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FOR THE

PLAN FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OF THE SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

YEAR UNDER REVIEW:

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(Submitted by the Commission)

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INTRODUCTION

This is the Third annual report on the Plan for the Transnational Development of the Supporting Infrastructure for Innovation and Technology Transfer (Innovation Plan -Note 1-), which was adopted by the Council on November 25th, 1983 for the period 1984-86, with the primary objective of initiating preliminary experimental steps aimed at overcoming the various obstacles to innovation which exist throughout the Community.

The general intention of the programme was to speed up and simplify the processes for transforming research results into new products, processes and services at both national and Community levels, and to accelerate the diffusion of innovation throughout the Community. Special importance is attached to the problems faced by the small-to-medium-sized enterprises which play such a dominant role in the economics of all Community Member States, and the Commission is assisted in its work by the Consultative Committee on Innovation and Technology Transfer (CIT). The Commission wishes to record its gratitude to CIT for its invaluable advice in implementing the Innovation Plan.

The programme was formulated in terms of four specific categories of activity

- A. Transnational Cooperation in the Field of Innovation
- B. Coordination of National Innovation Policies
- C. Ensuring greater Community-wide availability of information on Innovation and Technology Transfer
- D. Improving the Innovation Infrastructure of less favoured regions.

Further details and the allocations of funds to the various activities are provided in Annex I.

During the year, progress was made in all areas and consolidated the work reported previously on the earlier operation of the programme. The importance of the programme for the new Member States was also recognised and it was decided that the Plan should be extended and expanded to build on the foundations which have been laid.

The result was the drawing up of the proposal for SPRINT (The Strategic Programme for Innovation and Technology Transfer -Note 2-) which aims to continue the main areas of work and to extend them into the important area of training for specialist advisors in the technology transfer, innovation and financial areas, - particularly as their work applies to SMEs. (See list of priority actions -Note 3-). SPRINT -Note 4- was adopted by the Council on 9 June 1987 for the period to 31 December 1988.

The four areas of activity will now be discussed in more detail.

A. TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INNOVATION

The objectives of this part of the programme were

- improve the transnational integration of national innovation infrastructure networks;
- increase transnational cooperation in the field of venture capital;
- establish transnational cooperation in the interfacing of research and industry.

These have been approached from a number of different aspects, and, to a large extent, efforts have been concentrated on the SMEs.

A.1 Innovation infrastructure networks

A major aspect of the Innovation Plan is the development of transnational cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Part A of the programme attempts to facilitate this by concentrating on the technology transfer and innovation management advisory services, (such as Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Authorities, private technology and management consultants), which serve the SMEs in the different Member States, and has endeavoured to establish transnational networks of such advisory services. The intention is for these networks to form lasting information exchange systems which will foster and facilitate transnational collaboration between the small and medium-sized enterprises.

As in the two previous years, a Call for Proposals was made offering partial financing for the implementation of transnational Cooperation particularly involving the new Member States, Spain and Portugal. 21 proposals were accepted in this round, making a total of 69 in the three years of the programme. These contracts have involved public and private advisory bodies and have already led to more than 50 transnational technology transfer contracts between firms being assisted by the advisory services receiving aid (see Annex II). Another 40 contracts were about to be concluded at the end of the reporting year. This shows that the Programme has been successful and that it is increasing in a satisfactory way.

The particular steps being taken to improve the European network of intermediaries and to foster transnational cooperation already include exploratory visits and professional secondments which were started in 1984 as preparatory activities. These actions were found to be successful and were continued in 1985 with the European Association for the Transfer of Technology, Innovation and Industrial Information (TII) (see section below) acting as management agent for the Commission.

The object of these two activities was to encourage members of public and private innovation and technology management advisory services across the Community to get to know each other, to study working practices in other countries and to explore the possibilities for transnational cooperation.

During 1985 three two-to-three-day exploratory visits were made by groups of up to 20 members to Bristol (UK), Bilbao (Spain) and Dublin (Ireland). Additionally, twenty two-to-three-week and two three-month secondments were supported to establish contacts between advisory bodies in, for example, Madrid and Brighton, Rome and Paris, Thessaloniki and Hamburg, Gloucester and Lisbon, etc.

