

Results of the FSR Readership Survey

Jean Mair

Table 1

Summary of Survey Responses

Reader profile	Number of respondents	Per cent of total
Domestic	112	83.0
Foreign	16	11.9
Did not identify themselves	7	5.2
Affiliation		
Banking/financial services	34	25.2
Academia	24	17.8
Corporation/business	20	14.8
Government	16	11.9
Student	9	6.7
Other	21	15.6
Did not identify themselves	11	8.1

Table 2

Sections of the FSR Read Regularly

Section	Per cent of respondents
Financial System Risk Assessment	69.6
Important Financial System Developments	71.9
Reports	50.8
Policy and Infrastructure Developments	47.4
Research Summaries	49.6

Table 3

Views on the FSR

Question	Average rating ^a
High-quality writing	4.03
Interesting topics	3.98
Visually appealing layout and design	3.96
Rigorous economic analysis	3.86
Clear assessment of risks to the financial system	3.82
To the point	3.73

a. Respondents were asked to evaluate various aspects of the FSR on a scale of 1 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating).

The *Financial System Review* (FSR) has been published since December 2002. Currently, the FSR has about 1,500 subscribers. As well, some 3,000 persons are notified of its publication through Bank Messenger, an email alert service.

Early in 2005, the Bank of Canada decided that it was time to collect readers' views on the publication. A readership survey was circulated with the December 2005 issue and was also posted on the Bank's website. This note presents the results of that survey. We thank those readers who took the time to complete it.

Some 135 readers responded to the survey questionnaire. The results are summarized in Tables 1 to 3. They suggest that the FSR has a diverse audience with a wide range of interests, and that the readership seems generally satisfied with the publication. We will be taking into account the interests and views of our readership as revealed in this survey as we draft future issues of the FSR.

Who reads the FSR?

The survey results indicate that the audience is primarily domestic (close to 90 per cent of those respondents that identified themselves). The audience is also very diverse, with no single group accounting for much more than a quarter of the readership. The largest groups of readers are in banking/financial services, academia, business, and government.

Why do they read the FSR?

The FSR aims to improve the reader's understanding of current developments and trends in the Canadian and international financial systems and of the factors affecting them. It also summarizes recent work by Bank of Canada staff on specific financial sector policies and on aspects of the structure and functioning of the financial system.

About 80 per cent of the respondents said that they read the FSR for "information on developments in the Canadian financial system." Close to half read it for information on the Canadian banking sector, information on the global financial system, and for an assessment of the soundness of the Canadian financial system. About one-third wanted to learn about initiatives to enhance the efficiency of the Canadian financial system. And

about half of the respondents use it as a reference.

Most people were looking for relatively wide coverage:

- Virtually all respondents said that they read the FSR to obtain information on the Canadian financial system. But over 70 per cent were also looking for information on developments outside of Canada.
- Over 80 per cent were interested in current analysis. Two-thirds of those replying read the FSR for the “research articles.” And some 60 per cent of respondents said that, on average, they read more than one research article per issue.
- Close to 60 per cent of respondents were looking for both quick updates and in-depth assessments of financial system issues. About 30 per cent wanted only a quick update of these issues, and the balance, only in-depth analysis.

Information content was rated as more important than topic timeliness by a ratio of about 2 to 1.

What do they read?

The Developments and Trends section was the most widely read part of the FSR, with close to 70 per cent of respondents regularly reading both the Financial System Risk Assessment and Important Financial System Developments. Close to 50 per cent stated that they regularly read the other three sections (Reports, Policy and Infrastructure Developments, and Research Summaries).

What do readers think of the FSR?

Overall, survey respondents seemed satisfied with the FSR.

Respondents were asked to assess various aspects of the FSR on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest. The weighted-average answers clustered between 3.7 and 4, a reasonably favourable result. The highest marks were for high-quality writing, interesting topics, and layout. The lowest mark was in the “to the point” category. With these comments in mind, every effort will be made to ensure that

the material in the Bank’s *Financial System Review* is presented in a clear and direct manner.

Most respondents found the language in the FSR to be at an appropriate technical level.

Over 80 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the current frequency (twice per year) and length of the publication.

How do readers access the FSR?

The print version of the FSR is available to subscribers on request. The FSR can also be accessed on the Bank’s website. About two-thirds of those replying to the questionnaire use only the print version of the FSR, while another 13 per cent use both the print and online versions. Some 20 per cent of respondents (many from abroad) read the FSR only online.