Operations Evaluation” that analyzed these issues in depth. We do not call for the resumption of such a formal and costly exercise but firmly believe that a well-prepared seminar for CODE on this matter—with contributions by IEG and management—would provide enough oversight and impulses for the self-evaluation systems to deliver meaningful results and evolve as needed.

est levels— address these fundamental problems jointly. IEG could facilitate this evolution by recruiting more staff with recent private sector exposure, by adapting expectations to evolving markets conditions, and by demonstrating willingness to adapt its methods to outcome-oriented investment policies. The implementation of the following recommendations could progressively improve the situation and promote a culture of evaluation:

- **IFC and MIGA senior management must recognize that independent evaluation inquiries and products are essential for fulfilling their organizations’ missions.** IEG will support this new attitude by showing more understanding for operational needs and by focusing on the learning potential of its contributions.
- IEG, IFC, and MIGA must urgently develop a self-evaluation and validation system that builds on AIMM and IMPACT while maintaining useful components of XPSR and PER.
- IEG and IFC should aim to conduct at least two joint learning engagements per year, initiated by an operational unit’s demand for learning. These initiatives would be incorporated in the yearly IEG work programs approved by CODE.
- MIGA should continue to ensure engaged and informal discussions of the findings generated by the independent evaluation of its projects with the participation of senior managers.

### **The Board should define IEG’s role in assessing the WBG’s strategic shifts and its responses to crises**

186. For the past three years, faced with a major global crisis and its supervision role hampered by COVID-19-related measures, the Board has repeatedly asked IEG to examine key management decisions and assess ongoing financial and operational processes. This trend, seen in other MDBs, raises questions of IEG legitimacy and competence that should be addressed openly. The following steps are preliminary yet necessary:

- CODE, in consultation with IEG, should determine the contributions that independent evaluation can credibly make in assessing ongoing processes in the absence of tangible implemen-

tation results. In doing so, it should consider the comparative advantages of other accountability or research units active in the WBG when there are no tangible implementation results (for example, Group Internal Audit, the Development Economics Vice Presidency, and DIME).

- CODE needs to consider and address in its decisions the opportunity costs of studies focusing on ongoing processes and their consequence for the medium-term IEG work program.
- CODE should consciously avoid the possible crowding out of fact-based evaluations by limiting time and resources devoted to IEG's products with a short time horizon.

IEG should prepare for the next crisis by developing an argument for an appropriate level of contingency funding and a protocol for prioritizing conventional types of output when not all can be delivered because of crisis demands.

### **The Board should support the movement toward the outcome orientation of WBG strategies and their evaluations**

187. Outcome orientation is progressively shaping WBG country strategies and their evaluations. Approaches, assessment of performance, and WBG collaboration with governments and other partners must evolve further. IEG is called upon to interact more with local stakeholders. The implementation of the following recommendations would support this movement:

- The tension between accountability (which is more easily achieved by targeting outputs and immediate outcomes) and a focus on higher-level, long-term outcomes (which are the hallmark of an outcome orientation) are as much a matter for the Board as for management and IEG. The Board should continue to lead the dialogue on this issue so that it can give guidance on how to address the discernable tensions.
- IEG should have the confidence of Board support when it makes factually based and rigorously documented statements on the institutional quality in a country, although such statements in a publicly accessible evaluation could be sensitive.

- In the absence of WBG strategies in many areas of cross-country relevance, management and IEG, under the Board's guidance, should work together and ensure that major thematic evaluations provide accountability and learning from a global perspective, combined with country-level operational insights, in an outcome orientation framework.
- IEG should take advantage of the successful introduction of the new style CPEs to consolidate the outcome orientation of the World Bank strategies and connect them with the promotion of global public goods.

### IEG should continue promoting evaluation capacity development in developing countries and learn from this engagement

188. IEG has expanded its support to ECD in developing countries since the last external review. It has channeled resources through the GEI and collaborated with bilateral and multilateral development partners. It has relied on a network of diverse institutions, particularly IPDET and the CLEAR Centers. However, there is scope for IEG to do more, including learning and adapting its methodologies through its interactions with a diverse group of people that understand the local realities better and include local knowledge in their own evaluation work. The following recommendations serve this purpose:

- IEG should develop a comprehensive ECD strategy that articulates the responsibilities and accountabilities of IEG, WBG, GEI, and if appropriate, those of other trust fund contributors. IEG should connect GEI capacity-building initiatives with evaluations it conducts in client countries. The role of WBG country offices in this regard should be defined better to establish a transparent, equal, and attractive partnership with local agents of change. It would be useful for this strategy to capture the nature of support for internal ECD that IEG provides to OPCS.
- IEG should develop protocols for engaging local and Southern-based evaluators in its own evaluations and monitor this use at the junior and senior levels of expertise.

- The WBG should learn from different evaluation cultures. IEG should sustain this experience by involving local experts in its work and co-creating at least some of its products.
- IEG, with strong CODE involvement, should promote an international dialogue about the financial sustainability of initiatives promoting development of evaluation capacity in developing countries. This conversation should lead to realistic solutions combining donors' contributions, government involvement, and payment for services provided by the institutions that the GEI presently supports.

# ANNEX I.

## STATEMENT BY ALISON EVANS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, EVALUATION

IEG welcomes the insightful report of the Independent Panel. We thank the Panel for their constructive and transparent approach to conducting the review and for their engagement throughout. We appreciate the clear affirmation that IEG, under CODE's guidance and in interactions with management, has made considerable strides in enhancing our effectiveness since the last external review, especially in the relevance and alignment of our work with WBG strategic priorities, the improved engagement with Management and operational teams across the evaluation cycle and in emphasizing the learning dimensions of our evaluation work. We also welcome the Panel's forward-looking perspective that raises a number of observations and reflections on how we can strengthen our approach and how we can prepare ourselves to be 'fit for the future'.

