COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

on the

Interim evaluation of the implementation of the multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development of a European multimedia content industry and to encourage the use of multimedia content in the emerging information society (INFO2000)

Introduction

1. The multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development of a European multimedia content industry and to encourage the use of multimedia content in the emerging information society (INFO2000) was launched on the basis of the Council decision 96/339/EC of 20 May 1996[1], covering a period of four years from 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999 and foreseen with a budget of ECU 65 million.

2. INFO2000 aims at stimulating the emerging European multimedia content industry, encouraging the use of digital content and exploiting new business opportunities. The central theme of INFO2000 is the development of a European information content industry capable of competing in a global market and able to satisfy the needs of Europe's enterprises and citizens for information content leading to economic growth, competitiveness and employment and to individual professional, social and cultural development. The programme aims to achieve this through four main Action Lines:

    *   Stimulating demand and raising awareness.
    *   Exploiting Europe's public sector information.
    *   Triggering European multimedia potential.
    *   Support Actions.

3. According to Article 6(4) of the Council Decision, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, once the Committee referred to in Article 5 (programme committee) has examined it, an evaluation report at the end of three years on the results obtained in implementing the programme's action lines (interim evaluation). The Commission may present, on the basis of those results, proposals for adjusting the orientation of the programme.

4. In accordance with Article 4(1) and Article 4(2) fifth indent of the Council Decision, the Commission adopted the measures to be taken for the INFO2000 programme interim evaluation comprising the terms of reference and the composition of the evaluation panel[2].

5. The INFO2000 programme interim evaluation report was examined by the programme committee at its meeting of 18 December 1998 in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(4) of the Council Decision. In conclusion of the discussion the programme committee expressed its general support to the report. The main results of the discussion are incorporated in the Commission comments on the report.

6. The interim evaluation report provides an overall appraisal of the programme's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and utility, as well as a comprehensive evaluation of the initiatives launched within the programme's four action lines and the results obtained. A number of recommendations with respect to current activities and future actions are made (see report attached).

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[1] OJ No L 129, 30.5.1996, p.24.

[2] Written procedure No E/98/287 – C(98)427 of 24 February 1998.

Summary of results of the interim evaluation

7. The interim evaluation panel concludes that overall "the INFO2000 programme has fulfilled its objectives at this time, and is operating satisfactorily within the limited budget provided". Quantifiable evidence of impact is not yet fully available, but in the opinion of the panel "INFO2000 is assessed as highly relevant, efficient and having high utility. Programme effectiveness has been good given the short period elapsed since the start of INFO2000. It has demonstrated unique features in developing strategic direction for both industry and European Commission. Thus the present work should be continued and urgent action is needed to formulate the main elements for a successor programme."

8. The Interim evaluation panel has identified three types of recommended actions for the European Commission in respect of the current activities of INFO2000 and the requirement for future actions.

 • The first group of recommendations are of a strategic nature. The Interim Evaluation Panel strongly urges the European Commission to address these in a medium term policy approach. The strategic recommendations will determine the future vision, direction, effectiveness and impact of work in the electronic information services domain (strategic recommendations).

 • The second group of recommendations relates to actions to be taken in INFO2000 or a follow-up programme. These recommendations are of a more detailed nature than the strategic recommendations but they affect the INFO2000 programme as a whole (general recommendations).

 • The third group of recommendations is that of actions aimed specifically at increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the current INFO2000 Action Lines or the continuation of these Actions Lines in a follow-on programme (specific recommendations).

Commission comments to the appraisal

9. *The Commission agrees in general with the overall appraisal of the interim evaluation panel. However, bearing in mind the limited nature of evidence and the relatively early stage of programme implementation, the quantative findings must be viewed as preliminary.*

10. *The Commission takes note with satisfaction that the INFO2000 programme is considered highly relevant to the needs of a rapidly developing electronic content market. The limited INFO2000 budget has indeed limited the scope of the activities originally foreseen for a proposed budget of MECU 100. This has also hampered progress in the exploitation of opportunities for European content development.*

11. *The Commission agrees that a market oriented programme like INFO2000 and any follow-on activities have to take account of the dynamics of the market and its industry. Therefore a permanent dialogue with the industry has been established which has been further intensified to support the formulation of objectives and actions for a follow-on programme. In addition extensive bilateral consultations have taken place with key European players.*

12. With respect to efficiency and effectiveness, the Commission is aware that the administrative burden placed on contractors has caused some loss of efficiency and effectiveness. However, the strict application of the Commission's financial rules is a guarantee that "tax-payers' money" is not misused. The Commission acknowledges that the administrative burden should be reduced wherever possible. Measures will be taken as a follow-up of the Business Environment Simplification Task Force (BEST) report specified in the Commission communication to the Council[3]. The delays in achieving some objectives are closely linked to the budget cut and to the complex decision process within the Commission, which on the other hand, guarantees balanced Commission proposals in sensitive political areas such as access and exploitation of public sector information.

13. The Commission takes note of the assessment of the interim evaluation panel for the need to launch a successor programme as well as of the statement that the opportunity costs for Europe resulting from the absence of a follow-on programme would be high. The Commission is fully aware of the urgency to formulate the main elements for a follow-on programme. A Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions as well as a draft Council decision specifying the activities envisaged under a follow-on programme are under preparation. The Commission is due to consider the Communication in the first quarter of 1999.

Commission comments to the recommendations

- Strategic recommendations (see annexed report)

14. The Commission recognises the strategic importance of ensuring a proper follow up to the recommendations formulated by the review panel. The foreseen proposal for a follow- on programme to INFO2000 will take due account of the need to adapt the funding mechanisms and the provision of risk capital to the evolution of the market in line with the initiatives underway to enhance the provision of risk capital in the framework of the European Growth and Employment initiatives.

- General recommendations (see annexed report)

15. The Commission agrees in general with the recommendations. Co-operation between the public and private sectors will also be encouraged to improve access and exploitation of information held by the public sector thereby extending the first experiments undertaken under INFO2000. Initiatives in this field will build upon the results of the public consultation that will follow the publication of the Green Paper on Public Sector Information[4].

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[3] COM(1998)550 final, 30.9.1998, "Promoting Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness". The Commission's Response to the BEST Task Force Report and its Recommendations.

[4] COM (1998)585 final, 20.1.1999, "Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society".

- Specific recommendations (see annexed report)

16. *The Commission agrees in principle with the recommendations given with respect to the four action lines of INFO2000 highlighting improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of some activities. If they concern specific activities under a follow-on programme they will be taken into account when formulating the work programme of the future programme.*

17. *Immediate action will be taken in the following areas:*

- *Taking into account the panel recommendations the MIDAS-NET discussed in its meeting in Vienna on 30.11/1.12.1998. best ways to achieve further tangible results particularly in respect to dissemination of INFO2000 results and exchange of best practice. The Central Support Team (CST) will continue the monitoring of the MIDAS-NET activities and introduce, in consultation with the nodes, additional measurable success criteria. The Commission will encourage MIDAS-NET again to look for close synergies with national initiatives and other EU programmes and networks. The partner finding database on I*M Europe will be further enhanced by the CST.*

- *The Green Paper on public sector information was adopted by the Commission on 20 January 1999. The Commission has invited all interested parties to submit their contributions to the discussion by 1 June 1999. The Commission intends to strengthen support for multimedia content development in the area of public services by encouraging public/private sector partnerships through its pilot projects. The use of public sector information will be continuously assessed through a system of exchange of information and best practice.*

- *A significant and continued effort is being made to ensure dissemination of results and best practice, both as an integral part of the projects being supported under the programme, through display at exhibitions and other suitable locations, and through seminars and workshops organised by MIDAS nodes. The Commission agrees with the recommendation of the evaluation panel on GI2000 and confirms its intention to adopt the Communication on geographic information in the near future. Furthermore geographic information has also been included under the Fifth RTD Framework Programme.*

- *It is intended to improve the methodology for trend analysis and to develop a partnership with industry with respect to the publication of annual reports on 'European Information Trends'. The Commission intends to continue its successful work in commissioning strategic studies and will launch three new studies in 1999 on public sector information exploitation, new financing mechanisms for the content industries and language customisation. In addition a study will be launched aiming at analysing in detail the quantitative and qualitative impact of INFO2000 activities and assessing their performance in stimulating the development of the European multimedia content market and thus contributing to specify relevant actions under a follow-on programme. The existing broad range of expertise in the Legal Advisory Board (LAB) will be complemented by new members reflecting the market issues raised by*

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convergence. The Internet (WWW) will continue to be used as the main means of dissemination of its results, thus allowing all users to monitor the activities.

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MAKING DIGITAL CONTENT WORK FOR EUROPE

INFO2000 PROGRAMME INTERIM EVALUATION

SEPTEMBER 1998

PART 1

INFO2000 INTERIM EVALUATION

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PART 1

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INFO2000 INTERIM EVALUATION

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A new cycle of market development is now opening for Europe and the world in the area of digital content.   In these exciting times there is a demand for vision, leadership and determination to lead the market.   Europe can become the major source of content and can play a pivotal role in the global marketplace for digital content.   It is essential to install a great sense of urgency and to give priority to initiatives that increase the pace of market development and penetration - information content can and should be a major European thrust, as well as a source of new jobs and economic activity, leading to the nurturing of a major European export.

In order to grasp this opportunity there is a need for more European Commission investment in' this strategic area of work to meet the challenges set by the convergence of devices, markets and industries. Programmes, such as INFO2000, have proven to have sizeable multiplier effects on business, environments, public policies and government. Furthermore only European Commission led programmes can effectively aim at enhancing cross-cultural European content in line with the market demands and needs. Therefore, urgent action is needed to provide focus and direction for European industry to transform its enormous potential into effective content development for world markets, including not only traditional media but also new digital tools and services.

The development of a successor programme for INFO2000 that focuses on strategic issues should be acted on now. Otherwise, the threshold momentum generated by INFO2000 risks becoming sheer waste. The new programme should be focused on the changing marketplace and be proactively responsive to it. A new programme should be organised around generic topics responding to the politico-commercial needs of the EU in the content sector. Moreover, it should incorporate the in-built flexibility to address rapid market evolution and changing patterns of demand. Only through anticipatory measures can Europe seize the opportunity to take a leading role in the new and dynamic Information Society environment.

INFO2000 aims at stimulating the emerging European multimedia content industry, encouraging the use of digital content and exploiting new business opportunities. The central theme of INFO2000 is the development of a European information content industry capable of competing on a global scale and able to satisfy the needs of Europe's enterprises and citizens for information content leading to economic growth, competitiveness and employment and to individual professional, social and cultural development. The programme aims to achieve this through four main Action Lines:

- Stimulating demand and raising awareness;
- Exploiting Europe's public sector information;
- Triggering European multimedia potential;
- Support Actions.

Under the Council Decision 96/339/EC that adopted the INFO2000 programme, Article 6(4) states that the European Commission will submit an interim evaluation report at the end of three years on the results obtained in implementing the programme's Action Lines.

The overall results of that evaluation are that the INFO2000 programme has fulfilled its objectives at this time, and is operating satisfactorily within the limited budget provided. INFO2000 is assessed as highly relevant, efficient and have high utility. Programme effectiveness has been good given the short period elapsed since the start of INFO2000. It has demonstrated unique features in developing strategic direction for both industry and European Commission. Thus the present work should be continued. As mentioned before, urgent action is needed to formulate the main elements for a successor programme.

In this context, notwithstanding its interim appraisal nature, the Evaluation Panel has identified three types of recommended actions for the European Commission in respect of the current activities of INFO2000 and the requirement for future actions. The first group of recommendations are of a strategic nature: therefore, only these are given in this executive summary. The Evaluation Panel strongly urges the European Commission to address these in a medium term policy approach. The strategic recommendations will determine the future vision, direction, effectiveness and impact of work in the electronic information services domain. The second and third groups of recommendations relate to actions to be taken in the course of INFO2000 or in a follow-up programme, or within specific Action Lines respectively.

Thus, the Evaluation Panel recommends strategic actions in five key areas.

1. Creating a vision for the future

INFO2000 has provided support, influence and direction to the development of globally competitive European information services and products. In this context, it is important to stress the role of the European Commission in contributing to a vision for the EU content industry of the future, which has great employment and economic potential. A future programme must address strategic and foresight actions.

INFO2000 has addressed both public and corporate policy needs for guidance in times of turbulence and of rapid market/technology change. The strategic studies have made a major contribution to private sector business strategy and to policy development in the EU. The European Commission's convergence Green Paper gives evidence of the need for initiatives related to new commercial activity and job creation in this sector. Furthermore the initiative proposing a Global Information Charter and the results of the Bonn conference on Global Information Networks are both examples that require emulation and extension through a successor programme to INFO2000.

Delays in the approval of the Green Paper on Public Sector Information and the Communication "GI2000" has hampered discussion and related actions but the constraints are recognised which caused such delays.

