

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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## OF GOVERNMENT AUDITING

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The editors invite submissions of articles, special reports, and news items, which should be sent to the editorial offices at:

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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. Submission guidelines are located [here](#).

The Journal is distributed electronically to INTOSAI members and other interested parties at no cost. It is available online at [intosaijournal.org](http://intosaijournal.org) and [intosai.org](http://intosai.org), and by contacting the Journal via email at [intosaijournal@gao.gov](mailto:intosaijournal@gao.gov).

# THIS ISSUE

**4** Editorial

**6** Feature Articles

*Civil Society Participation in Audit: The Australian National Audit Office's Approach to Citizen Engagement in Performance Audits*

*Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea (BAI): Audit Request System and its Implications for Public Participation*

*Enhancing Accountability through Audits: Lessons from Collaborations Between Supreme Audit Institutions and Civil Society Organizations*

*SAI Nepal Perspectives Lessons on Civil Society Participation in Performance Audits*

*Mechanisms to Enhance Community Involvement in Public Sector Audits: Evidence from SAI of Indonesia*

**24** Special Contributions

**29** Spotlight Stories

**36** Inside INTOSAI

**47** News in Brief

Feature Article Theme: Civil Society Participation

# Engaging with Civil Society Enables High Quality Audits in Critical Times: Perspectives from the U.S. GAO



“While we regularly engage with civil society during the normal course of our work, at no time has this been more important than during global emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Author: Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the U.S. GAO*

In recent years, Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) have increasingly seen the value in engaging with civil society as a way to enhance government accountability and the quality of their audits. While we regularly engage with civil society during the normal course of our work, at no time has this been more important than during global emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic that we all have experienced for going on three years.

GAO has an important role to monitor the U.S. federal government's response to COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our government has authorized \$4.6 trillion in emergency spending across numerous federal agencies and sectors of our society. From March 1, 2020 to August 5, 2022, GAO issued 174 related products, providing real time oversight of these funds.

As of September 30, 2022, GAO has made 368 total recommendations for improving federal pandemic operations. These recommendations include improvements in such areas as publicly reporting COVID-19 nursing home vaccination data and targeting vaccine outreach to veterans. Agencies have fully or partially addressed 37 percent of these recommendations as of September 2022. More specifically, agencies have fully addressed 26 percent (94 recommendations) and partially addressed another 11 percent (42 recommendations) of recommendations.

In conducting this work, we interviewed and gathered information from numerous civil society organizations and the public to obtain first-hand knowledge about programs, participants, and outcomes. We have also recommended ways to improve services for key members of society that are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. These include the elderly, military veterans, children, those living in poverty, the mentally ill, health care workers and institutions, and individuals facing disruptions in income.

For our pandemic-related reports, we have interviewed:

- National organizations that represent nursing homes, residents, and their families, along with researchers specializing in nursing home infection control to identify ways to improve nursing home conditions;
- Officials representing the national association of state-level veterans' homes in order to recommend improvements for inspections of veterans facilities;
- Organizations that advocate for K-12 English Language Learner (ELL) students, as well as for students with disabilities, who engaged in distance learning during the pandemic. This included associations of educators, school administrators, and special education administrators to assess the status of distance learning for these communities;
- Representatives from national organizations that conduct child welfare-related advocacy, training, and research to assess challenges faced by child welfare agencies during the pandemic;
- Public health experts and stakeholder groups representing over 100,000 state and local public health officials; national, regional, community, and health system labs; school administrators; and nursing home staff, physicians, and nurses in our review of COVID testing guidelines;
- Public health interest groups, nutrition assistance organizations, and food distributors to understand implications of the pandemic on nutrition assistance programs;

- Organizations representing behavioral health service providers to assess the impact of the pandemic on behavioral health implications. We also reviewed data from a survey of households and information on calls from citizens to distress hotlines; and
- Government outreach partners representing retired individuals, nutrition advocacy organizations, coalitions of charitable organizations, and a low-income housing advocacy organizations to recommend improvements in economic impact payments to individuals.

GAO also engages external stakeholders in ensuring accountability by enabling these parties to report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of government resources to a hotline. For example, in fiscal year 2022, we received 607 complaints on Fraudnet specifically on COVID-19 emergency funding.

Based on these experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to further engage civil society in the rest of our work. We have a formal process in our audits for identifying relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, who can provide a diverse range of views that offer important context as we frame and conduct our engagements.

Among other things, we make all of our non-classified reports, as well as the database of open recommendations, available on our public website. We meet with and engage several advisory boards, as well as GAO's Center for Strategic Foresight (CSF) where we receive high-level input from a range of outside experts. They provide important insights on the full range of developments across key segments of society including academia, think tanks, nonprofits, and the public and private sectors.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our perspectives and experience on the importance of engaging with civil society to enhance audits during national and global emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborating with a broad range of civil society groups and important stakeholders has helped us achieve our mission of improving federal government performance, and helping ensure public sector accountability. We look forward to continue sharing knowledge and other practices with the INTOSAI community.

# Feature Articles

# Civil Society Participation in Audit

## The Australian National Audit Office's Approach to Citizen Engagement in Performance Audits

*Author: Isabelle Favre PhD, Senior Director and Daniel Whyte, Audit Principal, Australian National Audit Office*

### Introduction

In 2017, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) published the Guidance on Supreme Audit Institutions' Engagement with Stakeholders, which discusses Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) engagement of citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs), along with other important stakeholder groups, in the audit process. The IDI guide states that 'SAI engagement with stakeholders at various levels, and with various mechanisms, does lead to greater audit impact' (IDI 2017, 99–100).

Citizen engagement can occur at several points during an audit: during

the planning phase, during the audit proper, during the dissemination of audit reports, or during the follow-up of recommendations. This paper focuses on participation during the audit. It explores some of the approaches that the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) uses to engage with citizens and CSOs during the course of a performance audit, particularly during the fieldwork phase.

The ANAO's performance audit activities involve audits of the performance of Australian Government programs and entities with focus on assessing economy, efficiency, effectiveness, ethics, and legislative and policy compliance. The ANAO presented 40 performance audits to Parliament in 2021–22 and is planning to increase the number of performance audits it conducts to 48 each year by 2024–25.

### ANAO Citizen Contribution Facility

In mid-2013, the ANAO decided to open all in-progress performance audits to input from members of the public through a web-based facility. This decision followed a successful pilot of the initiative, and aligned with broader Australian Government initiatives to promote the use of technology to encourage more open and transparent government, and strengthened community consultation mechanisms.

Through the [ANAO website contact page](#) and social media platforms ([Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)), members of the public are able to provide comments at any time and on any matter, for example to raise concerns with an area of administration or to request that consideration be given to a

The screenshot shows the ANAO website's audit listing for the 'Management of Cyber Security Supply Chain Risks'. The audit is due by November 2022 and is currently 'OPEN FOR CONTRIBUTION'. The entity involved is the Australian Federal Police, Australian Taxation Office, and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Contributors can contact the team through their website. The audit is categorized under Activity (Procurement) and Sector (Cross Government). There are options to subscribe or contribute to the audit, and a link to view the in-progress audit.

Figure 1.1. The ANAO website home page offers a link to the audits that are open for contribution.

potential audit topic. The ANAO citizen contribution facility targets contributions that address the objective and the criteria of specific performance audits, and which will be considered as part of the body of evidence collected during the fieldwork stage of audits. In mid-July 2022, 21 performance audits were accepting contributions from members of the public.

The number of contributions collected through the citizen contribution facility varies greatly between audits. Between August 2021 and July 2022, over 1000 contributions were received across 41 performance audits.

Contributions are securely delivered to the relevant audit team, and it is not mandatory for contributors to provide their contact details with their contribution. The [Privacy Act 1998](#) protects the confidentiality of the information gathered through this facility, and information can only be disclosed for purposes defined in the [Auditor-General Act 1997](#) (see Sections 36 and 37), and in line with the [ANAO Privacy Policy](#).

## Engaging Effectively with Citizens

### Advertising the Audit Widely

Performance audit fieldwork generally involves consultation with stakeholders outside the entity being audited. These stakeholders, including CSOs, can be identified through the planning and research stages of the audit. SAs can then contact CSOs individually to request a meeting or a written submission.

Some audits, for instance audits focusing on service delivery programs, also benefit from a targeted engagement of citizens. In such cases, the ANAO may ask CSOs to advertise the audit to their constituents. Constituents can then use the ANAO's citizen contribution facility to submit their views independently of the CSO. The audit team may also seek to advertise the audit directly to the citizens affected by the service or program being audited through media outlets, including newspapers and radio.

In a [2019 performance audit](#), the ANAO conducted fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands, situated between the

northern tip of Australia and Papua New Guinea. The audit team used radio announcements in English and in Torres Strait Creole, an advertisement in the local newspaper, and an interview of the audit manager by a local journalist to encourage local citizens to share their views about the work of government agencies.

### Communication Clearly and Simply

Public awareness of the purpose and work of the ANAO has grown over recent years, mostly due to media coverage following the publication of audit reports. Nevertheless, the majority of citizens do not know or understand the role of the ANAO well. An important step for successful citizen engagement is to make sure that the targeted audience understands why the audit team is seeking citizen input, what type of information is relevant to the audit's objective, and how the information will be used by the audit team.

Effort is required to present a SA's role or the objective of an audit in a clear and simple manner, without misrepresentation or distortion. This is particularly important in communities where people master several languages. In these instances, the ANAO considers the use of translators and interpreters when seeking citizen engagement. In Australia, this can be done professionally and at a cost through the [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#), an interpreting service provided by the Australian Government for people who do not speak English and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with non-English speaking people. It can also be achieved by soliciting the assistance of members of the community. This second option offers less confidence in the quality of the translation, but can be more practical, especially when the ANAO is undertaking fieldwork in rural or remote locations where professional interpreting may have to be conducted by phone. It can also be better aligned with audit budgetary constraints, particularly when consultation is conducted in long meetings and over multiple days.

Figures 1.2 and 1.3 show the changes that were made to a poster used to seek the views of Aboriginal people living on the Groote Archipelago (located off the coast of Northern Australia) about the governance of the **Anindilyakwa Land Council**, an organisation assisting Groote Aboriginal people to manage their traditional lands and seas.

**Figure 1.2.**

**Give us your views**

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) is an Australian government agency based in Canberra. The objective of the ANAO is to support accountability and transparency in the Australian Government sector. The ANAO is currently reviewing the governance of Land Councils in the Northern Territory.

