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MANUAL OF
SELECTION AND ACQUISITION OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE
PLANNING INFORMATION SYSTEM (INFOPLAN)*



* This version is subject to revision of its form and its content.

Santiago, Chile, 1982

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Part One	
1. Frame of reference of selection and acquisition operations	1
2. The selection and acquisition function in an information network	3
3. The problems associated with selection and acquisition in the field of planning	5
4. Range of institutions which are potential generators of planning information	6
5. Obstacles to obtaining selected documents on planning	7
6. General strategy for the development of the selection and acquisition function	8
Part Two	
I. The literature of development and of planning	9
II. Consideration of some concepts of the planning process which constitute the frame of reference for the selection and acquisition function	15
1. Elements of the planning process	15
(a) The planning process	15
(b) The time span of the planning process	18
(c) The different modalities in which the planning process is constructed	18
2. Institutions participating in the planning process	19
III. Preliminary classification of information inputs and outputs in the planning process	26
Notes	35
Bibliography	37

Summary

This manual was conceived as a technical instrument for the selection and acquisition of planning literature, considered as one of the main problems in all information systems. The structure given to this manual reflects and reinforces the decentralized strategy followed by the INFOPLAN system in the region specially in those technical activities that will be of the responsibility of the National Information units participating in the information network.

This document comprises three parts: part one gives the general framework of this manual; the active role that the information specialist should play in the identification of planning literature; the condition of draft version of this publication so as to be able to introduce modifications for its future improvement. The second part deals with an overall view of the planning process that will help identify and find the prototype literature produced during the process and, at the same time, clarify the necessary technical activities dealing with the selection of planning documentation. The third part, which is still in preparation, describes the specific operations followed step by step to carry out the selection process.

Part One

Foreword

This document is intended to provide guidelines for the selection and acquisition of the planning documents generated in the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

As the field of planning is very vast and planning documents are in general non-conventional documents 1/ and are therefore issued in small numbers, access to them is difficult, which makes it hard to use them for purposes of exchanging experiences among planning bodies.

This manual represents an attempt to consider various aspects of the activities involved in selection and acquisition, ranging from the identification of the institutions generating ideas on planning in the countries to attempts to delineate the field of planning and the literature from the area which should be incorporated into the information system, including an active and aggressive strategy for obtaining the documents produced on the subject at the national level.

In the fulfilment of its objective, this manual also describes some concepts relating to the planning process, its characteristics and modalities, which will help the information expert to obtain a better understanding of the operational part of this document.

It must however be pointed out that these notes by no means constitute a substitute for reading texts produced for circulation and other planning literature as a necessary adjunct to the task of being an information expert in the field of planning.

1. Frame of reference of selection and acquisition operations

If we look at each information unit 2/ from a systemic point of view, we could say that it constitutes a system composed of subsystems which perform certain very specific activities. The various functions which each subsystem is called upon to perform helps in achieving the final objective of the system which is to "obtain and transform information in such a way as to make it accessible to a defined group of users."3/

/There are

There are these basic components or subsystems in an information system, and they act in sequence:

(a) selection and acquisition subsystem, whose purpose is to supply the documents required by the system;

(b) data processing subsystem, whose objective is to process the documentation with a view to storing the information in such a way that it can easily be retrieved;

(c) services subsystem, whose object is to service the demand for information with all the material prepared in the processing subsystem plus that contained in the reference collections.

So that the system can function adequately, it is indispensable to ensure the harmonious integration and development of each of its parts, and it is this relationship among the subsystems which will determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the total system.

To enlarge upon the subject, it might be added that in any sequential system of operations, the defects or errors in the first operations are transmitted to those which follow, so that unsurmountable obstacles are set up. Thus, for example, a selection which is defective in that the documents chosen are irrelevant to the subject matter covered by the system, will not be compensated for by good data processing or by an excellent services subsystem; the services subsystem will be directly affected if the summaries prepared to describe the content of the documents are inaccurate and if the indexing does not correspond to the topics covered.

In general, information and documentation experts stress the importance of the operations of information processing subsystem and concentrate their methodological efforts on this aspect, setting up an imbalance or disequilibrium which disturbs the harmonious integrated development that must operate between the subsystems. Although this manual refers explicitly to the selection and acquisition subsystem and to the documentary operations which correspond to that subsystem it always associates selection and acquisition with the operations of the other subsystems, especially those of the services subsystem, which come at the tail end of the chain of documentary activities and put the finishing touches to the work done by the first two subsystems.

2. The selection and acquisition function in an information network

One of the characteristics of the INFOPLAN system is that it is a decentralized regional information system. This being the case, it would seem necessary to bear in mind that it is made up of a network of information units, and is therefore a fairly complex system. The fact that the system is decentralized means that each information unit in it has different roles and responsibilities to fulfil as part of the system. In spite of this complexity, however, the basic components of the INFOPLAN system are the same as those listed above, i.e., the selection and acquisition subsystem, the data processing subsystem and the services subsystem, but it will be necessary to articulate each of them at three different, although intimately related, levels:

- (a) at the level of units participating in the national network;
- (b) at that of units operating as national focal points;
- (c) at the level of the co-ordinating centres, be they subregional or regional.

In organizing the selection and acquisition function, consideration will therefore have to be given to standards governing the performance of the activities at each of the levels mentioned above, in view of the fact that the overall objectives of the selection and acquisition function in a regional information network will be to supply the documents needed to:

- (a) establish and maintain an exhaustive collection and data base made up of the planning information available in each country;
- (b) establish and maintain a selective collection and data base made up of information representative of the planning process in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

In the first case, the responsibility for establishing and maintaining the collection or data base will be borne by the units participating in the national planning and information network and by the national focal point.

In the second case, it will be borne by the national focal points, the subregional co-ordinating centres and the general co-ordinating centre.

