Editors’ Introduction

This volume contains the Papers and Proceedings of the 26th Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE) held on June 15–16, 2015, in Mexico City. The theme of the conference was “Productivity, Growth, and the Law,” and it was hosted jointly by the Bank of Mexico and the World Bank.

The 2015 ABCDE Organizing Committee was composed of Kaushik Basu (World Bank, Chair), Asli Demirgüç-Kunt and Indermit Gill (World Bank), Alberto Torres and Laura Juárez (Bank of Mexico), and Andrew Foster (Brown University).

The committee chose the topics of the ABCDE sessions and selected the papers to be presented at those sessions. A call for papers appeared on the World Bank’s Web site and other academic outlets six months in advance of the conference. In this volume, a subset of the selected papers are being published, along with the keynote addresses of two well-known academics. Comments and discussions are not being published, but most of the comments, in the form of PowerPoint presentations, can be downloaded from the ABCDE Web site (www.worldbank.org/abcde2015).

The guidelines for choosing which papers would be published in the World Bank Economic Review (WBER) Papers and Proceedings issue differ from those for the regular issues of the WBER. First, the papers are edited but are not subject to the formal referee process that regular submissions to the WBER must pass—although papers can be rejected if after a thorough reading it is decided that they lack adequate merit. Second, the length of the paper is controlled. Third, papers are more exploratory and looser than formal articles on original research.

Finally, a great deal of teamwork was required to produce a volume of this size as part of the WBER series. The editors wish to thank the authors for their cooperation in meeting deadlines and all the other people who made this volume possible. In addition, we are deeply grateful to Gabriela Calderón and Laura Juárez (Bank of Mexico), and Claudia Sepúlveda (World Bank), who supervised and organized the conference program.