

PADIS - Box

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REPORT

TRIPARTITE REVIEW MEETING OF THE PROJECT

RAF/86/053 - PADIS PHASE III

13 July 1990

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**TRIPARTITE REVIEW MEETING OF PROJECT
RAF/86/053 - PADIS PHASE III, 13 JULY 1990,
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

Opening and Representation:

The meeting included the following:

- (a) UNDP (Chairman)
- (b) ECA represented by TACOO
- (c) Member States represented by Nigeria in the person of Dr. Adeyemi
- (d) Evaluation Team Members
- (e) RAF/86/053 - PADIS II Acting Project Coordinator and Project Staff Refer to Annex (A) listing the participants.

The Chairman welcomed the participants and the following agenda was adopted:

- 1. Opening
- 2. Presentation of Draft Report by the Evaluation Mission
- 3. Review of Original Project Design and its Relevance/Appropriateness.
- 4. Review of Project Performance and Operational Issues by Acting Project Coordinator.
- 5. General Discussion
- 6. Presentation of Work Plan 1990/91 by Acting Project Coordinator and Discussion.
- 7. Decisions and Recommendations.
- 8. Adoption of the Report.

Presentation of Draft Report by the Evaluation Mission:

The team leader observed that per TOR, the project document and the findings, the team is in agreement that the project generally achieved its objectives. However, there were some reservations with specific reference to the following:

- (a) While in some member States the project has made significant progress, in others there was little impact. Through more resources the project activities should be broadened.
- (b) PADIS was perceived by member States as a UN institution and also a funding agency. Effort should be directed towards promoting a realistic image of PADIS.
- (c) The project was not adequately targeted for planners and policy makers. Therefore, the future orientation should be better designed for the purpose.

After these general remarks, the team leader guided the TPR participants through the draft report on the findings of the evaluation mission. After that the other team members were invited by the Chairman to add on to the presentation. They concurred with the Team Leader's presentation along with the endorsement of the report on findings. Refer to Annex "B".

Acting Project Coordinator Presentation on PPER and Project Design:

The Chairman ^{12 questions} guided the acting project Coordinator to make her presentation in the broader context recognising that no TPR has taken place since 1987. In that case, the general remarks included the other two PPERs prior to the one tabled covering the period 31 January to 31 December 1989. Basically, her presentation captured the following:

- (a) The project design in terms of its relevance to the needs of member States was considered appropriate as reflected in the findings of the evaluation mission.
- (b) The linking of overall objective and the immediate objectives was considered still relevant.
- (c) The project inputs were reviewed in the following context:
 - i) The 1991 budget did not include project personnel. According to information provided by the acting Project Coordinator, it was indicated that the UNDP would reconsider the required resources after an indepth evaluation exercise.
 - ii) Savings on CTA, expected to come on board in September 1990, could be rephased to part of 1991.
 - iii) Under administrative support, the Technician was never recruited and the allocation for the micro-computer technician was subsequently spread to other budget lines.

revised

It was then decided the work plan and the budget had to be reconsidered in the light of the fact that the Regional Programme for Africa had scarce resources for the Fifth Cycle. In that consideration, the Acting Project Coordinator had to reconsider savings from other budget lines for the 1991 personnel component without affecting the Group Training and fellowship lines. However, based on the evaluation mission's recommendation for overall need for continuity of the project, the SC would still comply with the recommendation.

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Other General Discussion Issues:

The general discussion reflected the following issues:

1. The project generally achieved the objectives except in the area of sub-regional centres.

2. The midway change from the documentation emphasis to development information should have been accompanied by increase in resources along with closer monitoring from the UNDP.

3. The follow-up to greater impact scales was hampered by meagre resources and overloaded staff coupled with high turnover. Since the departure of the Project Coordinator, the Acting Project Coordinator and staff have been overstretched in keeping the project activities on course.

4. Both the image of PADIS and apparent lack of commitment on the part of member States demand a more vigorous campaign to link the needs with resources provision.

5. The sub-regional centres would need re-examination in view of the political and relocation considerations for effectiveness.

6. Inter-linkages would be needed among related projects such as SDPA/UNPAAERD/PADIS, etc., so that integration and complementarity can bear on efficient information generation and utilization.