The regional data base of the system will contain that documentary information which best reflects the experience of the entire region with regard to development planning. The national data bases,^{4/} on the other hand, will not

be confined to "relevant experience" but will be required to contain the maximum amount of documentary information on and for the national planning process. This means that there will be less information available per country within the regional data base than that provided in each national co-ordinating centre. Nevertheless, the general co-ordinating centre will have access to this information through the national and subregional co-ordinating mechanisms in the information network.

The achievement of the overall objective with different emphasis at regional and national level will require the active participation of each of the units belonging to the network though, as mentioned above, their degree of responsibility will differ. This distribution of responsibilities among the units has been designed to make a dynamic contribution and to fit in with a general strategy for the implementation and development of the system.

Traditionally, the selection and acquisition function has been assigned a rather passive role that of a grill through which some documents pass while others are rejected, in accordance with a pre-established range of topics. In other words, its main role has been that of providing criteria for deciding when a document should be incorporated in an information system and when it should be excluded. This traditional approach would explain the absence of specific guidelines 5/ for ensuring that coverage is given to a significant proportion of the documents produced within the fields of interest in which the systems work, the result being that there are not many information systems which can be reasonably certain that they are providing exhaustive coverage of the various topics in their subject area. In other words, while it may be certain that the information provided is pertinent to a given request, it cannot be said for sure that the information available constitutes a large share of what is produced in the fields in which information is sought or whether, conversely, it represents a minimal share. This uncertainty should not be acceptable in a system geared to serve the needs of decision-taking in the field of development planning.

The INFOPLAN system, on the other hand, has held the view that it is indispensable to give the selection and acquisition function an active role by making it a mechanism for identifying, tracking down and collecting the documentation produced in its field of interest with a view to covering it gradually and as exhaustively as possible.

The new approach adopted undoubtedly adds to the activities included in this function and makes them more complex and for that reason, -and this is a basic presupposition of the manual- the information expert is going to have to play a bigger role in the substantive aspects of the planning activities of his country. There are two ways in which his role will be bigger: first he will need minimal knowledge on the theories and methods of planning in order to have a better understanding of the typical information needs for this activity. Secondly, he will have to penetrate the background and specific characteristics of certain aspects of his country's planning process, including the most relevant aspects of the execution per se of the plan or group of plans. In short, if the information expert is to make a relevant contribution to meeting the information needs of the process itself, he must be associated in the substantive planning activities of his institution.

3. The problems associated with selection and acquisition in the field of planning

The need to think of selection and acquisition as an active function and for the information expert to play a bigger role in the substantive work involved in planning is seen to be particularly vital when consideration is given to the fact that the problems related to selection and acquisition are especially complex in the field of planning. Some of these stumbling blocks are described below:

(a) Difficulties in delineating the subject matter covered by the system:

The subject matter of planning is typical interdisciplinary, i.e., its contents are related to or belong to different disciplines, especially disciplines such as economics, sociology and administration in the social sciences, and also disciplines such as mathematics and statistics in the exact sciences. In practice, this means that it will be difficult for the system to identify which aspects of these disciplines will be of relevance for INFOPLAN, which will be covered by other information systems and which will be dealt with concurrently by INFOPLAN and other systems. In view of this, it must be accepted that there will be some overlapping, in respect of the topics coverage with other information systems if a service capable of meeting the information requirements of users of planning is to be maintained.

/In addition,

In addition, in view of the multisectoral scope of planning (in that its field of action includes all the development sectors), its limits must be determined in the light of other sectoral information systems in such fields as transport, agriculture and energy in order to avoid any unnecessary duplication of efforts in identifying and collecting documents.

(b) Absence of support instruments for use in the identification and selection of documents: In general, in other specialized information systems, such as the one in the field of medicine, for example, the function of identifying and selecting documents is supported by a wide variety of bibliographical instruments such as specialized bibliographies, commercial catalogues, bulletins relating to the acquisition of other specialized libraries, etc., which help them to perform this function. This is because the documents generated in the system's field of interest are published through traditional channels (specialized publishers) by which they may be easily identified and also because, due to a long tradition of the information units in this area, they are normally duly processed and registered in the catalogues of the libraries.

On the other hand, the most typical planning documentation does not flow through conventional channels of publishing or bibliographical control; in other words they fall within the category of non-conventional documentation, which, among other things, makes them difficult to identify. In practice, this means that the information expert will have to take account of this fact in initiating selection and acquisition operations and that, very possibly, they themselves will have to set up their own system for tracking down the literature on the topic, as will be seen later on in this manual.

4. Range of institutions which are potential generators of planning information

In order to feed their data bases, the specialized information systems normally depend on a small nucleus of institutions which generate and disseminate the most relevant information in the topical area which the systems are called upon to cover. This nucleus becomes the basic source of information which supports activities related to the selection and acquisition of documents.

/On the other

On the other hand, the interdisciplinary and multisectoral nature of the field of planning means that the institutions which are potential producers of information of interest for the system include practically all of a country's public administration institutions (since they are in fact the instruments through which development planning and programmes are formulated or implemented) and also many institutions in the private sector.

A somewhat similar situation may be observed in the research and study sector, whether its functions are performed in universities or private bodies. These observations are made in order to explain that it is virtually impossible to exclude any body or institution related with the development of a country as a possible source of information for the system. This does not, however, remove the need for a basic nucleus (referred to in this document as a "planning agency system") made up of the institutions operating exclusively in the field of planning.

5. Obstacles to obtaining selected documents on planning

The identification and selection of planning documents is a task, which, for the information expert, is compounded by the additional task of acquiring such documents. There are a number of factors which make this operation difficult: in the first place, the documents relating to economic and social development planning are usually issued in a limited number of copies (mimeographed or typed) for distribution to a limited number of people within an institution. This problem is complicated by the fact that for purposes of distribution outside of this small nucleus relies on the application of certain criteria that is capricious and chaotic which sets up one more barrier to obtaining them. The information expert normally has nothing to do with the policies governing their printing and distribution, and in many cases, they can be modified only by the most senior authorities of the institutions. This situation is without question one of the major barriers to the operation of systems in the field of development in general.

