Findings reports on ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published periodically by the Africa Technical Department on behalf of the Region.

Information Bank on African Development Studies (IBADS)

Background

Most African policymakers and researchers do not have rapid access to up-to-date information on development studies and programs undertaken by the World Bank and other development institutions. There is an urgent need to provide them with relevant and timely information, and build the capacity of African policymakers and researchers to access such information. At the same time, there is also a growing demand from the World Bank's clients, i.e. borrowing countries and the donor community to improve the dissemination of information available in the World Bank.

Electronic networking, which has become an increasingly common and crucial means of communication throughout the world, offers an excellent vehicle to address these two issues. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is, however, lagging behind other developing regions in the area of electronic networking. With an updated electronic networking system, SSA stands a better chance of achieving the multiple objectives of increasing the region's access to information, strengthening its research and policy-making capacity, and narrowing the technology gap between SSA and other developing regions.

To contribute to meeting these objectives, the Africa Technical Department, in collaboration with the Operations and Business Practices Department of the World Bank (formerly the Information Technology Facilities Department), has set up the Information Bank on African Development Studies (IBADS) to make World Bank information on Africa and World Bank African development studies electronically accessible to SSA and the rest of the world.

What is IBADS?

IBADS is an electronic mailing service with the objective of disseminating information about development studies on SSA. It presently contains data archives of abstracts of studies undertaken by the Africa Technical Department at the World Bank. Abstracts of studies are electronically retrieved and mailed to a requester over the global INTERNET. The service will eventually be expanded to include full-text reports, as well as relevant development studies undertaken by other units of the World Bank and other development, academic and research institutions worldwide. Full reports on these studies will not however be provided electronically by IBADS at the initial stage. Such reports will initially have to be requested from the Task Managers/Authors whose names appear in the IBADS abstracts.

**How do you access IBADS?**

No one can access IBADS without subscription. The system moderator, situated in the World Bank in Washington, D.C. will have to approve each request for subscription. Once a person becomes a subscriber, his/her requests will be automatically answered without any intervention from the moderator. The following are the steps for subscribing to IBADS:

(i) For World Bank staff:

1. Create an E-Mail message,
2. Next to To, type: @Listserv
3. Next to Subject, type: Subscription
4. In the body of the text, type:
   
   Subscribe IBADS First Name (space) Last Name
   
   For example: Subscribe IBADS John Doe

(ii) For non-Bank staff:

1. Create an E-Mail message
2. Next to To, type: Listserv@tome.worldbank.org
3. Next to the Subject, type: Subscription
4. In the body of the text, type:
   
   Subscribe IBADS First Name (space) Last Name
   
   For Example: Subscribe IBADS John Doe

To become a subscriber, the applicant will need to be a bona fide researcher or policymaker with an INTERNET address. For this reason, subscription by non-World Bank staff will not be granted unless the following information is included in the subscription request: specialty; organization; address,
subject of interest.

For Example:

Subscribe IBADS John Doe  
Specialty: Livestock specialist  
Organization: AJ Research Center  
Address: 1, Oxford ST., Oxford, UK  
Subject of interest: Agro-Industry

The subscription request will go to the system moderator. If the request is accepted, the user will receive a welcome message. The welcome message will introduce the user to IBADS, and provide him/her with the commands for accessing information and interfacing with the system.

How to include an Abstract under IBADS?

To include an abstract on the IBADS list, the user will need to adhere to this IBADS protocol:

(a) The abstract must deal with Sub-Saharan Africa;

(b) It should not exceed two pages, inclusive of the headings;

(c) It must be submitted in the following format:

Title: -----------------------------

Sector: -----------------------------

Sub-Sector: -----------------------------

Country (s): -----------------------------

Implementing Agency: -----------------------------

Sponsoring/Supporting Agency (s) -----------------------------

Author and Institution: -----------------------------

Study Date and Implementation Schedule: -----------------------------

Study Description: -----------------------------

The first item (Title) should not exceed 80 characters. The last item (Study Description), should include Background and Justification, Objectives, Expected Outputs, Intended Audience, and Design and Management of the study.

What are IBADS' impacts on the ground?

IBADS represents a pioneering effort in electronic networking which is expanding rapidly and whose adoption by the World Bank is gaining momentum. The system also offers a practical approach to sharing information with the outside world. The initiative is also expected to have considerable impact on the ground as it will provide African researchers and policymakers with urgently needed support which could contribute to strengthening focused research and policy-making capacity in Africa at the project, sector and macro levels. The lack of information in African countries and the lack of access to information outside Africa has proved to be a critical limiting factor for African development. By providing an instrument for the communication and dissemination of development initiatives, IBADS will contribute significantly to strengthening the relationship between researchers and policymakers in Africa and between international organizations, such as the World Bank, and their clients. Hopefully, this development communication effort will point the way towards the use of technology to stimulate more client and beneficiary participation in shaping development agendas.

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