

A Global Network for Coffee Research

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ABSTRACT

A feasibility study into a global network for coffee research has been initiated by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) and an interim report is given here on the preliminary findings, placing them in a somewhat wider context within the general worldwide Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) framework. The investigation is taking note of existing information sources and other resources that are already available. The potential benefits of such a network are being explored.

A survey of the potential user community is being carried out to obtain information on access facilities available, users' activities and potential commitment, and services desired. The initial results of early analyses of these data are provided. These are encouraging and positive, involving mainly the major players.

The levels of connectivity are being considered, particularly in relation to a potential network where a significant proportion of the user community is in the Third World. The range of services possible is discussed in relation to those now expected in the development of such a network, with reference to particular information products and other networks that are already fully operational. Initial costings are presented.

Research so far indicates that such a network is feasible in line with the desires of the international coffee information community. The best options are to be evaluated and presented in detail in the final project report to be presented to the ICO in September 1997.