We would like to hear your views on how the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC):

- Manages the operations of the ALC on behalf of Aboriginal people
- Conducts consultation with Aboriginal people
- Helps Aboriginal people and traditional owners manage and look after country
- Reports on the ALC's performance
- And any other views you may have on how the ALC works

Please provide your responses before 30 September 2022 by:

- Calling us on 0476 249 221
- sending an email to the ALC at [alc@anao.gov.au](mailto:alc@anao.gov.au) or
- submitting your comments on the ANAO website at [www.anao.gov.au/alc](http://www.anao.gov.au/alc)

**Any information you provide is confidential – it will not be shared with anyone outside of the ANAO.**

Once we have finished collecting information, we will write a report that will be presented to the Australian Parliament in March 2023. It may contain some recommendations to help improve the governance of the ALC.

- It allows the audit team to better identify root causes for observed deficiencies.

The ANAO does not usually present information collected through citizen and CSO engagement in a verbatim form in the ANAO audit reports. The ANAO generally uses this information to help identify high-risk areas for the

**Figure 1.3.**

**What do you think about the Anindilyakwa Land Council?**

We are the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), an Australian government agency based in Canberra. Our job is to make sure things are done the right way.

Right now, we are making sure that the Land Councils in the Northern Territory are doing things properly for their communities, in line with the rules, cultures and laws.

This is normal, and part of our role.

Please tell us how you think the Anindilyakwa Land Council works:

- How it runs its business on behalf of the community
- How it talks with you about big decisions
- How it helps you look after country
- How it reports back to you – to let you know how things are going
- And anything else you'd like to tell us

**How?**

Call us on 0476 249 221, email us at [alc@anao.gov.au](mailto:alc@anao.gov.au) or comment at [www.anao.gov.au/alc](http://www.anao.gov.au/alc). Please tell us before 30 September 2022.

**What's next?**

We will write a report for the Australian Parliament in March 2023. Some of the things you share might then be used to help the ALC be even stronger for your community.

**Anything you tell us is confidential.**  
We won't share it with anyone outside of the ANAO.

[Left] Figure 1.2 was developed by the audit team. [Right] Figure 1.3 shows edits suggested by a member of the community accustomed to communicating with Aboriginal people (the local radio coordinator).

## Using the Information Received

Information collected through citizen and CSO engagement can be an important source of evidence in the audit process:

- It provides the audit team with a better understanding of the social and cultural context in which the audited entity operates and delivers services;
- It ensures that the audit focuses on the issues that matter the most to those who are affected by the audited entity's operations or are the recipients of its services; and

audit, which are then examined and assessed through the analysis of files and documents.

For a **2021 performance audit** of the Australian Government's management of international travel restrictions during COVID-19, the ANAO received 1475 contributions from citizens and CSOs. The audit team reviewed all contributions received and undertook thematic analysis of issues raised to identify high-risk areas for further examination. In particular, contributions were used to identify issues relating to the consistency of travel exemption decision making.

## Challenges of Citizen Engagement

SAIs need to manage several risks when engaging citizens and CSOs in the audit process:

**Managing Expectations** – Contributors to the audit process sometimes share their views on issues that they would like to see addressed rapidly. They often expect to see a visible improvement in the service they receive or in how the audited entity operates. On average, ANAO performance audits take ten months to complete. It may take many more months for the impact of recommendations and findings to be perceived 'on the ground'.

## Setting the Parameters of Performance Audit Work

The ANAO does not have a role in commenting on the merits of government policy but focuses on assessing the proper use and management of public resources (considering efficiency, effectiveness, economy and ethics) and the implementation of government programs, including the achievement of intended benefits. It is important to establish this fact clearly with citizens and CSOs engaged in the audit process.

## Preserving Independence, Neutrality and Objectivity

The ANAO must manage the risk that citizens or CSOs with views that represent only part of the spectrum of opinions are overrepresented. The ANAO seeks to avoid any perception that the audit team only listened to one side of a debate or were influenced by a specific group of citizens by: aiming to consult as widely as possible within an audit's time, budgetary and resource constraints; and balancing and corroborating information collected from citizens and CSOs with a rigorous analysis of other sources of evidence.

### References

INTOSAI Development Initiative. 2017. Guidance on Supreme Audit Institutions' Engagement with Stakeholders. <https://www.idi.no/elibrary/well-governed-sais/sais-engaging-with-stakeholders/697-idi-sais-engaging-with-stakeholders-guide/file>.



# Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea (BAI)

## Audit Request System and its Implications for Public Participation

*Author: Mr. Soungdae Park, Director, Audit Request Division 5, Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea*

In identifying trends in public sector audit, there are two main changes in terms of audit types and stakeholders. Many supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) have expanded their focus from compliance audits to include performance audits, and have strengthened their responsiveness to stakeholders' concerns and needs. In the midst of social changes such as increasing participatory democracy and citizen involvement, the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea (BAI) introduced the Audit Request for Public Interest (ARPI) in 1996, the Citizens' Request for Audit (CRA) in 2002, and the National Assembly Audit Request in 2003. Audit Request Systems enable BAI to directly communicate with the public, whereas previously, BAI had indirectly influenced the public through its focus on auditing government agencies. SAIs' main stakeholders are no longer limited to the Legislative, but has expanded to encompass all various parties including government agencies, lawmakers, media, citizens, and civil society organizations. This article introduces BAI's audit request systems and explores its implications in the contemporary administrative system.

### BAI Audit Request Systems

According to the 'Regulation on Disposition of Audit Request for Public Interest', BAI introduced the Audit Request for Public Interest (ARPI) in 1996 to receive audit requests on matters

related to illegal activity, corruption, maladministration, waste of public funds, breach of public interests, etc. Individual citizens and civil society organizations can make audit requests if the number of requesters consist of more than 300 citizens aged 19 or older. The heads of public entities and local councils can also request audits to BAI. In 2002, the Citizens' Request for Audit (CRA) was introduced with the 'Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and the Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission'. The CRA allows a group of more than 300 citizens aged 19 or older to request audit on the issues related to illegal activity and/or corruption of public entities.

Despite the similarities between ARPI and CRA, BAI maintains both channels as they are distinct from one another. For instance, ARPI is broader than CRA in terms of eligibility of requesters, and audit scope, amongst other things. CRA is limited to the audit requests on issues related to illegal activity and/or corruptions of public entities, but ARPI additionally covers matters related to unfair activities and wrongdoing of public entities. Furthermore, in determining whether or not to conduct an audit on the requested issues, in the case of ARPI, BAI alone reviews whether the request meets the eligibility and requirement. Comparatively, in the case of CRA, the 'Audit Request Review Committee' consisting of four external experts and three BAI executives, reviews and makes the decision on whether to conduct an audit on the requested issue.

**Table 2.1. Comparison of the Citizens' Request for Audit and the Audit Request for Public Interest Systems**

	Citizens' Request for Audit (CRA)	Audit Request for Public Interest (ARPI)
<b>Legal basis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and the Management of the ACRC</li> <li>Introduced in 2002</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation on Disposition of Audit Request for Public Interest</li> <li>Introduced in 1996</li> </ul>
<b>Requester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group of more than 300 people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group of more than 300 people</li> <li>CSOs whose membership exceeds 300</li> <li>Heads of public entities</li> <li>Local councils</li> </ul>
<b>Reason for Request</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illegal activity and/or corruption that would harm the public interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illegal and/or unfair activity that would harm the public interest</li> <li>Waste of public funds</li> <li>Maladministration, mismanagement</li> </ul>
<b>Exceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters under investigation or trial</li> <li>Matters of private interest</li> <li>Matters being audited</li> <li>Matters concerning classified information and national security</li> <li>Matters under the local government jurisdiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters under investigation or trial</li> <li>Matters of private interest</li> <li>Matters being audited</li> <li>Matters concerning classified information and national security</li> </ul>

Source: [Board of Audit and Inspection \(BAI\) website](#).

Since its introduction in 2002, the number of CRAs received has been fairly constant between 20 to 40 requests per year, whereas the number of ARPIs received has been steadily increasing. For example BAI received 16 ARPI cases in 1996, 126 cases in 2005 and 170 cases in 2020. This increase is partially attributed to the broader ARPI eligibility requirements, such as requesters and subject matter, compared to the CRA, thus making it easier for the public to access and request BAI audits. From 2002 to 2017, the number of received ARPI cases totaled to 400 cases – 113 cases were related to the construction and transportation sector, 47 cases on the education sector, 40 cases regarding the financial sector, 27 cases on environment sector and 173 cases on other sectors. BAI has carried out audits for 64 cases out of the 400 (16%).

## Implications

### Participatory Democracy

In a modern democracy, elected representatives should be accountable to voters. Since the late 20th century, however, there has been criticism that elected governments have failed to fully respond to the people's policy needs due to the acceleration of social change. In an effort to overcome this challenge of representative democracy, participatory democracy and deliberative democracy have gained attention. BAI's audit request systems cannot be seen as direct public participation, nor as direct control by the people over the

administration. However, it can function as a tool to strengthen participatory democracy in that it allows people and civil society to take engage in the decision-making process. Recently, BAI has observed an increase in audit requests on controversial local issues directly related to local residents' benefits and convenience. It includes issues over where to place unpleasant facilities such as landfill sites, and whether to develop or preserve certain areas. Any inconvenience and/or dissatisfaction that people experience in their daily lives may increase their desire to participate in administration and the decision-making process. As citizens become involved in correcting unlawful or unreasonable administrative actions and decisions, BAI's audit request system can be seen as a mechanism for people to actively engage in democratic practices, a concept emphasized by Alexis de Tocqueville.