During the reporting year support has been given, again, for guided visits by groups of entrepreneurs and managers from one Member State to technology fairs in another Member State. This attracted considerable interest, with 55 proposals being received. Of these, 22 were accepted for subsidy support.

The European Association for the Transfer of Technology, Innovation and Industrial Information - ETTI - (Note 5- which was founded in 1984 with help from the Commission to create an European association of the main organisations involved in innovation and technology transfer, has now over 200 member organisations including university/industry liaison bodies, private, public and semi-public innovation and technology consultants, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.).

In 1985 continued support was provided under the Innovation Plan, and TII continued the activities initiated in the previous years, including the management of some actions under the Transnational Plan on behalf of the Commission. Additionally, a business plan has been drawn up to describe the Association's intended development in the next few years.

A.2 Transnational cooperation in the Field of Venture Capital - EVCA

In 1985, support was also given to the European Venture Capital Association (EVCA) - (Note 6-), a non-profit-making institution based in Brussels. EVCA now has 160 members, which is an increase on the previous years.

Among EVCA's many activities during the year, special mention should be made of a major conference, "Financing Growth Companies in Europe", which took place in June in Munich and which was attended by representatives of venture capital companies, banks, industry and government.

A.3 Transnational cooperation between industry-linked Research Associations

This aspect of the programme has two facets:

- Direct cooperation between industry-linked Research Associations,
- Modernisation of traditional industries.

The two aspects are closely associated, and different approaches were adopted to tackle them.

In the first, cooperation is particularly directed at the transnational dissemination of new technologies to SMEs. Such cooperation is intended to have a synergic effect on other related activities of industry-linked research associations, such as the testing and development of prototypes and products, standardisation and training. It is also concerned to help harmonise norms and standards and thus it has an important contribution to make to the creation of the Community internal market.

A restricted call for proposals for transnational cooperation projects was issued to industry-linked research associations selected by the CIT delegates from the individual Member States. There were 70 applications, of which 16 were selected, involving a total of 75 research associations (see Annex III).

The second topic was approached by launching a transnational pilot project for an experimental exchange of information and experience on national policies regarding the modernisation of traditional industries, on new technologies and on new products. Attention is being concentrated on three selected sectors; textiles, footwear and traditional ceramics, and the activities include:

- direct transnational exchanges of expert consultants to SMEs;
- visits by manufacturers to their counterparts in the same industrial sector in other countries;
- seminars for exchanging experience and information;
- preparation of information material in various languages.

B. COORDINATION OF NATIONAL INNOVATION PROMOTION POLICIES

The intention in this part of the programme is to improve the efficiency of national innovation promotion policies by increasing the degree of coordination between them, and to add complementary transnational components where possible and appropriate. There are several recognisable dimensions to this problem, centering on

1. the utilisation of publicly funded R&D results
2. the use of patents and other industrial property rights
3. wider and more effective use of design, and
4. innovation training and management.

Actions in these areas, together with the creation of a comparative directory of national measures to promote innovation and research, were all initiated in the earlier years of the programme and were continued during 1986. Progress has been made in each area and the highlights are as follows:

B.1 Improving the utilisation of the results of public or publicly funded R&D

The primary problem here is that, as no comprehensive picture is available as to the ways in which the various Member States utilise the results of their publicly funded R&D, it is initially difficult to suggest ways of improving the situation. To overcome this obstacle contracts have been signed with experts in each Member State to establish the present position, to identify suitable methods for dealing with particular problems at a national level, and to indicate how a suitable European framework might be created.

These studies have been progressing well, and it is expected that a systematic summary of the results will be available by late 1987.

The studies were complemented by a symposium on the utilization of the results of public and publicly funded R&D which was organised by the Commission in Luxembourg on 23-25 Sept., 1986, and attended by about 450 representatives from the fields of politics, administration, industry and research, and other concerned institutions.

