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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF PADIS  
(1984-1985) AND PROGRAMME OF WORK  
FOR 1986-1987

## A. INTRODUCTION

At its Third Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 5-14 March 1984, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers recommended inter-alia, that the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) presents an annual report on its programme and activities to the next session of the Conference.

The present report was prepared in the light of the above recommendation and covers the period January 1984 to December 1985. It includes the highlights of the recommendations formulated by the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS which met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 26 to 28 March 1985.

## B. PROGRESS REPORT

### 1. The PADIS bibliographic reference activities

#### 1.1 Data base on economic and social development literature in Africa (PADIS-DEV)

At the beginning of 1984 the data base contained 3600 references of mainly ECA documents. Since then effort available for the preparation of references to bibliographic information was substantially increased and, in particular a major effort was launched to assist member States in identifying and indexing the literature on development available at the national level.

In 1984 and 1985 missions were undertaken to Niger, Guinea, Botswana and Benin with the aim of introducing the PADIS methodologies and producing pilot comprehensive bibliographies of the respective countries.

At present the data base contains over 5000 references and is expected to grow at a rate of 3000 a year. More than 90 per cent of all items entered in the PADDEV data base are so called non-conventional literature.

During the period under review the DEVINDEX AFRICA which is an index to literature on economic and social development was made available in four separate issues. The four series contain references on a wide range of economic, social and technical sectors (agriculture, regional development, geology, hydrology, demography, economics, urbanism etc...).

#### 1.2 The PADIS complementary sectoral files

This is a major component of the Pan-African Documentation and Information System. It is designed with the aim of complementing the information contained in the PADIS-DEV data

base in sectors where regional or international information systems exist. During the period under review arrangements were made to acquire and install the following bibliographic data bases:

LABORDOC (ILO) produced by ILO, contains some 15000 records on labour policy, labour relations, social security, labour legislation, employment, working conditions, vocational training, economic policy, social development, rural development, technological changes etc.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ABSTRACT (UNIDO) - produced in Vienna by UNIDO it currently contains over 14000 records covering industrial developments, technology, technology transfer, industrial equipment, industrial processes, industrial arrangement, industrial project, etc.

AGRIS (FAC) - the decentralized, international bibliographic system with input supplied by over 100 national AGRIS centres. The PADIS-AGRIS file contains over 10000 records.

Access to these bibliographic data bases is currently possible through computer terminals installed at ECA. A Selective Dissemination of Information service is also provided to outside users based on tapes received from the above-mentioned international organizations. At present the SDI service is provided to 200 experts in 35 African countries.

### 1.3 Microfilming

The microfilming unit has converted 2600 documents onto microfiches thereby making up for the delay that was prevailing for the last three years. The PADIS microfiches are now made available to users upon requests, further more, selected microfiches will also be acquired from those institutions that do provide PADIS with regular update of their data bases.

### 1.4 Publications

During the period under review, the following publications have been issued:

- i) DEVINDEX AFRICA vol 9 & 10
- ii) DEVINDEX AFRICA/NIGER
- iii) DEVINDEX AFRICA/GUINEA

A revised edition of the PADIS manual for document analysis is in the final stage of production. It will be made available to users in early 1986.

A number of reports have been prepared for the benefit of the Regional Technical Committee and other ECA meetings where issues concerning PADIS have been discussed.

## 2. Referral Information System in support of TCDC (RTC/TCDC)

This component was developed in 1982 with the financial assistance of UNDP for the constitution of data bases on personnel skills, on-going research and development projects, development institutions and training programmes that could serve the purpose of technical co-operation among African countries.

At the end of 1984 the data base on personnel skills contained over 2000 records and was used to produce supplements to the first directory published in 1982. These supplements are currently with the publishers.

The Referral Information System component was initially funded for two years (1982-1984) to provide information on African personnel skills. However, it was made possible to extend the project for another year to co-ordinate, standardize and avoid the duplication in the production of directories and registers in the region.

Furthermore, a financial request is submitted to UNDP to continue the completion of the PADIS-CORE component which was supposed to include the constitution of databases on development institutions and on-going research and development projects and training programmes.

## 3. Data processing services for the Secretariat

PADIS continues to provide data processing facilities and services to substantive ECA Divisions. During the period under review PADIS ensured the maintenance and development of system application softwares for the Secretariat.

## 4. Training programmes

For the period 1984-1985 the PADIS training programme was directed towards upgrading the skills of medium level information and documentation service personnel. The PADIS training courses were organized:

- a) as a special course, workshop in documentation and information sciences and;
- b) as an in-service programme for national documentation centre staff ready to join the system.

