

*Special Issue
on Peer Review*

INTOSAI



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Given the *Journal's* use as a teaching tool, articles most likely to be accepted are those that deal with pragmatic aspects of public sector auditing. These include case studies, ideas on new audit methodologies, or details on audit training programs. Articles that deal primarily with theory would not be appropriate.

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Peer Review: A Quality Assurance Tool for SAIs

An interview with Dieter Engels, President of the German SAI and Chairman of the INTOSAI Subcommittee to Promote Best Practices and Quality Assurance through Voluntary Peer Reviews

In the field of science journalism, peer review has a track record dating back to the 17th century. In external government auditing, peer review is a relatively new tool that has gained increasing importance in the INTOSAI community in recent years.

Subcommittee 3 of INTOSAI's Capacity Building Committee (CBC) promotes best practices and quality assurance through voluntary peer reviews. According to information provided by the subcommittee, 24 peer review projects have been successfully completed since 1999. More than 30 supreme audit institutions (SAI) have participated in at least one peer review, either as the reviewed or reviewing SAI. Currently, five INTOSAI members are being reviewed by peers.

This edition of the *International Journal of Government Auditing* focuses on peer reviews in recognition of their growing scope and importance within INTOSAI.

The support team of CBC Subcommittee 3 interviewed Prof. Dr. Dieter Engels about the various approaches to peer review that SAIs have adopted and the German SAI's own experiences with peer review.

Question: *Why do SAIs carry out peer reviews?*

Dr. Engels: Peer reviews are carried out for a variety of reasons. In most cases, a peer review is used as a quality assurance tool to answer the question, Who audits the auditor? It helps SAIs carry out their audit work in compliance with professional standards; it also helps them enhance their practices and procedures. For example, when the German SAI participated in a peer review of the Austrian SAI in 2010, we investigated how the Austrian SAI could improve the way it carries out its core functions of auditing and providing advice.

Editorial

Peer reviews can also provide the basis for elaborating an SAI's strategic development plan. When Estonia was preparing for its imminent accession to the European Union, its SAI underwent a peer review whose results provided key guidance for defining its future role and mandate.

Question: *You have just outlined the benefits for the reviewed SAIs. What incentives are there for SAIs to assume the role of reviewing SAI?*

Dr. Engels: Peer reviews provide benefits to all participants. Their merits are not limited to the reviewed SAI. The reviewing SAI gains a deeper insight into the procedures and methods of a peer organization. Thus, it can identify good practices by comparing its own structure and procedures to those of the reviewed SAI. To date, the German SAI has participated in four peer reviews, and each time we identified helpful suggestions and ideas for our own work.

Question: *All this sounds very positive. What about potential risks? And, if there are any, how can they be addressed?*

Dr. Engels: Nobody likes to be criticized and, therefore, the decision to undergo a peer review requires courage, openness, and confidence in one's own strengths. As a reward for this courage, the SAIs involved should deal with each other on an equal footing without any bias and in a spirit of friendship and cooperation. This does not mean that the process will be dominated by words of appreciation and that criticism is undesirable. A peer review yields optimum benefits only if the partner SAIs engage in a sincere, frank, and constructive dialogue and the recommendations and proposals for improvement are based on sound arguments.

To avoid ambiguities or misunderstandings during a peer review, the participating SAIs should agree in advance on a framework for the process. For instance, it is essential to agree on the peer review's objectives, timetable, and procedural steps and how its costs will be handled. These basic conditions should be spelled out in writing in a document known as a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

In most cases, the organizational structure and audit environment of the reviewed and the reviewing SAIs will differ from each other. Therefore, the peer review team should receive all information it needs to familiarize itself with the legal, political, economic, and societal environment of the reviewed SAI. This will help ensure that the reviewed SAI can accept and implement the recommendations the peer review generates.

Question: *What areas do peer reviews normally focus on?*

Dr. Engels: There is no one generally applicable rule. Since peer reviews are carried out voluntarily, the participating SAIs are free to decide on their scope and content.

On one hand, the peer review may follow a quite comprehensive approach, looking into all audit activities and the entire structural organization of an SAI. This was the case for the peer review of the European Court of Auditors that was conducted in 2008.

On the other hand, peer reviews may focus on one or several specific fields of activities. As a case in point, I would mention the peer review of the Peruvian SAI, conducted in 2008, which addressed five selected fields of activity, including relations with Parliament and processing of petitions.

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Question: *Should the results of peer reviews be published?*

Dr. Engels: The decision about whether or not to publish a peer review report lies exclusively with the reviewed SAI. Nevertheless, experience has shown that those SAIs that have undergone a peer review have usually decided to make the results available to the general public.

Personally, I welcome such publication. An institution that deals with its strengths and weaknesses with equal openness creates confidence in itself and enhances the effectiveness of its work. Moreover, other SAIs can also benefit from the peer review report by, for instance, using it as a yardstick to design their own peer reviews.

Question: *What other tools are available to help SAIs considering or definitely planning to have a peer review?*

Dr. Engels: As you may know, the Subcommittee to Promote Best Practices and Quality Assurance through Voluntary Peer Reviews has drafted the *Peer Review Guideline*, which was adopted as ISSAI 5600 at the XX INCOSAI held in South Africa. The guideline is a useful tool that helps both the reviewing and reviewed SAI to successfully complete all stages of the peer review process. The document places particular emphasis on the contents of the MOU, whose importance I have already pointed out.

The guideline has an appendix, the *Peer Review Checklist*, that contains detailed questions that can be asked in the course of a peer review. The checklist provides guidance to the team of reviewers depending on the scope of the review and the fields to be reviewed.

ISSAI 5600: Peer Review Guideline and Checklist

The *Peer Review Guideline* developed by Subcommittee 3 of INTOSAI's Capacity Building Committee (CBC) was adopted by the XX INCOSAI as ISSAI 5600. The guideline is available on the ISSAI Web site at www.issai.org and on the CBC Web site at <http://cbc.courdescomptes.ma> under "Guides & Materials."

The *Peer Review Guideline* makes recommendations for all stages of the peer review process. It discusses preliminary questions (such as the objectives of a peer review and the choice of partner SAIs) as well as specific advice on how to prepare, implement, follow up on, and evaluate a peer review exercise.

A central chapter deals with the framework conditions to be agreed upon. Good practice cases based on earlier peer reviews supplement recommendations for the provisions that the memorandum of understanding should include.

The *Peer Review Checklist: Appendix to ISSAI 5600* provides guidance for conducting a peer review. The checklist includes questions designed to help understand the national environment of the SAI to be reviewed as well as the SAI's structural organization, internal rules, audit standards, and audit procedures. It is also available on the CBC and ISSAI Web sites.



The peer review documentation posted on the Capacity Building Committee's Web site (<http://cbc.courdescomptes.ma>) is another useful tool. At present, this documentation includes MOUs and reports of 20 peer reviews (see the list of the documentation on p. 5). It can serve as reference material that will help SAIs make informed decisions about carrying out a peer review.

Question: *You already mentioned that the XX INCOSAI adopted the Peer Review Guideline. Developing it was a major task of the peer review subcommittee. What issues will the subcommittee address in the years to come?*

Dr. Engels: While we have finished the guideline, we have not fully accomplished our mission. INTOSAI's *Strategic Plan 2011–2016* assigned several tasks to our subcommittee to enhance the environment for conducting voluntary peer reviews. The subcommittee wants to continue its efforts to assist SAIs as much as possible with preparing for and implementing peer reviews.

Specifically, one of our aims is to supplement and further refine the peer review documentation. Therefore, we are always anxious to receive professional input from SAIs that are conducting or undergoing a peer review. We also appreciate it very much if MOUs, reports of results, and other peer review documents are shared with us to enhance our documentation.

We are looking for new ways of presenting peer review materials to facilitate research and reliance on the documents.

Furthermore, we collect feedback on the applicability and the utility of the *Peer Review Guideline* and its checklist. For this purpose, the guideline includes a concise survey at its end inviting all INTOSAI members to share ideas and suggestions with us. Our subcommittee will use this feedback to review and refine the guideline.

If you have questions, wish to provide feedback on the *Peer Review Guideline*, or wish to share relevant documents with other SAIs, please contact the German SAI at international@brh.bund.de.

Special Issue on Peer Review

This issue highlights some of the peer review initiatives being carried out across the INTOSAI community. In addition to the interview with the chair of the INTOSAI peer review subcommittee in the editorial, two articles deal with the just-completed peer review of the Slovak Republic.

- The first article was written by Dr. Ján Jasovský, President, Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic, and shares insights from perspective of the entity being reviewed.
- The second article was written by Pawel Banaś and Jacek Mazur, Supreme Audit Office of Poland, two members of the peer review team. They share their reflections from the perspective of the team performing the peer review.