### External Control Function

Following the principal-agent problem, BAI's audit request system allows people to request an audit, provided that it meets all request eligibility requirements, and can be a useful means for the citizens (the "principals") to monitor and control public institutions' (the "agents") behavior. A principal-agent problem arises when there is a conflict of interest between the agent and the principal, which typically occurs when the agent acts solely in their own interests. The agent usually has more information than the principal, and such information asymmetry is one of the fundamental causes of the principal-

## Audit Request Case Study

# Cancer Cluster in Small Village

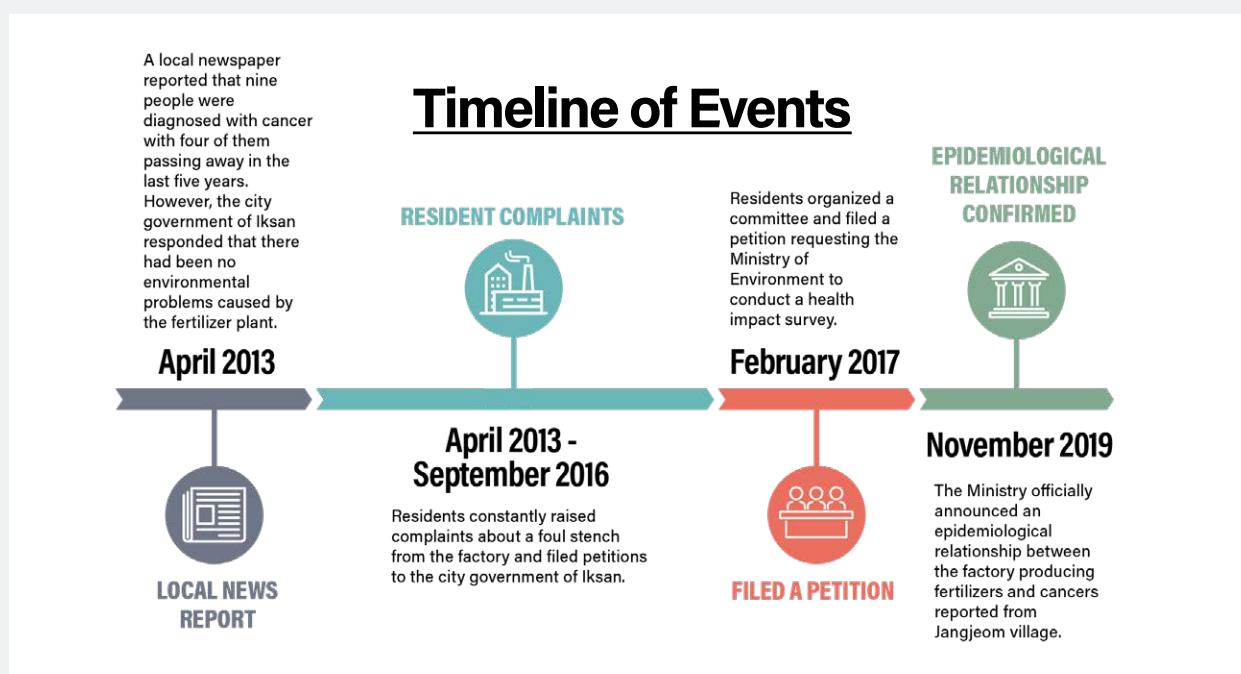
## Background

- As of 2017, 99 people lived in Jangjeom village in Iksan city, Jeollabuk Province, South Korea. 45 of these 99 people were above the age of 60, and 22 out of these 99 residents have been diagnosed with cancers with 14 of them passing away.
- A fertilizer factory, named Geumgang Nongsan, had operated near the village and produced fertilizer between 2009 and 2016.



**Figure 2.2. Village Map**

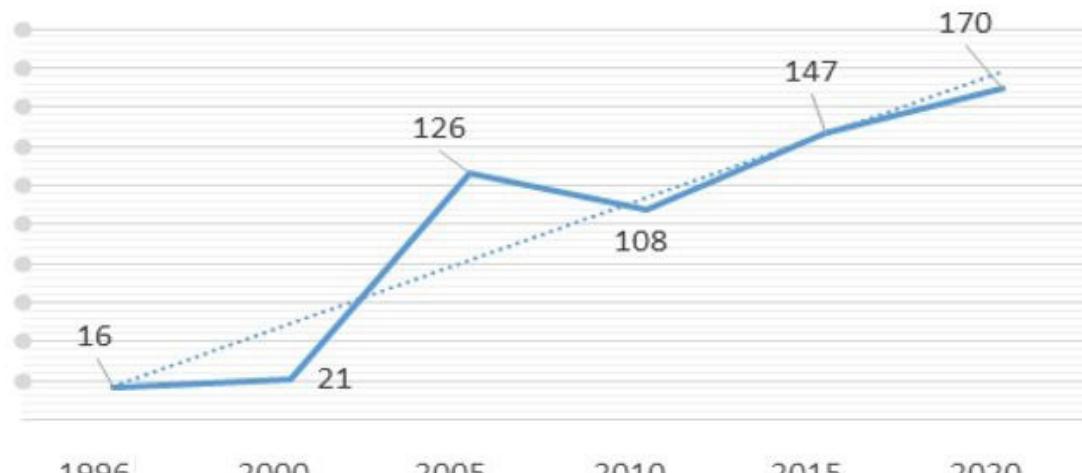
## Timeline of Events



## Audit Request and Result

- In April 2019, residents requested BAI to conduct an audit on the Iksan city government and the Jeollabuk provincial government, as they believed that the governments had not only neglected their duty to supervise the factory but also had not taken administrative measures until Jangjeom village received media coverage.
- BAI found that the negligence of the local government had contributed to the formation of a cancer cluster in Jangjeom village, and thus recommended that disciplinary penalties be imposed on public officials.

**Figure 2.3. Number of received Audit Request for Public Interest (ARPI) cases from 1996 to 2020**



Source: Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) ARPI case submissions

agent problem. However, if it is observable and verifiable by principals that agents are pursuing their own interests, instead of those of principals, principals will try to control this behavior. In the context of the audit request system, a recent increase in audit requests can be interpreted as the citizens' desire for monitoring the public institutions' works.

### Public Conflict Management System

Socially controversial issues may be challenging to manage due to competing interests, especially as an increasing number of stakeholders become involved. Public interests pursued by the government do not necessarily coincide with the personal interests pursued by individual. For example, relocation of an air force base can be seen as protection of public interests from the national security perspective, but at the same time it can be perceived as a violation of private interests from the land owners' perspective. Likewise, conflicts between public interests and the interests of private property owners may often take place in the process of public policy implementation. It may be most desirable for public conflict to be managed through social agreement, but it becomes more complicated to resolve conflicts as the types of conflicts become more diverse and various stakeholders get involved.

Despite the conflict management mechanism operated by the Office for Government Policy Coordination, BAI has observed an increase in audit requests on socially controversial issues in recent years, as people want such issues to be addressed through BAI's audit request system. For example, the audit request system has received multiple requests for the Four Major River Project and new airport construction project. The public's trust in the BAI enables the audit request system to serve as a public conflict management system.

### Conclusion

BAI aims to improve transparency and impartiality in public administration by encouraging citizens to participate in and monitor the public administration of the central government, local governments and public institutions. By operating the Audit Request System, BAI also strives to satisfy the need of citizens by rapidly resolving matters that disrupt the lives of the public. The Audit Request System contributes to ensuring transparency and impartiality in the public sector by fittingly and actively responding to changing audit demands and deriving timely audit results.

# Enhancing Accountability through Audits:

## Lessons from Collaborations Between Supreme Audit Institutions and Civil Society Organizations

*Author: Claire Schouten, International Budget Partnership*

The International Budget Partnership (IBP) initiated the [Audit Accountability Initiative](#) to bring together supreme audit institutions (SAIs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen government responsiveness to audit recommendations through more effective communication and engagement. In Argentina, Ghana, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, the SAI and civil society actors have coordinated efforts to secure remedial actions from governments in response to findings and recommendations contained in SAI audit reports.

IBP began this initiative after data from its [Open Budget Survey](#) revealed a paralysis in oversight systems that often prevents SAIs from achieving their overarching goals of protecting the public interest by improving the management of public funds. Audit reports are withheld from the public, hearings on audit findings take place behind closed doors and findings are not acted upon. While SAI independence is critical, SAI effectiveness ultimately depends on the interconnectedness with other actors of the overall accountability system.

The partners in this initiative recognize this interconnectedness. The participating countries were selected several years ago based on the presence of well-functioning and independent SAIs and CSOs with the expertise to engage on issues raised by SAI audits. We have learned from each other's experiences and generated broader lessons on collective action on audits to enhance government responsiveness and accountability.



## Partnering to Tackle Issues of Public Concern

Across the five countries, SAIs and CSOs selected a set of critical issues that were flagged in official audit reports issued by SAIs where government action was lagging:

- In [Argentina](#), the Auditoría General de la Nación and the Asociacion Civil Por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ) focused on underperforming government programs to prevent, diagnose, and treat 1.5 million people affected by Chagas—a tropical parasitic disease.
- In Ghana, the Audit Service and SEND Ghana addressed accountability and coordination challenges in the national school feeding program serving 2.6 million pupils.
- In [Nepal](#), the Office of the Auditor General and Freedom Forum partnered to strengthen the management of local development funds that support infrastructure projects, such as road, water supply and sewerage works.
- In [Sierra Leone](#), the Audit Service and the Budget Advocacy Network coordinated their efforts to ensure proper water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools across the country.
- In [Tanzania](#), a coalition of civil society organizations led by the Wajibu Institute engaged with the National Audit Office to push for the rehabilitation of dilapidated school infrastructure that has left 4 million children without proper classrooms.

## Lessons from the Initiative

These collaborations are achieving promising results and yielding important lessons that can inform how SAIs and CSOs can form even more productive partnerships. Two key lessons from this work are:

1. Current oversight systems and processes in many countries prevent SAIs from being effective advocates for their own audit findings and recommendations. SAIs may have more impact if they adopt a strategic approach to strengthen engagement with legislatures, the executive, affected communities and media, as well as other actors that are championing accountability more broadly. In a variety of contexts, CSOs can play important roles in amplifying SAI recommendations and demanding accountability. Ultimately, a combination of strategic engagements and processes will help SAIs become more effective in upholding accountability and promoting public interest.
2. CSOs can help make SAIs more effective in at least four interconnected ways. First, they can complement audit reports by highlighting new information and evidence to convince stakeholders to institute reforms. Second, because CSOs are not beholden to formal oversight timetables, they can directly engage a wide range of stakeholders in government on the issues raised in audits. Third, CSOs can build grassroots support and engender bottom-up pressure on governments to address audit recommendations. Finally, CSOs can leverage media opportunities to bring attention to audit findings and recommendations, including by organizing training events conducted jointly with SAIs, and by using social media to disseminate key messages to broader audiences.

IBP's initiative focused on a very specific model of civic engagement surrounding the implementation of audit recommendations; however, it is clear from recent examples that CSOs can support SAI efforts to require accountability in several other ways. When the independence of SAIs in countries such as [Cyprus](#), [Ghana](#), [Myanmar](#), and [Sierra Leone](#) was threatened by powerful executives, non-state actors including CSOs and the media have rushed to defend the SAIs. CSOs can also help direct SAIs' attention to areas of public concern. For example, in [South Africa](#), results from social audits of water and sanitation services conducted by local CSOs in townships have been praised by the national SAI as they help the SAI to prioritize issues that merit further investigation under its audit program. In the Philippines, the SAI's [participatory auditing techniques](#) directly involve specialized CSOs in their audits of government programs. In turn, CSOs also benefit from collaborating with SAIs as SAIs often have the technical expertise, legitimacy, and access to government information that CSOs may lack.