The work started under the Senior Experts Group should be developed into a Content Forum. This should be a managed network of contacts with strategic persons in the content industry throughout the EU. It must provide an improved mechanism for linkage between business objectives and the policies of the European Commission as they relate to stimulation of the information market. The Panel strongly recommends that one of the first assignments given to the Content Forum is to steer the launching of an impact study of INFO2000 susceptible of providing relevant inputs to its final evaluation.

There is a clear need for better market analysis and the development of a convergence observatory to influence developments and policies in the merging telecommunications, audio-visual and publishing markets and industries.

> The next generation programme must build on INFO2000 experience. It must put still greater emphasis on foresight activities, strategic studies and industry consultations. It must have a flexible work programme and monitoring mechanisms to remain close to a changing marketplace.

2. Addressing convergence

Digital multiple-media platforms will require more and better quality content provision. The digital marketplace is maturing and services such as e-commerce are gaining a high profile.

To enhance the influence and role of INFO2000 and its successor programme, stronger links to development in related EU programmes, Member State programmes and national support teams should be established. This is particularly true of the link to the Information Society Technology (IST) effort within the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5), where significant benefits should be drawn from synergies between the research and development environment and market application. INFO2000 role is central in the convergence of the telecommunications, audio-visual and publishing markets and industries, and in ensuring synergy between research and market application. Therefore, the Panel also urges for better links with DG X related activities.

> The Evaluation Panel recommends that a future programme address enhanced European content supply for digital platforms and multiple media as well as for new services and electronic markets. Also, it must facilitate increased co-operation with FP5 and other EC programmes (such as structural funds following-up on specific project developments at national level).

3. Creating the knowledgeable digital society?

The growth of the European electronic services market is being hampered because academic knowledge remains disconnected from business opportunities. Fast technical developments in business are outpacing academic education and most of the educational work has to be performed by enterprises and companies. There is a requirement to provide better links between the education and business domains, with initiatives to address training, experience sharing, interface enhancing, the wide distribution of competency and skills across Europe.

> The Evaluation Panel recommends support for knowledge pooling and networking activities bringing together academia, training institutions, researchers, knowledge transfer companies and business. Under a new programme, new mechanisms for market stimulation should be considered, such as the creation in the EU of a developmental environment aimed at nurturing new ventures.

4. Easier access to seed and compounded funding

Initiatives should be taken to link European Commission support funding to private funding mechanisms to create greater commercial incentives and larger examplar projects. The converged content industry is a high-risk and high-investment business. International and pan-European projects require substantial investment to conquer global markets.

Also, at present, many worthy ideas do not reach a prototype stage, due to administrative burden associated with European Commission support. This process must be eased, making it user-friendly especially for SMEs.

> The Evaluation Panel recommends that INFO2000 and a follow-on programme address funding mechanisms to allow seed money to catalyse early ideas developed by SMEs up to the stage of investment proposals. Combinations of hard and soft money are needed to penetrate to the market. Initiatives should be taken to investigate attitudes towards enterprise, investment and risk by the banking community and the role of the venture capital community as well as support programmes of the EC and Member States aimed at stimulating market development.

5. Better user targeting and awareness

The impact and influence of the INFO2000 programme is significant. However, to propel the European information service marketplace forward, actions should be undertaken to increase visibility and awareness of potential opportunities.

The current awareness building activities in INFO2000 are sometimes too dispersed and lack focus and high visibility. For example, the quality of MIDAS-NET nodes varies, and the MIDAS-NET nodes do not co-operate to the degree necessary to increase programme effectiveness and to attach a strong European dimension to activities. Promotion of best practice and examplar projects is limited. It is important for the MIDAS-NET to continue working on general awareness building activities and increasing the number of users of information services, particularly through demonstrating pilot projects and public-private ventures.

Another issue is access to public sector information and data that have value in the market, yet remain difficult to access, both by the public, in general, or by the private sector, in particular. A future programme should provide support to creative multimedia content development addressing the provision of public services in digital form.

The involvement of SMEs in INFO2000 is considerable, but many are still deterred from participation by bureaucratic barriers.

> The Evaluation Panel recommends better targeting of user communities, greater stimulation of public/private joint ventures aiming at increasing the exploitation of public sector information and increasing the involvement of SMEs through easier access to funding. Commission funding should concentrate on cross-border models of best practice and network creation with a clear European and international dimension.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE INFO2000 PROGRAMME

INFO2000 aims at stimulating the emerging European multimedia content industry, encouraging the use of multimedia content and exploiting new business opportunities.

The central theme of INFO2000 is the development of a European information content industry capable of competing on a global scale and able to satisfy the needs of Europe's enterprises and citizens for information content leading to economic growth, competitiveness and employment and to individual professional, social and cultural development. The programme aims to achieve this through four main Action Lines:

- Stimulating demand and raising awareness;

- Exploiting Europe's public sector information;

- Triggering European multimedia potential;

- Support Actions.

The specific initiatives undertaken are organised under these Action Lines, which are described in detail in Annex A, the Action Line Assessments. Chapter 3 of this report provides a programme level assessment and evaluation appraisal and the resulting general and specific recommendations are provided in Chapter 4.

The INFO2000 programme has a four-year work programme that started in 1996 and will be completed in 1999. The budget allocation for INFO2000 is 65 MEURO. A breakdown of the budget commitments for different Action Lines is provided in a summary budget table (table 1).

Action Lines	1996 '000 EURO	1997	1998	1999	Total '000 EURO
AL1-1 Creating new markets by raising awareness at the European level with specific user groups	12,707.7	2,750.0	750.0	405.0	16,607.7
AL1-2 Encouraging clusters of pan-European user groups	-	-	-	-	-
Total AL1 22 - 32% (25.5%)	12,707.7	2,750.0	750.0	405.0	16,607.7
AL2-1 Developing policies to access and exploit European public sector information	722.4	300.0	300.0	250.0	1,572.4
AL2-2 Linking directories to public sector information	-	700.0	1,600.0	1,000.0	3,300.0
AL2-3 Making use of content resources in the public sector	-	600.0	6,200.0	-	6,800.0
Total AL2 18 - 23% (18%)	722.4	1,600.0	8,100.0	1,250.0	11,672.4
AL3-1 Catalysing high quality multimedia content	10,400.1	14,258.2	2,014.0	2,800.0	29,472.3
AL3-2 Trading multimedia intellectual property rights	-	800.0	2,232.0	-	3,032.0
Total AL3¹ 45 - 57% (48.7%)	10,400.1¹	15,058.2¹	4,246.0¹	2,800.0²	32,504.3²
AL4-1 Observing and analysing the multimedia content market	75.0	250.0	1,400.0	345.0	2,070.0
AL4-2 Spreading the use of multimedia content standards	300.0	350.0	300.0	50.0	1,000.0
AL4-3 Encouraging skills development at European level	100.0	250.0	400.0	1,250.0	2,000.0
AL4-4 Developing and exchanging best practice	p.m.	-	-	-	-
Total AL4 3 - 8% (7.8%)	475.0	850.0	2,100.0	1,645.0	5,070.0
Total¹	24,300.2¹	20,258.2¹	15,196.0¹	6,100.0²	65,854.4²
Total (100% - 65 m EURO)	24,000.0	19,900.0	15,000.0	6,100.0	65,000.0

Table 1 - Summary Budget Table

2.2 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THIS REPORT

The INFO2000 programme was adopted, on 20 May 1996, under the Council Decision 96/339/EC. Article 6(4) of the Council Decision states that the European Commission will submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, an evaluation report at the end

Notes for Table 1

1 Includes contribution from European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries (300.2 thousand EURO in 1996, 358.2 thousand EURO in 1997 and 196.0 thousand EURO in 1998)

2 Without EFTA countries contribution for 1999.

of three years and a final evaluation at the end of the programme on the results obtained in implementing the programme's Action Lines.

This report presents the interim programme evaluation with comprehensive recommendations to the future vision, direction and emphasis of European Commission activities.

The working methodology adopted by the Interim Evaluation Panel aimed to provide an encompassing and thorough evaluation, and is in alignment with the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, which are given in Annex C. This methodology included extensive desk research to examine all relevant documentation, interviews with market actors and prominent European Commission Officials and, where possible, measurements based on statistics and market data to assess the impact of activities in the Action Lines of the programme. The Interim Evaluation Panel met on 7-8 May, 4-5 June and 16-17 July.

In addition to the Panel's main work performed by individual enquiry and plenary meetings during the months of May, June and July, 1998, a number of parallel activities were conducted by Evaluation Panel members that were valuable for this assessment:

- The opinions of numerous INFO2000 project partners were solicited through telephone interviews, meetings and correspondence;

- All of the nodes of the MIDAS-NET network were asked to complete a questionnaire devised by the Interim Evaluation Panel;

- The opinions of key European Commission personnel were solicited.

The Evaluation Panel addressed the following key issues for the INFO2000 programme that were spelt out in its terms of reference:

Programme relevance: to what extent the INFO2000 programme's objectives are still pertinent to the evolving needs and priorities of industry and users and to which objective priority should be given?

Programme effectiveness: how effectively the different actions contribute to achieving the programme objectives, how the effectiveness could be increased and has the right balance of activities been achieved?

Programme efficiency: given the limited budget resources for the programme (the proposed 100 MEURO of the Commission was reduced to 65 MEURO by the Council), it should be assessed whether or not the available resources have been converted economically into results contributing to the programme objectives and how efficiency can be improved.

Programme utility: if the INFO2000 programme is still valid given the development of initiatives in the public and private sector; if this is true, the essentials for INFO2000 follow-up activities to be tackled at European level should be indicated.

The Interim Evaluation Panel has carefully reviewed a comprehensive set of material provided by the Commission. A complete list of these documents is included in the bibliography in Annex F.

(3)

3   APPRAISAL

Overall the INFO2000 programme has fulfilled its objectives at this time, and is operating satisfactorily within the limited budget provided.   It has demonstrated unique features in developing strategic direction for both industry and the European Commission.   Thus the present work should be continued.   Urgent action is needed to formulate the main elements for a successor programme.

Within the scope of the Terms of Reference for this Interim Evaluation, the Evaluation Panel assessed the INFO2000 programme according to following criteria:

1.   Programme Relevance

The Interim Evaluation Panel finds that the INFO2000 programme is highly relevant to the needs of a rapidly developing electronic content market.   The programme has played a key role in heralding content as a fundamental driver of a sustainable Information Society and in providing strategic vision for its timely development in Europe.   INFO2000 has also addressed market needs through the initiation of innovative projects that are creating new services utilising novel technologies, at the forefront of the market when they commenced.   Furthermore, the Interim Evaluation Panel considers the concepts behind the MIDAS-NET awareness activities as highly relevant to a new and learning content industry.   It is recognised that some reduction and deviation from the ambitious work programme has occurred.   In large part this is due to budget constraints that have limited the scope of activities.

The Interim Evaluation Panel concludes that INFO2000 was correctly focused at its conception.   However there is now a need to refocus to the changing needs and status of the market.   A follow-on programme is essential.   Measures must be taken to ensure responsiveness to the changing market needs.

2.   Programme Efficiency

INFO2000 pioneered the concept of content as an important market sector and driver for convergence.   The INFO2000 budget has enabled significant beneficial multiplier effects.   Therefore the Interim Evaluation Panel concludes the efficiency of the INFO2000 programme to be high.   Specific examples of this cost-benefit ratio can be seen through the substantial interest generated in the MIDAS-NET initiated EUROPRIX MultiMediaArt 98 prize, demonstrating considerable impact at low cost. A further example is illustrated through the wide-ranging discussions resulting from the Bonn Conference on the subject of "Global Information Networks: Realising the Potential", managed at moderate cost.

INFO2000 clearly raises awareness.   It has aided the spread of competencies throughout European industry and has enhanced trans-national co-operation in Europe.

Some loss of efficiency has resulted from the administrative burden placed on contractors, particularly SMEs, by the European Commission's control services. Some delays have resulted in strategic objectives not yet being achieved, creating some imbalances between Action Lines.   Actions to remedy this should be undertaken immediately.

3. Programme Effectiveness

Given the relatively short period elapsed since the start of the INFO2000 programme quantifiable evidence of the impact of the INFO2000 programme is not yet available. However, qualitatively, INFO2000 has stimulated the electronic information services market through awareness activities, leading-edge projects and specific initiatives such as the Bonn Conference. Great interest has been demonstrated in the strategic studies undertaken whose lasting effect in providing direction is widely recognised.

INFO2000 has positively influenced the level of awareness of the potential opportunities within the content marketplace. It has influenced policy development, and public discourse resulting in new initiatives such as the Internet Action Plan. The creation of an adequate regulatory framework for the Information Society has been supported by the competence of DG XIII-E in this area. Effectiveness has been reduced in some Action Lines due to delays, such as the publication of the Green Paper on Public Sector Information and the Communication on Geographical Information, internal complexity within the European Commission in general and in particular the administrative burden imposed on contractors.

