

Grants to Institutions

Guidelines for Preparing Final Technical Reports

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1. What is the Final Technical Report?

Upon completion of a project, recipients of IDRC project grants are required to submit a Final Technical Report as a condition for receiving final payment from IDRC. This report provides the details of the activities supported by the project, focusing on the substantive achievements and lessons learned from the experience. In addition to other outputs generated by the project, the Final Technical Report is a primary source of information and analysis for IDRC. It serves an important accountability function in reporting on what was achieved with IDRC support.

And, in keeping with [IDRC's Open Access Policy](#), recipients must submit grey literature (including Final Technical Reports) to IDRC for publication on an open access basis in the IDRC Digital Library (idl-bnc.irdc.ca).

2. Considerations for Final Technical Reports

The requirements for all reports, including the Final Technical Report, are agreed to during project development. The *Application for an IDRC Research Grant*, requires an open access dissemination plan for the expected reports and publications generated by the project and reflected in the *Grant Agreement*. Disclaimers and any additional acknowledgement required will be set out in the grant agreement and must be included in all reports housed in the IDRC Digital Library.

In the event that changes occur to the research and planned outputs during the life cycle of a project, reporting requirements and arrangements may be modified by mutual agreement during project implementation. All changes are to be appropriately documented. Before final payment and project completion, all agreed reports must be submitted to the IDRC program officer responsible for the project and deemed satisfactory. A project cannot be closed without the necessary reports.

Prior to submitting the Final Technical Report, any outstanding issues related to dissemination in accordance with the IDRC Open Access Policy can be discussed between IDRC's responsible program officer and the recipient. Issues of concern can be addressed, keeping in mind:

- Even unsuccessful efforts and outcomes in research, capacity, and policy can convey important learning and lessons.
- Final Technical Reports provide valuable information on project achievements and outputs and enable further analysis and learning. These reports should provide candid observations, wherever possible, as per the guidelines set out below, about the overall experience with the project. However, sensitive or confidential issues should be addressed through a direct exchange with the program officer, and documented and filed separately outside of the IDRC Digital Library.

The following guidelines are for the content of the Final Technical Report, focusing on a substantive discussion of project activities, lessons learned, outputs, and outcomes. All other project outputs should be submitted separately as per [IDRC's Open Access Policy](#).

During the course of the project, it is important to keep in mind what was agreed to concerning the content of all project technical reports. This will help to keep a project on track, as well as to make and document any necessary adjustments.

3. Preparing a Final Technical Report

IDRC program officers responsible for the grant must be able to determine satisfactory completion of the work before they can approve the release of final payments. The guidelines below outline the requirements for final technical reports. Incomplete or unclear final technical reports will be rejected.

Recipients must complete and submit final technical reports on or before their due dates, pursuant to the grant agreement.

Structured guidelines are provided below. We suggest that project leaders prepare to write a report by first reflecting on the main messages they would like to convey. This will help the written report to focus on those messages. IDRC's principle interests in report content are in both actual experience and what was learned.

The report should be an opportunity to reflect on the management of the project from various perspectives: technical, administrative, and financial.

The amount of effort required can be reduced if project leaders are aware of the required content for these reports from the beginning, so that they can think about it during the life of the project. An ongoing exercise of self-assessment of this nature can be a useful tool for keeping a project on track and making any necessary adjustments.

4. Format

Projects differ in relative focus on research, capacity building, and policy/practice influence and there are different ways to organize this material. A suggested format for each section is provided below, but alternatives may be used as appropriate to the project.

- i) *Cover page*

The report cover page of the Final Technical Report should include the following:

- Project title
- IDRC project number (a 6-digit number) – component number (if applicable)
- Research organizations involved in the study
- Location of study
- By: full name of author(s), name of organization
- Report type: Final Technical Report
- Date: date the report is submitted
- Insert copyright and licensing information:
 - Copyright notice in the following form: “© [year] [name of the owner of the copyright]”.
 - Licensing information as follows: “Disseminated under Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) ”

ii) Executive summary

Provide an informative summary of the key advances, significant research findings, important outcomes and innovative outputs of the project. The focus should be on project achievements in terms of outputs and outcomes.

iii) The research problem

What was the basic rationale of the project and the research problem or problems being addressed? Often, the researchers’ understanding of the problems will have evolved since the project was approved. The report should describe this evolution and the reasons behind it. Did the research process lead to a revised view of the research problem?

