A Core Course on Macroeconomic Management: New Methods and Current Policy Issues was held in Washington, D.C. from February 17 - 27, 1998. This was the first of five course sessions planned for presentation during calendar year 1998 by EDIMP. The primary goal of these course offerings is to enhance the capacity of participants to use modern analytical tools to analyze current macroeconomic policy issues. Forty-one participants attended this course session, consisting mainly of professional macroeconomists, including Bank staff, government policy advisors, university professors, and academic and non-academic researchers. The session was evaluated by the EDI Evaluation Unit using an end-of-course questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. One section asked participants to rate aspects of the course on the extent that the course met standard performance criteria. These performance criteria included the level and quality of support provided by course sponsors, the ability of presenters and appropriateness of course materials, and the degree to which participants felt they had received suitable training. The second main section asked participants to rate their level of information or knowledge about topics covered in the course, before and after completing the course. This attempted to measure achievement through participant self-assessment. A 5-point Likert type scale that ranged from 1 = minimum to 5 = maximum was used to rate participant response for each item. Following is a summary of these evaluation results:

- Overall rating for the course's performance in different areas was high. Given that the scale's theoretical mid-point is 3.0, the mean score for all items was above that point. This is even more significant, given the large number of items used in the evaluation. These findings suggest that for all of the indicators assessed, including content and delivery, participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the course.

- A key indicator of course performance is the question that asks participants if this course was a worthwhile use of their time. On this indicator, results were extremely favorable. Participant mean score was 4.57 out of 5.0. This was one of the highest ratings received in this evaluation.

- Consistently high course ratings were given to items measuring course content. These included the extent to which the course provided new information and its relevance to participants' work. These received mean scores of 4.33 and 4.39 out of 5.0, among the highest scores received in this evaluation.

- Several items stand out for their relatively low mean scores. Two of these items related to course content. One was the extent participants felt they learned suitable policy options. The other was whether the course helped improve analytical skills. These areas are important because they are central to the course objective. Greater focus should be given these areas in future presentations.
Pre/post self-assessment learning questions show substantial gain for all items. These items were selected as issues that the course attempted to impart to participants. This consistent gain suggests that participants felt they did learn what the course's designers anticipated they would learn.

On one item in particular, participants indicated that their pre-course knowledge was relatively low. This was on the issue of currency stabilization, dollarization and monetary management. The mean score on this item was well below the scale's midpoint at 2.43. There was a substantial post-course increase, where the mean score rose to 3.78.

Pre-course mean scores were generally in the high 2.0 to 3.0-range. This measure can serve as an indicator of how much participants felt they knew about a topic upon entering the course. Its value is that it attempts to assess this level of information only after the course was completed. A high score on the pre-test would suggest that this topic should be reviewed for its contribution to new information for participants. The findings from this course show that, with one possible exception, these scores were not high enough to suggest that participants felt they knew a great deal about any of the topics upon entering the course. This one exception was on the topic of fiscal policy, public debt and sustainability, where the pre-course mean score was generally higher at 3.26. It rose to 4.04 in the post-course indicator.

The consistent gain in pre/post information reported by participants should be interpreted with caution. These gains were impressive and do reflect the belief by participants that they received a great deal from this course. However, it is not a valid measure of what was actually learned by participants. Future course offerings would benefit from developing and administering cognitively based questions capable of assessing what was truly learned by participants in the course, as opposed to what they feel they gained.