The report reaffirms the critical importance of a strong working relationship between IEG, CODE and WBG Management and the need to take shared responsibility for the strategic contribution that independent evaluation makes to accountability and learning for development effectiveness. On this critical point, we are pleased to see the Panel's assessment that accountability and learning from IEG evaluations has made significant progress since the last review and that a more engaged approach to enhancing the utility of evaluation is paying off. We also take on board the Panel's assessment that this approach is not yet working equally well across all three institutions of the WBG but would like to assert the importance of shared responsibility in finding the best way forward. We are encouraged by discussions over the last few months with IFC and MIGA on how we together can maximize the full learning potential of IEG's validation and evaluation work.

We note the forward-looking nature of the Review which situates IEG's work in the context of accelerated policy and operational cycles in which the institutions that IEG evaluates must respond early and at scale in unprecedented ways. This context undoubtedly presents new challenges for traditionally ex-post independent evaluation, not only within the WBG but across the

MDB landscape. We note the Panel’s suggestions on how IEG can best position itself in this fast-moving context, many of which we are already engaged on, but would appreciate further guidance on how best we can assist CODE to be more strategically selective; what should IEG consider doing less of, doing more of and, crucially, how IEG can best retain strategic relevance during periods of crisis.

We will seek CODE’s guidance on our response to the Panel’s report, particularly on the priority and urgency of the Panel’s many recommendations. As such it would be helpful to hear from the Panel how IEG should interpret the distinction between the section-specific recommendations and the general recommendations so that we can plan our actions accordingly. In the meantime, this DGE statement identifies a number of areas that we consider important for discussion.

On strengthening CODE’s capacity to steer the WBG evaluation system: we agree with the recommendation that a focused CODE agenda helps to prioritize the discussion of IEG products. Currently the vast majority of CPEs and one or two thematic evaluations each year are dealt with AOB. Further prioritization is always possible, but in taking forward this recommendation we would want an agreement that in pursuing a ‘limited number of objectives’ CODE does not significantly reduce the amount of time it spends engaging with IEG evaluations. To pick up on one of the main findings of the Review, it is vital that the dialogue space between IEG, CODE, and WBG Management remains open and constructive if both the accountability and learning potential of independent evaluation are to be fulfilled. One of these critical dialogue spaces is CODE meetings where evaluations are discussed. These could be complemented with exchanges in other formats aimed at having more interactive discussions. For example, we would also like to see more regular participation by IEG in CODE Retreats as a way to share knowledge from our evaluation work, but also to take more regular soundings on the priorities set by CODE.

On giving more visibility and allocating resources to the learning dimension of evaluations: we wholeheartedly agree with the Panel’s assessment of the learning value of evaluation. We are less clear on how we would design our evaluations differently in order to pursue “learning objectives as a priority”. We also consider that identifying learning results and costing learning time ex-ante would not necessarily be a practical way to achieve more effective uptake of our evaluations. We agree that time is often cited as a constraint to learning. We also note from our existing outreach and dissemination work,

however, that learning happens at different speeds and across a range of different audiences in ways that are not easily predicted ex-ante. On occasion it can take several years for the full learning implications of an evaluation to unfold. Learning also takes place tacitly, in informal and opportunistic ways and we would not want to crowd these out with formal requirements that may seem onerous to our stakeholders across the institutions. We would therefore appreciate further information from the Panel on how they see this recommendation working in practice and whether they have any specific examples that Management and IEG could consider as we give further thought to how best to respond.

Improving collaboration with IFC/MIGA and promote an evaluation culture: we take on board the perspectives of the Panel on the need to further enhance the accountability and learning value of our work with IFC and MIGA. We believe that a good process is already in place with MIGA to embed learning at the project level. We would like further guidance from the Panel on how this good collaboration can be enhanced at the level of thematic evaluations. In relation to IFC, we have recently reset the dialogue on the alignment of the self-evaluation and validation system with AIMM and look forward to taking this forward in the coming months. We continue to experience strong demand for learning engagements/sector highlights within IFC which we believe provides a good foundation for engaging more at the middle-management and operational level. On this and the broader challenge of building an evaluation culture we would welcome further CODE direction and support. We acknowledge the point on staffing and continue to seek recent private sector/DFI experience as part of our strategic staffing plans.

Assessing strategic shifts and WBG's responses to crises: we would welcome a broader discussion on the value contribution of early-stage evaluations. As the Review notes, this is an area of high demand amongst shareholders across the MDB system and we are in touch with our peers to compare experiences of undertaking such assessments. Given the plethora of evaluation methodologies that deal with real time events, we do not believe that the methodological challenges of early-stage assessments are insurmountable, but we do see value in further dialogue with CODE and Management on how best to focus IEG's efforts in this fast-moving operational space. We would appreciate further guidance on striking the right balance between more conventional ex post evaluations and making use of the flexibility and contingency funding that the Panel suggests are important for IEG to remain relevant during times of crisis.

The movement toward outcome orientation: we fully endorse the need to further enhance outcome orientation in IEG’s work and continue to explore methods that can be applied to provide an outcome-orientation lens to our evaluations.

We support the call for continued dialogue at the Board level on the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the WBGs evolving outcome-orientation framework and believe that the IEG evaluation on Outcome Orientation at the Country Level, and Management’s response to it, continue to provide the basis for that dialogue.

Promoting Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) in developing countries and learning from the engagement: in the past few years IEG has significantly ramped up its ECD work through the creation of the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI). While we take note of the Panel’s views on the need to clarify the responsibilities of IEG versus the WBG in ECD, we do not believe developing a comprehensive ECD strategy will add much value at this time. IEG will continue to engage with GEI and its partners to drive

increased client evaluation capacity. GEI will continue to buildout its partnership with national entities and development partners, including World Bank operational teams, as per its mission and strategic plan. IEG commits to continuing our collaboration with OPCS and the RMES community on the internal M&E agenda.

