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Marketing of Industrial Information

**INFORMATION NETWORKING FOR
TECHNOLOGY, INVESTMENT
AND BUSINESS**

**NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR
AFRICA**



**United Nations
Industrial Development
Organization**

INTIB

Marketing of Industrial Information

INFORMATION NETWORKING FOR TECHNOLOGY, INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS

NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR AFRICA

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United Nations
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Introduction

The global community is at the threshold of a new millennium during which the information superhighway will reach new heights. Information technology via the Internet will spread out speedily to almost every corner of the world. The number of Internet hosts has increased from four million in 1994 to nine million in 1995, a trend that will continue.

The future growth of industry, technology and investment will be inextricably linked with information technology. Hence it is a *sine qua non* for the developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs) to gain access to information networks in order for them to face the challenges arising in a competitive global economic scenario.

In this context the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)* has developed a programme for networking and capacity building in industrial information for technology investment and business for Africa, to strengthen the national capabilities of the African countries in this field. This is a major step towards establishing dynamic and effective mechanisms for the acquisition, retrieval, processing and dissemination of information pertaining to industry, technology, investment and other business sectors. It is anticipated that respective national focal points (NFPs) would operate jointly with the private business sector on a commercially sustainable basis to realize their established goals. Therefore, a market-oriented approach is a prerequisite for the economic viability of NFPs.

The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the flow of information on industry, technology, investment market opportunities and a myriad of other areas. Industrial information is crucial to economic growth. Hence, the industrial enterprises in developing countries should take maximum advantage of the flow of data in order to adapt to new market conditions by choosing the most appropriate technology and increasing productivity to uplift their performance.

In light of the above, this brief report presents some insights in terms of marketing industrial information that might assist the management of NFPs in focusing their efforts to service the information needs of their clientele, in effect to adopt a dynamic approach.

*<http://www.unido.org>

Background information on the economy of Africa

Economy

The economic fundamentals of most of the African countries need to be strengthened as a priority to avoid any further marginalization of these economies in terms of the global economy. During the period 1990-1995 the average economic growth rate in Africa, in real terms, stood at 1.7 per cent. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of developing world's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to fall to 5.8 per cent by the year 2020 from 7.6 per cent in 1992.

Manufacturing value added

The developing country share of global manufacturing value added (MVA) increased from 17 per cent in 1980 to 21.5 per cent in 1995. It is projected that this share will reach 30.6 per cent by the year 2005. Africa's share of global MVA (excluding South Africa) in 1980 was 0.85 per cent and by 1995 it had dropped to 0.74 per cent. About half of MVA in the developing world was attributable to growth in South and East Asia. Africa's share of developing country MVA was around 6 per cent. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 0.3 per cent of the world's MVA per capita. MVA in the sub-Saharan region was US\$40.

Global trade

The African share of global trade decreased from 5 per cent in 1980 to 2.5 per cent in 1995. Its share in developing country-trade figures reflected a further drop from 14.9 per cent to 6.4 per cent during the same period. It seemed that the African region would not make much headway with the global trade liberalization, according to assessments of the Uruguay Round of multinational trade negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), unless tremendous efforts were put in effect.

Population growth

The population growth in Africa records an annual average growth rate of 2.5-3 per cent. Unfortunately, MVA growth has not been able to keep pace with the population increases since the 1990s. It is estimated that over 220 million persons in Africa live in poverty.

Foreign direct investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows have a major impact on economic modernization and achieving industrial development. Due to the information revolution, and technological development, financial markets are not only being integrated but capital-flows are stretching across national borders. It is believed that about one trillion United States dollars cross national borders each day.

However, FDI in Africa remains at a modest US\$ 5 billion per annum, as a significant portion of FDI into developing countries are concentrated more in South East Asia and the Latin American Region.¹

FDI has been concentrated in a few African countries. In the 1993-1995 period, Nigeria accounted for 61 per cent of the entire flows into sub-Saharan Africa, while Egypt accounted for 48 per cent of the estimated flows into North Africa in the same years.

¹UNCTAD *World Investment Report* 1996.

Economic challenges facing African countries

African countries will face the following challenges in the implementation of their economic and industrialization policies.

- The Uruguay Round of GATT talks and the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have resulted in a global move towards free trade. As a consequence, both tariff and non-tariff barriers, initially set up to promote domestic industrial development, will have to be removed. Local industries will face competition from imports and the established export markets will become more competitive.
- The formation of strong economic groupings such as the European Economic Communities (EC) and the North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA) will have a significant impact on world trade. New norms for trading with these economic groupings are being formulated. The European Communities initiated the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series of quality and environment norms. Access to these strong economic blocks would depend on the policies and trade norms set by the economic groupings.
- The liberalization of central and eastern Europe and fast emerging economies such as China and India will have a major impact on global trade in industrial goods. Sub-Saharan Africa's competitive advantage in the processing of raw materials in agriculture, mining and low-technology-based labour-intensive activities will have to meet severe competition from these emerging players.

