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INTIB PROGRAMME: AN OVERVIEW*

Prepared by the

UNIDO Secretariat

* This document has not been edited.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Some ten years ago, following United Nations General Assembly Resolution 31/183 on the establishment of a network for the exchange of technological information as well as the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development UNIDO has carried out a number of action-oriented activities to facilitate and accelerate a greater flow of information to INTIB users.

The approach of the Secretariat in providing a broader base for its operations through the development of a network of national/regional focal points and the elaboration of the UNIDO Industrial and Technological Information Programme was approved and endorsed by UNIDO IDB.

Within this context, during the last three years UNIDO has re-oriented the activities of INTIB. They include:

Generation of industrial information through better and more efficient use of the existing information systems in the organization (INDIS (IDA/LINK) Energy Information System (EIS), TIES, INPRIS);

Improvement of the Industrial Inquiry Service with greater emphasis on networking through establishing and supporting INTIB National Focal Points and Nodes;

Introduction of modern data processing techniques in INTIB and its NFP and training staff in their effective use;

Establishment and development of specific data bases;

Incorporation of the INTIB concept in UNIDO's Technical Assistance Programme to provide assistance in formulating national industrial information policies, building-up and strengthening national and regional information infrastructures and networks, promoting new information technologies, such as on-line connections and use of electronic mail, creating industrial data banks and training and up-grading information specialists.

In addition, UNIDO's first attempt to standardize the approach to information exchange, in a network environment, was recently launched – the European INECA network (Industrial Energy Conservation Abstracts) – designed to record, exchange and disseminate factual information related to the activities of a number of sectoral focal points. Nine countries and forty institutions are associated in the first stage of this network.

The approach taken in the INECA network has now been transferred to the subject of clean technology, a subject of great importance to both developed and developing countries.

The Constitution of UNIDO as a Specialized Agency ascribes various functions to UNIDO in assisting developing countries, and most of these functions require the back-up of industrial and technological information. In addition,

the Constitution specifically states that the Organization shall "serve as a clearing house for industrial information and accordingly collect and monitor on a selective basis, analyze and generate for the purpose of dissemination, information on all aspects of industrial development on global, regional and national as well as on sectoral levels including the exchange of experience and technological achievements of the industrially developed and developing countries with different social and economic systems".

The role played by information in the selection and application of specific technologies and in the formulation of policies and strategies for industrial and technological development has become more crucial in the context of technological exchange.

The period 1990–1995 will be a critical phase in the industrial and technological development of developing countries. New technologies will broadly affect industries and services, the organization of production and the pattern of comparative advantage. Technological advances in fields such as biotechnology, micro-electronics, telecommunications, new materials, fine chemicals, marine industrial technology, energy and manufacturing technology bear far-reaching implications for the industrial and technological development of developing countries.

So, the problem is not only one of an increasing volume of diverse information, but also of the capacity to enjoy access to it through modern information transfer techniques and to analyze it so as to turn it into an effective decision-support resource.

That is why, industrial and technological information services are an important component of UNIDO's new programme approach to development and transfer of technology.

II. REVIEW OF INTIB ONGOING ACTIVITIES

The Industrial and Technologicl Information Bank (INTIB) including UNIDO's Industrial Inquiry Service, is the major mechanism through which UNIDO transmits reliable and continuous information to developing countries. Today INTIB provides a comprehensive service offering a combination of on- and off-line information, technical assistance, access to data bases and several series of related publications. Its overall task is to compile and disseminate information requested by developing countries and to help strengthen their own industrial and technological information systems. INTIB will search in any field of industrial technology but concentrates on technologies and equipment for 20 selected industrial sectors. INTIB also cooperates with other UN organizations to develop specialized information systems and data bases.

INDUSTRIAL INQUIRY SERVICE

The INTIB Industrial Inquiry Service (IIS), popularly known as UNIDO's mail order technical assistance, is a developing country industry's link with both the wealth of information maintained by UNIDO as a whole and the large number of data banks and information sources around the world to which UNIDO has access. INTIB's objective is to ensure a quick, easy flow of information to people who require it when selecting technology. Compared to most other , bibliography-dominated, information services, IIS is nearly unique in providing concrete, practical packaged information for industrial enterprises in response to specific queries and needs.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DATA BASES

Technology-related information is held by UNIDO in the following systems and data bases:

The Industrial Information System (INDIS) is a computerized form of the Industrial Development Abstracts (IDA), UNIDO-generated information held as some 17,000 titles and abstracts. Some 100 new entries each month; covers technical and other reports, feasibility studies, working papers presented at UNIDO meetings etc. Access is on-line. Available in micro-computer form and on tape for mainframe computer. We plan to make the data base available in the near future on CD-ROM.

The On-Line Information Key (LINK) information-generated outside UNIDO through Industrial Inquiry Service—directories of research and development institutions for specific topics or sectors such as metallurgy, non-ferrous metals, industrial biomass, solar energy, sugar by-products and fruit and vegetables. Available in printed and micro-computer form.

Technological Information Exchange System (TIES)—information abstracted from technology transfer agreements of the participating countries. The information is only accessible to institutions offering similar data on a confidential, reciprocal and mutually beneficial basis.