INTOSAI's peer review efforts are coordinated by subcommittee 3 of the Capacity Building Committee. The *Journal* wishes to express its appreciation to the subcommittee, chaired by the SAI of Germany, for its invaluable assistance in preparing this issue.



Members of the INTOSAI subcommittee on peer review.

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Overview of Peer Review Documentation

The documentation listed below is available on the Capacity Building Committee Web site (<http://cbc.courdescomptes.ma>) under “Guides & Materials.” If you wish to supply additional relevant peer review documentation, please contact the German SAI at international@brh.bund.de.

Reviewed SAI	Year	Peer Review Team (Reviewing SAI or other entity)	Documents ^a
Austria	2009/2010	Denmark, Germany, Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Objectives 📄 MOU (German) 📄 Report (German)
Canada	2004	France, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 MOU 📄 Questionnaire 📄 Report 📄 Action plan 📄 Press release
Canada	2010	Australia, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report 📄 Action Plan
Czech Republic	2000	SIGMA (Austria, France, Ireland, Sweden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Denmark	2006	Canada, Norway, Poland, Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Estonia	1999	SIGMA (Netherlands, Germany, Denmark)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report 📄 Background paper
Estonia	2005	SIGMA (Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Summary report 📄 Report
European Court of Auditors	2008	Austria, Canada, Norway, Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Republic of Macedonia	2007	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Key questions 📄 Report
Indonesia	2009	Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Mexico	2008	Puerto Rico, United Kingdom, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Summary information 📄 Report
Netherlands	2006/2007	Norway, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 MOU 📄 Report
New Zealand	2008	Canada, United Kingdom, Australian National University, Environmental Risk Management Authority (New Zealand), Yarralumla Consulting Pty Ltd (New Zealand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Norway	2005	Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report 📄 MOU
Peru	2008	Costa Rica, Germany, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 MOU (German, Spanish) 📄 Report (Spanish)
Poland	2001	SIGMA (United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Poland	2006/2007	Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report
Slovak Republic	2001	France, European Court of Auditors, NATO, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Summary information
Switzerland	2004/2005	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Peer Review Concept 📄 Report (German)
United States	2005	Australia, Canada, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Report

^aAll documents are available in English, except as noted

Legend

MOU = memorandum of understanding

SIGMA = Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (joint initiative of the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

NEWS

IN

brief



Brazil

Recent Activities of the Chamber of Accounts

The Brazilian Court of Audit (TCU) is currently training 48 auditors from 13 Spanish-speaking Latin American SAIs in performance audit methods and techniques in a 3-month e-learning course. This course is being delivered in conjunction with the OLACEFS Regional Capacity Building Committee. Due to the intense interest of the participating SAIs, the TCU increased the number of training slots available in the course.

The main course objective is training auditors to apply performance audit methodology in their own institutions. The course includes units on audit concepts, appropriate audit scope, audit criteria, types of performance audits, the steps of the audit cycle, techniques, working papers, and report preparation.

The course began on August 17 and will end on November 11. During a 1-week break, from September 19 to 26, some of the auditors from Mercosul countries will participate in the seminar *Mercosul, Community Funds, and Regional Oversight*, held in Brasilia. The seminar will include hands-on performance audit workshops led by instructors from the e-learning course. (Mercosul or Mercosur, the

Common Market of the South, is a Latin American trade organization.) The seminar is being supported by the German international cooperation agency (GIZ) in partnership with OLACEFS. Following the seminar, the Mercosul SAI Organization (EFSUL) will conduct a coordinated audit on a project funded by the Mercosul Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM). This audit will provide an opportunity for some auditors from the e-learning course to apply the performance audit methods that they are learning.

The TCU chairs INTOSAI's Performance Audit Subcommittee and recently published a Spanish version of its internal *Performance Audit Manual* to support capacity development in the region.

For additional information, contact the TCU:

E-mail: arint@tcu.gov.br
Web site: www.tcu.gov.br



Course instructors for the Brazilian e-learning course on performance auditing.

Pakistan

New Auditor General Appointed

In August 2011, Muhammad Akhtar Buland Rana began his 4-year term as the 17th Auditor General of Pakistan. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Rana was the most senior officer of the Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service.



Akhtar Buland Rana

Mr. Rana has a master's degree in political science and a law degree from the Punjab University, Lahore. He has taken international training courses in public financial management and commercial practices in telecommunication accounting in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. He joined the Central Superior Services in February 1976. As a career public servant, he has taken training in investment analysis and economic management, problem resolution, and decision making, advanced performance auditing, and advanced public management. He attended the National Management Course of the National School of Public Policy, Lahore, and is a fellow of that institution.

Mr. Rana brings rich experience to his assignment as Auditor General.

After starting his career with public sector auditing, he managed and maintained the accounts of the Defense Services of Pakistan and worked in the consolidation of national accounts. He also served in key public sector commercial entities in the communications and IT sectors as an advisor on investment and finance. He headed the Ministry of Human Rights as its additional secretary in charge. As Auditor General, Mr. Rana envisions the SAI of Pakistan as an increasingly professional and responsive public body addressing the good governance concerns of both domestic and international stakeholders.

Mr. Rana will serve as the Chairman of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) and Permanent Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ECOSAI).

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Auditor General of Pakistan:

E-mail: saipak@comsats.net.pk
Web site: www.agp.gov.pk

Romania

Recent Activities and Publications of the Romanian Court of Accounts

In line with its ongoing capacity-building efforts, the Romanian Court of Accounts (RCoA) published the July 2011 issue of its journal and posted it to its Web site.

At recent meetings the Romanian Plenum approved a number of important materials for the RCoA's activity. These include the following:

- the final version of the human resources strategy for 2011–2014 and its implementation plan;
- the activity program for 2012;
- a report on the 2010 training program, which proposes that future training modalities include videoconferences, e-learning, brainstorming using an Internet forum for debates, and increased use of RCoA's library; and
- a guide on checking the quality of audit activity that is designed to align RCoA's audit work with international audit standards and best practice.



Nicolae Vacaroiu (right), President of the Romanian Court of Accounts, and Dieter Engels (left), President of the Bundesrechnungshof, discussed areas of common interest during their July meeting in Bucharest.

International Visits to Court of Accounts

In July 2011, the RCoA hosted official visits from the heads of the SAIs of Germany and China.

Prof. Dr. Dieter Engels, the President of the Bundesrechnungshof, led a German delegation that visited the RCoA July 5–7. The heads of the two SAIs discussed bilateral institutional cooperation in the context of INTOSAI and EUROSAI. They shared information on their respective institutional frameworks, audits of European Union funds, and the relationships between their SAIs and Parliament.

Liu Jiayi, Auditor General of China, led a Chinese delegation that visited the RCoA July 19–21. As a result of their meeting, the heads of the two SAIs agreed to renew the bilateral cooperation agreement between their SAIs that was originally signed in 2004. After the agreement is updated and finalized, it will be officially signed in Beijing.



Nicolae Vacaroiu (left), President of the Romanian Court of Accounts, and Liu Jiayi (right), Auditor General of the China National Audit Office, agreed to renew the bilateral agreement between their SAIs during their July meeting in Bucharest.

For additional information, contact the RCoA:

E-mail: international.romania@rcc.ro

Web site: www.curteadeconturi.ro

Venezuela

Death of Comptroller General

In June 2011, Clodosbaldo Russián, Comptroller General of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, passed away in Cuba, where he was undergoing medical treatment after suffering a stroke during the preceding April. He was 72 years old.



Clodosbaldo Russián

Dr. Russián, an economist and attorney, graduated from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. He had served as the Comptroller General of the Republic since 1999, when he was appointed by the Constituent National Assembly and subsequently ratified by the Parliament in 2000 for a 7-year term. In 2007, he was reappointed for the 2008–2014 period.

He was a member of the INTOSAI Governing Board and the Board of Directors of this *Journal*. From 2003 to 2004, he served as the President of OLACEFS. He also chaired the OLACEFS Regional Training Committee of from 2000 until 2007.

For additional information, contact the Venezuelan SAI:

E-mail: contraloriavenezuela@gmail.com

Web site: www.cgr.gov.ve

Community of Portuguese-Speaking SAIs

International Seminar Held in East Timor

From June 29 to July 1, 2011, the International Organization of SAIs of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (OISC/CPLP) celebrated its 15th anniversary and held its 2nd International Seminar in Dili, East Timor. SAI heads and staff members from Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Macau, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé and Príncipe participated in the events.



The OISC/CPLP logo was designed by the Brazilian Architect Oscar Niemeyer.

The Prime Minister of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão, attended the ceremony commemorating the OISC/CPLP's anniversary. In opening remarks, the representative from the Brazilian Court of Audit, headquarters of the General Secretariat, recounted the various initiatives undertaken in the past 15 years to promote technical, scientific, and cultural exchanges and cooperation among Portuguese-speaking SAIs.

A highlight of the event occurred on the first day, when the delegates received the news that the East Timorese Parliament had just passed a law creating a Timorese Court of Accounts, a crucial step toward institutionalizing a national audit body.

