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SETTING UP AN INFORMATION CENTRE

UC/RAB/92/143

ARAB REGION

Technical report: Diagnostic study on setting up Information Center  
at the Secretariat General of the General Union of  
Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture  
for Arab Countries (GUCCIAAC)\*

Prepared for the General Union of Chambers of Commerce,  
Industry and Agriculture for Arab countries  
by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Based on the work of Ehab M. Moustafa,  
information systems expert

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Institutional Infrastructure Branch

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\* This document has not been edited.

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ABSTRACT

This document reports the activities accomplished during the mission of the International Information System Expert to the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries (GUCCIAAC) - Beirut - Lebanon, conducted during the period from January 27, 1993 to February 20, 1993. This period included a briefing in UNIDO headquarters in Vienna, work in the field from January 30, 1993 to February 18, 1993 and preparation, compilation and production of this report. The main objective of this mission was to carry out a diagnostic study on setting up a Trade Information Center at the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries. The details of the activities carried out by the International Expert during this mission are presented, the results of his investigations, findings & observations are reported, as well as, the conclusions. Finally the report concludes with the Expert's recommendations for future action. The report includes a tentative draft document for a possible Technical Assistance Project for the establishment of the Center. The draft is presented in Annex.

### Introduction:

The General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries is a non-governmental organization that has a regional service agency status. It was established to promote economic relations among the member countries as well as between these countries and the rest of the world. In view of the fact that its information processing and communication capabilities are limited and not adequately responsive to the needs of the Union for its future plans, a decision was made by the Council of the GUCCIAAC to establish an information center at the Secretariat General of the Union. The Secretariat General of GUCCIAAC invited UNIDO's assistance to the preparation of a diagnostic study to make an initial assessment of the technical and financial needs of the proposed information center. There is a definite need to establish an information center at the Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC to support its activities and operation in order to be able to carry out its mission. The purpose of the center is to bring together the knowledge and experience available in member countries of both economic development and the formulation and execution of general economic policies, to adapt such knowledge and experiences to the actual needs of Union's members and their respective countries or regions in the process of development and to put the results at the disposal of those who are in need for it by appropriate means.

According to the prepared framework, the main objectives of the proposed information center should be the following; quote:"

- *To promote inter-Arab trade relations by improving in general the system of exchanging trade information between chambers and federations of chambers, as well as between members of chambers in the Arab region;*
- *To coordinate the activities of national Arab chambers and federations in the field of information technology in order to maximize the benefits from the present and future information centers of those chambers.*
- *To create, maintain and publicize data banks responding to the present and future needs of the union, of various Arab chambers, federations, official authorities, Arab enterprises and businessmen. Such data banks should include, inter alia, Exporter / Importer registers, investment opportunities, production information, cost of basic goods, means of transport, export / import regulations; information of regional character which is not available to day in national information centers.*
- *To provide for the union and its members an access point to various national and international information sources such as the UN organizations, EC and Arab regional organizations.*
- *To support the economic research in the Union, the Union's library and the publishing activities of the Union.*
- *To serve as an information network for information centers of the Arab chambers to promote and coordinate their efforts in developing information systems, in unifying working methods, technics, and technologies." unquote.*

**Activities:**

**Setting the working plan**

Meeting with GUCCIAAC's Secretary General to discuss the strategic approach, identify the requirements, resources and determine expected outputs.

Meetings with GUCCIAAC's staff. Several working sessions were held between the International Expert and the SGGUCCIAAC's staff. The discussions covered their activities, services, the mode of operation, their sources of information, their relations with their suppliers and customers, their products, and the association with other organizations. A visit to the SGUCCIAAC's library was conducted, and an indepth investigation to its contents, resources and mode of operation was carried out.

Local Information Technology Market survey. Investigation on availability, support, training facilities and costs of the Information Technology marketplace in Beirut was carried out. The method to carry out this investigation on a sample bases has been determined in coordination with the local staff.

## **Findings and Observations**

In order to accomplish the mission's objectives and obtain the required information to appraise the needs and requirements for the establishment of an information center and identify its role and function, the international expert has conducted his investigation in accordance with the following categorization;

### **GUCCIAAC services**

- Conducting strategic macro-economic studies on economies of Arab countries as well as the Arab economic joint action.
- Carry out special studies in the different economic development sectors , particularly in industry and agriculture, in accordance to the needs identified by the Union members and the associated organizations in the Arab region.
- Studies and pre-feasibility studies on Pan-Arab industrial investment opportunities. (ex. the pre-feasibility study on the establishment of a Euro-Arab company for the manufacturing of active ingredients for the pharmaceutical industries..)
- Contributing with the Union members in the joint Arab-foreign Chambers through coordinating their activities and programs to serve mutual economic interest. This includes setup of policies and formulation of working plans.

### **GUCCIAAC information services**

- Publication of specialized studies and reports on the economic performance of the Arab countries.
- Dissemination of economic reports to the union members that covers issues of interest, and the recommendations and resolutions adopted in the various meetings and conferences attended by the Secretariat General of the Union.

### **GUCCIAAC Activities**

- Organizing and co-sponsoring regional and international Conferences, Seminars, workshops and meetings for the Union members and/or on their behalf
- coordination of policies and activities between Union members and the respective regional and international organizations and bodies in the domain of Trade, industrial, and Agricultural economic development.