In addition to the recommendations provided by the Panel, one area in which a recommendation might have been helpful is on staffing. While we have invested in both staff rotation and new staff skills, we believe that more can be done to ensure staff skills interchange between the WBG and IEG. Having more staff mobility within a strong framework of independence in IEG, would not only help in ensuring that skills are continually updated and relevant for the work of the WBG, but also send new skills and experience back into the WBG after a period in IEG.

To conclude, IEG appreciates the useful work done by the Panel, and looks forward to engaging with CODE and Management to define joint actions we can take to address the findings and recommendations.

# ANNEX II.

## WB MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. Management thanks the Independent Review Panel for conducting the external review of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and is pleased to provide comments on the report entitled “External Review of the Independent Evaluation Group of The World Bank Group (WBG).” For the WBG, it is critical to have IEG as an independent oversight entity to ensure the credibility and accountability of the institution and its operations and contribute to the learning process to deliver development outcomes. Management welcomes the forward-looking assessment of IEG’s effectiveness in delivering on its mandate, along with a review of implementing these commendations of the last External Review in 2015. Several areas covered in the review are pertinent to ongoing discussions between the Executive Board Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), IEG and Management, and the Review’s insights and recommendations will certainly help advance mutual understanding.
2. **Management appreciates the report’s reaffirmation of the importance of effective working relations between IEG, CODE and WBG Management to ensure that independent evaluation supports the ultimate outcomes the WBG seeks to achieve.** Management welcomes both the recognition of the quality of ongoing dialogue, and the suggested opportunities to deepen this engagement going forward. Early experience has shown that the recent Management Action Record (MAR) reform is serving to advance the institutional learning about development effectiveness. The MAR is an effective way for Management to report on progress in drawing from IEG knowledge to achieve better development results, and for IEG to validate the progress made, reinforcing accountability. Following lessons learned this year, the MAR is also paying more systematic attention to adaptive learning from evaluations, undertaking mid-course corrections as relevant.
3. **Management concurs with the report’s observation about the advancements in the quality and relevance of IEG prod-**

ucts under the guidance of CODE since the last review. Closer collaboration over the years between IEG and Management has led to substantial improvements in the quality and relevance of IEG products and its contribution to strengthening WBG's operational work. Management reiterates herein its appreciation for IEG's inputs for the preparation of the WBG response to the pandemic and the lessons learned through the early-stage evaluations of the Bank COVID response. In this regard, Management welcomes the invitation to "... establish a dialogue and discuss the methodologies and expectations for early-stage evaluations of crises while outcomes are still being generated". If methodologies are not mutually refined, such early-stage evaluations could sit uncomfortably with the focus on outcome orientation, which as the review notes, is a priority for the WBG going forward.

4. **Management is pleased with the recognition of the quality of dialogue between OPCS and IEG to advance the WBG's outcome orientation and welcomes the suggestion to continue to deepen this dialogue.** Management is implementing the Outcome Orientation Roadmap and undertaking new pilots to advance different aspects of this agenda. It concurs with the Review on the importance "... to make the how central in the outcome orientation approach and to use this to evaluate the WBG's own performance in achieving the *what...*". Many aspects of the COVID-19 response, including the unprecedented adaptive management and use of just-in-time knowledge, illustrate progress in this agenda. Management also recognizes the apparent tension between attribution and contribution that are part of this approach, and its implications for accountability. Yet it believes that in the way that Management has adapted the Country Engagement Guidance to enhance the focus on high-level outcomes, both concepts become part of a continuum rather than opposites. Identifying and tracking lower-level objectives through results frameworks attributable to WBG interventions in the short term continues to remain relevant for accountability and transparency when engaging with clients and shareholders.
5. **Management notes the report's recommendations regarding opportunities to advance knowledge and learning from IEG evaluations and will engage with IEG as suggested.** Management concurs with the report's observation that "*...it is not sufficient*

*to generate knowledge; users must assimilate and internalize this knowledge*". Important in this direction is the careful selectivity, prioritization, and sequence of IEG's work program, in a complex delivery context, with multiple crises and increasing client demand, raising the challenge of staff absorption capacity of lessons learned from evaluations. Management also concurs with the report on the importance of timeliness for effective evaluations, and with the recommendation for IEG to continue engaging upstream with staff across the institution. Both aspects were highlighted by Management in the MAR 2022 noting that, *"...now more than ever before, learning from evaluations happens in real time, as operations and programs adapt to shifting realities. As the unfolding crises have required the WBG to deliver with greater agility, Management has observed that the effects of IEG's evaluations often start long before the issuance of the formal report, as evaluation processes shine a light on key issues, spark new ways of thinking, and trigger real time learning and adaptation. The final report and the corresponding response from Management only formalize a process that started long before. In this context, Management has found that IEG's evaluations have the greatest learning potential when their findings are based on recent evidence, and they consider the latest changes in an often fast-shifting context"*. Within the parameters of the Strategic Framework for Knowledge (SFK), and in the context of the MAR reform, Management will discuss with IEG further opportunities to facilitate adaptive learning from evaluations.

6. Finally, Management welcomes the recognition that the Results Measurement and Evidence Stream (RMES) succeeded in establishing *"...an active and vibrant community of practice for M&E staff in operations, Global Practices, and other sections of the WBG, which offers a valued space for connecting and knowledge sharing"*, while pointing that it is striving to better articulate its learning offer. Management believes that given the decentralized and organic ways in which the Bank organizes its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function, RMES has been a flexible vehicle to advance knowledge, disseminate good practices, and maintain results orientation atop operational agendas across the World Bank Group. This has always been the primary objective of the RMES. As part of the Outcome Orientation Roadmap, Management is repositioning RMES to better serve operational staff and to advance the technical understanding of outcome orientation.

