

# ACCESS TO INFORMATION



December 2012

## New Access to Information Section

In implementing the Access to Information Policy (document GN-1831-28), the Bank created a section specifically tasked with policy implementation. The Access to Information Section (SEC/ATI), which is part of the Office of the Secretary of the Bank, is comprised of a team of three professionals. It was formally established in March 2012 and has been fully operational since July of this year. Among other functions, SEC/ATI offers permanent technical support for the different Bank units that consult it about application of the policy. *See page 3 for more information on the policy.*

## Changes to the Access to Information Website

The Bank's main means for disseminating information is its external website. Information and documents that have been classified as public under the policy are to be posted on the Bank's website and, therefore, having a site that provides easy access to information is a relevant objective. During this period, efforts have focused on making basic changes to the website, not just to provide maximum content, but also to organize and present the information in a way that provides users with ready access. In this first stage, work was coordinated with the Office of External Relations (EXR) and the changes to the page will soon be visible at [www.iadb.org/access](http://www.iadb.org/access).



## Publishers and Focal Points trained on the Access to Information Policy

One of the main objectives for adequate implementation of the policy is to ensure that it is properly understood and applied. SEC/ATI, with the cooperation of the Knowledge and Learning Department (KNL), designed and carried out a training program directed, in the first stage, to staff who play a relevant role in implementing the policy, i.e. staff authorized to publish documents (Publishers) and coordinators (Focal Points).



Marcelo Cerna, Chief of the Access to Information Section (SEC/ATI), trains a group of Publishers and Focal Points in November 2012.

This training program, called **Maximizing Access and Dissemination**, was offered in November and early December 2012. It included nine workshops for more than 120 Publishers in the Bank. SEC/ATI is currently working with KNL to design new training programs to be offered in 2013 for staff of the different departments, depending on the individual profiles and circumstances of each unit. Workshops will also be held for the Country Offices and other stakeholders.

## Access to Information Committee (AIC)

The Access to Information Committee (AIC) is a relevant player in the Access to Information Policy. It is an administrative body comprised the Office of the Executive Vice President (EVP), the four Vice Presidencies, and EXR, chaired by the Office of the President. The Legal Department advises the committee and the Office of the Secretary (SEC) serves as its secretariat.

Some of the AIC's responsibilities include overseeing general application of the policy; interpreting the policy in accordance with its guiding principles; and reviewing and deciding on requests for overrides from external requesters whose original requests were denied by the Bank.

The AIC has held meetings to supervise implementation of the policy. At the end of December, the AIC approved changes to the Implementation Guidelines in order to improve them in light of the lessons learned during the two years the policy has been applied. Classification instructions will soon be submitted to the AIC for approval and will constitute a basic tool that the Bank can use for appropriate classification of the documents produced by its departments.

*"Excellent training! It clarified the concepts, roles/responsibilities, and particularly the process for making a document public!"*

**Carla Bueso, MIF Focal Point**



*Irene Vega and Adrien Lopez of SEC/ATI received colleagues from the Mexican and Honduran Country Offices at the Access to Information Office.*



*In October 2012, SEC/ATI participated in the 12th Annual IDB-Civil Society Meeting in El Salvador, where it presented the main components of the policy and progress in its implementation. A need was detected for even wider dissemination of the policy among the Bank's external stakeholders.*



**IDB** Office of the Secretary

**Access to Information**

Policy Documents:

- Access to Information Policy (GN-1831-28)
- Classification & Declassification System and Review Process (GN-1831-31)
- Implementation Guidelines (GN-1831-33)

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*"The training was excellent. Aside from clearing up many questions relating to implementation of the Access to Information Policy, it identified other aspects that have been left as loose ends since the realignment. One clear example is the lack of understanding by staff of how to use IDBDOCS and of its importance for maintaining the Bank's official records. SEC/ATI has been doing magnificent, far-reaching work in the Bank."*

**Annabella Gaggero, IFD Focal Point**

## The new Access to Information Policy aims to make the Bank more transparent

The Report on the Ninth General Increase in the Resources of the Bank highlighted the changes made under the new Access to Information Policy (document GN-1831-28) relating to the dissemination of information and the importance of the presumption in favor of dissemination. The policy, which was approved by the Bank's Board of Executive Directors on 12 May 2010, came into effect on 1 January 2011, superseding the Disclosure of Information Policy.

