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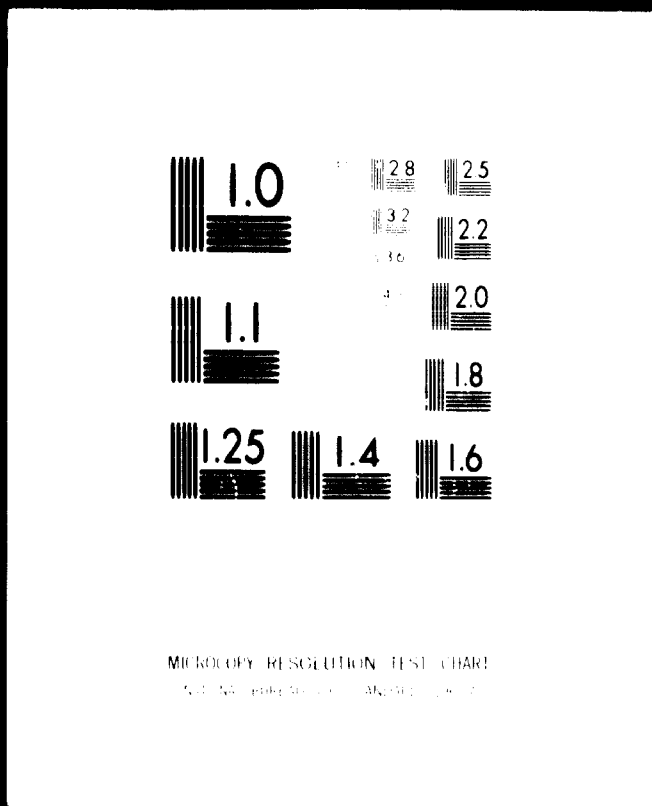
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United Nations Industrial Development Organization

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDUSTRIAL INFORMATION SERVICE
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

(Brief Outline)

Increasing recognition is rightfully being given to the important role played by industrial information in industrial growth. By the judicious use of up-to-date information the industrialist can keep himself abreast of the most recent developments in his own and related fields and becomes aware of administrative and technical innovations which, correctly applied, can result in increased production, more efficient operation and consequently reduced costs. This is of particular relevance to a developing country in the process of establishing new industries and fostering the growth of those already established. Much valuable time and expense can be saved by using the reservoir of knowledge which has been internationally accumulated in order to determine the most appropriate procedures and technologies for a specific undertaking.

Obviously, a large amount of research must be carried out if all possibilities are to be exhausted, and the individual concern, whether new or long-established, cannot afford the time or the finances involved. This situation - the need for information, the recognition of its value and the work required to procure the optimal data - justifies the existence of the Industrial Information Service.

The Industrial Information Service

The Industrial Information Service should be attached to an existing agency, institution or organization. The choice will be determined by the particular local situation and may fall upon a national (government) body

of economic policy (national committees on development, national planning offices, etc.), an industrial ministry, a development bank, a development association, chamber of commerce and industry, a scientific institution, (university, research institute), or a specialized library. As a rule, its activities are most efficiently carried out as part of a national industrial development policy making body, which plays a central role in the administration and economic structure of the country.

The size and scope of activities of the Service are governed by the circumstances prevailing in the area it is expected to serve. It will be national, if this is required by the information needs of the country, or regional, if the needs of a group of smaller countries in the same area are homogeneous. Whether national or regional, the Service can be general or specialized. The general information service covers every branch of industry (including the underlying pure sciences, e.g. mathematics, physics, chemistry), while the specialized information service concentrates on a single field in a particular branch of industry and uses deeper methods of processing the literature of its field. The optimal efficiency is obtained in circumstances which permit a combination of these two systems.

The physical size of the Service is not governed by the size of the country, since the decisive factor is the amount of information to be processed and transmitted. Depending on the size and the scope of the

Service and also on the assistance that may be expected from existing information sources in the country, the initial staff requirement might range from 3-15 persons. Thirty per cent of the staff is normally required for administrative and auxiliary work.

Functions of the Industrial Information Service

The newly established Service must become thoroughly familiar with the current industrial situation so that it can select the information most pertinent to local needs and supply it through the most appropriate communication medium (i.e. the printed work, audio-visual media, and personal contacts).