4. Programme Utility

The need for the INFO2000 programme is apparent. The actions undertaken were, and are currently, highly valid to the emerging marketplace. INFO2000-like programmes are now underway in many Member States. INFO2000 can be seen as a major investment in concepts within the electronic information services marketplace. The Interim Evaluation Panel stresses that the role of the European Commission is essential in providing direction and support to a developing and quickly changing global market. The cost in lost opportunities to Europe resulting from the absence of a follow-on programme would be high. Action is needed urgently to plan a follow-on programme.

4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim Evaluation Panel has identified three classifications of recommended actions for the European Commission in respect of the current activities of INFO2000 and the requirement for future actions. The first group of recommendations are of a strategic nature. The Interim Evaluation Panel strongly urges the European Commission to address these in a medium term policy approach. The strategic recommendations will determine the future vision, direction, effectiveness and impact of work in the electronic information services domain. These strategic recommendations are presented in the Executive Summary of this report.

The second group of recommendations relates to actions to be taken in INFO2000 or a follow-up programme. These recommendations are of a more detailed nature than the strategic recommendations but they affect the INFO2000 programme as a whole.

The third group of recommendations is that of actions aimed specifically at increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the current INFO2000 Action Lines or the continuation of these Action Lines in a follow-on programme.

In the case of each recommendation, there is an indication relating to the urgency with which action must be taken. The requirement for immediate action is indicated by {*}.

4.1   GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   E-commerce will require massive content packaging and creative multimedia applications. A future programme must contemplate publishing and content supply for e-commerce.

2.   The follow-on programme must continue to address the regulatory and legal framework for the converging global marketplace.

3.   The foreseen publication of the long-awaited Green Paper should create the momentum to make Public Sector Information a major driver of future European markets and to sustain a line of related projects via further appropriate Calls for Proposals.

4.   A follow-up programme must take advantage of the positive impact created by the Europrix MultimediaArt 98 to foster other cost-effective grass-root initiatives capable of enhancing awareness and stimulating market potential.

5.   Future Commission activities in this area should contemplate a better monitoring of the impact on employment generation of the content industry markets.

4.2   SPECIFIC ACTION LINE RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Line 1

1.   The provision of information through a MIDAS-NET type of structure should be continued. There should be a refocusing of the targets to prioritise industry-relevant SMEs and an adequate segmentation of activities by the main categories of users. {*}

2. MIDAS-NET, project co-ordinators and partners should be proposed mainly by leading industry representatives from the converged content industry, and should be organisations with a high national profile which are directly accountable to local constituencies.

3. Programme funding should be increased to foster inter-MIDAS co-operation across Member States.

4. The role of Central Support Team should be continued and enhanced by adding the task of defining and monitoring success criteria for each of the MIDAS-NET nodes. {*}

5. Stronger links between MIDAS-NET to related EU programmes, Member State programmes, and national support teams should be established. Enhanced activities for "partner finding" across Europe should be encouraged. {*}

Action Line 2

1. Concerning the proposed Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society, the Interim Evaluation Panel strongly recommends the planned activities are performed as soon as possible and that the resulting proposals are incorporated in a follow-on programme. {*}

2. Contractual arrangements between the European Commission and public sector organisations for project work must be urgently investigated and suitable arrangements established. An assessment of the effectiveness of the legal and financial arrangements for projects resulting from the Action 2-2 Public Sector Information Call for Proposals should be undertaken. {*}

3. A future programme should provide support to creative multimedia content development addressing the provision of public services in digital form (i.e. education, training, health care, financial services, local community participation).

4. The European Commission should assess progress on the use of public sector information.

Action Line 3

1. The work on multimedia rights clearance is of high value and should be continued through a successor to INFO2000.

2. Dissemination of project results and demonstrators, and best practice concepts should be increased preferably utilising electronic communications media. {*}

3. Activities related to the proposed adoption of the GI2000 Communication should be accelerated in order to seize the global opportunities already sensed under the current programme. {*}

4. Steps should be taken to enhance more European partnerships in projects ensuring their gradual extension to Central and Eastern European players. A future programme should also take on board cross-Atlantic and international partnerships designed to take advantage of complimentary strengths and to broaden the European penetration in the global marketplace.

5. Under a new programme, the following changes should be made to create two distinct types of project:

    •   An activity similar to the Preliminary (Definition) Phase for pilot projects should be provided. EU support should be not more than 100,000 EURO. The eligibility should be limited to SMEs and the application requirements should be minimal. The objective would be to encourage small enterprises with a good idea to establish the credibility of that concept, in preparation for seeking alternative commercial funding sources.

    •   All other projects should be increased substantially in size. They should focus on ideas that will become exemplars or breakthrough concepts that change the behaviour of a sector in the content industry. These large projects should be accepted only if they have matching funds commitment from private, banking or venture capital sources. For these large-scale projects the two-phase approach offers substantial advantages.

6. Actions must be taken to reduce and simplify the levels of European Commission bureaucracy, specifically with reference to proposals, contract preparation, payment, and bank guarantees for smaller organisations. {*}

7. Actions are needed to improve the monitoring of the results and their dissemination as well as the visibility and awareness of potential opportunities.

Action Line 4

1. Horizontal support actions, such as the publication of European Information Trends, must be further developed and continued. This should include information on standards appropriate to a changing marketplace. {*}

2. The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends continued support for the role of the Legal Advisory Board. The INFO2000 programme's support for the LAB is an essential means to develop the content industry and the public sector.{*}

3. Following the success of the studies under Action Line 4, the investigative role of a follow-up programme to INFO2000 should be greatly enhanced in order to better target and underpin actions to support industry development.

MAKING DIGITAL CONTENT WORK FOR EUROPE

INFO2000 PROGRAMME INTERIM EVALUATION

SEPTEMBER 1998

PART 2 - ANNEXES

INFO2000 INTERIM EVALUATION

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1.1   ACTION LINE 1 - STIMULATING DEMAND AND RAISING AWARENESS

1.1.1   Action Line 1.1 - Creating New Markets by Raising Awareness at the European Level with Specific User Groups

The objective of this Action Line is to stimulate the creation of new markets by demonstrating the opportunities arising from the developments taking place in the European information services market and especially in multimedia applications.

1.1.1.1   Call for Proposals for Operation of the MIDAS-NET Network

As a measure to raise awareness of electronic information services and multimedia across Europe a Call for Proposals for establishing the MIDAS-NET (Multimedia Information Demonstration and Support Nodes) network in 17 European Economic Area (EEA) countries was launched in June 1996. This work continued and extended the work under IMPACT II of the network of National Awareness Partners (NAPs). The aim of MIDAS-NET is to convince the target groups of the advantages of using multimedia, to demonstrate access to government and other information and to provide a shopping window to the European content industry with a view to the design of new multimedia applications. Target groups are industry and trade, in particular SMEs, and citizens.

Following the evaluation of the Call for Proposals 23 nodes in 17 countries were created with European Commission support of 9,285,870 EURO being committed for four years (1996-1999). The horizontal statistical MIDAS-NET node ended its work after one year. A Swiss consortium has participated since June 1998. Approximately 1.6 MEURO in European Commission support were foreseen over four years for joint actions of MIDAS-NET nodes including the biannual meetings of the 112 participating organisations.

All of the MIDAS-NET organisations responding to questionnaires made by the Interim Evaluation Panel, gave their full support to the objectives of MIDAS-NET. The organisations have strongly committed themselves to the objectives set for the network by the European Commission. The Interim Evaluation Panel did not identify any motivational problems in realising the MIDAS-NET objectives, which had to be very similar to the sub-goals of national Information Society programmes in many countries.

Some MIDAS-NET partners have stated that the reporting requirements of the European Commission are too demanding. They believe that the European Commission is collecting too much information that is of no use to project partners, although one has to recognise the need for a minimum level of information to justify expenditure.

In order to succeed in their task the co-ordinators and partners are presumed to have adequate hardware resources. The budget-covering practices have varied. The co-ordinating units that are large enough to invest a notable share of their own capital in the activities have managed best. The MIDAS-NET agreement has strengthened an organisation's status and image in their own country and so encouraged use of its own budget. Small units have mostly had to resort to external financing sources to cover their budgets.

In addition to the subsidy from the European Commission, financing has come from national ministries (for example, the Ministry of Trade and Industry) and regional administrations.   In some countries, such as the Netherlands and Norway, the residual budget has been financed by the State. Also, participating enterprises and other communities on a national level have financed the project with their own activities. Other sources of financing have been the proceeds from conferences and consulting.

The competition situation varies according to country. Direct competition, however, hardly exists. The MIDAS-NET partners consider the large consulting and training companies and seminar organisers operating in their fields as their most significant competitors. Sources offering similar information are regarded mainly as partners rather than direct competitors. In general, the status of the partners is strong from a national viewpoint.

MIDAS-NET is not directly addressing the content industry, but is focused on multimedia organisations.   However some project partners are addressing the content industry, such as through the example of the "Digital Apartment" evening where leaders from banking, insurance, television, radio, and information industries were presented with a view of the future.

In summary, the Interim Evaluation Panel presents following points as the most important factors for the success of the MIDAS-NET and as the most significant evaluation criteria:

- Training courses and seminars arranged; and essentially their contents;

- Reaching the largest target group (SMEs);

- Increased co-operation between the MIDAS-NET and outside actors;

- Increased common awareness of the existence,. use and exploitation of multimedia products and services.

The reasons for poor results are the lack of knowledge of target groups, especially SMEs, and lack of effective co-operation with their representatives. Methods should be explicit and understandable, for instance, demonstrations of multimedia examples should illustrate concrete advantages to enterprises. This is primarily a matter of co-ordinators' ability to command the entire multimedia field.

On the other hand, co-operation partnerships should be especially sought in the poorly known fields. Also, in this sense, it is necessary to emphasise the co-operation with active commercial multimedia actors like content producers in the field of both electronic and printed publications, software producers, manufacturers of data terminal equipment, and enterprises in technology.

Co-operation with other networks like the Euro Info Centres, the Business Co-operation Network and the Innovation Relay Centres has been fairly close, mainly in the form of jointly organised seminars, workshops etc.

It is also noticeable that the national infrastructure may have direct effects on the usage and utility possibilities of information, for example, for SMEs.

As a conclusion, the financial opportunities and connections to other national Information Society programmes and other EU projects should be encouraged. In

the Interim Evaluation Panel's estimation additional financing can be received through the proceeds of organised activities and also through better co-ordination of the other available public financing opportunities in order to reach the goals of INFO2000. For instance, regional organisations could through some EU programmes become co-financiers in projects to raise partners' awareness.

As a general rule, MIDAS-NET is well appreciated in the partners' home countries. The large number of EU programmes connected to multimedia may, however, to some degree cause confusion amongst customers, particularly SMEs.

The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends that the selection criteria for co-ordinators of future retained consortia for the MIDAS-NET network or its successor should remain the same as used previously. However, MIDAS-NET project co-ordinators and partners in a follow-on programme should be endorsed by representatives of the converged content industry and should be organisations with a high national profile.

Actions are needed to make SMEs and the content industry participate in awareness-raising projects. As for market development, the key question is how to advance the creation of such information-networks-exploitation services that really add value to the use of electronic information services from the perspective of the target groups.

The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends that the provision of information through the MIDAS-NET should be continued. There should be a refocusing of the business targets and sector activities of the MIDAS-NET nodes. Stronger links between MIDAS-NET to related EU programmes, Member State programmes, and national support teams should be established. Enhanced activities for "partner finding" across Europe should be encouraged. Programme funding should be increased to foster inter-MIDAS co-operation across Member States.

1.1.1.2 Central Support Team for MIDAS-NET

I*M Europe and ECHO server

As a key function of the Central Support Team to MIDAS-NET one of the tasks is the operation of an information distribution infrastructure consisting of a World Wide Web (WWW) server known as I*M EUROPE and of a complementary database server known as ECHO (European Commission Host Organisation).

I*M Europe acts as a focal point for Information Market related issues, and for MIDAS-NET nodes' WWW network in particular. ECHO supports with its main databases these objectives.

In 1996 1,336,852 EURO were committed from INFO2000 for this action. In 1997, 680,000 EURO were committed and for 1998 the same amount is foreseen.

The effects of ceasing the ECHO server were not seen as decisive for demonstration purposes. It is essential to secure an adequate inexpensive supply of information in some source and in some form.

Support for the networking of MIDAS-NET nodes

The role of the Central Support Team (CST) within the MIDAS-NET network is to give support to the activities of the network of 112 MIDAS-NET participating organisations operational in 17 EEA countries and Switzerland.

The specific objectives of the CST are, within their supporting action, the same as for each of the MIDAS-NET nodes. That is, to convince the target groups of the advantages of using multimedia, to demonstrate access to government and other information and to provide a shopping window to the European content industry with a view to the design of new multimedia applications. Target groups are industry and trade, in particular SMEs, and citizens.

In 1996, 630,000 EURO were committed from INFO2000 and in 1997, 330,000 EURO. For 1998 the same amount is foreseen than in 1997.

Generally, the role of the CST is regarded as important and essential to the realisation of the project. The CST provides useful resources to link to the European Commission and to the other MIDAS-NET nodes.