National treatment clauses in any future multilateral investment agreement*

Should such multilateral investment agreements (MIAs) come into force, any investor of a member country of WTO will get "free entry" to establish a company in a member country of WTO and enjoy "national treatment" i.e. treatment without any discrimination by the host country authorities, vis-à-vis national investors in terms of investment, trading etc.

A most disturbing fact is that 33 out of the 48 LDCs are located within Africa. Hence, Africa is recognized as a priority region on the United Nations development agenda.

According to the *Annual Report 1996* of UNIDO it is crucial to accelerate manufacturing activity and build a diversified and efficient manufacturing base in Africa. The process requires not only the upgrading of technological capabilities and

*Reference: OECD, <http://www.oecd.org>

human skills but also participation of foreign investors and the domestic private sector to help quicken the process.

Alliance for Africa's Industrialization

The Alliance for Africa's Industrialization (AAI), is a new initiative of UNIDO and complements the United Nations system-wide Special Initiative on Africa. It is directed towards achieving sustainable industrial growth and enhancing the competitiveness of African economies by strengthening their national capabilities—the policy, institutional and enterprise levels.

AAI is considered a dynamic mechanism for attaining the goals and objectives of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA). The programmes of the AAI are developed under the following three components:

- Capacity building for industrial competitiveness;
- Linking industry and agriculture to increase productivity and competitiveness;
- Promoting private investment and other forms of industrial cooperation and policy support.

*"The rapid implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa utilizing the Alliance as a new support mechanism to enhance the attainment of its goals and objectives is expected to contribute to transforming some of the African countries to newly industrialized countries during the next 15 to 20 years"*²

The provision of industrial information is a major prerequisite for the successful implementation of these programmes. The entire gamut of information on industry covers a broad spectrum, e.g. technology, machinery and equipment, raw material sources, prices, patents, copyrights and trademarks, environmental protection, market opportunities, potential investors etc. This knowledge base is vital to the decision makers in government authorities, private sector business community, chambers of commerce and industry, entrepreneurs, researchers, academicians, financial institutions, potential investors and other relevant parties such as small manufacturing enterprises (SMEs). Most SMEs are unaware of these information resources. Those that are aware of them may not comprehend how best to convert the flow of complex industrial data in order to raise the performance of their enterprises.

²Annual Report 1996, UNIDO.

Networking programme

Information Networking for Technology, Investment and Business (INTIB), is a programme within the Statistics and Information Networking Branch of the Investment Promotion and Institutional Capacity-building Division, an implementing arm of UNIDO whose main focus is to strengthen the capacities in industrial information systems and networking of targeted countries by providing packages of assistance.

The main objective of INTIB Africa programme is to strengthen the NFPs of African States so that NFPs will adopt effective mechanisms to acquire, retrieve, process and disseminate information on industry, technology investment and business opportunities to its end-users i.e. industrialists, financiers investors, policy and decision makers, SMEs/SMIs, R&D and academic institutions.

“The UNIDO industrial information networking product will contribute to meet the information needs of developing countries in technological processes, investment and business opportunities to facilitate the development of the industrial sector in each individual country and the integration of these services at a regional level to enhance regional industrial development.”

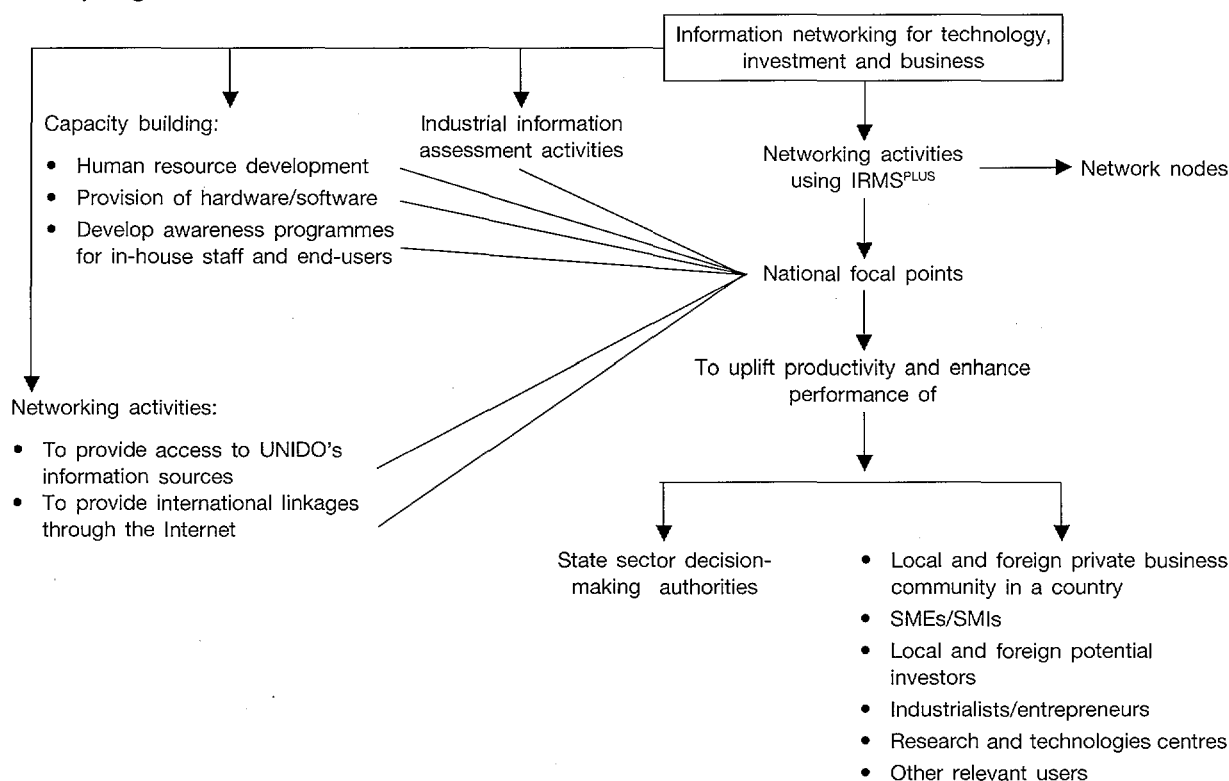
Industrial information gathering for NFPs