The Service must ascertain the extent to which information is locally available and the foreign sources which will supplement this stock to the degree required in the country. The compilation of a roster or inventory of existing sources of information is therefore its primary task in order to facilitate the rapid location of the competent source of supply of the information required.

Before passing information to a requester, the Service must screen the material, collating, summarizing and translating where necessary.

It is important that the Service be prepared to educate the industry in how to use information to its best advantage. It must stimulate the demand for information by demonstrating the benefits to be derived from information on modernization of production processes and management techniques. It must make known that its central position in the administration permits it to tap many more sources of information, know-how and expert advice on the national and international levels.

The process of determining the information sources already available in the country will bring the Service into contact with institutions already covering on a national basis some sectorial needs, such as documentation centres dealing with scientific and technical information, and libraries and specialized information units within large enterprises.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE SERVICE WORK CLOSELY IN CO-OPERATION WITH SUCH INFORMATION SOURCES, ACTING AS A NATIONAL (OR REGIONAL) CLEARING-HOUSE AND IN NO WAY AS A COMPETITIVE BODY. THE SERVICE SHOULD PLAY A CATALYTIC ROLE AND STIMULATE THE DEMAND FOR AND UTILIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL INFORMATION.

Sources of Information

The following is an indicative list of sources of information to be consulted by the national clearing-house:

Government offices
Statistical offices
Industrial and scientific research institutes
Chambers of industry and commerce
Trade and professional associations
Development banks
Large industrial firms or local agencies of such firms
Consulting firms
Commercial counsellors attached to foreign embassies
Documentation and information centres
Specialized news agencies
Local experts
Meetings, workshops, seminars
Fairs and exhibitions
Reference books
Abstract journals
Directories and trade literature
Collections of feasibility studies
Industrial technical films

Regular Services

In addition to dealing with requests, the Service should provide a continuing flow of information on general subjects and specific items of information designed to meet the needs of a particular consumer by establishing:

- a. An Inquiry and Advisory Service answering individual questions, providing advice on special requests and giving assistance to industrial development wherever possible.

- b. A Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI-Service) based on a careful identification of clients, their requirements, and their individual "profiles".
- c. An Industrial Information Bulletin or Newsletter, initially published monthly and later weekly, supplying information on local and foreign industrial development and performance.

Staff Requirements

The impact of the Industrial Information Service depends on the competence and dynamism of its staff. To make the Service an instrument of real use to industry, it is essential that the staff understand the problems and aims of industry. Consequently, the background and experience of its staff should be of an industrial rather than of a scientific or administrative nature. The information specialists should include the staff working at the head office of the Service and the field personnel. The field personnel is mainly concerned with the initiation and maintenance of direct contacts with the consumers of information in industry.

No formal curriculum can be laid down for the education of an industrial information officer. His background should be of a general industrial and technological nature. He should be familiar with all

facets of information work. Most of his qualifications are acquired on-the-job and through experience. Training depends, therefore, on attendance at seminars or workshops, on visits to other information organisations, etc.

Besides their professional experience, information specialists should have at least a good working knowledge of one or two world languages. Where possible, the range of languages covered by the staff of the services should include English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, and Japanese. In some instances a separate translation unit may be found necessary.

Auxiliary personnel should be composed of librarians and technical staff (typists, duplication machine operators, etc.). They should also have a knowledge of at least one world language. On-the-job training in the mechanical operation of information work, such as registering, storing, filing, etc., should be provided for them.

Financing

Costs and overhead expenditures of various types of information services are normally financed by the government and are provided for in the national budget. The financing might also be provided by industrial federations, chambers of commerce and industry, or other

organizations. Personnel expenditures (salaries, wages, etc.) usually account for 60-80 per cent of the costs, while the administrative expenses amount only to 20-40 per cent. This does not include the cost of a possible translation unit.