During the period under review the following courses and seminars were held:

### i) Niamey (5 Jan - 27 Jan 1984)

courses directed for mid level information specialists in the areas of bibliographic description, indexing, abstracting and input sheet preparation.

ii) Conakry (31 Mar - 24 Apr 1984)

Courses directed for mid level information specialists in the areas of bibliographic description, indexing, abstracting and input sheet preparation.

iii) Benin (19 Jul - 20 Aug 1985)

Courses designed to introduce the staff of the national centre of Benin (CEPADI) to the PADIS methodologies of document analysis and the use of the DEVINLEX system software package.

iv) Addis Ababa 12 Aug - 16 Aug 1985

Regional seminar organized for heads of information and documentation centres of nine African countries to introduce the PADIS methodologies to facilitate the participation of those countries in the PADIS system.

Furthermore a two to three weeks in-service programme was offered for information personnel of the following member States: Botswana, Benin, Togo and Ethiopia and for a staff member of the Kacera Basin Authority.

5. User services

In addition to disseminating the DEVINLEX-APPIC7 to over 300 institutions and to over 1000 individual experts in member States. PADIS has launched in June 1984, a pilot issue of a Current Awareness Service using the tapes of PADIS-DEV, LAFOBDOC, UNIDO and AGNIS. The first issue was a computer printout based on profiles which describe the interests of the various users. A questionnaire has been widely disseminated to expand the size and diversity of the users.

6. Advisory services

In its effort to provide advice on proposals for major new information systems PADIS played an important role in providing advisory services to member States in documentation services.

During the period under review it provided assistance to the Government of Niger in the preparation of a project document for the establishment of a national documentation centre. A mission was also undertaken to Benin to provide technical advice on the establishment, operation and management of the national documentation centre (CEPADI). During the same period PADIS has also participated in the design of the UNDP sponsored Technology Information Pilot System (TIPS).

Assistance was also provided to the Government of Ethiopia in the design and establishment of an information system for geoscience literature.

## 7. Establishment of subregional co-ordinating centres

Efforts have continued to bring to the operational level the two subregional centres in the Eastern/Southern and Western Africa subregions. A memorandum of understanding is being finalized between the UNCTA and the Governments of Niger and Zambia (host Countries) with regard to the status and activities of the West African Documentation and Information System and the Eastern and Southern African Documentation and Information.

## C. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The activities of the PADIS project during the last five years have been examined by the Regional Technical Committee which met from 26 to 28 March 1965. During this meeting several problems have been identified with regard to the overall implementation of the project and a number of recommendations have been formulated.

### 1. Member States participating in the System

Despite several attempts by PADIS to invite member States to nominate the national PADIS participating centre and play an active role in the field of information transfer, the response of member States have not been as expected. This was due to the prevailing weaknesses of many countries information infrastructure and the inadequate level of assistance of PADIS to resolve the many problems. The Regional Technical Committee recommended that PADIS a) intensify its assistance to member States for the creation of new or strengthening of existing centres, and that it b) undertake field missions for the purpose of assisting member States in identifying and establishing their national centres.

### 2. Financial aspect of the project

The financial resources currently available to the project are insufficient for its work programme. This particular problem was also noted by the Regional Technical Committee which recommended that the ECA Executive Secretary approaches prospective donors to secure the financing required to execute the PADIS project. In particular the launching and operation of the two subregional centres in West and Eastern/Southern Africa remain a pressing problem.

### 3. Staff requirements

The project is currently experiencing an acute shortage of staff to implement its work programme. At present its higher level staff consists of a project manager (presently officer in

charge) assisted by a training co-ordinator and a systems analyst. In view of the poor status of information and documentation activities in the region, the size and quality of the staff currently working on the PADIS project should be increased additional personnel.

#### 4. Arabic unit

The delay in establishing the Arabic Unit at PADIS/CCC was also noted as a major obstacle to information exchange in the region. In order to rectify this pressing problem the Regional Technical Committee recommended that PADIS works closely with the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) and other similar centres with a view to introducing the use of the Arabic Language within the system. To this effect initial contact has been established with ALDOC and a memorandum of co-operation signed in May 1985 during a visit to Tunis made by the PADIS Officer in Charge.

### D. PADIS WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 1986-1987

#### I. Introduction

The proposals formulated in this draft programme and budget for the period 1986-1987 will largely depend upon the receipt of confirmation that the necessary funds are available to continue the project activities.

So far the budget of PADIS has been financed jointly by the following organizations: UNDP, UNECA, IDFC and ADB. The budget for the period 1986-1987 is expected to be funded by UNECA, UNDP, IDFC and the EPC. It is expected that for the years 1986-1987 the level of resources will remain unchanged in real terms as that of 1984-1985. The work programme for 1986-1987 will continue to reflect the concern of the Economic Commission for Africa to facilitate access by member States to local and international information and to improve the information infrastructure within the member States.