### GUCCIAAC Information Sources

List of national, regional and international organizations supplying GUCCIAAC with their publications is presented in the Annex 5.

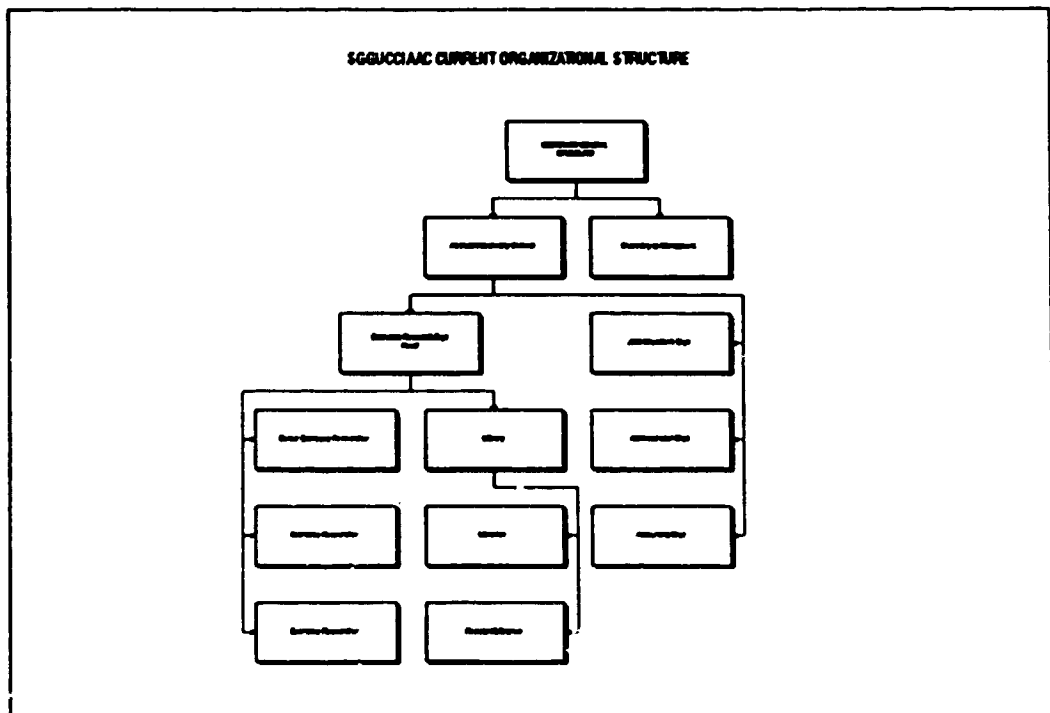
### GUCCIAAC products

The current main products of the GUCCIAAC are the following publications:

- Arab Economic Report, an annual publication on the economic performance of each individual Arab country (in Arabic and in English).
- Economic Papers, a bi-annual publication that covers a collection of specialized economic articles.
- Economic Studies, a collection of economic studies and papers presented in the different conferences sponsored by GUCCIAAC.
- Specialized economic comparative studies and analysis on special issues.
- Books on specific subjects pertaining to economic development and experiences (ex. Lessons from Economic Development in the Arab World.)
- Proceedings of the annual conference of the Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries. It includes the economic studies presented to the annual conference.
- Proceedings of the Arab Businessmen and Investors meetings.

### GUCCIAAC's present Organizational Structure

The present Organizational Structure of the Secretariat General of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries is the following (Annex 6)





### **GUCCIAAC existing facilities**

Beginning 1993, the Secretariat General possessed three Apple Macintosh LC computers each with 40 MB hard disk storage capacity, plus one laser printer type NEWGEN model (TURBOPS/300P). The three computers are interlinked in an AppleTalk network so that system users can access the printer. The system has the following software packages installed;

NISUS (Arabic word-processing application program),

AL-NASHER (Arabic top desk publisher program) and

EXCEL 3.0 (a spreadsheet program) .

These resources are mainly used for the editing, development and production of the different reports, studies, documents and letters of the Secretariat General and its staff. At present there is a pool of four secretaries that use this facility. They are trained locally by the supplier on word processor application program .

### **GUCCIAAC human resources**

The Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC is staffed with highly qualified experienced professionals in the domain of economics and well trained librarians. But it definitely lacks qualified personnel in the domain of Information systems and techniques.

### **Information Technology Availability in Lebanon**

A sampled investigation of some of local information technology suppliers in Beirut indicate the availability of the latest releases in personal computers locally. Some of the interviewed companies showed a fairly competent level of professionalism to support the supply, installation and implementation of computerized systems in different sectors. Other than Apple, the survey included some of the brand names like IBM, Compaq, Olivetti and Hewlett Packard and less known compatibles like COPAM. Customer support is fairly organized and competition among the suppliers enforces a high level of support (for price levels refer to table in Annex 4). The prices of original software application packages are within the international retail prices (ex. MSDOS ver. 5.0 Arabic version 90\$, MS WINDOWS ver. 3.1 with Arabic language support 100\$, MS Excel ver 4.0 399\$, MS WORD ver. 2.0 399\$...). The commercial training courses on any of the packages are available and cost in the order of 150\$ per course per person.

