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INFORMATION MEMO

Purchase of two dredgers for the Congo (Leopoldville)

On March 9, 1965 the EEC Commission decided to finance, through the new European Development Fund, the purchase of two dredgers for the Congo (Leopoldville), the EDF Committee having expressed a favourable opinion at its sixth meeting.

The dredgers will be used principally to keep clear a navigable channel in the River Congo where for 50 kilometers its course tends to change owing to sandbanks which shift with fluctuations in the level of the river and hamper shipping.

In order to maintain a depth of 28 to 30 feet, required by ships of 17.000 tons, some 6 million cubic meters must be dredged each year. On account of the inadequacy of the equipment at present available (4 dredgers, one of which is no longer serviceable after 40 years' service) it has become necessary to buy two large modern dredgers capable of moving 3 million cubic meters a year.

From time to time the vessels will also be needed in the ports of Boma, Ango-Ango and Matadi, in order to prevent the berths and anchorages from silting up, and in the Bay of Banana.

The project was recommended by the EEC Mission which in 1963 was responsible for drawing up a plan for the recovery of the Congolese economy; it was given priority because of the importance of this national highway, which ends at the ports of Boma and Matadi, for the economy as a whole. In 1963 it carried about 1.560.000 tons, which is 70 % of all trade entering and leaving the Congo.

The estimated cost is 3.200.000 u.a.⁽¹⁾ and includes the crews to be provided by the builder of the dredgers for the year covered by the builder's guarantee.

(1) 1 u.a. = \$ 1.00