Science of Delivery at the World Bank Group

What does it take to produce transformational impacts on people's quality of life, every time in every country?

We know that sound technical knowledge is fundamental for effective interventions that impact people's lives. Development organizations and governments have invested substantial resources into increasingly sophisticated technical solutions – new infrastructure, health programs, budgetary reforms, and access to clean and affordable energy (among many others).

Yet, we also know that investments don't always have the intended impacts on people's lives. Too often, implementation processes are disrupted, and even otherwise sound technical solutions don't deliver the returns that policy makers want and people expect. Capacity shortfalls, misaligned incentives, and fragmentation between national, state, and local authorities are just some of the many non-technical challenges, or delivery challenges, that practitioners face.

We need to improve our ability to combine technical expertise with on-the-ground delivery know-how; and develop a more systematic, collaborative, and cumulative understanding not just of *what* to deliver, but also of *how* to deliver.

The Science of Delivery is the collective and cumulative knowledge base of delivery know-how that helps practitioners make more informed decisions and produce consistent results on the ground. This understanding of how delivery works in international development will be informed by a broad range of development partners worldwide and across technical sectors. While it will take time to develop and put into practice a Science of Delivery for international development, bettering our understanding of delivery challenges will significantly improve our ability to achieve consistent and transformational impacts on the ground.

How we work

Central to our understanding of Science of Delivery is the notion of learning from operations, for operations: revisiting past interventions to apply knowledge about the implementation process to future operations. We are supporting the operationalization of the Science of Delivery across the World Bank Group with three main initiatives.

Case Studies ask questions about underexplored complex delivery problems and processes that development stakeholders grapple with: what they are, when they arise, and how they might be addressed. Case studies offer powerful insights into delivery successes and failures and help to identify why a particular outcome occurred. They offer detailed accounts of delivery techniques, strategies, and experiences of the twists and turns of the implementation process. In collaboration with our partners in the Global Delivery Initiative (GDI), we are working to build a library of case studies that investigate delivery problems. As the library expands, its contents will be made available to practitioners worldwide.

Delivery Gaps Research systematically investigates delivery in its own right, addressing the under-researched and often under-appreciated delivery challenges that affect results on the ground. The objective is to explore why otherwise technically sound interventions don't always achieve their full potential, identify analytical categories of common and recurrent delivery gaps, and deploy insights from this research to support operations.

Operational Support addresses the operational needs of task teams, aiming to provide a real time bridge between practitioners on the ground and ongoing operational learning through case studies and Delivery Gaps Research. We support teams in thinking through their assumptions and identifying potential delivery challenges during early project cycle stages.

Overview of WBG Science of Delivery activities

Where we work

6 World Regions

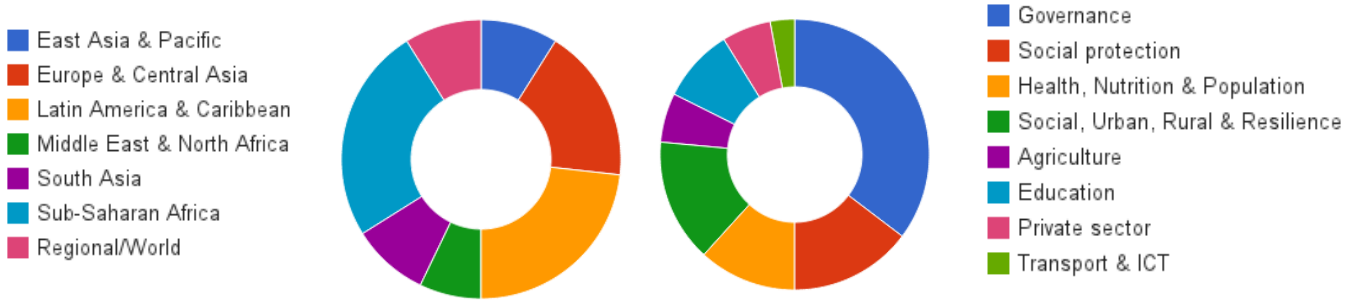
Africa • East Asia & Pacific • Europe & Central Asia • Latin America & Caribbean • Middle East & North Africa • South Asia

14 Global Practices

Agriculture • Education • Energy & Extractives • Environment & Natural Resources • Finance & Markets • Governance • Health, Nutrition & Population • Macroeconomics & Fiscal Management • Poverty • Social Protection & Labor • Trade & Competitiveness • Transport & ICT • Social, Urban, Rural & Resilience • Water

5 Cross-Cutting Solution Areas

Climate Change • Fragility, Conflict & Violence • Gender • Jobs • Public Private Partnerships



Operational support ■ **Case studies** *Completed 2013-14* ◆ *Ongoing & planned 2014-15* ◆