

GATT Office Circular No. 277

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE AUTOMATION ADVISORY GROUP

GATT is beginning to introduce a higher degree of automation, with the aim of increasing our efficiency and effectiveness. This process will have to be carefully planned and systematically carried through, so that we make the best possible use of the technical resources and money available.

As the use of computer and communication technology spreads in GATT, we shall need to ensure that compatibility of computer hardware and software is maintained, and to assess continuously the results we anticipate and achieve. Effective training will also be a key element, to ensure that the automation programmes are understood throughout the Secretariat and to teach the consistent work methods and techniques which allow computer technology to be used most effectively.

I am therefore establishing, with immediate effect, an Office Automation Advisory Group (OAAG) to coordinate these activities.

Under the chairmanship of the Head of the Department of Coordination and Administration, the membership of the OAAG will include the following:

Chief, Budget and Control Section
(Mr. J.E. Chabert)

Head, Technical Services and Buildings Section
(Mr. M. Rothenbühler)

Senior Systems Analyst (Mr. J. Vigogne)

Personnel Officer (Miss A. Meylahn)

The Group will draw on the advice of outside consultants as necessary. Heads of Divisions will be invited to participate in the meetings of the OAAG depending on the issues under discussion.

The terms of reference of the Office Automation Advisory Group are:

1. to advise the Director-General and the Deputy Directors-General on all matters relating to office automation, so that GATT can realize the maximum potential of technological innovations in office automation, including word-processing equipment, micro-computers, related software and communications devices linking this equipment;

./.

2. to this end, to:

- (a) recommend policies, standards and procedures relating to the acquisition and use of office automation equipment;
- (b) monitor compliance with these policies, standards and procedures. This will include reviewing and advising on programme budget proposals submitted by any unit of the Secretariat for new, additional or replacement office automation equipment. The OAAG will receive technical appraisals of such proposals from the Technical Services Section and the Electronic Data Processing Section;
- (c) review the use of all funds allotted for the acquisition, replacement and maintenance of word-processing equipment;
- (d) ensure that:
 - (i) GATT maintains the degree of compatibility between equipment needed to allow efficient exchange of data and its use in different applications;
 - (ii) periodic reviews are made of the efficacy of arrangements for the training of staff who use office automation equipment;
 - (iii) the impact on staff productivity of the office automation programme is monitored;
 - (iv) adequate records are maintained of all office automation equipment, both installed and on order.
- (e) assist the operational Departments in identifying data requirements and applications which may be common to several Divisions, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of collection, storage, analysis and development of data;
- (f) provide for periodic reviews to be conducted of the automation programme.

Arthur Dunkel
Director-General