The Interim Evaluation Panel considers that the role of CST should concentrate on:

• offering assistance relating to technology;

• effective supply of information relating to EU projects;

• improving the internal flow of information in MIDAS-NET; increasing the co-operation between partners;

The Interim Evaluation Panel has not found a universal model for the co-operation between partners. The partners tend to find synergy generated by their know-how and common goals. The internal exchange of information and other kinds of co-operation are considered very important. This co-operation should be developed further and, especially information on the strengths and weaknesses of the partners should be disseminated. The main focus is on the development of internal co-operation in connection with the partner-finding and best-practice methods for projects.

The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends that the role of Central Support Team should be continued and enhanced by adding the task of defining and monitoring success criteria for each of the MIDAS-NET nodes.

Common awareness material and other promotional activities

This task aims to raise awareness of the INFO2000 target groups on every aspect of the programme by providing information and awareness material, either through the CST or by the MIDAS-NET nodes, and therefore this section addresses both the efforts of the CST and the MIDAS-NET nodes. The CST actively promotes the programme goals through participation in exhibitions, organisation of information days, seminars, awards, etc.

This is being achieved through the design, production and management of a multitude of printed, electronic and multimedia awareness material under INFO2000.

In 1996, 420,000 EURO were committed and in 1997, 112,000 EURO. For 1998 the same amount is foreseen than in 1997.

The actions taken on a national level to raise awareness include different conferences, training courses, fairs, enterprise consulting and series of seminars. Topics and target groups were amongst others:

- Multimedia as media sector in future/business life;

- Utilisation of new information technology and opportunities in enterprises/ business life;

- Business opportunities offered by new information technology/business life;

- Copyrights and new information technology/information professionals, business life;

- Electronic trade/expert organisations.

In addition, the project partners have organised a prize contest for multimedia products in addition to other similar activities to raise awareness.

Some of the measures, the purpose of which was to commit SMEs to the project, are partly regarded as unsuccessful in the interviewees' estimation. SMEs have sometimes demonstrated low activity in dissemination activities, including limited participation in conferences, fairs and other occasions. On some occasions the problem has been in timing and marketing as attendance at some occasion, for instance, one seminar attracted very low participation whilst another seminar with the same content has been a success a little later.

The dissemination and distribution of information and materials produced in the MIDAS-NET network are considered sometimes non-optimal. There is also need for material telling of the existence of the network and, more specifically, being better tailored to potential users of the network (SMEs). In addition, multilingual material, i.e. more information in each of the languages is required. Difficulties in obtaining national publicity were mentioned, though in some countries the close collaboration with the established press network has improved the situation considerably.

The use and exploitation of the sources of public sector information have been developed among target groups in the form of seminars and other occasions and actions (e.g. consulting).

Factors relating to the information and the need thereof under the term "Government Information" have not been investigated. A majority of the partners in MIDAS-NET consider the availability of public sector information to be good.

Activities in the field should be continued, although the introduction of public information as digital products through to user groups has not advanced rapidly in every country so far. The Interim Evaluation Panel sees, however, that the potential of the sector is manifold and capable of supporting widely not only the goals of the INFO2000 programme but also the objectives of other EU programmes promoting content product and services projects.

Operation of a central multilingual help-desk

The CST operates a multilingual help desk, which is available both as a manned help-desk, and electronically. The range of types of questions in the 11 EU languages is vast, from the location of documents to aspects of pertinent Community legislation, funding and calls. The Team also provides Frequently Asked Questions on major initiatives, such as the INFO2000 Calls for Proposals or ECHO databases.

The objective of this help-desk is to complement the MIDAS-NET nodes in the area of Community matters or specific user questions for ECHO or INFO2000 related

issues. The human intervention is especially useful to serve the European citizen who has just entered this area of activities.

In 1996, 210,000 EURO were committed to this activity. For the year 1997, 78,000 EURO were committed and for 1998 the same amount is foreseen.

Inventories of European Information Content sources and services

In order to help the MIDAS-NET nodes to guide their potential clients within the European information services market as well as to support their partner finding efforts, two databases are produced and offered in the context of INFO2000. The two databases are I*M GUIDE, which is an inventory of products and services, and I*M FORUM, which is an inventory of European companies active in the content market.

In 1996, 370,000 EURO were committed. In 1997, 100,000 EURO were committed and the same amount is foreseen for 1998.

The I'M GUIDE but particularly the I'M FORUM has proven to be very useful to potential consortia in that assistance is providing in partner finding, in preparation for Calls for Proposals.

Workshops and information exchange

A number of workshops have been organised in order to facilitate exchange of information and expertise both from the European Commission to the network and within the network itself. Face-to-face contacts have strengthened the cohesion of the network through training courses and regular network meetings convened for the 112 MIDAS-NET organisations. In 1996, 1997 and 1998 50,000 EURO per year were allocated or are foreseen.

General conclusion

The target group is composed of SMEs, libraries, information professionals, public authorities, chambers of commerce and the rest of information industry. Additionally, there are producers, software developers, schools/students, politicians, multimedia designers and multimedia clients as user groups. The most important needs for multimedia-based organisations, are to find funding sources, partners and infrastructure, through a more expert-orientated approach. For other businesses, the need is to understand that multimedia requires a re-engineering of their business.

The best results, with respect to the objectives, have been achieved in countries where the network co-ordinator or partners are involved in electronic publishing activities and have a good knowledge of all the actors in the multimedia value chain. Success has also been achieved in countries where there have been a wide variety of partners (i.e. state, private and semi-private) which are all operating in their area of expertise. Nevertheless, more emphasis should be placed on the involvement of SMEs and less on public bodies, as SMEs are more dynamic and have a clear interest in making MIDAS-NET successful.

The commitment has been weakest in countries where the primary focus has been on information collection, and in the regions where the target groups and their needs are not well known to the network.

The question of convergence should be addressed towards the whole range of "content" industry. MIDAS-NET is a discussion forum, which aims to encourage the use and best practice of multimedia. In reality the repositioning of organisations is much slower than technology take-up. The problem with corporate reorganisation from, say, database to multimedia orientation is that it requires a change in the way of thinking.

MIDAS-NET needs - to aid the co-ordinators - public and commercial partners who are able to bring the additional value gained through their expertise for use across the entire network. As a whole, the activity must get a better coverage both in regions and in different lines of business. In the selection of co-ordinators and partners, special attention should be directed to their abilities of creating social networks, their connections to the media, and the effectiveness of their activities on a large scale, in order to realise the objectives in the whole society.

1.1.2   Action Line 1.2 - Encouraging Clusters of Pan-European Users

The overall objectives of Action Line 1-2 are the stimulation of the dialogue between national and pan-European user groups' about the demand side by providing incentives for co-operation and exchange of experience concerning content related issues. This action line has been incorporated in the work programmes of the nodes of MIDAS-NET and therefore the costs are included within those for the MIDAS-NET.

In case that the objective is seen as significant by the European Commission, it should be focused to be able to lead to real actions in the framework of the programme. Due to limited resources the success will remain marginal.

1.2   ACTION LINE 2 - EXPLOITING EUROPE'S PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION

1.2.1   Action Line 2.1 - Developing Policies to Access and Exploit European Public Sector Information

The overall objective of Action Line 2-1 is to develop European policies to access and exploit European public sector information for the benefit of citizens, businesses, the information industry and the public sector itself.

A first step is to publish a Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society by the European Commission in close collaboration with Member States and market actors. Studies comparing national situations are to be undertaken and exchanges of national experience are encouraged.

The public sector produces a great deal of information, much of which is of interest for commercial purposes or for informing citizens as part of the democratic process. The rules for access to information held at different public sector levels are very different throughout the Member States. On the basis of studies (undertaken under IMPACT II) and meetings, the Green Paper should initiate a wide public debate on better access and exploitation of the considerable amount of public sector information. The responses to the Green Paper thus will contribute to the reflection on and the development of European policies aiming at improving access to, dissemination and commercialisation of public sector held information, notably via the new electronic networks.

In the four-year Work Programme, 1996-1999, the publication of the Green Paper was expected to be in April 1996 so that it could form the basis for discussion at a

conference in Stockholm in June 1996 and concentrate the focus of projects under Action Line 2. The draft "Green Paper on Access to and Exploitation of Public Sector Information in the Information Society" was available for internal European Commission purposes only in due time, including the comments of a task force of the Legal Advisory Board.

This draft (9 April 1996) has not yet been adopted by the European Commission and has therefore not been published. One of the reasons have been that it was a very detailed (and therefore voluminous) paper. Meanwhile a revised, smaller and better accessible draft "Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society" is ready and now subject to a new inter-service consultation before its transmission, planned for September 1998, to the European Commission for final adoption. Once adopted, the Green Paper will be transmitted to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and to all interested parties and the general public. There will be six months to reply and give additional comments.

The Stockholm Conference on "Access to Public Information: A Key to Economic Growth and Electronic Democracy" took place on 27 and 28 June 1996. It was organised by the European Commission's services. Originally designed as a plenary Legal Advisory Board (LAB) meeting open to the public, the Conference proved to be very attractive, being attended by more than 350 people from 21 countries (including representatives of public and private sector suppliers, information users and representatives of the European institutions).

This large audience demonstrated great interest in the subject and the European Commission knows that it is necessary to reactivate this interest after a two year interruption by specific provisions (such as an information campaign concerning the availability of the Green Paper). The Stockholm Conference, which was originally envisaged to discuss the Green Paper, created an opportunity to hear about and discuss the following themes (among others):

• Access to public sector held information and public dissemination policy;

• How to conciliate access to public information and privacy, intellectual property rights and national interests;

• Improving the synergy between the public and private sectors within the information market;

• The Information Society and democracy in Europe.

It is true that, compared with 1996, today there is greater sensitivity concerning the access and exploitation of public sector information. Also, it is true that now the impact of new technologies like the Internet (and its linkage with intranets) may be much better articulated and incorporated due to a wider experience. The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends that the Final Evaluation Panel of the INFO2000 programme is asked to investigate the impact of the delay of the Green Paper.

Action Line 2 was considered to be an ordered series of tasks, with the first step being the Green Paper. Its discussion should have started at the Stockholm Conference, leading to discussion and proposals for project activities. Thus the activities of Action Line 2-1 (the Green Paper) should have had a great impact on the planned next steps, Action Line 2-2 (linking directories) and Action Line 2-3 (making use of content resources). The Calls for Proposals for Action Line 2-2 and 2-3 were closed on 17 April 1998 and the evaluation completed by the beginning of May 1998.

All decisions concerning the support of projects have had to be made before the publication and discussion of the Green Paper.

The relevance of Action Line 2-1 is very high. The programme effectiveness and efficiency is stated to be good concerning the Stockholm Conference. Concerning the Green Paper, it is strongly recommended to perform the actual planned activities as soon as possible and to incorporate the resulting proposals into the follow-up programme. The expected impact of the Green Paper on the public and private multimedia sectors has not been realised to date due to the delayed publication.

The possibilities for interested parties to obtain relevant information can be judged as excellent. Most of the material is available in printed form and accessible via the Internet.

1.2.2 Action Line 2-2 - Linking Directories of European Public Sector Information

According to the Council Decision, the European Commission will support initiatives to produce directories of European public sector information to a common format, so that they can be interlinked and easily accessed from any point in Europe. Pilot projects may address the transnational interconnection of existing national or regional information directories as well as the collaborative production of new directories. Private/public partnerships and multilingual solutions are particularly encouraged.

Due to the delay of the Green Paper, this activity had to be modified to some extent. Concerning the evaluation of the Call for Proposals for "Exploiting Europe's Public Sector Information" (described below under Action Line 2-3) some activities have been selected under Action Line 2-2 and some budget allocated for project activities.

Activities on the basis of the results of the discussion of the Green Paper have to be incorporated into a successor programme of INFO2000. It is highly recommended by the Interim Evaluation Panel to initiate joint actions linking directories of European public sector information and to support them so that they may have a significant impact on an European Union level.

There has to be some flexibility in executing a programme as INFO2000, which lasts for four years. There has been a necessary change in the sequence of activities under Action Line 2, which has been inevitable given the delay in the Green Paper process.

1.2.3 Action Line 2-3 - Making Use of Content Resources in the Public Sector

Europe is blessed with a rich stock of information collections, under public sector control, which are increasingly in digitised form. The INFO2000 programme aims at mobilising these digital collections for exploitation by co-operation between public and private sector. The creation of European inventories, their interconnection across the Community as well as the linkage with intellectual property rights trading systems will be supported. Related standards (of formats) and specifications should be developed. Detailed inventories of the information available in the different public sector information repositories should be encouraged in order to facilitate exploitation of content resources through value-added services.

A Call for Proposals for projects for "Exploiting Europe's Public Sector Information" was published in the Official Journal of 16 December 1997 with a deadline for receipt of proposals on 17 April 1998. The support is limited to 50% of actual costs, subject to a ceiling of 500,000 EURO per project. The planned budget for those projects, which had to address the objectives of Action Lines 2 and 3, was about 8.6 MEURO for 20 projects.