### **Conclusions**

There is a definite need to establish an information center at the Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC to support its activities and operation in order to be able to carry out its mission. The objective of the center is to bring together the knowledge and experience available in member countries relating to both economic development and the formulation and execution of general economic policies, to adapt such knowledge and experiences to the actual needs of countries or regions in the process of development and to put the results at the disposal of those who are in need for it by appropriate means.

Based on the findings and the assessment of the needs and available means, the need to initiate a project to establish an information center is justifiable. The project should capitalize on the existing resources and work on developing them to meet the required standards to carry out their tasks with a high level skill. The immediate goal is to enhance the productivity and operations of the GUCCIAAC. The Library should be the core of the development phase. Reorganizing, modernizing and automating the library is base for building the proposed center. The development of new skills to the GUCCIAAC staff, through training and study tours is necessary. Complementing the existing cadre with information specialists to be responsible to operate and support the center is a definite need. The center in perspective will provide the information support required to the GUCCIAAC , through strengthening the capabilities of the library to serve its customers, and by providing access to regional and international data banks and other information sources. The needed computational and communication hardware is available in the local market with a satisfactory after sale support and services. Technical assistance of UNIDO to this project is appreciated to build up the center. The above must take into consideration the following:

- 1) The Information Center should not duplicate what is already available( in Chambers of Commerce or Regional and International data banks), especially with respect to information services of specific market nature. This implies that it must concentrate on the information of common nature that may not be available in already established national/local data banks.

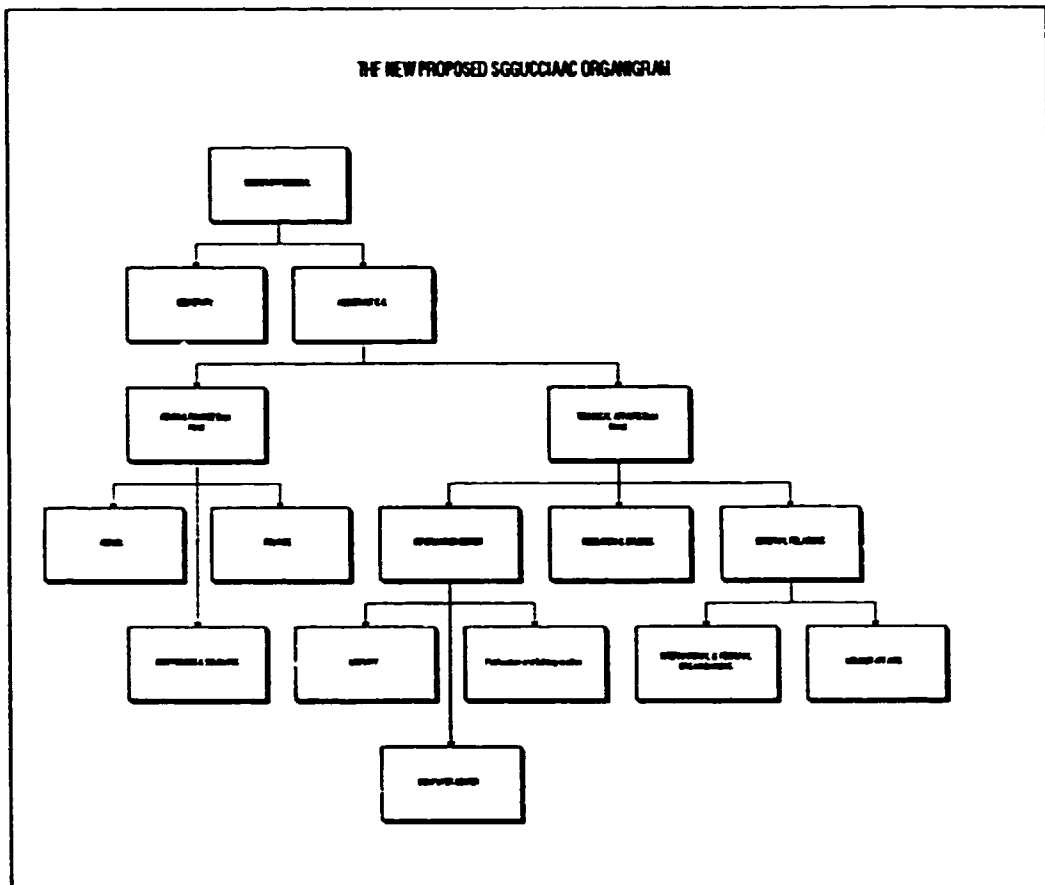
- 2) It should not be limited to simply reproducing what is already available. It is very important that it achieves a comparative advantage in providing a value added ingredient to the inputs it can have access to.
- 3) It does not have to have access or deal with all information available in data banks, but rather it should be selective in order not to over expand the information basis unnecessarily and gets diverted towards misleading details.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the findings and observations mentioned above, the following is highly recommended for a successful and fruitful implementation of an Information Center within GUCCIAAC;

