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LEBANON

TRADE INFORMATION CENTER

report on a mission by
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(17 march - 3 april 1996)

(Project No. LEB/94/005)

The mission described in this report was carried out on behalf of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) at the request of the government of Lebanon. It was financed by the United Nations Programme (UNDP) as part of technical cooperation project with the government of Lebanon, executed by the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report lays out the first phase of a mission undertaken by the Consultant in Beirut (Lebanon) from March 18 to April 2, 1996. The document is therefore to be considered as an interim report comprising interim work plan and recommendations. It was carried out in the framework of the project LEB/94/005 "Establishment of a Trade Information Centre". The mission follows up two major activities previously implemented by ITC staff. The first one consisted of :

-a workshop on trade information held in Beirut on the 17th and 18th of May 1994 was organized with the support of the Ministry of Economy and Trade (MET) and UNDP and attended by representatives of main business organizations;

- a technical mission carried out by the Chief of ITC Trade Information Section which focused mainly on the preparation of work plans for each member of staff of the TIC.

The overall objective of the project is to reduce Lebanon trade deficit and consequently to contribute to the expansion and diversification of the exports and the optimal management of imports. At technical level, the Trade Information Centre is expected to provide the business community, export oriented enterprises and private sector organizations and governmental institutions involved in foreign trade procedures and/or operations with reliable, up-to-date and relevant information and data on the international markets for Lebanese products and services.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Under the direct supervision of the Office for Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Middle East (OAPEME), Division of Technical Cooperation Coordination (DTCC) and the technical guidance of Trade Information Section, Division of Product and Market Development (DPMD) of ITC, closely with the Project Manager, MET counterparts and in consultation with UNDP the Consultant in Trade Information performed the following duties :

-Revise the work plan and requirements of the Trade Information Centre (TIC) with short and medium term priorities (including furniture, equipment, communications);

-Assist in finalizing the list of documents to be acquired and information services to be subscribed to;

-Define databases to be designed and information flows to be developed at the national level and international levels;

-Establish contacts at the national level, with co-operating agencies from the private and public sectors, for the promotion and development of the services, and at the international level with information providers and partner organizations for possible information supply and exchanges as well as participation in trade information networks (e.g. ATFP/IATIN, EU/BCC, GTPNet, UNDP/TIPS...);

- Propose a methodology for regular monitoring and periodic evaluation on the cost-effectiveness of TIC's services and their usefulness for the Lebanese business community;

-Perform on-site training of formation specialists and propose complementary training programmes for project staff;

-Prepare an interim and final report for the Ministry of Economy and Trade, UNDP, ITC, and guidelines on how to operate and develop the TIC in a cost- effective manner.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE MISSION

The Consultant was briefed at ITC Headquarters on 17 and 18 march 1996, during which he had working sessions with the chief and concerned staff of OAPEME and TIS. He collected relevant documents in support of his mission and for replenishment of trade collection of the TIC. Meetings and consultations were also held with other technical sections of ITC including the Trade Information Service and Juris data base managers.

The mission in Beirut took place from March 19 to April 2, and from 5 to 7April. (During the intervening period, April 3 to 5, the Consultant undertook a mission to Damascus Syria, described in a separate report).

From April 8 to 9 the Consultant attended a debriefing at ITC Headquarters. He discussed outcomes of the mission during the debriefing. The following additional inputs to be made by the Consultant were requested by UNDP :

- a consolidated strategic work plan for the TIC, the breakdown of which in terms of operational detailed activities will be entrusted to the Project Manager;

- an identification of possible contributions by other donors in order to consolidate and complement ITC/UNDP inputs in the specific area of trade information system management. This concerned more particularly a contribution already earmarked under World Bank loan meant for the overall programme for administrative rehabilitation in Lebanon (in this respect see in Annex ... proposals presented to the Information Technology Adviser of the Ministry of Administrative Reform).

The debriefing offered also an opportunity to hold a working session with ITC Consultant in Market Intelligence appointed to carry out a follow up mission in the framework of the project. Discussion focused on project situation in the area of computerized data management, and overall implementation progress. Granting priorities set and forthcoming activities to be achieved, the Consultant took advantage of his presence at ITC headquarters to undertake an Internet search on Lebanon (see in Annex V documents concerning connection possibilities and prospects)

As regard the work plan for the mission, it was based on the terms of reference assigned to the Consultant for the period 19 to 31 March and then extended to April 2, and April 6, 1996. It was also based on observations stemming from initial contacts and working sessions with TIC Project Manager, Project staff, Officials from the Ministry of Economy

and Trade and UNDP Personnel.

In the breakdown of specific activities the Consultant managed to include general orientations as formulated by ITC Officers in charge of project monitoring and backstopping : OAPEME and the Chief of Trade Information Section.

Although preparatory activities are still in progress in terms of defining strategic framework and identifying the needs of the business community and the other partner information providers from both sectors the plan puts emphasis on operations.

The Consultant called for comments, observations and reactions from colleagues working for the project. Their remarks helped adjust the work plan and make it relevant to the progress of the mission. A workshop was organized around the end of the consultant's mission. It focused on dissemination of information as a key function to be performed by the Trade Information Centre. Annex I presents a sequential work plan for the mission gives detailed activities.

IV. FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

A. Identification and interviews with co-operating agencies/institutions

These will also be referred to in this report either as partner institutions or network partners particularly when dealing with on-line connections and electronic exchange of data.

1. Partnership framework

Since it was supposed to be the first contact to be established with most of the co-operating agencies the outline for conducting the discussion and interviews with them was based on the following pattern which might serve as guidelines for future partnership framework :

- Presentation of the TIC institutional and technical framework
- Conditions and feasibility of exchange of information
 - considering data exchange partnership
 - . modes of action
 - . ways and means of exchange
 - . type and range of information to be exchanged/circulated amongst network members
- Existing resources
 - relevance vis a vis economic information in general and trade information in particular

- area or areas of coverage precisely
- Dissemination tools and conditions of consultation of available resources
 - how the information resources are made available to internal users and to external users
 - type of information available for consultation and for dissemination
- Co-operation and exchange prospects
 - presentation of the national economic and trade information network to be set up involving all existing and potential information providers.