The availability of the right type of industrial and market information is critically important to increase productivity in a continuously changing and fiercely competitive business environment. The existing industrial information infrastructure in most developing countries, especially in Africa, is not adequate to meet the demands arising from both public and private sectors. Therefore, the core constraints of NFPs i.e. institutional and structural weaknesses, insufficient qualified and trained personnel, material inputs, lack of market-orientation and inadequacy of awareness among end-users etc., are being addressed by UNIDO through the implementation of an INTIB programme to convert the NFPs into robust market-oriented, self-sustainable organizations.

Industry provides a major force for the economic modernization of developing countries. Industrial sector development is pursued by policy planners as a means of increasing economic growth, generating employment prospects, and giving impetus to agricultural productivity and diversification of exports. It is imperative to accelerate the pace of industrialization to target these goals and meet with the tremendous challenges of globalization and liberalization successfully.

In view of this situation, NFPs must gear themselves to respond effectively by assisting the decision-making authorities in the State agencies, private sector business community, chambers of commerce and industry, industrialists, agro-business,

The programme activities structure



SMEs, R&D organizations and other relevant parties as a “knowledge base” and source of information.

The types of industrial information sought by the key public sector organizations and the private sector business community will spread from a simple enquiry to a complex technological subject. NFPs should initially attempt to store basic information related to industry and technology, agro-processing development and research, market intelligence and investors demands, taking into account the end-user requirements.

The information on industry (including agro-business) could be classified into the following broad categories.

- Industry (including agro-industry): R&D, products, industrial statistics etc.;
- Technology: plant machinery equipment, designs and technical processes;
- Standards and quality;
- Market: competitive prices, demand overseas, packaging, overseas buyers, preferential tariffs, customs duties etc.;
- Investor driven: potential foreign investors, domestic investors, strength of local SMEs, incentives (fiscal/other).

Constraints in gathering industrial information

It has been revealed that constraints exist within NFPs, that act as a deterrent in establishing effective information mechanisms to service the target clientele efficiently. These constraints are:

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- Organizational structure: the private sector the “engine of growth” is not involved as an equity holder in the present establishment;
 - Human resources: the paucity of required professional skills has been a serious problem;
 - Equipment: in most cases the computers at NFPs are insufficient or outdated;
 - Awareness inadequacy among end-users.

The INTIB programme has addressed these issues and taken steps to develop NFPs as sound organizations that ultimately provide a “window” for international investors, industrialists, agro-processors, SMEs, national entrepreneurs, R&D organizations and others.

Targeting a clientele for NFPs

It is important to find out the target clientele that a respective NFP is trying to reach. Following are some of the main clients who would reach the NFP, which should endeavour to attract entrepreneurs or industrialists even from outside the formal industrial sector:

- Decision makers in the State sector organizations;
- Private-sector companies;
- Foreign investors/overseas business associations business councils based in the host country and abroad;
- Chambers of commerce and industry and trade associations;
- SMEs, industrialists and entrepreneurs in agro-business, etc.;
- Embassies;
- Research institutes and bureau of standards;
- Training organizations;
- In-house staff members of NFP;
- Banking and financial institutions, insurance companies;
- NGOs and donor agencies;
- Export-credit organizations;
- Investment promotion centres and export development agencies;
- NFP-club members (may establish clubs consisting of regular members and offer them concessionary packages);
- Airline and shipping companies and freight-forwarding agencies.

It would not be easy to service the numerous demands arising from all of the above mentioned customers. This list is provided principally as a cautionary measure. If NFPs are publicized as information focal points there is a high probability that members from the above list would contact the NFP.

