GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING
FINAL TECHNICAL REPORTS

To be submitted by IDRC Grant Recipients

IDRC ❋ CRDI

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Contents

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 research outputs generated by the project, the 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 commitment to sharing knowledge, all Final Technical Reports, along with other project research outputs**,** will be available through IDRC's open access Digital Library (unless otherwise specified), thus making a valuable contribution to the research literature disseminated by the Centre.

Throughout its history, IDRC has believed that to bring about positive change in the developing world, knowledge needs to be widely shared. The IDRC Digital Library (idl-bnc.idrc.ca) makes available and preserves in digital format output that is created by IDRC-funded researchers or IDRC staff, and/or is otherwise relevant to IDRC's program activities. The IDRC Digital Library follows an open access model of communication and provides long-term access to Centre-funded research outputs for researchers all over the world. It fulfills IDRC's commitment to public accountability, and contributes to the global movement to remove barriers – economic, social, and geographic – to the sharing of knowledge.

The Final Technical Report will be placed, along with other project research outputs, in the IDRC Digital Library, except as otherwise specified.

2.   Considerations for Final Technical Reports

The requirements for all reports, including the Final Technical Report, are agreed to during project development, summarized in the *Application for an IDRC Research Grant*,[1] and reflected in the *Memorandum of Grant Conditions* (MGC)[2] signed between IDRC and grant recipients. Matters to be resolved at the planning stage include:

- Specification and agreement of the whole set of reports the project will generate.

- Agreement that Final Technical Reports must include a complete bibliography of all research outputs generated by the project.

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[1] Please see the section on Results and Dissemination in IDRC's online *Application for an IDRC Research Grant*.
[2] Please see the relevant sections on Information Dissemination and on Intellectual Property in IDRC's *Memorandum of Grant Conditions* (MGC), attached to IDRC's online *Application for an IDRC Research Grant*.

- Agreement that Final Technical Reports will be accompanied by all research outputs created as a result of IDRC-funded research.

- Agreement that IDRC's Library staff will maintain yearly contact for up to three years after the completion date of the project to capture **subsequent research outputs** that have resulted from IDRC funding.

- Agreement on any reports to be published or disseminated on a non-open access basis elsewhere (for example, published books or articles), keeping in mind that:

  o there is an increasing choice of book and periodical publishers who permit open access sharing. For a directory of publishers see www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php
  o many publishers allow open access availability of early or substantially different versions of books and periodicals;
  o open access is almost always possible with some (agreed) delay, if not immediately.

- Agreement on any intellectual property issues involved in "jointly owned" knowledge where several recipients and partners are involved.

- Agreement on any disclaimers or explanatory information that should accompany 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. A project cannot be closed without the necessary reports.

Prior to submitting the Final Technical Report, any outstanding issues related to dissemination through the IDRC Digital Library can be discussed among IDRC's responsible program officer and the research partners. Issues of concern can be addressed, keeping in mind:

- While high standards of research are always sought, good results, in terms of research findings, policy impact, or capacity and learning outcomes, are often achieved with basic and well-known methods.

- 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.

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. Actual substantive outputs of a project should be submitted separately and not be embedded within the report. This also applies to research results that are published, where the copyright holder cannot provide permission for open access dissemination of the published source in the IDRC Digital Library.

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

a. Format

Project research outputs, including Final Technical Reports, are to be submitted in digital format whenever possible. See Annex A for a list of digital file formats that the IDRC Digital Library supports and that can be preserved over the long term. 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.

b. Content

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 is provided below, but alternatives may be used as appropriate to the project.[3]

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. They can be summarized under the following headings and questions:

i) *Basic Project Information*

- Title page

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[3] Following the basic sections (project identifier information, problem and rationale, objectives), another format often used effectively is to report on activities, outputs, and outcomes *under* each of the project's specific (research, capacity, or policy/practice) objectives, with summary of any overall outcomes and learning at the end.

- Abstract
- Keywords

The template in Annex B contains the basic information required for all project outputs. Reports should also include a Table of Contents.

ii) *The Research Problem*

The basic rationale for the project and the research problem or problems that were addressed should be stated. 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.

iii) *Objectives*

The general and specific objectives of the project specified in the MGC should be restated, with a discussion of whether or not the objectives were met. If the objectives were not met, outline the reasons why and the subsequent impact on the project. Objectives may have also evolved, and the reasons and learning involved should be described. The degree of fulfillment of any new objectives should also be assessed.

iv) *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.

v) *Project Activities*

- What was done with available resources? Describe the activities supported under the project and their timelines.

- What was learned about the implementation and management of the project's activities? Were certain aspects of project management and implementation particularly important to the success of the project?

vi)   ***Project Outputs***

Outputs are the directly achievable products of a project's completed activities (e.g., policy briefs, journal articles, research papers, trained people, etc.) [4]

- What were the main outputs of the project? Provide a list of all project outputs, including complete citations. 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.