A total of 141 proposals were received by the closing date, exceeding all expectations. The proposals were evaluated resulting in the selection of 20 projects (with a total cost of 15 MEURO and recommended funding of 8.6 MEURO) and a further 19 projects placed on the reserve list. Negotiations and decisions are expected to be completed by September 1998.

The proposals came from all countries within the EU and a number of countries outside the EEA were involved (which may participate without EU funding). The overall quality of the proposals was adequate and satisfactory. They addressed a considerable number of domains in the public sector - a total of thirteen broad categorisations were identified. Geographical information and economic information projects were the most numerous, followed by archives, culture and tourism, environment, general, health and technical information and a few proposals were covering education, legal, library and social. The segmentation was reflected in the short list and reserve list of projects. All selected projects aimed at releasing and exploiting public sector information. Generally they complemented each other in terms of subject area and approach within the individual domains. There was also commonality among the selected projects in the definition of problems and their proposed resolutions.

The projects selected during this Call for Proposals were performed in one phase. The Call's panel of external evaluators recommended a two-stage process; that would ensure that funding could be more aligned to the progress and impact of projects.

Under a new programme, the following changes should be made to create two distinct types of project:

• An activity similar to the Preliminary (Definition) Phase Pilot projects should be provided. EU support should be not more than 100,000 EURO. The eligibility should be limited to SMEs and the application requirements should be minimal. The objective would be to encourage small enterprises with a good idea to establish the credibility of that concept, in preparation for seeking alternative commercial funding sources.

• All other projects should be increased substantially in size. They should focus on ideas that will become exemplars or breakthrough concepts that change the behaviour of a sector in the content industry. These large projects should be accepted only if they have matching funds commitment from private, banking or venture capital sources. For these large-scale projects the two-phase approach offers substantial advantages.

The results of this Call for Proposals confirm the importance of EU activities in this area. Making use of content resources in the public sector is of high relevance to the needs of all parties concerned (citizens, businesses, information industry and the public sector) and the European Commission.

The activity effectiveness is also of a high order. The selection of the proposals shows an adequate balance of projects in different sectors, incorporating enterprises from all EU countries and the major players as well as innovative small enterprises. Similar activities in a successor programme to INFO2000 should have - on the basis of experiences of the selected projects - a closer focus in scope and some guidance and "coaching" activities for all the selected participants of a programme.

The activity efficiency is good. The available budget has been distributed according to many different important criteria in an attempt to maximise the impact on this complex subject area.

The activity utility is of a very high order. The projects will have an impact not only economically (by increasing the synergy of public and private sector) but also with regard to the political integration and better services for the citizens. Follow-up activities should incorporate the countries in central Europe who will join the European Union through the envisaged enlargement.

The Interim Evaluation Panel recommends that the final evaluation team of the INFO2000 programme assess the impact of these activities on the use of public sector information.

1.3   ACTION LINE 3 - TRIGGERING EUROPEAN MULTIMEDIA POTENTIAL

1.3.1   Action Line 3.1 - Catalysing High-Quality European Multimedia Content

1.3.1.1   First Call for Proposals

Following consideration of the multimedia content industry in the period of the mid-nineties, the INFO2000 management team decided to push forward the development of pilot products and services capable of exploiting the competitive advantages of the European single market. The four main areas are:

- Cultural heritage;

- Business services for firms (in particular SMEs);

- Geographical information;

- Scientific, technical and medical information.

These four sectors correspond to areas of real potential, as demonstrated by the large answer to the Call for Proposals: 477 proposals were received and examined by external evaluators during the first phase, the "Definition" phase. Two-thirds of these proposals were led by SMEs.

Community support for the retained proposals was limited to a maximum of 100,000 EURO per project. 80 Definition phase projects were selected at the end of 1996 with a budget of 7,466,600 EURO. This phase helped the industry to produce good prototypes and confirmed the value of a Definition phase approach for stimulating industry development. This method is effective and acted both as a catalyst and as a tool to help evaluators in identifying the best projects. The Definition phase, by providing a low financial commitment threshold, also has the advantage of allowing a large number of proposals made by very small companies. However, even given the high involvement of SMEs in the INFO2000 Definition Phase, largely, SMEs still believe that they should not be involved in European Commission programmes or

feel that they cannot afford the necessary investment to answer. Further steps to simplify and encourage SMEs into programmes such as INFO2000 should be taken.

The Definition phase (including production of prototypes) aided the selection of 29 projects, with a two-year implementation period starting from January 1998 (13 for Cultural heritage, 7 for Business services, 5 for Geographical information, 4 for Scientific technical and medical information). The INFO2000 financial support allocated was up to 500,000 EURO for each project.

The wide variety of projects means that a global evaluation approach is very difficult, if not impossible. Also project monitoring costs could increase, mainly in the technical and scientific aspects, due to the high level of competencies required.

The Interim Evaluation Panel has detected four main issues in the approaches used:

1. High cost of two evaluations (about 350,000 EURO in evaluators' contracts);
2. Cost to both industry and the European Commission of running small contracts;
3. The requirement for bank guarantees from small businesses;
4. Rigid time scales imposed by administrative procedures.

These points are not surprising considering the complexity of the INFO2000 Programme and its very large scope. The high cost of two steps evaluations, even if expensive, allow a far better selection and optimise the return on investment, especially in terms of content interest.

Concerning the third point, contacts taken with most of the 29 projects' participants show that when required, the bank guarantee is a serious problem for micro-companies which generally live precariously. Bank guarantees are expensive and reduce the value of the Community contribution to the project. This raises the question of micro-enterprise participation in these types of programme.

The effort to conform to administrative requirements proved to be extremely arduous for most consortium' members. SMEs generally under-estimated this problem, by being encouraged to make simple and straightforward proposals. The calculation, according to precise rules of costs incurred and the completion of a declaration comprising 36 fields (Simplified Research and Development contract), proved complex and time-consuming for many contractors.

It must be concluded that the European Commission's administration, reinforced with controls to combat fraud, is not adapted to small contracts or dealing with small companies. In future, a specialised agency or system of macro-contracts (e.g. FUSE of DG III) could be envisaged to administer small contracts in a more streamlined way.

Sub-contracting of the administration of small contracts could be completed by a collective expert team in charge of giving financial and contractual support, helping, for example, reduce the payment delays of the European Commission contributions or avoiding the bank guarantees. This suggestion could be extended to a "one stop guichet", simplifying the relationship between the consortium members and the European Commission officials. Guidelines for newcomers to European Commission structures and procedures would be very efficient.

The European Commission is not best equipped to carry out this kind of operation. Since access to finance is undoubtedly a central issue in the development of a multimedia industry in Europe, the alternative of a guarantee fund, or an insurance fund, should be considered for this purpose. Alternatively, the use of loans from the European Investment Bank or the European Investment Fund could be considered.

Concerning the rigid timescales, it should be noted that the European Commission moves as fast as administrative procedures allow. These procedures are getting more complex, mainly due to the multiplication of cross checks. The delays involved are variable, from zero to several months, depending on the capacity, the past experience of the consortium members to anticipate the procedures and, of course, the way the different phases are linked.

Payment delays are more critical. Some cases involve either interruption to the work until the money is paid, or forces a temporary solution, such as internal or bridging loans, which are for small companies sometimes difficult to achieve. The immediate payment on acceptance of deliverables has been suggested. There seems to be no complete solution. A pragmatic and flexible approach is essential.

The financial support, in term of amount and percentage (from 30 to 45%) to each project, also appears a problem to some participants. Most complain that the money received is not sufficient to give their project a real chance of achieving its full ambition, beyond the first production phases. Commercial approach, communication and promotion-marketing suffer directly from this, which is against INFO2000's clear objective of economic growth and access to the market. This criticism is very common and is not specific to Action Line 3-1.

One suggested solution is to reduce the number of projects in order to increase the financial support available to each project or eliminate, after the prototype phase, the projects not satisfying requirements. Another suggestion could be to establish a specific workpackage, with a corresponding budget, inside each project dedicated to commercial actions. There is a clear need to give projects a chance to face the European market.

The projects have been invited to demonstrate their achievements at events such as Frankfurt Book Fair, London On-Line, MILIA. The responses from the projects' leaders are variable, depending on their knowledge of the market. This particular point is linked to promotion which, once again, has to be improved. Of course, this essential local, national, and European (if not international) presence in exhibitions, symposiums and commercial fairs is expensive and therefore, an effort has to be made. A link with other European Commission programmes (like MEDIA) could be helpful.

1.3.1.2   Second Call for Proposals

The second Call for Proposals under Action Lines 2 and 3-1 was launched to exploit information held in the public sector. The Call for Proposals aimed to encourage projects that would overcome obstacles to the release and integrated use of information held by the public sector in different Member States, through partnership with the private sector. No special areas were cited but a preference was stated for those that lend themselves best to integration across frontiers and gain added value for end users by such integration.

The proposed budget for support of the selected projects was 8.6 MEURO, with 7.2 MEURO coming from Action Lines 2.2 and 2.3 and a further 1.4 MEURO from Action

Line 3-1. This was expected to result in the selection of about 20 projects receiving support at 50% of costs up to a limit of 500,000 EURO.

The Call was published in the Official Journal on 16 December 1997 and closed on 17 April 1998. Evaluations were undertaken in May. The opinion of the INFOCOM committee was reached in June and the Commission Decision was obtained in July 1998. Contract negotiation and signature were completed by September/October 1998.

Following the evaluation procedure the European Commission has retained a short list of 20 projects with a total support of 8.6 MEURO and a reserve list of 19 projects. An assessment of this Call for Proposals is given under Action Line 2.

It will be necessary to follow the projects closely for interaction with continued policy development, for example in the context of the Green Paper on Public Sector Information.

The form of contractual arrangements with public administrations has yet to be finalised. Due to the inflexible contracts offered by the European Commission, it may be necessary to use intermediary agencies that are permitted to sign or mandate signature and receive funding. The form of cost-sharing contract is in any case probably not the best suited to the kind of stimulation activity generally undertaken by INFO2000 and similar programmes, but so far there have been no resources available to research and develop alternative models. Large contracts, which need not use more administrative efforts than small ones would however disadvantage SMEs.

1.3.1.3 Geographical information

Although the development of Geographical Information policy activities are not subject to evaluation, it is appropriate to comment briefly on them.

The "GI2000: Towards a European Policy Framework for Geographic Information (GI)" initiative aimed to establish and maintain a stable, European-wide set of agreed rules, standards, procedures, guidelines and incentives for creating, collecting, exchanging and using geographical information building upon and where necessary completing existing information society frameworks.

Work has been undertaken drafting documents, notably the GI2000 draft communication, organising meetings and participating in external events with actors presenting, promoting, commenting and documenting ideas and opinions. The European GI community has been given help and impetus to organise itself in EUROGI. During 1997 reinforced efforts have been put into communicating information to and from the actors via the GI section of the I*M Europe WWW server.

In 1996, 150,000 EURO were committed for expert support. Cost for experts supporting this action, particularly to develop the communication GI2000, and a subvention for EUROGI in 1997 was 358,200 EURO. For 1998 it is estimated that costs around 227,000 EURO will be incurred for experts, WWW activities and EUROGI.

Under evaluation, although still not official, GI2000 has nevertheless catalysed countries to put national spatial data policies in place or at least accelerated such developments. Support to the enlargement process has been recognised (EU-CEEC Forum on the Information Society).

The impact of the work performed is clearly weakened as the GI2000 Communication itself has not yet been adopted by the European Commission. The delay has unfortunately somewhat reduced the recognition and credibility of the actions undertaken. EUROGI is perceived as being public sector dominated. This repels direct industry involvement which is further hampered because the GI industry is not an easily identifiable homogenous entity. It therefore lacks the drive and dynamics that could spring from stronger private sector involvement.

To help underpin GI2000, three studies (GI-BASE, GI-META and GI-POLICY) have been launched to analyse various aspects of the GI market. GI-META has confirmed the need for metadata, considered a public good. However, the business case for European metadata services is weak. Therefore, public support for such services is recommended. GI-BASE estimates the EU market for geographic information base data in the range 460-750 MEURO/year excluding the huge economic activity in collecting, processing and disseminating geographical information in administrations and local governments. The study confirms that growth in the market is constrained by low data availability and accessibility as well as a lack of awareness of the benefits from using such data on the part of users. GI-POLICY has identified a range of political issues that need to be dealt with to overcome current market barriers. Most important of these is copyright, data access and data quality confirming the conclusions of the two other studies.

1.3.2 Action Line 3.2 - Trading Multimedia Intellectual Property Rights

The Council Decision's stated objectives with regard to Action Line 3-2 can be summarised as follows:

- To stimulate the development of effective and efficient mechanisms for trading multimedia rights at European level through a Call for Proposals;

- To undertake studies to determine how different intellectual property rights trading systems for multimedia in Europe can work together;

- To contribute to the enhancement of the current multimedia trading environment in the European Union, by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the rights dealing processes between right holders and multimedia product developers.