2. Institutions visited

a) Ministry of Agriculture

From the foreign trade stand point the highlights of the meeting can be summarized as follows :

The technical departments of the Ministry are concerned with exports of fresh fruits and vegetables. The Ministry has the authority to maintain contacts with farmers having real export potentials for guidance and orientation purpose. A statistical data basis on agriculture focused mainly on production is in the process of setting up in co-operation with FAO. So far, a statistical bulletin is published and attempts to cover beside production exports and imports as well. A national Association of Exporters of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables has been active but it is still in need of reactivation. Once it has regained its previous dynamism this institution will prove to be very effective for the establishment and functioning of the national trade network. For future contacts and consultations it is suggested that the Direction of Studies and Coordination be considered as counterpart body

b. Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Through its Centre for economic studies and documentation the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Beirut is to be considered the closest co-operating agency of the TIC. The main highlights of the interview can be summarized as follows :

Business information is indeed a prime concern of the Chamber management. In additions to current operations such as issuance of Certificates of Origin to exporters, guidance and various support services are also offered to the members of the Chamber. In terms of operational databases the main output available consists of a company profile which is actually the members' profiles based on the legal company register of the capital city. The Chamber does publish a bulletin which is more of a liaison magazine than a real factual trade information publication conveying information that can be translated into operational data in support of decision making process. In this respect further co-operation should give priority on ways and means of providing the business community with relevant operational information.

c) Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli

The meeting was attended by members of the governing board. Among the major highlights of the meeting it is to be noted that there is a strong willingness for co-operation and exchange. The officials of the chamber insisted on the fact that a real technical partnership framework be discussed in order to clarify terms of reference and subsequently come up with a congenial distribution of work among national network members. In this respect it was suggested that members of the board will be assigned with the task of following up the development of the TIC role in relationship to information support to the business community in Lebanon. At technical level it has been about a year since the chamber endeavored to computerize its data bases. The demonstration exercise presented by the chamber EDP Specialist has shown a well structured company profile in Arabic version. This is supplemented by statistics on regional export trade of the Northern region using Mina harbor based on data compiled from the certificates of origin issued by the Chamber.

d) ASYCUDA Project

This visit aimed at :

- assessing the progress in the implementation of the project which is expected to become a major partner in the handling of information on external trade and subsequently interfacing in the monitoring of the overall external trade operations and guidance and orientation to be provided to the exporting and importing community.

- identifying the capacity of the project in terms of statistics collection, and processing on Lebanon foreign trade.

Discussion and explanation given by project members both the National Expert and UNCTAD Adviser revealed that project is still going through its experimental stage. Emphasis and priorities are being put on ASYCUDA as a paper reduction oriented project aiming mainly at trade facilitation. However suggested area of collaboration in the short run might include exchange of ideas and then the setting up of advisory services in order to assist traders particularly small scale business in understanding and operating ASYCUDA programme in their day-to-day activities.

e) LIBNOR

The institution is undergoing full restructuring and reorganization. Along the line it is contemplating the prospect of setting up a management system using information technology particularly in relationship to information on norms and standards. This would include :

- computerization of data base management
- on-line connection with international sources on norms and standards
- use of Internet to collect and disseminate data
- making the resources available to internal and external users particularly the business

community and the manufacturers.

Training and sensitization work targeting the industrial community in Lebanon has already been carried out. In this respect joint activities should be worked out with TIC in order to associate the trading firms. It is recommended at this stage that both institutions plan and conduct a national workshop or seminar on ISO 9000.

e) KHALIL MASRI et Fils SARL

Initially it was the Minister of Economy and Trade who suggested personally that TIC Project Manager and ITC Consultant should get in touch with Khalil Masri Company. Actually it is a private information broker established in Beirut with a solid experience in credit rating and business information. The data gathered and processed are basically transactions oriented and focusing on companies and individual business operators. Beside in its own capacity K. Masri acts as Dun and Bradstreet distributor and Kompass representative in Lebanon with scope of activities extended to Syria. Possibility of co-operation may comprise negotiation on ways and means and forms of acquisition of specific components of company profiles with priority given to : Exporters, Importers, Importers/Exporters, Manufacturers engaged in procurement of value added export oriented products.

2. Conclusion on contacts established with partner institutions

This set of institutions represents a substantial sample of co-operating institutions in the setting up of a comprehensive trade information network in Lebanon. As stressed above the activity should be followed up in order to cover partner institutions that duration of the mission under review did not allow to approach. By order of priority it is suggested that the two chambers of commerce at Sidon and Zahle be contacted the soonest. Moreover trade associations and international trade firms with proven capacity and infrastructures for the handling and management of in-house information should also be given particular attention.

3. Strengthening of the TIC bibliographic collection

The initial list of priced publications, periodicals and CD ROMS to be ordered for the TIC included 33 titles. During the mission, the Consultant discussed with the staff of the project the need to replenish the collection according to the following criteria :

- TIC should not limit its role and function to those of a library of documentation centre;

- Publications have to be acquired on a highly selective basis and should chiefly serve the purpose of consultancy, advisory services and research.

None the less, a certain amount of basic reference materials and information sources on international trade should be made available to the users of the Centre. The list attached in Annex V is based on these criteria and however remains open for amendment and further additions in need be. In this respect it was agreed with Project Manager that it would be useful to have a comprehensive set of reference titles on export marketing operations and techniques

supplemented by another set of materials on norms and standards with direct relevance to the export strategy of Lebanon.

Further acquisition of publications should reflect the TIC progress. It means budget permitting the third batch of publications should focus on advisory services and support needed by the end-users in areas connected with export markets, Lebanese products both already being exported and exportable and relevant functions of international trade within an overall diversification and promotion strategy of exports.

4. Databases and information flows

At the end of the Consultant mission the installation of the computer equipment was being finalized. Once the system and software are tested and the configuration deemed fully operational, the "Company Profile" is the priority database to be designed. It is recommended that ITC format COMREG be adopted. A special memo field could be incorporated to describe in a summarized form possible services the TIC is able to offer to the company under review. The information could help define TIC users profile for performance monitoring and other follow-up operations such as :

- selective mailing of various communication and dissemination papers (newsletters, bulletin...);
- SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) performed to the company and possible rating from a qualitative and quantitative point of view;
- quantitative evaluation of inquiry/reply services provided individually to trading companies;

ITD (International Trade Database) provided by ITC Trade Information Section has already been installed. Training exercises carried out by the Consultant concentrated on the use of ITD for bibliographical research on specific subject areas of direct interest to Lebanon foreign trade.