/6. General strategy

6. General strategy for the development of the selection and acquisition function

The organization of the selection and acquisition function for a decentralized regional data network is, as has already been pointed out, a complex task since it is necessary to orientate the operations of the units participating in the national network as well as those of the national, subregional and regional centres. The intention of the Regional Co-ordinating Centre to give the selection and acquisition function an active role will involve the use of all the resources and time needed to turn it into as highly technical a component as information processing is.

The Documents Selection and Acquisition Manual for the INFOPLAN system has been designed with the objective of eliminating the obstacles standing in the way of the information expert in the selection and acquisition function so that the system, at both the national and the regional level, may be continually fed with relevant information.

The selection and acquisition function is, however, directly related to the total development of the information system whose implementation in the region is a dynamic process which must be carried out in successive stages. The assessment of these stages leads to changes and corrections which will affect not only the strategy for the future but also the very structure of the system and its technical instruments. Consonant with this thinking, the Manual has been designed as an open-ended working instrument, in which it will be possible to incorporate advances and developments achieved in the selection and acquisition function.

Thus the structure of the INFOPLAN manual as it now stands and its content are assumed to be in strict accordance with a current approach to the problem and are intended to facilitate possible solutions to it, rather than reflecting an abstract idea of what the selection and acquisition function should be.

/Part Two

Part Two

In this part an attempt is made to provide a succinct account of some aspects of planning which affect the type of documentation produced. These are relevant aspects in that the selection and acquisition operations require an information expert who is highly involved and participates very actively in the substantive planning activities of his institution.

In compliance with this objective, some ideas relating to the following topics will be developed: I. The literature of development and of planning; II. Consideration of some concepts of the planning process which form the frame of reference for the selection and acquisition functions and, finally, III. Preliminary classification of information inputs and outputs in the planning process.

I. THE LITERATURE OF DEVELOPMENT AND OF PLANNING

The present trend is to consider information and, in the end, documents which contain it as a factor or variable which has a decisive effect on the economic and social development process of the countries. From this perspective, all the information, whether technological, theoretical or applied, used and generated by a country's development process is equally necessary and is part of the information resource which countries require to take decisions to further their development.

Almost all the institutions without exception at all levels of a country participate in the generation of information. A graphic and simplified representation of development information may be found in figure 1.6/

In this figure an attempt is made to define the "topical coverage" of any country's development information system; rings I and II represent that part of the system which would correspond specifically to planning. For greater clarity it would seem important to explain that the information referred to in the segments as well as in the rings of the wheel is produced by a broad and varied group of institutions not shown in figure 1.

The production of information which would correspond to ring I is shared by a small number of institutions which condense and synthesize information generated in all the sectors; such institutions include national planning

/offices or

offices or ministries, central banks, ministries of finance or the treasure and national development organizations.

The information corresponding to ring II is produced by a large number of institutions, including first of all, all the institutions at the ministerial level and centralized services in each development sector and secondly, a large number of institutions comprising for example, decentralized sectoral services, independent corporations and even State enterprises, which generate documents related to planning but in a smaller amount.

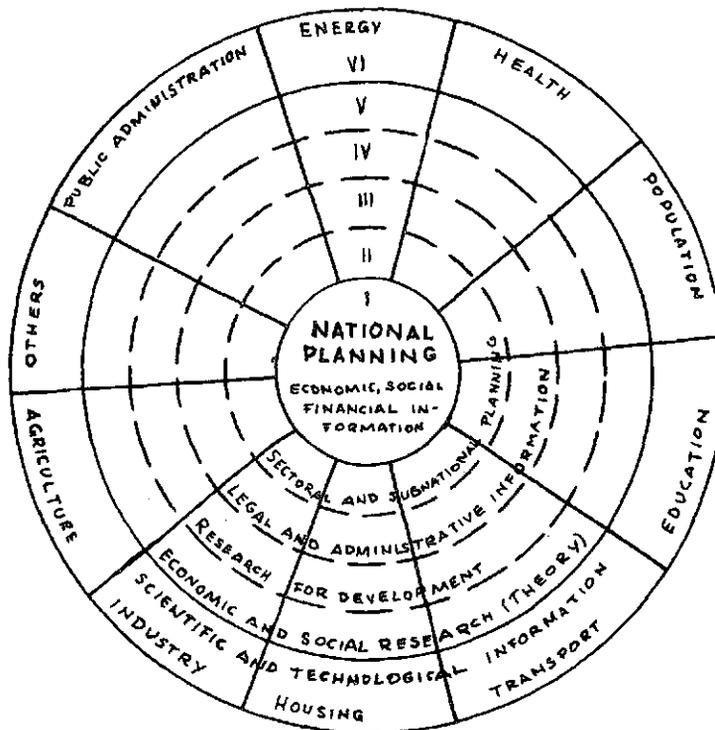
As may easily be imagined, all the institutions which participate in the activity of the sector not only produce information on planning but in practice they also produce all the various kinds of information covered by the rings in this figure -science and technology information, information resulting from the applied research conducted in a sector, information on the theoretical-methodological aspects of the academic disciplines related to a sector, information on legal and administrative matters generated by and during the performance of the activities of the sector, etc., etc.

/Figure 1

Figure 1

FIGURE SHOWING TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

- Ring I : attempts to depict the idea that national planning is an exercise in which the information generated in all the development sectors is elaborated, synthesized and condensed in such a way as to bring it into line with the country's needs.
- Ring II : includes sectoral information (branches of economic and social activities), and subnational information (regions, provinces, states, cities, etc.) used as an input in the planning process.
- Ring III: includes the legal and administrative information related to the regulation and operation of development activities. Covers fields such as legislation, administrative procedures, project follow-up and management, etc.
- Ring IV : includes all information and documentation on economic and social research necessary to the continuity of development activities.
- Ring V : covers the academic research carried out by universities or institutes of higher education and international bodies.
- Ring VI : includes the scientific and technological information involved in the development of a specific sector.