Tentative Budget

Initial Costs

Equipment (typewriters, duplicating machinery, filing cabinets, other furniture)	\$	5,000.00
Basic reference and handbooks (approx. 40-50)		5,000.00

Annual Costs

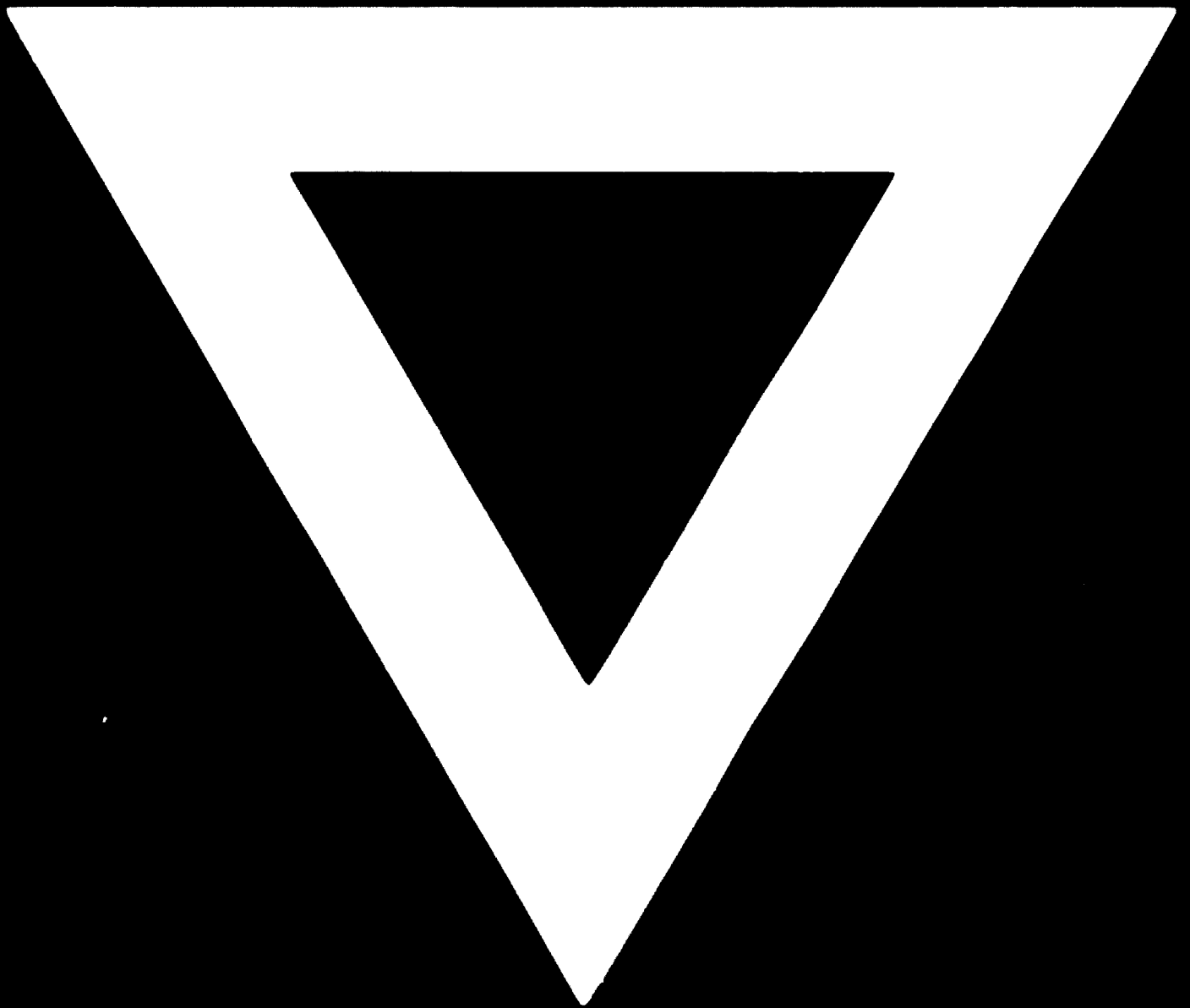
Salaries (2 professionals, 3 general service, 1 manual)	\$ 24 -	36,000.00
Subscriptions		3,000.00
Maintenance and completion of stock of information (acquisition of yearbooks, new handbooks, etc.)		1,500.00
Stationery, etc.		500.00
Rent of premises	\$500 -	1,200.00

ANNEX I

Selected List of References

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