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The Governance, Regulation and Finance Division of WBI (WBIRP) conducted a core course on Privatization and Regulation of Transport Services in Washington, D.C., from September 20-26, 1998. This was the second course offering in 1998, following an earlier course offering in January, 1998. The primary objective of the course was to provide transport regulators and policy makers with theoretical and practical tools necessary to deal with various challenges that arise after privatization of the transport sector. The course covered four major themes: 1) theories of regulation in industries; 2) international experiences in the liberalization and privatization of transport activities; 3) information required for day-to-day operations in implementing regulations; and 4) institutional requirements for effective regulation. Participants in the course included Ministers and Secretaries of Transport, and heads of privatization commissions and regulatory agencies. A total of 41 participants, including 9 (22.0%) women, attended this course from 16 countries.

The WBI Evaluation Unit (WBIES) conducted a Level 1 (participants' reaction) evaluation using a participant's feedback questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by 40 respondents, 97.6% of the total participants. Respondents were asked to give their views about course content, the quality of instructors, and perceived levels of their own knowledge on 6 specific issues, before and after the course. A 5-point Likert type scale that ranged from 1 = minimum to 5 = maximum was used for each question. Respondents were also asked to write comments or suggestions for the course in an open-ended format. Following are the key evaluation findings.

Course Design and Delivery

- The overall usefulness of the course received a mean score of 4.35 out of 5.0. Nearly 95% of respondents rated either 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale for this indicator, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the course.

- The quality of the 8 course instructors was assessed individually in terms of their knowledge of issues and communication skills. Two of the 8 instructors were the presenters of case studies. All instructors received a rating exceeding 4.0 on their knowledge, ranging from 4.08 to 4.74. Three instructors, including the 2 case study presenters, also received an above-4.0 rating in their communication skills, ranging 4.29-4.82. Five of the 8 course instructors scored in the 3.62-3.94 range.

- The course used a combination of lectures and case studies to deliver key messages. The course organizer particularly emphasized the use of case studies in the initial course plan as an important means to promote interactions among participants and facilitate active exchange of different experiences by participants. The extent to which respondents were satisfied with the quality of different pedagogical methods used during the course, however, was not captured in the questionnaire. In addition to the quality of instructors' knowledge and communication skills,
for the future it would be critical to measure other various specific dimensions of instructional
delivery in assessing course performance, such as the usefulness of each instructional method,
the level of interactions between participants and instructors, the depth of material coverage, and
the appropriateness or balance of time allocation.

Self-Reported Knowledge

- Respondents' pre/post self-assessment of their knowledge levels indicated a positive gain on all
  6 specific topics. Pre-course ratings were below 3.0 across all topics, ranging from 2.49 to 2.97.
  Four of the 6 items exceeded a rating of 4.0 after the course, ranging 4.03-4.33, and 2 items
  received a rating in the high 3.0 range, 3.79 and 3.98.

- The mean score of the topic on "contractual arrangements in infrastructure deals" increased from
  2.68 to 4.13, indicating the largest pre/post percentage change (54.2%). The "role of return and
  price cap regulation," with which respondents indicated the least familiarity before the course
  (mean=2.49), was also one of the items that increased substantially in rating after the course
  (mean=3.79, or 52.6%). Respondents' pre/post gain was above 50% on all topics, except on one
  item. The topic on "quality regulation" had the highest pre-course rating among the respondents
  (mean=2.97), indicating that the respondents were most familiar with this item before entering
  the course. Respondents reported that their knowledge level remained among the highest on this
  topic at the end of the course (mean=4.21), but their perceived gain from attending the course
  was the smallest among all topics (41.4%).

- One of the expectations of the course organizer was that participants who attended the course
  would be able to increase their "problem-solving" skills. The questionnaire had 2 questions that
  asked about respondents' skills: the extent to which respondents acquired new regulatory skills;
  and the extent to which they understood the next steps to take for their own plans. Respondents
  had a rating exceeding 4.0 on both questions, 4.03 and 4.24, respectively. It was not clear,
  however, whether or how much respondents' problem-solving skills were improved by taking the
  course. The questions only asked about their skill levels at the end of the course, and their initial
  levels upon entering the course were not measured. The course organizer is advised to compare
  participants' perceived technical skill levels both before and after the course, or more preferably,
  use a measure other than self-reported instrument to try to assess actual gains in skills and
  learning in future course offerings.

Comments from Respondents

- Written comments from respondents showed both positive feedback and suggestions for future
  courses. When asked about the most useful aspect of the course, the most common responses
  were the presentations of case studies and exchange of views and experiences among
  participants (N=17), improvement in understanding general framework of privatization and
  regulation (N=7), reading materials provided by the course and references for useful documents
  (N=6), and exposure to negotiation skills (N=5).

- Respondents felt that the course could be improved in a number of ways. Ten respondents
  commented on the balance between the number of topics covered in the course and the
  limitation of time. They requested that the course should be selective in topics and ensure
  sufficient time to review each of the important issues in depth. Another 8 respondents preferred a
  longer duration for the course, such as a 2-week session, to cover all scheduled topics. Several
  respondents commented on case studies (N=5), requesting more case presentations covering
different regions, as well as various modes of transport, such as rail and ports. They also
suggested that each case study be supplemented by a clear identification of lessons learned. Several respondents also commented that the course should have more group work or role-playing activities for negotiation skills (N=5), and that each presentation should be followed by participants' discussions (N=4).