During the 2nd OISC/CPLP Seminar, two major issues were debated: the role of supreme audit institutions in modern democracies and the importance of cooperation among SAIs for institutional development and capacity building. At the conclusion of the seminar, the representatives approved the Dili Declaration, which details the main recommendations coming out of the event.

For additional information, contact the CPLP:

E-mail: arist@tcu.gov.br

Web site: www.tribunaiscplp.gov.br

Peer Review as a Form of Capacity Building: Lessons Learned from Undergoing a Peer Review

by Dr. Ján Jasovský, President, Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic

More than 18 months have passed since the Supreme Audit Office (SAO) of the Slovak Republic (SR) decided to undergo a peer review of the quality and effectiveness of our work in several areas. The primary objective of this project was to examine the soundness of the SAO's updated development strategy and its compliance with the mission of a modern audit institution. We focused mainly on audit activities—audit planning, conducting audits, and reporting results. In addition, we decided to have a review of our audit quality assessment methodology as well as our human resource and public relations functions.

One of the SAO's key values is to promote sound and effective public fund management and to provide the National Council of the SR and the public with objective audit findings. The SAO's mission is to improve the quality and effectiveness of independent and internal audits to facilitate better public fund management. Accomplishing the SAO's mission effectively requires an ongoing improvement process.



A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the peer review of the SAI of the Slovak Republic was signed by (seated from left to right) Frank Grogan, SAI of the United Kingdom; Jan Jasovsky, SAI of the Slovak Republic; and Tõnis Saar, SAI of Estonia. Representatives from Poland and Slovenia had signed the MOU earlier.

The goal of the peer review was to improve the SAO's work and examine the correctness of internal procedures specified in internal directives. We believed that an external independent review would show us the extent to which we had implemented international standards and the overall correctness of our internal procedures and also give us recommendations for improvement.

At the time we were preparing for our peer review, our colleagues from the Austrian Court of Audit were undergoing a peer review, so we took advantage of their experience. We contacted several SAIs and, from those who replied positively, asked the National Audit Office (NAO) of the United Kingdom, the NAO of Estonia, the Supreme Audit Office of Poland, and the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia

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to be our peer reviewers. I am very grateful to my colleagues from these SAIs for their willingness to cooperate. They provided their knowledge and resources and put together an international team of experts who dedicated their time and efforts to accomplishing the difficult task of examining the quality and effectiveness of our work.

Looking back, we realize that the preceding 18 months meant a lot of hard work for both the peer reviewing team and for us. We prepared the necessary documents to run and implement the project as effectively as possible. During this period, six meetings were held, including discussions at all levels of our SAI. Altogether this amounted to 19 working days at our headquarters in Bratislava and one of our eight regional offices. Dozens of conversations along with studies of our internal regulations formed the basis for examining our work and drawing up the final peer review report.

Peer Review Guidance

Our peer review was conducted in compliance with ISSAI standards, using ISSAI 5600: *Peer Review Guideline*, which was recently elaborated by Subcommittee 3 of the INTOSAI Capacity Building Committee, chaired by the German SAI. The document was adopted at the XX INCOSAI, and our peer review was the first in the world conducted in compliance with it. I am proud that we can thus provide feedback and contribute to the global SAI community by sharing what we learned.

The Peer Review Report

The hard work of carrying out the peer review has been completed successfully. The report was drafted and submitted for signature, and the signing ceremony took place on May 30, 2011, during the VIII EUROSAI Congress in Lisbon. Participants in the signing ceremony included the presidents of the participating peer review SAIs, the head of the German SAI delegation, and Dr. Josef Moser, General Secretary of INTOSAI.



The peer review report was signed by (from left to right) Martin Sinclair, Assistant Auditor General, U.K. NAO; Jacek Jezierski, President, SAI of Poland; Jan Jasovský, President, SAI of the Slovak Republic; Igor Šoltes, President, SAI of Slovenia; and Mihkel Oviir, Auditor General, SAI of Estonia.

The peer review report has 18 recommendations divided into five sections. The first deals with audit activities that focus on the central government. These recommendations are aimed at planning, conducting, and reporting the results of SAO audit activities. The second part deals with audit activities involving regions and municipalities and is structured similarly. The recommendations in the remaining three parts deal with audit quality assessment, human resources development, and public relations.

The peer review team concluded that the SAO had responded effectively to the range of challenges that it had faced in recent years. According to the team's assessment, we have improved the quality and professionalism of our activities. We have also increased the impact of our work by making it more accessible to its stakeholders and strengthening cooperation with the media. We have improved the infrastructure of our organization to support the overall objective of enhancing our performance. The team concluded that this ambition was clearly articulated in the SAO's Development Strategy and that the strategy itself and its implementation would improve the quality of SAO audit activities and help us achieve our desired impact. The team also concluded that the audit quality methodology the SAO is putting in place complies with relevant INTOSAI guidance and standards.

Recommendations from the Peer Review

The complete text of the report together with its recommendations will be available in Slovak and English on our Web site (www.nku.gov.sk). Let me, however, mention several recommendations that have etched themselves on my memory as they relate to actions we had been considering before we began the peer review. The review simply confirmed that we were moving in the right direction.

- Undertaking such audit activities as extending and strengthening our performance audit methodology and improving the skills of staff undertaking performance audit. We fully acknowledge the importance and added value of performance audit in the public sector, as well as the demanding nature of these audits, and we attach great significance to this issue.
- Supplementing the resources available for the audits of regions and municipalities.
- Developing links with external organizations to introduce regular external assessment of audit quality and considering the introduction of independently moderated professional qualifications for audit staff.

Regarding this last point, INTOSAI may wish to consider establishing uniform ISSAI standards for certifying auditors in the future. Another interesting idea is increasing the use of external advice and expertise.

While it may seem that we have reached the final phase of the peer review process, the reverse is actually true. Members of the team responsible for implementing its results in our office have many tasks ahead of them. These tasks relate primarily to implementing the peer review recommendations to meet the project's objective of improving selected SAI activities and methods. We have formed five working teams to implement the peer review recommendations. Currently, these teams are preparing an action plan.

SPECIAL SECTION ON PEER REVIEW

Lessons Learned

What can I say to those who are planning for or thinking about a peer review? Implementing a peer review is demanding and requires a significant investment of human and material resources. Since a peer review is international in nature, translations and interpretation may be expected. It is also necessary to inform all staff beforehand and prepare them for the work and discussions that the peer review will entail. Support from the SAI's top management is important throughout the implementation and reporting phases because the results of the peer review must be implemented in accordance with internal administrative procedures and regulations.

While undertaking a peer review is very demanding, its benefits and added value greatly exceed the demands. Recommendations confirm whether the institution's management is headed in the right direction and advise management on ways to refine its methods to produce more effective work of even higher quality. Considering the unique position SAIs occupy in the public sector and the rapidly changing conditions and new challenges we face, a peer review is a worthwhile investment of time and resources.

If you choose to do a peer review, we recommend using ISSAI 5600, where you can find guidance and instructions on how to proceed. The appendix to the guideline contains a helpful and practical checklist of possible questions to ask during the process. Other products of Subcommittee 3 of INTOSAI's Capacity Building Committee can also be used. (See the CBC Web site at <http://cbc.courdescomptes.ma.>)

Last but not least, a peer review enables you to answer the question, Who audits the auditor? Audit work is at the core of each SAI's daily activities. By voluntarily undertaking a peer review, you open your work to external assessment and audit based on international auditing standards. This is of great importance at both the national and international levels.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me repeat what I said at the beginning of this article: accomplishing the SAO's mission requires an ongoing improvement process. Our peer review was not undertaken in isolation. At present, we are carrying out a 3-year educational project cofinanced by European Union (EU) funds and are implementing quality management according to the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) model. We are also building a new information system, cofinanced from EU funds as well. That is why the peer review has been so significant for us: we need to know that we are moving in the right direction in a high quality and effective manner.

Let me again thank our international partners—the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom, the National Audit Office of Estonia, the Supreme Audit Office of Poland, and the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia—for their cooperation and assistance in the peer review.

For additional information, please contact the SAO at info@nku.gov.sk.

Representatives from four SAIs (Estonia, Poland, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom) constituted the peer review team for the SAI of the Slovak Republic. In this article, the two Polish members of the team share their reflections on this experience and what they learned through it.

Peer Review of the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic: Reflections of Peer Review Team Members

by Paweł Banaś and Jacek Mazur, Supreme Audit Office of Poland (NIK)

During the course of its work, the peer review team gained an appreciation for the many strengths of the Supreme Audit Office (SAO) of the Slovak Republic. The team recognized that the SAO is an institution open to change and modern working methods. It commended the SAO's professionalism, the quality of its audit activities, the development of its audit methodology, the growing importance and availability of the SAO's audit findings to its stakeholders, and its cooperation with the media.