# ANNEX III.

## IFC MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

7. IFC Management thanks the Independent Panel for the IEG External Review (“ER”) report and welcomes the opportunity to provide comments. Management is grateful for the constructive engagement with the Panel and their continuous outreach throughout the process of the ER. It is an opportune time to evaluate implementation progress since the 2015 ER and assess topics critical to IEG’s contribution to the WBG’s development effectiveness.
8. IFC Management particularly appreciates the Panel’s dedicated attention to IEG’s evaluation of WBG’s private-sector-oriented activities, in recognition of the growing importance the international community has attributed to the private sector’s role in addressing development challenges. IFC Management strongly agrees with the importance of (self)-evaluation activities; as well as the need to work collaboratively with IEG to design systems that combine both accountability and institutional learning. As the ER highlights, a critical aspect of this work will be to adapt (self-) evaluation and validation approaches to better capture the particularities of private sector activities and to align these with outcome orientation. To that end, IFC Management commits to: (i) redoubling effort to remedy the trust and collaboration deficit by continuing to build a constructive relationship with IEG; (ii) work to define a way forward on methodological misalignments with IEG; and (iii) emphasize the importance of learning from IEG assessments.
9. **Commitment to greater collaboration:** Management agrees with the Panel’s call for greater collaboration between IEG and IFC. Indeed, the relationship has improved significantly over the course of the last few years. The IFC-IEG Corporate Dialogue was instituted as a platform to address issues of mutual concern between the two institutions. This has resulted in a number of break throughs, including an agreement on an initial approach to address the evaluation of IFC projects significantly impacted by COVID-19, and the reform of advisory project evaluation methodology. IFC Management is committed to addressing the identified issues on our side. This will likely take patience

and require both flexibility with respect to the development of new methodological approaches to project-level evaluations and greater consideration of private sector dynamics.

10. **Commitment to (self) evaluation and ownership:** Project-level self-evaluation, especially on the investment side, has been a challenging area of engagement between IFC and IEG. Acknowledging the urgency to find a resolution, Management is pleased to note that the Corporate Dialogue on XPSR<sup>145</sup> Reform has been re-invigorated, and both IEG and IFC commit to concluding this Reform promptly. IEG's Head, Director General, and IFC's Senior Management are championing the Reform, external consultants have been retained to assist in the effort, and a dedicated cross-functional working group is being convened to prepare the proposal. As the ER notes, it is Management's hope to leverage the strengths of current systems and create a relevant, credible, and robust framework paying specific attention to i) both accountability and learning objectives, ii) better integrating the AIMM system with the current XPSR evaluation approach, and iii) efficient use of staff time and effort.
11. **Learning from IEG assessments:** IFC Management agrees with the Panel that the two objectives of accountability and learning require distinct processes and deserve specific attention respectively. IFC notes the Panel's emphasis on recognizing self-evaluation work and communicating the importance of learning moments from thematic and corporate evaluations. Furthermore, IFC appreciates IEG's openness to engage early in the development of thematic evaluations as well as recent efforts to develop tailored learning products. Nonetheless, on both counts, there is room for creating greater clarity and alignment early in the process to maximize the learning opportunity.

## Recommendations

12. Regarding the recommendations, IFC Management acknowledges all those that are addressed to IFC Management specifically or as part of the WBG Management.
13. **Section D Rec 1:** IFC Management agrees with the Panel on the recommendation that IFC and MIGA management *should stress the*

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<sup>145</sup> Expanded Project Supervision Report.

*importance of self-evaluations and their IEG validation for their organizations' credibility and the constant improvement of operations.*

14. **Section D Rec 2:** IFC Management agrees with the Panel on the recommendation *that IFC, MIGA, and IEG should urgently propose to CODE consideration of a new self-evaluation methodology (led by management) and validations methodology for IFC investments and MIGA guarantees (led by IEG), centered on AIMM and IMPACT.* We commit to accelerating the XPSR Reform engagement with IEG. A joint proposal for a new self-evaluation framework for IFC investments will be shared with CODE for consideration once ready.
15. **Section D Rec 3:** IFC Management agrees with the Panel on the recommendation that *the selection of projects to be self-evaluated (and therefore validated by IEG) should consider the learning needs of the organizations involved and not just follow the logic of the approximate rating of a representative portfolio.*
16. **Section D Rec 4:** IFC Management concurs with the Panel on the recommendation *that equity investments should be evaluated at the exit of IFC.* Regarding other investment products, Management agrees with the Panel's proposal that IFC (and MIGA) may suggest at entry a time that would be better suited for measuring the impact of their contributions (in years after their commitment). In addition, we are aligned with Panel's observation in Paragraph 100 that IEG's current methodology overemphasizes the objectives presented in the proposal made to the Board and that the new system should appreciate the actual outcomes achieved.
17. **Section D Rec 5:** IFC Management appreciates and is in agreement with the Panel on their commendation that *major corporate evaluations (such as the recently initiated evaluation of IFC additionality in middle-income countries or the planned evaluation of IFC country diagnostics and strategies under IFC 3.0) should be designed and conducted with clear learning objectives in mind and with full management involvement.* We acknowledge that the recommendation also asks Management to estimate the resources necessary to pursue those objectives and define appropriate processes with IEG for CODE's endorsement.
18. **Section D Rec 6:** IFC Management supports the recommendation issued to CODE that *CODE should assess the learning impact of IFC and*

*MIGA self-evaluations and of their IEG validations every two years. IFC will provide necessary materials for CODE’s review of the learning impact of IFC and MIGA self-evaluations and of their IEG validations bi-annually.*