As regards channels and methods of data collection, initial contacts established with co-operating agencies allowed the Consultant and TIC staff to negotiate ways and means for exchanging information on trading firms in Lebanon :

- Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry manages and maintains a company profile based on members register. The information could be used to build up a comprehensive exporters profile covering the entire metropolitan Beirut;
- The EDP Section of Tripoli Chamber of Commerce and Industry is in the process of finalizing a comprehensive database covering trading firms and manufacturers of northern regions including Tripoli and Mina harbor area;
- The Credit Rating Company "Khalil Masri & Fils" offers database services using a comprehensive company/business profile covering corporate entities and individuals involved in sizeable transactions as well.

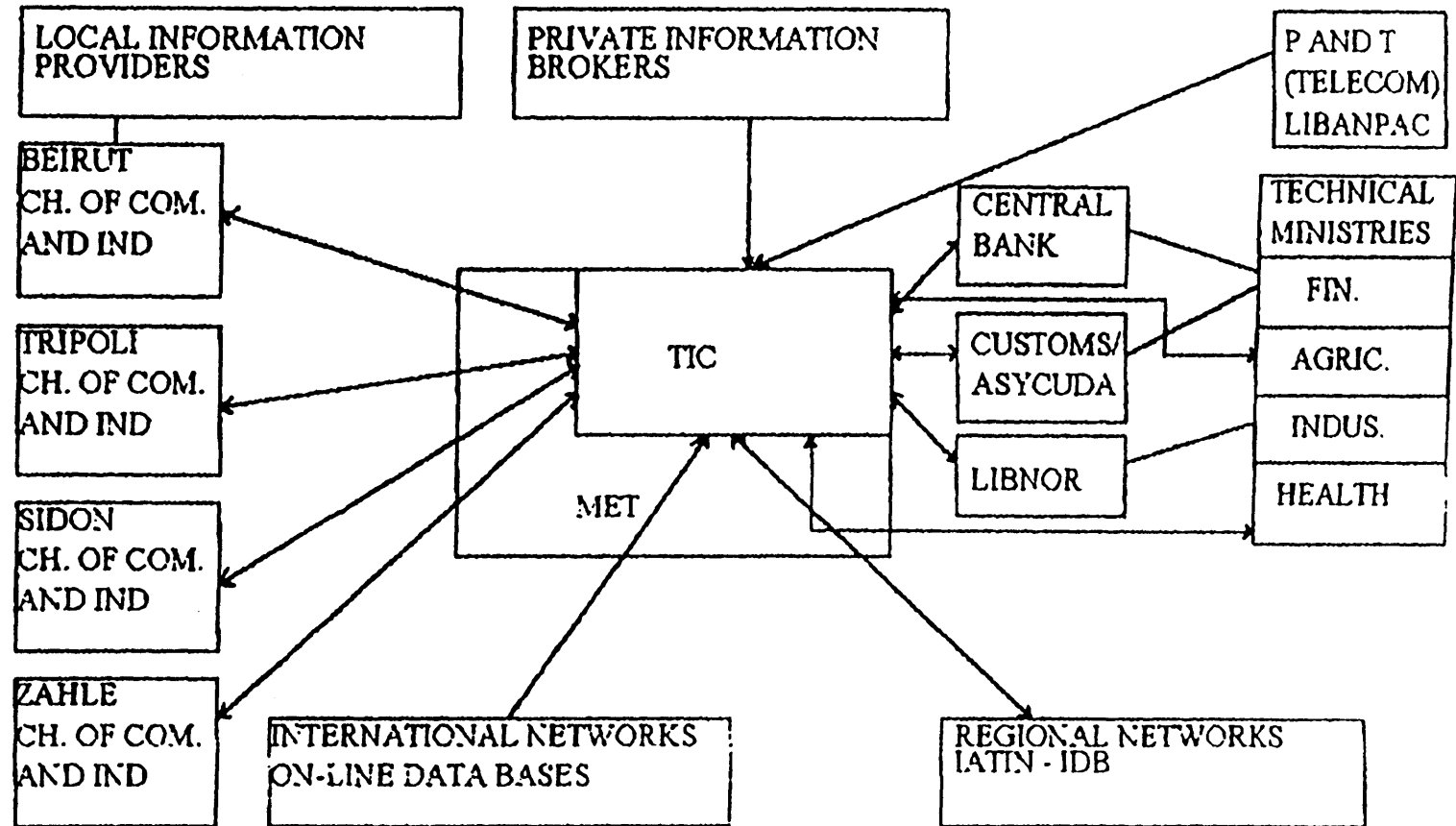
Acquisition of data/information can be operated within the framework of a clear cut partnership agreement based on exchange and co-operation. However since the company operates as a private information broker, information to obtain from "Khalil Masri & Fils" is expected to be charged. In any case, when selecting companies to be entered in the TIC database the following criteria should be taken into consideration :

- 200 trading firms, mainly small and medium size, with proven capacity and/or good potential for export trade could represent a fairly good number of profiles to start with;

- special attention should be paid to Importers/Exporters and manufacturers particularly those that real "value adders" for exports.

Regarding information flows to be developed, within the national context these are expected to gravitate around local information providers : The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the different regions of the country, business associations, technical Ministries and their specialized agencies and ultimately the private information brokers. The domestic flows of information should be in a position to rely on regional and international information networks and on-line databases proposed for connection such as ITC and other international organizations dealing with trade related matters e.g. IATIN, IDB, BCC, TIPS... (Feasibility of connection and finalization of links with these institutions will be considered during the forthcoming ITC Consultant mission who will handle this specific project component.

THE TRADE INFORMATION CHAIN AND EXPECTED PREDOMINANT FLOWS OF INFORMATION



B. Workshop on dissemination of information

1. The trade information system

The main topic of the workshop was to highlight the importance of a sound articulation between the different operational stages of the trade and economic information system management (see workshop outline in Annex III). The presentation made by the Consultant stressed the fact that prior to reaching an effective dissemination the system should rely on :

- a highly selective set of reliable sources of information;
- fast and streamlined channels of acquisition of information;
- a rational method for processing, organizing and retrieving information;

An effective implementation of each sequence being a sine qua non for a complete success of the following one. This implies that an efficient dissemination techniques and operations in support of decision making at :

- policy and procedures levels (basically macroeconomic information);
- operational business level (basically microeconomic level);

should rely on a well conceived overall management of the information system.

On the other hand, in order to decide about appropriate dissemination techniques and operations adapted to the specific context and priorities of the TIC, end-users should be defined by sector of activities and by categories each having specific requirements

2. Defining the target groups

The following categories of potential users have been identified according to the institutional structure (governmental and public bodies) and business landscape (private sector corporate entities as well as Associations and groups) in Lebanon.

