

INIS TO START NEXT YEAR

INIS, the International Nuclear Information System by which the Agency and its member countries will attempt to keep track of material published on atomic energy throughout the world, is to come into operation next year.

The Board of Governors have its approval to the computer-based project, and the date of initial operation, at its February meeting. An advisory committee was suggested to keep the system under review, implementation will follow a step-by-step process, and efforts will be made to negotiate suitable arrangements with existing information services, particularly that now operated by Euratom.

It is estimated that every day about 250 new articles, books or other items of information about the peaceful applications of atomic energy are published – nearly 100 000 a year. INIS will help to keep track of this literature and make it available to individual scientists and engineers.

An outline of the scheme – which is a co-operative project sharing work between the Agency and its Member States – was given to the Twelfth Session of the General Conference in September by John E. Woolston, the Agency's Director of Technical Information in a special lecture. An account of this appeared in IAEA Bulletin Vol. 10 No. 6.

Detailed preparation has now been in progress for two years. The particular plan now adopted was first prepared by a team of 14 experts who worked for various periods in Vienna during the first half of last year. The recommendations of this team were reviewed, modified and endorsed in October 1968 by a panel composed of 37 experts from 23 Member States and four international organizations.

Each Member State will be invited to participate by reporting details of all new literature published in its territory and giving new information.

The main product will be a magnetic-tape service. Participants receiving it will have a complete data bank and will be able to use it to carry out searches of the literature for the scientists and engineers that they serve. It will be possible to have a computer print out the title, the names of the authors, and other identifying particulars for each piece of literature. If a user needs more, he will be able to turn to a field of microfiches in order to obtain a short summary. If he needs the full text, he can either go to his library or – if the item is not one regularly distributed – order a microfiche copy of the full text from the IAEA.

[Microfiches are small pieces of photographic film about 10 × 15 centimetres, on which can be recorded 60-72 pages of text. They are cheap to transport and can be read with the aid of relatively inexpensive instruments.]

Many countries do not as yet have the computing facilities that would enable them to make immediate use of the magnetic-tapes. Therefore the Agency will also publish twice per month, a computer-printed bulletin that will report the same information that is contained in the magnetic-tapes. The bulletin will carry indexes that will be cumulated twice per year, so that manual searching of the literature reported to INIS will also be possible. It is expected that developing countries, in particular, will profit from the publication of this bulletin. Since IAEA is inviting all countries to participate in and to report their literature to the system, they will be participating on a similar basis to the more advanced countries. Training programmes are planned to assist them in developing the skills needed for this participation. Their scientists and technologists will, through INIS, obtain rapid access to all the world's information in this field, and they will have a first-hand opportunity to study how modern computers can be applied to data processing.

As a tribute to the memory of Homi Bhabha, this auditorium at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, has been named after him. Holding 1036 people it was in fact planned by Homi Bhabha, who apart from his many scientific activities for India was for some years a member of the Agency's Scientific Advisory Committee. Photo: Dept. of Atomic Energy, India