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SAIs can enhance civic engagement by testing different models of collaborations with CSOs. The SAI community, in collaboration with CSOs and other domestic and international actors, has an opportunity to enhance accountability and audit impact:

- At the country level, SAIs can forge collaboration with CSOs (or CSO networks) throughout the audit cycle – from the development of the audit work plan, to the conduct and communication of audits, and follow-up on audit recommendations.
- At the international level, the learning across countries and results from country-level work can bolster ongoing efforts to guide SAI engagement with civil society around the world. National actors and networks can also cross-fertilize ideas and experiences from their respective countries through facilitated discussions.

We can provide access to knowledge resources and tools to SAIs around the world to help mainstream emerging models for civic engagement. For example, through the [Open Budget Survey](#), we have good practices to share of civic participation throughout the audit process.

Together we can leverage the respective skills and specializations of SAIs and CSOs, foster strong partnerships and ultimately enhance oversight, accountability, and audit impact.



# SAI Nepal Perspectives

## on Civil Society Participation in Performance Audits

*Author: Maheshwar Kaphle, Deputy Auditor General, Office of the Auditor General of Nepal*



**“Engaging CSOs can help improve the quality of audit, and having a reliable source of local level information may enhance accountability and responsibility.**

### Background: Performance Audit and Civil Society Participation

Performance audit aims to improve accountability and transparency while constructively promoting effective and efficient governance through recommendations for future improvement. Performance audits, often conducted by Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), hold those with governance and oversight responsibilities accountable and aim to improve their performance by examining the efficiency of decisions of the legislature or executive and whether tax payers or citizens have received value for how the government has used public resources. These audits also provide useful information to the public, while serving as a basis for future learning and improvements from lessons learned. Elements of performance audits may overlap with other audit types. Combined audits can also incorporate various performance, compliance, and financial auditing aspects.

Although the functions of SAI and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are different in nature, the relationship between SAI and CSOs is necessary for quality audit management. In participatory audit, civil society stakeholders (civil society organizations, academic groups, community members, and the private sector) contributes to various parts of the audit process, including the planning, execution, reporting and follow up of audit. Civil society engagement strengthens the auditing process through improving:

- **Partnership building:** A strong partnership between SAs and civil society stakeholders will help establish the terms of engagement through a consultative and collaborative approach.
- **Capacity development:** Civil society engagement improves the capacity of primary stakeholders to undertake participatory audits with greater effectiveness.

- Public communication:** An integrated communication plan with support from internal and external CSOs stakeholders can be designed to create awareness of the program and audit.
- Knowledge sharing:** CSOs usually work on the grassroots level, and thus, have more information about local situations and circumstances. Sharing this information with SAI will benefit a quality audit. The combination of SAI audit staff experiences and information on public resource uses from the grassroots level to CSOs enhances the quality audit.

### Office of the Auditor General of Nepal (OAGN) and Citizen Participation Audit (CPA)

The Office of the Auditor General of Nepal (OAGN) approved the Citizen Participation Audit (CPA) procedure in 2016. This procedure incorporates civil society partners into the audit process to provide primary sources of data or sector specific information and expertise; to monitor local activities; to establish communication mechanisms, and; to support and enhance accountability. CSOs can also provide input to possible topics for performance audits and submit issues in the annual audit plan, as approved by the Auditor General. Engaging CSOs in the performance audit process is beneficial, as CSOs may have more information on public resource use as they are directly involved in monitoring and evaluation of program implementation at local level. CSOs may also help to disseminate the results of the audit, and can assist with continuous monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations.

The process of CSO engagement in performance audit is defined in the approved procedure. According the CPA Procedure, CSOs that can participate in the audit process are institutions registered as per the law that are not-profit oriented, are not politically affiliated, and have the goal of enhancing civic awareness. Locally registered CSOs will have participatory priority and there must not be conflict of interest vis-a-vis the project. CSOs are required to abide by OAGN's audit Code of Conduct, core values, and principles, and must be willing to engage without remuneration.

Although OAGN has statutory and primary auditing responsibility, selected CSOs can contribute at various parts of the auditing process. The CSOs may involve in the following audit cycle whereas the OAGN has decided:

- In the audit planning stage, CSOs may suggest subjects and issue areas for audit to OAGN through methods such as a joint meeting, formal request, public notice, etc.
- In the audit execution phase, CSOs help to make audit execution effective by assisting with the collection of relevant evidence and information. CSOs may participate in the verification of information, field observation, and inspection with OAGN audit team. CSOs may also share information and their views regarding the status of services provided by the entities to the audit team. The OAGN engages CSOs through focus group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires. CSOs may be involved in the audit procedure, but must follow the terms of reference and code of conduct stated in the audit plan, as well as guidance of the audit team.

- In the reporting stage, the audit team has the responsibility to prepare audit report with consultation or with due consideration of the information provided by the CSOs, and must verify this information in the audit execution.
- In the audit follow up stage, CSOs may provide support to the audit team for continuous follow up to monitor the implementation of audit findings, in cases where the Auditor General determines it necessary. CSOs may help to dissemination of the audit results.
- As per the CPA procedure, CSOs must return all documents, information and other evidence to the OAGN's audit team after the completion of engagement with a particular audit.

### Audit Results: Case Studies of Performance Audits with CSO Participation.

The OAGN has conducted 12 performance audits in the year 2021. Out of these 12 audits, the OAGN has conducted 4 performance audits and an environment audit with the participation of CSOs. The audit objectives, scope, methodology, audit results and recommendations of these audits are as follows:

## Performance Audit Topic #1

### A rehabilitation and reconstruction program after the great 2015 Gorkha earthquake in Nepal

**Audit Objective, Scope and Methodology:** The audit objective of this program was to evaluate the effectiveness of the rehabilitation and reconstruction program. The scope included the most affected 14 districts, and 31 other affected districts. The methodology employed was information collection through direct interviews, discussions and questionnaires and evaluate such program.

**Civil Society Involvement:** Civil society organizations participated in the information collection of subsidy distribution and rehabilitation & reconstruction of public and private housing.

**Summary of Audit Results and Recommendations:** The audit found that there was poor management in relief distribution, and the progress of rehabilitation and reconstruction was very slow. Resulting recommendations were: The government should have an emergency relief plan; the government needs to expedite the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, and should provide an immediate response, and; the government needs improved the efficient management of resources.



[Top & Bottom] Focus group and beneficiary group discussion with auditor, civil society organizations and beneficiaries and stakeholders for rehabilitations and reconstruction program in Ramchap, Districtradio coordinator).

## Performance Audit Topic #2

### Local government service delivery in Kathmandu Valley

**Audit Objective, Scope and Methodology:** The audit objective was to evaluate the efficiency of the local government and subsidiaries' delivery of services, including public participation in local government planning process, project implementation, grievance handling, and social security arrangements. The scope of this audit was the work done by the Gokarneswor, Suryabinayak and Godawari municipalities in Kathmandu Valley within a 3 year period (2018/19 to 2020/21). The methodology of this audit focused on an evaluation of the local government planning processes, service delivery and results.

**Civil Society Involvement:** Civil society organizations participated in information collection, field verification, interviews and discussions.

**Summary of Audit Results and Recommendations:** The audit found lapses in the local governments' public participation with the planning process. Public hearings were not properly conducted, the documentation system was poorly managed and kept, and there were lapses with the grievance handling mechanism. As a result, the OAGN recommended that local governments in the Kathmandu Valley focus on improving public participation, increasing attention to record system, and improving the planning process.



Focus group discussion among the management team of local government, civil society organizations and the auditor at Gokarneswor Municipality, Kathmandu

## Performance Audit Topic #3

### Mobilization of the user committee in an irrigation project

**Audit Objective, Scope and Methodology:** The primary audit objective was to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the mobilization of the user committee in an irrigation project. Other objectives included were to evaluate the legal registration of the user committee, user contribution, capacity development, maintenance and sustainability of the irrigation project. The scope of the audit was the selection of user committee based irrigation project implementation of 13 districts of Bagmati province from 2018/19 to 2019/20. The audit methodology focused on evaluating the process and identifying problems in user committee based irrigation projects.

**Civil Society Involvement:** Civil society organizations were engaged in information collection, and were involved in the interview process, focus group discussions and field verification.

**Summary of Audit Results and Recommendations:** The audit found that most of the user's committees weren't renewed their registration due to the noncompliance of the rules and regulation, user contribution to the project was low, there was no mechanism for further building the capacity of the user committee, and there was no proper maintenance plan of the irrigation project to be handed over to the user committee. OAGN recommended that the user committee based irrigation project should have better manage the user committee mobilization mechanism for the sustainability of the irrigation project.

## Performance Audit Topic #4

### Effectiveness of a vocational training program of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) for the development of skill manpower.

**Audit Objective, Scope and Methodology:** The audit objective of this program was to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational training program and employment results of those trained through the program. The audit scope focused on training policy arrangement, operation and quality management of the training program conducted by the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) within 3 years (2018/19 to 2020/21).The methodology of this audit included reviewing the policy arrangements; collecting data and information, and; conducting interviews, discussions, and questionnaires. The audit approach was results and process oriented.

**Civil Society Involvement:** Civil society organizations were engaged in information collection, and were involved in the interview process, focus group discussions and field verification.

**Summary of Audit Results and Recommendations:** The audit found poor coordination among training institutions; inefficiencies demonstrated through lapses in the optimum utilization of resources; a poor record-keeping system; problems with the trainee selection process; lack of demand-based training for skills development, and; no guarantee of employment after the training program. The OAGN recommended that the vocational training program should be focused on the development of skill manpower, need to coordination between training institution and enhance the quality management of training program

## Performance Audit Topic #5

### National Park Management (Chitwan and Bardia National Park)

**Audit Objective, Scope and Methodology:** The audit objective was to evaluate the management of the Chitwan and Bardia National Parks. The scope of this audit was to focus on assessing the management of the protection of biodiversity and wild animal habitats, and the sustainability of the wild life conservation program within the 5 years (2016/17 to 2020/21). The methodology employed in this audit included document review, interviews, discussions, questionnaires and information collection.

**Civil Society Involvement:** Civil society organizations participated in information collection, field verification, interviews, and discussions.