19. **Section D Rec 7:** IFC Management notes the recommendation that *the planned evaluation of AIMM in FY24 should contribute to improving the self-evaluation and validation system for IFC and MIGA operations and therefore include a critical assessment of the corresponding IEG methods and processes.* Management finds this recommendation helpful and will be ready to engage with IEG in the planned AIMM evaluation.
20. **Section D Rec 8:** IFC Management agrees on the recommendation that *IFC and MIGA, in collaboration with IEG, should actively share with other MDBs and DFIs the major conclusions of the evaluations of their activities, particularly those related to operations in fragile contexts.* We will look into the optimal mechanism internally and with IEG. In sharing thematic evaluations of our activities, it would be useful to complement them with our Management Responses.
21. **Overarching recommendation (iii)** *“IFC and MIGA should improve their collaboration with IEG and promote an evaluation culture.”:* IFC Management takes the Panel’s observations and recommendations summarized in Paragraph 185 seriously and commits to addressing sub-recommendations issued to IFC Management. First, we will recognize that independent evaluation inquiries and products are essential for fulfilling our organization’s missions. Second, we will urgently engage with IEG to develop a self-evaluation and validation system for IFC investments, building on AIMM and determining useful components of our existing systems. Third, we will also plan to undertake two joint learning engagements annually and discuss them with IEG during the annual IEG Work Program consultations. In recent years, IFC Management has conveyed to staff how important IEG’s independent evaluations are by including IEG’s data, the candor gap,<sup>146</sup> and learnings as inputs to all portfolio reviews, and country strategy discussions, to name a few platforms. Our Operation’s KPIs include a few IEG-related indicators.

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<sup>146</sup> Difference between IFC’s self-evaluation success rate and IEG’s final rate in a given period.

22. Management also believes that our efforts should yield a quicker and greater impact on IFC teams if they are complemented by collaboration on the IEG side, for instance, through strengthening the private-sector and IFC business understanding, adapting expectations to evolving market conditions, and demonstrating a willingness to adapt its methods to outcome-oriented investment principles, as noted by the Panel in the same paragraph. Attention and consideration that IEG colleagues give to detail, accuracy, and contexts are very much appreciated and help increase IFC's receptivity to independent evaluations and validations. We are committed to working with IEG and MIGA to address the culture around evaluations and IEG collaborations, moving forward.
  
23. **Other recommendations issued to IFC as part of the WBG Management:** IFC Management acknowledges the second overarching recommendation that the WBG Management should ensure visibility and should explicitly allocate resources to the learning dimension of evaluations along with related recommendations provided in Section E "IEG Contributions to Knowledge and Strategies of the WBG". Management is prepared to work with IEG, the Board (including through its committee), the World Bank and MIGA to take these recommendations forward.

# ANNEX IV.

## MIGA MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. MIGA highly appreciates the opportunity to comment on the “External Review of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank Group from the Independent Review Panel (IRP) (“the External Review.”) In particular, MIGA appreciates the External Review’s specific attention to private sector evaluation, which was not an area of special attention in the 2015 External Review of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). The findings and recommendations are timely, as IFC and MIGA have gained a more prominent position within the World Bank Group’s activities, in line with the increasing significance, complexity, and changing role of the private sector in the development finance ecosystem. MIGA thanks the IRP for the rich discussions during the review process and appreciates the opportunity to have offered our observations to a draft of the External Review.

### Project Evaluations

2. MIGA agrees with the recommendation that “IFC and MIGA management should stress the importance of self-evaluations and their IEG validation for their organizations’ credibility and the constant improvement of operations” (see paragraph 108). MIGA Management and staff are continuously focused on efforts to nurture a culture of evidence based decision-making founded on relevant findings from evaluations and learning from operations, including as follows: (i) MIGA has a strong history going back to FY2012 of self-evaluating all of its projects, with corresponding validation of these self-evaluations by IEG; (ii) MIGA created and introduced in 2019 a development impact assessment tool, IMPACT, which has been the central instrument of MIGA’s ex-ante screening of potential projects based on expected development impact; (iii) MIGA has expanded the number of staff dedicated and involved in the evaluation function, development impact assessment, and project monitoring and data collection to enhance its evaluation capacity and ability to learn from projects; (iv) MIGA management is briefed and

discusses on a quarterly basis the outcome of IEG’s validation assessments of MIGA projects; and (v) as noted in the External Review, MIGA and IEG jointly hold regular “brown bag lunches” featuring MIGA’s project self-evaluations and IEG’s validation assessments to disseminate lessons within MIGA, with MIGA management in attendance. In this context, MIGA welcomes the External Review’s recommendation on continuous engagement and informal discussions with IEG on the findings from project evaluations with senior management’s participation (see paragraph 185).

3. MIGA appreciates the External Review’s statement that “the self-evaluation should produce results that are useful to the implementation of IFC investments and MIGA guarantees and meaningful for the technical people conducting them” (see paragraph 107). While MIGA and IEG jointly revised the guidelines for MIGA’s Project Evaluation Reports (PERs) in 2019, MIGA is already finding the new guidelines are not fully aligned with MIGA’s current business model, which emphasizes continuous innovation, product development, and responding rapidly to changing country, regional, and global development needs. In this regard, the continued assessment of the quality, relevance, usefulness, credibility, and influence of IEG’s work, which was recommended in the 2015 External Review of IEG, is a critical piece of the puzzle to encouraging a learning culture from evaluations.
4. Therefore, MIGA particularly welcomes the recommendation to create a new self-evaluation approach based on the current AIMM/IMPACT frameworks and the recommendation that “the selection of projects to be self-evaluated (and therefore validated by IEG) should consider the learning needs of the organizations involved and not just follow the logic of the approximate rating of a representative portfolio.” MIGA agrees with the External Review’s suggestion that the new system should move away from the current system’s reliance on the quantitative and qualitative objectives stated at the time of the project approval as presented in the Board papers. The new approach should be more cognizant of clients’ capacity (supported by IFC/MIGA) to adapt to changing market conditions and use measures of performance that better consider the evolution of the macroeconomic and business environment. Such an approach can recognize mid-course corrections as a critical part of project evaluation and enhance evaluation as a meaningful tool for learning in the context of changing conditions. By

expanding the scope of learning from project evaluations, the evaluation exercise would move toward the potential for more meaningful lessons for staff and management. **MIGA would greatly welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with IEG and IFC to operationalize these recommendations.**