7. Reference was made to the need for making a distinction between PADIS the project and institution/programme. In that direction, the hiring of a Project Coordinator with specified functions would assist in separating the functions of the project against those of the programme/subprogrammes and the institution. Effort underway by the

ECA to seek a regularised position of the Director of PADIS is in recognition of that.

8. Income generating activities may need to be streamlined in line with the UNDP regulations on one hand, and on the other the need to support the project activities in the face of scarce resources for the project. This goes for other resources that may be attracted by the project in the form of separate projects under parallel/shared costing arrangements.

Workplan and Budget

UNDP pointed out that the Regional Programme had no additional funds for the personnel component not budgeted for 1991. Suggestions were made for the Project Coordinator to be hired beginning 1991 so that the savings could be phased into 1991. Also the budget lines for consultants as well as training could be reduced in order to stretch the activities into 1991. With that in mind, the meeting tasked ECA to re-examine the workplan and the budget in the light of the UNDP position.

It was also suggested that ECA explores the possibility of redirecting savings from other related projects with the view to bridge-gap the PADIS activities. Yet, again some related projects could carry some of the PADIS activities. Reference was made to RAF/86/052 SDPA and TACOO/ECA was requested to explore that possibility.

Conclusion:

Broadly, three conclusive remarks are in order.

1. The project generally achieved its objectives except for the sub-regional centres that are either non-operative or non-existent.

2. It was the general consensus that the project, since its inception, lacked adequate monitoring as reflected in the absence of a TPR despite the project complexity.

3. It was noted that there was confusion over the ECA/EDP functions on one hand and on the other the project activities against the PADIS programme/sub-programmes as an institution.

Recommendations:

The meeting endorsed the position of the evaluation mission and strongly recommended that the UNDP considers funding the project into the Fifth Cycle. In redesigning the project to meet the reprioritized needs of Africa, consideration should be given to include various donors and other funding agencies. More specifically the following recommendations were made:

1. Sub-regional centres should be recommended for better location that may consider IGOs. That would take into consideration their economic role in harmonizing development in the sub-regions.

2. Closer scrutiny should be made for relevant inter-linkages so that UNDP funded projects can be harmonized for greater effectiveness.

3. In view of scarce resources in the Regional Programme, consideration should be given to income generated by the project being ploughed back to support project activities.

4. For continuity to the end of the Fourth Cycle, emphasis should be paid to redirect resources from some budget lines to accommodate project personnel. In view of this position, ECA was directed by the meeting to re-examine the workplan 1990/91 in the light of the budgetary constraints. Refer to Annexes "C"

5. For greater and more effective monitoring, the meeting endorsed the recommendation of the evaluation mission for the immediate institution of a Steering Committee. That will include representatives of related projects and member States.

6. An independent or ECA evaluation should be made to re-examine the evaluation of printed outputs of PADIS by users in order to streamline the image and relevance of the institution.

7. The recruitment of the Chief of PADIS and the Project Coordinator with specified functions would entail separation of functions between ECA/EDP and PADIS project/programme. This would bring into focus the relationship between PADIS and related projects in the programme.

Adoption of the Report:

The report was accordingly adopted.

The next TPR was tentatively scheduled for January 1991 on the understanding that the exact date would be specified in due course.

ANNEX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representative of the Government of Nigeria

Mr. M. Adeyemi

UNDP

Mr. O. Silla (Chairman)

Mr. T.I. Chivore

ECA

Mr. Hans Van Den Heuij

Evaluation Team Members

Mr. H. Andima (UNDP Team Leader)

Mr. M. Adeyemi (Member States Representative)

Mr. H. Van den Heuij (ECA)

RAF/86/053 PADIS III Project Staff

Ms. N. Hafkin (Acting Project Coordinator)

Mr. F. Inganji

Mr. F. Faye

Mr. S. Solbi

RAF/86/052 - SDPA (Statistics Division/ECA)

Mr. A.M. Farazi

Ms. C. Kronauer

ANNEX «B»

DRAFT REPORT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

26 May - 13 July 1990

FINDINGS

GENERAL

- 1 The creation of a development information system and network for Africa, which PADIS is assigned to address, still remains an important and worthy objective meriting the support of the international donor community.
- 2 The need for and usefulness of the activities under Project RAF/86/053, PADIS III, are recognized and expressed as such by the Member States
- 3 In working towards meeting the objectives of the project, in implementing the activities directed at the realization of these objectives and in producing the related outputs, UNDP resources have been used in a useful way and in accordance with the conditions as mentioned in the project document.