**Summary of Audit Results and Recommendations:** OAGN found that the Chitwan and Bardia National Parks have poor management of wildlife conservation; lacked properly maintained grassland for wild animals; experienced a reduction in the number of wild animals, and; lacked of maintenance of the biodiversity, which is needed to manage the sustainability of the wildlife conservation program.



[Top & Bottom] Focus group discussion among the management team of Chitawan National Park, Civil society organizations and the auditor at Chitawan National Park

### Considerations for the Future:

Although CSOs can make valuable contributions to performance audits, there are considerations to ensure optimal cooperation between CSOs and the audit team. OAGN observed that some challenges of CSOs participation in performance audits included: (a) inactive participation of CSOs, and lack of awareness from citizens regarding the audit; (b) CSOs' lack of sufficient knowledge on auditing practices, and; (c) potential CSOs and citizen political affiliation linkage, and resulting misleading information. To further promote effective CSOs engagement, SAIs may consider joint-training, sharing

of information and lessons learned, capacity development, and a positive attitude toward supporting environment for CSOs participation in performance audit. It is also important to have an agreed upon code of ethics, and clearly defined roles and responsibility for CSOs to enhance the openness and transparency in public audit with due consideration the independence of audit.

### Conclusion:

CSO engagement in public audit is relatively new concept for the OAGN, as the CPA procedure was recently initiated and is in a very early stage. CSOs help to make the audit more effective by assisting with the collection of relevant

evidence and information. CSOs share information and perspectives regarding the status of services provided by the audited entities, as some are directly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of program implementation at the local level, and thus, have more information regarding local circumstances. There is greater public demand for transparency, accountability and responsibility; the safeguarding of public assets, and; the efficient use of public resources. As seen by the recent results of OAGN's early implementation of the CPA procedure, engaging CSOs can help improve the quality of audit, and having a reliable source of local level information may enhance accountability and responsibility.

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# Mechanisms to Enhance Community Involvement in Public Sector Audits

Evidence from SAI of Indonesia



*Author: Muhammad Rafi Bakri, Gilbert Simson Gattang,  
SAI of Indonesia*

## Background

The INTOSAI community has long held a belief that the work of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) should benefit the communities that they serve, and as part of that, encourage public interest and involvement in its work. In 2013, at the INTOSAI Congress in Beijing, INTOSAI adopted a new International Standard, INTOSAI-P 12 – The Value and Benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions, which recognizes citizens as key beneficiaries of SAIs' work. In the XXIII INCOSAI Outcomes Report of 2019 ("the Moscow Declaration"), the INTOSAI community continued to recognize the importance of citizen engagement, acknowledging that "public engagement tools catalyze inspiration in the public, increase public trust, enable concentration of mutual efforts, and encourage innovative solutions to public challenges" (Moscow Declaration 2019).

In addition to the INTOSAI commitment to public engagement, Indonesian Law Number 14 of 2008 also concerns the Openness of Public Information. The law was developed with the aim of encouraging public participation in the public policy-making process, increasing the active role of the community in public-policy development and management of public bodies, and realizing a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable state administration, amongst others things,

Based on this law, SAI of Indonesia (BPK) has developed internal regulations on public information management. One of these regulations, Regulation Number 3 of 2011, monitors the

management of public information within the BPK, and ensures that it meets the principles and objectives in the Law on Public Information Disclosure. Within the BPK, the Information and Documentation Management Office (PPID) and Information and Communication Centre (PIK) is in charge of overseeing the management of public information.

## PPID Application

BPK enhances the role of the community in public sector audits through three public information services, implemented by the PPID: (1) public information inquiries services; (2) public complaints services, and; (3) information objection services. This article focuses on the first two public information services. BPK has observed greater demand for publicly available information on public sector audits, such as Audit Reports and Summary of Semester Audit Reports. These products include audit reports on financial reports of the central and local governments, audit opinions and results of audit of public sector entities.

### Public Information Inquiries Services

BPK reviewed and analyzed its public information inquiry services data, and found that in 2019, the public made 1,694 informational inquiries to BPK. Out of the total, the public made 1,455 inquiries for periodic information (about 86%), 3 inquiries to request for excluded information (about 0%), and 236 inquiries to request for other information (about 14%). The majority of the public inquiries made are used to inform:

- Research and research data;
- Reporting;
- Studies and contributing study materials;
- Social control, supervision, and monitoring, and;
- Publications, such as materials for preparing audit programs, investigations, completion of follow-up actions on BPK audit results.

In addition to audit report requests, PPID also receives inquiries for information related to BPK's officialdom.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BPK recognized a need to provide the public with information through digital means. To continue to serve the public virtually, BPK optimized PPID through a digital version of the program, E-PPID. E-PPID allowed for the public to have greater access to BPK's information. Public demand for information increased significantly: BPK saw total public information service requests in 2020 increase to 14,022, or by about 728%, in 2020. This positive trend for public informational inquiries occurred again in 2021, with the number of public information service requests amounting to 18,864, or an increase of about 34.5% from the previous year. BPK will respond to all inquiries for information that meet the request requirements.

In response to public demand and interest for public sector audit information, BPK has prioritized accelerating responses to inquiries from the public. In 2021, from a total of 18,864 incoming inquiries that meet request requirements, BPK fulfilled 99.6%, or 18,788, within one to ten days. For the remainder, BPK fulfilled 59 inquiries for information within 11-17 days, and the remainder in more than 17 days.

As a result of making public information from BPK available through PPID and E-PPID, BPK can fulfill its third mission by implementing transparent and sustainable organizational

governance and becoming an instance for other institutions. Moreover, this transparency can certainly escalate public participation in public sector audits.

### Public Complaints Services

The BPK notes that receiving and reviewing public complaints is a key aspect of the BPK's duties and functions as a state financial auditor. Through PPID, the public can contribute to the auditing process by reporting any actions that are deemed inconsistent with the applicable regulations. Complaints from the public can be related to audit, non-audit, or other concerns.

The Inspectorate General of BPK follows up on complaints about alleged violations of the code of ethics. In contrast, the work unit in charge coordinates and reviews complaints on audit findings. Regarding public services, the Bureau of Public Relations and International Cooperation provides complainants with information on the procedures for inquiring information.

In 2019, PPID received a total of 214 public complaints (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan 2019). The complaints consisted of 141 complaints related to audits (about 66%), 11 complaints related to non-audit (about 7.8%), and 62 complaints related to other topics (about 29%)<sup>1</sup>. Complaints received pertained to topics, including:

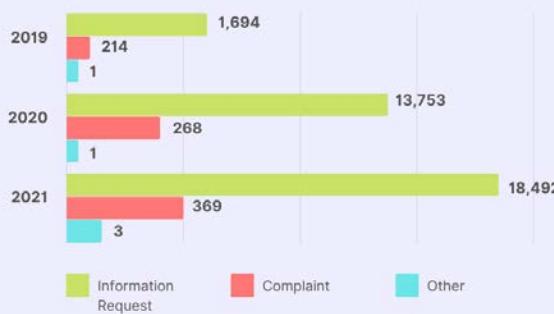
- The misappropriation of State or Regional Budget funds to government agencies (48 complaints)
- The procurement of goods/services and the use of village funds

Both of these topics are challenging for the BPK to audit. However, with assistance from the community, BPK can better focus audits related to the procurement of goods and services, and village funds to achieve targeted and impactful results.

In 2020, the misuse of the State or Regional Budget continued to be the topic of most frequent public complaints, with a total of 85 complaints (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan 2020). The public community has played an increasingly involved role in helping BPK ensure proper oversight of the state finance and reduce harmful risk to the system. In addition, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world and Indonesia, BPK received complaints in 2020 regarding the alleged misuse of funds for handling the pandemic.

The topics of public complaints received by the BPK started to diversify in 2021. BPK has observed that Indonesian society has become increasingly critical of and concerned with the response to problems related to state financial losses (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan 2021). Allegations of corruption and misuse of the budget accounted for 14% of the total complaints received. Based on public complaints, BPK will follow up

### Public Information Services Through PPID



<sup>1</sup> Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

by investigating the alleged corruption. If it is proven that corruption is occurring, this public complaint services reporting will successfully ensure that state funds are not improperly diverted, and avoid financial losses.

## Innovation in Community Engagement

In response to the increasing demand for public audit information, and the growing public role in the disclosure of information and transparency, BPK has made and plans further improvements to the quality of public information services.

For example, BPK continues to optimize the use of online communication channels for public interaction. In 2021, BPK developed and launched PPID Mobile, which facilitates and expedites BPK service and response to public complaints and inquiries for information. In addition, BPK conducted virtual comparative studies with ministries and agencies that already have adequate PIK facilities and infrastructure, and more established information management procedures. Based on the comparative study, BPK continues to coordinate with several stakeholders to ensure that the synergetic knowledge sharing across multiple institutions can improve public interaction with BPK.

BPK also took innovative approaches to information services at one of its regional offices, specifically, the BPK Regional Office in Jambi. At the beginning of 2022, the Head of the BPK Regional Office in Jambi, Rio Tirta, authorized a research room called "Akustik- Akuntabilitas untuk Semua dengan TIK", or Accountability for All through Information and Communication Technology. The BPK regional office is making this room accessible to the public to directly inquire for information related to public sector audit, thereby increasing the community's engagement in audit.



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Even in its short time in operation, the Akustik has carried out many activities that engage the surrounding community in the audit process. For example, the Akustik has conducted outreach activities to academics, introducing the duties and functions of BPK to this group of external stakeholders. BPK provides materials, such as e-books and e-journals on audits, allowing for researchers and students to utilize public audit information as references for studies and reports. As a result, academics have increased knowledge and agency in their role to contribute to public sector audits.

## Conclusion

PPID has significantly contributed to facilitating the community's involvement in public sector audits in Indonesia. PPID assists the BPK, the state financial audit institution, through the public solicitation of complaint information on fraud and corruption that can potentially cause state losses. With such public great demand for PPID's services and impact, BPK's mechanisms for public community engagement can be applied in other audit institutions and organizations to increase information accessibility and to have the public contribute to informing public audit. With community involvement and participation, SAIs can work more effectively and efficiently towards tackling fraud and corruption.



# Special Contributions

# ■ CSO Engagement a New Opportunity for Many Pacific Island SAIs: PASAI Stakeholder Engagement

*Author: Luke Eaton, Communications Advisor/Editor, PASAI; SAI New Zealand*

Over three days in July 2022, we, the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), delivered a workshop called Effective Stakeholder Engagement attended by staff from 10 Pacific Island public audit offices.

During the workshop, we launched a stakeholder engagement toolkit. The toolkit outlines good practice for communicating with the three branches of government as well as citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs).