The peer review team had many long discussions with its Slovak colleagues concerning the role, mandate, and functioning of their respective SAIs. Based on their audit experience, the team formulated recommendations to the SAO regarding

- improvements in present practices related to strategic and technical issues and
- the development of incentives to resolve problems that are frequently difficult to address and that the SAIs of the peer review team also face.

This article presents some reflections of the Polish members of the peer review team resulting from those discussions. Its purpose is to show how the interactions among the members of the peer review team and with the entity being reviewed can provide knowledge and insights that are useful to all the parties involved and can be applied to the different organizations, mandates, and working methods of the individual SAIs.¹ For us, the peer review was a great opportunity to compare and rethink our own solutions in the following areas: strategic goals, sources of audit topics, territorial organization of our SAI, development of performance auditing, the readability of audit reports, and approaches to audit activity assessment. The following sections discuss some of the insights we gained in these areas during the course of the peer review and give examples of the differing practices of the peer review team members' SAIs in each area. We also discuss the overall benefits of a peer review for those involved in performing the review.

The Purpose of SAI Activity

Many SAIs have adopted strategic documents that set out the basic directions and principles of their activity. While comparing the experience of various SAIs during the peer review, we observed that the general purpose of an SAI's activity is not always clearly defined. Undoubtedly, the basic task of SAIs is to audit and report on expenditures of public funds. While in some countries (e.g., Austria, the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, and Spain) the constitution sets out the purpose of SAI activities, in most countries this is not the case. For example, the Constitution

¹This article does not, however, discuss the results of the peer review. These are contained in the peer review report that will soon be available in English and Slovak on the SAO Web site (www.nku.gov.sk).

SPECIAL SECTION ON PEER REVIEW

of Poland sets out the scope of auditing but does not specify the purpose of its SAI's activity.

Therefore, it is important to answer strategic questions about the ultimate purpose of an SAI's audit activities: is it to assess the government as a whole or the performance of individual bodies?

When selecting issues to audit, strategic objectives, risk analysis, materiality and the potential impact or added value of the planned audit are often taken into account. However, the concepts of risk and materiality can be further developed to better use an SAI's resources to audit priority areas. Should the SAI conduct more audits at the strategic level (e.g., sectoral policies and governmental programs)? The Web sites of the SAIs of the peer review team contain examples of audits focused on assessing essential problems or whole areas. These include audits of the system of subsidies for state-owned enterprises, financial management in the central administration, the stability of the banking system, energy security, privatization of the shipbuilding industry, and implementation of a program to fight cancer.

External Suggestions of Audit Topics

As the peer review team was analyzing the way in which the SAOs develop their audit plans, a question arose about whether SAIs should consider informal suggestions about audit topics made by the Parliament, the government, other central state bodies and the public. A valid case can be made both for and against doing this.

Each year, the Auditor General of Estonia asks the parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts to propose audit topics. To the extent that it is possible, the proposed topics are included in the audit plan, except for those issues that have been already audited and topics that are political in nature.

In 2010, the Court of Audit of Slovenia's 63 audits included 24 audits required by law, 20 audits related to issues selected based on risk analysis, and as many as 19 audits (almost 30 percent) selected from the 409 proposals received from various state bodies, companies, associations, and citizens.

Every spring the President of the Polish SAI (NIK) asks for suggestions to help the NIK select audit issues. In 2010, parliamentary committees submitted 81 suggestions; the Speaker of the Senate submitted 15; the President of Poland submitted 6; the Prime Minister submitted 40; and the Ombudsman submitted 7. The 2011 audit plan included most of the suggestions in its 294 audit topics.

During the course of a typical year, citizens suggest numerous issues for SAIs to audit—for example, cases of suspected misuse of substantial resources, unclear tender proceedings, or other issues of interest. While *ad hoc* audits of such issues can be conducted, an SAI has the final word on how its often scarce resources are to be spent.

Regional and Central Offices

Regional offices of SAIs often employ a large portion of their staff (in the case of Polish NIK, about 50 percent). The NIK has found that it can enhance its long-term potential by strengthening its regional offices, especially by dedicating part of their resources to managing national audits.

Performance Audit Toolbox

Because most SAIs conduct, or want to conduct, performance audits, the peer review team considered ways to expand performance audit work. The *Peer Review Checklist: Appendix to ISSAI 5600* identified questions regarding the extent to which an SAI uses different types of performance audit tools, such as process-based studies, organizational studies, impact and outcome studies, cost-benefit analysis, and service and quality management studies. A detailed description of performance auditing methods is presented in *ISSAI 3000: Standards and guidelines for performance auditing based on INTOSAI's Auditing Standards* and practical experience and *Appendix to ISSAI 3100*.

Readable Audit Reports

Because the Slovak and Polish languages are fairly similar to each other, we were able to review a number of original audit documents in Slovak, which allowed us to consider the issue of the readability of audit reports. Discussions with the other members of the peer review team showed that many SAIs have problems in this area. For example, even if audit reports are brief, their style, layout, and contents may diminish their clarity and, consequently, their impact. While the language and style of audit reports must be formal enough to ensure that they are accurate and verifiable, the reports must also be accessible to the general public.

Audit reports can begin by describing the key conclusions of the findings to encourage the reader to read the whole document. It is also useful to present executive summaries in special typeface at the beginning of audit reports. The report contents can be divided into parts by types of findings and presented using understandable titles. Additionally, SAIs' annual reports and reports on individual audits can be enriched with trend analyses, lists comparing findings with data from previous years, and systemic conclusions presenting SAI opinions on the audited issues.

External Assessment of Audit Activities

In many SAIs, the audit quality process comprises continuous assessment that takes place during the course of an audit and postaudit assessment.

Continuous external assessment of audit activities is a controversial issue because of the risks it poses to an SAI's independence. Only a few SAIs practice it. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the National Audit Office's financial audits have been subject to external review since 2001. The Comptroller and Auditor General chose to have this type of assessment to certify the quality of the SAI's activities based on commonly accepted criteria. The SAI of Estonia also has an external assessment of its financial audit quality. In these cases, the company chosen to do the external assessment (usually an international audit company) reviews several audits selected using statistical sampling.

SPECIAL SECTION ON PEER REVIEW



The peer review team members were (from left to right) Pawel Banaś and Jacek Mazur (SAI Poland), Frank Grogan (SAI U.K.), Tõnis Saar (SAI Estonia), and Mojca Planinšek and Alenka Zidar (SAI of Slovenia). Not pictured: Nina Furman (SAI Slovenia).

Benefits of a Peer Review

A peer review provides a unique opportunity to consider the basic principles and purposes of an SAI's functioning and to compare them with the experience of other SAIs. Therefore, peer reviews are valuable experiences for both those who conduct them and for those who are reviewed as they seek to find solutions to problems that they share. We found many similarities between the challenges that the Polish SAI and the SAI of Slovakia have to respond to and, as a result, learned a great deal from each other. Both the Polish NIK and the Slovak SAO—like most SAIs in the world—face a key challenge in obtaining significant findings and recommendations and communicating them effectively to our readers, among whom citizens are the most important. Our discussions gave us a great opportunity to compare and rethink our solutions to this challenge and to challenges in the other areas mentioned in this article.

The discussions during the peer review process also helped us identify the strengths of our SAI: numerous performance audits and effective communication with the public through our professional Web site. At the same time, we learned from the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic about being open to the experiences of others, striving to use new technical solutions, and presenting brief audit reports to the public.

Another group of benefits for INTOSAI as a whole relates to our experience applying *ISSAI 5600: Peer Review Guideline* and its ready-to-use checklist to this peer review. We found the checklist helpful in quickly screening all important matters. After the peer review, we were able to provide Subcommittee 3 of the Capacity Building Committee with feedback on problems that we had faced with these materials and our proposals for improvements. This was the first opportunity to provide feedback since ISSAI 5600 was approved at the XX INCOSAI in November 2010.

For additional information, please contact the authors at: Pawel.Banas@nik.gov.pl, Jacek.Mazur@nik.gov.pl

A graphic featuring a globe with a grid pattern. The word "Spotlight" is written in a large, bold, serif font across the top of the globe. Below it, the words "on ISSAIs" are written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. The globe is rendered in shades of gray and white, with a subtle shadow effect.

Spotlight on ISSAIs

by Bruce Robertson, Office of the Controller and Auditor-General of New Zealand, and Sarah Lineham, PASAI

Why Is Harmonization Needed?

During its August 2011 Congress in Tonga, the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) took significant steps toward adopting the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) into its work program, the Pacific Regional Audit Initiative (PRAI). PASAI's Assistant Secretary-General, Sarah Lineham, successfully raised the awareness of congress participants by introducing them to an innovative ISSAI checklist that focuses on the ISSAIs on level 2 of the ISSAI framework, the prerequisites for the functioning of SAIs.