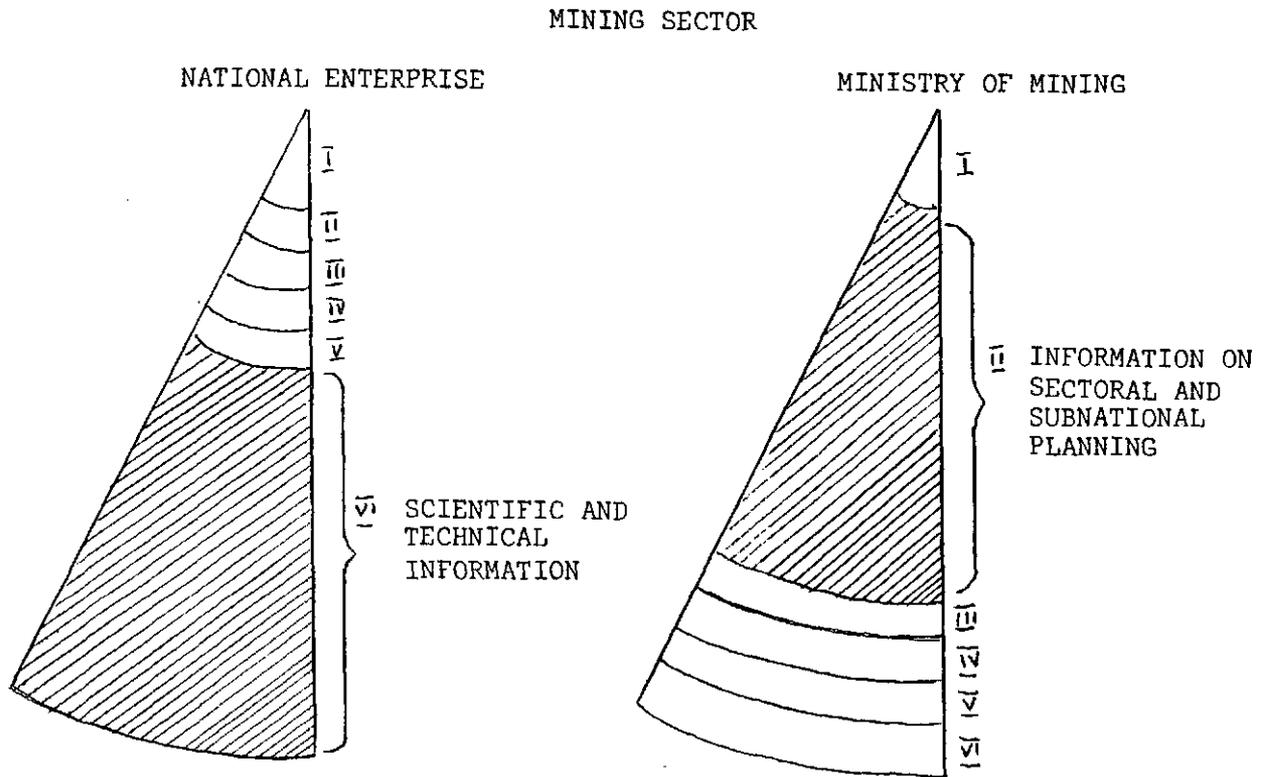


/Figure 2

Nevertheless, it can also be stated that -in a general sense- the quantity of information for planning produced in each one of the rings of the following figure varies according to the different types of institutions in a given sector. This difference is shown in figure N° 2.

Figure 2

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION IN TWO INSTITUTIONS
OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR



/In summary,

In summary, it may be stated that the planning information of value for the INFOPLAN system is found embodied in a larger mass of development information, and that it is generated or produced by a broad spectrum of institutions in varying proportions.

II. CONSIDERATION OF SOME CONCEPTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS WHICH CONSTITUTE THE FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR THE SELECTION AND ACQUISITION FUNCTION

In the light of the concepts considered above, it may be stated that the main obstacle for INFOPLAN is the identification of the mechanisms and criteria which will make it possible for it to be selective in collecting the information which should be included in the Planning Information System. The identification of these mechanisms and criteria will constitute the central objective of this manual.

The frame of reference of these mechanisms and criteria consist in: (1) a number of elements extracted from the planning process itself which are considered to be significant for the information expert and which provide him with guidelines, and (2) those institutions whose participation in the planning process is most explicit.

1. Elements of the planning process

The elements extracted from the planning process include:

- (a) the various phases and stages in the planning process;
- (b) the time perspective of the process;
- (c) the various approaches taken by the process: global, regional and sectoral planning.

The understanding and use of these elements will make it possible to identify the specific information content which, taken as a whole, comprises the system's field of interest and to carry out the activities which are part of the selection and acquisition operation.

(a) The planning process

From its very start, development planning has been understood to be that process which attempts to rationalize and regulate, partially or totally, the organization of a society's efforts to achieve the economic and social development objectives it has set for itself.

/This planning

This planning process has its origins in a referential situation which it is desirable to achieve within a given time span also known as image-objective. This corresponds to a model and as such to a selective simplification of reality, which expresses the desired future situation to be reached according to the agents who control the decision-making process. In it, reference is made to a certain growth and development model and a proposal concerning the structure and functioning of the system during an established period is therefore implied. This image-objective is what guides the formulation and execution of the plan.

(i) Traditionally, the formulation of the plan includes the stages of diagnosis, determination of objectives and targets, design of strategies and the specification of policies. As for the execution of the plan, it implies the selection of the policy instruments and their control and evaluation.

- Diagnosis and prognosis: In formulating a plan, the central objective of the diagnosis and prognosis stage is the presentation to the planners of a clear picture containing the description of the existing situation, the causes which explain it and the trends towards change. The prognosis, on the other hand, consists basically in an extrapolation of the current situation to some future date; an attempt is made to project the trends detected in the diagnosis, acting on the assumption that the factors which have determined these trends in the past will continue to operate.