The INFO2000 work programme has provided a contribution to the enhancement of the current multimedia trading environment in the EU, by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the rights dealing processes. The specific focus is on the organisational and operational issues of multimedia rights trading systems and concentrates on the relationship between right holders and multimedia product developers. Action Line 3-2 plans to encourage and support pilot projects in a limited number of priority domains that lay the foundations for enhanced cross-border and cross-sector trading multimedia rights. These pilot projects aim to:

- identify, develop and test business, technology, standards and legal models;

- demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed solutions.

The proposed actions aim at accelerating, in a co-ordinated manner, the adaptation process of the rights management system in light of multimedia convergence and internationalisation. The key results expected for right holders and multimedia product developers are reduced transaction costs, increased cross-sector and cross-

border business, and optimising asset and project management. For the end users the expected results are lower product prices and a better quality in term of content.

1.3.2.1 Supporting actions

To enact the implementation procedure an open call for tenders was published in the Official Journal on 11 October 1996. 163 companies were sent the general invitation to tender. The closing date for bids was 2 December 1996. Following approval on 17 March 1997 the contract for the implementation of the supporting actions was awarded to PIRA International and signed on 30 April 1997. PIRA International acted as a focus for publishers' interests and GESAC acted as a sub-contractor, bringing expertise from the collecting societies.

The objectives of these support actions are to:

• ensure involvement of and raise awareness among relevant parties;

• develop a strategic frame assessing the current situation and evolution scenarios with regard to relevant business, technology, standards and legal issues;

• provide a basis for the definition of priority domains to be addressed by the Call for Proposals for pilot projects;

• contribute to medium and long term policy development;

• assist interested parties in their strategic analysis and policy development.

The study provided an assessment of the current situation and evolution scenarios with regard to relevant business, technology, standards and legal issues. These deliverables provided the basis for the design of the Call for Proposals. In particular, they facilitated the definition of priority domains to be addressed.

The study's recommendations provided a basis for the formulation of medium and long-term policy actions at European level. The study deliverables also assisted the interested parties in formulating and reflecting on their strategic positioning and on their commercial, technological and legal policies.

The total cost amounted to around 800,000 EURO.

1.3.2.2 Call for Proposals for projects concerning multimedia rights clearance

A Call for Proposals was published in the Official Journal of 16 December 1997. This followed the European Commission Decision on 8 December 1997. The support is calculated at up to 50% of costs, subject to a ceiling of 250,000 EURO per project. The budget for the support actions for this call is around 2.23 MEURO.

In response to the call, 26 proposals came from a wide-range of professional representatives in the multimedia area. Ten projects were selected with a further three placed on a reserve list. The call was successful in raising cross-sectoral interest in participation, which included the publishing, audio-visual, music, image, collective management, and multimedia production sectors. Complementing the sector-based proposals, strategically important cross-sectoral initiatives were proposed addressing identifier and metadata interoperability and awareness within the interactive multimedia industry. The representation of Member States of the EU and EEA was satisfactory.

Proposals showed an adequate balance concerning the rights management modes involved, as well as a pragmatic attitude with regard to the management mode selected for the project. Most proposals concentrated on the private sector, with the notable exceptions of public broadcasting and publicly funded educational multimedia production. Whilst most retained proposals were driven by the key industrial players, some interesting proposals were creator or end-user driven or driven by new service players.

The actions proposed within the projects include feasibility studies, prototypes, standardisation issues, pilot systems, and awareness actions. Most proposals showed a clear understanding of the relationship between the realisation of information society policy objectives, the adequacy of the rights trading environment, and the effectiveness/efficiency of multimedia rights clearance. The quantity and quality of multimedia assets involved in projects was considered impressive for industrial pilot projects.

In conclusion, the evaluation panel considers that the work carried out under Action Line 3-2 has been of high value and that there is an obvious need for continuation of this activity under a successor programme to INFO2000.

1.4   ACTION LINE 4 - SUPPORT ACTIONS

1.4.1   Action Line 4.1 - Observing and Analysing the Multimedia Content Market

1.4.1.1   European Report: Member States Study I on Electronic Information Services and Member States Study II (Methodology)

The European Commission published in October 1996 a report entitled "The Market for Electronic Information Services in the European Economic Area". This study and report is referred to as MSSTUDY I. The objective was to assess development in the markets for Electronic Information Services (EIS) and other electronic services and to facilitate comparison of these markets with other parts of the world.

A European report was produced which aggregated the findings of the 17 national reports. The cost of aggregating the national findings and writing the European report was 75,000 EURO. The Institute for Information Economics and Infratest Burke performed the work.

The report has been distributed to the programme committee (INFOCOM) as well as MIDAS-NET. Another 1,000 copies have been distributed in response to requests from other interested organisations. The study report has been made available in electronic form on the I*M EUROPE WWW server resulting in an average of 250 requests per month.

From the original report, it may be concluded that this project was successful. The work has high relevance to industry needs for better data. The task was undertaken effectively and represented value-for-money.

The terms of reference and methodology for Member States' Study II on Electronic Information Services started in May 1997. The initial tasks were to elaborate terms of reference and to create a methodological manual through an extensive process of consultation with industry, experts and the INFOCOM programme committee.

The manual for the second study has been produced by the Institute for Information Economics, Hattingen and Cologne together with Infratest Burke, Munich. It was published in November 1997.

A second round of the Member States' Study on Electronic Information Services will be carried out during 1998. 16 of the 18 EEA Member States have declared interest in carrying out national studies. The objective of the second round of the MSSTUDY remains unchanged.

The national studies will be carried out on a cost-shared basis with the European Commission contributing up to 50% of the costs. The maximum contribution from the European Commission towards all 16 national studies will be 600,093 EURO in total. In addition, the Commission will fully finance the European report to aggregate the national findings. The cost for this is estimated at 140,000 EURO.

The time schedule is for the national reports to be finalised by December 1998 and the European report to be finalised by January 1999.

This second study demonstrates relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in seeking to develop better statistical frameworks for the electronic information services sector. The work on the manual to guide the second study is worthy of particular praise.

However, in this Interim Evaluation, one caveat must be recorded. Although the scope of the study has been extended to cover consumer orientated WWW, multimedia and transaction services, the work should be reviewed for extension to cover all sectors of the electronic information trading and transactions industry. Also, at some time in the future, this work should have progressed to the point where it could be adopted by private sector companies.

1.4.1.2 Study on Electronic Publishing Strategic Development for the European Publishing Industry towards the year 2000

Since 1993 under the IMPACT II programme the European Commission has instigated several strategic studies. These studies are a unique contribution under INFO2000 in compiling original and authoritative strategic information both for industry and policy development by the European Commission.

The latest study was undertaken by Anderson Consulting with a budget of 480,000 EURO. The report attracted a high level of attention when presented at the 1996 Frankfurt Book Fair. Two thousand copies of the full printed report and 4,000 CD-ROMs have been distributed plus 10,000 copies of the Executive Summary. The particular contribution of this work was to examine the demand side drivers for electronic media.

This work was high in relevance and effectiveness as is demonstrated by the scale of distribution throughout the Member States. The product delivered represented good value-for-money. The European Commission provided a unique service to industry by commissioning a leading international consultancy to bring together a comprehensive vision of the information industries that would not have been made available by any other means.

1.4.1.3 Study on Content and Commerce Driven Strategies in Global Networks (CONDRINET)

This study continues provision by the European Commission of strategic studies. This latest study reflects the growing interest in electronic commerce. The CONDRINET study will analyse the relationship between content and electronic commerce.

The present project has been allocated a budget of 500,000 EURO. The results will be presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 1998.

The progress so far suggests the study is high in relevance and effectiveness. Again, it is only through INFO2000 programme initiative that such a study can be commissioned independently. The results will provide a cost-effective means for briefing both industry and the European Commission.

1.4.1.4 Report on European Information Trends 1996

In the past the Information Market Observatory published annual reports on developments in the information market. While this work was sound in content, it suffered delays due to the process of reporting and approval. The Final Evaluation Committee of IMPACT II recommended this work should be transferred to the private sector. This recommendation was actioned in 1996. Subsequently the report, European Information Trends 1996, was published in October 1997. The paper-based version was available only from January 1998 and several hundreds of copies have been distributed up to June 1998.

The coverage is still not comprehensive. The harmonisation of data and methodology remain weak. Most of the material collected is from secondary sources which emphasises the random nature of the report's content. The document lacks qualitative judgements concerning implications of the trends.

If this work is to be continued, and there are strong arguments that it should, three actions are recommended. They are:

• Contractors must demonstrate competence in methodological development of trend surveys and be willing to contribute to improved structure in this work, if necessary by making shared cost investment;

• Consideration should be given to increasing the budget for this work as it is set too low for that which is required in development of coverage and methodology;

• A long-term (five-year) partnership should be developed with the contractor to encourage the partner to make investment in methodology and on-going data collection structures. This may best be achieved by funding the work as a 50% shared cost programme.

It may be concluded that this work is not yet satisfactory in relevance and effectiveness. Bearing in mind the low budget provision, the efficiency and utility of what has been produced should be regarded as satisfactory.

1.4.1.5 INFO2000 Senior Experts Group

The Final Evaluation Committee of the IMPACT II programme recommended the creation of a Senior Experts Group. The objective of this Group is to involve leaders from industry to provide a facility for strategic guidance to the European Commission.

The costs involved are the reimbursement of travel and subsistence of the Group members taking part in the meetings. The first meeting took place on 25 September 1996. Two other meetings followed in 1997 and the fourth meeting was held on 27 January 1998.

It may be concluded that so far as efficiency and utility are concerned, the Senior Experts Group provides value-for-money for the European Commission. So far as relevance and effectiveness is concerned there is need to re-evaluate the mechanism used.

The Group has been useful in debating key issues with senior European Commission officials. However there are still problems to be resolved. Convergence will lead to the need to reconsider the composition of the Group to reflect a wider perception of what constitutes the content industries. It may have to be recognised that rapport with board personnel throughout the EU can be achieved only by one-to-one consultation, with the information gathered being aggregated subsequently by a third party for presentation to the European Commission. Nevertheless the work of the Senior Experts Group has shown that such a consultative mechanism is essential. It should be developed. An outline proposal for immediate action is given below.

A Forum is needed to bring together leaders in the content industries through a knowledge-network which will stimulate content trading, drive market creation and advise on shaping the regulatory environment. The Forum should focus on business issues. It should also act as a knowledge transfer mechanism to stimulate new business paradigms in the information age.

The Forum must provide a continuous vision of the future business landscape for the content industries. It should filter the plethora of data and information that confuses the emergence of the Information Society. It should be synergistic in character and encourage partnerships for business benefit.

Topics on which a Forum should focus initially are:

* quantifying the impact of convergence and growth of the Internet on the demand market for content;

* issues of consolidation and competition policy in the content marketplace;

* charting the trend from product to service provision and the new role of companies as value-added intermediaries and information management providers;

* matching the drive for profitability in the content business with job creation, governmental policies and social benefit;

* exploring the relationship between new business organisation structures, enterprise, fiscal incentives, venture capital and the creative combination of hard and soft money sources;

* evaluation of the 'California phenomenon' in new media and its replication by comparable synergistic networks in the EU;

- gauging the future of advertising as a driver of new business patterns in the content industry;

- evaluating the combination of electronic commerce, electronic publishing and new business paradigms which will transform industry and commerce of the future;

- looking at the needs of the individual and the community in an increasingly technologically driven global trading environment for information products and services;

- understanding technological developments and their application to maximise commercial success - including the growing role of the Chief Technology Officer and its relationship to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the company.

1.4.1.6   Legal Advisory Board (LAB)

The complexity of some of the legal and regulatory issues affecting the Information Society and the content industry in particular has led the European Commission to establish a body of independent legal experts, the LAB, in May 1985. The objectives of the LAB are to advise the European Commission on the different issues and inform on relevant developments in each Member State. The direct costs of the LAB are reimbursement of travel and daily allowances for full LAB meetings and Task Force meetings.

It may be concluded that support for the LAB is an essential support for the development of the content industry. The LAB must articulate the views of the content industry in legal and regulatory matters. Convergence and the development of global networks makes this role of even greater importance and urgency. There is need to support the role of the LAB in the INFO2000 programme and its successor.

The work of the LAB has high relevance, is effective and efficient and offers a unique shared cost articulation mechanism to the content industries.

1.4.1.7   Specific Policy Development Activities

Although specific policy development activities under the INFO2000 programme are not subject to evaluation, it is appropriate to comment on them.

Growth of the Internet impinges on aspects of the information marketplace. The Internet has given cause for concern when it is used for criminal activity. It is proper that the European Commission, under the INFO2000 programme, should articulate the views of the content industries on these subjects. Developing an action plan on the safe use of the Internet should be encouraged.

Similarly there are certain categories of activity in the information market which overlap a number of programme initiatives. An example is that of Geographical Information (GI). It is a proper role of the INFO2000 programme to provide a co-ordinating role in their use for development of the information market.