The checklist enables an SAI to compare its current position against the prerequisites outlined in the ISSAIs. It is available online at www.pasai.org/site/pasai/files/issai/ISSAI%20self-assessment%20checklist.pdf.

Many SAIs face constitutional or organizational challenges to meeting the ISSAI prerequisites. At one of the congress workshops, PASAI delegates did a self assessment against the checklist as a first step in working with the ISSAIs. The workshop outcomes included sharing challenges that SAIs face in meeting all the prerequisites and that individual auditors-general face in developing strategies to move their SAIs toward effectively complying with the ISSAI framework.

The PRAI and its activities are generally consistent with the ISSAI framework. The auditors-general recognize that ISSAI implementation will involve combining their self-initiated work with participation in the PRAI.

The PRAI also involves a significant cooperative capacity-building program, under which manuals are produced on a cooperative regional basis for use in PASAI's planned staff development program. The suite of manuals is near completion and includes financial and performance audit methodology manuals, reporting and quality assurance guidelines, and a human resource manual. The congress resolved that these manuals be reviewed to incorporate the relevant ISSAIs as they are produced. The manuals will be available on CDs and from the PASAI Web site (www.pasai.org).

Despite the challenges they face—including funding—PASAI members are keen to effectively implement the ISSAIs into their practice, moving beyond rhetoric into action.

For more information on the checklist, please contact Sarah Lineham at sarah.lineham@oag.govt.nz.

For additional information on the ISSAIs, see www.issai.org.



INTOSAI- *Donor Cooperation* *Update*

Global Call for Proposals to Support Capacity Development

by the INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Secretariat

In July 2011, the World Bank hosted the third INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee meeting in Washington, D.C. The meeting resulted in several milestone agreements, including the development of a consolidated databank of ongoing projects designed to strengthen SAIs; the formation of a donor task force to take forward the establishment of a pooled fund for SAI capacity development, which would most likely be administered by the World Bank; and the issuance of a global call for proposals for SAI capacity development. The call for proposals is designed to support SAI capacity-development initiatives across the INTOSAI community that need additional financial, in-kind, peer-to-peer, or other forms of support. The INTOSAI-Donor Secretariat's task is to facilitate cooperation with the INTOSAI regional and subregional secretariats.

Rationale for Global Call for Proposals

The 2010 SAI stocktaking identified a significant need for increased capacity-building support among SAIs, particularly in developing countries. Recognizing these needs, the INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee decided to issue a call for proposals that would maintain the INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation's momentum and increase coordination among, and levels of support to, SAIs. The call for proposals is not intended to replace existing support arrangements, and applicants are encouraged to view it as an additional means of support.

Application Procedures and Deadline

In August 2011, the INTOSAI regions issued invitations to the SAI community to respond to the call for proposals. SAIs in developing countries, INTOSAI regions and subregions, and INTOSAI committees, subcommittees, and working groups are eligible and encouraged to apply. Final proposals must be submitted electronically to the INTOSAI-Donor Secretariat—directly or through the INTOSAI regional and subregional secretariats—**by November 14, 2011.**

A proposal template has been developed for applicants together with relevant user guidance, including an indicative results framework (i.e., an illustration of the results chain for a comprehensive SAI capacity-development program, including examples of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts), and sample applications. These can be accessed at www.idi.no or through the INTOSAI regional secretariats. Applications can be submitted in INTOSAI's five official languages as well as Portuguese.

The Secretariat will check the completeness of all final proposals received and review them against key considerations. Finalized proposals will be forwarded to potential support providers, along with the Secretariat's review of the proposal.

In addition to the Steering Committee members,¹ potential support providers may include other donors and SAIs engaged in supporting SAI capacity development. Individual SAIs and donors will decide what financial, in-kind, or peer-to-peer support will be provided for each application. Programs will be managed according to the policies and procedures the support providers and the applicant agree upon. The Secretariat will be responsible for effective coordination and communication between applicants and potential support providers and will report on progress at the fourth INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee meeting to be held in Jaipur, India, February 23–25, 2012.

The Steering Committee anticipates that the global call for proposals will be an important means of matching SAIs in need of capacity development support with donors or SAI providers. However, because the demand for capacity-building support is high and funding and other forms of support are limited, there are no guarantees that proposals submitted will be funded.

For additional information about the global call for proposals, please contact the INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Secretariat at idi@idi.no.

¹Leadership of the Steering Committee is provided by Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs from the INTOSAI and Donor communities. The SAI of Saudi Arabia is Chair and the SAI of the United States is Vice Chair for INTOSAI. The World Bank is Chair and the U.K. Department for International Development is Vice Chair for the donors. The INTOSAI Development Initiative serves as Secretariat for the INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation.

UN/INTOSAI Symposium

The 21st UN/INTOSAI Symposium, jointly organized by the INTOSAI General Secretariat and the United Nations (UN), was held in Vienna, Austria, July 13–15, 2011. The symposium focused on effective practices of cooperation between supreme audit institutions (SAI) and citizens to enhance public accountability.

About 140 representatives of 66 SAIs attended, along with representatives of various international organizations, including the UN, the Inter Parliamentary Union, the International Budget Partnership, and GIZ (the German development organization).

For the first time in the symposium's history, a UN Under-Secretary-General participated in the event. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, made remarks and met with symposium participants. Carman Lapointe, UN Under-Secretary-General for the Office of Internal Oversight Services, was also present as an observer.

Dr. Josef Moser, INTOSAI General Secretary and Auditor General of Austria, opened the symposium and welcomed participants. The symposium sessions covered three themes: (1) communication between SAIs and citizens, (2) forms of citizen participation in government auditing, and (3) values and benefits of cooperation between SAIs, parliaments and citizens. Osama Jafar Faqeh, President of the General Auditing Bureau of Saudi Arabia, served as theme 1 chair; a UN representative served as theme 2 chair; and Terence Nombembe, Chairman of the INTOSAI Governing Board and Auditor General of South Africa, served as chair for theme 3.

The symposium featured presentations by 26 representatives of SAIs, as well as representatives of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

The symposium contributed to the implementation of the following strategic priorities in the INTOSAI Strategic Plan 2011–2016:

- help ensure the independence of SAIs,
- strengthen capacity building of SAIs,
- demonstrate the value and benefit of SAIs,
- further the fight against corruption, and
- enhance INTOSAI communication.

The symposium reflected the ongoing cooperation and partnership between INTOSAI and the UN. In its concluding session, symposium participants made several recommendations to enhance public accountability through cooperation between SAIs and citizens. The recommendations included the following:



- Continue the efforts to adopt a UN General Assembly resolution supporting the principles laid down in the Declarations of Lima and Mexico and recognizing the work of INTOSAI.
- Apply the INTOSAI Framework on Communicating and Promoting the Value and Benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions to enhance the credibility of SAIs and improve the lives of citizens.
- Increase public knowledge of the work and role of SAIs and their added value through ongoing media coverage, public campaigns, use of social media, and other awareness-raising activities in the local languages, as appropriate.
- Develop and implement public relations and communication strategies for active, accurate, and transparent communication with the media.
- Support budget transparency systems and actions that will inform citizens about the entire budget process, including amendments to and the execution of the budget.
- Promote citizen participation by developing mechanisms to receive and monitor complaints for noncompliance and misuse, as well as suggestions for improved public administration.
- Commit to contributing to the Rio plus 20 Summit on Climate Change in June 2012, at the UN's invitation, through appropriate INTOSAI mechanisms.
- Establish a joint agenda with UN DESA to build capacities in all countries, including partnership between developed and developing countries and aiming to improve the audit process, transparency, and the eradication of corruption.
- Contribute specifically to the prevention of corruption in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
- Encourage sharing of information and experiences among SAIs to promote efficient and effective interactions with citizens.
- Develop INTOSAI guidance on cooperation with citizens through the work program of the INTOSAI Working Group on the Value and Benefits of SAIs to address the opportunities as well as the risks associated with communication with citizens.

The full set of conclusions and recommendations is available at: www.intosai.org/blueline/upload/18conclusions200711e.pdf.

Professional Standards Committee

The Steering Committee of the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) held its 8th meeting in Wellington, New Zealand, June 22–24, 2011. At the meeting, delegates discussed initiatives related to raising awareness of the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI), carrying out the ISSAI harmonization project, and maintaining the ISSAIs and INTOSAI Guidance on Good Governance (INTOSAI GOV).



Participants in the June 2011 PSC Steering Committee meeting in New Zealand.

ISSAI Awareness Raising

The delegates from Bahrain and Poland gave presentations on their experiences with awareness-raising events in ARABOSAI and EUROSAI, respectively. Their presentations were followed by extensive knowledge sharing on other ISSAI awareness-raising events and activities. The delegates welcomed the news about various initiatives and acknowledged achievements to date. They also emphasized the need to accelerate the work, include aspects of implementation, and focus on all four levels of the ISSAI framework. The PSC Secretariat was encouraged to gather information on different ways the PSC Web site can be used to implement the ISSAIs and support knowledge sharing. The Secretariat would also greatly appreciate receiving more information about member SAIs' experiences related to implementing and using the ISSAIs and requests that relevant information on these topics be forwarded to the PSC at psc@rigsrevisionen.dk.