Marketing industrial information

Based on UNIDO's experience and the assessment studies on the subject of marketing for information needs and its users, INTIB is fully convinced that there exists a sound market open for a wide range of information products and information services. These studies concentrated on 10 African states: Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

It has been revealed that the following types of inquiries have figured prominently:

- *Products on:* Agro-based processing, oils, metals, minerals, leather, building materials, textiles and mining.
- *Services:* Machinery and equipment suppliers, know-how, marketing, storage, transportation, distribution, research, quality control, technology, patents and copyrights, brand names and trade marks, licensing, standards, regulations, legislation, investment opportunities, prices, statistical data, international trade, government policies and evaluation methods.

The main information users described in the studies are as follows:

Industrialists, government decision makers, small and medium size entrepreneurs, consulting engineering companies, development banks, university academicians, researchers, in-house staff of NFPs, technical institutes, trade associations and chamber of commerce, etc.

It is evident from the foregoing that an excellent market exists in the 10 countries studied to develop marketing programmes with professional finesse to market industrial information by the respective NFPs. The implementation of privatization projects coupled with liberalization will, no doubt, ensure a growing market for industrial information products and services.

Advertising an NFP programme

The advertising programme should be designed by the marketing division in close consultation with other divisions, bearing in mind that NFPs are primarily service-oriented organizations created for a highly sophisticated knowledge-based activity.

Pre-launch campaign

- Media: press briefings
- Newspaper supplements
- Radio programmes
- Television programmes
- Seminars
- Direct-mail campaign

Training services offered by NFPs

Training programmes for clients

Training programmes should be conducted at the site of the corporate client, in-house or other suitable locations. The training packages should be tailored to meet customer demands, whether for a secretary of an SME or a group of persons. It must not be forgotten to run continuous short training programmes to develop in-house skills for information officers, documentalists, computer programmers/analysts, librarians etc. Their knowledge base must be improved in qualitative terms.

Training packages

- Standard IT applications;
- Training on the Internet;
- Training on IRMS^{PLUS} Package (Information Resource Management System)
- Training on the use of COMFAR for feasibility analysis;
- Workshops for secretaries and “customized” groups;
- Use of the Internet to assist SMEs and others to locate technology packages and information on industry investment and business;

Seminars and workshops

Informative seminars and workshops must be conducted to cover all of the country regions. One such seminar or workshop would “discover” a fair number of new entrepreneurs with tremendous potential. It is the duty of the field staff to locate them and gradually bring each one of them into the system, handling them and understanding their problems with great patience. The identification of new clients is a continuous “on going” process.

The programmes designed for presentation must be developed in an innovative and creative manner using as much audiovisual material as possible.

It is important to attract as many SMEs and potential entrepreneurs as possible to these sessions. Participants from universities, research institutes, financial institutions and banks, chambers of commerce, trade associations, State organizations and statutory bodies involved in industry, investment, planning, finance, commerce, research etc. should be invited to form a mixed balance of participants.

At the end of each seminar or workshop, written feedback (using a well thought-out questionnaire) from the participants would give the organizing NFPs material to improve on future seminars and workshops. It is important to remember that every contact carries seeds of becoming a client of an NFP. It is the responsibility of NFP staff members to play as a team and serve the existing subscribers and clients with meticulous care by supplying valuable information at all times.

Trade fairs on information technology and industry

NFPs must not miss opportunities that arise at trade fairs which could ultimately accrue the following benefits: increase clientele portfolio; create new business opportunities; provide exposure.