- What were the main specific achievements in terms of research, capacity building, and policy/practice influence? What was learned about the production or realization of research, capacity, and policy or practice outputs – for example, problems that arose, or changes in orientation that occurred. What contributed to these outputs and what lessons did you draw from the experience?

- If appropriate, highlight any unique or innovative outputs.

- If appropriate, explain why outputs were not completed or were of poor quality.

Examples of outputs include:

Research:
- Research reports
- Technologies (broadly defined, including social processes)
- Milestones achieved in knowledge-building and networking

Capacity:
- Numbers of individuals who have completed training or other (mentoring etc.) capacity-development activities – in research, capacity development (e.g., training of trainers), and policy (e.g., training/informing/involving of policymakers, stakeholders, and opinion shapers)
- Milestones in capacity development of teams, institutions, networks, and partnerships, etc. (may include both human and other, equipment or infrastructure support, outputs)
- Comment on the sustainability of increased institutional capacities, and on particular contributions to capacity building of women or marginalized social groups
- Achievement in individual and organizational capacity (e.g., are researchers in the organization writing better proposals, obtaining successful funding from other donors, displaying leadership, better able to

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[4] The MGC defines project outputs as any and all research-related outputs and results of the project and publications and reports produced in relation to the project, submitted by the recipient to the Centre in any form now existing or hereafter invented.

do research, better able to conceptualize and ask research questions, better able to draw conclusions and synthesize, more effective in making linkages with other stakeholders, making effective interventions in global debates, and participating in South-South and North-South dialogues?).

Policy and practice:

- Policy analysis, recommendations, and documents
- Other milestones in terms of policy/practice stakeholders and processes, such as the involvement of research users or ultimate beneficiaries

vii)   Project Outcomes

Project outcomes 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.

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

- 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?

viii) **Overall Assessment and Recommendations**

- Comment on the usefulness in achieving the project's objectives through any partnerships with Canadian or other researchers, with Canadian or other capacity or policy-oriented organizations, and with other donors.

- What contributions to development did the project make?

- What would you do differently as a result of this experience, and what general and useful lessons can be derived for improving future projects?

- Briefly provide your own views on the value and importance of the project relative to the investment of time, effort, and funding.

- Include any recommendations that you would like to make to IDRC. 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.

Annex A: Digital File Formats Supported by the IDRC Digital Library

Description	Extensions
Microsoft Word	doc
Adobe PDF	pdf
Postscript	Ps, eps, ai
SGML	sgm, sgml
Microsoft Excel	xls
Microsoft PowerPoint	ppt
Microsoft Project	mpp, mpx, mpd
Microsoft Visio	vsd
Filemaker	fmp3, fm
Photoshop	psd, pdd
Audio AIFF	aiff, aif, aifc
Audio/basic	au, snd
Audio MPEG	mpa, abs, mpeg, mp3
RealAudio	ra, ram
Audio WAV	wav
Image GIF	gif
Image JPEG	jpeg, jpg
Image PNG	png
Image TIFF	tiff, tif
Image BMP	bmp

Photo CD	pcd
HTML	html, htm
Text	txt
Rich Text Format	rtf
XML	xml
Video MPEG	mpeg, mpg, mpe
Video Quicktime	mov, qt
Video MPEG4 (Media File)	mp4
Video AVI (Audio Video Interleave File)	avi
Video ASF (Advanced Streaming Format)	asf
ODF (Open Document Format for Office Applications)	Odt, odg, odp, ods, odc, odi, odf, odm
OGG (Compressed Multimedia File)	ogg
OGM (Compressed Video File)	ogm

Annex B: Template for IDRC Research Output Title and Abstract Page

Research outputs submitted to IDRC must include a title page, abstract, and keywords. The kind of information that should be included is listed below. Items marked with an asterisk are particularly important and **must** appear.

<p align="center">*Title:</p>

<p align="center">Subtitle:</p>

<p align="center">*By: <i>Full Name(s) of Author(s)</i></p>

<p align="center">Report Type: e.g., <i>Final technical report, workshop report, research paper, research study, etc.</i></p>

<p align="center">*Date:</p>

<p align="center">Published by: <i>Full Name of Publisher</i>
Location: <i>Name of Place of Publication</i></p>

<p align="center">Series Name:
Number of Series part:</p>

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

*Full Name of Research Institution:

   *Address of Research Institution:

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

   *Contact Information of Researcher/Research Team members:

*This report is presented as received from project recipient(s). It has not been subjected to peer review or other review processes.

*Abstract: *Research outputs should include an abstract of 150-200 words specifying the issue under investigation, the methodology, major findings, and overall impact.*

*Keywords: Include up to six subject keywords separated by commas.