Furthermore, it is the role of the European Commission to take initiatives such as that actioned in July 1997 by launching the ministerial conference in Bonn on the subject of Global Information Networks: Realising the Potential. Such initiatives should not be regarded as one-off activities but instead should be considered an on-going part of INFO2000 and its successor.

In particular, there will be a growing need to examine in this context the relationship between venture capital and the development of the electronic information trading market in the EU. These matters will not only be concerned with commerce, but the whole fabric of the future of European society. This will range from electronic government, through initiatives to create jobs and reduce unemployment, to the development of a vigorous European electronic commerce marketplace.

1.4.2 Action Line 4.2 - Spreading the Use of Multimedia Content Standards

The OII Standards and Specifications List provides the main framework for this work. It continues work started under the IMPACT programme in 1992. The OII Standards and Specifications List gives a comprehensive listing of over 1,000 standards and specifications that can be used for open information interchange.

To increase user awareness of the relationships between the listed standards/specifications and their application in specific areas, the project team is writing a series of new guides.

The launch of new activities or increase in the volume of current activities depends on budget availability. It is the recommendation of the Interim Evaluation Panel that budget enhancement for this work should be investigated. Continuing focus is needed in the EU on standards that contribute to interoperability. While there are separate standards bodies concerned with this work there remains the need for overall co-ordination and cross-sectoral integration. Only the European Commission can provide this co-ordination.

It may be concluded that this work, for which 1 MEURO for four years are foreseen, has high relevance, is currently effective and efficiently managed. There is an argument in terms of utility that the budget for this work should be increased.

1.4.3 Action Line 4.3 - Encouraging Skills Development at European Level

1.4.3.1 European Inventory and Analysis of Multimedia Training Courses (Form-Base project)

Form-Base sets out to identify the training courses available, gaps and inadequacies in order to establish an inventory for dissemination and priorities for further action. The cost of the project is 248,200 EURO and the work has been undertaken by an European consortium by IDATE - the Institute for Audiovisual and Telecommunications in Europe.

The final draft report has just been delivered. It is a comprehensive document and of high quality.

Although it is early to judge the project it would appear to have high relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in the way in which the work has been undertaken. It is focused on an area of great importance, namely, the identification, definition and quantification of skills training facilities which may be apt to the needs of industry in the development of the Information Society.

1.4.3.2   Training for SMEs from the Publishing Sector (Form-EDI Project)

This project seeks to develop a series of training modules for SMEs in the information industry and for training centres established through university/industry collaboration. The budget for the project is 250,000 EURO. A series of CD-ROMs with modules for open and distance learning as tools for vocational training in the publishing sector are likely to be ready by the end of December 1998. Thus in this Interim Evaluation it is not possible to comment meaningfully on this work.

1.4.3.3   Initiative for the certification of post-university training for multimedia product development (Form-Ami Project)

This work sets out to develop new diploma courses, on an experimental basis, covering the professional skills needed in the multimedia content industry. A call for tender was issued earlier this year and the closing date was 11 September 1998. The foreseen budget which will be committed in 1999 is 1 MEURO. The work is related to other activities to be undertaken by DG XXII (SOCRATES).

The Form-Ami project seeks to address two issues. They are:

- advanced training (post-Master level),

- dissemination lectures.

The work addresses two quite different audiences and objectives. Whether that is feasible must remain a matter for conjecture.

Due to the early state of this project it is not possible for the Interim Evaluation Panel to comment critically on its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency or utility. However the Interim Evaluation Panel recommends strongly that the Project Advisory Group guiding the work should be examined to ensure it has high proportion of practical business representatives to ensure that the work is of real industry relevance.

1.4.3.4   Development of Tools for the Pedagogical Use of Multimedia in Primary Schools (Form-Schools Project)

It is too early to evaluate this work, as the only material available is that of conference proceedings. These proceedings suggest a well-documented statement of need to link multimedia in primary schools with the enhancement of pedagogical skills. Thus the topic seems appropriate to INFO2000.

As yet it is difficult to evaluate the work undertaken and the success criteria set for this project. This action is a good example of financial synergy between DG XXII and DG XIII, as a result of the DG XXII study of 1996 and the validation of the content for Teacher Training included in FORM-AMI as an experimental action of the Action Plan "Learning in the Information Society".

1.4.3.5   Development of a CD-ROM for the Training of University Students (Form-EDUC Project)

It is too early to evaluate this project. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that one explanation for the success of the USA in the development of creative industry activities, is the early exposure of university students to multimedia. Thus work, which is aimed at spreading this familiarisation to university students

throughout the EU, is likely to have long-term beneficial effects. In principal, support should be given to this effort. The CD-ROM "Virtual Scholar" has been evaluated by the MIDAS-NET and accepted in the MIDAS-NET meeting in Helsinki in March 1998. It will be disseminated by DG XXII-B, in 1998, to universities and SMEs.

1.4.4 Action Line 4.4 - Developing and Exchanging Best Practice

The objective of developing and exchanging best practice is to support the acceleration of change in the content industries and to ensure that advances made in particular environments are communicated rapidly to the test of industry for common benefit.

Given the limited budget of INFO2000, actions have been concentrated on presenting Commission-promoted projects at exhibitions, the publication of a multimedia CD-ROM on successful multimedia media projects and the promotion of a EUROPRIX 98 MultiMediaArt Award.

No specific budget has been committed under this Action Line. The costs for the actions are integrated in those for dissemination of project results under Action Line 3-1.

1.4.4.1 CD-ROM "A Step into Europe's Multimedia Future"

In October 1997 a CD-ROM was published summarising outstanding multimedia projects co-funded under the previous IMPACT programme and providing information on the activities under the INFO2000 programme. The CD-ROM is currently only available in English. Translation into German, French, Spanish and Italian is underway. The objective of the CD-ROM is to provide developers of multimedia projects with examples of current best practice. 11,000 copies will be published in five languages.

The 11,000 copies of the CD-ROM have been and will continue to be widely distributed free of charge through MIDAS-NET and at exhibitions, conferences, etc. The CD-ROM illustrates effectively the achievements of EU-funded multimedia projects. Through on-line connections to I*M EUROPE, access to the latest status of relevant European Commission documents is ensured. The major problem encountered in this promotional exercise was the time consuming effort required to gather data and information from project participants. In any future promotional programme this approach would need to be critically assessed. To be effective and efficient it might be necessary to draw up a specification for project participants to prepare material for inclusion in such a project as an integrated part of any project programme.

1.4.4.2 Participation in Exhibitions

In the context of awareness activities (as described under Action Line 1) producers of outstanding projects co-funded by DG XIII-E are encouraged to demonstrate their projects at exhibitions. The objective is to demonstrate best practice in developing multimedia products and services. The costs for the stand are integrated in those for the European Commission stand. All other costs have to be borne by the producer of the multimedia product. Many co-funded projects have been demonstrated successfully at the main European exhibitions such as Milia, Frankfurt Bookfair, Online (London), INFOBASE (Frankfurt), IDT (Paris) and SMAU (Milan).

Exhibitions provide opportunities to demonstrate programme and project results to a wide audience. Such participations undoubtedly stimulates new business contacts. However, against this benefit must be weighed the expensive and labour intensive nature of exhibition participation. For the future this promotional and awareness activity needs to be set in a context which examines the role and size of future demonstration projects under a follow-up programme to INFO2000.

1.4.4.3   EUROPRIX 98

The EUROPRIX MultiMediaArt 98 is the first uniquely European contest for the best in European multimedia production. It is open to all who produce marketable multimedia products (off and on-line) in the EU, EFTA, the ten applicant countries from Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. In a special Award Gala to be held in December 1998 in Vienna, excellence in the new media forms will be recognised and celebrated. The event will be accompanied by an "INFO2000 Conference" to demonstrate the achievements of the INFO2000 programme.

The EUROPRIX is organised jointly by the Austrian Ministry of Economic Affairs and DG XIII-E. MIDAS-NET will be strongly involved in the promotion of the EUROPRIX. The official announcement was made at Milia in February 1998 in Cannes. The deadline for submission of entries was 30 June 1998. 557 entries have been submitted. While it is too early to make absolute judgement it would appear that this initiative will create a major promotional focus for multimedia products in the EU. This has been done at minimum cost to the European Commission and demonstrates the benefit of active partnership between a MIDAS-NET partner and a Member State government. While this contest only deals with one aspect of the content industry it provides a valuable examplar of partnerships which can promote throughout the European Union awareness of new product and service developments. The achievement is to be applauded and noted for future emulation.

2   ANNEX B - INTERIM EVALUATION PANEL COMPOSITION

The members of the interim INFO2000 evaluation panel have been selected from a list of experts who have applied to the call for interest published on 4 December 1996 (OJ C364).

Mr Roberto Carneiro (P), Chairman of the Panel

Mr Carneiro has a very broad professional background. He was minister for education in Portugal, secretary of state for regional and local government, president of a television network, and worked as an economist for the World Bank. Presently, Mr Carneiro teaches economics of human resources at the University of Lisbon and is president of Grupo Forum, a company with 115 employees active in the area of multimedia and niche-market magazine publishing.

He was elected Vice President of the Information Society Forum of which he is still a member. He chaired the five-year evaluation of the ESPRIT programme.

Mr Brian Blunden (GB)

Mr Blunden is chief executive of the International Electronic Publishing Research Centre (IEPRC), a not-for-profit institute dedicated to promoting and researching business applications of electronic technologies to the publishing process.

He is Chairman of the Board and President of AIRTO - the Association of Independent Research and Technology Organisations which represents the contract research industry in the UK.

He has 20 years experience in research of issues concerning traditional and electronic publishing and is an outstanding expert in all issues related to the transition of traditional to electronic publishing. He is member of the International Communications Round Table (ICRT), a forum which brings together major actors of the computer, telecom, software and publishing industries.

He chaired the final evaluation panel of the IMACT2 programme and is experienced in executing this kind of task.

Mr Denis Fortier (F)

Mr Fortier is director of development and commercial innovative applications at the Innovation department of the Institute National de l'Audiovisuel (INA) in France. He is especially involved in multimedia networks and digital television. Before, he was adviser to the CEO of Infogrames Entertainment and in charge of cultural and educational off- and online programmes. He worked for several years in different audiovisual-related areas as editor, consultant and manager. He also teaches multimedia publishing and production in various French universities.

With respect to experience of European Commission work, he was one of the evaluators of the MIDAS-NET call and is member of the INFO2000 Senior Experts Group.

Mr Markku Laukkanen (FIN)

Mr Laukkanen, having a professional background in communication and audiovisual media, has an experience of more than 20 years in the media business (film, broadcasting, print and electronic publishing) as a producer, manager and in administrative duties. Currently he is chairman of the Board of Governors of the Finnish Broadcasting Company and managing director of two consulting companies of which one is specialised in the media business. Between 1991 and 1995 he was member of the Finnish Parliament.

He is a member of the INFO2000 Senior Experts Group.

Mr Franz Mösl (D)

Mr Mösl is an information broker and consultant specialised in the conception of online databases, electronic publishing and multimedia content development (CD-ROM production). He has been in this business for more than 15 years, and has worked for German ministries, the German and European patent office, and private publishing houses.

He was a member of the IMPACT II final evaluation panel.

Conclusions

The composition of the INFO2000 interim evaluation panel is a balanced mixture of experts experienced in the broad range of multimedia content. The panel members' experience and knowledge embrace in total research, practical application, policy and European Commission programme evaluation.

3   ANNEX C - TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE INFO2000 INTERIM EVALUATION

I Introduction

On 20 May 1996 the Council adopted a multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development of a European multimedia content industry and to encourage the use of multimedia content in the emerging information society (INFO2000)[3]. The programme covers a period of four years from 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999, and the financial reference amount for the implementation of the programme amounts to EURO 65 million.

With reference to Article 6 (4) of the Council Decision 96/339/EC, the Commission has to submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, once the programme Committee has examined it, an evaluation report at the end of three years (interim evaluation) on the results obtained in implementing the programme's action lines.

II Aim of the evaluation

The general aim of this interim evaluation is to examine the performance of INFO2000 with reference to the formal programme objectives, focusing on a defined set of areas of programme implementation, and assessing the impact of the various initiatives on the European multimedia content market in the context of the emerging information society.

1.   INFO2000 objectives

The programme objectives, which should serve as a framework for the specific investigations, are as follows:

• creating favourable conditions for the development of the European multimedia content industry,

• stimulating demand for, and use of, multimedia content,

• contributing to the professional, social, and cultural development of the citizens of Europe,

• promoting the exchange of knowledge between users and suppliers of multimedia products and knowledge infrastructure.

The programme objectives focus on the print and electronic publishing segments of the content industry and its contribution of information services to the promotion of growth, competitiveness and employment in Europe, while recognising also the contribution of the audiovisual segments of the content industry towards the development of the European multimedia content industry.

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[3] Council Decision 96/339/EC, OJ N°L129, 30.5.1996, p. 24 ff.

