

DD/S&T 2345-68


13 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Planning, Programming and
Budgeting

SUBJECT : Format and Procedure for R&D Planning

1. The attached paper outlines the procedure which we informally discussed recently. I believe it will encourage better planning in R&D, and significantly reduce the amount of time which our scientists and engineers now spend in unnecessary effort in the development of these plans, i. e., necessary and sufficient planning information will be obtained, but the submission of superfluous and redundant information will be discouraged. In addition, potential changes or alternatives in the R&D plan may be more readily evaluated and adapted. Ultimately, the long-range plan will merge directly into current year plans, and on into actual implementation without changing horses anywhere in the stream. Because the planning/execution of the R&D program will always remain open to input of detail and revision, planning need not be an onerous chore. The R&D program is relatively simple and well structured, so implementation of the proposed procedure will provide timely experience in the use of such techniques, and identify desirable characteristics which should be incorporated in the over-all management system of the Agency, of which this is only one part.

2. With your approval, I propose to arrange for the programming and other detailed actions which may be required in order to implement the proposed system as rapidly as possible so that it may be used for the next cycle of long-range R&D planning this Fall.


Special Assistant to the R&D Coordinator

APPROVED:

STATINTL

John M. Clarke
Director of Planning,
Programming and Budgeting

DD/S&T
FILE COPY

Attachment: As Stated

FORMAT AND PROCEDURE FOR R&D PLANNING

1. In responding to the current Call, R&D plans for the period FY 70-74 were submitted by the various technical offices in a variety of formats and with greatly differing degrees of detail. Different ground rules were used in arriving at estimates. The quality of the R&D planning inputs may be improved and, at the same time, much extraneous work eliminated if simple uniform procedures and a common format was adopted. The Contract Information System, now in wide use for maintaining a data base on current R&D contracts, was designed to also be used without modification in the planning process. Since detailed information pertaining to this system is provided in the Agency Project Officers' Manual, the extension of this system to planning will require a minimum of additional instruction or orientation.

2. In addition to simplifying the submission of data by the various technical offices, use of the Contract Information System for planning will facilitate entry of the R&D plans into a data base which may then be changed or manipulated as required as the plan progresses toward execution with a minimum of effort on the part of either the technical offices or the O/PPB. Further, the R&D planning base may easily be kept current since any modification of funding or direction of the R&D program may quickly be reflected in the data base. From this base up-to-date information copies on the R&D plan may be provided in appropriate detail to the technical offices and other interested components.

3. The following procedure is proposed. Technical offices will complete, as a minimum, a single Contract Information Data Input Sheet for each R&D program element in which that office proposes to expend funds. Although there may be exceptions (and hopefully these will increase in number) there are few current programs which are sufficiently well defined to justify planning in greater detail than element level beyond three years. Thus, in submitting five year plans, for example, offices with programs in audio collection would submit a single Contract Information Sheet to indicate their planned expenditures for the fifth year, and another sheet to indicate the expenditures proposed for the fourth year. The 100 characters provided by the CIS for program/project description on the Input Data Sheet will provide sufficient detail for any entry at the Agency

level. Supplementary detail may be provided only if required at the Directorate level. Assume, for example, that ORD has submitted a single Input Data Sheet for audio collection for FY 74. A year later the estimated expenditure for FY 74 might be revised, and two years after the original submission it might be desirable to provide some detail to describe the main features of future work proposed. This detail will increase in each succeeding year and continue through the current operating year as the various planned details become actual projects and contracts within the system. To accomplish this it is only necessary to submit revised Data Input Sheets as additional detail is developed, and to reallocate the amount budgeted for this activity among the details. The descriptions of the work will also become more detailed.

4. Although modification of the plan for any program element or detail for any year may be met very simply, it is anticipated that particular attention would be given to revising and updating the plan as a part of the regular PPB cycle. In terms of the present procedure, for example, it is proposed that in the submission of five year plans that pertinent printouts of the plan then existing in the data base be provided to each technical office for revision, and for the incorporation of any additional detail that might be pertinent at that time.

5. When the revised plans are submitted by the various offices, the integration of the inputs may be done almost completely automatically, and the distribution and focus of effort among the program sub-categories and elements may be easily examined. Hopefully, much of this could be done in the near future through the simple expedient of a CRT or other suitable display.

6. To be effective, clear definitions of terms and procedures are required. The Project Officers' Manual provides most of what is needed with only the designation of the required data elements for planning having to be specified. For example, it would appear to serve no purpose to describe the type of R&D work, i. e., research, exploratory development, advanced development, etc., for a program element estimate five years in the future. Thus, this information should be submitted only when a request for contract action is submitted for approval. In fact the only critical planning data items would be the program element, any project detail, the description, the estimate, the identification of the organization proposing to do the work.