In order to better reflect these complementary objectives, it is proposed to reformulate the existing two sub-programmes. It is felt that this new reformulation more clearly reflects the nature of the PADIS project.

## II. Executive Summary

The work programme of PADIS for the biennium 1986-1987 has two sub-programmes:

- Sub-programme 1: Basic Co-ordination and information Exchange servicing.
- Sub-programme 2: Information infrastructure building in the member States.

### Sub-programme 1: Co-ordination and Information Exchange services

The main objective of this sub-programme is to continue providing advice to member States and regional organizations on proposals for the creation of new information systems or for major enhancements to the existing systems, with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication and improving cross system compatibility. Experience to date has shown that member States have frequently requested information from the PADIS Central Co-ordinating Office (CCO) on the use of automation, on indexing and techniques on data base access and development and on telecommunication access to remote computers. It is expected that the development of the activities described in sub-programme 2 will reinforce the expertise of the PADIS-CCO to cope with such requests for advice and guidance.

This sub-programme also comprises overall programme planning, management of the PADIS-CCO, servicing of the PADIS meetings and attendance at inter-agency intergovernmental and other meetings of specific relevance.

- Sub-programme 2: Information infrastructure building of member States

This sub-programme concerns itself with tools to increase productivity, to make more efficient use of existing resources capacity of member States to provide more effective information services to their planners, decision makers, engineers, investors etc. The most important role that PADIS can play is to attempt to get member States plan for the development of an integrated information systems using modern techniques, - to provide training for information personnel of the region, - to prepare common indexing vocabulary, - to develop common norms and standards, to assist in the development of data bases and use of microcomputer and telematics.



Summary of activities by programme element

Sub-programme 1: Coordination and Information  
Exchange Services

Programme element 1.1

Data base on African development literature (PADIS-DEV)

One of the major objective of PADIS is to develop and maintain a regional data base on document for developments, in cooperation with participating member States and regional institutions. At present this data base contains over 5000 references of development related information. During the present biennium PADIS will increase its effort in obtaining either the magnetic tapes or the worksheets from its participating centres and ensure delivery of documents requested by users.

Objective

Possibility of access by member States to an enlarged source of information on development literature produced in the region.

Activities

- (1) Obtain references on magnetic tape (ISO format) or worksheets from participating centres.
- (2) Merge these references into a single bilingual data base accessible for on line retrieval.
- (3) Prepare information products for member States.
- (4) Obtain feedback from member States on usefulness of product.
- (5) Check for completeness of the worksheets sent to the CCC.

Outputs

- (1) Publication of a regional abstract on development.
- (2) Merged data base containing 20000 to 30000 records.
- (3) Information products derived from the data base.

## Programme element 1.2

### Complementary data base and files development (PADIS-CCI)

This program is designed with the aim of complementing the information contained in the PADIS-DEV data base (program element 1.2). It is mainly a set of data bases acquired from existing regional and international institutions in the various scientific, economic, social and technical fields.

This program element will mainly provide selected current information to member States on published and unpublished development literature produced in the region and outside the region.

#### Objectives

Member States have access to selected source of information of development literature from selected information systems.

#### Activities

- (1) Merge these references into a single or group of data bases.
- (2) Obtain references on magnetic tape in the Commerce and Communication Format from various organizations.
- (3) Prepare information products from member States.
- (4) Obtain feedback from member States on usefulness of products.

#### Outputs

- (1) Merged data base containing 40,000 - 60,000 records.
- (2) Information product derived from the data base.

## Program element 1.3

### Databasc on African experts

PADIS published in 1983 a Directory of African Experts using its experts data base which was designed and developed in 1981. At present the data base contains over 2000 records and discussion has been initiated with organizations involved in similar activities to standardize data collection and processing in order to avoid duplication.

### Objectives

Provide member States with up to date information on African skill and manpower in the region with the aim of encouraging technical co-operation among developing countries.

### Activities

- (1) Updating and expanding the data base on African experts.
- (2) Determine the best means of obtaining data on African skill and identify methods to streamline the activity with other regional organizations.
- (3) Prepare information products for member States.

### Outputs

- (1) A selected number of directories in priority fields of development (food and agriculture, energy, human resources etc.).
- (2) On-line data base.
- (3) Sorted lists of experts for the use of African countries and organizations.

## Program element 1.4

### Database on African institutions and on-going research programmes

This program is part of the PADIS-CORE component and is expected to strengthen the co-operation between member States in the field of economic, social, scientific and cultural activities. The first collection of data would take place in late 1986 and the first outputs from the system would be available early in 1987.