DESIGN

- 4 The project design did not take into account all of the recommendations of the 1985 evaluation mission.(ref paras ...)
- 5 The technical design of the project, at the time of the conception of phase III, is acceptable. Technological development, being as fast as it has been, should have incurred a rethinking of strategies during the lifespan of this phase.
The latter also holds true for the change from documentation and information system to development information system as it has been introduced during this phase of the project.
- 6 Given the resource base of the project the immediate objectives of PADIS are over-ambitious in terms of geographical coverage, span of attention and scope of activities.
- 7 The persistent lack of knowledge on actual and potential users and their respective needs as well as the wide variety of requests for training and advisory services emanating from the member states, could not but lead to a loosely defined design of the project in these respects.
- 8 The budget for project RAF/86/053 does not contain any provision for personnel for the year 1991. Also the budgetary provisions for equipment for the years 1990 and 1991 will not allow PADIS to maintain its know-how regarding recent technological developments in the field of transfer, storage and repackaging of information.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

- 9 Given the workload as defined in the project document (servicing of meetings and conferences, training, advisory services, databases, further development of CCO, methodology, standards, norms) and additional functions within ECA the project is understaffed. This situation has been aggravated by the high turn-over of staff and slow recruitment procedures of the executing agency. Taking these circumstances into account, the Mission was very much impressed by the degree to which the quantity and the quality of the outputs, as foreseen in the project document, have been delivered by the present project team.
- 10 Recognizing the importance of bringing together and providing access to as much relevant information as possible, the change from "documentation and information system" to "development information system" has broadened the scope of PADIS activities without additional resources and as such has led to a dilution of efforts.
- 11 Because of the important equipment components in the earlier phases of PADIS destined to national and sub-regional centers, the perception of PADIS as a funding organism still persists.
- 12 A substantial improvement of the quality control on data input in the databases of PADIS has been noted by the mission (cleaning up of the databank on African experts, check on DEVINDEX worksheets)
- 13 On the basis of feed-back received in the countries visited, the Mission is of the opinion that there exists a serious mismatch between the main targeted user group (decision makers and planners) and the actual user group (researchers etc.)
- 14 Decision makers and planners seem largely oriented toward numerical data, most of which are acquired at the national level. Information sought from external sources mainly pertains to macro-economic, sectoral and project related data at the sub-regional level and data facilitating comparative inter-country analysis.
- 15 Confusion as to what development information is or should be is widespread. A clear-cut distinction between numerical data (statistics) and other development information exists in the majority of the member-states visited by this mission, as well as at the level of the executing agency (Statistics and Population Divisions vs PADIS). Furthermore these two types of information are in most cases generated and used in quite distinct sectors and flow through separate administrative circuits (statistics --> planning vs documentation --> research).

- 16 National Participating Centers which are located in Central Statistical Offices or co-ordinating ministries like those of Planning are more successful in supporting the integrated approach to development information, both in terms of collection - dissemination and of reaching the targeted user-group, than National Participating Centers located elsewhere.
- 17 The level of development and sophistication of the national centers differs widely. The same holds true for the degree of support by national governments and the importance they attach to information related issues.
- 18 A certain lack of co-ordination seems to exist in the field of the planning and scheduling of, notably training, activities between PADIS center and the National Participating Centers.
- 19 Some of the National Participating Centers consider themselves capable of implementing part of PADIS's activities, notably in the field of training, at the national and sub-regional level.
- 20 A lack of follow-up on the project's activities, as also recognized by project staff, is clearly felt at the national level.
- 21 Although difficult to be imposed at the project level, a more adequate selection of participants in workshops and seminars, in terms of level of computer literacy and/or level of acquaintance with the subject in case, was considered necessary by many of the National Participating Centers.
- 22 Where national centers, already having an operational system, are approached to participate in the network, more emphasis should be placed on the possibilities to participate without having to change the existing system/procedures through interfacing either at PADIS center or at the national level.
- 23 In some countries Inter-institution competition seems to hamper the selection of national focal points and the development of national networks. It also seems to induce protective attitudes as to international contacts and the shielding off of access to training and other activities involving travel abroad.
- 24 Co-ordination between PADIS and other networks in Africa should be stepped up.
- 25 Although much effort has been put in making PADIS and PADIS activities, services and products more widely known in the region (Newsletter distributed to more than 700 addressees in Africa, pamphlets), name recognition and acquaintance with PADIS and its activities, products and services still

leaves much to be desired.

