

Delivery Challenges Work Stream

The Delivery Challenges work stream establishes an evidence-base for identifying and addressing the most common delivery challenges that hinder implementation with the aim of improving operations.

1. Why does the Delivery Challenges work stream matter?

Implementation issues remain under-appreciated and under-analyzed; most of the existing knowledge on delivery know-how is scattered or tacit. Further, the development community lacks a common framework of analytical categories to refer to non-technical problems or delivery challenges. This lack of analytical clarity leads to references such as “political will,” “lack of capacity,” or “institutional weakness” problems. These all-encompassing tags have little analytical or practical value since they are overly broad, ambiguous, and fail to generate knowledge that is useful for practitioners on the ground. Prime examples of delivery challenges that impact development projects – irrespective of sector – include electoral cycles, limited stakeholder engagement, poor existing technology, or insufficient consultative processes with civil society.

2. What is the objective of the Delivery Challenges work stream?

As part of the Global Delivery Initiative (GDI)*, a Working Group composed by the ADB, AfDB, DFID, GIZ, IADB, and WBG experts is exploring why otherwise technically sound interventions do not always attain the expected results, and building a system that can help practitioners address delivery challenges. Ultimately, this work stream will arm practitioners with insights that are directly applicable to their daily work. In doing so it also aims to:

- Help practitioners solve delivery challenges by providing evidence on how others have solved (or not) such challenges;
- Connect practitioners across organizations to exchange experiences and ideas on solving delivery challenges;
- Create an evidence-based system that provides real-time data on common delivery challenges and potential solutions;
- Improve analytical clarity by providing common categories of delivery challenges and;
- Provide the analytical underpinnings for generating knowledge that speaks to practitioners’ needs.

3. What does the Delivery Challenges work stream do?

It initially seeks to achieve these objectives by establishing the analytical basis for systematically *identifying* and *helping solve* the most common delivery challenges.

At present, the Delivery Challenges Working Group is focusing on identifying the most frequent non-technical issues in close collaboration with practitioners through the following activities:

- Thorough analysis of historical WBG operational data of 2,200 projects to identify and categorize the most common delivery challenges;
- A literature review aimed at capturing the nuances of implementation and its problems;
- Building an evidence-based system (DeCODE) that can estimate the likelihood of a delivery challenge occurring in a particular country and sector based on practitioners’ insights;
- Conducting interviews with select teams to develop and launch a survey to collect relevant information on delivery challenges to fine-tune the system.

A second phase will entail the incorporation of historical data from the Working Group partners, and refining the delivery challenges categories to enable practitioners to identify concrete problems they face on the ground. During the second phase, a beta version of DeCODE will be launched and tested in selected sectors across the Working Group organizations.

A third phase of this initiative will streamline DeCODE into existing processes of the Working Group organizations in order to fit seamlessly into current work flows. It will also promote the use of DeCODE across new GDI partner organizations. Finally, the data will help the Working Group identify patterns of delivery and development challenges and provide practitioners further evidence that derives from this work stream.