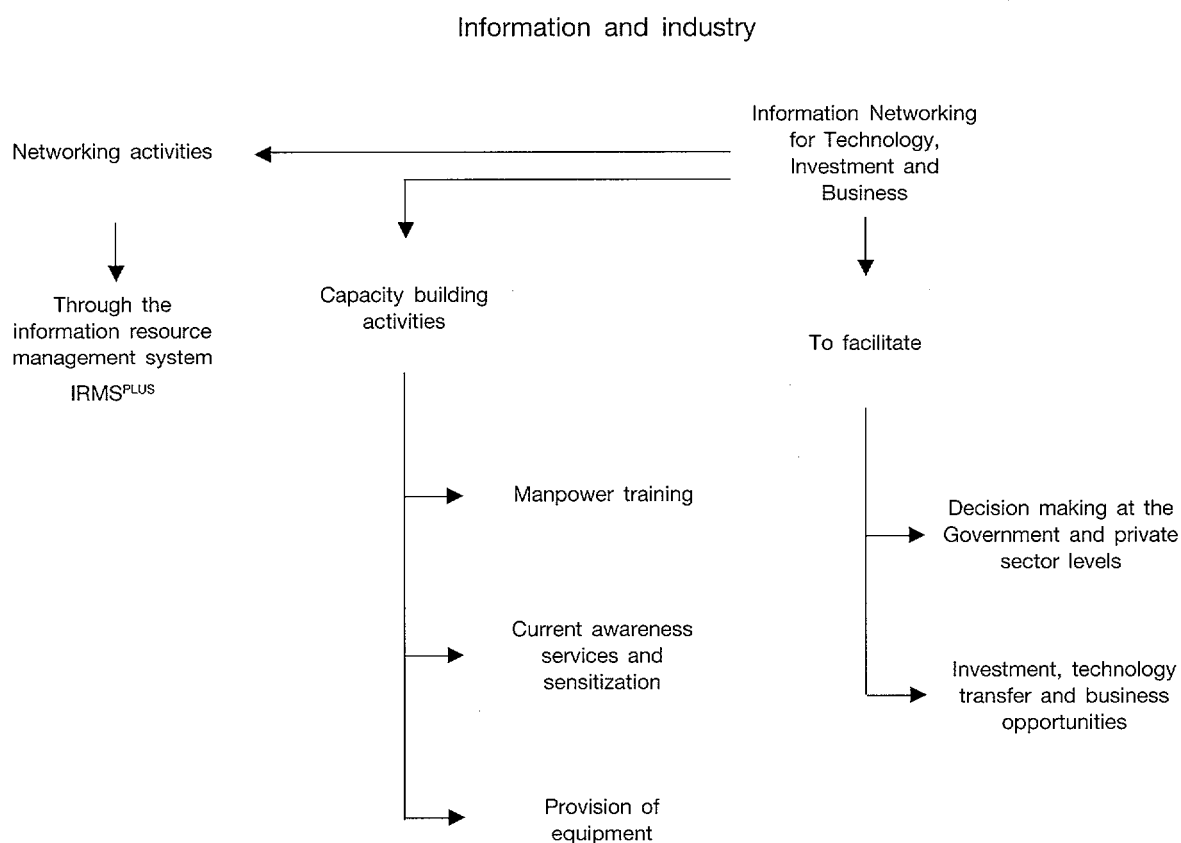
It would be advisable to avoid, as far as possible, hiring outside personnel without any proper training or commitment to represent NFPs at the fair stalls.

Trade fairs offer great opportunities to meet industrialists, potential investors, entrepreneurs etc. who are in search of investment opportunities, information on industry and technology and other market intelligence. Therefore each client enquiry must be handled efficiently to assure that each customer returns to the NFP.

At the end of each day, during an evaluation meeting, persons who visited the NFP may be categorized according to the seriousness reflected by each of them or any other basis, e.g. sector, product etc. The contact addresses must be given to the field staff, e.g. information officers so they can commence follow-up operations without any delay.

Types of industrial information available to NFPs

The following diagram shows the relation between information and industry:



A broad range of types of industrial information relevant to the work of NFPs is listed below.

Industry and technology

- Plant, machinery and equipment and technical know-how;
- Company addresses of machinery and equipment suppliers, (local and foreign);
- Complete technology packages (appropriate technologies);
- Competitive price information;
- Evaluation and analysis of technology packages;

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- Industrial publications on technology;
 - Industrial statistics;
 - Assistance provided by development banks and State sponsored agencies grants and technical assistance programmes;
 - Certifying authorities that furnish quality certificates on machinery and equipment e.g. general superintendence etc.;
 - Licensing/franchise arrangements.

Availability of human resources at different levels

Management Level

Engineers
Designers
Surveyors
Researchers

Middle Level

Engineering
Technicians
Electrical
Civil and R&D fields

Labour

Skilled labour
Unskilled labour
Technicians

Environment considerations

Pollution control mechanisms (using environment-friendly technologies)
Waste management processes

Market intelligence

Sub-contracting exchanges
Quality control systems
International standards
Product adaptation
Packaging requirements
Overseas buyers
Market prices and market research reports
Shipping and freight

Customs duties, tariffs, and preferential rates of duty
Patents, trademarks, copyrights and brand names
Company registration/incorporation
International trade fairs
Customs statistics, import/export

Information to facilitate foreign investment

Country data, status of economy
Political stability
Approval procedures and regulations
Repatriation of profits, dividends and capital
Fiscal incentives and other packages of incentives
Infrastructure facilities
Land availability, acquisition arrangements and price information
Information on local investors
Investment promotion and protection treaties
Double taxation agreements
Banking facilities
Auditors, accounting firms and company secretaries
Research institutions, marketing and management institutions and training organizations
Availability of trained skilled labour and rates
Expatriate accommodation—rent, locations etc
International schools
Tourism—hotels, travel facilities etc
Insurance and medical institutions and living conditions in the host country
Availability of local raw materials and machinery and equipment
Arbitration institutes—local and foreign, e.g. ICSID, Chamber of Commerce Paris, Stockholm Chamber of Commerce
Conference facilities
Commercial lawyers/legal expertise
Printing and publishing houses

Foreign aid

Credit lines from donor agencies: World Bank/International Finance Corporation, African Development Bank, United States Agency for International Development, etc. to provide development assistance for SMEs, entrepreneurship development funding etc.

Preparing an information service

- Conduct feasibility studies, economic/market reports; prepare company/product profiles for SMEs etc.

