



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Information Technology Systems Fund**(b) Investment in information technology**

1. In June 2000, the International Labour Conference decided to establish an Information Technology Systems Fund from the 1998-99 surplus in the amount of US\$25 million. This was fully committed for upgrading the ILO's financial and human resources systems. To partially address other information technology needs, the International Labour Conference approved the transfer of a further US\$5 million from the 2000-01 cash surplus to the Information Technology Systems Fund. This transfer was made on the understanding that any proposals for the use of these resources would be submitted to the Governing Body for its prior approval.
2. The Office's main information technology needs have been identified in previous papers¹ submitted to the Governing Body. They included telecommunications infrastructure improvements, a Content/Document Management System (CDMS), disaster recovery/hardware security, a Storage Area Network (SAN), Microsoft Office licences, Conference electronic voting system and new Internet connectivity for headquarters. At its 285th Session (November 2002) the Governing Body, on the recommendation of this Committee,² approved a sum of up to US\$600,000, to be used for the replacement of the electronic voting system and for further development of information technology at the Conference, leaving an amount of US\$4.4 million available in the Information Technology Systems Fund.
3. Following further analysis and prioritization by the Office of its information technology needs, improvements in the ILO's telecommunications infrastructure and tangible progress towards the introduction of a CDMS are regarded as the most urgent. Further details of the proposals are provided below, and this paper seeks the Committee's approval to charge these two information technology investments to the Information Technology Systems Fund.

¹ GB.273/PFA/6 and GB.277/PFA/2/2.

² GB.285/PFA/5/2.

Headquarters/field telecommunications infrastructure improvements

4. All ILO external offices require an appropriate telecommunications infrastructure that permits timely and accurate access to information and knowledge. This is essential to improve coordination and integration of work between headquarters and external offices and between external offices, to facilitate information management, improve decision-making, and streamline administrative functions.
5. At present, all external offices are connected to the Internet through local Internet Service Providers (ISPs), which provides all ILO officials with access to email, Intranet, and some web-based applications. A Telecommunications Task Force, created to assess the ILO's requirements for worldwide data and voice communications, security of information and performance, concluded that local ISPs cannot support critical processes and workflows of a decentralized organization such as the ILO. A more robust telecommunications infrastructure, which can support ongoing developments that are reliant on dependable and high-speed access to web-based systems, including key organization-wide applications such as the enterprise resource planning (ERP), is essential and is needed urgently. The infrastructure would also provide the foundation for worldwide knowledge sharing through future applications such as electronic document management system (EDMS), enhance communication and support new ways of working, such as network-based video-conferencing.
6. The Telecommunications Task Force issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) to select one or more vendors to implement a global telecommunications infrastructure for the ILO. At the time this paper was prepared, the three responses to the RFPs were still being subjected to commercial and technical considerations and a full evaluation will be completed by the end of April 2003. However, based on the analysis carried out so far, the cost for this proposal is estimated at US\$3 million.
7. Deployment of the improved infrastructure would start with the Regional Offices, but it is intended that 50 external locations would be globally linked by the end of 2004. All offices will benefit from improved bandwidth and performance but priority will be given to regions where Internet connectivity is currently problematic, followed by a phased deployment in the other regions.
8. The implementation of an improved telecommunications infrastructure will ensure that ILO officials in the field will quickly benefit from a reliable data transmission environment, which will later extend to voice communications. This will allow read-and-update access to administrative functions (financial, human resources, etc.) by managers in the external offices, and provide improved management information (e.g. through online reports). The infrastructure will also permit worldwide access to documents, publications and records produced by the Organization, when these are eventually made available in electronic form.
9. ***The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it approve the use of up to US\$3 million from the Information Technology Systems Fund for improvements to the headquarters/field telecommunications infrastructure.***

Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)

10. Documents and information are captured in many forms, such as emails, text-processing files, spreadsheets, publications, scanned images, web pages, audio and video material, etc. There is currently no standard process for the management of all forms of electronic documents, and no application that can search the entire collection of active and archived ILO documents. This shortcoming should be addressed urgently, as information plays a central role in the work of the ILO, and the efficient storage, search and retrieval of documents is a starting point for implementing knowledge management in the ILO.
11. A bibliographic management component was procured and implemented during 2002, which makes available the ILO Library's database, Labordoc, on the Internet. This application will be deployed throughout the Office, and will facilitate the organization of and access to documents in other information collections and databases at headquarters and in the field. The enhanced availability of Labordoc will also contribute to a more effective dissemination of bibliographic material to constituents.
12. An internal working group studied the implementation of a fully integrated CDMS through extensive internal consultation, and recommended that an EDMS, integrated with the bibliographic system, would be the next logical step. The cost of such a system is estimated at US\$500,000.
13. EDMS implementation would initially concentrate on the preparation, workflow processes, storage and access to official documents, working papers and publications, as well as the creation of internal documents. This will require a feasibility study and an implementation plan involving consultation with relevant departments, to be carried out with the assistance of an external consultant. Costs will cover the procurement of hardware, software and training. Priority departments will be identified during the study phase for the initial implementation of this system by the end of 2004. Eventually the system will be deployed throughout the Office by the end of 2006.
14. The investment would permit the storage, search and retrieval by all ILO staff of a full range of text documents in electronic form. ILO officials at all locations will quickly benefit from much-enhanced access to the ILO's information and expertise, which will promote the sharing of knowledge across sectors and locations. The investment will also facilitate more efficient document preparation through the use of workflows, common procedures and applications for managing documents and information. The EDMS will result in a more effective dissemination of ILO material through the ILO web site and constituents, together with the research community, will benefit from the enhanced knowledge management capacity of the Office to deliver data, information, expertise and service.
15. ***The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it approve the use of up to US\$500,000 from the Information Technology Systems Fund for an Electronic Document Management System.***

Geneva, 31 January 2003.

Points for decision: Paragraph 9;
Paragraph 15.