The ISSAI Awareness-Raising Task Force will keep track of already planned INTOSAI events, in particular regional events, and seize these opportunities to promote the ISSAI framework. The PSC wishes to employ a demand-driven strategy in which it is seen as a willing assistant and active participant in awareness-raising activities that INTOSAI members plan and organize. In connection with this, the task force has developed a set of standard presentations on the ISSAIs that SAIs can use. The presentations can be found on the PSC Web site. All materials are available in English and some are also available in INTOSAI's other official languages.

ISSAI Harmonization Project

The delegates emphasized the critical importance of the ISSAI harmonization project, approved at the XX INCOSAI in Johannesburg, in supporting the successful implementation of the ISSAIs among INTOSAI members. The project's overall objective is to revise the text of ISSAIs 100–400, fundamental auditing principles, and develop the

ISSAIs into a more coherent set of standards. The PSC Steering Committee's intention is that the revised fundamental auditing principles should provide a better overview of the full set of ISSAIs, including the implementation guidelines on financial, performance, and compliance auditing (ISSAIs 1000–4999). The INTOSAI family's full support of the revised fundamental auditing principles is essential for the project to succeed, and various means of communication (including the ISSAI Web site) will be employed to keep INTOSAI members updated on project developments.

Maintenance of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs

In November 2010, the XX INCOSAI endorsed the due process for INTOSAI's professional standards, which defines, among other things, responsibilities for maintaining the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs. The Steering Committee delegates discussed the implementation of these requirements and agreed that the relevant subcommittees should decide on the frequency of maintenance reviews and publish the maintenance frequency on www.issai.org before November 2011.

All reports and additional meeting materials can be found on the PSC Web site (www.psc-intosai.org) under "PSC SC."

Capacity Building Committee

Subcommittee 1: Forging Stronger Links with the Regions

Under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ahmed El Midaoui, the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) is strengthening its links with the INTOSAI regions. Over the next few years, one of the CBC's key activities will be helping support and strengthen regionally based capacity-building activities. To launch this process, all regions were invited to participate in the June 2011 meeting of CBC Subcommittee 1 (Promote Increased Capacity Building Activities among INTOSAI Members) at the United Kingdom's National Audit Office in London. The regional delegations gave presentations showing how their regions are supporting capacity building, what activities are planned, and what are the main challenges being faced. The few regions unable to attend sent PowerPoint presentations to assist with the discussions.

These presentations confirmed the vibrancy of the regions and the extent of their innovations in the design and delivery of capacity-building activities. Most are running regional training courses for audit and corporate support staff and senior managers, as well as developing regional audits. Their innovations include the following:

- Annual technical updates to share the latest developments in auditing standards and practices.
- Creating awards to recognize innovative research and analytical activities in the audit field.
- Using mixed modes of training—for example, e-learning plus face-to-face meetings.
- Launching cooperative or parallel audits so that SAIs can work together on common audit areas.

The presentations also revealed opportunities for getting more out of this work and achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency, something dear to our hearts as auditors! Many regions have been developing quality assurance guides and training courses, but few outside of each region knew of these developments and were making use of them. In the future, it may be possible to increase resource sharing and reduce cost and duplication by involving several regions when developing new programs or materials.

Similarly, it was evident that some regions have been better able than others to obtain the resources to build up their support systems and recruit more regional staff. There are opportunities to share lessons learned in securing and managing regional resources and running efficient regional capacity-building programs. Also, regional capacity-building Web sites can be improved by identifying, disseminating, and applying best practices. The meeting also highlighted issues around access to subject matter expertise, communication difficulties caused by distance and language differences, and a lack of follow up and evaluation of training and capacity-building activities.

From the ensuing discussions, the subcommittee added the following to its action plan for the period leading up to XXI INCOSAI in China in 2013:

- Strengthen the capacity of the regional secretariats by helping them attract funds, access the work of other regions, improve planning, and develop better Web sites.
- Strengthen CBC's role as capacity-development broker by developing better knowledge-management and information-sharing arrangements, helping avoid unnecessary duplication, and strengthening the CBC Web site to ensure that it provides easy access to other relevant sites, in particular to the regions.
- Use CBC Subcommittee 1 as an arena for meetings/exchanges between INTOSAI regions—for example, to consult on documents and guides developed or being developed by INTOSAI regions.
- Encourage the use of more innovative and cost-effective forms of training, building on the INTOSAI Development Initiative's work with e-learning.

This meeting was an important step in working out new ways in which INTOSAI and the regions can better work together. Participants want to see continued efforts to collaborate during future subcommittee meetings. The Board of Audit of Japan has generously offered to host the next meeting of Subcommittee 1 in Tokyo, June 14–15, 2012.

For additional information, contact the subcommittee at iain.johnston@nao.gsi.gov.uk.

Subcommittee 2: Annual Meeting Held in Peru

The third annual meeting of the CBC's Subcommittee 2 (Develop Advisory and Consultancy Services) was held in Lima, Peru, August 31–September 1, 2011. During the meeting, the SAI of Morocco summarized the activities of the CBC's three subcommittees in accordance with the INTOSAI strategic plan and highlighted the importance of their work. In addition, the SAIs of Peru and Pakistan presented progress reports on Subcommittee 2 activities. The SAI of Germany submitted a final report on standardizing guidelines on cooperative audits. The SAIs of Pakistan,

Morocco, and Peru discussed strategies to carry out the three lines of activities that constitute the subcommittee's work: developing and promoting a database of experts, coordinated and joint or parallel audits, and internships and visitor programs.

The SAI of Peru, Chair of Subcommittee 2, presented working papers on the development of an INTOSAI database of experts. The members of the subcommittee agreed to disseminate this important tool within INTOSAI and expand the database's listing of experts on government audit. Therefore, INTOSAI community members are encouraged to contact the subcommittee at cooperacion@contraloria.gob.pe to request a username and password so that they can register their experts in the database. Current database users can both register and search for experts at <https://apps.contraloria.gob.pe/intosai/>.

The SAI of Pakistan offered to include new provisions into the guidelines for internship programs and prepare a proposal outlining a standard agreement for these programs.

For additional information, contact the subcommittee at cooperacion@contraloria.gob.pe.

Working Group on Public Debt

INTOSAI's Working Group on Public Debt (WGPD) is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2011. Since its creation in 1991, the WGPD has carried out specialized research and generated and published guidelines and other products to encourage sound reporting and proper auditing and management of public debt.

The National Audit Office of Lithuania (NAO), a member of the WGPD since 1996, hosted this year's meeting, which took place in a time when the current financial crisis has made public debt—in particular its rapid growth and implications for general fiscal stability—an issue of primary importance for many countries. Public debt has posed many unexpected challenges to governments as well as their SAIs.

In this context, Lithuanian Auditor General Giedrė Švedienė, noted the following during her opening address at the WGPD meeting: "Such [a] situation demands that SAIs redouble their efforts to help provide accountability for their governments, to ensure transparency of borrowing, [and to] look for more effective ways to manage the debt. The WGPD is uniquely positioned to support SAIs now facing emerging public debt issues and, I believe, will pay particular attention to new debt management issues and challenges emerging from the recent financial turmoil."

The WGPD's activities are part of goal 3 of the INTOSAI Knowledge Sharing Committee and currently revolve around six themes ranging from the impact of financial crises on public debt to contingent debt and information systems related to public debt management. Since 2002, the WGPD has worked closely with the INTOSAI Development Initiative to help create capacity-building programs on public debt management. It also supports the work of the Professional Standards Committee in developing the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI).

Thus, the WGPD is harmonizing its official products with the new ISSAI standards and determining which should be modified, eliminated, or maintained.

As of July 2011, the members of the WGPD are Mexico (Chair), Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea, Lithuania, Moldova, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the Ukraine, the United States, Yemen, and Zambia.

For additional information, visit the WGPD Web site at www.wgpd.org.mx or e-mail the WGPD at secretariat@wgpd.org.mx.

Working Group on the Fight against Corruption and Money Laundering

The Working Group on the Fight against Corruption and Money Laundering, chaired by the SAI of Egypt, held an international seminar on September 12, 2011, in Prague, Czech Republic. The seminar included sessions on trends, approaches, and successes in the fight against corruption; promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability in public administration; and the status and powers of SAIs in the fight against corruption, as well as the risks, and proposals for anticorruption measures. These sessions featured presentations from experts in governments, SAIs, and international anticorruption organizations.