Energy Information System—on-line data base with an established thesaurus of energy key-words. It contains periodical reports on UNIDO's energy activities.

Technology Supply Data Base—offers of technology, joint venture opportunities and requests for technology. 50 institutions from 35 countries contribute technology profiles to the data base. Available in micro-computer form.

Petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals data bases—initial stage of development—information on products, processes and raw materials.

Through INTIB, inquirers from developing countries may also gain access to other UNIDO data bases, namely:

UNIDO Statistical Data Base—central reference point for statistical data in the manufacturing sectors; information on 80 countries.

Investment Promotion Information System (INPRIS)—computerized data files:

- Project file—data on over 3,000 industrial investment project proposals in developing countries;
- Investor file—a directory of over 3,900 public and private enterprises;
- Bank file—directory of some 600 development finance institutions;
- Institution file—ministries of industry, investment promotion agencies etc.;
- Sponsor file—developing country firms potentially interested in redeployment possibilities;
- Country investment profiles—general country data.

Expert Roster for Industry—data base on individual experts in various industrial sectors;

Purchase and Contracts Data Base—information on manufacturers/suppliers of equipment in various industrial sectors and on engineering consulting companies and their services;

External Data Bases—access to bibliographic and directory-type data bases through the VIC Library.

NETWORKING, ADVISORY SERVICES, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INTIB technical assistance develops linkages and communications with end-users in developing countries and enhances their capabilities in the systematic handling of industrial information. It also promotes the availability and utilization of technological information in decision-making processes in industrial development, in which technology selection plays an important role.

End-user linkages enabling exchange and transmission are organized as an INTIB network made up of national focal points (NFPs) and nodes—information sources specializing in industry and technology—chambers of commerce, associations of small and medium industries, research and development institutions, engineering consulting firms, development banks, technology transfer promotion agencies etc. Plans are in hand to link NFPs and nodes on-line with UNIDO. For this purpose, INTIB initiated and successfully implemented projects for DPRK and Mongolia in establishing on-line access to different world-wide data bases including UNIDO's own; for various countries in Europe and Africa in introducing electronic mail techniques using IBM INS network, UN ICC and GEISCO. INTIB assistance is also used to encourage and develop national industrial information policies and to train industrial information specialists. INTIB advises developing country institu-

tions and policy-makers on technological information and organizes training workshops.

INTIB also encourages and helps developing countries to set up their own industrial and technological data bases, either nationally or regionally, providing expert advice and assistance.

JOINT PROGRAMMES AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENTS

INTIB is engaged in joint programmes and co-operation agreements with specialized information systems of United Nations agencies, for example with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in its International Referral System for Sources of Environmental Information, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Technological Information Pilot System, with International Labour Organization (ILO) in a joint publication on Technical Memoranda and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology. There are other joint programmes include one with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Energy Conservation Technology Information Exchange System, with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in the patent information system and with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the International Nuclear Information System.

INTIB also co-operates with ITC, WHO, ECE, ISO, IDRC and FID and on a regional level with ICSTI, APCCT, ARCT, CARIRI, ALIDE and WAITRO.

PUBLICATION PROGRAMME

UNIDO's printed publications supporting and emanating from the development and transfer of technology programme including newsletters, serials and special reports, directories and abstracts.

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In our opinion, the further development of UNIDO information activities depends to a great extent on national users' support and to this end our activities should correspond to the needs and requirements of developing countries to utilize UNIDO information resources fully, which in turn requires the existence of national organizations responsible for industrial information activities in their irrespective countries, which actually constitute the INTIB network of national focal points and nodes.

In close co-operation with INTIB, National Focal Points are generating, disseminating and assisting the small and medium enterprises to apply industrial and technological information in the technology selection process.

All of us clearly understand that effective use of information depends as much on what is given as on how it is used. Processing and targeting information on the part of INTIB is as important as the capacity to handle and use information at the national level. We in the UNIDO Secretariat are aware that the capacity to use the information provided effectively is indeed a crucial determinant of the results of an activity such as INTIB and do not really have to dispair with Eliot and ask "where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge" and "where is the knowledge we have lost in information"?

The objective of the Third Meeting of the Advisory Group of INTIB is to:

- Review INTIB's activities following its re-orientation and approval of the Industrial and Technological Information Programme;
- Operation of INTIB – Regional National Focal Points – network, modus operandi for focal points and INTIB global network project proposal;
- Co-ordination and co-operation between INTIB and other UN and external data bases for effective utilization of existing technological resources for INTIB end users with emphasis on computerized networking for environmental technology;
- Review and finalize INTIB's human resource development programme based on concrete proposals from various member countries; and
- Develop vision for INTIB in the 1990s.

The work of the meeting is organized in two panel discussions:

- Panel I: INTIB in the 1990s
- Panel II: Computerized Networking (with emphasis on environmental technologies).

The findings and recommendations of both panels will be presented and discussed on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning at the Plenary Sessions. The afternoons of Thursday and Friday are reserved for hands-on sessions and demonstrations of INTIB and other data bases and telecommunications-related works.

May I, in conclusion, express our hope that the discussions during these three days will contribute to creating a vision for INTIB in the 1990s that is derived from the actual needs of UNIDO member countries.