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Technical Aid by GAWI

by Dr Werner Apelt, Frankfurt *

The contribution deals with the origin and development of GAWI (German Aid Company for Developing Countries Ltd.) and its present activities in the field of technical aid of the Federal Republic of Germany.

GAWI has been in existence for 41 years. For 16 years, by now, it has been carrying out economic aid measures within Germany's technical development aid programme. Established in 1932, GAWI had been trustee for the fulfilling of public tasks — guarantees of, formerly, the German Reich, and, since the war, the Federal Republic of Germany. According to these activities the original title of the organisation was Guarantee-Fulfilment Company Limited ("Garantie-Abwicklungsgesellschaft mbH"), also called GAWI.

Origin and Growth

The setting up of an appropriate machinery for the actual carrying out of technical aid projects was essential for the realisation of a Parliamentary initiative to aid "economically less developed countries". So, in 1957 GAWI was entrusted, as trustee, with the supporting of the Federal Foreign Ministry and relevant Departments in the pursuance of aid measures for the so-called LDCs decided upon by the Government. In accordance with this widening of its tasks, the organisation's name was changed to German Economic Aid and Trustee Ltd. GAWI (Aid Company for Developing Countries) ("Deutsche Wirtschaftsförderungs- und Treuhandgesellschaft mbH. GAWI [Förderungsgesellschaft für Entwicklungsländer]"). The present style of the organisation — German Aid Company for Developing Countries (GAWI) Ltd. ("Deutsche Förderungsgesellschaft für Entwicklungsländer [GAWI] GmbH.") — dates from 1964 by when the sheer size of measures for the countries of the Third World had grown so much that it had become the organisation's full-time sole occupation.

The beginnings, in 1957, were on a modest scale: 4 experts were sent out from Germany. But already one year later, the despatch of additional 38 experts to LDCs was indicative of things to come; by the end of 1972, then, there were 1,339 members of the GAWI-staff working overseas. In all and up to the end of last year GAWI headquarters looked after 3,500 trained personnel employed in 90 countries of the Third World.

There was a corresponding upward development of incoming project orders, reaching from the supply of a single implement to the providing of entire university laboratories or television studios. Of about 2,000 project orders at a total value of some DM 1.4 bn, 500 are at present in the process of being carried out.

Aims and Tasks

It is the aim of this technical aid to enable the partner-states ultimately further to develop projects on the strength of their own resources, orientate them on their local requirements, organise the whole scheme and direct everything economically and scientifically as well as to train local labour.

This at once describes, besides the nature of projects, also the tasks of GAWI-experts: to commence and build-up a project and train and educate local experts, within a given period of time, for the task begun jointly.

The aim of technical aid — to provide know-how, set guiding examples and lastingly entice initiative — entails in each case the despatch of expert personnel and the supply of technical equipment. As a rule GAWI is given its orders and instructions from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation via the subordinated Federal Department for Development Aid. Its tasks are therefore matter-of-course: the recruiting of suitable staff and the looking after them as well as the supply of materials within the framework of technical aid extended by the Federal Republic of Germany.

Organisation

The broad spread of projects to be carried out, changing demands on experts and equipment in the course of progress of the LDCs and unforeseeable — yet necessary — auxiliary measures, call for a purposefully built-up organisation. It must be in a position to adjust itself rapidly, sensibly and in a flexible manner to new basic

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facts as well as changed methods and forms of cooperation (for instance integrated experts or local purchases). The efforts of some 300 staff-members at GAWI-headquarters in Frankfurt are concentrated on doing their share towards success of the complex tasks of achieving economic and social headway for the bulk of the people in the Third World.

It may be as well to stress, in this context, that GAWI is more than merely an administrative body. In vital aspects of development aid, GAWI no longer lets it suffice, as it were in a sort of neutral way, with long practical experiences, but actually brings these past experiences to work with the aim of rendering it easier for the relevant Government departments to carry out a politically inspired order and instruction.

Structure

As to the structure of GAWI, one has to distinguish between three sections: the personnel branch; the supply branch; and a third section comprising, to put it briefly, the finance department, internal management and supervision, and the legal department.

In personnel matters GAWI exercises, under Government authority, all functions of an employer in respect of staff employed abroad. Essentially these are: recruiting, psychological test, choice and training of experts to be sent out for the carrying out of a project, their welfare and that of their families while abroad working in a partner-country.

The staff of the special branches of Health Service (enlarged, since November 1, 1973, by a laboratory for tropical medicine) and Family Welfare help to overcome difficulties possibly arising from changed living conditions in the country where they have to live and work. Returning GAWI-collaborators receive, under the basic contract conditions, a special performance blanket-payment according to the length of their sojourn overseas. Should there be difficulties in the readjustment to working conditions in the home country, there are possibilities of getting payments also during a transitional period.

Over and above the circle of its own personnel employed overseas, GAWI also looks to an increasing extent after German subjects working in LDCs as „integrated experts“, which is to say whose working contracts were concluded in the country where they are employed, but whose work has been found important from the point of view of development policy as a whole.

The second section is responsible for the obtaining and despatching of the whole technical equip-

ment for projects to be carried out in the Third World. For the technical and the commercial departments this entails the publication of tenders for all necessary material and equipment and subsequently to put all what has been acquired at the disposal of the various projects.

The detailed obtaining-planning begins with the receiving of the obtaining-instruction which includes, inter alia, the enumeration and listing of the — technically checked — material requirements, the working-out of the position-planning of machines, and the initiating, or carrying-out, of construction planning as well as that for electrical installations, water supply and sanitary provisions. The multiplicity of kinds of projects necessitates the drawing-in of expert groups of engineers for machine-building, ship-building, electro-technical appliances (power and high frequency), printing in general, construction techniques inclusive of the fields of water and land technique with the special branches of agriculture and fisheries as well as applied medicine. The technical department is entrusted with the drawing-up, and conclusion, of contracts with architects, assembly and building firms, the preparation of supply contracts and the technical and other supervision reaching right up to the handing-over of buildings, complete installations and machines.

The commercial department deals with the actual placing of the technically scrutinised orders with the supplier. On the basis of the operation plan, the data of personnel employment and delivery, transport and assembly terms this department supervises the punctual carrying out of deliveries. It controls the adherence to agreed conditions for delivery and payment observing also questions of taxation and guarantees. It also finalises the delivery contracts prepared by the technical department and watches over their fulfilment. The group despatch has the tasks of choice of the most favourable means of transport as to cost and time factors, tendering, the placing of orders with forwarding agents, clarifying the import regulations in the country of destination, obtaining necessary import licences, completing and passing-on of shipping documents.

The group Insurance proceeds as far as possible in concurrence with the despatch, but two other groups within the sphere of the obtaining have special tasks given them. The group Teaching Material is responsible for the translation and printing of technical books put at the disposal of commercial schooling projects. The further group Food Aid is entrusted with food deliveries which are an obligation the Federal Republic of Germany has taken upon it, and guaranteed, towards the receiving countries and international organisations.