It includes procedures and templates for communicating with each of these stakeholder groups. In the case of citizens and CSOs, there is a template audit staff can use to summarise an audit report into a single page within four subheadings. The toolkit also includes a presentation template for audit staff to use when talking about audit findings and recommendations to CSOs. The presentation suggests to CSOs that they can, following the presentation:

- Read, share, promote, quote and use the SAI's report,
- Encourage the auditee to implement report recommendations,
- Use their networks and grassroots connections to find out if the audited entity is implementing report recommendations, and
- Potentially provide feedback on implementation.

We know that actively engaging CSOs is new to many SAIs in the Pacific. For that reason the presentation also includes an overview of the SAI's role in public finance management (PFM) and outlines the importance of SAI independence.

In a recent blog post<sup>1</sup> we outlined six opportunities in the audit cycle for SAIs to engage CSOs in a mutually beneficial way. Perhaps one of the more obvious opportunities is at the reporting phase, when SAIs can simply produce citizen-friendly audit report summaries and/or deliver presentations to CSOs on their audit findings.

Having spent decades operating under less than favourable conditions, it's not surprising that few Pacific SAIs have a long history of robust collaboration with CSOs. In fact, drafting a citizen-friendly audit report summary is a new experience to

many of them. So, we devoted significant time in the workshop making a compelling case for publishing audit summaries (the why), showed examples of good ones (the what) and explained the process involved in drafting them (the how).

We covered some plain language basics and had a guest presenter from the Victoria Auditor-General's Office explain the way they create engaging material from their audits.

We required course participants to collaborate with their colleagues and draft a summary of a publicly available report of their choice. All 10 public audit offices submitted a summary applying workshop learnings and presented these summaries to all other course participants. Course facilitators provided immediate, constructive feedback on these submissions.

We also arranged for workshop participants to hear from the Chair of the Civil Society Forum of Tonga, who explained CSOs are keen to know more about PFM systems.

**We think CSOs in the Pacific have the potential to be among our SAIs' most vocal allies and beneficiaries of their audit work.**

The Deputy Auditor-General of Tonga relayed his recent experience of describing his SAI's role in Tonga's PFM at a public forum for CSOs that was also livestreamed and broadcast on local radio. We designed the presentation template we included as part of the workshop toolkit so our SAIs could customise it to meet the needs of a similar type of event.

We recognise many Pacific SAIs face challenges that would be unheard of in other regions of the world. Some offices are prevented from engaging in public discussion about audits

<sup>1</sup> *The mutual benefits of engaging civil society organisations*

for months or years by, for example, lengthy delays in tabling reports in the legislature. Others have few media outlets through which they can disseminate their findings. And certain countries have significant segments of the population whose circumstances would prevent them from ever knowing about an audit report if all the SAI did was to publish it online.

For some SAIs in the Pacific, stakeholder engagement may, in practicality, involve travelling by small boat to remote islands and explaining audits in languages other than English to village chiefs or assemblies of elders (known in Tuvalu, for example, as Falekaupule). Having provided technical assistance on SAI communication strategies, we know this is the kind of activity some SAIs aspire to do.

Through workshops like this one, we are helping SAIs engage more effectively with CSOs, building their capabilities and giving them some of the tools to do so. We encourage this engagement so SAIs can maximise the impact of their work, arguing it will likely be CSOs who are the ones relentlessly advocating for positive changes based on audit recommendations.

Once these relationships have been established and CSOs are more familiar with the role of their local public audit office, we hope to see greater engagement, including with active participation in audit planning and monitoring of implementation.

We think CSOs in the Pacific have the potential to be among our SAIs most vocal allies and beneficiaries of their audit work.

# ■ SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's First Communication Strategy Targets Improved Civil Society Engagement

*Author: Jasmina Galijasevic, Head of International Cooperation Unit, the Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina) developed its first **communication strategy for a four-year period (2022-2025)**. The communication strategy aims to increase the impact of SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina, and enables delivery of proper value and benefits for the society through enhanced stakeholder engagement.

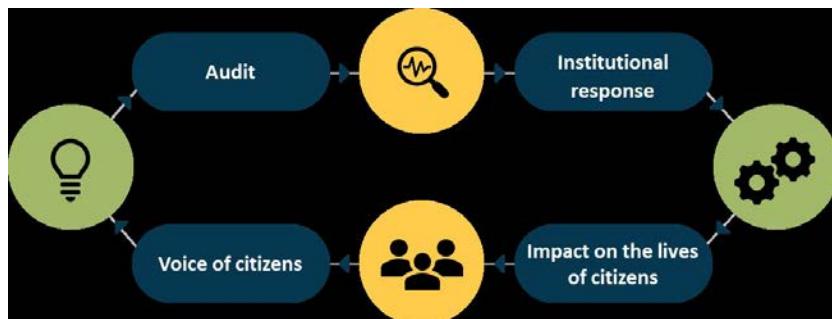
SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina identified the development of effective relationships between SAIs and parliaments, and effective engagement with other stakeholders to increase impact, including civil society, as an area for further support and guidance. The Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA)<sup>1</sup> initiative has supported stakeholder engagement

since 2018. The initiative aims to provide support to SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop effective stakeholder engagement within the context of **INTOSAI-P 12** on the value and benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). SIGMA also assists in increasing external stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the role and work of the SAIs.

Prior to 2018, SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's communication approach was a one-way process—the main

repository of information was the SAI's website where final audit reports, press releases and other materials were published, without any mechanisms for feedback or consultation by external stakeholders.

Recognizing that one-way communication fails to build relationships and does little to increase understanding and impact of the SAI's work, SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina made efforts to promote feedback mechanisms and build a two-way communication



<sup>1</sup> SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU.



Yesterday we met with the representatives of civil society organisations to discuss our performance audit programme and topic selection. The session was an example of constructive collaboration between civil society and audit offices.



12:23 PM · Jan 12, 2022 · Twitter Web App

opportunity where SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's performance auditors share key rationales behind performance audit topic selection for the upcoming annual audit plan with CSOs.

One such performance audit, conducted on a topic proposed by a CSO, resulted in an ongoing parliamentary initiative to reduce certain administrative fees payable by citizens and businesses, which was directly linked to our audit findings. SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's strategic objective to engage CSOs into the audit planning process has resulted in an impactful audit.

process between the SAI and its stakeholders that goes beyond mere reporting

After initial stakeholder and communications analysis, SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina and SIGMA implemented several key activities aimed to identify stakeholder expectations and knowledge on SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's role and responsibilities. The analysis activities included surveys and focus groups specifically designed for the media, civil society organizations (CSOs), auditees and SAI staff. SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina and SIGMA also held a workshop where SAI Hungary and SAI Latvia representatives presented their good practices on engaging with stakeholders.

As a result of the outcomes of the above activities, SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina has been gradually introducing new communication tools and methods in order to overcome communication challenges previously identified.

One of the key reformative approaches that had been introduced are consultative meetings with CSOs coming from sectors of public finances, corruption, security, public procurement, etc., that is, the areas the SAI covers with its mandate. The meetings allow CSOs to provide input to SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's annual performance audit planning process. The first of these meetings took place in 2018, and has since become an annual practice. CSO representatives reacted very positively to this new communication mechanism, and utilize the meetings to actively discuss relevant public sector issues that could potentially be addressed by performance auditing procedures. Apart from discussing potential audit topics, these meetings provide an

opportunity where SAI Bosnia and Herzegovina's performance auditors share key rationales behind performance audit topic selection for the upcoming annual audit plan with CSOs.

## Citizen Participation in Corruption Eradication From An Audit Perspective

*Author: Andi Siti Chadidjah B, Internal Auditor of the Constitutional Court of Indonesia*

### Forensic Audits: A Background

In Indonesia, a forensic audit is an inspection activity that focuses on identifying responsibility for inefficiency or abuse of authority. These audits have a specific scope and time period, and may result in recommendations to follow-up on found

authority breaches, if any. The purpose of a forensic audit is to identify further findings to investigate a public complaint report submission or to identify further findings and verify information from preliminary or prior investigative audits. The public plays a significant role in forensic audits by calling attention to issues of concern, providing information, and submitting it into a complaint submission system.

## SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

While investigative audit procedures and techniques refer to auditing standards, forensic audits have a wider range, a more extensive authority, and are often adapted to the circumstances at hand. In planning and carrying out a forensic audit, auditors use their professional skills and applies the principle that presumes innocence unless otherwise found to be responsible for inefficiencies or abuse of authority. A forensic audit team can be formed if the source of information has submitted sufficient evidence supporting the claims through the public complaint report. The team that carries out the forensic audit should be by the team or at least one of the auditors who have developed the preliminary findings of the previous audit. The forensic audit report will stipulate the public officials and/or civil servants that are involved or responsible, and is signed by the head of the audit unit agency.

### Public Complaints and Participation in Audits

The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) is the national Indonesian agency established to prevent and fight corruption. The KPK, an independent state institution, was formed and mandated to eradicate corruption from existing institutions, and to encourage and act as a stimulus for corruption eradication efforts in existing institutions to increase effectiveness and

society participation in audits. Subjects of public claims or complaints include: service performance; allegations of general crimes; allegations of corruption, collusion, and nepotism; problems with the potential to cause social and environmental vulnerabilities; deviations that cause state financial losses, and; allegations of abuse of authority.

The community participation helps provide the KPK with access to information or reports of alleged corruption crimes that occur in the public society. Public submissions of valid information accompanied by strong supporting evidence greatly assist the KPK in resolving corruption cases. The KPK uses the information to investigate corruption calls from citizen participation, particularly in reports of corruption crime allegation. The general public or public society can submit complaints to the Corruption Eradication Commission by postal mail, in person, telephone call, facsimile, text message, or an online complaint system application. The follow-up action may depend on the quality of the submitted report.

Cases of corruption that occur on a national scale are a raising public concern and awareness. Based on the table below, this growing concern has resulted in a significant number of complaints received through a public complaint report submission, and reflects public demand of transparency and accountability.

2018 Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Reports on Public Complaint Handling

Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Accepted Report	475	495	532	546	497	266	499	502	556	761	742	598	6,468
Verified Report	475	495	532	546	496	263	499	502	552	761	742	598	6,468
Analyzed Report	148	109	134	114	86	21	127	133	150	385	440	170	2,257
Report File	327	384	394	387	393	206	368	320	323	370	277	258	4,000

Source: KPK public complaint reports, 2018.

efficiency. In Indonesia, within the framework of the public sector, forensic audit is conducted and limited to three current institutions, one of which is the KPK. The KPK coordinates with and supervises institutions authorized to combat acts of corruption. It also conducts investigations and prosecutes acts of corruption in cases that: involve law enforcement, state officials, and those connected with those groups; generate significant public concern, and/or; lost the state at least IDR 1,000,000,000 (USD 100,000).

