

Access to Information

ANNUAL REPORT FY2019

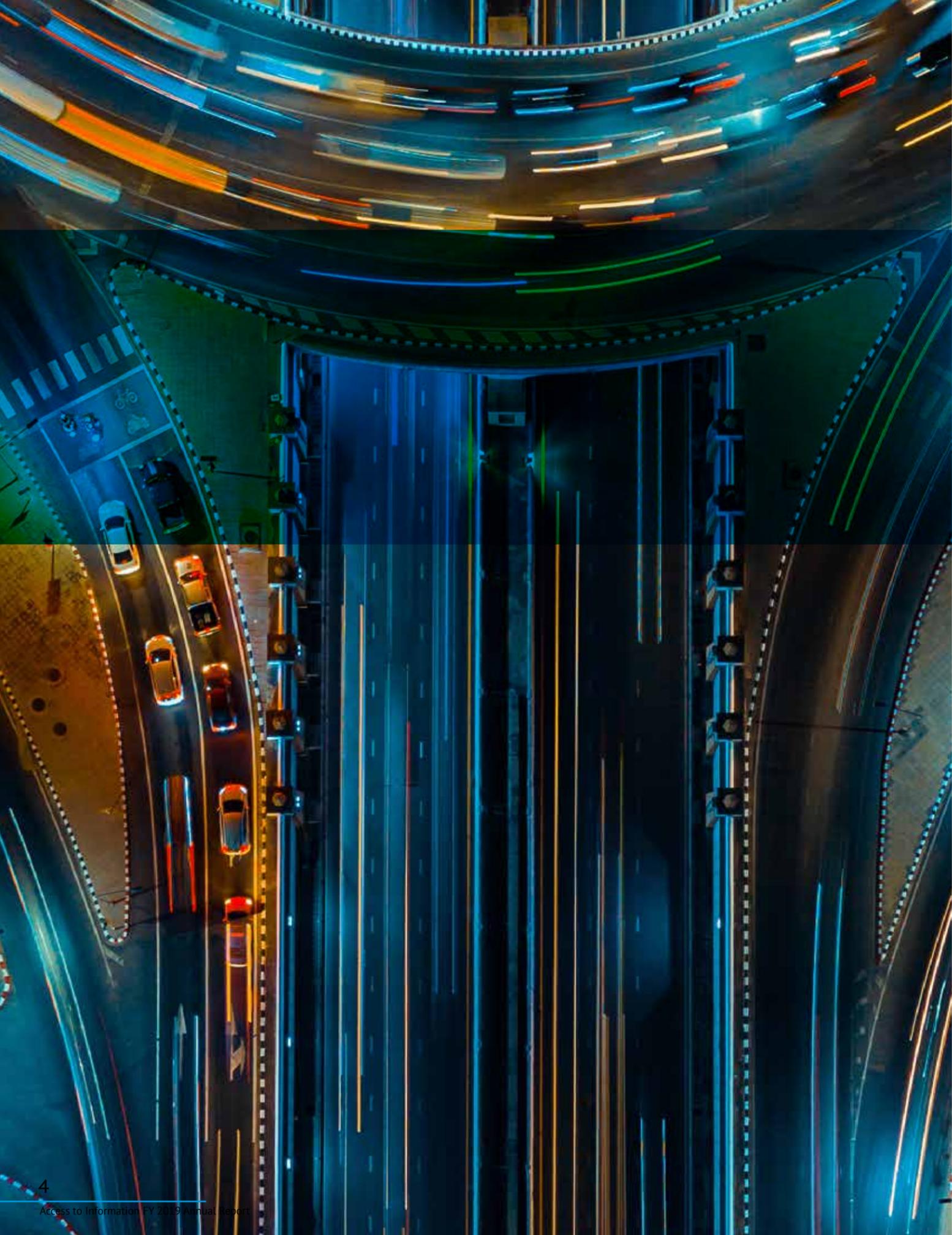


THE WORLD BANK
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INTRODUCTION

Introduced in 2010, the World Bank's Policy on Access to Information (AI Policy) remains the standard for international development institutions and has made the Bank a more effective development partner.

The AI Policy is based on the concept that any information in the Bank's possession should be accessible to the public, except for what falls under a defined list of exceptions. It has provided the basis for the accompanying open initiatives—including Open Data, Open Finances, the Open Knowledge Repository, and the Open Archives—all of which make the Bank's work more transparent, accessible, and accountable. It has also led to a massive increase in the proactive disclosure of documents.