- Objectives and targets: The objectives and the targets corresponding to them are placed within the future reference situation known as the image-objective. An objective in planning is the state in which a variable appears in the model and image-objective. The value of this state provides a measure to the extent to which this value is associated with a time pattern.

- The strategy: A development strategy consists in a number of important decisions, whose main objective, taking into consideration the different ways in which the environment might react, is to maximize the changes needed in a system while at the same time minimizing the adverse reactions which they may arouse. This small number of decisions is expressed in a sequence of combinations of alternative options known as guiding principles or strategical action lines, which delineate the frame of reference in which the individual policies are placed.

/Policy specification

- Policy specification: With the background data brought together in the diagnosis, the definition of objectives and targets and the design of the strategy, which aims at establishing the basic actions which should be introduced during the planning process to close the gap between the present situation referred to in the diagnosis and the situation reflected in the image-objective, it is possible to be specific concerning the policies for development. A policy is a development policy when it refers to the principles through which a government uses its authority to regulate the behaviour of the private agents and put order into the public bodies and staff called upon to use the resources of the State in carrying out the action proposed in the objectives, targets and strategies.

(ii) The execution of the plan

- The selection of policy instruments: These are the special instruments which support the implementation of the big policy decisions in such a way that in permitting, prohibiting, stimulating or discouraging the behaviour of certain agents in certain circumstances, they promote co-ordinated action in some areas or sectors. These instruments may be categorized as public finances; monetary and credit instruments; exchange rates; instruments for direct control, such as the capacity of the State to set prices, values or quantities; institutional instruments which affect the basic system within which the other instruments act; certain projects, etc. Such instruments also include programmes and projects which determine, with a greater degree of accuracy, the way and time in which certain activities should be carried out.

- Monitoring and evaluation of the plan: This is the final stage of the planning process. It should however be noted that it is also the first stage in a process which will give rise to a further flow of information since planning has no determined beginning or ending but moves in a continuous circular pattern. Monitoring naturally involves verification and measurement and includes both temporal considerations and other very dissimilar elements which must be measured.

In short-term monitoring and evaluation, use is normally made of:

- the items on the programme budget and the corresponding cash flow which makes it possible to monitor the development of each project from the financial point of view;

/- the physical

- the physical monitoring of the progress of works, and
- a number of short-term indicators which make global monitoring possible.

For long-term monitoring and evaluation, use is made of the data provided by the national accounts for purposes of answering questions relating to change in the composition of the product, change in income distribution, etc.

(b) The time span of the planning process

Another aspect of planning which is particularly relevant in identifying the information of value for the system is the time span of the planning process.

This aspect will be dealt with here very briefly and schematically and only insofar as such information is indispensable for the information expert.

With regard to the time span of planning, a distinction is traditionally drawn between three periods: long-term planning (10 to 15 years), which generally speaking is characterized by the establishment of policies in respect of the society aspired to and the role of the State in governing the process of change and strategies in respect of the path along which the process will move; medium-term planning (4 to 6 years) provides a global and sectoral (the sectors may vary in their comprehensiveness) frame for development policies in which, moreover, a number of specific programmes and projects are formulated to bring about the changes aspired to; annual operational planning is basically aimed at reconciling the objectives of structural change and development with other objectives, such as balance-of-payments equilibrium, which are usually of predominant concern in the short-term.

In this regard, the point of reference of the manual will be medium-term planning since most of the planning activity of the region centres around this aspect.

(c) The different modalities in which the planning process is constructed

With regard to the modalities of the planning process, it may be said that planning can be:

(i) global, providing ample coverage of the geographical space as well as of all the sectors and facets of development (cultural, social, economic, etc.);

(ii) sectoral, referring to some of the productive or service sectors traditionally classified under the headings of health, housing, labour, education, mining, industry, agriculture, etc.

/(iii) regional, wherein

(iii) regional, wherein the spatial dimension is introduced in the process and reference is therefore made to the needs and possibilities of evolution of all parts or regions of a nation in an attempt to strike a regional balance, in spite of possible anomalies.

These succinct explanations concerning the planning process, its time spectrum and the ways and means in which it operates introduce some of the parameters which will be used later in the operational manual to identify the standard documentation generated by and used in the planning process and which will also make it possible to identify the institutions which produce this information.

To go into greater detail concerning the point raised above, examples will now be given of the information to be found in the documents corresponding to each of the planning modalities:

- the documentation on global planning contains comprehensive information referring both to the purely global aspects of planning (i.e., a structural macro-diagnosis of the socio-economic problems of a country) and to the sectoral and regional aspects of planning. This information may be found in a book plan or in a large and varied assortment of documents. Adequate prior knowledge of this kind of documentation will guide the work of identifying and selecting documents specifically relating to sectoral and regional planning;

- the documentation on sectoral planning contains information referring to the productive and service sectors of each of the countries. It is found in a number of documents, in a more disaggregate state than the information provided in the global planning documents;

- the documentation on regional planning will contain information on the planning process in some or all of the regions of a country. This information may exist explicitly as such or may be dispersed among the different sectoral plans or the documents which refer to programmes and projects proposed or in execution for some region of the country.

2. Institutions participating in the planning process

To reiterate what has been stated above, in order to carry out the functions of selection and acquisition it will be necessary for the information expert to familiarize himself with some of the characteristic and basic traits

/of the

of the national institutions which participate in the planning process and, in particular, to be aware of their links with the various modalities of the process.

Mention should, however, be made here, in connection with the institutions which generate information on planning, of a problem which has been fully analysed in ILPES documents 7/ relating to the "styles" of planning existing in the region, in which it is noted that the roles of the branch and sectoral ministries vary considerably depending on the style adopted. It is important to bear this point in mind in designing strategies for the identification and selection of literature.

In addition, it would seem worthwhile noting that in the manual consideration has not explicitly been given to this variable, and the information expert will have to introduce it as a basic criterion within the functions of identifying and selecting the documentation to be incorporated into the system.