- Governmental institutions :
- TIC immediate environment (Ministry of Economy and Trade Officials);
- Other technical Ministries interfering or interacting on the trade issue :
 - . Agriculture
 - . Finance
 - . Industry
 - . Health

and their specialized Agencies/Departments

- . Customs
- . Statistics
- . Libnor

- Official Lebanese representations abroad both diplomatic and commercial particularly those based in target countries (export markets for Lebanese products and markets of supply for products and commodities imported)

- Official foreign representations in Lebanon :

- Embassies
- Commercial representations
- Commercial Attaches
- International organizations based in Beirut

- Regional groupings (those having economic and trade/tariff and customs agreements and orientations) with Lebanese direct membership and active participation.

- Regional and sub-regional information networks offering on-line services.

-Private Sector

- Business Associations (those that can be considered trade and economic information providers);

- . Chambers of commerce
- . Industrial Associations

This section attempted to explain how dissemination can benefit from the national network

- Business community
 - . Exporters
 - . Importers/exporters
 - . Importers
 - . Small and medium scale industries/enterprises

3. Dissemination vehicles

A wide range of dissemination tools could be envisaged, once the objectives are clearly set and the end users accurately defined.

For instance in backing up decision and policy makers within the Ministry through day-to-day desk research focused on trade policy and procedures, legal and macroeconomic aspects of international trade the dissemination can be achieved in the form of : consolidated instruments such as reference materials, special dossiers on particular topics, priorities .

This service might also be offered to other Officials from Technical Ministries as listed under the section : defining target groups

Appropriate means of wide dissemination should on the other hand reflect cost-effectiveness in every way, by defining the right vehicle i.e. the one that meets best the requirements of the end-users, which implies adopting and producing the right title either in the form of :

- Awareness list
- Trade bulletin and/or
- News letter and/or
- Press release and/or
- Bulletin of contents
- Business opportunities

Obviously the dissemination procedures and means will have to take into consideration the value added function of the TIC. In so doing priority should be given to the vehicle which regardless of their title would put more emphasis on factual information and conveying to the business community information related to business opportunity (export and import as well), basic foreign trade indicators, trade statistics, exchange rate and other financial data, news on external trade logistics etc...

At this stage of the setting up of the TIC, the main issue as far as dissemination is concerned is how to reach a balance between news/data on exports versus news data on imports. On the other hand, is it going to be a dissemination policy based on an overall trade promotion approach ?

Initial dissemination operations should help define a standard contents profile for those titles that were deemed relevant to the specific context of the TIC.

4. Performing SDI and other dissemination activities

SDI (selective dissemination of information) can efficiently help complement the conventional system of dissemination. Project staff particularly the Trade information Officer will have to carry on as follow up exercises by presenting concrete examples on how to use bibliographical data base to perform SDI; It is also suggested that in collaboration with EDP Specialist she organizes demonstration sessions on possible interface between conventional dissemination of information and computerized data bases out-comes.

Participants to these sessions were supposed to reflect on the above by ways of comments, questions, remarks based on their experience.

- what method of dissemination of information should be adopted in the specific case of Lebanon taking into consideration the frame of mind of the business community;
- the concept of relevance of the various approaches of disseminating information;
- the importance of personal approach vis a vis the institutional approach ;
- constraints (frequency/periodicity), content relevance, methodology of feed -back assessment.

B. Staff training

Throughout his assignment the Consultant undertook training activities involving ITC Trade Information Adviser and during the second part of the mission a counterpart was appointed as national Trade information Officer to participate in the training sessions. This took the form of interactive demonstration exercises meant to illustrate sequence by sequence the trade information system management. It put emphasis on information in support of trade promotion through questions and answer periods covering the following topics :

- overview of business information as lifeblood of trade promotion;
- monitoring of information needs; economic environment related, sector related and sector related;
- information strategy in support of trade promotion , the specific case of Lebanon's foreign trade;
- the use of available information sources, economy and cost-effectiveness of acquisition methods and processing and dissemination techniques;
- Inquiry/reply service as tool for personalized dissemination and processed material for operational data basis.

As regards sustain ability of the TIC in terms of human resources see recommendation under the appropriate section of this very report.

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V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to terms of reference this document should be considered as an interim report therefore recommendations will have an interim character. The core of the mission conclusion is constituted by the strategic work plan for the TIC. Additional recommendations will deal mainly with further training of TIC staff and with national human resources required to ensure sustainability and self reliance.

A. Work plan for the TIC

1. Conceptual framework

So far the support provided to the different categories of trade information users has relied on the resources available in the TIC. Eventually information providers both local and external have also been contacted to gather data sought by the TIC clientele. However it should be observed that in the day-to-day work, individual memory together with experience and knowledge of the TIC staff have also proved to be instrumental in making available the data needed by government officials and personnel from trading firms. Though mostly selective, a substantial range of macroeconomic and microeconomic information is available at the TIC in both forms published and computerized :

- data on policy and procedures (*) of international trade : general economic background of Lebanon, legal aspects of foreign trade, trade agreements, national statistics, trade and production statistics, international statistics, main economic indicators and short term national economic indicators, basic data related to standards and norms;

- data on operational aspects (**) of international trade : country profiles, market profiles and market studies on selected products, trade statistics, a computerized trade data base, international trade statistics on CD ROM (PC/TAS).

It is to be noted that the project was designed for export promotion. However as emphasized in the project document and various mission reports prepared by ITC staff, areas of coverage of the TIC should also be extended to import related matters for Lebanese importers have also been deemed not having easy access to adequate trade and economic information.

As for the overall trade flows exports and imports as well the information system being set up should be geared towards :

- diversification of Lebanese exports;
- rehabilitation of traditional exports ;
- rationalization of import management since imports represent the major part of the overall foreign trade operations

Regarding interlinkage with international information networks and connection with on-line trade data bases the work plan limits itself to preparatory activities only. In this respect the TIC will just consider initial proposals related to tentative lists of regional

networks and a set of data bases specializing on international trade deemed relevant to the rehabilitation plan of Lebanon traditional exports and the design and implementation of a new export promotion strategy (see project document and terms of reference of ITC Consultants). It is expected that full technical details along with the feasibility and cost effectiveness and pertinence will be dealt with during the forthcoming mission of ITC Market Intelligence Consultant due to take place at a later date.