D.2 Patents and innovation

Patents play a crucial role in the innovation process and a CIT sub-group was established in July 1985 to accomplish a range of tasks which extend the Commission's activities with regard to patent information. Specifically, the sub-group is to examine possibilities of improving the utilization of patents, particularly in order to promote innovation.

During 1986, the work of the CIT sub-group concentrated on:

- the drawing up of an inventory of existing and planned measures in the Member States for the promotion of innovation through the patent system;
- the identification of necessary studies and possible activities in this field;
- examination of the practicability of the recommendations made during previous studies. These have touched, for example, on the re-introduction of the period of grace, costs in patent infringement proceedings, influence of the duration of protection on innovation, and conditions and instruments for encouraging patent applications in the European Community.

D.3 Design and innovation

There is tendency for manufacturers, and particularly SMEs to overlook the importance of design in their innovation, production and marketing activities. To help overcome this, the CIT established a "Design and Innovation" working group whose main objectives are to increase awareness of the importance of design and to provide information as the role of design in the innovation process.

A wide range of activities have been undertaken, including

- publications: The intention of the publications is to help industrial managers to appreciate the importance of design and to improve their access to the design community. Five titles have been selected for support
 - Design Management in Practice
 - The design-based enterprise
 - The Corporate Design Programme
 - "Design : WHY ?"
 - Index of design lecturers at universities and design centres.
- seminars: A Design Management Consultancy Seminar involving about 15 managers of large organisations was held in cooperation with the British Design Council and the Kilkenny Design Workshop (IRL).
- exchanges of staff between design centres in different Member States.

- an initial experiment to promote direct cooperation between SMEs in France and the United Kingdom with a view to devising joint design strategies.
- The European Design Prize. This is intended to have a strong public impact and so make a contribution to heightening public awareness of design. Nine Member States (DK, D, E, F, GR, I, IRL, NL, UK) will participate in the first competition to be held in 1987.

B.4 Training and innovation

It has been realised that training for innovation is essential and a number of initiatives have been launched. Additionally, a study carried out on behalf of the Commission has shown that there is a considerable need for complementary transnational consultation and supporting activities at Community level. Some pilot actions in this field will be launched in 1987.

B.5 Directory of national measures for the promotion of applied research, development and innovation

Finally, in recognition of the need both for information and for Community-wide coordination in the innovation field, the Commission has again published a directory of "Incentives for Industrial Research, Development and Innovation". This provides information on direct and indirect public measures to promote research, development and innovation in the Member States of the European Community and includes measures which were in operation or awaiting implementation on 31.3.1986 -Note 7--.

C. COMMUNITY-WIDE INFORMATION ON INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Information and information flow are essential to the innovation process and the emphasis of this part of the programme has been on improving the Community-wide availability of information on innovation and technology transfer - particularly for SMEs. There has been considerable success during 1986, with progress being made particularly in

1. the dissemination of R&D results
2. the gathering of technological information from parts of the world in which information is difficult to obtain
3. community-wide dissemination of information on opportunities for co-operation between companies - particularly SMEs
4. community-wide dissemination of information on technical standards and regulations.

C.1 Dissemination of R&D Results

The dissemination of R&D results has been approached through two specific actions: The Europeanisation of conferences on technology and innovation, and the launching of EuroTechAlert, a European technology awareness scheme.

Europeanisation of Conferences in the field of new technologies. Here aid is given to conference organisers to bring speakers from other Member States, to reach potential participants from other countries, and to translate and circulate the proceedings throughout the Community. During 1986, 23 conferences were selected for support, bringing to 65 the total number supported since the beginning of the programme. The conferences cover a wide range of topics in the field of new technologies and innovation.

EuroTechAlert. This project is based on the British TechAlert system, and aims to supply European industry with information abstracted from the many technical reports on government and other public research which are published every year throughout the Community. These reports represent a potentially powerful source of information for the creation of new products, for the application of new technologies and for improving manufacturing and processing methods.

Currently, France and the United Kingdom actively participate in the EuroTechAlert project and it is expected that other countries which will have completed their preparations by the first half of 1987 will then also take an active part.