After the seminar, the working group held its fifth meeting on September 13 and 14. During the meeting, the working group discussed its progress on the new work plan for 2011–2013, which had been approved at INCOSAI XX. The group discussed cooperative efforts among SAIs in preparing guidelines to support efforts to detect and fight corruption and money laundering.

The working group also addressed implementing the following:

- reviewing channels of communication and cooperation with key international partners named by the World Bank's Financial Market Integrity group,
- cooperating with the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing to develop a guideline on corruption and fraud in environmental auditing,
- developing a database of SAI best practices and expertise in fighting corruption and money laundering,
- publishing the Russian SAI's document on guidelines and principles for SAIs and translating it into INTOSAI's five official languages, and
- publishing the working group's First Book 2007-2010 in Arabic and English on its Web site.

For additional information, contact the working group:

E-mail: wgfacml@cao.gov.eg

Web site: www.wgfacml.cao.gov.eg

AFROSAI General Assembly Held in Gabon

The African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI) held its 12th General Assembly in Libreville, Gabon, July 18–23, 2011. Hosted by the President of the Court of Audit of Gabon, Gilbert Ngoulakia, the assembly drew delegates from Arabic-speaking SAIs (AFROSAI-A), English-speaking SAIs (AFROSAI-E), French-speaking SAIs (AFROSAI-F), and Portuguese-speaking SAIs. Over 50 countries sent delegates, while guests and observers included ministerial officials and representatives from the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), the Institute of Internal Auditors, various international donor organizations, and this *Journal*.

The opening ceremony, held at the Laico Okoume Palace Hotel in Libreville, was attended by the Prime Minister of Gabon, Paul Biyoghe Mba, who made opening remarks to the delegates. Mr. Ngoulakia, incoming AFROSAI President, and Terence Nombembe, outgoing AFROSAI President and Auditor General of South Africa, also made welcoming remarks.

At the first plenary session, Mr. Nombembe underscored the importance of having all regions and language groups of Africa represented and participating in AFROSAI meetings. He noted that he was pleased to see such a large and diverse group attending the General Assembly and that he hoped this level of cooperation and participation would continue into the future. He also congratulated Mr. Ngoulakia on his new role as incoming AFROSAI President.

Mr. Ngoulakia thanked Mr. Nombembe and stated that it was an honor to take the role of AFROSAI President and that he looked forward to continuing the good work in AFROSAI that Mr. Nombembe had initiated.

In other opening business, the assembly approved the appointment of the Auditor General of Gambia, Bubacarr Sankareh, as Technical Vice-President for the 12th AFROSAI meeting. The SAI of Libya hosts the AFROSAI General Secretariat and, due to the situation in the country, was unable to attend. Alfred Enoh, Director of the Secretariat of AFROSAI-F, represented the secretariat *ad interim* and announced that the AFROSAI prize, normally awarded to an SAI for its role in supporting AFROSAI, would not be awarded this year because of the absence of the SAI of Libya. Mr. Enoh awarded the science competition prize to Khemraj Reetun of the SAI of Mauritius.

The assembly also heard remarks from Magnus Borge, the head of IDI, and Francis Salsmann, representing the Court of Accounts of France, who discussed the complexities of the relationship between SAIs and their parliaments.

Bame Gueye, President of AFROSAI-E and President of the Court of Audit of Senegal, delivered the AFROSAI General Secretariat report. He spoke about the status of AFROSAI dues, the upcoming introduction of the new AFROSAI strategic plan and procedure manual, relations with the donor community, and capacity building within the regional language subgroups.

Mr. Nombembe introduced the new 2012–2014 AFROSAI strategic plan, noting its three priorities—strengthening governance structures, technical capacity building of member SAIs, and institutional capacity building for member SAIs within their own jurisdictions. He also highlighted the section of the plan dealing with AFROSAI financing, which essentially comes from member dues and donor contributions. He noted that if donor contributions diminish, it will even more essential that AFROSAI ensures that all member dues are kept current and paid in full.

Mr. Gueye presented delegates with the newly completed *AFROSAI Procedures Manual*, which was adopted unanimously by the assembly. The assembly also unanimously approved the strategic plan.

In other business, Mounira Abd El Hadj presented the report of the *AFROSAI Journal*. Representatives of the AFROSAI language subgroups each made presentations, followed by remarks from Emma Kellner, representative of German development organization GIZ, who discussed 12 projects already completed with AFROSAI, including work on the strategic plan and procedures manual and seven more ongoing capacity-building projects.

The second plenary session focused on the presentation of papers and discussions on three themes:

- performance audit (theme chair Ghana, rapporteur Namibia, and reports from Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Senegal, and South Africa);
- audit of public debt (theme chair Mauritania, rapporteur Morocco, and reports from Egypt, Cameroon, Gabon, and Guinea); and
- auditing government salary payments (theme chair Cameroon, rapporteur Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), secretary Senegal, and reports from Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, and Guinea).

In the third general plenary, the assembly unanimously approved the admission of four new members to AFROSAI: Guinea, Togo, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe. It also approved the election of new language subgroup representatives to the AFROSAI Governing Board: Algeria (AFROSAI-A), Cameroon and Senegal (AFROSAI-F/CREFIAF), and Namibia (AFROSAI-E).

Various issues regarding AFROSAI's finances were discussed, with particular emphasis on the situation in Libya and the functioning of the General Secretariat. It was agreed that a decision regarding the General Secretariat would be taken at the Governing Board meeting before the next AFROSAI General Assembly.

Finally, the delegates unanimously adopted the Libreville Accords, and proposed that Morocco host the next AFROSAI General Assembly in 2014. The delegates approved the proposal, and Morocco accepted the invitation to host the 13th AFROSAI General Assembly.

VIII EUROSAI CONGRESS

From May 30 to June 2, 2011, the VIII EUROSAI Congress was held in Lisbon. The congress was organized by the Tribunal de Contas of Portugal, which is serving as the President of EUROSAI for 2011–2014.



Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins, President of the Portuguese SAI and President of EUROSAI, welcomed participants to the VII EUROSAI Congress in Lisbon at the beginning of June 2011.

Congress Themes

The congress focused on two main themes.

- Theme I dealt with the challenges, demands, and responsibilities of public managers and the role of supreme audit institutions (SAI). Discussions on this theme were divided into two subthemes: I.A, challenges and demands faced by public managers today, and I.B, the role of SAIs in the accountability and responsibilities of public managers.
- Theme II focused on SAI audits of independent regulatory agencies.

The following SAIs served as chairs and reporters for each theme and subtheme:

- Subtheme I.A: Netherlands (chair) and Slovenia (reporter).
- Subtheme I. B: Spain (chair) and France (reporter).
- Theme II: Poland (chair) and United Kingdom (reporter).

Working groups for each theme and subtheme prepared principal papers and discussion papers for the congress. EUROSAI members contributed country papers that served as a significant basis for the exchange of experiences, discussions, and deliberations.

The presentations of congress speakers also contributed to fruitful debates, which were, in turn, enriched by participant interactions. The participants included representatives of 47 EUROSAI member SAIs and 20 observers from the public audit community (including other representatives of INTOSAI and its regional organizations). All had the opportunity to discuss issues of common interest and major importance that were raised in the context of the congress themes.



Participants in the VIII EUROSAI Congress in Lisbon.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Theme I

New realities in society have had a significant impact on public management and accountability. In a fast-changing world, governments must respond more quickly to meet the needs and expectations of their citizens.

Congress participants noted a challenging tension in government between (1) careful democratic processes of legislation and control and (2) flexibility to deal with rapid developments. However, they believe that there is no contradiction between flexibility and an open system model, on the one hand, and accountability, on the other hand.

SAIs have an important role to play in promoting a culture of accountability and facilitating an effectively operating accountability process by auditing, reporting, issuing recommendations, highlighting good practices, and—in some cases—exercising their jurisdictional and sanctioning powers.

Therefore, the congress adopted recommendations on the need for SAIs to adapt to the innovations and changes in society and promote different dimensions of accountability.

Within the framework of the EUROSAI strategic plan adopted by this congress (see below), the congress recommended that EUROSAI build upon this theme through a structured dialogue and other joint efforts to meet the challenges of change, and that the results be shared with the wider INTOSAI community, in accordance with INTOSAI's motto, *Mutual Experience Benefits All*.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Theme II

EUROSAI members recognized that independent regulators are an important, and growing, feature of the public sector landscape in many European countries. They have developed as the result of a variety of factors, and there is no common definition of regulation; in fact, there are many different regulatory roles and functions, and they differ from country to country. However, three primary groups of regulators can be found across EUROSAI members: infrastructure regulators, competition and consumer regulators, and financial services regulators.

The financial crisis has led to enhanced roles for financial regulators across the EUROSAI countries. This can complicate SAIs' audits of regulation in this area because not all SAIs have audit responsibility for central banks.

Regulators and SAIs have much in common. They have different mandates to contribute to good governance and public sector management, but both aim to protect the interests of citizens.

