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UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

**Seventh Advisory Group Meeting
of the Information and Networking for
Technology Investment and Business (INTIB)**

Vienna, Austria, 20-23 May 1997

REPORT*

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* This document has not been edited.

CONTENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   AGM supports the strategy of INTIB in developing programmes/projects to strengthen the capacity of developing countries and economies in transition in providing value-added information services to SMEs through the efficient use of IT and Internet and thereby contribute to the building of the Global Information Society.

2.   More attention should be given to providing an integrated package of UNIDO services, i.e., information, networking, technology and investment promotion and sectoral expertise.

3.   A regional approach is considered as correct. Efficient procedures for providing interaction and cooperation between INTIB projects, as well as transferring experience between the projects should be implemented. Efforts should also be made to strengthen inter-regional cooperation, in order to stimulate South-South cooperation.

4.   INTIB activities in the regions should be enhanced as follows:

In **Africa,** cooperation should be intensified with the ARCT as the Regional Focal Point and generator of business information exchange through the establishment of a WWW server; provision of consultancies and training; a follow-up to "seed projects" on needs assessment and expansion of such projects to other LDCs in Africa.

In **Asia and the Pacific** activities should be implemented in close cooperation with the APCTT, using the ITMIN project in Sri Lanka as a model and a resource centre for similar projects in the region. In addition, ITMIN could also function as a Sub-Regional Focal Point generating an exchange of business information through the establishment of a WWW server, and the provision of consultancies and training.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean** activities should concentrate on the on-going and planned projects under TF arrangements. A meeting in Brazil, in cooperation with FIESP, to evaluate INTIB's strategy in the region and to strengthen cooperation with other networks in the region (RITLA, TIPS) should be convened.

In **Central and Eastern Europe** activities should concentrate on the implementation of the IBIS concept and OLVIT's experience, which consists of offering diversified high quality services, should be applied. The expansion of the above to the Central Asian countries should be implemented in cooperation with the APCTT. The strategy for such cooperation should be discussed at a meeting to be held in Iran in 1997.
To secure information exchange between various international projects, such as "Electronic Information Market in Eastern Europe" coordinated by ICSTI and GMD.

5.   The development of mechanisms and facilities to ensure the self-sustainability of INTIB projects is necessary to make INTIB a viable alternative to other ICT assistance providers. Every effort should be made to develop mechanisms aimed at the improvement of data collection processes within the ICT network projects executed by INTIB, and for the provision of reliable, timely and accurate information.

6.   To work out a strategy on incorporating electronic commerce facilities into the INTIB network information systems. In particular, state-of-the-art documentation of security, authentication and the anonymity of electronic transactions should be prepared by the INTIB staff and made available to INTIB partners.
Payment schemes for access to and downloading data from the network information

systems should be elaborated and applied to the INTIB ICT projects.

In order to facilitate an information exchange in the field of electronic commerce, it would be desirable to consider convening a conference of all parties interested in this area, such as UNIDO, EU, ICSTI, on the strategies and techniques used in this field.

7.   INTIB should continue to develop its WWW site so as to reflect UNIDO business opportunities and to respond to the needs of its clients. Consideration might be given to establishing some mirror servers to provide efficient access to UNIDO information resources in selected regions/countries.

To consider, where applicable, the re-engineering of the INTIB information infrastructure according to the object oriented methodology.

8.   INTIB should follow the latest achievements of such disciplines as data mining, knowledge management and artificial intelligence in order to propose and apply intelligent information tools and new methodologies. Special emphasis should be given to multimedia facilities and data visualization, as well as providing advice to and training for users in applying IT and accessing world-wide information resources for business.

9.   "Best practice" books based on the experience of ITMIN and OLVIT and other INTIB network partners should be prepared and made available. These books should include chapters on measures on achieving self-sustainability and payment modalities.

10.   Consideration should be given to the establishment of methodological guidelines, including software tools for local content providers based on the Internet, on a low-cost basis.

11.   The AGM supports UNIDO's efforts in establishing active strategic alliances with other international organizations; e.g., World Bank (MIGA/IPAnet), E.U., ASEAN, APEC and other regional and international organizations.

12.   More aggressive fund raising procedures for financing INTIB projects have to be determined and applied. Towards this end, closer contacts with the European Union are recommended, to use the comparative advantages of both organizations.

13.   Action should be undertaken to achieve better synergy in assisting developing countries and economies in transition in capitalizing on the IT revolution and in the efficient use of electronic networks, in particular the Internet.

14.   Activities should be increased to enhance the range of INTIB promotional material and to increase the visibility of INTIB in international conferences and workshops.

ORGANIZATION

The Advisory Group Meeting was attended by 15 participants from various member countries, international as well as inter-governmental organizations. In addition 16 observers from the Russian Federation, who were supported by the International Centre for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI), also attended the Meeting. See Annex I for the list of participants.

In the opening statement of the Director-General, delivered by the Managing Director of the Investment and Technology Promotion Division, he pointed out that it was necessary to ensure that all countries, in all regions, have equal access to industry and business information resources world-wide, so as to be able to take advantage of the rapidly globalizing knowledge-base. The dramatic advances made in the information industry in recent years, in particular the rapid growth in electronic networking, have revolutionized access to the world's knowledge resources. He further stated that access to networks and to other information technology products has the potential to improve the position of developing countries and economies in transition, by providing data and information to assist in strategic planning, market access and technology acquisition.

The opportunity was taken to quote from a speech made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, to the Confederation of Indian Industry made in New Delhi in April 1997:

"the United Nations needs business and industry to make the contributions that they are uniquely placed to make."