From a strategic stand point it is suggested that the implementation process reflect a modular approach based on a sound articulation between the different modules of the information system. Assuming that the initial period concentrated mainly on the setting up of the infrastructure, the physical arrangement of the premises and the organization of the trade information sources received through the project, the work should now consist in gradually making full use of the existing resources and those to be acquired in the near future aimed at meeting the requirements of decision and policy makers and the business community as well. In this respect three main stages characterizing the progress pattern have been defined :

- building up a reply capacity using trade documentation acquired, processed and disseminated to the end-users;
- setting up and operating in-house/local computerized data bases;
- combination of both channels of acquisition of economic and trade information, on-line data bases and international networks. This will depend on the development and the capacities of national telecommunications infrastructure.

Effective use of telecommunication system is expected to create direct interaction between profiles available within TIC data bases (in-house) and national and international information networks.

In view of a quick impact particularly on the business community, the overall set of activities proposed for implementation will also have to rely on :

- a substantial increase of the existing team work spirit;
- the adoption of a method of work more favorable to the pooling of existing capacities among TIC staff thus leading to increased efficiency and quicker impact on the business community;
- a more systematic involvement of national counterparts in order to help ensure sustainability and future self reliance during the post technical assistance phase;
- the introduction of consultation mechanisms involving key persons and services within the Ministry of Economy and Trade, other technical Ministries dealing with trade related matters and local trade network partners particularly chambers of commerce and business and manufacturers/industrialists associations.

2.Activities

a) Setting up and operating in-house/local data bases

The overall activities consists of regular scanning and processing of published materials comprising macroeconomic information, basic economic indicators meant for

setting up and operating a national foreign trade monitoring system capable of guiding policy and decision makers from government and private sectors.

i. Prepare relevant data to be entered in the computerized data bases through :

- regular scanning of published materials received at the TIC;
- compilation of information included in the trade collection particularly the reference titles on international trade (Directories, Yearbooks, Guides and trade encyclopedias...)

selection of information should reflect the geoeconomic context and foreign trade profile of Lebanon, the international regional and sub-regional situation in terms of supply and demand and trends of the trade flows.

ii. build up and maintain a consolidated filing system based on up-to-date scanned materials from specialized periodicals and other serial publications on international trade. The system comprises four categories of files : by countries, by products, by functions of international trade and by national trading companies;

iii. Establish and perform in a systematic way inquiry/reply services focused on the needs of the business community. The findings connected with individual inquiry could serve as a basis for a data base to be managed and operated either manually and/or computerized thus strengthening the reply capacity of the TIC;

iv. Computerized data bases and profiles

- build up and maintain country/market profile focused on both exports and imports : traditional trade partners of Lebanon, countries trading sporadically with Lebanon, potential target markets for Lebanese products, existing countries/markets of supply, potential countries/market of supply.

- build up and maintain product profile for exports : existing exports, potential exports (based on diversification strategy), for imports : existing imported products, potential imports (based on local market evolution and international demand and supply situation.

- continue consultations with national institutions dealing with foreign trade statistics in order to define specific roles and functions of TIC in the area of foreign trade statistics collection and management (Department of statistics, Central Bank of Lebanon, Direction of Customs/ASYCUDA);

b). Dissemination of information

i. internal circulation of publications and intra-muros dissemination of information (within the MET) by means of : awareness lists, bulletin of contents, Press release etc...

ii. production of an information bulletin or a newsletter (suggested frequency at the beginning : once a month) focusing on factual information related to international trade. Special attention should be given to traditional Lebanese exports : fresh and off-season fruits

and vegetables, processed food, clothing and manufactured products. However diversification of exports should concentrate on the following sectors : services (both product aspect and function aspect), software development, multimedia , communication and publication industry (particularly the arabisation component), packaging (as a product and as a function of international trade). Priority functions of international trade to be covered are the followings : market situation, prices, trade contacts, business opportunities, logistics of international trade.

iii. performing SDI (Selective dissemination of information) upon specific requests particularly from trading firms, while market situation should help anticipate the needs of national network partners i.e. technical Ministries, chambers of commerce, trade associations, governmental institutions dealing with trade related matters.

iv. based on target groups defined and categorized in the technical note on dissemination of information prepared for the workshop, build up, operate and maintain a detailed mailing list giving priority to the following groups :

- national network partners, trading firms involved in exports, export-import, imports and manufacturing. Along the line special supporting activities should be aimed at promoting small exporters, businesswoman already operating or interested in export trade.

c). Advisory services, Consultancies, guidance and marketing of the TIC services

i. provide guidance and assistance required by the TIC users (Ministry officials, personnel of trading firms) during consultations of information sources available at the Centre;

ii. extend advisory and support services in the areas of trade information management and use to trading firms established at provincial level through network partners such as chambers of commerce, business associations in Tripoli, Sayda and Zahle;

iii. in collaboration with chambers of commerce and other business associations plan and conduct demonstration exercises involving personnel from trading firms focused on : the use of published materials on international trade, the preparation of information tools such as the filing system by country, by product and by function of international trade, computerized trade data bases and as soon as it becomes operational on-line data bases specializing in international trade;

d). Preparatory activities related to networking at national level and on-line connections with international data bases

i. follow-up fact finding interviews and work sessions held with local information providers and private information brokers identified and approached during the mission regarding : data bases to be consulted, exchanged, connected to, purchased ... particularly

profiles of companies, markets, products...taking into consideration present and future conditions of feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

ii. start consultations with partner organizations and check preconditions for the introduction and further networking/sharing of electronic data processing and dissemination.

iii. initiate exploratory contacts regarding future system developments and possible network projects and connections to telecommunications networks (e.g. Libanpac);

iv. assess training needs of local personnel in computerized information system and telecommunications management (Ministry staff and enterprises personnel);

The above set of activities is to be implemented in the framework of the Market intelligence Adviser mission due to take place some time between May and June 1996.

e). Prepare for sustainability and self reliance

i. consider and design mechanisms such as technical committees, task forces for monitoring and evaluation of the TIC development and performance :

- at Ministry level, Officers dealing with and /or intervening in foreign trade policy and procedures;

- at network partners level, technical Ministries, chambers of commerce, business associations

Terms of reference would include :

- periodical review and permanent reassessment of TIC priorities;
- improvement of out-put quality;
- revision of interface modalities in order to prevent redundance and duplication of tasks;

ii. Identification, assignment and training of a team of national permanent counterparts from within the Ministry of Economy and Trade personnel (in addition to the local Trade Information Officer at least a Counterpart of EDP Specialist having a solid computer literacy will be required)

f). future prospects and possible contributions

Identification of areas of possible development connected with the expansion consolidation of the national economic and trade information system for which international multilateral and/or bilateral co-operation will be needed :

- fact-findings studies
- draft terms of reference for global or sectoral support for the setting up and operating a trade and economic information system
- feasibility studies related to connectivity with regional and subregional

information networks

(*) This includes Ministry of Economy and Trade, other technical Ministries and governmental agencies involved in foreign trade related matters such as the Central Bank, the Customs, LIBNOR, Department of Statistics ...

