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SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL
RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

COMPUTING DIVISION

DISTRIBUTED INTERACTIVE COMPUTING NOTE 859

IKBS
Meeting with Oakley & GTS
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IKBS/AS/Report Comments file
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PRESENT: B W Oakley
W P Sharpe
S Freckleton) General Technology Systems Ltd
D Cashmore) " " " "

(see next page)

1. BWO BRIEFING

Before meeting GTS BWO asked for an update on the Architecture Study report and actions arising out of it.

- (1) BWO spoke to Mike Hotchkiss to expedite the formal clearance of the report for publication.
- (2) BWO agreed to endorse the report as the initial IKBS strategy document. He was worried about the fairly narrow industrial representation but accepted that the main industrial expertise had been consulted. He wants to encourage wider discussion of the report and asked WPS to draft him a letter to go out over the report.
- (3) In the absence of any agenda for this meeting WPS had prepared a short list of actions to be considered by BWO which were briefly considered. BWO raised no objections and asked to receive them written up. They are attached to this note.

2. GTS

GTS are an independent consultancy made up of people with long experience in companies like GEC, Plessey etc which specialises in wide scale R&D management and industrial policy. They were employed as principal UK consultants in defining the ESPRIT programme; Cashmore reported on the European IT scene to the Abingdon workshop on the Japanese FGCS.

They now have an open ended contract to give general assistance to the Alvey team by bringing in their technical understanding of the ESPRIT programme and also its organisation and management.

3. ARCHITECTURE STUDY REPORT

GTS had been given a draft of the final report for comment. Unfortunately they only had the main section without any of the annexes or volume 2. They had produced a critique comparing it to the Alvey and the Esprit reports. The only points of substance picked out by BWO were:

- (1) GTS were critical of the absence of market research in the proposed plan. BWO stressed that with 50% funding we would rely on the industrial parties only submitting proposals that they had backed up with their own market research.
- (2) GTS pointed out the danger of stimulating a demand before the UK industry could satisfy it; they agreed however that it was better to get the IT users onto the latest methods even if that entailed some importing of tools.

- (3) GTS urged involvement of the business schools in long term projects. They stressed that major structural changes would be required of organisations in exploiting IKBS. BWO agreed and said that he saw the professional unions in this country as potentially far more obstructive than the others. WPS in discussion with GTS later suggested that they talk to Prof Enid Mumford at the Manchester Business School who is very keen to study the organisational impact of new technology. David Cashmore will consider whether they can define appropriate specifications for a project in this area.
- (4) GTS suggested that the AS report had made proposals that were all geared towards the professional user rather than the mass market. WPS pointed out that (a) insofar as IKBS is concerned with handling complexity professional users would be a prime target (b) there was no bias since some of the DPs such as remote interrogation of databases were clearly mass market projects. There is however a numerical bias towards professional users in the six DPs in the industry group report and it may be worthwhile to consider this before the proposed tutorial write up goes ahead.

As a general point on industry/academic collaboration BWO said that if industry wants to collaborate with one of the main IKBS university sites it should be required to put real manpower in.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ALVEY IKBS ACTIONS

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

It is assumed that an IKBS Steering Group will exist reporting to the Alvey IKBS DD. The attached diagram shows a possible management structure drawn up primarily to suggest how the infrastructure could be managed.

2. R&D

2.1 Show Me

Appoint Show Me programme manager reporting to IKBS Steering Group (SG). The manager would have day to day executive powers but would submit all technical decisions to the SG.

2.2 Short term developments/demonstrations

- (1) Approve expenditure of £25 for tutorial write up of the demonstrator projects and action Alvey agent to let contract.
- (2) Invite proposals for industry led projects and appoint Alvey agent (IKBS DD?) to liaise with industry and foster proposals.
- (3) Define the mechanisms to be used in the short term eg. contracts, collaborative grants etc.
- (4) Set a date for the first round of proposals on which recommendations would then be made by the Steering Group to the Alvey director.

2.3 Themes

- (1) Define mechanism for collaboration in the short term eg. collaborative grants.
- (2) It is suggested that since these are to be initially SERC led that SERC sponsor a series of theme workshops to produce a state of the art report in each area and promote collaborative proposals where appropriate.

2.4 General Research

No specific Alvey action required. SERC to coordinate in style of DCS, STI.