This is difficult in the early stages. However, some efforts in initiating such exercises should be made. It should be remembered that the supply of industrial information is a continuous process. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to conduct brief “continuous quality enhancement” in-house meetings. All relevant staff members should participate in such meetings and exchange ideas and views preferably daily. The head of the NFP or deputy should chair these sessions.

- Produce publications, including the following:

Weekly newsletter: Information on industrial development and technology keeps changing at a rapid pace. It is a continuous process. In view of this fact it is of paramount importance to feed the clientele with all relevant information weekly. The newsletter should carry “hot” topics on industry, R&D, science and technology, market data, investment and trade opportunities, etc.

Monthly journal: Information on new technology, machinery, innovations, scientific development, news on leading companies in engineering, mechanical, construction and technical, power, telecom and other industrial sectors, joint venture/business opportunities/information on environmental issues—waste and pollution control mechanisms may be covered. Publish success stories or achievements by industrialists and NFP clients. Every issue must give adequate coverage to SMEs and local industrialists. Encourage in-house staff members to write articles.

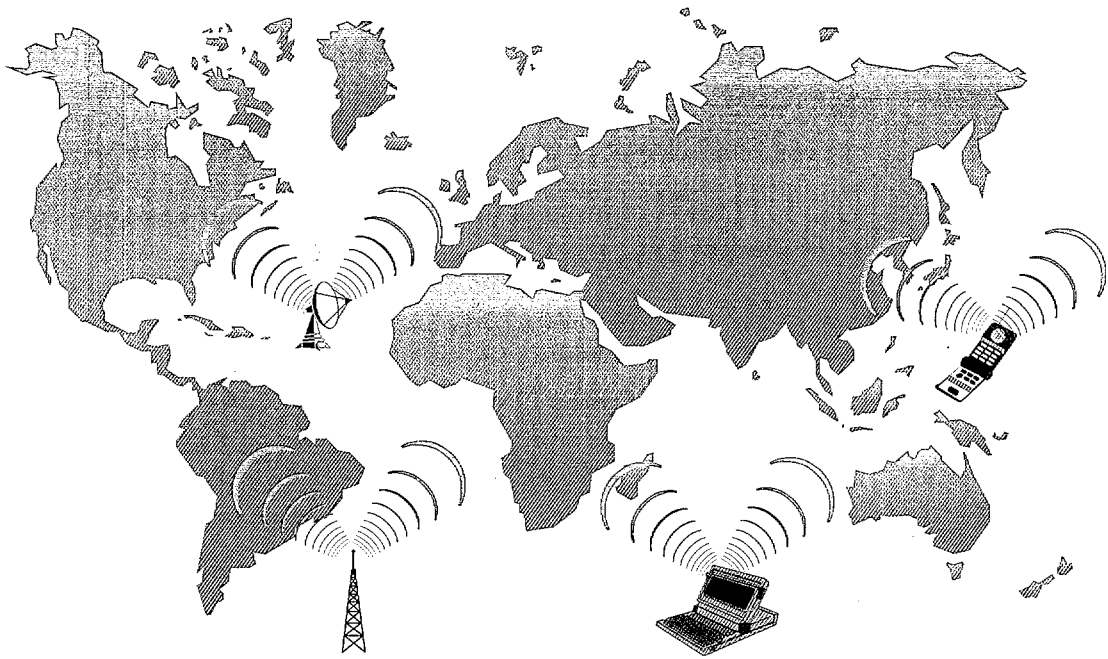
- Conduct media activities, including: conducting television interviews; radio programmes; writing articles for the national newspapers, journals and magazines; hosting receptions to create informal contacts and to selected clientele.

Ensuring self sustainability

To develop NFPs that operate on a commercial basis without private sector assistance is a daunting task since it requires that NFPs work in a competitive atmosphere. UNIDO, through its INTIB programme, is already providing infrastructure support and institutional capacity building activities to a selected number of African countries. The programme is to be extended to other countries in other regions. There are more “players” in the field who supply information e.g. ministries of industry, investment promotion centres, department of commerce, research and scientific organizations, chambers of commerce, statutory bodies promoting industry and exports etc. All these organizations provide information on industry, technology, investment and business.

With the advent of the Internet, every person with a PC equipped with a modem has the capacity to subscribe to Internet services and access and visit a variety of industrial information-rich web sites. The Internet is not owned by any organization and information can be obtained without much difficulty. In view of this, for NFPs to survive in a competitive environment, they will have to be properly structured, as business-oriented entities.

The Internet



- The Internet is the world's largest computer network.
- It is the international information superhighway.
- It is a network of computer networks that talk to each other using Transition Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP).
- Nobody owns the Internet.

The relationship of the Government and private sector in the use of industrial information and its application

The relationship between the Government and the private sector in the field of industrial information usage and application has to be clearly identified. Most of the industrial information that entrepreneurs need is created by Government entities. This information includes investment rules and regulations, financial rules and regulations, statistics etc. A mechanism between NFPs and Governments has to be created through which the NFP can access this information, compile and add it to other technical information collected by the NFP, to make it available for NFP clients.