- Complementing the existing computational facilities to support the administrative department needs with a data base management system (recommending Apple's 4th Dimension), is a necessity to help in organizing the GUCCIAAC's roster and Cardex system, as well as the organization of files. On the other hand it is recommended to train the accounting staff on the use of EXCEL spreadsheet application, to use it to develop financial and accounting applications that suites their needs.
- The approval of the draft project for technical assistance provided in the Annexes. The expected outputs from this project will enhance the performance and functionality of the Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries into its mission in promoting the economic development of the Arab region.
- Phased Implementation: In view of the stated objectives and requirements of the proposed information center, it is recommended to adapt the phased implementation approach.
- Library reorganization and automation: In view of developing the library staff skills and awareness with modern automated techniques of library management, it is strongly recommended to organize for them a training program on the use of the selected textual data base management system (UNESCO's CDS/ISIS-the Arabic version) as well as basic micro computers skills.
- Due to the absence of qualified information specialized staff, it is recommended to consider the search and appointment of an information specialist to be responsible of managing the information related activities. The candidate to this job should hold a university degree in informatics with adequate experience in microcomputers and their applications.
- Access to International data banks and information providers (ex. DATANET, CompuServ, Data Star, Dialog, ITC galnce...etc) should be scheduled in phase I, subject to availability to funds.
- Directories of databases on CD-ROM and of on-line accessible data bases should be purchased as soon as possible. CD-ROMs for subscription and appropriate on-line host should be selected.

- **Re-organizational Structuring:** In view of incorporating the Information services and a center within the Secretariat General of GUCCIAAC, it is recommended to consider the following adaptation for re-structuring the Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC. (Annex 7)



- The space for the center site is available now in the current premises of the Secretariat general of the GUCCIAAC. To equip the center with the appropriate hardware, the equipment component as per a preliminary estimate is presented in the project document.
- A study tour for the economic experts is recommended to stand on the techniques and the use of related data banks and to understand more about there contents and application in their domain of specialization. This tour is to be scheduled as soon as the project is approved.
- Either a mission of an international expert, or the assigned project leader should conduct the project activity planning and a project plan should be setup as soon as the project is approved.
- The establishment/development of a database (Roster) on the Arab Experts / consultants in the different disciplines and specialization of Trade, Industry and Agriculture sectors. This database will provide a new information service needed by the Union members.

ANNEXES

**ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference:**

The terms of reference for the international expert for this mission was defined by the job description as follows;

- To position the proposed center within the organizational and management structure of the Union; and specify the necessary staff in the starting up phase and further human resources requirements for operating the center.
- Recommend the necessary computational and telecommunication facilities including hardware and software components.
- work out the budget for the setup as well as the first year of operation of the center.
- Elaborate a tentative draft project document for a technical assistance project, which could be required for the establishment of the center.

To produce the above mentioned outputs the following activities were envisaged to be carried out during this mission;

- Review the present organizational structure and functions of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries; its linkage to its affiliates as well as to various national and international bodies.
- Assess the present system of exchanging trade information between the Union and the Chambers, Federations of chambers and between members of chambers in the Arab region.
- Appraise the Union's needs and requirements for the establishment of the trade information center to enhance the Union administrative, communications, operation and research capabilities.
- Identify the scope and magnitude of the information *available* to the Union today; survey the Union's library and its operation.
- Categorize the current and future consumers of the information presented and published by the union.
- Survey available human resources, computer and telecommunication equipment as well as networking facilities in the Union and in the existing information centers of Arab chambers.

**Annex 2 : List of Organizations visited and Persons met during this mission**

**General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries:**

Mr. Burhan Dajani	Secretary General
Dr. Elias Ghantous	Assistant Secretary General
Mr. Walid Audeh	Head Economic Research Dept.
Mrs. May Demashkieh Serhal	Senior Economic Researcher
Mrs. Rula Kronful	Director of Administration
Mrs. Naila Hadad	Economic Researcher
Mrs. Nahed Noamani	Economic Researcher
Mrs. Huda Kachtan	Responsible Printing & Publication
Mr. Ghazi Farag	Librarian
Mr. Yousef Shideed	Assistant Librarian

**U.N.D.P. Office in Beirut:**

Mr. Adel M. Khalifa	Deputy Resident Representative
Mrs. Marlene Abillama	Program Assistant
Mr. Anwer Hadad	Senior Administration Officer

**Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry:**

Dr. Mohy ElDeen Al Qussy	Director General
Mr. Paul Charbel	Member of the Board

**Local Information Technology Suppliers:**

- Interpress s.a.r.l. (Apple, Olivetti, Vector computers Distributor)
- Automation & Computer Technologies - ACT (Microsoft's Dealer)
- Advanced Computer Systems & Electronics - ACSE (COPAM of USA Dealers)
- PC GROUP s.a.r.l (IBM, ACER, Sharp's Dealers)
- Compuland ( computers and office machinery)

### **Annex 3: Framework for the Center's Project**

#### **Information Center**

##### **1) Role of the Information Center:**

- a) **Intermediary & linkage between The Arab Chambers of Commerce and data banks, as well as with Arab foreign Joint Chambers and Councils established with friendly countries.**
- b) **Gateway to Arab Chambers with other information centers and data banks.**
- c) **Specialized in information services that use internal resources, along with available data in Regional and international data banks, specifically in producing the value added which is of particular interest to the private sector and the Arab Chambers.**

**There is a particular need to identify the kind of information needed according to the needs of the Union's audience. (The Secretary General will prepare a framework with the assistance of all staff to identify the needs pertaining to information and data resources ).**