### Objectives

Member States have access to up to-date, accurate information about institutions and their on going projects.

### Activities

- (1) Finalize and disseminate data collection form in the region.

- (2) Collect information and construct databases retrieval.
- (3) Produce and widely disseminate the directory.

#### Outputs

- (1) Printed directory.
- (2) On-line data base.
- (3) Searches on requests.
- (4) Copies of the database on magnetic tape.

#### Program element 1.5

##### Data transmission network (PADIS-NFT)

The purpose of this program element is to study and come out with a recommendation with regard to a communication system designed to introduce and improve the quality and speed of technical information transfer to and from the region.

##### Objectives

- (1) To establish a system for the transfer of development information in the region.
- (2) To enable member States have immediate access to PADIS and other information sources.

##### Activities

- (1) Prepare a feasibility study or a suitable system for the transfer of information in co-operation with organization that have adequate experiences in the field (CCA, VITA, SATEL-CONSEIL).
- (2) Collaborate with IRI to study the application of IBINFT technology to the PADIS-NET network project.
- (3) Contacts with the Pan African Telecommunications Union (PATU/UPAT) and the African Postal and Telecommunications Union (UAPT) to study possibilities for tele-data transmission.

##### Output

A feasibility report on the status of African telecommunications infrastructure and a proposal for the

establishment of a communication system for the transfer of information.

Program element 1.6

Management of PADIS Central Co-ordinating Office

This program includes overall management, liaison with other organizations, and services provided by the Central Co-ordinating Office (CCO) as general support to the work programme. In addition the CCO provides and co-ordinates computer services for the ECA Secretariat including new application development and enhancements, file maintenance, storage and retrieval of data etc.

The Regional Technical Committee for PADIS normally meets once a year to review its work programme, to respond to requests and resolutions of intergovernmental bodies concerned with information systems, to deal with matters brought to its attention by organizations and by member States etc. The subregional technical committees meet also once a year to review the implementation of the PADIS work programme in their respective subregions. The PADIS CCO provides the necessary support services for these meetings.

Activities

- (1) Programme planning, management, monitoring and reporting.
- (2) Servicing PADIS meetings, preparing working papers and reports.
- (3) Participation in meetings dealing with UN and African information systems.
- (4) Participation in conferences of specific interest in the field of information technology or international information systems.
- (5) Co-operation with regional information systems on matters of concern interest.

Outputs

- (1) Working papers for and reports on PADIS meetings.
- (2) Programme planning, budgetary and other administrative documents.
- (3) ECA data processing outputs.

Sub-programme 2: Information infrastructure:  
building in member States

Programme element 2.1

Identification of PADIS participating centres

Effort will be made to assist member States identify the PADIS participating centres. Such centres would normally be located in an organization which is already providing some level of documentation and information service.

Objectives

Gradually bring all member States and regional organizations in Africa to participate in the PADIS system.

Activities

- (1) Assist the member States in the selection of the PADIS participating centres.
- (2) Determine the level of assistance needed for the well functioning of the system.
- (3) Establish a procedure for the input/output of the system.

Output

- (1) Official PADIS participating centres.

Program element 2.2

Training programmes on information systems

To improve the infrastructure of information services of member States with regard to quality and quantity of personnel, important resources will be devoted to train mid and high level information personnel.

Objectives

- (1) Trained manpower in the field of information.
- (2) Increased capacity of member States to use and manage information.

Activities

- (1) Organization of seminars, workshops and short courses.
- (2) Preparations of training manuals.
- (3) Determine the best means of providing information to users.
- (4) Fellowship offer for post-graduate studies in information sciences.
- (5) Participate in the discussion of curricula development.
- (6) Obtain feedback from member States on usefulness of the system.

#### Outputs

- (1) Trained manpower.
- (2) Training manuals.
- (3) Organization of seminars/workshops.

#### Program element 2.3

##### Advisory Services on information systems

PADIS-CCO provides advice to member States and regional, sub-regional organizations on the planning of new system or the proposals for major enhancements to existing ones. A growing number of such requests are being received. In many cases advice can be provided directly on the basis of existing information, but in other instances the PADIS-CCO can refer member States to qualified consultants who could undertake feasibility study or technical studies using the PADIS fund.

##### Objectives

- (1) Avoidance of unnecessary duplication in the development of co-operation of information systems.
- (2) Compatibility ensured between information systems in the same or selected field.

##### Activities

- (1) Review proposals for new info-systems or for major alterations to existing ones.
- (2) Show alternative means of adopting existing information systems in same or related field.



(3) Provide a pool of expertise to assist in the selection and design of appropriate systems.

Output

(1) Advice to organizations.