



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE  
CENTRE DE RECHERCHES POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL  
File 3-03-16

P.O. Box 8500  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1G 3H9  
Cable: RECENTRE

Ottawa, January 23, 1973.

Dr. V. Siddhartha,  
National Committee on Science  
and Technology,  
Department of Science and Technology,  
Vigyan Bhavan Annexe,  
New Delhi-11, India.

Dear Dr. Siddhartha:

I am writing in reply to your letter of January 9 to Mr. Arthur Vespry, the IDRC Librarian. I was very pleased to read of your interest in the Macrothesaurus and am sending, under separate cover, a copy of the English/French publication. The thesaurus, as you may know, is the result of eight years of cooperation among national and international organizations, coordinated by the OECD Development Centre. The work was completed and published in 1972 with the support of a grant from the Information Sciences Division of IDRC.

The Macrothesaurus is primarily intended to provide a means of coordinating specialized vocabularies which are being developed in organizations dealing with particular subjects relevant to economic and social development. It is a "macro" thesaurus to which "micro" thesauri can be matched. The aim is to ensure a common pattern of vocabulary development so that different data (stored by traditional means or in computer files) can be accessed by the same tool. The macro is divided into 19 broad categories which, for the most part, correspond to the interests of one of the contributing organizations. These categories are not exhaustive and at the level of the most specific term reference is made to the organization which has built up a more complete set of terms in a specific subject area. These two features of the thesaurus provide the user with a means to locate compatible thesauri in cases where the macro is not sufficiently developed to meet his needs.

The Macrothesaurus is now being widely used in national and international organizations within traditional libraries and automated information systems. The International Labour Office and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization have both produced their own thesauri which match the macro. These documents can be obtained by writing directly to ILO or UNIDO. Some mechanism will need to be created to maintain consistency in the development of "micro" thesauri

and of the macro itself. We are hopeful that this will become the responsibility of the Inter Organization Board for Information Systems and Related Activities of the UN. This is a body created by the United Nations to coordinate information activities within the UN. I will keep you informed of developments in this direction so that you can establish contact with whatever organization takes on this responsibility.

In the meantime I would be very happy to have your comments on the practical value of the thesaurus once you have some experience of using it in your library.

I look forward to hearing from you again.

Yours sincerely,

*Kate Wild .*

Kate Wild  
Program Officer  
Information Sciences

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KW/jl