**The above mentioned tasks should consider the following:**

- 1) **The Information Center should not merely reproduce what is already available in existing data banks of Arab Chambers (or in Regional & International information centers), especially regarding information services of specific market nature. This implies that the Information Center must concentrate on the information of common nature that may not be available in already established data banks, in order to establish its own comparative advantage. (What? Should it have to assume the role of bridging the gap for the Arab Chambers that lack such facilities? )**
- 2) **It should not limit its work to simply reproducing what is already available. It is very important that it achieves a certain comparative advantage in providing a value added ingredient to the inputs it can have access to. (Value added? )**
- 3) **It does not have to have access to or deal with all information available in data banks, but rather it should be selective, in order not to over expand its information basis unnecessarily and becomes diverted towards misleading details. (Selection of data banks to have access to is a major task), ( What sort of data to have access to? ) { according to the needs of the Union and its objectives and prospects }**

## **2) Tasks involved:**

Produce a full fledged diagnostic study for the establishment and first year operation of the Information Center. This study involves the following:

- Formulation of a system for the Information Center.
- Configuration of the requirements of the Center ,its establishment and operation requirements and the different phases involved.
- Identification of the type of information needed. ( Treatment of information & expected value added ).
- Preparation of an ad hoc detailed report on how to update and automate the library (CDS/ISIS, & cabinet files: requirements and program of action ).
- Figure out ways and means for harmonization of information centers of the Arab Chambers and for coordination with regional data banks.
- ( Field visit to Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry may reflect the possibility of duplication of efforts that should be avoided. How to overcome this, & how to use resources in an efficient way? \*The economies of scale of the Information Center ).

## **3) Requirements :**

- Automation of the library ( modernizing the system & training staff )
- Selection of Hardware platform
- Identifying software needs
- Telecommunication equipment needed
- Technical training on software applications & study tours for researchers
- Recruitment of personnel ( one BA graduate specialized in computer science, BA graduate with background in economics or in business administration & trained on software applications )
- Financial requirements
- Access to data banks

## **4) Output :**

- a) Research ( facilitated and expanded )
- b) Information services



**Specific requirements and tasks:**

- 1- Preparation of a list of regional and international data sources
- 2- Preparation of a paper on types of information needed
- 3- Preparation of an ad hoc report on the requirements for modernizing the library (ISIS & CD's & HW & SW & facilities)
- 4- Formulation of plan for training the personnel
- 5- Working out a detailed program for action

**Annex 4: Current prices of Hardware components**

MODEL	Description	price US\$
<b>Olivetti</b>		
PC pro33 mt	386-33MHZ, 4MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 120MB HD, VGA 14" color monitor	7,570
PC pro 486/33m	486-33MHZ, 8MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 510MB HD, VGA 14" color monitor	14,070
<b>Compaq</b>		
prolina 3/25 s	386-25MHZ, 4MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 120MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	2,800
prolinea 4/33 s	486-33MHZ, 4MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 120MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	3,060
prolinea 4/50 s	486-50MHZ, 4MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 240MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	3,940
proSigni 4/66Dx2	486-66MHZ, 8MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 550MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	7,740
<b>Vectron</b>		
VEC 33DX	386-33MHZ, 4MB RAM, 64KB cache, 1FD 5.25", 1FD 3.5", 120MB HD, VGA 14" color monitor	2,550
VEC 486DX	486-33MHZ, 8MB RAM, 256KB cache, 1FD 5.25", 1FD 3.5", 340MB HD, VGA 14" color monitor	4,350
<b>COPAM</b>		
COPAM 386/33	386-33MHZ, 4MB RAM, 1FD 5.25", 120MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	1,500
COPAM 486/66	486-66MHZ, 8MB RAM, 1FD 3.5", 120MB HD, SVGA 14" color monitor	3,800
<b>HP Printers</b>		
HP III	Laser printer 300dpi, 8ppm, A4, Paralell+Serial, 2MB RAM	4,700
<b>EPSON</b>		
EPL410	Laser 300dpi, 6ppm, A4, Paralell+Serial, 2MB RAM, Epson & HP laserjet IIP emulation	1,800
LQ1170	Dot matrix 24 pin, 330 CPS, 15", Color, Parallel	1,050
LQ860	Dot matrix 24 pin, 300 CPS, 10", Color, Parallel+Serial	1,075