3. AWARENESS AND MARKETING

- (1) See 2.1
- (2) Fund seminars on task/application/industry areas as outlined in report. Appoint Alvey agent to be responsible for organisation, reporting to SG for technical direction.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

- (1) Approve SERC setting up AGIKBS as primary focus for development of computing hardware and software infrastructure.
- (2) Appoint Alvey agent to consider mechanisms for support of industrial training courses.

5. SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE AND MANPOWER

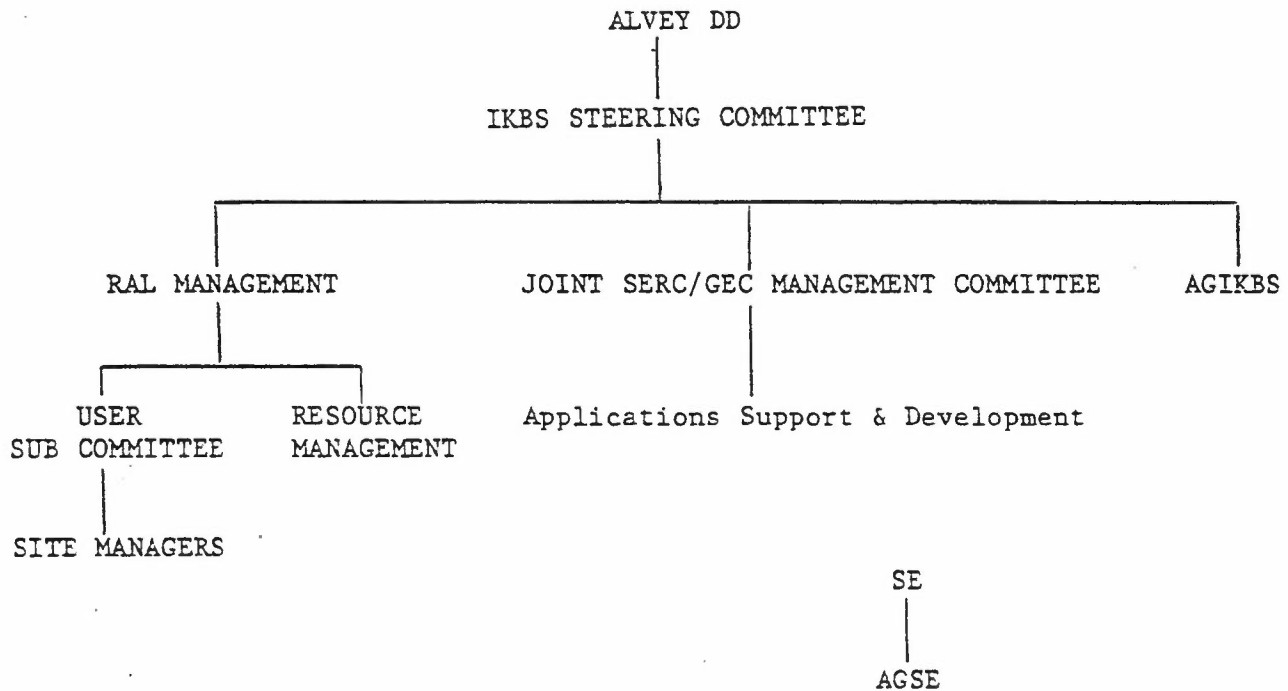
- (1). Approve planning by SG within a budget of £880K for 83/84 as follows:

	£K
3 Show Me	96
1 Short term development (large)	405
2 Short term development (small)	100
1.5 Demonstrators	150
1.3 Themes	<u>130</u>
Round Total	<u>£880K</u>

- (2) Activities immediately involving Alvey manpower:

- Management of Show Me
- Approach to Industry to promote short term developments and Demonstrators
- Publicity of IKBS programme
- Liaison with AGIKBS
- Formulation of proposals on industrial training.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR AI/IKBS INFRASTRUCTURE



1. Steering Committee will be responsible for overall management and implementation of the infrastructure. The Steering Committee will not have manufacturer representatives.
2. A User's Sub Committee provides a channel for user comments on the service.
3. Site managers will report through a manager's group to the User Sub Committee.
4. Resource management is handled completely within RAL under existing line management.
5. A joint SERC/GEC Management Sub Committee is responsible for advising the Steering Committee on all aspects of R machine development and support and monitoring the work of the site applications programmers.
6. AGIKBS replaces the existing SIGAI. It has representatives from academia and industry. Recommendations on R-machine developments are made via the SERC/GEC Sub Committee. Other recommendations are made direct to the Steering Committee.
7. SE needs have not been considered but could be met by a AGSE in the same way as IKBS.