- 26 Although some actions have been undertaken to gain more insight into the composition of existing and potential user groups and their respective needs, more needs to be done in this field.
- 27 Information and information policy have, if any at all, a relatively low priority in the national policies and the formulation thereof in member states. This state of affairs, in many cases, constitutes a barrier to follow-up actions and/or funding of those at the national level.
- 28 The PADIS project is relatively unknown to national UNDP offices, a phenomenon not uncommon to regional projects. By consequence follow-up e.g. in terms of promotion or through linked projects at the national level is rare, although an obvious need exists.
- 29 The high turn-over of staff appeared to have mainly been related to better career perspectives elsewhere and personal reasons of the staff involved. The first reason has been reinforced by the absence of budgetary provisions related to personnel for the year 1991 and the relatively late scheduling of the evaluation mission which is to recommend on this particular point.
- 30 As PADIS has been created as an IGO, some officials met were of the opinion that an autonomous, i.e. separated from ECA, status for PADIS would be desirable. With a view to the unsatisfactory position of many IGOs after depletion of external assistance, ECA officials and project management expressed their preference for a further integration of PADIS into ECA. As the mandates of both institutions are compatible the mission supports this view, on the understanding that project activities will be clearly separated from regular budget activities.
- 31 Although PADIS the project still is administratively linked up with ECA administration, the EDP functions of ECA and the project activities, with the notable exception of the supervisory role the CTA/OIC has on the ECA part of PADIS, are now clearly separated.
- 32 ECA has undertaken efforts to regularize part of PADIS staff. Up to now, financial constraints in the UN system as a whole, have made these efforts to no avail.

MONITORING

- 34 Notwithstanding the fact that PADIS, during its phases I and II, has had to cope with serious management problems and regardless of the recommendations of the 1985 evaluation mission, UNDP failed to call for any Tripartite Review Meeting during the lifespan of phase III to date.

SUBREGIONAL CENTERS

- 40 The sub-regional centers covered by RAF/86/053 are not operational. In Lusaka and Niamey the main bottleneck now is constituted by the funding of the components the host governments agreed to finance. In Kinshasa everything is ready to receive the equipment. Although the draft agreement on hosting the center is quite clear on this point there seems to exist some confusion as to the duration of the funding of the agreed upon components by the host government.
- 41 Developments in information technology have rendered the need for sub-regional centers as collection and processing nodes redundant.
- 43 Provided adequate resources are made available, the sub-regional centers can play a useful role in bringing PADIS closer to the field and in decentralized efforts in the field of sensitization, training and advisory services. Main functions for the sub-regional centers as perceived in the field would be:
- closer presence of PADIS to National Participating Centers
 - partly take over training/advisory work from center
 - repackage and or compile development information (macro-economic, sectoral, project related and business) at the sub-regional level
 - monitor developments in user needs
 - monitor and where possible co-ordinate related activities under other projects, networks or (sub-) regional organizations
- 42 The mission noted with satisfaction the efforts undertaken in the implementation of project activities in complying to the special considerations as mentioned in the project document. These pertain to Women In Development and to lusophone countries.

35 Project management appeared not to have been informed by the executing agency of the possibilities for substantive change in the structure of the project offered through the mechanism of the so-called "October or early rephasing" and, by consequence, tried to adhere as much as possible to the project document whilst recognizing the flaws in its design.

36 The contents and efficiency of the monitoring role of the Regional Technical Committee and its sub-regional counterparts has not become clear to the mission.

However, as this body provides the only direct line to the Conference of ECA Ministers and, apart from the participation of project staff, does not incur any additional expenditure against the project account, the mission is not opposed to continuing the activities of this body. More emphasis on co-ordination of activities under other projects in related fields and networks might make its meetings more worthwhile.

OUTPUTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

37 Starting from a meager basis, PADIS III has shown remarkable progress in all fields related to its immediate objectives (growth in number of National Participating Centers, increase in number of databanks, increase in contents of databanks, increased use of products and services, training, advisory services and servicing of meetings provided)

38 Income generating activities under RAF/86/053 have been very limited. The mission is of the opinion that charging for the full range of products and services provided by PADIS would be premature and would constitute a barrier to the further development of the network. Moreover, the project gains only moral satisfaction from these activities as generated funds flow back to the general UNDP account.

However, during the field visits it was noted that some National Participating Centers, notably those benefitting from external assistance and those having an adequate budget, are willing to pay for services. Mentioned were on-the-job training, need assessment and receiving hard copies of requested documents.

39 During the Fourth cycle PADIS has been able to secure the following additional funding:

- \$ 270,000	UNDP/RBA	KBO databank
- \$ 250,000	UNDP/RAB	PADIS activities in N. Africa
- \$ 60,000	UNDP/Rubelfund	Study tour Russia
- \$ 90,000	UNIFEM	Databank WID
- \$ 200,000	IDRC	training co-ordinator 1986-87
- \$ 134,000	IDRC	pilot project in information technology
- \$ 100,000	IDRC	regional seminar on international and domestic policy

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 In order not to jeopardize the continuity of PADIS activities UNDP should undertake immediate action to make provisions under RAF/86/053 for the budgetlines related to personnel for the year 1991. Necessary funding has been tentatively budgetted for US\$ 650,000
- 2 Given the state of the results of PADIS activities which begin to bear fruit in the Member States, the Mission recommends continued funding for PADIS through the UNDP Fifth cycle.
- 3 If recommendation 2 above is accepted, the Mission strongly recommends that an in-depth study into the actual and potential users and their respective needs be undertaken. This study should be completed before April 1991 and serve as input in the formulation of the next phase of PADIS.
- 4 In order to prevent monitoring problems in the future the Mission recommends the establishment of a Steering Committee. This Committee should have as members; UNDP, ECA, a representative of the member states, the PADIS CTA and either on a permanent or an ad-hoc basis representatives of co-funding agencies and/or related projects, networks and the like.
The Committee should meet at least twice a year and one of these meetings should immediately precede the Tripartite Review Meeting. Following a suggestion from the field, the meetings should be held in different Member States each time, as a means to further promote PADIS and to stimulate people engaged in PADIS-related activities.
- 5 The Mission strongly recommends that the required inputs be made available to PADIS in order to enable it to implement the mandate implied in Resolution 658(XXIV), which places emphasis on development information by changing the name of PADIS from Pan African Documentation and Information System to Pan African Development Information System. This implies a redesign of the project to reflect the new emphasis on development information.
- 6 In view of the technical and financial implications, the Mission recommends that appropriate avenues be sought to canvass the issue of the sub-regional centers on the agenda of the respective relevant sub-regional IGOs. Untill a reasonable solution as to their future has been found, activities with respect to the sub-regional centers should be suspended.
- 7 In order to increase its sustainability PADIS should continue its search for financial sources other than UNDP: (external assistance, member states' contributions, income generating activities) Efforts should be intensified to ensure the further regularization of PADIS within ECA for the year 1991.

- 8 PADIS should put considerable more effort in a) the promotion of itself, and its products and services, b) follow-up on activities in the field.
- 9 ECA should nominate as soon as possible a director for the division to which the project in its own quality can be attached.
- 10 UNDP country offices should be more vigilant in following up on regional projects in general and PADIS in particular and look into possibilities of funding from IPF of complementary activities at the national level
- 11 Member States should honour the obligations they choose to engage in and strive more vigourously for the implementation of the resolutions passed on their behalf.

ANNEX C,

WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

Following the TPR meeting of 13 July 1990, the RLO and the ECA held two meetings which culminated in the meeting of 20 July 1990. At the said meeting, the following was noted:

1. The ECA was finding it difficult to reduce some 1990 budget lines since most of the 1990 activities were already on course.

2. The RLO reiterated that the Regional Programme had no additional resources to cater for the 1991 personnel component of PADIS.

In the light of the above, a decision was taken for the project to continue as already planned and reflected in Revision "G". Then in November 1990, a mandatory rephasing exercise would be mounted involving ECA and the RLO. In the meantime the UNDP would be alerted about this problem.