Grants to Institutions

Guidelines for Preparing Interim Technical Reports

Programs and Partnerships Branch
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What is the Interim Technical Report?

An interim (or progress) report is a technical report which recipients must complete in accordance with the schedule outlined in their grant agreement. It should provide a concise description of the activities planned and completed during the reporting period. The report helps IDRC staff assess the technical progress of projects against set project objectives. 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.
Considerations for Interim Technical Reports

Recipients must complete and submit interim technical reports on or before their due dates, as stated in the grant agreement signed between IDRC and grant recipients. When expected to submit a joint interim technical report by several collaborating organizations, it is the responsibility of the grantees to ensure that each one of them completes its contribution to the project report early enough to allow the coordinating organization to integrate and submit the completed report on behalf of all organizations, according to the schedule. Delays in submitting technical reports on time will impact distribution of project funds. Project payments will be delayed if reports are not received within the schedule agreed upon in Part 3: Schedule of project milestones of the project grant agreement.

The interim technical report must contain sufficient information detailing the work accomplished during the reporting period. For each of the project objectives, the following information should be provided:

- details of the work carried out;
- results;
- activities planned for the next period;
- assessment of progress;
- an outline of problems encountered and the actions to take to address them; and
- administrative aspects.

Lastly, a reminder that - in keeping with IDRC’s Open Access Policy - recipients must submit grey literature to IDRC for publication on an open access basis in the IDRC Digital Library.

Using these guidelines

Structured guidelines are provided below. We suggest that recipients prepare to write their report by first reflecting on the main messages they would like to convey. Following the basic sections (project identifier information, problem and rationale, objectives), the recipient is to report on activities, outputs, and outcomes under each of the project’s specific objectives (research, capacity, or policy/practice), with summary of any overall outcomes and learning at the end. The recipient must also provide candid observations, 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.

The interim technical report is an opportunity to reflect on the management of the project from various perspectives: technical, administrative, and financial. It is suggested that recipients familiarise themselves with the required content for interim reports from the outset of the project, so that they can remain aware of the key elements of these reports and are better able to maintain the information which these reports require.

**Preparing an Interim Technical Report**

a. **Format**

Depending on the size and complexity of a project, the interim technical reports may vary in length. However, the interim technical report should be no longer than 20 pages, excluding annexes. Whenever possible, the interim report and accompanying documents should be submitted in digital format via [IDRC Connect](#) to facilitate diffusion. Recipients should refer to the email received from the Centre providing explanation about IDRC Connect and information on how to submit documents.

**Basic Project Information includes:**

**Cover Page**

Interim reports submitted to IDRC must include a title cover page. The important information that must appear on the cover page is listed below.

* **Project Title:**
* **IDRC Project Number-Component Number (if applicable)**
  If the report is a joint interim report, no component number is necessary.
* **Subtitle (if applicable):**
* **By:** Full Name(s) of Author(s)
* **Report Type and #:** e.g., 1st Progress Report, 2nd Interim Report
* **Period covered by the report:** e.g., January – December 2022
*Date:* Date the report is submitted

*Country/Region:* Country(ies) or region(s) where project was carried out

*Full Name of Research Institution:* (Incl. Research Organization(s) involved in the study):

*Address of Research Institution*

*Name(s) of Researcher/Members of Research Team*

*Contact Information of Researcher/Research Team members*

b. Report Contents

Project leaders may begin by reflecting on the main messages they would like to convey, then focus in detail on those messages. IDRC’s principal interests in report content are in both actual experience and what was learned. Reports should include a Table of Contents. The report should be composed of the following sections:

1. **Executive Summary**

The report should begin with a half-page to one-page synthesis of the project which situates the work in the period with respect to the project as a whole. This section should be an informative summary of the key advances, significant research findings, important outcomes, and innovative outputs of the project during the reporting period. The focus should be on project achievements in terms of research results and outcomes.

2. **The Research Problem**

This section should state the basic rationale for 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.

3. **Objectives**

This section should briefly describe project objectives and achievement of project milestones (as specified in the grant agreement) for the reporting period. It should address the degree of progress toward the achievement of each project objective specified in the grant agreement,
including the general objective, and any new or modified objectives. To this end, it should further provide a brief section for each milestone (e.g., Milestone 1.1, 1.2, etc.). Provide evidence that milestones are being achieved and refer to the hard evidence in attached annexes (as needed). If applicable, explain why any are not achieved and how the project will readjust.

4. Methodology

Describe and discuss the research methods and analytical techniques used and any methodological problems that arose during the reporting period. Research instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides, and any other documentation judged useful to understanding the project should also be included as annexes to this report. 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.