Some information of a general nature is supplied below concerning institutions or model-institution complexes which exist in nearly all countries of the region, under similar or different names, and which participate in the national planning process in its global, sectoral and regional aspects. It is therefore suggested that each participating centre should try to reconstruct these outlines with the actual institutions existing in their countries.

Table 1 draws attention to some of the model-institutions which play a large role in the formulation of the Global Plan, also known as the "National Development Plan" in some countries.

These institutions, which comprise the "planning agency system", are as follows:

- (a) first, the central planning organ which may be a national office or a ministry;
- (b) secondly, the sectoral ministries and the general planning departments and regional planning organs;
- (c) thirdly, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance.

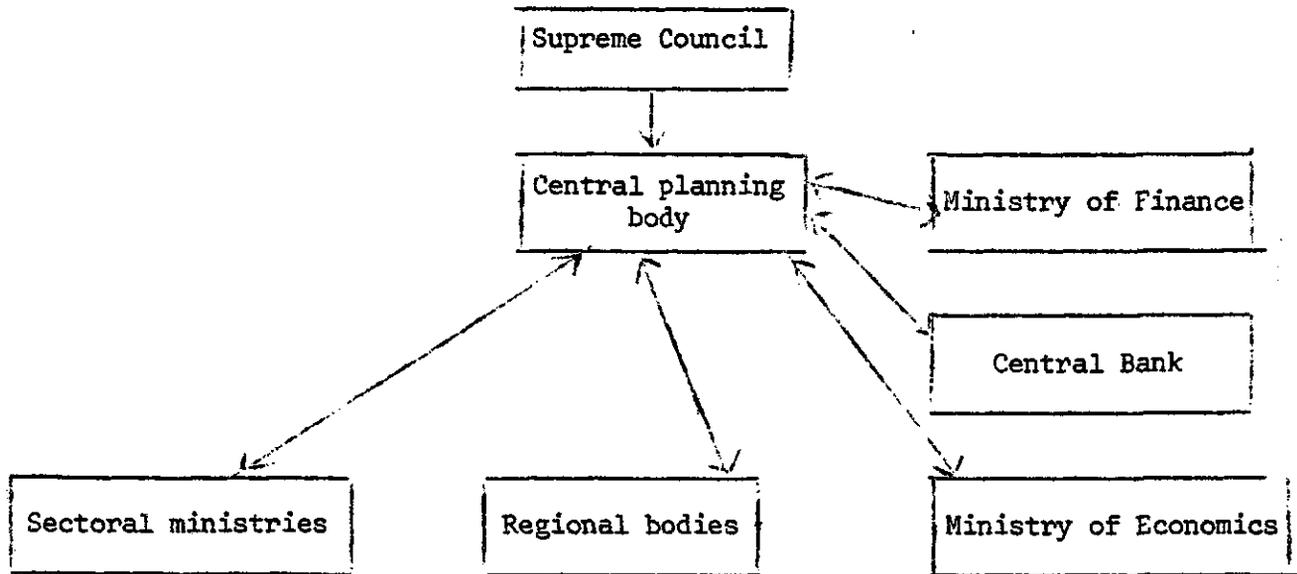
It should be pointed out that normally it is the central planning body which, in conjunction with the sectoral ministries and regional bodies formulates the global plan(s) while the ministries of Finance and Economics

/and the

and the Central Bank participate in the formulation of the plan in their budgetary component -the economic budget, monetary and financial budget, the foreign trade budget and the public sector budget.