Overall in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19), for information that is proactively disclosed, the Bank received more than 3 million visits to and 30 million downloads from the Documents and Reports database. The Bank handled 696 public

access requests for information. For requests that are denied, the public can appeal by alleging a violation of policy and/or making a public interest case. The internal Access to Information Committee (AIC) serves as the first level of appeals, and its decisions are final for appeals alleging a public interest ground. A second and final recourse for appeals alleging a violation of policy is available through the external and independent Access to Information Appeals Board (AIAB), consisting of three international experts. In FY19, the AIC considered five cases and one new appeal was decided by the AIAB.

For more information and to submit public access requests for information to the World Bank, visit www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information



ACCESS TO INFORMATION DIRECTIVE/PROCEDURE UPDATE

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

In FY19, the AI Directive/Procedure was updated to reflect the new, modern and business-friendly Procurement Framework. The regulations provide many choices for borrowers to design the right approach to market and specify the rules that must be followed. The change mostly affected the disclosure process of the procurement-related routinely available documents.

OPEN DATA

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

OVER 98 MILLION
PAGE VIEWS

OVER 29,000 DEVELOPMENT
DATASETS, INDICATORS
AND VISUALIZATIONS
AVAILABLE

OVER 2.1 MILLION
FILES DOWNLOADED

ACCESS TO RECORDS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In FY19, five public access requests involving Board records were handled, which resulted in the disclosure of 87 historical Board records, most of which were transcripts of Board and Board Committee meetings. Additional Board records were also cleared for disclosure to support the WBG Archives’ disclosure initiatives related to the World Bank’s initial post-war loans in the 1940s. Substantial efforts supported this year’s disclosures, which in total resulted in the release of over 3,800 pages of historical Board transcripts.

GENERAL INQUIRIES

The general public can check public information about the World Bank or submit specific questions through the help desk platform. The requests are addressed in a timely manner by redirecting users to the public link where they can find the requested information. In 93% of the time the users were able to find the answers to the most commonly asked questions during their first visit to the website.

13,555

Page hits

1,198

Unique users

3,193

Average answers per
month

93%

First-time answers
through web portal

OPEN ACCESS

The World Bank's [Open Access \(OA\) Policy](#) enables the widest possible dissemination of its research and knowledge and increases the users' ability to discover and use pertinent information. It mandates that Bank publications and knowledge products shall be made available to the public under Creative Commons (CC) licenses in the [Open Knowledge Repository](#) (OKR). Enhancements to the OKR include improved bot detection and suppression for more accurate statistics and several new series and translations. The Bank has also concluded institutional open access agreements with fifteen academic publishers since 2012 to allow Bank staff to publish in non-World Bank journals in compliance with the OA Policy. The [Documents and Reports Collection](#), which is the World Bank's official disclosure mechanism for reports and publications is actively growing and includes new document types that cover historical and board documents. These include Announcements, Speeches of Presidents, Statements of Governors, Monthly Operational Summaries, as well as other documents to support the new Environmental and Social Framework including the Environmental and Social Review Summary (replacement for ISDS), Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).

DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

5,292,232

Page Views

3,182,848

Visits to Site

2,244,706

Unique Users

30,013,780

Downloads

OPEN KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

6,605,470

Abstract Views

10,944,013

Downloads

DIGITAL VAULT

Using a new platform, the Digital Vault is a system to manage and preserve the Bank's digital assets. The Digital Vault attained security accreditation, completed the system installation, staff training, and pilot ingest of permanent archival records.

OPEN ARCHIVES

The Bank continues to provide greater access to historical information over 20 years of age through the World Bank Group Archives Holdings, archivesholdings.worldbank.org/, and the Bank's Projects and Operations database, www.worldbank.org/projects. At the end of FY19,

more than 272,000 folders of archival records were listed for some 7,200 projects in the Projects and Operations database and some 1.1 million pages of archival records were digitized and made available through this database and through the World Bank Group Archives Holdings. The Archives declassified more than 265,534 pages of archival records in fiscal year 2019.

In FY19, 87 researchers accessed 718,734 pages of archival records declassified under the AI Policy.