This mechanism could either be implemented by a private NFP or a Government NFP who should market and sell its services.

NFPs should work under one of the three following options:

- *Private-sector NFPs.* Efforts are now underway to privatize INTIB NFPs. The following NFPs have already been reassigned to the private sector:

The Nigeria INTIB National Focal Point has moved from the Federal Institute for Industrial Research, Oshodi, to the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria.

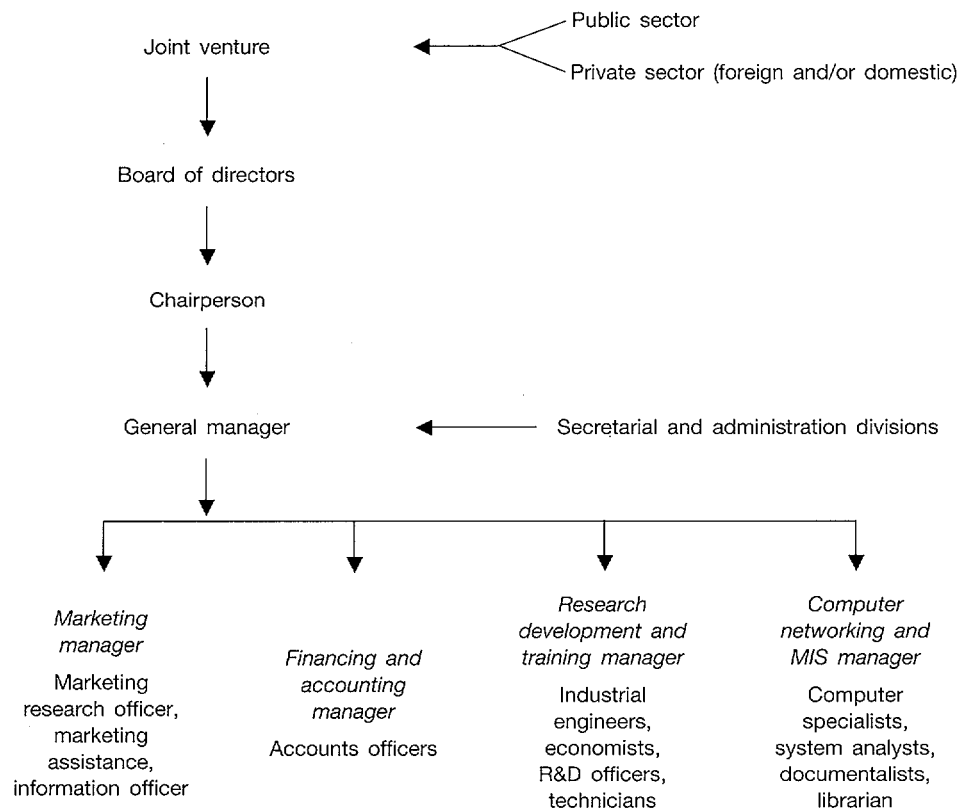
The Egypt INTIB National Focal Point has moved from the Ministry of Industry to the Advanced Technology Office, Cairo.

The Cameroon INTIB National Focal Point has moved from the Ministry of Industry and Commercial Development to the Programme Prioritaire de Promotion des PME Camerounaises (PPPP). The Senegal NFP is under review.

- *Government-sector NFPs.* Government NFPs that have strong infrastructure and good potential in the field of industrial information are recommended to continue as NFPs with a provision to market and sell their industrial information products and services.
- *Company-controlled NFPs.* A company should be established whenever needed and wherever possible. Since NFPs are not yet incorporated as companies, it is prudent to register them as companies when they have fulfilled governmental regulatory procedures. Private sector firms, chambers of commerce and industry could be shareholders by contributing to the equity of these companies. At the end of the financial year NFPs would have to file final accounts with the registrar of companies. In the final analysis, NFPs would be accountable and transparent in their operations. In the long-term perspective, this would constitute a healthy development.

Recommended organizational structure for the INTIB NFPs

Objective: To play a dynamic, market-oriented and catalytic role in the acquisition, retrieval, processing and dissemination of information on industry, technology, investment and business



Suitable criteria based on performance to measure productivity in reaching set goals and targets must be designed. These performance targets would be clearly stated in the corporate plan of the respective NFP, which would be approved by its board of directors.

Performance targets

In order to become viable institutions, NFPs should work out their operational costs and fix performance targets for each of their staff members. Staff members must be carefully chosen and be fully committed to their respective organizations.

Monitoring progress

If the industrial information marketing programme is to succeed, there should be an effective monitoring system to check the progress of different divisions of the NFP as well as the productivity and output of the total organization.

Pricing policy

It is extremely important to fix the prices for the services provided by the NFP on a rational basis as this cannot be done using ad hoc calculations or methods.