## Macro Evaluation

5. **MIGA welcomes the External Review’s recommendations that prioritize the learning dimensions of evaluations.** To strengthen a culture of learning from evaluations, especially in IFC and MIGA, the External Review suggests having at least one major evaluation conducted annually, mainly with learning objectives in sight (see paragraph 27), and that “major corporate evaluations... should be designed and conducted with clear learning objectives in mind and with full management involvement” (see paragraph 108). MIGA agrees with these recommendations. MIGA also sees the relevance of the associated recommendation “management must estimate the resources necessary to pursue those objectives and define appropriate processes with IEG.”
6. **MIGA also welcomes the specific recommendation to CODE, stating, “CODE should assess the learning impact of IFC and MIGA self-evaluations and of other IEG validations every two years” (see paragraph 108, bullet 6).**

## Final Observations

7. MIGA benefits from evaluation products relevant to our business and learning needs, alongside quality and efficiency in their production. These elements need to be in place if there is to be successful implementation of IEG’s recommendations and lessons learned from its evaluative exercises. **In this regard, MIGA agrees with the External Review’s view that “IEG could facilitate this evolution by recruiting more staff with recent private sector exposure, by adapting expectations to evolving markets conditions, and by demonstrating willingness to adapt its methods to outcome-oriented investment policies” (see paragraph 185).** The implementation of this recommendation has the potential to enhance the relevance, quality and credibility of the evaluation process and products and the usefulness of evaluation activities from a learning perspective.

8. We would like to express our appreciation again for the IRP and the delivery of this timely and welcome External Review. MIGA believes strongly in the view expressed by the IRP that only through the coordinated efforts of CODE, WBG Management, and IEG can there be further improvements to the evaluation system along with the increased relevance of IEG's work. At MIGA, this External Review is an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to that undertaking.

# ANNEX V.

## APPROACH AND METHODS

### Approach

Three dimensions or pillars describe the panel's adopted approach: The first was primarily backward-looking: assessing the effectiveness of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) in delivering on its mandate in addition to highlighting how IEG has responded to the 2015 review's eight recommendations. This approach was used to further enhance IEG's value and use for the World Bank Group (WBG)—for the present and for the immediate future—by identifying those aspects of IEG work that are working well, raising questions where we noticed gaps, and flagging issues that require further considerations.

The second adopted approach was collaborative, participatory, and consultative. We considered this approach important because of our belief that genuine and open participation is the primary way to understand the workings of a large and complex organization like the WBG. It is also generally understood that one of the best ways to gather assessment findings and recommendations is through collaborating with the evaluand during the evaluation, as the process is unfolding. Though not an evaluation as such, this external review was conducted in as collaborative and participatory a manner as possible, involving close consultation and sharing, and updating key responsible staff and strategic individuals regularly. The consultation extended into the writing phase, when the panel spent appreciable effort to absorb and reflect on comments made by IEG and the WBG.

The third and final pillar of the external review approach was a conceptual and analytical deep dive into five key areas reflecting strategic dimensions of IEG's work and engagement. The areas were identified during the early stage of the review and presented in the Approach Paper. They include (i) the IEG response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, (ii) the adoption of outcome orientation and its consequences for the evaluation work, (iii) the evaluation of International Finance Corporation and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency activities, (iv) IEG's contribution to WBG knowledge, and (v) the support provided to evaluation capacity development in client countries. The result is an examination derived from deep dives that explains how salient

dimensions of evaluation practice of relevance, credibility, and utility have played out since the last review.

## Methods

The review deployed a combination of methods, tools, and techniques to support the triangulation of data, strengthen the analysis, and reach conclusions and recommendations. The primary method for the review was qualitative. Information and data collected through quantitative methods such as the IEG annual client survey were also used.

### Literature review including systematic document analysis

Considering the large number of IEG products (evaluation, synthesis, summaries, and other reports), we examined mainly recent IEG reports published or presented in 2020 and 2021. Early documents were consulted if they were considered central to IEG's institutional role and responsibilities. These included annual *WBG Results and Performance of the World Bank Group* reports, the validation of Management Action Records, IEG's annual reports, and IEG working programs and budgets and the attached Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning frameworks. IEG evaluations published before fiscal year (FY)20 were consulted for assessing the evolution of the evaluation system in IEG and the WBG since the last external review, and a select number of recent self-evaluations, country program evaluations, thematic and sector evaluations, meso evaluations, and sample synthesis reports were also reviewed, along with IEG client surveys from 2017 to 2022. We carefully analyzed the evaluations and assessments commissioned by IEG in preparation for the external review, such as the IEG self-discovery exercise, the Ernst and Young external analysis, the review of IEG's project-level evaluation validations, and the meta-evaluation of IEG evaluations (FY15–19). We also reviewed other IEG outputs, such as the IEG website, podcasts, videos, and engagements in public discourses. Furthermore, we conducted a systematic document analysis of 40 of the most critical IEG documents selected from those listed. The systematic review involved a stepwise analysis of the value and relevance of each document for responding to the review questions.