ON-SITE IN READING ROOM IN WASHINGTON, DC

57

Number of Researchers

508,202

Number of pages researched

ELECTRONICALLY

30

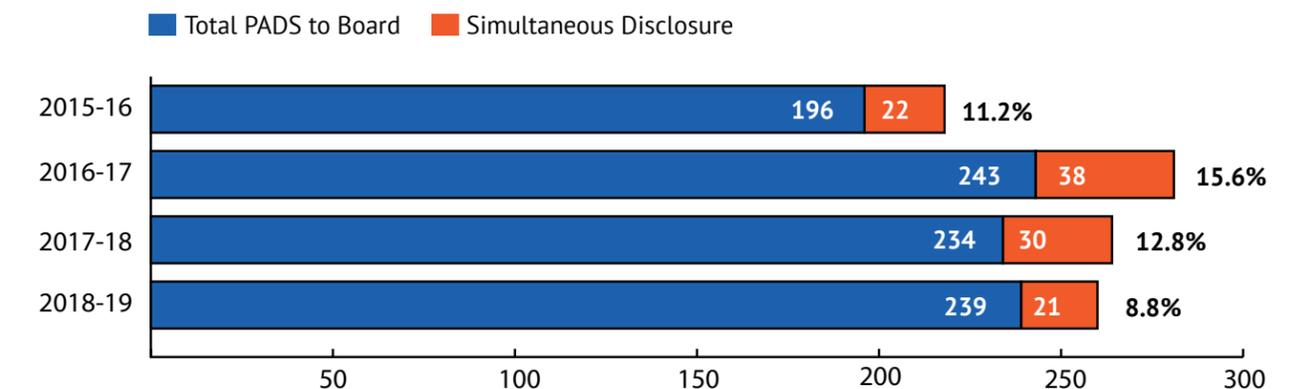
Number of Researchers

210,532

Number of pages researched

SIMULTANEOUS DISCLOSURE

The AI Policy recognizes that papers distributed to the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors (Board) for discussion or consideration are normally posted at the end of the Board's deliberative process, once they have been finalized. Operational policy papers, Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), Project Appraisal Documents (PADs) and Program Documents (PDs) may, however, be disclosed before Board discussion, if public consultations were held and if the client gives its written consent to such early disclosure. The early release of Board documents is commonly referred to as simultaneous disclosure. Simultaneously disclosed Board documents are posted in the D&R database, as well as on a [dedicated Simultaneous Disclosure webpage](#).





75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRETTON WOODS CONFERENCE

To mark the 75th anniversary of the Bretton Woods Conference that created the World Bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WBG Archives mounted an archival exhibit in the atrium of the World Bank Group's Main Complex during the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE), June 17-18, 2019. The museum-style

exhibit told the history of the World Bank Group through seven eras. Large panels divided the exhibit into seven "rooms" where archival record displays and informational banners offered visitors the opportunity to dig deeper into each era, and iPads provided access to the World Bank Historical Timeline.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF INDONESIA



The [Indonesia timeline](#) was created to mark the 2018 World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual Meetings held in Bali, Indonesia from October 8th to 14th. The timeline describes the history of the Bank's relationship with Indonesia, one of its key members. In doing so, the timeline charts the evolution of both the country and the World Bank's approach to economic development. The timeline's 58 events are explored through more than 300 archival and online resources.

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION



The WBG Archives preserves thousands of photographs documenting historical Bank projects, events, and personalities. In FY19, the Bank launched an online [Historical Photographic Collection](#) to provide access to an ever-growing number of these images available for download.

PAST PRESIDENT'S SPEECHES



In FY19, the Bank launched the [Past President's Speeches website](#) which provides access to transcripts of over 1,000 speeches made by former World Bank Group presidents from 1946 to 2018. Speeches by all twelve of the World Bank Group's past presidents, from Eugene Meyer to Jim Kim, are included. The site provides a variety of avenues to access these speeches including a collection of audio recordings.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION (AI) REQUESTS HANDLED*

Fiscal year in which the AI request was created	Number of AI requests Handled	Number of AI requests Closed	Percentage of AI requests Closed	Number of AI requests which remained Open
FY2019	696	665	96	31
FY2018	31	30	97	1
Total	727	695	100	32

*Handled – The request was created in FY19 or was carried over from previous fiscal years as an open case

AI REQUESTS FULFILLED (IN WHOLE OR IN PART) OR DENIED

Of the 695 requests closed in FY19, 478 requests provided sufficient information and were handled by the AI system. 460 requests were fulfilled in whole or in part, and 18 requests were denied without fulfilling any part of the request.

