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Working Party on Industry Profiles
Beirut, Lebanon, 4 - 7 May 1970

OBJECTIVES, BACKGROUND AND AGENDA^{1/}

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UNIDO Secretariat
and
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A. Main objectives

1. The Working Party of Industry Profiles for Arab Countries will be composed primarily of those senior representatives of various national organizations dealing with industrial development matters who are subsequently to take part in the programme of the Industrial Development Centre for the Arab States (IDCAS)^{3/} concerning industrial survey and productivity development. The main goal of the meeting is to examine the technical and organizational aspects of the afore-mentioned programme - in particular, its component entailing the preparation and evaluation of data on industrial establishments in selected branches in the countries concerned. The Working Party is thus expected to formulate basic guidelines and a concrete plan of action, in both organizational and technical terms, to be followed by the countries and organizations participating in the programme.

B. Background

2. The original IDCAS proposal, which gave rise to the request for UNIDO support in carrying out this meeting, was concerned with the possibility of utilizing, as a key element in its industry survey and productivity programme, a special, standardized framework of data compilation and analysis that might be developed in conjunction with the UNIDO "Profiles of Manufacturing Establishments" series. This proposal reflected the recommendations and resolutions of the Board of Directors of IDCAS in its recent Ordinary Sessions, particularly to the effect that IDCAS should:

- Establish and execute an appropriate programme of productive, administrative and technical analysis aiming at the improvement of the performance in industrial enterprises and productive units;
- Conduct field studies aiming at co-ordinating production programmes of certain existing industries in the Arab States, covering both economic and technical aspects;
- Function as a focus for collecting statistical, economic, planning, and technical data on the industrial sector; and to this end, to conduct a comparative analytical study of investment and cost aspects of different branches of industry, taking into account similar studies in other countries, with a view to devising certain industrial indices that will enable the following up of productivity development in Arab countries.

^{3/} IDCAS has been established within the League of Arab States for the purpose of promoting industrial development in the member countries and co-ordinating efforts exerted in this field.

3. With a view to making best use of the experience which UNIDO has acquired in this line of activity, it has been requested that UNIDO assist in the technical preparations for the implementation of the afore-mentioned IDCAS programme. Thus, a Working Party on Industry Profiles for Arab Countries is organized by UNIDO to assist the participating countries in the first phase of preparatory work.

4. It is planned that UNIDO will also provide assistance in the second phase by training the leading staff of the various national teams which will subsequently carry out the field work required for this project. A Training Workshop on Industry Profiles for Selected Industrial Branches is expected to be convened in Cairo towards June 1970, to reflect the guidelines which are to be established by this Working Party. It is anticipated that the members of the Beirut Working Party will serve as the leaders of the respective national Profiles teams, and as such will actively support the Cairo Workshop.

C. Schedule of meeting

5. It is planned that the Working Party will meet at Beirut (Hotel Al Bustan) during the period 4 - 7 May 1970. A daily schedule will be made available in due course. The meeting is to be jointly organized and serviced by UNIDO, UNDSOP and IDCAS.

D. Agenda

6. The four-day sessions of the Working Party will be devoted to the discussion of:

- (a) The specific objectives to be pursued by the proposed IDCAS Profiles-Productivity Programme;
- (b) The distinction between (i) the technological and policy problems relevant to each individual branch of industry considered, and (ii) those of common relevance for all branches;
- (c) Designing of the technical framework of Profiles study in accordance with guidelines provided by (a) and (b) above;
- (d) Organization methods for the implementation of the proposed programme.

7. The IDCAS Profiles-Productivity Program may be designed to serve three different, but equally important, purposes:

- (i) To define and measure the technical and managerial efficiency (viz. productivity and efficiency) of individual industrial units (firms or establishments) and to suggest, on a case-by-case basis, possible measures for (internal) productivity improvement;
- (ii) To assess the influences exerted by the current governmental policies (in particular, monetary, fiscal, trade and labour policies) on the production costs and the economic viability of each industrial unit considered; and
- (iii) To derive and subsequently to build up a stock of key techno-economic parameters that are susceptible to flexible uses as a reference data for industrial projections and planning purposes in the countries concerned.

8. It is important for the success of the field inquiry that the amount of information to be sought on each selected industrial unit should be kept to a minimum sensible level. This will require that early agreement should be reached as to the relative priorities to be accorded to each of the above-mentioned objectives. Then, it can be decided what observations are to be made and what parameters are to be assessed under the programme. Assuming that the field inquiry will rely more on the direct observations of expert teams on firms and factories than on the conventional questionnaire-return procedure, it may be desirable to develop an approach that is rather different from what the UNIDO Profiles have involved so far, emphasizing more analytically-oriented observations, including the direct calculation of certain parameters on the spot.

9. It is clear that the purposes of the study call for a more detailed frame of reference than is provided by the current general Profiles approach of UNIDO. While certain economic parameters should be established in comparable terms for units in different branches of industry, certain other aspects of productivity and efficiency - particularly those relating to production technologies - would require different specifications for different industries in order to permit meaningful inter-firm or inter-factory comparisons. Part of the Profiles framework ought to be tailored, therefore, to reflect the relevant characteristics of the specific industrial branches under study.

10. A limited number of branches are suggested for inclusion in the IDCAS programme at this stage. They include:

- (i) Textiles (excluding knit weaving in particular);
- (ii) Fertilizers;
- (iii) Edible oil processing mills; and
- (iv) Grain mill products.

Other branches, such as cement and other building materials, glass, ceramics and porcelain, etc. might be considered at a later stage.