### Interviews

Key informant interviews were another important pillar of our external review. Conversations were conducted with 127 individuals to inform our analysis. Individuals interviewed and those in conversations and information-shar-

ing meetings included the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE) and members of the WBG Board of Executive Directors, current and former IEG staff, senior WBG management and staff, current and former World Bank staff, WBG client country representatives, heads and senior members of other evaluation offices or units in multilateral development banks, other development partners, and evaluation experts from civil society organizations and nongovernmental organizations. Their names are listed in Annex III.

## External Review Process

The external review was undertaken in three phases leading to the writing of the report.

### Inception and Exploratory Information Gathering

The inception phase, characterized by mapping the dimensions and ramifications of the assignment, culminated in the Approach Paper that CODE approved in April 2022. Protocols and interview guides for the different stakeholder groups were designed, prepared, and tested in this phase, preceded by exploratory engagements and conversations with mainly IEG and World Bank staff. Furthermore, the contours and depth of the IEG document stack were analyzed as were the document management and document analysis plans.

### Data Collection and Data Analysis

Interview guides specific to respondents or stakeholder groups were used to collect information for a five-month period from April through August 2022. We thematically analyzed information from the literature review and document analysis, combined with interview data, through identifying and categorizing key opinions and perceptions that reflected the utility of IEG's work within the WBG and in the global evaluation space. A little more than one-third (35 percent) of interviews were analyzed qualitatively using systematic analysis based on deductive and inductive coding of identified themes to provide a comparison undertaken through manual analysis.<sup>147</sup>

### Consolidation of Findings and Emerging Conclusions

Throughout the review period, we conscientiously examined and discussed the information gathered and interrogated emergent pictures of findings in relation to the issues being assessed. These incipient pictures were discussed,

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<sup>147</sup> Omoding, Andrew Gerald, "IEG Review Qualitative Data Analysis Report," July 2022.

affirmed, or revisited in meetings, conversations, and interviews held regularly with IEG and World Bank staff. The result of this systematic and consensual analysis is the consolidation as captured in the report.

## Resources

The results achieved also reflect the available resources. We had 180 expert days at our disposal – and the full-time support of a research assistant. We met virtually when conducting the review and conducted interviews mainly online. The panel chair spent a week in June 2022 meeting with Board members in Washington, DC. A professional editor reviewed this final report in two steps.

# ANNEX VI.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF IEG'S EVOLUTION

Topics	FY17	FY18	FY19
MAR reforms	IEG's 2017 MAR review found that Management Action Plans are not always aligned with the intent of IEG recommendations.	IEG piloted a strategic review of the MAR.  IEG engaged in ongoing discussions with management on MAR reforms.	
RAP methodologies, content, and results	The report's thematic focus was <i>Environmental Sustainability</i> .	The thematic focus was eliminated.  The 2018 Report analyzed the relationship between IEG recommendations and management action plans.	

Topics	FY17	FY18	FY19
Learning events	<p>Defining and Measuring Project Outcomes</p> <p>Service Delivery: Deriving and Sharing Lessons</p> <p>Learning from the Past, Building for the Future</p> <p>Approaches, and Socializing IEG's New Behavior Change Tool</p> <p>WBG Support of Student Assessments</p> <p>Developing Resilience Building Results Frameworks</p> <p>Building Resilience: Synthesis</p> <p>IEGSD Collaborative Exchanges in Performance Measurement</p> <p>FCV in MICs</p> <p>World Bank's Support of Nutrition in Senegal</p> <p>Guidance for the new "Brief ICR"</p> <p>ASA Pilot Assessment in Trade and Competitiveness Projects</p>	<p>Gender in Evaluation</p> <p>Strengthening Country Engagements Practice</p> <p>Measuring Efficiency in Environment Sector Projects in the World Bank</p> <p>Results Framework and Key Performance Indicators (WSS)</p> <p>Learning from Failure (Urban Operations)</p> <p>Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Efficiency</p> <p>IFC Advisory Service Development Effectiveness Study</p> <p>Lessons from IEG on MFM-led DPFs</p> <p>Improving Identification and Measurement of Gender Results</p> <p>Sustained Services for the Poor</p> <p>ICR Reform for DPFs</p> <p>Promoting Learning (Agriculture Projects [Phase 1 and 2])</p> <p>Leveraging the Forest MAR to enhance Sector Performance</p>	<p>Measuring the Performance of Social Protection Delivery Systems</p> <p>Early-Stage Assessment of IFC and WBG JIIP</p> <p>P4Rs and IFMIS: Evidence from IEG Evaluations</p> <p>Inclusive Rural Job Creation and Citizen-State Relations in Nepal</p> <p>Blended Finance in IFC</p> <p>Community-Driven Development Projects in the World Bank</p> <p>MTI-led DPFs: An IEG-MTI Learning Engagement (second phase)</p> <p>Environmental and Social Sector Highlights</p> <p>IFC Investment Funds</p> <p>(Proposal) What Works for the Transport Sector</p> <p>How to Change Behavior</p>

Topics	FY17	FY18	FY19
Connection to strategies	<p>IEG completed a new results framework in consultation with the Board and management to align the IEG mandate to the WBG strategy.</p> <p>IEG evaluations on poverty focus (FY15) and shared prosperity (FY17) recommended more explicit attention to the WBG's twin goals.</p> <p>IEG worked in the development of the WBG- wide Evaluation Framework (FY17) and (FY18).</p>	<p>IEG updated its Theory of Change to include causal links to the two WBG corporate goals.</p> <p>IEG evaluations on FCV, FCS, and forced displacement contributed to the development of the WBG FCV strategy and to the FCV- related policy commitments agreed in the IDA18 and IDA19 replenishment negotiations.</p> <p>IEG evaluations in the Job theme built on the World Development Report 2014 and helped to elevate and integrate the jobs perspective into WBG activities and informed job-related policy agreements agreed in the IDA18 and IDA19 replenishment negotiations.</p>	<p>IEG introduced a new work program for FY20–23 that aligned with WBG priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals, and commitments made in capital increase packages.</p> <p>IEG Methods Adviser co-led the release of the <i>World Bank Group Evaluation Principles</i>.</p>