The manner in which the remaining 217 requests were handled is described in the table titled “**Manner in Which the Remaining Cases Were Handled**”.

AI REQUESTS FULFILLED (IN WHOLE OR IN PART)

Indicator	Requests Fulfilled in Whole	Requests Fulfilled in Part	Total Number of Requests Fulfilled in Whole or in Part
Total number	426	34*	460
% of total	93	7	100%

*Of the 34 requests that were fulfilled in part, the outcomes were due to the following reasons:

- The requester was unresponsive (fourteen requests)
- Some of the records were not in the Bank’s custody (two requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Attorney-Client Privilege” exception (two requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Deliberative Information” exception (one request)
- Part of the request was handled through the World Bank Publishing Unit (one request)
- The information was restricted by the “Deliberative Information” exception (one request)
- Part of the request was handled through the Open Data Initiative (ten requests)
- Part of the request was handled through the Development Data Initiative (one request)
- Part of the request was referred to IEG (one request),
- Part of the request was referred to ICSID (one request).



AI REQUESTS DENIED (IN WHOLE OR IN PART)

Of the 478 requests handled by the AI system and closed in FY19, 18 requests were denied without fulfilling any part of the request.

Indicator	Requests Denied
Total number	18*

* Of the 18 requests that were denied in whole or in part without fulfilling any part of the request, the outcomes were due to the following reasons:

- The information was restricted by the “Deliberative Information” exception (six requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Corporate Administrative Matters” exception (four requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Information Provided by Member Countries or Third Parties in Confidence” exception (five requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Financial Information” and “Corporate Administrative Matters” exception (two requests)
- The information was restricted by the “Personal Information” exception (one request)

TIMELINESS OF AI REQUESTS CLOSED

Indicator	Number of Requests	Percentage of Requests (%)
Requests closed within 20 working days	584	81
Closed within more than 20 working days	111	19
Total number of Requests Closed	695	100

MANNER IN WHICH THE REMAINING AI REQUESTS WERE HANDLED

As mentioned on the previous page, of the 695 requests closed in FY19, 478 were handled by the AI system and a response was provided. The remaining 217 requests were handled as follows:

Indicator	Numbers of Requests
Request for World Bank Data	99
Information Covered by AI Policy Exception -Information Restricted Under Separate Disclosure Regimes and Other Investigativet Information	17
Referrals to IFC	5
Additional Information Needed or Unresponsive Requester	36
Records not Found in World Bank Custody	41
Records not Found in World Bank Custody and Unresponsive Requester	1
Referral to Doing Business, Development Data and Climate Change Knowledge Portals	6
World Bank Publishing Unit*	11
Referral to Corporate Secretariat	1
Total	217

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



APPEALS CONCLUDED BY THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION COMMITTEE (AIC)

	Case number and information requested	Violation of AI Policy	Public Interest	Upheld or Reversed World Bank decision to Deny Access	Applicable Exception(s)
1.	<i>AI5823</i> Sexual Harassment Surveys (Staff Association)	X	X	No violation of policy/not properly before the AIC on public interest	Personal Information Exception
2.	<i>AI5950</i> AMS 6.21A	X	X	Not considered	Corporate Administrative Matters
3.	<i>AI5946</i> Amaravati Report - assessment of land pooling scheme		X	Upheld	Deliberative Information
4.	<i>AI5767</i> List of countries funded under the Africa Climate Business Plan	X	X	Not considered	Deliberative Information
5.	<i>AI6310</i> Project preparation and supervision costs data		X	Not considered	Corporate Administrative Matters and Financial Information

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

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

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

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

APPEALS CONCLUDED BY THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION APPEALS BOARD (AIAB)

Case number and information requested	Upheld or Reversed AI Committee's decision upholding World Bank Decision to Deny Access	Applicable Exception(s)
<i>AI5197</i> CBI Report (Nepal)	Reversed. Found information not to be deliberative	Deliberative Information

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

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

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



Documents & Reports

is the official disclosure mechanism for more than 280,000 documents starting from the 1940s that enables sharing of the institution's extensive knowledge base and implementing its access to information policy.



The World Bank Group Archives

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



Projects & Operations

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



The Open Knowledge Repository

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



The Open Government Partnership

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



International Aid Transparency Initiative

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



World Bank Group Finances

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



Open Data Initiative

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



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