2.   Specific objectives of the interim evaluation

Key issues to be addressed in the interim evaluation of INFO2000 are as follows:

Programme relevance

Given the rapid change and highly diverse nature of the information content industry as well as of the user community, it should be assessed to what extent the programme's objectives are still pertinent to the evolving needs and priorities of industry and users and to which objective priority should be given.

Programme effectiveness

Given the different layers of the INFO2000 programme (project support, policy development, support actions) it should be assessed how effectively the different actions contribute to achieving the programme objectives and how the effectiveness could be increased. In this context also the question of the right balance of activities should be addressed. Further the impact of the various activities on the European multimedia market (industry and users) in the light of the emerging information society should be assessed.

Programme efficiency

Given the limited budget resources for the programme which, compared to the initial Commission decision, was reduced by the Council from the proposed EURO 100 million to EURO 65 million, it should be assessed whether or not the available resources have been converted economically into results contributing to the programme objectives and how efficiency can be improved.

Programme utility

Given the development of initiatives in the private sector, and given the various initiatives in the Member States and by the Commission to stimulate the development towards an information society, it should be assessed whether or not a Community programme such as INFO2000 is still valid. If this is found to be the case, the essentials for INFO2000 follow-up activities to be tackled at European level which are not yet covered by other Community programmes, and which will contribute substantially to the emerging information society should be indicated.

III Activities subject to the interim evaluation

The activities carried out so far under the different action lines of the INFO2000 programme should be evaluated (see Annex A).

IV Organisation of the evaluation

1.   Evaluation Panel

The evaluation will be carried out by a panel of five to six independent high level experts who will be appointed by the Commission after consultation of the programme committee (INFOCOM).

One of the panel members will assure the chairmanship on appointment by the Commission.

The secretariat of the evaluation panel will be assured by the Commission service.

2.   Methodology

In conducting the evaluation the panel members will base their examination on:

- _Desk research_ to examine all relevant documentation as provided by the Commission such as budget overviews, workplan, public and internal documents (e.g. studies, calls for proposals evaluations, reports, project fact sheets, etc.).

- _Interviews with EC officials_ who have responsibilities in the implementation of the programme to complement the information available from desk research.

- _Interviews with market actors_ who are aware of the INFO2000 programme or who have been involved, such as content producers, information providers, INFOCOM members and Partners of the MIDAS net.

- _Measurements_ based on statistics and on available market data in order to assess the concrete impact of the activities within the different action lines of the programme.

- _Panel meetings_ to take place at regular intervals with the participation of Commission officials to review the progress of work, and to plan and co-ordinate the work of the individual panel members.

The evaluation work will start with a kick-off meeting in order to clarify the tasks, to set up a work programme and to define analytical tools and criteria for assessments, and best organise the work to be carried out.

V Time Schedule and Deliverables

The evaluation should be carried out in the first half of 1998.

The evaluation panel will provide the Commission with the following:

- an interim report within 10 weeks of the commencement of work describing the structure of the evaluation report, table of contents, and the elements of the report.   The report should contain the following main elements: executive summary, introduction (description of the programme, its political and economic context, purpose of evaluation), methodology of evaluation (collection of information and data, analysis), evaluation results (findings, conclusions, recommendations), annexes;

- a draft final report within 4 months of the commencement of work providing the full evaluation for discussion and opinion by INFOCOM;

- a final report within 5 months of the commencement of work taking into account the comments made by the Commission and INFOCOM on the draft final report, for submission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

4   ANNEX D - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Panel wishes to express its gratitude to Mr. Bart de Turck, Ms. Martina Flynn, Dr. Peter Bruck and Dr. Johanna Roos who made time available to meet the Panel. Furthermore, the Interim Evaluation Panel would like to thank the many INFO2000 project participants who were happy to attend additional meetings, respond to questionnaires and be interviewed for the purposes of this review.

The Panel also wishes to express its appreciation of the openness and forthright statements of the Commission staff who made themselves available for interviews by Panel Members.

Furthermore; thanks are extended to Mr. Jürgen Westhoff and Mrs. Susan Fraser of the European Commission who provided continued technical and administrative support to the Panel.

5   ANNEX E - LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Dr Peter A Bruck
Techno-Z FH Research and Development, Salzburg
(MIDAS-NET co-ordinator for Austria)

Ms Martina Flynn
BTIS University of Limerick
Business & Technical Information Services
(MIDAS-NET co-ordinator for Ireland)

Dr Johanna Roos
Art and Exhibition Hall of Germany, Bonn
Co-ordinator of "Polar Perspectives" project

Mr Bart de Turck
Union Européenne de l'Ameublement, Brussels
Co-ordinator of "Upholstered furniture ignition resistance data" project

Mr Jan Hoorens
Action Line 3-2: Trading multimedia intellectual property rights
DG XIII-E

Mr Wolfgang Huber
Action Line 3-1: Catalysing high-quality European multimedia content.
DG XIII-E

Mr George Papapavlou
Action Line 2: Exploiting Europe's public sector information
DG XIII-E

Mr Richard Swetenham
Action Line 4-1: Legal Advisory Board (LAB)
DG XIII-E

Mr Axel Szauer
Action Line 1: Stimulating demand and raising awareness
DG XIII-E

All interviews were held in the Euroforum Building, Luxembourg on the 7 and 8 May 1998.

6   ANNEX F - LIST OF REFERENCE MATERIAL

Action Line 1:   **Stimulating demand and raising awareness**
Action Line 1-1:   **Creating new markets by raising awareness at the European Level with specific users groups**
Action Line 1-2:   **Encouraging clusters of pan-European users**

INFO2000 General Information

INFO2000 4-year work programme: *http://www.echo.lu/info2000/en/infowpg.html*
INFO2000 brochure: *http://www.echo.lu/info2000/home/html*
INFO2000 Contact Guide   *http://www.echo.lu/info2000/home/html*
INFO2000 Documentation CD-ROM Multimedia Content Fact Sheets:
                                                 http://www.echo.lu/info2000/en/mm-projects/projects-toc.html

INFO2000 Calls for Proposals

Call for Evaluators INFO2000/MLIS   *http://www.echo.lu/info2000/en/infowpg.html*

European Commission Host Organisation

ECHO Databases and Services   ·   *http://www.echo.lu/echo/en/home.html*
Eurodicautom Technical Sheet   *http://www.echo.lu/edic*
TED Technical Sheet   *http://www.echo.lu.6669*

MIDAS-NET
MIDAS-NET brochure   *http://www.echo.lu/info2000/midas/ home.html*

Newsletters

ECHO facts for users (quarterly)   *http://www.echo.lu/echo/databases/efu/en/echoffu.html*

Action line 2:   **Exploiting Europe's Public Sector Information**
Action line 2-1:   **Developing policies to access and exploit European public sector information**
Action line 2-2:   **Linking directories of European public sector information**
Action line 2-3:   **Making use of content resources in the public sector**

Documents on public sector information are available on:
                                            http://www2.echo.lu/legal/en/labhome.html
                                http://www2.echo.lu/legal/en/access/access.html

Conference on "Access to Public Information: A Key to Economic Growth And Electronic Democracy", Stockholm, 27/28 June 1996, conference proceedings:
                                            http://www2.echo.lu/ legal/stockholm/welcome.html

Guidelines for improving the synergy between the public and private sectors in the information market 1989:   *http://www2.echo.lu/legal/en/access/synergy.html*

Workshops on commercial and citizen's access to government information - 26/27 June 1995, workshop minutes: *http://www2.echo.lu/legal/en/access/workshop/workshop.html*

PUBLAW 3 report by PSI, London and CRID, Namur
                                http://www2.echo.lu/legal/ en/access/publaw/publaw.html

Discussion paper: Access to Public Sector Information, by Tilburg and Leiden Universities:
http://www2.echo.lu/legal/en/tilburg.html

Action Line 3:   **Triggering European multimedia potential**
Action Line 3-1:   **Catalysing high-quality European multimedia content**

Evaluation reports of 1996 Calls for proposals
Fact sheets on projects supported
http://www.echo.lu/info2000/en/mm.projects/project-toc.html
Evaluation reports of 1997
Evaluation of results of Definition Phase projects
Brochure on projects supported
Documentation pack for 1997 Call for proposals (Public Sector information)
http://www.echo.lu/info2000/call1297/public.html

Reference material for GI

GI Projects

INFO2000: GI projects: Final Report of 13 Definition Phase projects [14 January 1998]
INFO2000: GI projects: Fact Sheets, 5 implementation phase projects [2 March 1998]

CEC Studies

GI-BASE: Study on Demand and Supply of GI in Europe [November 1997]
GI-META: Study on Metadata [July 1997]
GI-POLICY: Study on Policy Issues Relating to GI in Europe [June 1997]

CNIG Studies

Etude du marché européen de l'information géographique numérique (Coopers & Lybrand/Urbatique) [October 1997]
Prix des données et stratégies de l'Etat (Arthur Andersen/Urbatique) [September 1997]

EUROGI studies

Legal Protection of GI [February 1996]
Legal Protection of GI, Copyright and Related Rights, Bottlenecks and Recommendations [June 1997]
Priority Plan for Legal and Economical GI aspects [June 1997]

These and other GI-relevant documents can be found on:
http://www.echo.lu/gi/en/docarchive/ref_doc.html

Action Line 3-2:   **Trading Multimedia Intellectual Property Rights**

Report to the Advisory Committee on Procurements and Contracts
Study Steering Committee composition
Study Working Party composition
Workshops
MMRCS web site structure
MMRCS web site statistics
Participants list - Information Day 12.01.1998
Table on attendance at Information Day 12.01.1998
INFO2000 web site structure
INFO2000 web site statistics
Preparation for the information day
Results from the information day
Study deliverables

OJ notice of call for proposals
Call information package
List of national information days
Composition of evaluation committee
Invitation to European information day
Call management guide
Call guide for evaluators
Evaluation report
Commission decision
Information on selected proposals

Action line 4:   Support Actions
Action line 4-1:   Observing and analysing the multimedia content market

The Markets for Electronic Information Services in the EEA (European report)
                                        http://www2.echo.lu/imo/en/ms-study.html
Terms of reference for MSSTUDY II
European Information Trends 1996 (report)   .
                                        http://www.echo.lu/imo/en/trend96/trend96-toc.html
List of members of the INFO2000 Senior Experts Group
Minutes of the meeting of 25 September 1996
Minutes of the meeting of 21 January 1997
Minutes of the meeting of 27 May 1997
Minutes of the meeting of 27 January 1998
Strategic developments for the European Publishing Industry towards the year 2000
                                        http://www.echo.lu/elpub2/en/ep1.html
Specifications of the CONDRINET study
Leaflet on LAB
Illustrative LAB web pages   *http://www.echo.lu/legal/en/labhome.html*
Illegal and Harmful Content on the Internet
                                        http://www.echo.lu/legal/en/internet/communic.html

Action Line 4-2:   Spreading the use of Multimedia Content Standards

OII Standards and Specification list
OII Fora list

Further reference material is available: *http://www.echo.lu/oii/*

Action Line 4-3:   Encouraging Skills Development At European Level

FORM-SCHOOL: Proceedings of the conference
FORM-EDUC: CD-ROM & manual   *http://www.LearningWorld.org/vs*
FORM-BASE: draft final report (& 10 annexes with the findings)
                                        http://www.idate.fr/formbase/166.html
FORM-AMI: text of call of tender & technical annex

Action Line 4-4:   Developing and exchange of best practice

CD-ROM "A step into Europe's multimedia future"
Leaflet on EuroPrix 98

7   ANNEX G - LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
AL	Action Line (of the INFO2000 programme)
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNIG	Conseil National de l'Information Géographique
CONDRINET	Content and Commerce Driven Strategies in Global Networks
CST	Central Support Team of the MIDAS-NET network
DG	Directorate General of the European Commission
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Host Organisation
EURO	European Currency Unit
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EIS	Electronic information services
EU	European Union
EUROGI	European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information
FP5	Fifth Framework Programme of the European Commission
FUSE	The FUSE Programme of DG III
GI	Geographical Information
GI2000	The proposed European Commission Communication entitled "GI2000: Towards a European Policy Framework for Geographic Information"
GIS	Geographical Information systems
I*M EUROPE	The World Wide Web server of DG XIII-E
IMPACT II	The Information Market Policy ACTion Programme of DG XIII
INFOCOM	The Programme Committee of the INFO2000 Programme
IST	Information Society Technology (of the Fifth Framework Programme)
KEURO	Thousands of EURO
LAB	Legal Advisory Board
MEURO	Millions of EURO
MEDIA II	Measure to Encourage the Development of the Industry to Audiovisual Production - DG X programme
MIDAS-NET	Multimedia Information Demonstration and Support Network
MSSTUDY	Member States Study
NAPs	National Awareness Partners of IMPACT II
OII	Open Information Interchange
SME	Small and medium sized enterprise
SOCRATES	Action Programme in the Field of Education - DG XXII programme
TECHSERV	Information Engineering Support Team
USA	United States of America
WWW	World Wide Web