5. Progress Towards Thematic Priorities

This section should discuss how progress on the project has contributed to IDRC’s Strategy 2030 priorities, found in Annex B. It is understood that not all projects will have significant changes related to each strategic priority in every reporting period, you need only address areas where relevant changes have occurred since your last report. For convenience, additional information on IDRC’s strategic priorities and programmatic themes can be accessed in the Strategy 2030 document.

6. Project Implementation and Management

This section should briefly describe the activities which have been supported under the project during the reporting period and their timelines. It should also provide a budget summary (details should be provided in the financial report). Please refer to the original workplan used in the research proposal. List key priorities (milestones) for the next reporting period.

If relevant, please comment on specific aspects of project design such as:
o Financial and administrative challenges - indicate the financial variances which resulted from the activities of the project. Include the financial and administrative challenges that should be flagged in the reporting period with focus on budget management and financial milestones. Full details on financial reports are available from the IDRC website. Highlight how the risks identified in the proposal are being managed. Highlight any new risks that might have emerged since the last report and innovative ways you have found to deal with risks.

Include forecasted expenditures for the next reporting period and until the end of the project (comment on the financial forecast included in the interim financial report, with respect to the activities planned for the next reporting period, highlighting variances from the original plan or from the last forecast);

o Research partnerships - Indicate if this IDRC funded project contributed to stronger research partnerships (e.g., south-south partnerships, partnerships with Canadian or developing country researchers/institutions or with other researchers), and the usefulness of these in achieving the project’s objectives.

o Research ethics:
  o Is the project collecting corporate or personal information?
  o If so, what are the protocols in place to obtain informed consent and maintain confidentiality?

- Data management and publishing:

IDRC promotes good data management practices and the publication of research data. In this interim technical report, please address the following if you have completed a Data Management Plan (DMP) and/or you intend to publish some or all the data you collect and/or will analyze.

  o If this is your first technical report, you are collecting data from research subjects and you intend to publish all or some of the data you collect, please include the text from your research ethics application explaining what data you will collect, what data you intend to publish, and what informed consent language you intend to use (or are using) that will permit you to publish the data you collect.
  o If your plan for managing and/or publishing your data has changed since you finalized your DMP or since your last interim report, briefly describe those changes. If you are working with other agencies to create new or accessing existing datasets, comment on progress made and/or issues arising.
Where and when are you planning to publish your data? If your intentions remain unchanged from your previous technical report, please reproduce the information you provided previously.

Data repository name:

Repository internet address:

Estimated (or actual) date of publishing:

7. Gender Equality and Inclusion

In this section, the research team is given the opportunity to reflect and report on the project’s contribution to gender equality and inclusion (GEI). In examining issues of GEI, research teams are encouraged to examine intersecting identities and experiences (e.g., ethnicity/nationality, citizenship, ability, education, class, caste, religion, indigeneity, sexual orientation, and geographic location) that can contribute to compounding vulnerabilities and potential discrimination. Using the gender progress markers found in Annex A, the team should determine the category in which the project falls, articulate outcomes and results achieved toward the category, discuss if the project has shifted categories from previous reporting periods, and share any other pertinent lessons or reflections. In sections 8, 9 and 10 the team is also welcomed to include GEI aspects into their responses.

NOTE: IDRC does not fund projects that are gender-blind or limited. These are projects that have a treatment of gender equality and inclusion that could potentially cause harm (blind) or adversely affect outcomes (limited).

While addressing the gender progress markers, consider the following questions:

- Has the project aimed to address underlying root causes of gender inequality/gendered power? Were there explicit approaches to address the underlying causes of gender inequality including social norms and other structural barriers? Are there demonstrable changes or progress towards change in social norms and other structural causes of inequality?

- How has gender been considered throughout the research cycle? Were local partners including grassroots organizations who understand the underlying causes of gender inequality in context included in the research?
8. Challenges encountered/actions taken

Address other project management issues which affected the project during the reporting period, and which will bear on the future of the project.

Where relevant, indicate whether there have been any significant challenges faced by the project thus far. These could include delays, problems amongst stakeholders, problems with research activities, administration by the research organization; human resources (staffing, turnover, etc.), the project schedule; etc. Please flag any issues that may require help from IDRC to resolve. If applicable, explain actions that have, or will be taken, to ensure the project continues on schedule.