C.2 Gathering information from parts of the world in which it is difficult to obtain

During 1986 initial consideration was given to overcoming language barriers to information from parts of the world in which it is difficult to obtain. Japan was the primary focus of activity, but possible measures in this field proved to be difficult.

Therefore, this type of action has been handed over to the services of the Commission in charge of overcoming language barriers.

C.3 Dissemination of information on opportunities for collaboration - Tolefax Network for European technology transfer institutions

In an earlier pilot project financed outside the Innovation Plan, a telex network was established to link technology transfer centres in the European Community. The objective of this network was to facilitate transnational commercial exchanges of technology between the major technology transfer institutions in the Community by speeding up communications compared with ordinary mail and by allowing the transmission of drawings, diagrams, photos, etc., which is not possible by telex.

In 1985, the Commission undertook to support the extension of the network, and, during 1986, the number of network affiliates doubled to about 100. Consideration is currently being given to publishing a directory of the affiliates, and because of the increased membership, it is anticipated that this project will soon become self-supporting.

C.4 Community-wide dissemination of information on technical standards and regulations: ICOMS data base

The Member States have developed large, often specifically national technical standards. The work needed to achieve technical harmonisation at the European and international levels is still far from complete, so that it is often very difficult for companies, especially SMEs to identify the requirements of different national standards when trying to market a new product.

The Commission proposed a partial solution to this problem through the compilation of a comparative index linking and comparing national and European standards (ICONE data base). This work is being carried out under contract to the Commission by ECS (European Committee for Standardization) in collaboration with the standardization institutes of the various Member States.

Progress has been very encouraging. The contract with ECS was signed at the end of 1985, and the setting up of the ICONE data-base began in 1986. On 27 May 1986 a contract was concluded with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) for the supply of magnetic tapes with the most important ISO standards and for their quarterly updating. Similar agreements have been made with the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) regarding electrical standards. By mid-1986 all the EEC Member States had supplied relevant information. By November, 1986, a total of almost 10,000 items on technical standards had been stored and it is expected that this first data collection phase can be completed by the end of 1987.

Additionally, in July 1986, a contract was concluded with EFTA with a view to enabling ECS member organizations from EFTA countries to participate in ICONE on a fee-paying basis.

D. INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LESS FAVOURED REGIONS

The aim of this part of the programme is to assist areas of the Community which cannot participate fully in the innovation activities because they lack the necessary innovation and technology transfer infrastructure.

Initial actions in this area must be carefully selected and monitored because, unlike the mutual-exchange activities carried out in the other parts of the programme, they involve a one-way transfer of technology, experience and information. They cannot be implemented without transnational cooperation, and care must be taken in selection and in prosecution to ensure that they are successfully accomplished. 1986 was the first year in which fairly large-scale projects of this nature were undertaken and three specific schemes were set in motion.

D.1 Robotics in Ireland

A number of measures are being implemented to achieve a wider appreciation of the benefits of robotics by Irish SMEs and to encourage the wider application of robotics technology. Foreign experts are being called in as speakers at a series of seminars being held throughout Ireland, and as training staff in Irish companies. They are also being used to assist selected Irish SMEs in a number of case studies to assess the possibilities of using robotics for specific applications.

D.2 Increased use of patents in Greece as a source of information on technology

Greece has been an importer of technology for the last 40 years. This was not without consequences for the building up of its innovation and technology transfer infrastructure. In an effort to improve the situation and to ease the flow of information to Greek industry, this action is intended to increase awareness in Greece of the usefulness of patents as a source of information and to improve the flow of patent information. Specifically, support is to be provided for:

- (a) in-house training of Patent Office staff;
- (b) training of Patent Office staff abroad;
- (c) training for Patent Office users;
- (d) supply of data through on-line links with international data banks (patents information and patent documentation);
- (e) equipping the Patent Office, training material, etc.

The activities started in 1986, with the main emphasis being on items (b) and (c): training Greek Patent Office staff abroad, and training users of the Patent Office.