## **Annex 5: List of current information sources/providers**

### **United Nations Organizations:**

**Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)**

**International Trade Center (ITC)**

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

**International Labor Organization (ILO)**

**ESCWA**

### **Specialized Arab Banks and Financial Institutions**

**Arab Monetary Fund**

**Saudi Development Fund**

**Saudi Industrial Development Fund**

**Kuwaiti Arab Economic Development Fund**

**Arab International Bank**

**Abu Dhabi Arab Economic Development Fund**

**Arab African Economic Development Bank**

**Islamic Development Bank**

**Joint Arab Organizations**

### **The Arab League Organizations**

**Arab Administrative Organization**

**Arab Industrial Development Organization**

**Arab Standards & Measurement Organization**

**Arab Labor Organization**

**Arab Agriculture Development Organization**

**Arab Education, Cultural and Science Organization**

**Various Specialized Departments**

### **Governmental Organization**

**Central Banks**

**Ministries of Planning**

**Organizations for Statistics**

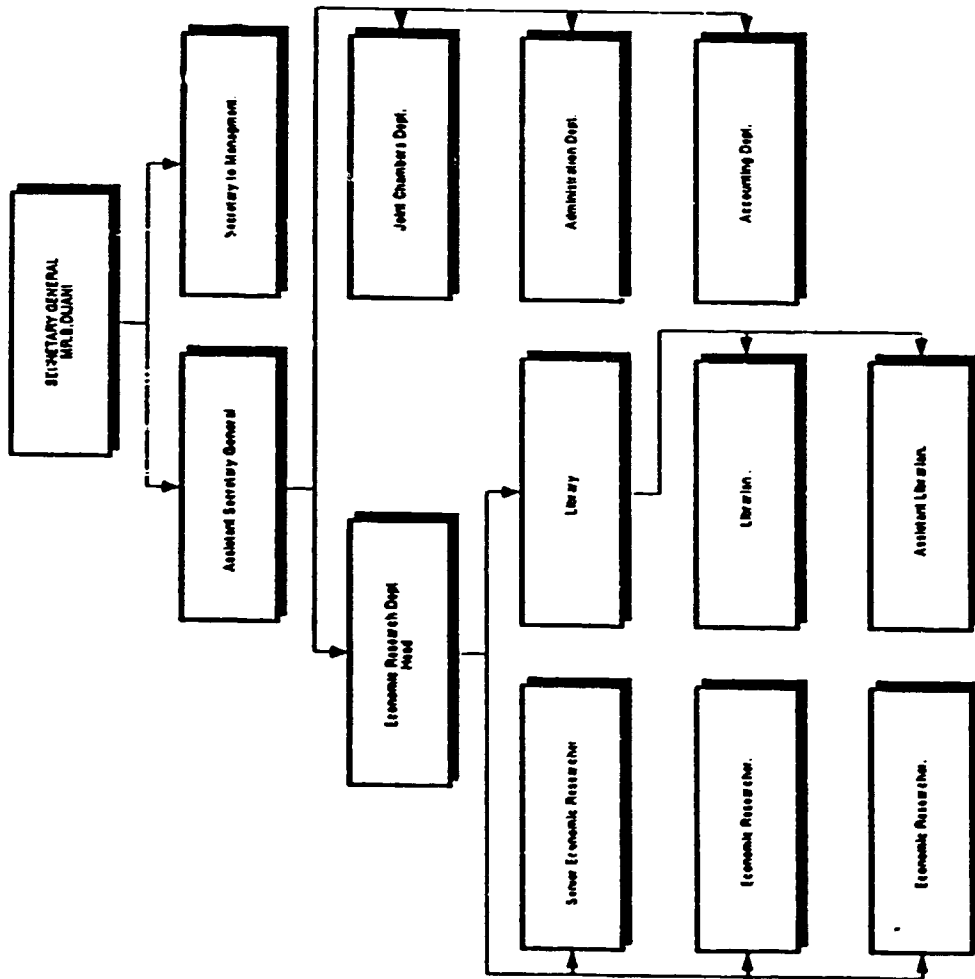
### **Member Chambers**

### **Pan-Arab Organizations:**

**Joint Arab Unions**

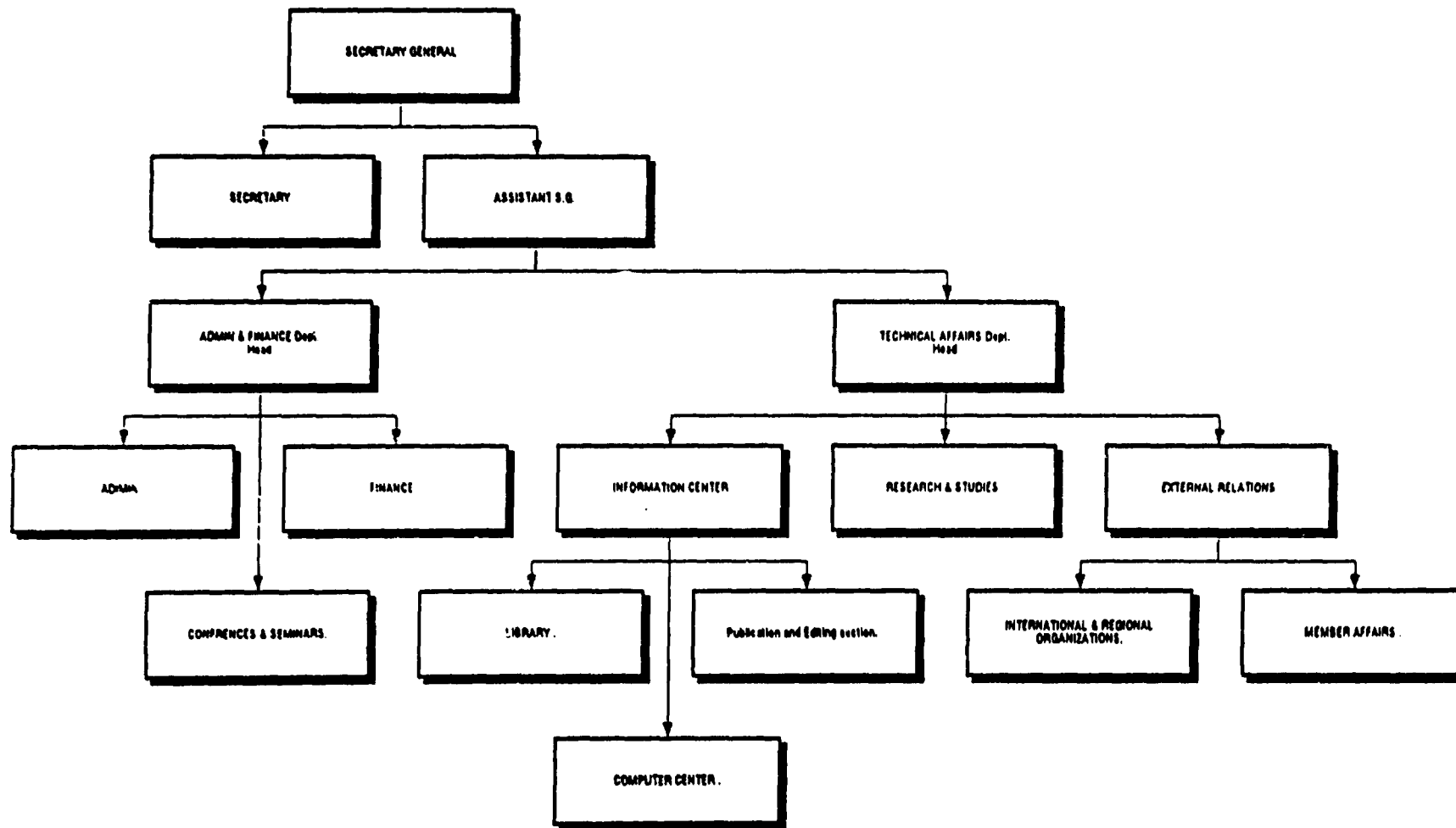
**Joint Arab Projects**

ANNEX 6  
SGGUCCIAAC CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



ANNEX 7

THE NEW PROPOSED SGGUCCIAAC ORGANIGRAM





Publication and Testing section

**Annex 8: Draft Document of a technical assistance project**

**UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

**PROJECT DOCUMENT**

**Number:** Country: Arab Region

**Title:** Setting up an Information Center at the Secretariat General of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries.

**Total UNIDO budget:** US\$

**Estimated starting date:** As soon as possible      **Planned duration:** 12 months

**Project site:** Beirut, Lebanon

**Government Implementing Agency:** N/A

**Host Government/Agency:** Secretariat General of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries.

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**Brief description:** To set up an Information Center at the Secretariat General of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries.

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## I. Background and Justification

### (a) Background

The General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab countries (GUCCIAAC) is a non-governmental organization established in 1951. The Secretariat General of the Union is located in Beirut - Lebanon. The objectives of the Union is to enhance Arab economic development, and integration through coordinating the economic and social development plans as well as coordinating industrial, agricultural and trade policies and legislation, and through reducing and eliminating the barriers hindering the flow of Arab goods and the movement of persons, and improving the means of transport. On the other hand, promoting the Arab economy within the outside of the Arab world, and working jointly with the Union members to secure markets for Arab products with a view to enhance the bargaining power in trade as well as other economic relations with the outside world. Also, GUCCIAAC works to support the exchange of technical information in the agricultural, industrial and other fields, and encouraging scientific, economic and technical research. To achieve these strategic objectives, GUCCIAAC is performing within the following areas:

- a. Encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit and supporting the efforts of the public and private sectors, and representing them in Arab and international organizations.
- b. Coordinating the activities of the Arab Chambers and promoting cooperation among them.
- c. Propagating the administrative and advanced technological systems which comply with the conditions prevailing in the Arab countries, and promoting the awareness to improve the efficiency and operation of existing economic units.
- d. Cooperation with the chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture in the developing countries, and creating joint institutions and organizing meetings and seminars with them, in order to support the efforts made by the governments of these countries to cope with the changes in world economic and its evolution, and to preserve the environment and natural resources.
- e. Promotion of the Arab economic interests in the outside world, through the participation in the creation and operation of joint chambers of commerce and industry. The establishment of appropriate relations and institutions in accordance with the prevailing conditions in the countries concerned and by all means of communication.

The organs of the Union are the General Conference, the Council, the Executive Committee and finally the Secretariat General which is the executive arm of the Union. It is responsible for the administration of the work of the Council and carry out all the studies and research work necessary for the council needs, and implement the programmes set by the council.



The functionality and operation of the Secretariat General relies heavily on information availability related to economic activities in trade, industrial and agricultural sectors in the Arab countries. Currently, the main source of information is the literature and documents received and gathered in the Secretariat General's library, which contains a diversified valuable literature and publications on relevant subjects. The need for accessing updated information and data from various sources regionally and internationally, and to improve the methodology for treatment and dissemination of information, propose the importance for establishing a modern information center within the Secretariat General of Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries.

(b) Justification

The establishment of an Information Center in the Secretariat General of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries is a necessity in order to enhance the mode of operation of the Secretariat General of the Union, and improve its capacity in providing the needed information support for its members. On the other hand, the center will play the important role of "information service provider" to its constitutional members and its affiliated organizations. With the establishment of this center the GUCCIAAC will be qualified to act as the central Hub to a planned Arab Chambers' information network, and will participate actively in the efforts aiming at the establishment of a Pan-Arab information exchange network. To achieve this, the assistance of the UNIDO is required to:

- . providing the know-how and expertise needed for the establishment of such information center.
- . Assist GUCCIAAC in supplying the needed hardware, software and other tools.
- . Organize and provide the needed training and skill development programmes required for the GUCCIAAC's staff to be able to manage and carry out the center's functions.