With this new policy, the Bank seeks not only to maximize access to all the documents it produces or receives—under a new standard for information disclosure that makes public all information that is not included in the list of exceptions established in the policy—but also to demonstrate the transparent use of public funds and, by deepening its commitment to stakeholders, to improve the quality of its operations and knowledge and capacity-building activities.

Under the organizational changes carried out by the Bank at the end of 2011, responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Access to Information Policy was transferred from the Office of External Relations (EXR) to the Office of the Secretary (SEC), creating the Access to Information Section, which has been fully operational since July 2012 and is at the service of the Bank's staff. Contact information: (202) 623-1946, [sec-ati@iadb.org](mailto:sec-ati@iadb.org)

## Appointment of External Review Panel members

The policy establishes a two-stage mechanism for reviewing requests for information that have been denied by the Bank. The first stage in the review is carried out by the AIC and the second by an external panel comprised of three members who are independent of the Bank. SEC/ATI supported the selection process, which was carried out by a recommendation panel specially set up by the Bank. In July 2012, the President presented a list of three potential panel members to the Board of Executive Directors, which approved it, and the proposed candidates were appointed on 27 July 2012.



Mauricio Merino, Mexico



Ximena Abogabir Scott, Chile



Toby Mendel, Canada

## SEC/ATI held first meeting with Focal Points

As established in the implementation guidelines, Focal Points are key players in implementing the policy. In August, SEC/ATI undertook a process to establish Focal Points in each Bank department. They serve as a liaison between their departments and SEC/ATI for implementing the policy. In December, SEC/ATI held its first working meeting with the Focal Points to inform them about the main implementation responsibilities and to identify coordination activities for 2013.



*The meeting with Focal Points from different departments was held on Friday, 14 December.*

## SEC/ATI worked to implement the Policy in 2012

During the last half of 2012, the Access to Information Section focused its efforts on implementing the policy. Its main activities included:

- **Access to Information website:** Efforts during the period focused on making basic changes to the website in order to present the information in a way that provides users with easy access. The changes will soon be visible at [www.iadb.org/access](http://www.iadb.org/access).
- **Training:** With cooperation from KNL, SEC/ATI carried out a training program aimed, in this first stage, at staff performing a relevant function in implementing the policy, i.e. staff authorized to publish documents (Publishers) and coordinators (Focal Points). *For more information see page 1 of the Bulletin.*
- **Focal Points:** Focal Points were established in each department. They will serve mainly as a liaison between their departments and SEC/ATI to implement the policy.
- **Publishers:** The list of staff authorized to publish documents in each Bank unit was updated.
- **Implementation guidelines:** Given that nearly two years have elapsed since the policy took effect, areas for fine-tuning the guidelines were identified. At the end of December, the AIC approved changes to the Guidelines. *For more information see page 2 about the Access to Information Committee.*
- **Information classification:** With support from EXR, SEC/ATI worked with all the Bank's departments to prepare instructions so that each unit can assign a classification to each document produced. The work is in the final stages and will soon be submitted to the AIC for approval.

## SEC/ATI held a workshop on the Policy for ICIM



The Policy establishing the Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism (ICIM) of the IDB, was approved by the Bank's Board of Executive Directors in February 2010. The policy establishes a process and an independent forum for addressing complaints from communities or individuals who have been or could have been adversely affected by Bank-financed operations. On 9 November, SEC/ATI held a workshop at ICIM's office to present the basic aspects of the Access to Information Policy and examine subjects that are pertinent for the two Bank policies.

## Continue with implementation in 2013

In 2013 SEC/ATI will continue to take steps to implement the policy in the Bank, with particular emphasis on training, improvement of the website, development of systems to verify timely dissemination of public documents, closer coordination with the different Bank units, and dissemination of the policy. With regard to dissemination, SEC/ATI intends to raise awareness of the importance of the policy among Bank staff and also among external stakeholders, such as civil society organizations. To that end, it will hold more specialized training events in 2013 for the different internal stakeholders in the Bank and will plan dissemination campaigns on the policy for staff and external audiences.