Initially, total operational costs of the organization have to be worked out. Thereafter, the market demand has to be examined and achievable performance targets have to be set. Products should be assessed to meet the sustainable cost level for a given period. An alternate method is to cost each "service unit" taking into account the actual cost that would be incurred in answering a particular enquiry e.g. general enquiry, report, study, etc. By using both methods, NFPs would arrive at a break-even point (actual no profit—no loss situation). A rational and realistic pricing policy should be implemented based on an understanding of the ground situation and, of course, the market demand. Every corporate entity should be aware of this situation.

Companies who regularly subscribe for training programmes and regular clients who recruit other potential clients may be offered discounts or concessions off the normal charges as a promotional gesture. Regular clients may also be chosen to form a club. Club members could enjoy concessionary rates on their enquiries etc.

The following table is a sample of indicative prices of some information-related services:

Service	US\$
General enquiries If the information required could be obtained easily from another organization e.g. Ministry of Industry or Investment Promotion Centre, etc	Free
Value added to a specific enquiry e.g.: supplying an address of a foreign company. Presenting the enquirer with background information on a company and/or its marketing activities	10
Enquiry made by a foreign investor to identify suitable local partner for joint-venture project, (provide details of background information on local investor)	25

Service	US\$
Market reports on specific products; e.g. ready-made garments, processed fruits, vegetables, etc. Such reports could be obtained from the departments of commerce and export development organizations or chambers of industries and commerce. Therefore, make it a point to add value by providing extra details, e.g. international quality specifications, packaging, up-to-date market prices reliable buyers, preferential tariffs etc	25
Feasibility study analysis using COMFAR, add value by providing information on appropriate technology, environmental impact assessment etc	25
Import/export statistics	10
Analytical presentation of trade statistics	20
NFP publications (bulletins, periodicals etc.) Weekly market report, monthly journal Subscription for three months, annual subscription	20

Training programmes

<i>Training</i>	<i>Duration (Hours)</i>	<i>US\$ (Rates/person)</i>
Introduction to computers, a basic training package	20	45
Internet/e-mail Using Internet as a source for business intelligence	15	35
The latest Microsoft Office, Windows 95/NT	10	25
IRMS ^{PLUS} package	10	25

These selected items of information services and the prices quoted herein are given purely as a guidance. Each NFP is expected to obtain advice from its finance and marketing managers when arriving at viable prices. As explained earlier, "value added information" would be the hallmark for success.

Offering special concessionary rates to groups of clients should attract more participants to training programmes. At the end of the training programme the awarding of certificates could be used as an event for a promotional exercise.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the relevant authorities, in respect of the NFPs, should invite the private sector (including chambers of commerce) to participate as equity holders by contributing matching equity for the proposed organization. This is extremely important in terms of the concept of "self-sustainability". Furthermore, due to the dwindling aid resources of international donor agencies this would be the most viable option available.

The launching of a properly thought out and well defined marketing programme would contribute immensely to the success of this venture. Managers of NFPs should be advised of the following:

"Keep a close watch, especially on the following two core factors, in order to avoid any breakdowns in the organization and systems of operation".

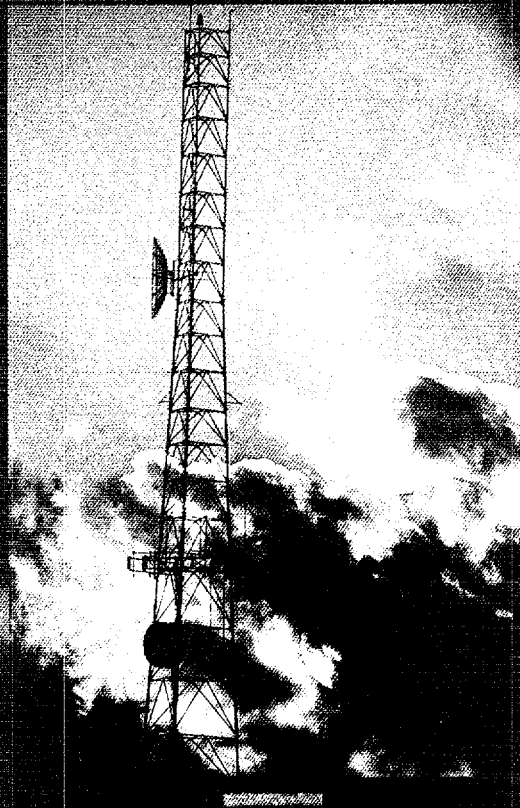
Human resource factor

It is a truism that human skills are the single most vital element in the successful use of information technology. Therefore, recruiting a small team of professionals and specialists by offering them attractive remuneration packages is essential. It is believed that some 60,000 middle-level and high-level managers left the African continent during the 1985-1990 period. This is not unusual, a similar phenomenon of brain drain is witnessed in regard to almost all the developing countries.

Steps should be taken to mount suitable training programmes to update the knowledge base of the in-house staff since information technology is continuously changing.

Infrastructure: telecommunications and electricity supply

These services should be in place at the NFP location without any recurrent breakdowns in order to confer comparative advantages to the business sector clientele. If interruptions to power supplies do occur, it is prudent to install a generator. It must be ensured that required back-up equipment and spares are stored at hand.



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