He stressed the importance that UNIDO places on a well-directed and comprehensive information support and networking programme to ensure the effectiveness of the work of the Organization. The importance of the INTIB Advisory Group in ensuring the continuous reorienting of INTIB's activities according to the emerging needs of the international community was acknowledged. He concluded by stating that the rapid growth of the Internet and related electronic networks made a further review of INTIB's operations all the more opportune.

ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The meeting was invited to elect a chairman and rapporteur. The meeting unanimously elected:

1. Chairman: Mr. A. Boutrimenko
                 Director, International Centre for Scientific and Technical Information,
                 Moscow, Russian Federation

2. Rapporteur: Mr. M. Muraszkiewicz
                 Deputy Director, Institute for Computer and Information Engineering

WORKING SESSIONS

The Chief, Industrial Information Section, UNIDO, outlined UNIDO's programme on information and networking to support and build business partnerships through the use of information technology and the Internet.   In his presentation, he analysed the changes in the information needs of developing countries, and economies in transition and stressed the importance of business and market information in additional to technology information.   He gave a brief overview of the various activities of INTIB and its regional information programmes.

The principal objective of the INTIB programme to build up national capabilities to meet the demand and need for information and value-added or support services in a sustainable way was outlined. The aim here is to increase the flow of investment and technology to a country or region.   One way of achieving this was through networking, which included the building up of strategic alliances with government agencies, regional organizations, industry, business and financial agents, so as to ensure the delivery of UNIDO's services in a coherent, synergetic and coordinated manner.   He then briefly described some of the strategic alliances recently entered into (World Bank, MIGA/IPAnet, ITC, ITU and UNCTAD).

He summarized cooperation within UNIDO on industrial information and described UNIDO's World Wide Web site on the Internet, for which INTIB is directly responsible with regard to the technical development and further expansion. The main aim of INTIB's input was to provide access to technology, investment and business opportunities stemming from UNIDO's activities and to integrate all UNIDO information and other services and to provide them online via the Internet.

The afternoon session of the first day was started by Mr. A. Toth, Managing Director of NOVITECH, who presented a paper on electronic commerce for SMEs - the Internet and global trade.   This was followed by a paper from Mr. T. Gatter, Bank Austria, who spoke about the use of the Internet to support banking operations and the financing of international projects and export.

The second day started with a presentation by Mr. D. Ellard from the European Commission on the G7 Initiative: Global Information network for SMEs and the work being carried out by the European Union in this regard.   This was followed by a presentation by INTIB staff of the IBIS project (Industry and Business Information System) and its role in promoting business in eastern and central europe and the CIS.   The morning session continued with the presentation of Messrs. Y. Savostitsky and V. Bodjansky (Deputy Director, Institute for Automated Systems and President OLVIT respectively) on the state of the art of Internet and the potential for investment, trade and business in Russia.

The afternoon session began with a presentation by Mr. M. Muraszkiewicz, Deputy Director, Institute for Computer and Information Engineering, on how to build an Intranet and on the comparative advantages and disadvantages of an intranet for companies. This was followed by a paper of Mr. K. Perera, Director, ITMIN Ltd., on the emerging pattern of information use among business decision makers.   He spoke on the impact on the growing information industry and ITMIN's experience.   The afternoon session was concluded with a brief description by Mr. A. Serdjuk, Director, INTERTEC, on the use of the Internet to promote business opportunities.

All presentations were followed by discussions in which all participants took part.

The third and fourth days were devoted to individual meetings between participants and INTIB staff.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

After detailed discussions, the meeting adopted the recommendations and the report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The participants expressed their appreciation for the arrangements and hospitality provided by UNIDO and in particular to the INTIB staff for making the meeting efficient, effective and successful. They congratulated the Chairman for his efficient and smooth handling of the meeting and the Rapporteur and INTIB for preparing precise, exact and comprehensive reports and recommendations in the shortest possible time.

Special appreciation was given to the International Centre for Scientific and Technical Information for organizing and supporting the participation of the "users group", who were representatives from the business and finance information industry and information services. It was considered that this practice should be continued in the future.

LIST OF INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Mr. D. Ellard, EU Mr. V. Ejkov, IIAT	- Potential cooperation in assisting developing countries and economies in transition in information and networking.
Mr. J. Bischoff, APCTT	- Joint implementation of the project "Information needs assessment in Asian LDCs and low-income countries"; - Joint organization of meetings in Iran and Kyrgyzstan on technology, investment and information networking.
Mr. A. Boutrimenko, ICSTI Mr. V. Kodola, ICSTI	- Cooperation programme ICSTI/INTIB for 1997-1999.
Mr. V. Bodjansky, OLVIT	- IBIS project - Russian Chapter new developments.
Mr. T. Gatter, Bank Austria (followed with Ms. Hampel and Mr. Froede)	- Exchange of ideas to build-up cooperation in investment and technology.
Mr. E. Simonov, Far Eastern Bank	- UNIDO investment programme in Primoski Bravj.
Mr. A. Toth, NOVITECH	- IBIS project - Support to Slovakia Chapter.
Mr. M. Muraszkiewicz, ICIE	- LDC project in Africa and Asia. - special issue on Information Technology for Emerging Technology Series.
Mr. K. Perera, ITMIN Ltd. Mr. V. Ratnarajah, ITMIN Ltd.	- ITMIN II concept and LDC meeting in Sri Lanka in October 1997.
Ms. C. Martins, FIESP	- INTIB programme development in Brazil and LAC region: problems encountered and ways to intensify cooperation.
Ms. J. Mrazikova, CRD	- IBIS project - Czech Chapter.
Mr. G. Saghian, ARMINCO	- IBIS project in Armenia.