D.3 Setting up "active information centres" for key Greek industries

In order to improve the competitiveness of Greek industry, the Greek Government has set up R&D companies for three key industrial sectors (textiles, iron and steel and marine technology). These companies are to provide various service functions for the benefit of the appropriate industry including, providing access to R&D, evaluation of R&D, undertaking R&D activities on their own account, and technology training.

With the help of the Commission each of the three companies will also host an "Active Information Centre", to provide information and counselling in their own industrial sector. Emphasis is being placed on aid for training and on information aids (including specialist literature, a computer-aided system for accessing relevant information available abroad, and other similar measures).

Explanatory Notes

- (1) This third annual report has been prepared for submission to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Article 6 of the Council Decision (83/624/EEC) of 25 November 1983 (see OJ L 353 of 15 Dec. 1983).
- (2) Com (85) 483 final, 14 Oct. 1986
- (3) Priority Actions for the period 1985-86, which obtained a favourable opinion from CIT at its meeting on 6 and 7 June 1985:
 1. Support for the establishment and initial activities of liaison mechanisms between advisory bodies for technology and management, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
 2. Organization of transnational activities and dissemination on a Community-wide scale of information concerning innovation and technology transfer, in particular:
 - (a) use of the results from research and development carried out in the public sector or financed by the public sector;
 - (b) collecting information on technology developed in certain regions of the world where access to information is difficult;
 - (c) initiatives to develop opportunities for cooperation between firms, particularly SMEs;
 - (d) supply and demand of transferable technologies, for example by means of data bases, technology fairs and technology fairs;
 - (e) impact of problems connected with industrial property on innovation;
 - (f) improvement of access to knowledge on technical standards and regulations;
 - (g) analyses of future needs in the context of the assessment of new technologies;
 - (h) research/industry interface;
 - (i) promotion of the role of innovation in the modernization of traditional industries.
 3. Organization of pilot activities, transnational in aim or in nature, relating to the training of technology transfer specialists on the management and financing of innovation and related fields in firms, in particular, small and medium-sized enterprises.
 4. Establishment of liaison mechanisms between local authorities as agents in the innovation process, as regards both the possibility of fostering innovation through cooperation on procurement and their role, or that of equivalent bodies responsible for innovation, in the creation of a favourable environment for innovation on a local level.

5. Within the framework of the Advisory Committee for Innovation and Technology Transfer, and with a view to concertation between Member States, exchanges of information, experience and opinions on national and Community measures designed to promote innovation and technology transfer, their effects and their efficiency. In this context, identification of new opportunities for transnational action and proposals for their realization.
- (4) Council Decision (87/307/EEC) of 9 June 1987, amending Council Decision 83/624/EEC concerning a plan for the transnational development of supporting infrastructure for innovation and technology transfer (1983 to 1985)
- (5) Mr. M. Duhamel, Secretary General
TII, European Association for the Transfer of Technologies, Innovation and Industrial Information
3, rue de Capucines
L-1313 Luxembourg
Tel. 00352/463035
- (6) Mr. R. Ceurvorst, Secretary General
EVCA, European Venture Capital Association,
Clos du Parnasse, 11F
B-1040 Bruxelles
Tel. 02/5137439
- (7) Commission of the European Communities, Incentives for Industrial Research, Development and Innovation, London, Kogan Page, 1986, ISBN 1-85091-236-Y