(**) This includes Chambers of commerce, Trade and business associations , individual corporate entities...

SEQUENTIAL PLANNING OF THE TIC ACTIVITIES

APRIL - DECEMBER 1996

ACTIVITIES	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY.	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC
a. Setting up and operating in-house / local data bases									
- sub-activity i data collection		X	X	X	X				
- sub-activity ii filing system	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
- sub-activity iii inquiry / reply service			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
- sub-activity iv data bases, profiles			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
b. Dissemination of information									
- sub-activity i circulation of information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
- sub-activity ii dissemination of a bulletin				X	X	X	X	X	X
- sub-activity iii performing S. D. I		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
- sub-activity iv establish mailing list			X	X	X	X	X	X	X

B. To ITC

1. Study tour for Project Manager

It is foreseen that Project Manager will undertake a mission at ITC headquarters for routine project review including :

- progress of project implementation;
- possible budget revision
- discuss with specialized technical sections and departments of ITC topics of interest to the setting up and consolidation of the TIC

This could be an opportunity to extend her trip as a study tour to one or two countries (Tunisia and/or Malta for instance) facing similar economic challenges such as joining up WTO and preparing for Euromediterranean Agreement. The main terms of reference for the visit would be :

- to gain experience based on a comparative approach in the area of trade data base management;
- to study the way on-line connections and international telecommunications are being used to provide support to the business community and policy makers with economic and trade data;
- to carry out a comparative study on roles and functions of the TIC to better prepare negotiations and support decision making process in dealing with both major economic issues Lebanon will be faced with in the short run;
- to discuss with trade and economic information system managers roles and functions of Information centres in decision making support at policy and at business levels;
- to gather information and basic instruments used in negotiations and in sensitization of the business community as regards these specific issues;

After achieving the above tasks, the Project Manager will draw lessons and set guidelines as to how the TIC can contribute in the field of data collection, processing and dissemination in support of major economic and trade issues to be dealt with by governmental institutions and private sector.

Budget permitting it would be of considerable interest to the Ministry of Economy and Trade to designate a high level Adviser to accompany the Project Manager during the study tour.

2. Further training of national Trade Information Officer

During the Consultant mission a national Trade information Officer was assigned to the TIC. The decision will greatly help ensure sustain ability of structure set up. However since the rest of the staff is being considered as project personnel under ITC/UNDP payroll the risk is that once the project is wrapped up the TIC may suffer from a lack of permanent and competent staff. Therefore it is recommended that within the national capacity building mandate of the project further training and short term internship be granted to the national Trade information Officer to allow her through internship/training visit at ITC headquarters and a trade promotion organization such as the Swiss Office for Trade Promotion (OSEC) in Lausanne or a chamber of Commerce in a southern European country in order to :

- improve her understanding of the business information system management on a larger scale;
- better grasp the rational and efficient methods of collecting, processing and using economic and trade information;
- experience the management of electronic data processing and the use of international telecommunications to gather and disseminate business information.

It is suggested that the training visit should last two weeks. About two days would be spent at ITC to familiarize herself with specialized data bases.

**WORKPLAN FOR THE MISSION
ON TRADE INFORMATION
19 MARCH - 02 APRIL 1996
LEB/94/005**

ANNEX I

ACTIVITIES	DATES	PERSONNEL	OBSERVATIONS
<p>1. Initial contacts and working sessions with :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Manager - UNDP (Res Rep, ARR and Programme Officer) - Government Officials 	19/03	ITC Consultant and Project Manager	Discussions are expected to focus on main guidelines to prepare workplan for the mission on trade information
<p>2. Review work progress :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Execution of work plan (Aug-Sep 1995) - Other activities carried out during the period Oct-Mar. 96 	19-20/03	Under the supervision of Project Manager ITC Consultant and TIC staff	Based on work plan prepared by ITC chief of Information Section and priorities set by Project Manager
<p>3. Prepare work plan for the mission :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss it with Project Manager - Discuss it with project staff 	20-21/03	ITC Consultant	Work plan will be prepared in the light of findings and observations of the activities described above
<p>4. Discuss bibliographical role of the Center and subsequently :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist in finalizing basic lists of acquisition - Propose adequate system of trade documentation processing and management 	21-24/03	ITC Consultant in collaboration with trade information Officer EDP specialist under the supervision of Project Manager	This exercise will take into consideration resources and reference materials already received in the project and how they have been used so far
<p>5. Consider types of data bases to be designed and managed by the TIC and subsequently :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist in defining the trade data bases required - Assist in defining the information flows to be developed at the national and international levels 	22-27-03	ITC Consultant and EDP Specialist in consultation with Project Manager	Once guidelines are set and agreed upon project personnel will have to carry on and finalize the programmes

<p>6. Contact partner institutions involved in information support to the business community :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chambers of commerce and industry - Trade, business and industrial associations - Private information providers - Organised public trade and business information providers 	<p>22-29/03</p>	<p>ITC Consultant Project Manager and TIC personnel</p>	<p>This is meant to assess existing resources particularly those managed by information providers and consider ways and means of co-operation and exchange</p>
<p>7. Plan and conduct :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-service training sessions with information personnel - Organise a workshop on information system and dissemination of information 	<p>21-29/03</p>	<p>ITC Consultant</p>	<p>In-service training sessions and workshop will involve counterparts from the Ministry assigned to the project and dealing with information and project staff</p>
<p>8. Prepare draft interim recommendations and medium-term work plan for project staff :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work plan for EDP Specialist - Work plan for Trade information Officer 	<p>29-30/03</p>	<p>ITC Consultant</p>	<p>Both work plans will be submitted to the Project Manager for discussion/comments and approval</p>



Made in Lebanon



Association of Lebanese Industrialists

INTRODUCTION

NEWSLETTER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

MEMBERSHIP

Association of Lebanese Industrialists

Sanayeh, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Bldg.