The success of the KPK is the result of public participation and concern in reporting potential corruption cases. Public complaints can serve as a form of external supervision and civil

As a public office, national institutions such as the KPK have an obligation to process and follow up with complaints received from the public community. Through the proper mechanisms and implementation of integrity, transparency and accountability principles, the KPK, along with other oversight institutions, contribute to eradicating corruption in the public sector. These institutions continue to pursue Indonesia's goal of achieving public welfare and prosperity for the country and returning sovereignty into the hands of the people.



# Spotlight Stories



# Spotlight on

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### ■ INTOSAI Regional Coordination Platform (IRCP) Back Together After Pandemic

*Author: Secretariats of the INTOSAI Capacity Building Committee (CBC) and the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI)*

For three very interesting, intense and interactive days in the beginning of June, about 45 participants representing almost all INTOSAI regions met in Oslo for the first time in three years to identify present challenges and regional needs, and to find capacity development initiative gaps or overlaps.

In 2017, the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) and the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) established a single coordination platform for all INTOSAI organs and regional organisations to align common efforts and explore synergies. In the first week of June in 2022, this INTOSAI-Regions Coordination Platform (IRCP) gathered in a hybrid format to discuss INTOSAI's response to capacity development challenges and opportunities faced by SAIs. IDI – the host of this year's platform – welcomed participants attending in Oslo, as well as colleagues joining virtually, which made it possible to also participate from home for those unable to travel. This opportunity to discuss as a community representing different working bodies all contributing to SAI capacity development, was highly appreciated and the energy brought into the room by the participants was motivating.

The coordination meeting was aimed at developing a deeper and common understanding of INTOSAI's strategic goal 2 landscape on capacity development. Goal 2 informs INTOSAI



decision-making on sustainable SAI capacity development in support of all INTOSAI members. The CBC, IDI and regional organisations supported by the Professional Standards Committee (PSC), Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Services Committee (KSC), Policy, Finance and Administration Committee (PFAC) and the General Secretariat identified and discussed SAI capacity development needs and priorities to be addressed in 2023-25, and deliberated on sustainable capacity development support mechanisms. Identified challenges to sustainability, and opportunities to overcome these included SAI leadership commitment, country environment for oversight and accountability, SAI culture, staff retention, ensuring needs-based support and effective coordination, and delivering and measuring sustainable results and impact.

Another outcome of the meeting was a mapping of current and future capacity development initiatives in the following six broad focus areas:

1. Competent people
2. High quality audits
3. High impact audits
4. SAI external environment
5. SAI internal environment
6. Global environment for effective SAI capacity development

Building on this mapping, participants identified areas for future cooperation and actions that could be taken across the INTOSAI community. At a broad level, participants thought all bodies could focus more on addressing common challenges together and documenting and sharing proven solutions. Regarding competent people, key areas identified were creating internationally recognised professions serving the needs of SAIs, human resource management as a driver for performance improvement, and leadership development.

On high quality audits, ideas identified were around better defining ISSAI compliance, supporting SAI quality



**The coordination meeting was aimed at developing a deeper and common understanding of INTOSAI's strategic goal 2 landscape on capacity development**

management, and building quality feedback loops better into peer supported audits. For high impact audits, a cultural shift towards audit impact was suggested, through better stakeholder engagement and selecting relevant audit topics, leveraging strategic partnerships to bring in topic experts, supporting SAI resilience and agility, and improving the communication and follow-up of audit findings.

For SAI external environment, participants saw the need to explore the adequacy of SAI resourcing, continue communicating the value of SAIs and advocating for SAI independence, and building better partnerships with others in the broader governance environment, at global, regional and country level. Finally on SAI internal environment, it was recognised that SAIs need to better embrace technological change, lead by example in the public sector especially on SAIs holding themselves accountable, and act on the findings of the various SAI assessments conducted.

Arising from the Oslo coordination meeting and in support of INTOSAI's Strategic Plan for 2023-28, INTOSAI's key contributors to Goal 2 have agreed on the main components of the 2023-25 Operational Plan. The plan, which is currently being drafted, covers the first three years of INTOSAI's new strategic plan 2023-28. After three years – and in concurrence with INTOSAI's mid-term assessment and its Performance and Accountability Report in 2025 – this Operational Plan will be revised, and an adjusted plan will be adopted for the next three-year period (until 2028).

The IRCP participants left Oslo with a lot of food for thoughts to take back to their home regions.



# Spotlight on

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Addressing the Lack of Access, Infrastructure, and Teacher Trainings for Distance Learning in General Education after COVID-19: Recommendations from SAI Georgia

*By Ms. Mariam Zaalishvili, Deputy Head of the Social Sphere Audit Department, State Audit Office of Georgia*

A state of emergency was declared in Georgia in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic posed new challenges, including to the quality of general education as classroom learning was replaced with virtual, distance learning for 97% of students at public schools. This situation created certain losses in education, raising a public need for the performance audit of distance learning for the State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG) with respective audit findings and recommendations with the involvement of the US Government Accountability Office's Center for Audit Excellence experts.

The SAOG identified six key findings in the performance audit of distance learning in Georgia:

#### 1. Lack of IT Resources for Students:

The Ministry lacked appropriate IT resources for students, and did not know the exact number of students lacking IT resources.



Lack of IT resources for students



Inefficient utilization of resources



Technology related trainings for teachers



Teleschool coverage



Lack of Action Plan



Lack of teachers in rural areas

#### 2. Inefficient Utilization of Resources:

The risk occurred for an inefficient utilization of resources, as the online meeting system Teams licenses were not fully used in 2020 with 42% among students and 10% among teachers. The licenses are therefore recommended to be procured needs based with an appropriate monitoring process.

#### 3. Additional Needs for Technology Training for Teachers:

From 2017-2021, the SAOG found that only 42% of public school teachers had participated in the technology related trainings.

**National Education Plan through "Teleschool":** With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education created an electronic platform with virtual classrooms for all public schools. For students who did not have access to the resources needed to participate in distance learning, the Ministry launched their TV school project "Teleschool".

However, this project turned out to be challenging since it did not fully cover the national education plan, and the project authorities did not have viewing statistics.

#### 5. Lack of an Action Plan for Education Emergency Preparedness:

The Ministry and its units lacked an action plan for emergency mitigation of damage to the public education system.

#### 6. Shortage of Teachers in Rural Areas:

The SAOG found that the existing education programme for highland population experienced a shortage of 309 teachers in rural areas between 2018-2021, which affected 15,000 students that distance learning should be targeting. This was a pre-pandemic challenge that had exacerbated effects in the pandemic.

Having evaluated the emergency preparedness, and assessed the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures to provide distance learning during the pandemic, the SAOG report identified the possibility of using this acquired experience in the future. The key conclusions were drawn on every

response stage, followed by potential for improvement on which the SAOG issued the relevant recommendations:

1. For virtual distance learning, access to adequate resources for students remains a challenge. The Ministry of Education does not have complete and reliable information on the number of students who do not have access to the resources needed for distance learning. Existence of reliable information makes it possible to identify vulnerable groups and increase their access to distance learning. The SAOG recommends that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia identify the number of students lacking access to distant learning technology infrastructure, and identify ways to improve their respective access.
2. It is also important to determine the adequate number of computer licenses to be purchased, and to collect detailed information on the usage of licenses facilitating efficient use of resources. The licenses are therefore recommended to be procured through a needs-based determination with an appropriate monitoring process.
3. Additionally, 42% of teachers employed at public schools were not involved in any of technology related trainings, which hinders the proper conduct of distance learning. Assessing the specific needs of teachers in computer skills and providing trainings to them according to the specific areas will improve the distance learning process. The SAOG recommends that the LEPL National Center for Teachers Professional Development within the Ministry identify IT needs among the teachers and facilitate their trainings.
4. As the response measure, the "Teleschool" project used as one of the forms of distance learning did not fully cover the compulsory subjects defined by the National curriculum, ensuring countrywide access to general education. It is important for the virtual education

TV lessons to fully cover compulsory subjects. The SAOG recommends that the Ministry improves the "Teleschool" to cover the national education plan and study its audience.

5. As part of lessons learned for the future, the Ministry should come up with a plan for emergency situations, which outlines the risks, its impact and measures to ensure the access and sustainability of education. The 5th recommendation the SAOG made to the Ministry is to improve emergency preparedness needs by devising an education contingency plan for arising circumstances.
6. Last but not least, a number of students in the rural areas, due to the shortage of teachers, do not have an adequate access to general education existing even before the pandemic. During the COVID-19 state of emergency, the challenge turned more critical. Since the education system gained greater experience with developing and employing the distance learning process in the pandemic, SAOG recommends that the Ministry should use this opportunity to solve the pre-pandemic condition of the shortage of teachers. At schools with a shortage of teachers in a particular subject or qualified staff, it should be possible to offer distance learning in subjects where classroom education is not available or possible.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office's leading practices and experience was the subject of benchmarking in this regard for assessing the crisis response measures, preparedness, and reflection for better governance to increase program efficiency and effectiveness, as the Center for Audit Excellence experts supported the audit process with the



approaches and methodologies, as well as assisted in enhancing the audit impact.

The audit findings and recommendations were made to the Ministry of Education with the Parliamentary Standing Group on Reports of the State Audit Office. The Ministry representatives agreed on the findings and recommendations that the SAOG presented. SAOG will further follow-up with the implementation of the recommendations in the Audit Recommendation Implementation System (ARIS) innovative platform, which will monitor the follow up process. Based on the SAOG recommendations, the Ministry has prepared an action plan which improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the distance learning processes, and increases access to the education.

Assessment of the long-term effects of the pandemic and the potential impact of distance learning on the education system will allow Georgia to understand the full outcomes of the pandemic, and plan for appropriate response measures. The experience gained in distance learning in the public education system during the pandemic can be used in the future to ensure full and universal access to general education.

For more information please contact SAOG at [iroffice@sao.ge](mailto:iroffice@sao.ge).