The congress recommended that given the independent discretion available to regulators and their varied mandates, SAIs and others external bodies need to rigorously scrutinize regulators' use of financial resources and effectiveness.

The main conclusions and recommendations for each theme can be found at www.eurosai2011.tcontas.pt/Pages/Welcome.aspx.

Other Congress Actions

Other fundamental milestones of the congress were the adoption of the *EUROSAI Strategic Plan 2011–2017*, which can be found on the EUROSAI Web site (www.eurosai.org), and the decision to hold the next congress in the Netherlands in 2014.

The congress also approved a statement, *Reinforcing the independence of SAIs*, which can be found at www.eurosai2011.tcontas.pt/Pages/statement-of-independence.aspx. In this document, EUROSAI members recognize with appreciation and support internal and external INTOSAI initiatives promoting greater transparency, accountability, and the effective and efficient receipt and use of public resources for the benefit of citizens.

For additional information, please see the congress Web site at www.eurosai2011.tcontas.pt/Pages/Welcome.aspx or the EUROSAI Web site at www.eurosai.org.

EUROSAI Signs Cooperation Agreement with European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing

In March 2011, EUROSAI and the European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing (ECIIA) signed a cooperation agreement in Rome that created a process allowing the two organizations to benefit mutually from each other's work and promote knowledge sharing. The ECIIA is a regional organization of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) a well-known body in the international community of auditors. The IIA has been a partner of INTOSAI since 2007, when it signed a memorandum of understanding with the Professional Standards Committee that was renewed in 2010. As a regional branch of the IIA, the ECIIA assists and represents the European internal audit profession in both the private and public sectors. Thus, collaboration between ECIIA and EUROSAI, as European structures of the two organizations, seemed a natural step toward implementing the achievements of the global organizations at the European level.



Phil Tarling (left), President of the ECIIA, and Jacek Jezierski (right), then Chair of the EUROSAI Governing Board, signed a cooperation agreement between their two organizations in March 2011 in Rome.

Work on the agreement had already started in 2009. After a series of meetings, representatives of EUROSAI and ECIIA identified areas of collaboration and set common objectives and framework initiatives in the field of public sector internal auditing that were later captured in the agreement on cooperation. It was based on the awareness that the internal auditing and public external auditing professions complement each other. An effective internal audit function is a vital component of good governance providing public managers, especially senior management, with assurance about the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations as well as suggestions for improvement in all areas of control and governance. Supreme audit institutions, being bodies of public external audit, can benefit from the results of internal auditors' work.

The cooperation process initiated by the signing of the agreement includes (1) facilitating dialogue and knowledge sharing between SAIs and internal auditors in the public sector across Europe, (2) developing a common understanding of the issues related to public sector accountability, auditing, and shared terminology in the field, and (3) sharing experiences in implementing existing professional standards. To accomplish these purposes, the ECIIA and EUROSAI have agreed to develop a common platform to share their publications, tools, and resources; inform each other of all initiatives related to the public sector; and identify and implement joint projects, such as conferences, seminars, and training and research activities.

The agreement was signed by Jacek Jezierski, President of the SAI of Poland and the then Chair of the EUROSAI Governing Board, and Phil Tarling, President of the ECIIA.

Phase 2 of the IDI/CAROSAI Program on a Risk-based Approach to Financial Auditing

A Program on Risk-based Approach to Financial Auditing was launched in 2010 to follow up on the Program on Quality Assurance in Financial Auditing delivered in 2009. Audit teams from six CAROSAI members participated in developing guidelines for risk-based financial audits and carried out pilot audits based on the guidelines. The program culminated with an IDI/CAROSAI guide, *A Risk-Based Approach to Financial Auditing*. In 2011, the program will be delivered again for those CAROSAI members that were not able to participate in the first round. IDI staff and regional experts met for a design meeting in July 2011 to develop comprehensive courseware, which will be used to deliver a workshop on a risk-based approach to financial audits by the end of 2011.



Participants in the IDI/CAROSAI design meeting.

IDI/CREFIAF Strategic Planning Program

IDI is currently cooperating with CREFIAF (French-speaking AFROSAI) to deliver a Strategic Planning Program. A Workshop on Needs Assessment, the first activity of this program, was delivered to eight SAIs in July 2011. The workshop trained participants in how to assess capacity-building needs using the framework and tools described in the *IDI Capacity Building Needs Assessment Guide*. After this workshop, the participating teams conducted needs assessments in their own SAIs. These assessments will be reviewed when the teams reconvene at a combined Needs Assessment Review and Strategic Planning Workshop in 2012. The program will be delivered twice during 2011 and 2012. The heads of the second group of SAIs will attend an initial strategic planning meeting in October 2011.

IDI UPDATE



IDI Update keeps you informed of developments in the work and programs of the INTOSAI Development Initiative. To find out more about IDI and to keep up to date between editions of the *Journal*, look at the IDI Web site: www.idi.no.

IDI/AFROSAI-E Management Development Program

IDI and AFROSAI-E (English-speaking AFROSAI) launched a regional Management Development Program (MDP) in 2009 to enhance leadership and managerial capacities in the regional SAIs. After conducting several workshops targeting SAI heads and senior and operational managers, IDI and the region are now ready to roll out the program to other SAI staff. In August 2011, a selected group of senior and operational managers who had taken part in the program's first phase participated in a Workshop on Facilitation Skills to prepare them for their roles in delivering the program to five AFROSAI-E members.

IDI/PASAI Cooperative Performance Audits on Fisheries

IDI has agreed to support PASAI in delivering a third cooperative audit focusing on fisheries after the successful completion of two cooperative audits on solid waste management and access to safe drinking water. Team members from the participating SAIs held an audit planning meeting in August 2011 and are to conduct field audits, analyze data, and draft audit reports before reconvening for a feedback meeting early in 2012.



Participants at the IDI/PASAI cooperative audits on fisheries planning meeting.

IDI/ASOSAI Program on Development and Implementation of Strategic Plans

After a 2009 ASOSAI needs assessment survey revealed the need to strengthen SAI strategic planning capacities in the region, IDI and ASOSAI agreed to launch a new cooperation program to develop and implement strategic plans. As a first step, a strategic planning meeting was held in September 2011 with the heads of nine participating SAIs to obtain their commitment and agree on the program components, outputs, and outcomes.

Completion of the Transregional Program on Public Debt Management Audit and Issuance of the *Public Debt Practical Audit Guide*

The Transregional Program on Public Debt Management Audit, the single most comprehensive program in IDI's history, has reached its completion. Audit teams from 29 SAIs have attended an e-learning course, conducted a public debt management audit, and completed their audit reports and audit guidelines. The program was delivered in both English and French.

The program's final activity was held in September 2011. IDI staff, subject matter experts, members of the INTOSAI Working Group on Public Debt, and representatives from the three groups of participating SAIs convened in Lisbon to finalize the draft *Public Debt Practical Audit Guide*, one of the planned outputs of this program. The guide is based on the relevant International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions and the feedback and experiences gained through the program's pilot audits. The participating SAIs have committed to adopting the guide for use in their institutions.

The final *Public Debt Practical Audit Guide* will be made available to the INTOSAI community in early 2012.

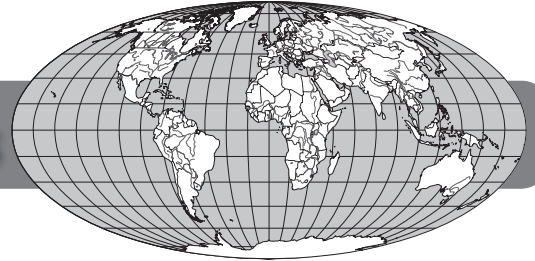
Contacting IDI

To discuss any of the issues raised in this edition, please contact IDI:

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Web site: www.idi.no

INTOSAI 2011-2012 Events



<p>October</p> <p>5-6 Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Committee on Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Services, Moscow, Russian Federation</p> <p>17-22 OLACEFS General Assembly, Caracas, Venezuela</p> <p>27-28 62nd Meeting of the INTOSAI Governing Board, Vienna, Austria</p>	<p>November</p> <p>7-10 Meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Auditing, Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>	<p>December</p>
<p>January</p>	<p>February</p> <p>23-25 INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee meeting, Jaipur, India</p>	<p>March</p>
<p>April</p>	<p>May</p> <p>28 EUROSAI Governing Board Meeting, Ankara, Turkey</p>	<p>June</p> <p>14-15 Capacity Building Committee meeting, Tokyo, Japan</p>

Editor's Note: This calendar is published in support of INTOSAI's communications strategy and as a way of helping INTOSAI members plan and coordinate schedules. Included in this regular *Journal* feature will be INTOSAI-wide events and regionwide events such as congresses, general assemblies, and board meetings. Because of limited space, the many training courses and other professional meetings offered by the regions cannot be included. For additional information, contact the Secretary General of each regional working group.

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