P.O.Box 11-1520

Beirut , Lebanon

Tel: (961) (1) 350280/1/2

Fax: (961) (1) 351167

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set-up expenses: 600 U.S.D

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- * Includes: different sections, links, images, structures

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ANNEX III

Lebanon (Lebanese Republic) (LB)

Nabil Bukhalid - 29.01.94

Date

From: American University of Beirut <0004328920@mcimail.com>

To: David Sitman <david@earn.net>

Subject: Re: Network in Lebanon

Date

Hello David,

The Lebanese commercial network consist of an X.25 PSN with nodes in most of the major cities and connected to the international transit node of Paris.

The pilot academic and research network is based in the American University of Beirut and still in the testing period. AUB's network is linked to the Internet via a 9.6kbps dialup X.25. AUB is planning to enhance its Internet link bandwidth and connect other Universities (funding the project is the major problem).

The public telephone network will be ISDN based, the project will take 3 years
the first phase of implementation started this year.

Regards,

Nabil Bukhalid.

Lebanon (Lebanese Republic) (LB)

Status regarding EARN:

Non-member

EARN Director:

none

EARN Technical Contact:

none

EARN International node:

none

Number of EARN Nodes:

none

International Connectivity:

International Organizations:

none

Key People:

none

Status Report:

Nabil Bukhalid - 29.01.94

Terms of Reference related to setting up
a Trade Information System in Lebanon
Suggested guidelines

It is recommended that at this stage the design and implementation of a Trade Information System in Lebanon should be planned according to three distinctive phases.

- Phase I

It would consist in carrying out a comprehensive feasibility study and would mainly focus on the followings issues :

1. Assessment of needs;
2. Evaluation of on-going project (s) beyond assessment of existing national capacities this might include strategy and modalities of integration of national, sub-regional and regional information programmes and networks
3. Ultimately design of the system with special emphasis on technical specifications and resources required to set up the system;

Phase II

Organisation of a national Symposium/Workshop/Seminar to submit findings to participants (invited in their personal capacity and/or representing national institutions actually taking part or with potential role in the trade and economic information chain in Lebanon). Participants would consider the feasibility study and discuss the system proposed;

Phase III

operational stage consisting of implementing the project document to be designed in light of proposals and discussion stemming from phase I and phase II.

Phase I. and phase II would be carried out by a team of four consultants (2 international and 2 national)

For cost-effectiveness you might consider extending the feasibility study to include in addition to trade information all economic issues (overall macroeconomic monitoring system, Financial and economic analysis etc...)

ITC Project LEB/ 94/005

Ms Shaden HALAZOUN
Mr. Raed EL REZ
Ms Mona DARWISH
Ms H. VAN der PLUIM
Mrs SHAMAA

Project Manager
EDP and Communication Specialist
Trade Information Officer
UNV
National Trade Information Officer

ANNEX V

LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Ministry of Economy and Trade

Mr. JABBER	Minister of Economy and Trade
Ms Lina TAHER	Adviser to the Minister
Ms Gina Jamil CHAMAS	Adviser to the Minister
Mr. Hasam Bawab	Director of Trade

Ministry of Agriculture

Mr Fakhr DAKROUB	Director
------------------	----------

Beirut Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Rafiq QABANI	Executive Director
Mr. Bishr NSOULI	Dep. Executive Director
Ms Doha MALIK	Chief Market Studies and Documentation

Tripoli Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr Mohammad ZOK	President
Mr H. QUBAITAR	Board Member
Mr M. MALAK	Board Member
Mr. J. SAID	Board Member
Mr. S. HALAL	Board Member
Mr. N. DAKKUR	EDP Specialist

LIBNOR

Mr Antoine J. SAMAANE	General Manager
-----------------------	-----------------

Khalil Masri Et Fils SARL

Mr. Habib Kh MASRI	General Manager
Ms Nicole CHACCOUR	Information Officer

ASYCUDA Project

Mr. Wassim Ali HASSAN	Project Manager
Mr. Roger PALL	Customs Adviser

Ministry of State of Administrative Reform

Mr Akram NAJJAR	Information Technology Adviser
-----------------	--------------------------------

UNDP

Mr. Ross MOUNTAIN
Mr Mounir TABET
Ms Rana MAALOUF

Resident Representative
Assistant Resident Representative
Programme Officer

ITC Project LEB/ 94/005

Ms Shaden HALAZOUN
Mr. Raed EL REZ
Ms Mona DARWISH
Ms H. VAN der PLUIM
Mrs SHAMAA

Project Manager
EDP and Communication Specialist
Trade Information Officer
UNV
National Trade Information Officer

ANNEX VI **MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND TRADE**
TRADE INFORMATION CENTRE

Workshop Agenda / 1 April 1996
Dissemination of trade information

1. Institutional framework of the project
 - 1.1 . Partners involved in the project, execution and funding
 - 1.2 . Objectives of the project
 - 1.3 . Resources
2. The information system adapted to the TIC mission and priorities
 - 2.1 . In- put definition
 - 2.1. 1. Information sources
 - 2.1.2 . Data gathering methodology
 - 2.2 . In-house data bases
 - 2.3 . Networking at national and international level
 - 2.4 . Processing of information
3. The dissemination of trade information
 - 3.1 . Out-put definition
 - 3.1.1 . Defining target-groups /end-users
 - 3.1.2 . Dissemination policy and procedures
 - 3.2 . Designing interfaced dissemination and information retrieval modules
 - 3.3 . the use of data bases for dissemination of information
 - 3.4 . the use of on-line connections and telecommunications for data collection, processing and dissemination
4. Standard sample of dissemination vehicles
 - 4.1. internal dissemination of information
 - 4.2. external dissemination of information
5. Feed-back assessment of the TIC dissemination techniques and operations

ANNEX VII

List of publications to be acquired by the TIC:

- *1. Branch AE, Dictionary of shipping/International Trade terms and Abbreviations
London, Witherby, latest Edition
5, Plantain Place, Crosby Row, London SE1, UK**
- *2. Horten Hc. Export-Import Correspondence in four Languages. Epping, Gower,
Epping, Essex, CM16, 4BU, UK . Latest Edition**
- *3. International Chamber of Commerce . Incoterms: International Rules for the
Interpretation of the Trade Terms. Paris.**
- *4. International Chamber of Commerce. Guide to Incoterms. Paris**
- *5. World Measurement Guide. London, Economist Newspaper. Latest Edition.**
- *6. Bankers Almanac and Yearbook. Croydon, Thomas Skinner Directories. Windsor
Court, East Grinstead House, West Sussex. RH1G 1XE, UK. Latest Edition**
- *7. Owen's Commerce and Travel and International Register. London, 100 Belsize
Lane,
London, NW3 6BB, UK. Latest Edition**
- *8. Stores of the World Directory, Department Stores, Supermarkets, Chains, Retail
Executives, Trade Buyers, Resident Buying Agents. London Newman Books, 48
Poland Street, London W1V 4PP, UK. Latest Edition.**
- *9. Globe; World Directory for Land, Sea and Air Traffic. Oslo Globe Directories.
P.O. Box 7023, Oslo, Norway. Latest Edition.**
- *10. Ports of the World. London, Seen, 25 New Street Square, London EC4A 3JA,
UK.
Latest Edition.**
- **11. Arab Business Yearbook. London, London Graham and Trotman, Bond Street
House, 14 Clifford Street, London W1X 1RD, UK. Latest Edition**
- **12. Commercial Directory of Kuwait, Gulf States and Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait
Arab Advertising Agency, P.O. Box 1779, Safat, Kuwait. Latest Edition.**
- *13. Directory of Middle East Importers. Healdsburg, CA, Blytmann International, 326
Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA, USA. Latest Edition.**

- *14. Economic Yearbook of Member States of the Arab League Roma. Editions E.F.dica. Via Casilina 424, 00177 Rome, Italy.
- **15. Gulf Handbook. Bath, Trade and Travel Publications. Mendip Press, Parsonage Lane, Bath BA1 1EN, UK. Latest Edition.
- *16. Major Companies of the Arab World. London, Graham and Trotman. Bond Street House, 14 Clifford Street, London W1X 1RD, UK
- *17. Middle East Yearbook. London, IC Magazines, 63 Long Acre, London WC2E 9JH, UK. Latest Edition.
- **18. Talib's OPEC Trade Directory. London MacMillan. Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3LF, UK. Latest Edition.
- **19. Traveller's Guide to the Middle East. London, IC Magazines, 63 Long Acre, London WC2E 9JH, UK. Latest Edition.
- *20. World Outlook
Economist Intelligence Unit, The Economist Publications.
- *21. McCarthy EJ. Essentials of Marketing. Homewood Illinois 60430, USA. Latest Edition.
- *22. Anbar Mngement Services. Institute of Marketing, Cookham Berkshire. Marketing and Distribution Abstract. Wembley, Anbar Publications. P.O.Box 23 Wembley 9HA BD1, UK. Latest Edition.
- **22. Cateora P. International Marketing, Homewood, Illinois, Irwin. Ridge Road. Homewood, Ill. 60430, USA. Latest Edition.
- **23. Day AJ. Exporting for profit; the Practical Handbook for Improving Export Sales. London, Graham and Trotman. Regent Street, London W1V 1HH, UK. Latest Edition.
- **24. Enet D. Exporting for Small And Medium sized Firms; A practical Guide for New Exporters. London, Business Books. 24 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RX, UK. Latest Edition.
- *25. Sliper MT. Assessing Export Potential- How to Conduct a Feasibility Study into the Profitability of Export Activities. London, Gower Press, 140 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5TA, UK. Latest Edition.

- *26. De Keyser E. Guide to World Commodity Markets. London Kogan Page. 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK. Latest Edition.
- *27. Alles A. Exhibitions : Universal Marketing Tools. London Associated Business Press, 107-111 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2AB, UK. Latest Edition.
- **28. Livingstone J. International Marketing Management. London, MacMillan Press, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3LF, UK. Latest Edition.
- *29. Shmitthoff CM; Export Trade; The Law and Practices of International Trade. London, Stevens. 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4HE, UK. Latest Edition.
- **30. Leonard EA. Packaging; specifications, purchasing and quality control. New York, Morgan-Grampian. East 42nd Str. NY 10017.
- *31. EIU. World Commodity Outlook; Food Feedstuffs and Beverages. London Spencer House.
- *32. EIU. World Commodity Outlook; Industrial Raw Materials. London Spencer House.
- *33. MEED; Middle East Economic Digest. London, 21 St. John's Street, WC1N 2BP, UK.
- *34. Blackstone Franks : Chartered Accountants, London. Raising Money For Business. London Economist Publications. 40 Duke Street, London W1A 1DW, UK
- *35. Kayaloff JJ. Export and Project Finance; a Creative Approach to Financial Engineering. London, Euromoney Publications PLC, Nestor House, Playhouse Yard, London EC4V 5EX, UK.
- *36. Atlas International. Geneva Edito-Service, 9 Chemin de Roches, BP 307. CH1211, Geneva 10.
- *37. ISO- AFNOR. ISO 9000 : Application Symposium. ISO, Case Postale 56. CH1211, Geneve 20.
- *38. Rothery B. ISO 9000. Hampshire, Gower Publishing Company, Gower House. Croft Road, Aldershot, GU11 3HR, UK
- *39. ISO 9000; International Standards for Quality Management. ISO. Case Postale 56, CH 1211 Geneve 20.

*40. Kanholm J. ISO 9000 Explained; 65 Requirements Checklist and Compliance Guide. AQA Co., 334 Crane Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90065, USA.

**41. Kanholm J. ISO 9000 in Our Company; Self-study Course For Personnel. AQA Co. 334 Crane Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90065, USA.

42. WTO/GATT Trade Policy Reviews :

- Egypt*
- European Community*
- Japan *
- Korea*
- Malaysia**
- Romania**
- Singapore*
- Switzerland**
- Thailand*
- Tunisia*
- Turkey*
- United States*

CD ROMs for acquisition

***1. CD-EXPORT**

Bureau Van Dijk
250 Avenue Louise
1050 Brussels - Belgium

***2. FIRMEXPORT/FIRMIMPORT**

Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris
Dept. of international Trade
2, rue De Viarmes
75002 Paris

****3. INTER PRESS SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DATA BASE:**

Global Information Network LTD
777 United Nations Plaza
NY 10017 USA

***4. JUSTIS CELEX**

Context LTD
Tranley House
Fleet Road London NW3 2QW, UK

****5. NORIANE / PERINORM**
Association Francaise de Normalisation
Tour Europe
92080 Paris la Defense CEDEX

***6. WORLD TABLES**
World Bank Publications Service
701 18th Street
Washington DC 20433
USA

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مكتب وزير الدولة لشؤون التنمية الإدارية
مركز مشاريع ودراسات القطاع العام

Republic of Lebanon
Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies
(C.P.S.P.S.)