Our Programmatic Clusters
As part of Competitiveness Policy Evaluation Lab’s (ComPEL) objective of taking up programmatic impact evaluations in Trade and Competitiveness (T&C) Global Practice, three focus areas, or clusters, have been chosen: (1) connecting businesses to improve market access and promote spillovers; (2) improving regulatory efficiency to benefit firms; and (3) targeting and promoting businesses with high-growth potential. The selection was based on an extensive consultation held in September 2016 with T&C management and staff, researchers from the World Bank and academia, and our donor partners. These focus areas are strategically important for development interventions related to trade and competitiveness, and at the same time present significant research gaps. The impact evaluations selected under these clusters will have the potential to inform specific country programs and contribute to a body of knowledge on the subject through the publication of research and findings as academic papers in reputed journals.

Project Demand – Mexico City Round
In October 2016, 46 teams across the World Bank responded to a call for expressions of interest, indicating their interest in developing impact evaluations under ComPEL clusters. The large number of submissions, suggests a growing interest in impact evaluation and a recognition of the value addition it brings to project implementation.

All teams were then invited to three “clinics” to deepen their knowledge on the clusters. Keynote presentations by David Atkin (MIT), David McKenzie (DEC-WBG), and Mushfiq Mobarak (Yale), were followed by project introductions, and a brainstorming session with additional researchers from T&C and the Development Economic Research Group (DECRG). Overall, 85 people attended.

A selection committee shortlisted 19 teams in November to receive further assistance, based on the technical feasibility, intervention timeline, and client engagement.

Flagship Workshop
A 4-day workshop was held in Mexico City in February 2017, co-organized by T&C and the Development Impact Evaluation unit (DIME). Of the 19 shortlisted teams, two were more advanced and encouraged to present a concept note in June. The other 17 invited to the workshop to receive extra support in developing their impact evaluation. The objectives of the workshop were (1) assisting each team in designing their impact evaluation through ‘daily clinics’, (2) disseminating knowledge of the latest research in the three focus areas through ‘policy’ and ‘ignite’ sessions, (3) enhancing the technical capacity of the teams working on the evaluation through ‘methods’ sessions, and (4) strengthening networks within the stakeholders of the impact evaluations through ‘networking’ sessions. There were 100 participants: 17 external researchers from academia, 20 researchers from within the World Bank, 27 project team members, and 36 country clients. They benefited from keynote presentations by Rocco Macchiavello (LSE), Fred Finan (UC Berkeley), and David McKenzie (DEC-WGB) who provided a conceptual framework for each cluster, as well as one-on-one guidance to project teams on advancing their project design.

The daily clinics were a crucial feature of the workshop that required team members, including government officials, to brainstorm along with their assigned researchers and apply the technical knowledge acquired to put together a preliminary design for an impact evaluation around their project, to be presented to the entire group of participants on the last day. Most teams continued working on their
impact evaluations much beyond the scheduled hours of the workshop, demonstrating their high level of involvement. When the presentations were made at the end of the workshop, they received substantive feedback from the various researchers.

The participation survey suggests that the workshop has honed impact-evaluation knowledge for project teams. Box 1 shows that 76 percent of respondents were satisfied with the technical content delivered and

86 percent indicated that it is likely that they implement the impact evaluation discussed. Also, 74 percent of respondents who were policy makers believe the workshop influenced how they measure the success of the program.

**Seed Funding**

After the workshop, teams had the opportunity to apply for a small grant to be used as ‘seed funding’ for developing the impact evaluation methodology in full and conducting a field trip to validate it in the country. Overall, 16 applications were received and 11 awarded small grants. Applications were evaluated in March 2016 for technical quality by three external academics and for policy relevance by the Chief Economist of the Equitable Growth, Finance, and Institutions Vice-presidency of the World Bank and other members of T&C management.

**Implementation Funding**

Two additional clinics were organized to provide further technical assistance to the teams, focusing on challenges they might face when kicking off their impact evaluations. Of the 19 teams selected during the identification of project demand, 13 applied for implementation funding from ComPEL by submitting a detailed impact evaluation methodology in June.

Over the summer, methodologies will be evaluated for technical quality one more time. Based on these, the selection committee is expected to allocate implementation funding to up to five impact evaluations. These impact evaluations are expected to launch their baselines (if applicable) during FY18.

**Key Contacts and More Information**

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More information on ComPEL’s clusters: