Country perspectives on multilateral development banks

A survey analysis

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Appendix 1 Technical note

This technical note provides details on the methods and the research protocol applied to generate the evidence behind the analysis of this report. We cover the following six areas:

- selection of the mode of recruitment and data collection
- questionnaire design and scripting
- sampling approach
- database building and contact strategy; data collection
- response rates and distribution of replies
- weighting approach.

Our informal advisory board provided feedback on the questionnaire design and the sampling approach in March 2021.

1.1 Selection of the mode of recruitment and data collection

We collected the data via the Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) mode of data collection. An email invitation to an online questionnaire was sent to senior government officials and officials in multilateral development banks (MDBs) in selected countries. The texts of the online questionnaire – with separate, but largely overlapping versions for government officials and officials in MDBs – are included in Appendix 2.

We chose the online mode of data collection instead of other approaches (e.g., face-to-face or phone interviews), due to the optimal balance of strengths and weaknesses of the online mode in this project compared with other modalities. Some of the conventional weaknesses of CAWI as a mode did not apply to this survey, while the strengths were fully applicable. First, the usual weakness of CAWI is the incomplete coverage of the survey population: when it comes to surveys among the general public, even in the most digitally transformed societies, at least 10% of the population do not have online access. Even for the online population, there are no frames which list all individuals or households, and which can be used as sampling frames for probability selection. This did not apply in our survey, as all of the target population had online access and actively used email as part of their professional life. Second, the online mode disproportionately excludes disadvantaged sociodemographic groups: those with low income and low literacy levels. This factor did not apply to this survey design, as the sociodemographic representation was not among the survey objectives, and the target population was well represented online. Third, when selecting a sampling frame, survey researchers often have to rely on self-selected online access panels, which are not representative of the general public. We were able to build a sampling frame of the survey population based on the information from the public directories and contact persons.

At the same time, several of CAWI’s strengths were applicable to the survey’s aims and objectives. First, respondents could be contacted in a large number of countries easily and without any
logistical issues, compared with the telephone or face-to-face mode. Second, the specific target group of respondents were often easier reached according to their own schedule, rather than being forced to be interviewed at a given time; email invitations and online completion easily allow for this. Finally, the online modality helped overcome the challenges posed by travel restrictions, lockdowns and uncertainty regarding access to informants caused by the multiple waves of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, when data collection for this project took place.

1.2 Questionnaire design and scripting

**Questionnaire design.** The questionnaire design started with an extensive review of the literature on the operations, financing and strategy of MDBs. We concentrated on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these institutions and on the factors influencing governments in their decisions on borrowing from MDBs. The summary of the literature review is presented in Section 2.2. It offered the basis for the hypotheses tested in this project and framed the questions and response options offered in the questionnaire.

The text of the survey underwent several rounds of internal team reviews to ensure its consistency with the research questions, and to improve the clarity and logic in the order and formulation of questions. We sought and received written and verbal feedback from the informal advisory group for this project. Additionally, upon reaching the near-final draft, we cognitively tested the English language questionnaire in an interview session via Zoom with a limited number of selected government officials. We checked the cognitive interpretation of the questions, response options and the terminology used in the questionnaire. Additional improvements were made to the questionnaire, reflecting the results of the limited scope of this cognitive testing.

**Two questionnaire variants.** Given the two distinctive groups of respondents, two versions of the questionnaire were designed to acknowledge the differences between government officials and officials in MDBs. The questionnaire to officials in MDBs included fewer questions compared with the one submitted to government officials. The questionnaire to MDB officials did not include specific questions about the effectiveness of MDBs as a whole or an assessment of individual MDBs. Questions were also rephrased to reflect their perspectives, without significantly altering the substance of questions (e.g., by only changing the pronouns). Both questionnaires are included in Appendix 2.

**Translation of questionnaires and methodology.** Respondents were given the option to complete the questionnaire in English, French, Portuguese, Russian or Spanish to ensure accessibility to as many respondents as possible. The team at cApStAn, a specialised survey questionnaire translation agency, was responsible for the translation of the questionnaires.

With cross-regional and cross-linguistic comparability as guiding principle, cApStAn implemented a translation/adaptation design that combined relevant use of translation

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1 The choice of the two surveys was predetermined based on the stakeholder mapping in each country.
2 We excluded questions 3, 4, 6, 19, 20, 21 and 22 in the questionnaire for officials in MDBs.
technology with systematic discussion, endorsement and documentation of all choices made, question by question and language by language. Bilingual glossaries of technical terms were prepared and validated by the authors of the questionnaire. The two main steps of the translation process were:

- **Question-by-question translation and adaptation notes**: user-friendly item-per-item translation and adaptation notes were prepared as part of the package provided to translators and reviewers. The focus of such notes was: (i) to determine which adaptations were mandatory, desirable, acceptable or ruled out; and (ii) to draw translators’ attention to possible terminology problems, ambiguities, translation traps, etc. The notes were validated by the authors of the questionnaire before use.

- **Translators and reviewers**: professional translators (native speakers of the target language with expertise in survey translation) were selected from cApStAn’s network to produce the translations into each language. They were briefed to adhere to the glossary and comply with the translation and adaptation notes. They all worked in the same state-of-the-art CAT tool (computer-assisted translation tool, which is not a machine translation tool). In the CAT tool, translation memories are generated as the translator progresses, and this ensures consistency across similar segments throughout the material. The translation was followed by expert review: a segment-by-segment comparison of the target version with the source version, which included a systematic check that each translation adaptation note had been addressed satisfactorily and consistently. Special attention was given to the best possible balance between equivalence to the source and fluency in the target language.

**Scripting.** We used Exavo Survey Studio as the survey management software. This allowed for advanced functionality of questionnaire scripting and anonymous response tracking, including the use of different question types, randomisation of response options, dynamic routing and filtering (to cater for different questions for government officials and MDB stakeholders), and piping of information from the database or answers from a previous question. The scripted questionnaire was thoroughly tested by several team members and some members of the informal advisory board, to ensure that the right logics were in place and that all questions, filters and skipping patterns were programmed correctly. The software enabled a multilingual survey set-up, in which the questionnaire was first scripted in English before the four translated language versions were imported and again thoroughly tested by native speakers. The layout of the online survey was customised and branded using the ODI logo, colours and fonts.

### 1.3 Sampling approach

#### 1.3.1 Survey population

**Eligible countries.** As of April 2021, 144 countries were eligible for assistance by the World Bank, the MDB with the largest coverage. We excluded countries whose population was less than 500,000 inhabitants from the survey universe because of the size of their public administration systems. Following the exclusion of the smallest countries, 126 countries were eligible for inclusion in the sample.
Eligible respondents. Group A: Senior government officials

For the first group, the respondents were selected among those senior government officials whose job put them in a position to assess the strengths and weaknesses of MDBs across multiple projects and programmes. Eligible respondents included officials negotiating grants and loans with MDBs and managing relations and dialogue with MDBs (external resource mobilisation departments or equivalent and their desks on MDBs in Finance or Planning Ministries), scrutinising the terms and conditions of loans from MDBs (debt management departments in Finance Ministries or Central Banks), and coordinating projects with MDBs in each ministry (heads of international cooperation). Among line agencies, we selected only those ministries whose projects and programmes tended to receive external development assistance and that could, in principle, implement projects funded by MDBs (e.g. health, education, environment, infrastructure/public works, energy, agriculture, fishery, forestry, water and sanitation).

The number of government officials varied in each country, reflecting their different institutional structures and the size of the civil service.

In most countries, a mid-career civil servant in the Ministry of Finance or Planning was appointed as the focal point. The team at ODI provided the criteria mentioned above to select colleagues across the civil service to participate in the study. The focal point then identified colleagues who met the eligibility criteria, sought approval from the Permanent Secretary for participation in the questionnaire, and shared the contact details of respondents. Email invitations and online questionnaires were administered by the ODI research team only.

Eligible respondents. Group B: Multilateral development banks

To triangulate the information shared by government officials, we also approached senior officials in each country office of each MDB (AfDB, AsDB, EBRD, IADB and the World Bank). We did not approach officials at the AIIB as they did not have country offices. We wrote to colleagues negotiating country programmes and with a broad overview of the operations and conditions in the country, notably the country director/manager and the senior economist of country offices/desks.

The number of officials in MDBs varied by country. The World Bank was present in all the countries reviewed, but the rest of the banks are represented only in a subset of selected countries, largely based on their region. In each country, in addition to the World Bank, we included between one and up to three regional development banks (e.g., in Central Asia where AIIB, AsDB and EBRD are all present). We invited at least two officials of the country office of every MDB where the country was a client. It is also worth noting that for the World Bank, AfDB and EBRD, in some cases country directors and/or country economists were responsible for one or more countries in the same region (in selected cases, for up to four countries) and replied from regional offices or headquarters. They had the option of filling out as many surveys as the countries they were responsible for and that were included in the sample.

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3 That would exclude defence, for example, in most cases.
1.3.2 Stratification

We decided to stratify the sample to increase the accuracy of the survey results. Two characteristics were selected for stratifying the country universe: eligibility for concessional and non-concessional assistance (two groups: proxied by eligibility for IDA and IBRD lending as of April 2021) and broad geographical regions (five regions: Africa; East Asia the Pacific; South Asia; Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East; Latin America and the Caribbean).4 ‘Blend’ countries – borrowing at both concessional and non-concessional terms from the World Bank – were classified as IDA considering they were largely eligible for concessional assistance. Two regions – East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia – were merged for the data analysis purposes in this report.

Countries were grouped into 10 stratification cells by borrowing eligibility and region (Table 1). Within each cell, we first selected countries where the team had existing networks. For those countries where we did not have existing contacts, we applied a multi-pronged selection strategy by identifying where our broader networks might have had contacts in the Ministry of Finance (e.g., UN colleagues, academia) or approached the Ministry of Finance directly via phone calls or email. We prioritised those governments that replied first to our request for contacts.

Seventy-three (73) countries were selected for the sample and are listed in Table 1.

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4 We followed the World Bank classification for South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>East Asia and the Pacific</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Latin America and the Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Lesotho, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa (8 countries)</td>
<td>Indonesia, Philippines, Viet Nam (3 countries)</td>
<td>India, Sri Lanka (2 countries)</td>
<td>Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey (11 countries)</td>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay (10 countries)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Database building and contact strategy

1.4.1 Recruitment of respondents

The recruitment of respondents was possibly the most challenging component of this survey's design and implementation due to the narrow definition, niche expertise and seniority of the survey population. We applied a multi-pronged strategy to find and recruit our respondents. We aimed to invite at least 10 government officials per country and at least four respondents from MDBs (at least two per MDB in each country).

For government officials we pursued the following strategy:

- Approach existing networks in the functions indicated in Section 1.3.1 of this appendix starting from the Heads of Development Cooperation in Ministries of Finance or Planning and line ministries. We filled gaps via snowball sampling via email and phone calls.
- Select government officials based on the suggestions of the focal point assigned at the Ministries of Finance/Planning and in line agencies when authorisation for the survey was required by senior management at the ministry. This was often subject to approval by the Permanent Secretary via an official letter. Communication took place via email and phone.
- Access contacts via the external relations office of the ministry.
- Seek advice and recommendations from trusted local partners (UN system, NGOs, local consultants, academics, think tanks).
- Gather information based on government websites or social media (primarily LinkedIn).
- Review recent project documents of MDBs and approach government officers in charge at the Ministry of Finance and line ministries.
- Review lists of participants at recent international meetings (e.g., IMF/World Bank Spring and annual meetings, Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation) listed in the functions in Section 1.3.1 of this appendix.

For officials in MDBs, the following steps were taken:

- Approach existing networks in the functions indicated in Section 1.3.1 of this appendix.
- Gather information based on websites of country offices that publish a list of their staff in country offices (World Bank, AfDB and AsDB).

- Access contacts via the external relations office of country offices or strategy and policy departments of MDBs.

- Review project documents of MDBs.

- Approach both the incumbent and the previous person in the post if changes in position took place in the six months before they were approached.

1.4.2 Contact and response strategy; data collection

Data collection took place in the period between June and December 2021. The first invitations were sent to potential respondents on 24 June as part of the soft launch. The data collection was cut off on 3 December. We followed the following steps to approach stakeholders:

- Respondents received a **personalised invitation letter** via email, setting out the objectives of the study and how information would be used. A soft launch took place in late June 2021 to test the system. Invitations were largely sent out in July and August 2021. Contacts identified via snowball sampling and the review of project documents received invitations in September and October 2021. In some countries, the government protocol required written letters to be sent to respondents. This mainly took place in June 2021. In the letter, we informed all participants that responses would be kept confidential by ODI and be accessible only by the research team, and that the project was compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on data treatment.

- All replies were treated as confidential and analysed across countries without the possibility of identifying any respondent. We were only able to assess whether a respondent in our database had started or completed the questionnaire.

- Usually a week after the invitation letter, respondents received the link to the survey via email, with a unique password and access. This allowed us to restrict participation only to those respondents that were selected in the database and met the criteria listed in Section 1.3.1 of this appendix. In the questionnaire, we offered the choice to opt-out from the survey should the information about the respondent’s affiliation to the government, MDBs or country of responsibility reflected incorrectly in our records.

- We scheduled at least **four reminders from different email accounts** with personalised messages. The first reminders were sent mainly in August, the second set of reminders in September, the third in October/November via email or letter with selected countries, and a fourth and final reminder the week before the survey was closed (late November). Focal points nominated by their Permanent Secretaries for some countries also helped us approach interviewees. Those respondents that were identified having started the questionnaire received an additional reminder to encourage them to complete the questionnaire.
During the data collection, major political events took place in Afghanistan and Sudan. One of the results of these events was a major overhaul or transition in the two governments. We had received responses from the government representatives from these two countries before the changes in government. We decided to include their responses in our analysis, as they represented the view of the national governments at the time of data collection, although not necessarily the views of the new governments.

1.5 Response rates and respondent profiles

We sent the invitation to the online survey to 1,481 respondents in the 73 countries, of whom 1,121 were government officials and 360 were staff in MDBs. We received 487 completed questionnaires with an overall response rate of 32.9%: 352 from government officials (a response rate of 31.7%) and 135 officials in MDBs (a response rate of 37.5%) (Table 2). Incomplete questionnaires (60) were not included in the calculations of the response rates in Table 2. Fourteen (14) people were ineligible to take part in the questionnaire (e.g., wrong person or no longer in the role). Of all the invitations sent, 62 invitations bounced back because of invalid or wrong email addresses.

Table 2  Response rate, by respondent group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total no. invites</th>
<th>Completed questionnaires</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDB officials</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1481</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the unique characteristics of the survey was that it attempted to convey the viewpoints of not only respondents as individuals (government and MDB officials), but also as country representatives. We received responses from all 73 countries selected into the sample, thus the country-level response rate was 100%. In a minority of countries, we received a response from either a government official or a MDB official; thus the response rate for separate respondent groups was lower than 100%. A special attempt was made to ensure that we maximised not only respondent-level responses but also country-level responses (Table 3).

Table 3  Country-level response rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total no. invites</th>
<th>Completed questionnaires</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDB officials</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4, 5 and 6 show the distribution of responses by lending groups and regions, the roles of respondents, and the length of service of government officials.
### Table 4  
Completed questionnaires by lending groups and regions, % of total respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>East and South Asia, Pacific</th>
<th>Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5  
Breakdown of roles, % of total respondents (government and MDB officials respectively)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government officials</th>
<th>Total respondents</th>
<th>Department or Ministry of Finance/Treasury or Planning</th>
<th>Other government department or ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>352</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDB officials</th>
<th>Total respondents</th>
<th>Country Director</th>
<th>Country Manager</th>
<th>Country Economist</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All figures rounded to the closest unit.

### Table 6  
Length of service, total and by region, % of total government respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>East and South Asia, Pacific</th>
<th>Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Total (all government officials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5 years</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20 years</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All figures rounded to the closest unit.

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Stratification and post-stratification considered five regional groups. We opted for four regional groups in the descriptive analysis for ease of presentation.
1.6 Weighting approach

Weights were calculated for the collected data, with a view to increasing the accuracy of the survey estimates. Three sets of weights were calculated.

Weights for different survey sub-populations

The survey aimed to collect responses for different survey populations: government officials and MDB officials. While the questionnaire was mostly designed for completion by both groups of respondents, several questions were designed only to be answered by government officials. With this in mind, three separate sets of weights were calculated, one for each of the two groups of respondents, and one for the entire survey population. All three sets of weights were calculated using the same procedures detailed below.

Country-level weights

First, weights were calculated to account for the varying number of respondents taking part in the survey in different countries, ranging from 1 to 14 in each country. We decided to limit the impact of the responses from countries with the highest number of responses. All countries represented in the survey received the same weight. In other words, each respondent from countries with two respondents received a weight of 0.5, whereas each respondent from countries with four respondents received a weight of 0.25. The same procedure was followed for each group of respondents, and for all respondents, separately.

Post-stratification weights

At the second stage, post-stratification weights were calculated. As explained in the sampling section above, the countries were divided by two different characteristics (eligibility for different types of financing and geographical region), and formed 10 cells for stratification. Weights were calculated to restore the correct distribution of countries by stratification cell.

After each stage, weights were recalculated to the average of 1, for ease of use in calculations, without an impact on the results.