BUDGET OF THE TRANSNATIONAL PLAN

	Total budget allocated 1984-1986
A. <u>TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INNOVATION</u>	
1. Innovation advisory services	4.489.586
1.1 Supporting measures to the innovation advisory cooperation scheme	
a. Exploratory visits	100.000
b. Short-term transnational secondments	100.000
c. Long-term transnational secondments	150.000
d. Guided visits	210.000
1.2 European Association for the Transfer of Technology, Innovation and Industrial Information - TII	522.000
2. European Venture Capital Association - EVCA	320.000
3. Interface Research/Industry	
3.1 Research Associations	1.333.480
3.2 Modernisation of traditional industries	230.000
B. <u>COORDINATION OF NATIONAL INNOVATION POLICIES</u>	
1. Utilization of the results of publicly funded R&D	372.100
2. Patents and Innovation	
3. Design and Innovation	351.000
4. Training and Innovation	84.000
5. Directory of measures for the promotion of Innovation	37.500
C. <u>INFORMATION ON INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER</u>	
1. Promotion of the "Europeanisation" of Conferences	1.248.700
2. EuroTechAlert	200.000
3. Telefax-Network	55.000
4. ICCNE	192.200
D. <u>INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LESS FAVOURED REGIONS</u>	
1. Robotics for Ireland	153.000
2. Improvement of Patent use in Greece	125.000
3. Active Information Centres in Greece	220.000
E. <u>EVALUATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES</u>	132.901
	10.626.457

In the Council decision 83/624/CEE 10 Mio. ECU were deemed necessary for the implementation of the Transnational Plan. In order to enable a smooth continuation of the Plan's activities under the new SPRINT-Programme, which was to be adopted by the Council of Ministers in June 1987, the budgetary authority had reserved 1.5 Mio. ECU of the 1986 budget in chapter 100. This sum was transferred to the Plan (budget item 7521) in the last year of its duration. Roughly 0.6 Mio. ECU of these additional 1.5 Mio. ECU had been committed by 31 December 1986. The SPRINT budget amounts to 8.6 Mio. ECU for 1987 and '88.

1. Transnational contracts concluded up to 31.12.1995 within the framework of transnational cooperation between innovation advisory services

Kind of Agreement	Product				Economic sector							
	Intermediate Product	Final Product	Process	Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
- Distribution Agreement	2	11	12	--	8	5	1	4		6	3	
- Collaboration Agreement for Product/Process Development	--	3	7	--	3	2	1		2		1	1
- License Agreement	--	2	8	1	1	3			6			1
- Joint Venture	--	2	4	--	3			1	1	1		

Indicators for the economic sectors:

- 1 Information Technologies/Computer Industry/Electronics Industry
- 2 Building/Constructing
- 3 Bio-Technologies
- 4 Energy Saving/Clean Technologies
- 5 Equipment Industry (incl. Metal-working Industry)
- 6 Chemistry/Fibers Industry
- 7 Food Industry
- 8 Other sectors

Annex III

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS ON TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN INDUSTRY-LINKED RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS

Sector	Project Number	Aims of the Project (16 different projects)
Footwear industry	1.	To promote the introduction and application of new technologies (in particular CAD/CAH) by SMEs in the footwear industry
Welding	2.	To enhance the exploitation, especially by SMEs, of recent advances in welding technology
Building/ construction	3.	To improve technology transfer in the building/construction sector
	4.	Definition of a unified system for evaluating of the fire performance of building materials, in particular wallcoverings
	5.	To increase the number and improve the quality of research institutions producing expert systems for the engineering service sector of the construction industry
	6.	To establish more homogeneous certification methods for composite construction floor systems
	Composites/ plastics	7.
Wood	8.	Promotion of awareness and application of new wood-drying technologies by, among other things establishing a "European Kiln Drying Club" (EKDC)
	9.	To foster the application of new technologies in the wood sector
Textiles	10.	Evaluation of newly developed methods of bleaching and depigmentation for wool and other Keratin fibres
	11.	Establishing a method to evaluate the productivity of "straight line" weaving looms
	12.	Harmonisation of tests and procedures to determine the fire resistance of safety clothing
Smelting works/ Foundry	13.	To advance the industrial applications of non-destructive tests in iron foundries

Sector	Project Number	Aims of the Project (16 different projects)
Ceramics	14.	To improve the understanding of the behaviour of industrial ceramics under thermal "fatigue" and thermal shock conditions with a view to establishing norms for thermal shock testing
Paint	15.	Investigation of the parameters that control the behaviour and resistance to mechanical impact of glazed floor tiles
Paint	16.	To develop and promote an expert system which will assist non-specialists in selecting the most appropriate coating for their manufactured components

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