Provide a synthesized reflection on the overall progress of the global project (please include the general objective of the project). Describe the contribution to knowledge that this project represents from a scientific, developmental and/or policy perspective.

iv) Progress towards milestones

Briefly describe achievement of project milestones (as specified in the Grant Agreement) for the entire reporting period. Have a brief section for each milestone (e.g. Milestone 1.1, 1.2, etc.).

Provide evidence that milestones were achieved, and refer to the hard evidence in previous reports and/or attached annexes (as needed). If applicable, explain why any milestones were not achieved.

v) *Synthesis of research results and development outcomes*

The analysis of outcomes should take into account social, gender, and environmental dimensions wherever appropriate and possible. It can be done in two ways, but should be consistent the approach used in your past interim technical reports (confer with the program officer to determine the preferred approach):

By each project research objective:

- Synthesize the main research results during the project, highlighting the progress made by the project. This should be done by listing each specific objective as it is written in the Grant Agreement, highlighting the progress for each one.
- If applicable, include any summarized quantitative analysis to back up the results as an annex to this report
- Highlight any unexpected, surprising or interesting innovative results that you can draw out of the research.
- Explain how the research results are being used, and what their impact has been on specific communities or populations in the targeted country(ies) at the end of the project.
- How were research ethics issues, if any, assessed and managed?
- Describe any potential uptake of project results within 3 years of the end of the project.

OR

By overall project outcomes:

What were the main outcomes of the project? How did the project contribute to:

- Scientific, research, or knowledge innovations?
- Changes in behaviour, capacities, actions, or relationships of researchers, networks, or research institutions?
- Changes in behaviour, capacities, actions, or relationships of research users or those affected by the research process or findings?
- Policy influence (e.g., expanded policy capacities of researchers; broadening policy horizons of policymakers; and affecting policy regimes)
- Technology development, adoption, and adaptation
- Changes in the state of economic, social, health, political, or environmental conditions
- What was learned about approaches or broad design elements for conducting research, building capacity or influencing policy or practice in the field and circumstances of the

project? What problems arose, and what changes in orientation occurred? Were certain aspects of project design particularly important to the degree of success of the project?

- What contributed to these outcomes and what lessons did you draw from the experience?
- Did any research ethics considerations emerge during the project? How were these issues mitigated and managed? What are the lessons from the assessment and management of research ethics in the project?
- What was the role of other organizations or donors in this project? How was this relationship managed?

vi) Methodology

Describe and discuss the research methods and analytical techniques used and any problems that arose. Research instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides, and any other documentation judged useful to understanding the project should also be included. Indicate and explain any changes in orientation that may have occurred since the project was designed. Indicate any particular learning about merits of different methods for addressing the project's research problem and generating desired outputs and outcomes.

vii) Project Outputs

Making reference to the open access dissemination plan, what were the main outputs of the project? Identify any outputs that were planned, but which have yet to materialize. Specify when these outputs will be completed, including plans for any future publications. Specify how you have met the requirements of [IDRC's Open Access Policy](#). If appropriate, highlight any unique or innovative outputs. If appropriate, explain why outputs were not completed or were of poor quality.

viii) Problems and Challenges

Have there been any problems or challenges faced by the project? These could include delays, problems amongst stakeholders, with research activities etc. Highlight any risks that might have emerged in the project, and innovative ways you have found to deal with these risks. Reflect on possible problems and challenges related to ethics.

ix) Administrative Reflections and Recommendations

This section is not about research recommendations, but administrative recommendations for IDRC. What would you do differently as a result of this experience, and what general and useful lessons can be derived for improving future projects?

What recommendations would you make to IDRC with respect to the administration of the project, related to the scope, duration, or budget? Candid observations about the overall experience with the project are encouraged. However, any sensitive or confidential information should be addressed through a direct exchange with the program officer, and documented and filed separately.

5. Submission of Final Technical Reports

Please follow the instructions on how to submit final technical in the [IDRC Connect User Guide](#).