The proposed information center will serve the Unions members and help the GUCCIAAC's staff to carry out their tasks in a more effective and efficient way. The center is expected to provide the following services and to perform the following tasks:

- Strengthening the present role of the Union in serving its members by offering them an access to diversified sources of information.
- Enhance the current activities in the domains of economic research and the preparation of issues that the Union is involved in with the other bodies.
- Improve the Union's capacity to communicate and coordinate with other regional organizations acting in the domain of economic development.

- Develop the Union's capability to initiate and to implement new information services needed by its members in the private sector and the business community in the member countries.
- Help in the development of those members with limited resources and abilities by supplying them with information that they need.

## II. The Project

### (a) Project Objective

To create, establish and develop an information center within the Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC that serves the mission of the Union in the promotion of economic development and provides information services to the union and its affiliated members.

### (b) Output

- (i) **Established Information Center comprising a library and computerized information services and staff trained through study-tours and on-the-job training.**

Services to be performed upon the completion of the project:

Collection, processing and dissemination of information needed and required by the different member chambers. This will be done in two steps. The first will address the library reorganization and automation. The second step will aim at the development of a set of relevant information services encompassing computerized information, publications, referral services, and computerized links to other data banks and specialized regional centers.

#### **Staff:**

- 1 Librarian
- 1 Assistant Librarian
- 1 Database application programmer
- 2 Information officers

#### **Methodology:**

Implementation of a library computerized management system, reorganization of the library (adoption of modern cataloguing, classification and indexing techniques). Setting the procedures for data collection, data entry into the computerized information system.

#### **Premises and facilities**

Fully installed office space to house the information center.

**Management/financing**

The information center will constitute a part of the Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC and its staff will report to the management. The center will be financed by the members of GUCCIAAC.

Activities for output (i)	To be completed by month
1. Specification and ordering the equipment and necessary software tools for the center	2
2. Preparation of users training courses programmes	2
3. Consultancy, evaluation and selection of data banks, determination of mode of access and subscription	6
4. Preparation of user training courses on international data banks access and search	10
5. Conduct training programme	12
6. Organize and conduct study-tours for staff	8
7. Delivery and installation of computer equipment and application software	8
8. Data preparation, collection, and Database building up	12
9. Library organization	12
10. Establish service, implementation of document storage and retrieval system. Enhancement of Information Support Services (information gathering, processing and dissemination), survey of quantitative and qualitative needs of Union's members.	12

(d) Inputs

(i) Hosting Organization

The Secretariat General of the GUCCIAAC will provide:

- . All required human resources needed for the setup of the center. List of local personnel allocated to the project to be determined in a later stage.
- . Adequately furnished and equipped (electrical, communication facilities, etc.) site for the Information Center.
- . All administrative support to international consultants/experts and local travel if required.

(ii) UNIDO inputs

international staff

Post	Title	Cost US\$
11-01	Chief Technical Adviser, Expert in designing and establishment of information centers (6 m/m to be split into 3 missions 3 m/m + 2 m/m + 1 m/m)	88,000
11-50	Short-term Consultant in international data banks services (0.5 m/m)	8,000
16-00	UNIDO staff travel	4,000

Training requirements for national staff

Type of training activity	Cost US\$
Computer basic techniques - orientation for library staff (as part of 11-01 assignment)	
CDS/ISIS textual data base management system (as part of 11-01 assignment)	
CD-ROM database application programme usage (as part of 11-01 assignment)	
Access to selected international data banks and information retrieval techniques (as a part of 11-50 assignment)	

Study-tours of the national staff for orientation and to study the existing relevant data banks and the use and applications of their information in the relative sectors of interest.

**Total Training** 15,000

**Non-expendable equipment**

**i) Hardware**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost US\$</b>
1	486/33MHZ - 16MB RAM - 400 MB HD- CD-ROM reader - SVGA color monitor	6,000
4	386-486/25MHZ - 4MB RAM - 120 MB HD SVGA color monitor	12,000
1	High output Laser Printer	3,000
2	Heavy duty matrix printer	1,600
1	heavy duty color matrix printer	600
1	Modem 2400 card	300
1	Document Scanner with interface	1,900
5	Network interface cards and cables	2,500
1	5 KVR UPS power supply	4,000
	<b>Total Hardware</b>	<b>31,900</b>

**ii) Software**

5	MS/DOS ver. 5.0 with Arabic NLS	500
5	Microsoft Windows ver. 3.1 with Arabic NLS	500
3	Microsoft Word for Windows ver. 2.0 with Arabic NLS	1,200
3	Microsoft Excel for windows ver. 4.0 with Arabic NLS	1,200
1	Microsoft Project (or similar)	300
1	LAN software that support the needs for 5 users	1,500

1	Adequate communication software	200
1	CDS/ISIS textual data base management system (Arabic version)	0
	<b>Total Software</b>	<b>5,400</b>
iii)	<b>Data Banks Information services *</b>	<b>12,000</b>
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>2,000</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>166,300</b>

\* This is the estimated cost for the first year enrollment in 4 to 5 international information and data providers, access and retrieval charges including practicing.

### III. Reporting and Evaluation Requirements - Expected Follow-up

The project will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with UNIDO procedures. The CTA in co-operation with the national counterpart will prepare a Terminal Report.