11. Once it has succeeded in drawing up an appropriate technical framework for the IDCAS Profiles-Productivity Programme, the Working Party can then begin to determine the specific organization methods to be adopted for the implementation of the programme, referring particularly to:

- (i) Choice of supervising and supporting authorities;
- (ii) Composition of national working teams;
- (iii) Scope and organization of a training programme;
- (iv) Sampling of industrial units to be studied;
- (v) Procedures for field inquiries;
- (vi) Comparative analysis of the results of the inquiries, on the multi-national, as well as the national, level; and
- (vii) Arrangement for broader use of the data generated from the study, e.g. a "Profiles Library" with IDCAS.

E. Pre-meeting preparations

12. Members of the Working Party are invited to contribute to the meeting papers and documents particularly relating to:

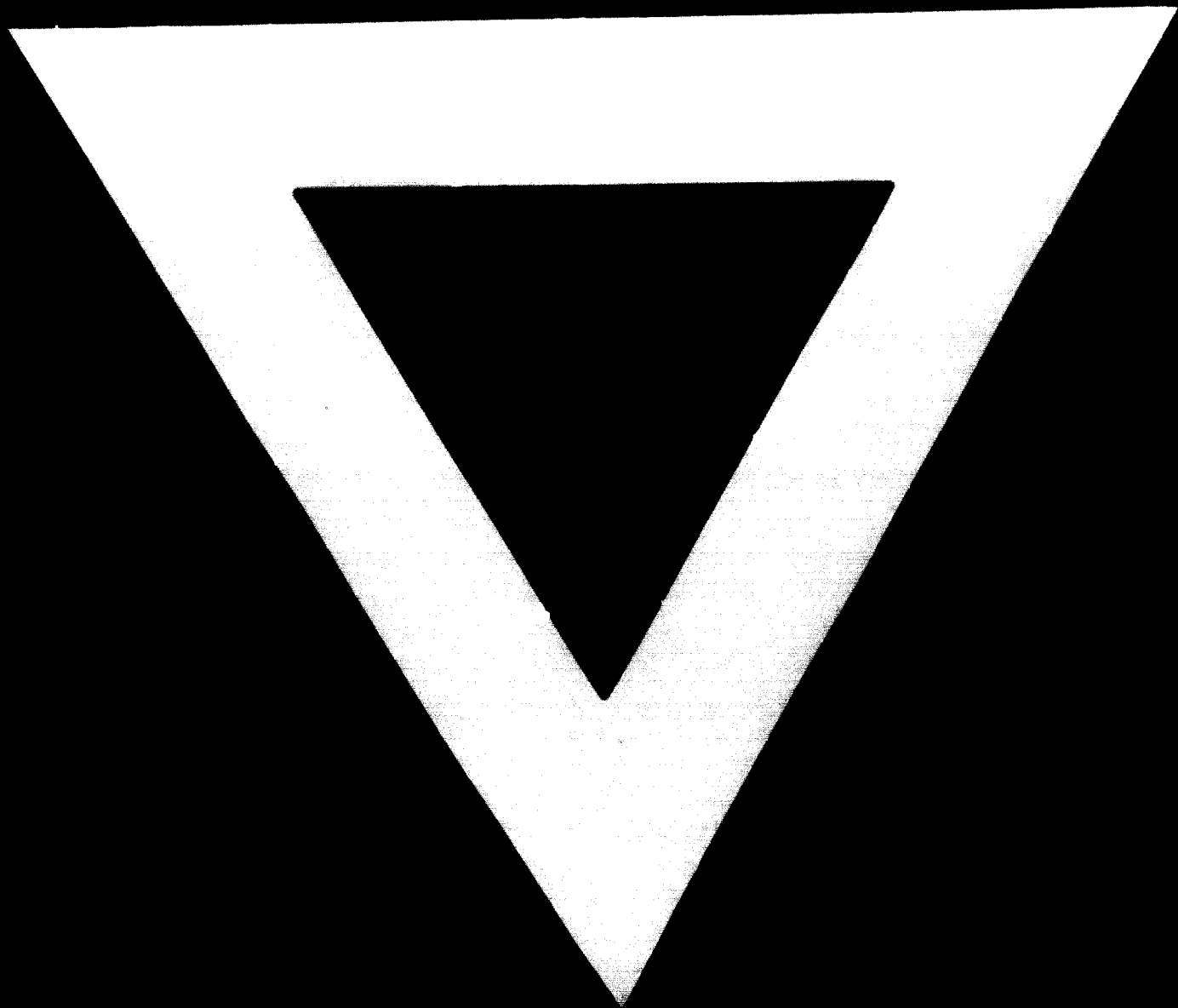
- The characteristics of data on existing industrial firms and establishments as being currently available in their countries;
- Trends of development, major economic and policy issues characteristic of the four branches of industry (textiles, fertilizers, edible oils and grain mill products) in the respective countries; and
- Major problems related to technological adaptations and productivity development in these branches.

13. Particularly, the members representing national "productivity centres" and similar institutions are requested to review the scope of their current and projected activities and the main technical and organizational problems being envisaged in carrying out their activities, with a view to suggesting

specific aspects of productivity development that should receive priority attention in the proposed IDCAS Profiles-Productivity Programme.

14. The meeting secretariat will provide some background documents dealing with the methodologies and reference data concerning cost accounting, productivity analysis and inter-country and inter-firm comparisons. The meeting will also be supplied with the working material connected with the UNIDO Profiles series, as well as selected publications dealing with the technologies and economics of industrial plants in the particular branches of interest for the Working Party. A paper indicating the experience obtained in the recent IDCAS field studies in Sudan may also be made available.





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