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Transparency and Trade Facilitation in the Asia Pacific: What's at Stake?

A new World Bank-APEC study, "Transparency & Trade Facilitation in the Asia Pacific: Estimating the Gains from Reform", estimates that the potential intra-regional gains in APEC from improved transparency (the way in which trade reform measures are designed and administered) are substantial—approximately \$148 billion, which is 7.5 percent of 2004 trade. Action to improve transparency could be undertaken in many forms, including within the current Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation framework or future talks on a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific. While reform must continue to focus on traditional measures such as tariffs, transparency is also critical, say authors Helbe, Shepherd and Wilson. APEC member economies already perform relatively well on trade policy transparency compared with other regions, in part because of the effective use of information technologies by member governments.

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Climate Change: The Final Blow for Agriculture in Africa?

Even without climate change, African agriculture faces serious challenges—land degradation, inadequate irrigation, rural-to-urban migration, political instability, and stagnant economies. Slow technological progress and a lack of access to information on how to cope with climate change are further constraints. In this brief, Ariel Dinar describes a recent study—the first to analyze climate impact and adaptation across the African continent and to combine cross-country observed and simulated data—that provides economic insights into the magnitude of the impact and the value of adaptation. The results suggest that large regions of marginal agriculture in Africa may be forced out of production by 2100, while others will thrive. Millions of agriculture-dependent, water-deprived people in the most vulnerable countries will need information, technologies, and supporting institutions to adapt to further climate deterioration. Some countries being more vulnerable than others, help must be focused where it is needed most.

[Research Brief](#)

Brain Waste? Educated Immigrants in the US Labor Market -- and more articles in the latest World Bank Research Digest

Everyone in New York has a story about how their taxi driver was an Eastern European scientist. And taxi drivers, in turn, claim that all their Indian passengers are computer professionals. Using US census data, Mattoo, Neagu and Ozden investigate questions such as whether skilled employment of immigrants in the United States really differs by country of origin. Preliminary results suggest that they do – for example, a hypothetical 34-year-old Indian college graduate who arrived in 1994 has a 69 percent probability of obtaining a skilled job, while for a Mexican immigrant of identical age, experience, and education, the probability is only 24 percent. To find out more about the real numbers behind popular perceptions and what they could imply for policymakers in developing countries, and a range of other research articles, read the summer issue of the World Bank Research Digest.

[Research Digest Vol. 1, No. 4](#)

ADePT: User Friendly Tools for Poverty Analysis

The World Bank produces on average about 15 poverty assessments per year for developing countries, nearly all of which entail significant time and resources to produce a reasonably standard set of tables and graphs with basic statistics. Similar work is now done by country governments, such as within the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process. ADePT is a new Stata software platform for automated economic analysis designed by researchers Lokshin, Sajaia and Radyakin of the World Bank's Development Research Group. ADePT simplifies and speeds up routine poverty analysis and helps to minimize errors. It also introduces new techniques and methods of applied economic analysis to a wider audience. It can be used as a tool for sensitivity analysis, data checking, and as an educational tool. By producing a standard set of tables and graphs, the program allows comparisons of poverty statistics across countries.

[Modules based on ADePT](#)

Martin Ravallion, New Director of the World Bank's Development Research Group

Martin Ravallion, formerly Senior Research Manager of the World Bank's Poverty Research team, is now Director of the Bank's Development Research Group, comprising macroeconomics and growth, finance and private sector development, human development and public services, rural and urban development and poverty. An Australian national whose main interests over the last 25 years have

concerned poverty and policies to fight it, Ravallion takes over from L. Alan Winters, who has returned to the University of Sussex.

[Martin Ravallion](#)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Future Challenges facing the World Bank Group - What do you think?\*\*\*\*\*

As the global environment evolves, the World Bank Group has begun work on an options paper that lays out future global scenarios and considers how the institution's long-term strategy might be adapted to better respond to the needs of the clients and stakeholders it serves. This Long-Term Strategic Exercise (LTSE) is being conducted by a team of Bank staff drawn from across the institution, guided by Francois Bourguignon, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Development Economics. To read the overview of the draft paper produced by this working group, and to provide online feedback, please visit

[www.worldbank.org/ltse](http://www.worldbank.org/ltse)

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 New Policy Research Working Papers  
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These papers, and all older papers, are also available using the [Document Search](#) on the Bank's Development Economics Research website and on the [Social Sciences Research Network](#).

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