Table 1

THE PLANNING AGENCY SYSTEM



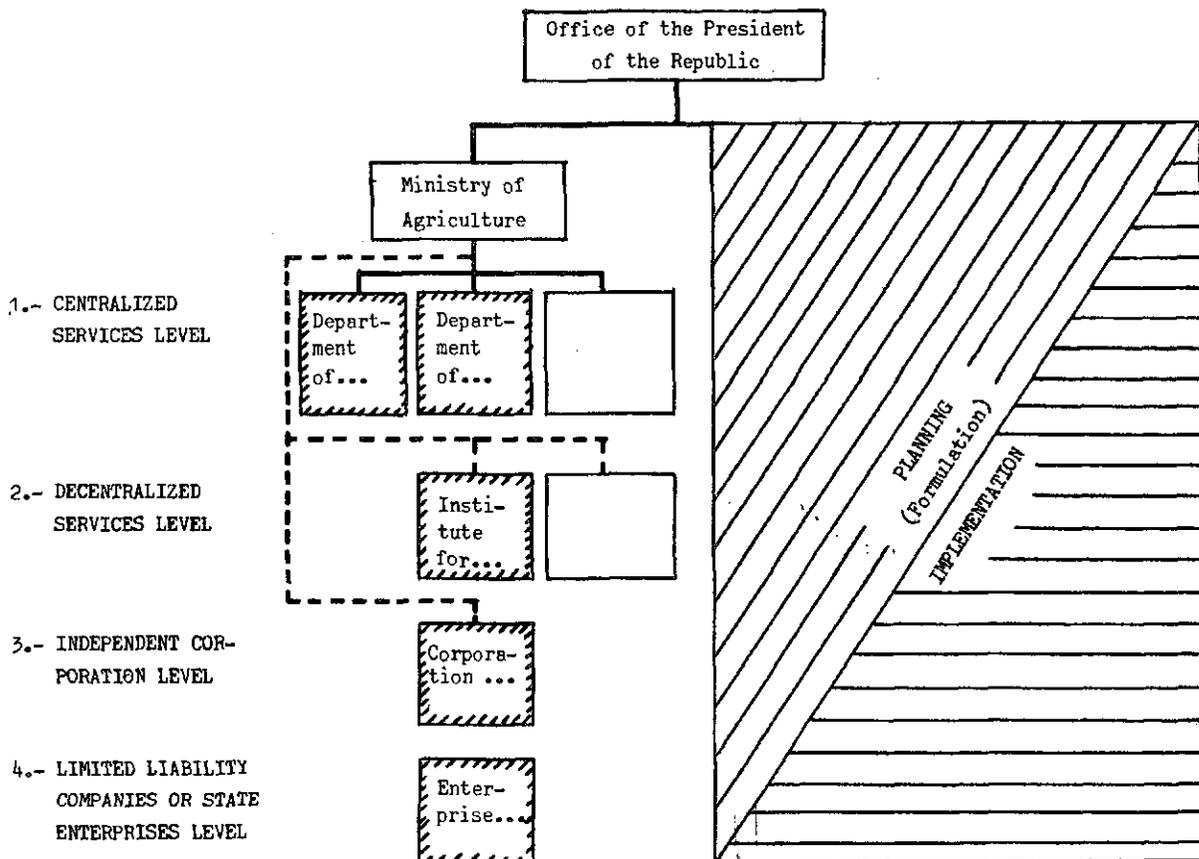
/To present

To present the situation schematically, it may be stated that sectoral planning differs from global planning in that a greater number of institutions at different levels participate in it. In figure 3 it is seen that at least four levels are involved in the process of formulation and execution in the planning of a sector, in this case, the agricultural sector.

- (1) a first level consisting of centralized public services, including basically the ministries and departments responsible for the sectors;
- (2) a second level consisting of decentralized services, such as the specialized institutes in the sector (e.g., National Institute of Agrarian Reform);
- (3) a third level consisting in independent corporations, such as, for example, the Andean Development Corporation;
- (4) a fourth level consisting in incorporated companies and state ventures.

Figure 3

INSTITUTIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING



In the same figure it may be seen that the location of institutions along the vertical line indicates the degree of their participation in the formulation phase of the development plan. Thus, the institutions at the top of the figure are more thoroughly involved in the stages of formulation and those at the bottom are more closely associated in the execution of the plan.

As regards regional planning, the institutions which participate in it are not so easily categorized, at least from the point of view of the documentation they generate, by comparison with the situation which exists with regard to sectoral planning. This difference may be due to the fact that institutional policy instruments to formulate and execute regional policies and programmes have not been set up in all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. For this reason and in order to simplify things to meet the needs of the selection and acquisition process, two situations perceivable in the region are described below:

(a) regional planning is carried out through regional bodies specializing in all or some of the regions of the country (i.e., SUDENE in Brazil, FUDECO in Venezuela, PREDESUR in Ecuador, the regional SERPLACS in Chile, etc.)

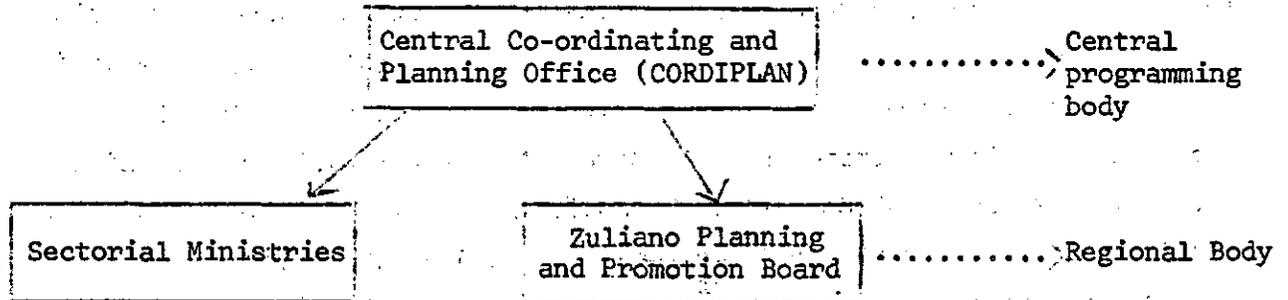
(b) regional planning is carried out directly from the National Planning Office and is given practical expression in programmes and projects within each sector (see table 2).

In the first case, the institutions referred to (FUDECO, PREDESUR, SERPLAC, etc.) are the generators or sources of information on and for regional planning. In the second case, it is the global planning institutions which effect regional planning -through programmes and projects. It is therefore very difficult for the information expert to identify them as being generators of documentation on regional planning.

Table 2 shows the situation in respect of a case in Venezuela.

Table 2

REGIONAL PLANNING INSTITUTIONS:
A CASE IN VENEZUELA



III. PRELIMINARY CLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION INPUTS
AND OUTPUTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process may be considered to be a complex sequence of operations requiring certain basic information inputs and, in turn, generating certain basic information outputs. Both the information inputs and the information outputs are representative of the planning experience and therefore are of potential value in respect of the INFOPLAN system and objectives.

Because planning is an activity aimed at synthesis, however, the inputs used are more numerous and varied than the information outputs generated; at the same time, the latter are easier to classify from the point of view both of content and of form.^{8/} We believe, however, that precisely because they are produced by synthesis, the outputs will be helpful in making a rough determination of the main tendencies and features of the planning process. As regards to the classification of the inputs, the information expert will be required to play an active role in their identification and classification. This task is seen as a dynamic and continuous activity in which the inter interdisciplinary work of planners and documentalists can take shape.

In spite of the situation described above, this input-output component of the information system can be described and an attempt has been made to do so graphically in tables 3, 4 and 5. The topical content has been arranged from three angles:

/(a) a general

- (a) a general description of the main information inputs and outputs in each stage of the planning process (table 3);
- (b) stages in the planning process and time-span categories at the medium-term and annual-operational-planning levels (table 4);
- (c) the planning process in its various modalities as described above: global, regional and sectoral (table 5).

