

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION NETWORK (IDIN)

Abstract: This paper presents the main tasks of IDIN. Phase I (1989-91) saw the decentralisation of the data bases on information on development institutions, research projects and individuals from the Development Centre of the OECD in Paris to five regional associations. The second phase of IDIN will focus on coordination and evaluation of the collaborative mechanism, extending the range of sources tapped, designing and developing value-added products and marketing and promotion of the IDIN products.

Background of the IDIN data base project

The International Development Information Network (IDIN) was first set up in 1976 at the OECD Development Centre, Paris. It comprised a data bank on development research in the member institutions of the five associations of the Interregional Coordinating Committee of Development Associations (ICCD): ADIPA in Asia, AIRCARDES in the Arab region, CLACSO in Latin America, CODESRIA in Africa and EADI in Europe.

In 1984, the OECD-Development Centre requested the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada to evaluate the Centre's database on Development Research. In the evaluation-report (the so-called 'Oswitch report') three alternatives were given. It was decided to choose for the decentralization of data-gathering and -processing to the level of the five regional associations within the ICCDA-framework.

The partners in the network gather and process information on research and training relating to economic and social development. The collection and computerization of data is handled at the regional level.

The purpose of the project is to exchange this information in order to improve the flow of information on social science research and training and to foster regional and interregional cooperation (South-South and North-South) in support of the development process.

The working languages are English, French and Spanish.

The OECD Development Centre will act as a technical focal point of the project. Each Regional Association will send copies of their data bases for input into the Global Data Base maintained at the OECD Development Centre. Eventually each Regional Association will have the disposal of a global data base development research of the five regions.

In the framework of IDIN the following information applications will be implemented:

- profiles of institutions,
- ongoing research projects,
- specialists,
- research publications

Technical tools and formats

The five associations, involved in IDIN, agreed to use identical software (CDS/ISIS), formats and keyword-systems (Macrothesaurus).

Software

CDS/ISIS is a menu-driven generalized Information Storage and Retrieval system designed specifically for the computerized management of structured non-numerical data bases. One of the major advantages offered by the system is that CDS/ISIS is able to manipulate an unlimited number of data bases of which may consist of completely different data elements.

Formats

IDIN formats are designed for the creation and management of databases for:

- bibliographic information,
- institutes,
- ongoing research projects and
- specialists.

The format for bibliographic information is described in: 'IDIN manual for the creation and management of a bibliographic data base using Micro-ISIS'.

The other formats are described in the 'IDIN manual for the creation and management of databases using Micro-ISIS for Research and Training Institutes, Research Projects and Specialists'. The design for all databases is available on diskettes for participating institutes, using micro-computers.

Keyword system and subject coverage

As keyword system is chosen: **Macrothesaurus for Information Processing in the Field of Economic and Social Development.**

IDIN will cover the following subjects:

- International cooperation, international relations
- Economic policy
- Social policy
- Culture and society
- Education and training
- Agricultural economics
- Industrial economics
- Trade
- Transport
- Public finance
- Labour
- Demography
- Food and health
- Environment
- Development planning
- Information and documentation.

IDIN EUROPE

The European part of IDIN has been implemented by the Development Research Institute (IVO) in Tilburg on behalf of EADI.

In the European part of IDIN the decentralized data-gathering and -processing at the national level is exercised and tested for the first time. The principle is to collect the information at the closest point to its generation. National focal points in the participating countries are able to coordinate with other national research register activities to ensure no unwanted duplication and to reduce the demands made on the research institutes and individual researchers. The national focal points are requested to provide us with the processed information in machine-readable form. The information will be imported in our database 'Ongoing research projects'. Where necessary technical and organizational support will be rendered by us to the national focal points.

The European part will cover data on ongoing research projects and in a later stage data on institutes.

In the first (pilot) phase of the project the organizational problems concerning the National focal points identified and now cooperating in the IDIN project in Europe are:

- The Netherlands: SWIDOC and IMWOO,
- Hungary: Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
- Federal Republic of Germany: Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung,
- Spain: Instituto de Información y Documentación,
- Norway: Norwegian Social Science Data Service and Chr. Michelsen Institute,
- Switzerland: Institut Universitaire des Etudes du Développement (IUED),
- Finland: Institute of Development Studies (IDS) University of Helsinki
- Italy: ISPA Nord/Sud.

The pilot phase of the project resulted in 1991 in a database with 1.069 ongoing research descriptions from 7 European countries. In the second phase (1992-1994) the extension of the geographical coverage is planned. New national focal points have started their activities in: France, Slovenia and Denmark. Update procedures in the countries already participating in IDIN has started recently: results are expected soon.

For several smaller countries in Europe (e.g. Iceland, Ireland, Bulgaria, Albania etc.) data-collecting are carried out directly from Tilburg. This activity has recently started and has resulted in more than 100 project descriptions.

On behalf of EADI's secretariat a database with profiles of individual expertise of researchers in EADI member institutes has been implemented, containing 630 records. A publication will follow.

IDIN worldwide

Since the start of the decentralization process all Associations have been collecting and processing data on ongoing research projects and development research and training institutes in their own regions. The overall results of the first phase of the projects are:

	Research projects	Institutions
Asia	847	761
Arab Region	789	214
Africa	881	851
Latin America	1.304	120
Europe	1.069	541
<u>Total</u>	<u>4.890</u>	<u>2.497</u>

New tasks and services in IDIN phase II

In the second phase new tasks and services will be developed in order to strengthen the IDIN Network.

- definition and implementation of links with external information sources
- experiments with value-added products
- development of procedures for merging regional databases into global IDIN database
- study on promotion and marketing alternatives
- improvement of communication between IDIN partners through electronic mail user-study
- strengthening of technical capacity.

The Development Research Institute (IVO), carrying out the European component of the Network, will implement the following new tasks:

- inventarisation and acquisition of external information-sources and databases;
- merging and integration of the regional databases into global databases;
- coordination of technical developments and technical experiments, e.g. electronic mail, hypertext, desk-top-publishing.

More Information

For more information, please contact the IDIN Project Coordinator, c/o CLACSO or the information officers of the respective Regional Associations.

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