9. Project Outputs and Dissemination

Provide a listing of any project outputs during this reporting period and describe the project’s main research results, if any currently exist. Identify any outputs that are planned, but which have yet to materialize. Please specify what dissemination efforts were made wherever relevant. Categories of outputs can be identified as:

- information sharing and dissemination (reports, publications, conferences, websites, etc.);
- manuscripts developed to date (published, in press, in review, in preparation, etc.)
- book or chapter of a book
- thesis, technical bulletin/report, paper in conference proceedings
- selective others (if judged to be a substantive output)
- submission of project outputs

All substantive outputs developed as part of the project (e.g., project research outputs, including Interim Technical Reports), are to be submitted in digital format. Please follow the instructions on how to submit the interim technical report, and associated project outputs, in the project output submission user guide at the IDRC Connect webpage.
This section should further describe and interpret the main research results to date by highlighting the contribution to knowledge that this project represents from a scientific development and/or policy perspective. Include the summarized quantitative analysis to date, which should back up your findings. References to quantitative and qualitative evidence and the raw data (e.g., numbers from surveys and other forms of data collection, statistical tables, maps, etc.) should be included as annexes to this report. Comment on any unexpected, surprising, or interesting results that are arising out of the research.

While submission of lengthy outputs in paper format such as published books is also acceptable, project leaders are encouraged to submit all project outputs electronically to facilitate dissemination.

10. Project Outcomes:

This section should describe outcomes the project may have had or might be expected to have, which include changes in behaviours, attitudes, practices, capacities, policies, relationships, technologies, etc. that promote sustainable and equitable development and reduce poverty. They may result from the research process or the application of the research findings. It is important to consider both tangible achievements (outputs) and resulting consequences (outcomes), together with derived learning. If possible, explain how research results and findings are being used, and what their impact has been on specific communities or populations in the targeted country(ies) since the last report.

The analysis of outcomes should take into account social, gender, and environmental dimensions wherever appropriate and possible.

11. Recommendations

Include in this section a summary of any recommendations that you would like to make to IDRC with respect to the administration of the project, related to the scope, duration, or budget. These recommendations should derive from the background information provided in previous sections of this report.
### Annex A:

**Gender Progress Markers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender aware</th>
<th>• Gender equality and inclusion is considered in the research project’s rationale but is not an operative concept in the design and methodology.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender sensitive</td>
<td>• Gender equality and inclusion is considered in the research project’s rationale and is addressed in the project design and methodology but does not (yet) extend to analysis and action to address gender inequalities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Awareness of intersectional issues, root causes in program area of research or field.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is minimal gender fade (the inability to incorporate gender analysis in the research methodology or implementation itself in spite of awareness and intentions of having included gender in the rationale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender responsive</td>
<td>• Gender equality and inclusion is considered in the research project’s rationale, design, and methodology and is rigorously analyzed to inform implementation, communication, and influence strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At the start, the project is clear about gendered outcomes in the rationale for issues and targeting. Gendered (intersectional) relations are considered and built-in to call/concept note, grant contract, proposal and/or evaluation grids (pre and post).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• By the end of the project, in addition to the previous marker, project has addressed gendered intersectional relations in the research. This may include, depending on the intervention, sex-disaggregated (and other relevant intersections) instruments, data collection and meaningful participation of targeted marginalized groups. There have been gender considerations related to legitimacy (team composition and gender expertise) and support for capacities in gender and relevant analyses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Results of gender analysis are used to inform implementation strategies an influence outreach, communication and policy strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Transformative</td>
<td>• At the start, in addition to the previous marker, the project aims to address the root causes of gender inequality and underlying power dynamics and norms that perpetuate gender inequalities relevant to the research.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• By the end of the project, in addition to the previous marker, there is evidence of gendered outcomes achieved or well-positioned to be achieved. Gender was well-considered throughout the research cycle including legitimacy (team composition and broader governance including advisors, links to gender experts) and</td>
</tr>
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positioning for use (forms of meaningful engagement, dissemination, forums, networking, authorship, co-authorship, knowledge translation).

- As part of addressing underlying dynamics and root causes, the project has led to changes in social norms and social relations and gendered power dynamics at different levels. How that is done will vary depending on research and intervention but there is related evidence of change or progress towards change.

**Annex B:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 2030 Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Invest in high-quality research and innovation in developing countries,</strong> enabling research organizations and their stakeholders to address both their own and global development challenges.</td>
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<td><strong>Share knowledge for greater uptake and use,</strong> increasing the reach and impact of IDRC-supported research in driving solutions, and influencing national, regional, and global development agendas, including by synthesizing and communicating results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobilize alliances for impact, growing international funding partnerships to expand available resources for research for development, and developing enhanced relationships with the private sector to expand the reach of research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>