Table 3

EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION INPUTS AND OUTPUTS OF
THE PLANNING PROCESS

INFORMATION INPUTS		INFORMATION OUTPUTS
<p>Basic statistics and socio-economic indicators. Financial information. National accounts.</p> <p>Integrated studies of natural resources. Reports on individual production sectors and/or factors.</p>	DIAGNOSTIC STUDY	<p>Information which describes and analyses the existing situation and the causes for it. This information is to be found in global, sectoral and/or regional plans.</p>
<p>Basic statistics and socio-economic indicators.</p>	PROGNOSTIC STUDY	<p>Projection of present development trends and of the results to be obtained by applying the measures proposed in the plans.</p>
<p>Information contained in the ideas put forward by the various social, political and economic agents with regard to the desired future situation.</p>	DEFINITION OF IMAGE-OBJECTIVE	<p>Reference model which summarizes the situation to be achieved by the changes proposed: the development objectives and the type of socio-economic structure it is wished to construct are broadly defined.</p>
<p>Information contained in the ideas put forward by the various social, political and economic agents with regard to the alternatives for achieving the desired situation.</p>	STRATEGY	<p>Information which defines the structure or means chosen for evolving from the situation described in the diagnostic study to that defined in the image-objective.</p>
<p>Information relating to the aspirations and needs of the community in general and to the socio-economic indicators which correspond to them.</p>	FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	<p>Reference information containing global as well as sectoral and/or regional operational objectives and their quantified expression or targets.</p>
<p>All information relating to strategies, objectives and targets which have already been established. Information relating to policy instruments -legal, administrative, institutional, financial, etc.</p>	POLICY FORMULATION	<p>Reference information containing the principles which the government will apply in order to regulate the performance of the private agents and organize the financing of the public agencies of the various development sectors and regions.</p>
<p>Information relating to productive activities, services and investment provided for in the policies and which reflect those aspects of development (sectors, commodities, geographical areas, etc.) which are favoured or emphasized in the plan.</p>	PROGRAMME FORMULATION	<p>Description of the programmes proposed for the period (targets and spatial and time distribution of those activities); information relating to the administrative units which might carry them out. Schedules of activities and budgetary information. Information relating to the follow-up and monitoring of the programmes.</p>
<p>Basic studies to identify project ideas. Technical and financial information needed for project formulation. Public sector programme budget.</p>	PROJECT FORMULATION	<p>Project ideas, preliminary projects and projects. Implementation time-tables. Information on ongoing or completed activities under the projects.</p>
<p>Performance studies. Periodic progress reports on programmes and projects. Final reports on programme and project implementation. Study of the impact of given policies.</p>	ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF THE PROCESS	<p>Global reports in which activities are assessed and reformulated.</p>



Table 4

EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION INPUTS OF THE ANNUAL
OPERATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

DIAGNOSTIC AND DIAGNOSIS STUDIES	→	Descriptive and analytical information relating to current problems of the economy; balance of trade, fiscal, deficit, etc., and the outlook concerning them for the period.
FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	→	Information covering formulation of micro-objectives and annual targets.
POLICY FORMULATION	→	Information containing the total budgetary picture: - Overall economic budget and budget by sectors and regions - Monetary budget - Foreign trade budget - Budget of State enterprises - National investment budget
PROGRAMME AND PROJECT FORMULATION	→	Description of programmes for the implementation of public projects. Schedules of basic activities.

Table 5

EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION INPUTS AND OUTPUTS IN THE
PLANNING PROCESS OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

INPUTS

OUTPUTS

Rural population and population active in agriculture. Production indicators; marketing and consumption of agricultural commodities. Resources (manpower, technology, and capital) available to the country. Farm income. Entrepreneurial structure of agricultural activities, etc.

DIAGNOSTIC
STUDY

Information which describes and explains the structure, operation and trends of the agricultural system. Information drawing attention to the basic assets and liabilities of the system. Diagnostic studies of specific factors.

PROGNOSTIC
STUDY

Descriptions of the future performance of the agricultural system, on the basis of current trends.

Standard model and diagnostic information obtained.

STRATEGY

Information relating to the key variables which will make it possible to accelerate or reorient the development process of the sector. Aspects calling for special efforts and the options available in that connection

Strategic approaches to the development of the agricultural sector.

FORMULATION
OF OBJECTIVES
AND TARGETS

Objectives in respect of the conditions and characteristics desired for the agricultural system. Targets relating to crop demand and supply. Targets relating to productive and technological resources for the agricultural system; targets relating to foreign trade in agricultural commodities and agricultural input targets.

The diagnostic study of the sector, the outlook for its future development and strategical approaches.

POLICY
FORMULATION

Policies relating to production resources and techniques. Economic policies, policies for reforming the entrepreneurial structure, social mobilization policies. Instrumental mechanisms (legal, financial, institutional, etc.)

All information relating to production, support and similar policies.

PROGRAMME
FORMULATION

Programmes relating to production for domestic and external markets and programmes supporting productive activities (relating to productive resources and techniques, credit and marketing) the structure of agricultural enterprises, etc.

Basic studies to identify project ideas:
- technical data for project formulation.
- budgetary and financial data.

PROJECT
FORMULATION

Strategic projects relating to infrastructure and to conservation of renewable natural resources. Project in support of the productive process. Time-tables for implementation of agricultural projects.



Notes

1/ For "non conventional documents" we are referring to literature "published" with a small number of copies in mimeograph form, ditto form or even typed, and therefore, with a restricted distribution making it difficult to obtain them.

2/ For information unit we mean indistinctly libraries or documentation centres.

3/ For further information on the INFOPLAN structure, please refer to document "The structure, functions and operation of the INFOPLAN System." Santiago, Chile, 1982. (E/CEPAL/CLADES/R.21).

4/ By "data base" we mean the information contained in a computer as well as in a manual information system which counts with the possibility of information retrieval, such as: a library catalogue in a UNITERM system.

5/ This document does not intend to analyse the reasons for the absence of guidelines in the different information systems nor the range of importance this absence might imply.

6/ In: Cubillo, J. "Some thoughts about the subject scope of development information systems in Latin America." First draft. Santiago, Chile, 1981. 12 pp.

7/ ILPES. La planificación del desarrollo agropecuario. México, Siglo XXI, 1977. 2 v.

8/ This explains the existing unbalance among planning inputs and products in this manual. Therefore, the description of the products of the planning process is richer than the inputs that appear on tables 3, 4 and 5.

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