Topics	FY17	FY18	FY19
Capacity building: internal	IEG Academy launched	IEG cohosted the WBG-wide Results Measurement and Evidence Stream learning days.	<p>Methods Advisory team worked with other IEG teams to apply a broader range of methodological approaches to evaluations.</p> <p>Courses for IEG staff were delivered, with participation of colleagues from other institutions.</p> <p>Learning engagements were mainstreamed.</p> <p>Methods Advisory team developed and updated IEG's methodological guidelines.</p>
Capacity building: external	<p>IEG helped CLEAR Centers adopt more strategically selected service offerings and strengthen their business-oriented management approach. IEG delivery partner, Carleton University, disengaged from IPDET.</p> <p>IEG set targets to foster opportunities for local consultants in evaluation (9 percent target).</p>	<p>IPDET 2.0 was launched.</p> <p>IEG exceeded its target for local consultants.</p>	

Topics	FY20	FY21
MAR reforms	IEG and management reformed the MAR to focus on strategic recommendations.	Implementation of new MAR system.
RAP methodologies, content, and results	IEG reviewed the format, frequency, and methodology of the RAP.  The scope of the report and the data sources used were broadened to analyze outcome levels beyond ratings.	RAP 2021 integrated the AIMM framework into the analyses of IFC projects. It also presented novel analyses of the longer-term WBG upward trend in ratings.
Learning events	Evolution and Performance of World Bank Housing Portfolio How to improve WBG's Development Effectiveness in MENA Results and Measurement Framework for IFC's Corporate Finance Services Addressing Urban Crime and Violence Risks IFC Advisory Services Sector Highlights Comparative Analysis of AIMM-Backfilled Projects and XPSRs and Evaluation Notes IFC MAS Sector Highlights Justice and Security Sectors in FCV Contexts Supporting Climate Change M&E	GP-Specific JOBs Theories of Change Using DPF to Support Anti-COVID-19 Crisis Response How to Improve WBG Interventions in Justice and Security Sectors Improving Road Safety Project Designs and Results Measuring Scaling up PPP Programs Anticipating an Economic Impact of Urban Infrastructure Projects Joint IFC-IEG Financial Industry Group Sector Highlights Lessons Learned: Credit Bureaus AS Portfolio
Connection to strategies	IEG began to produce just-in-time notes that summarized key lessons from past crisis and helped inform the WBG multiphase programmatic approach to COVID-19.  WBG institutional priorities were used to inform potential evaluation topics.	IEG collaborated in the drafting of the WBG Strategic Framework for Knowledge Management.  IEG adapted its results framework to follow a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework.

Topics	FY20	FY21
Capacity building: internal	<p>IEG Increased in just-in-time learning through learning engagements based on synthesized evidence from IEG evaluations.</p> <p>The Methods Advisory Function continued to provide support to evaluation teams and proposed a framework for adjusting the scope and methodology of evaluations during COVID-19.</p> <p>IEG hosted Staff Learning Days, in which courses and topics covered machine learning, program theories, and on-the-job tools.</p>	<p>Methods Advisory held workshops on adapting evaluations to COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Methods Advisory released <i>Evaluation of International Development Interventions: An Overview of Approaches and Methods</i>.</p> <p>IEG Academy increased interactive learning sessions, virtual classes, brown-bag lunches, job tools, and coaching. The virtual reality pilot program for staff was launched.</p> <p>Methods Advisory Function published a framework for adjusting the scope and methodology of evaluations to ensure the quality and depth of analysis, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Capacity building: external	<p>IEG led the development of a new strategy for CLEAR because the multidonor trust fund funding was closing in 2021.</p> <p>IPDET expanded its Global South reach through a decentralization strategy based on partnerships.</p> <p>IEG's ECD team convened stakeholders and communities through events, forums, and conferences. These include gLOCAL Evaluation Week.</p>	<p>IEG launches Global Evaluation Initiative.</p> <p>GEI and the CLEAR Initiative organized the annual gLOCAL Evaluation Week, which covered evaluation methods, ECD, and evaluation communication and use. GEI also partnered with IPDET to produce a workshop series that included topics on geo-enabling initiatives, theory-based causal analysis, and digital analytics for M&amp;E.</p>

*Note:* AIMM = Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring; AS = advisory services (IFC); ASA = advisory services and analytics (World Bank); CLEAR = Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results; DPF = development policy financing; ECD = evaluation capacity development; FCS = fragile and conflict-affected situation; FCV = fragility, conflict, and violence; GEI = Global Evaluation Initiative; GP = Global Practice; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; IDA18 = 18th Replenishment of the International Development Association; IDA19 = 19th Replenishment of the International Development Association; IEG = Independent Evaluation Group; IEGSD = Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Micro Unit; IFC = International Finance Corporation; IFMIS = integrated financial management information system; IPDET = International Program for Development Evaluation Training; JIIP = Joint Implementation Plans; M&E = monitoring and evaluation; MAR = Management Action Record; MAS = Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; MFM = Macroeconomic and Fiscal Management; MIC = middle-income country; P4R = Program-for-Results; PPP = public-private partnership; RAP = Results and Performance of the World Bank Group; WBG = World Bank Group; WSS = water supply and sanitation; XPSR = Expanded Project Supervision Report.

# ANNEX VII.

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