The Environment and Natural Resources Division of EDI (EDIEN) conducted a core course on *Environmental Economics for Development Policy* in Washington, D.C., from July 6-17, 1998. The two-week course was designed to introduce participants to the latest developments and best practices in using environmental economics to address natural resources and environmental problems. Environmental issues were examined at the macro, sectoral, and project levels to enable participants to derive relevant policy recommendations. Participants were expected to strengthen their analytical skills on new policies and programs for sustainable development, and train various audiences on specific environmental issues of relevance to their countries. The course consisted of a total of 39 thematic sessions, including case studies, and a Saturday computer workshop. Forty-nine participants from 28 countries attended this course, consisting primarily of environmental economists and researchers from governments, universities, and multilateral institutions.

The course was evaluated by the EDI Evaluation Unit (EDIES) using both formative and summative evaluation methods. The formative method used two in-course, open-ended group interviews that were conducted in the middle of each week. Participants' views of course structure and content, case studies, opportunity to ask questions, and learning methodology were obtained for the course presenters and staff to make adjustments to improve the course.

Summative methods included two types of questionnaires. First, different course instructors' skills were evaluated based on 24 end-of-session questionnaires (EOS). The average response rate of EOS was 72 percent, ranging from a total of 15 respondents (Session 37) to 49 respondents (Sessions 22 and 23) out of 49 participants. Session 38 was the participants' case study presentations and was excluded from the evaluation. Secondly, an end-of-course (EOC) questionnaire was used to obtain respondents' feedback on overall course performance. The EOC questionnaire was completed by 42 respondents (response rate = 85.7%). For the EOC respondents, 10 held either Doctorates or an equivalent, 28 held Masters degrees or an equivalent, and 4 held Bachelors degrees or an equivalent. Twenty-seven respondents held degrees in Economics. Of the 42 respondents, 15 (35.7%) were women. A 5-point Likert type scale that ranged from 1 = minimum to 5 = maximum was used for all questions in both EOS and EOC questionnaires.

The course also used pre/post cognitive surveys to estimate the respondents' knowledge levels before and after the course. Two different sets of 13 multiple-choice questions were randomly assigned to pre/post course surveys. Forty-six respondents completed the pre-course survey (response rate = 93.9 percent) and 42 completed the post-course survey (response rate = 85.7 percent). Following is a summary of the evaluation findings.

- Respondents gave the indicator measuring the overall usefulness of the course one of the highest course performance ratings, 4.10 out of 5.0. Eighty-one percent of the
respondents rated 4 or 5 on this indicator. Two items that were found particularly useful were the presentations (mean=3.81) and training materials (mean=3.95). Respondents also felt that the course provided new information (mean=4.10).

- A relatively lower rating was reported on the extent to which the respondents felt equipped at the end of the course to apply the approaches and analytical tools taught in the course. The mean score was 3.14 out of 5.0. Thirty-three percent of the respondents felt equipped well by rating 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale.

- Pre/post cognitive surveys indicated that the average number of correct responses given by the respondents was 5.91 out of 13 questions before the course (45.5 percent correct) and 7.31 out of 13 questions upon completion of the course (56.2 percent correct). This was a percentage increase of over 10 percent in the respondents knowledge. A T-test was conducted to see if the difference in the two mean scores was statistically significant. The result indicated that the respondents in fact scored significantly higher after the course (t=3.38, p< .001).

- Results from the respondents’ self-assessment of their ability or knowledge before and after the course indicated positive increases in their understanding of all key issues. Pre-course mean scores fell between the mid- to high 2.0 on all items except four issues. Post-course ratings ranged between 3.59 and 4.18. The percentage gains varied from 27.3 percent (on the problems faced by governments in making society aware of the link between environment and economic development) to 57.1 percent (on the application of environmental valuation methods).

- Six indicators measuring the course instructors’ communication and presentation skills exceeded 3.0 out of 5.0 for all instructors. Respondents’ views, however, varied among 24 different groups of instructors. Seven groups of instructors received a below-4.0 average rating on all 6 indicators. Results showed that respondents’ ratings on teaching methods of these instructors, either the use of relevant approaches and/or analytical tools, appropriate training materials, or illustrative examples and case studies, tended to be lower than other indicators of instructors skills. Nine groups of instructors whose mean scores exceeded 4.0 on all 6 items received particularly high scores on their ability to answer questions adequately and/or communicate their messages clearly.

- The course designers made changes throughout the course based on issues raised by the participants during the two mid-week in-course interviews. Two notable improvements made to the course were the allocation of certain time at the end of each session for questions and answers and the provision of personal assistance from instructors and staff for participants’ better understanding of the logic of the course content and sequencing of a very large volume of information provided by the course. Participants also raised during the interviews that there was a need for more active exchange of views among participants. On the EOC questionnaire, 59% of respondents felt at the end of the course that there was still too little interaction.

- There were limitations to the evaluation. First, the statistical test of the pre/post cognitive surveys was based on the comparison of two unmatched groups. The paired-data matching individual respondents in pre/post surveys were not available due to anonymity of the surveys. Second, information on respondents’ educational and professional levels was not available for the cognitive assessment. This information would be useful in assessing knowledge increases by respondents’ different characteristics.