# Spotlight on

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

### ■ OLACEFS Continues to Make Progress in the Area of Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination

*Author:* OLACEFS

Over the years, the Latin American and Caribbean Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS) has developed new spaces and advances in terms of Gender Equality and Sustainable Development Goal #5 (SDG5) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The effort to incorporate the gender perspective in Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in the region began in 2012, through the meeting "Gender and Transparency in Supreme Audit", held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. On that occasion, recommendations related to the topic of gender were approved and the "Declaration of Santo Domingo" was signed, which reaffirms the need for SAIs to incorporate the gender equality dimension, both within SAIs and in the execution of government audits.

Afterwards, at the beginning of 2014, the first Coordinated Audit on "Gender Equality and Equity" was carried out with the participation of the SAIs of Chile, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico. The results of this work generated the necessary momentum. In 2016, the OLACEFS

General Assembly approved a proposal to carry out a new gender audit, in this case, linked to the 2030 Agenda and in particular to SDG5. Subsequently, in 2018, the "Ibero-American Audit on Gender Equality. Preparation of Governments for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5", had 18 participants: 16 SAIs from the region (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela and Uruguay), 1 SAI from Europe (Spain), 1 Subnational Control Entity (Office of the Comptroller of Bogota, Colombia).

It is through these actions aimed at charting the way for gender equality in OLACEFS that in June 2020, during the LXXI meeting of the Virtual Governing Board of the Regional Organization, it was agreed to create the Working Group on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination (GTG for its acronym in Spanish) led by the SAI of Chile. The general objective of this Working Group is to develop a policy on gender equality and non-discrimination that will serve as a basis for implementation in the SAIs of

OLACEFS. Likewise, the GTG will have to define, together with the interested SAIs, the implementation of the policy, its monitoring and evaluation, as well as the processes of feedback and exchange of good practices that can be generated around gender equality and non-discrimination.

The GTG has as members the SAIs of Argentina, Brazil, Chile (chair), Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico and Uruguay. Since its creation, it has achieved important milestones such as the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between OLACEFS and UN Women, as well as the approval of the Policy on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination, during the XXX Ordinary General Assembly of the Regional Organization held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

The approval of the Policy was a historic event in terms of gender within OLACEFS, given the work that had been carried out in previous years, in addition to the sum of efforts and consensus on the part of the SAIs for

the preparation of the document. The aforementioned Policy constitutes an institutional planning instrument that guides the Organization and the Entities that comprise it on the principles that should govern their actions in the area of gender and non-discrimination and the type of actions that can be promoted to generate changes, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement and materialize them.

Likewise, in May of this year, the "Coordinated Audit on Gender Violence; State Response in the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women" was launched. This coordinated audit aims to evaluate the efficiency of government actions, whether plans or programs, in favor of eradicating violence against women, and its work will be focused during the period 2019-2021. In this way, the reality before and during the pandemic will be observed, which will allow a comparison of the state response and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on it.

Currently, from May until October 2022, the GTG is carrying out a Cycle of Master Classes called "*Manos a la Obra: Política Sobre Igualdad de Género y No Discriminación*" ("Hands at Work: Policy on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination"), which are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 am (UTC-4) and have high-level panelists and moderators, who have been presenting the axes that make up the OLACEFS Policy on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination, seeking to deepen in its dimensions and recommendations.

The purpose of these lectures is to provide the necessary guidelines for the implementation of the aforementioned Policy. Therefore, the importance of each of the axes (ethical culture, inclusion, sexual/workplace harassment/stalking, organizational culture, people management and audit functions) is

## Política sobre Igualdad de Género y No Discriminación



highlighted, both for the functioning of the SAI and for the successful accomplishment of its tasks, allowing the gender approach to permeate within the institution in a cross-cutting manner.

OLACEFS is highly motivated to continue promoting initiatives on

gender and non-discrimination in order to promote equality within the region, leaving no one behind, and to position itself as a model organization that contributes to the strengthening of its SAIs and the achievement of the SDGs.



# Inside INTOSAI

# ■ AFROSAI-E Engages Member Countries and Key Stakeholders at the 2022 Strategic Review & 18th Governing Board Meeting

*Author: Annerie Pretorius, Senior Communication Manager, AFROSAI-E*

Over 110 delegates from AFROSAI-E's 26 member countries, partner institutions, and key stakeholders attended its 2022 Strategic Review and 18th Governing Board meeting. SAI The Gambia hosted the highly successful event from 9 to 12 May 2022 on the smiling coast of Africa.

In his opening remarks, the AFROSAI-E Chairperson, Mr Mohammed Ali (Auditor General of SAI Somalia), noted, "it is because of our highly engaged Board members that we have been able to forge ahead with implementing our strategic goals, albeit with different methods than planned. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic showed how our region could mobilize its membership to help one another get through a major crisis together."

The event included two days of thematic discussions on increasing accountability and reducing corruption through audits and, the independence of SAIs. The AFROSAI-E Secretariat also presented the outcomes of regional performance against its Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2024. Visit [www.afrosai-e.org.za](http://www.afrosai-e.org.za) to read the 2021 Integrated Annual

Report, the 2021 Monitoring and Evaluation Report and the 2021 State of the Region: Institutional Capacity Building Framework Self-Assessment Report.

## The Governing Board Meeting Results in Productive Discussions

Members of the AFROSAI-E Governing Board met to deliberate on a range of topics affecting the region. A critical discussion centred on the need for SAIs to take the lead in identifying the priority areas where peer-to-peer support is most needed, considering their own capacity to absorb and implement the support. This is crucial to ensure that peer support leads to measurable and sustainable results.

## SAI Ghana Wins the 2021 Best Performance Audit Report Prize

The Auditor General of the Swedish National Audit Office, Ms Helena Lindberg, announced the winner of the 2021 Prize during the opening ceremony. The prize is awarded annually to the best performance audit report in the region.



The independent international review team unanimously declared the Ghana Audit Service report entitled "*Provision of Flood Control Drains*" as the winner. This award represents the pinnacle of excellence demonstrated by SAIs in the region in their efforts to develop the performance audit discipline. Ms. Meisie Nkau, AFROSAI-E CEO stated that, "The SAI of Ghana was our first prize winner in 2008, and they have shown tenacity, perseverance, and commitment to replicate the same hunger and enthusiasm by winning the prize in 2021. We are proud of this accomplishment and applaud the SAI for their dedication to performance audit."

## AFROSAI-E Research Increases Accountability and Reduces Corruption through Government Audits

The outcomes of the AFROSAI-E research and experience-sharing on COVID-19 audits and related SAI activities formed part of the theme discussion. The research results show:

- An increase in SAI disaster-related audits, with 88% of SAIs having performed such audits.
- Most audits done were in real-time.
- All audits were implemented as compliance and financial audits.
- Risk areas identified were both sectoral- and process-based.
- 80% of SAIs have already identified future audit subject matter areas.

The research results will be the basis of future regional capacity-building initiatives on SAI response to disaster situations.

A panel of experts deliberated on the role of SAIs to combat fraud and corruption through stronger collaboration with Anti-Corruption Authorities. The enhanced cooperation between the two accountability actors at a national level is a critical enabler in the fight against corruption. The panel members included Ms Munira Ali, the General Secretary of the Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA), Ms Nancy Gathungu, the Auditor General of Kenya, and Mr Stephen Kateregga, the Assistant Auditor General of Uganda. While Anti-Corruption Authorities and SAIs already collaborate informally when conducting investigations, particularly in cases of fraud, the panel members noted that a formal relationship would reduce the time gathering information for fraud investigations as there will be sharing of information at all stages. Where fraud exists, this will be established in the initial stages of investigations.

## SAI Independence Enables Audit Impact

Mr Bubacarr Sankareh, the former Auditor General of the National Audit Office of The Gambia, delivered a stirring keynote address on leadership in Africa contributing to strengthening public sector audit institutions. He remarked that a responsible and responsive executive should be the leading champion and advocate for SAIs, not just in words but in demonstrated and consistent practice. Mr Bubacarr Sankareh stated that, "Public officials, whether elected or appointed, have a contract by law or a social contract with citizens/taxpayers that requires them to deliver public services and be accountable. It is, therefore, not only the duty of the executive to support SAIs, but it is also very smart to do so. The implications of a strong disconnect and low levels of trust in a government and how these can lead to social unrest and instability can be devastating for a country."

In building on the vital message by Mr Sankareh, Mr Einar Gørriksen from the IDI spoke about the outcomes of the Global Stocktaking Report of 2020 related to SAI independence, specifically in the AFROSAI-E region. He further elaborated on the targeted support IDI provides to SAIs to respond to threats and breaches of their independence through the SAI Independence Rapid Advocacy Mechanism (SIRAM). The Auditor General of South Africa, Ms Tsakani Maluleke, shared the SAIs' experience in implementing the Public Audit Act in South Africa and reporting on their performance to demonstrate transparency of operations.

## African Professionalisation Initiative Aims to Develop Capacity of Accountants Across Africa

The African public sector has a severe shortage of professional accountants and auditors. The API works to grow the capacity of accountants to have the competencies needed to be effective in an evolving public sector role. The API is a partnership between the accounting profession, accountants general, and SAIs from across Africa. The Head of the API, Mr Evans Mulera, gave an overview of the initiative's value proposition. The Auditors General of Namibia, Mr Junias Kandjeke, and Botswana, Ms Pulane Letebele, also shared their perspectives on why they believed it was important for their SAIs to take a leading role in implementing the API in their countries. Visit <https://professionalisation.africa/> to learn more about the API.

# Chairmanship of CAROSAI passed to the Court of Audit Aruba during the XII CAROSAI Congress

*Author: CAROSAI Secretariat*

CAROSAI Congress is always a unique experience, and the most recent Congress was no exception: SAI Aruba went beyond expectations in providing a hospitable atmosphere, conducive for learning and sharing experiences. Although the sessions were intense, the beauty of the Island was not lost on the participants.

During the week of May 15th to May 19th, 2022, the XII CAROSAI Congress was organized in Aruba by the Court of Audit Aruba. The theme for the XII CAROSAI Congress, "Targeting Superior Audit Impact", promotes accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness. The first day included a Master Class given by Mrs. Carol Bellringer, President and CEO at Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation (CAAF) and Mrs. Sheila Dodds, Deputy Auditor General of the Office of the Auditor General, British Columbia. The Master Class focused on the required elements to communicate effectively with the legislature, the media, and other stakeholders.

During the week, there were presentations on "Small Island Challenges" from both PASAI and CAROSAI. Mr. Khalid Hamid from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) presented on topics including retention of qualified staff, limited scope for SAI financial

independence, and stakeholder engagement and implementation of SAI recommendations. Mr. Ola Hoem of INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) spoke on the performance measurement framework and strategy performance measurement and reporting. Mrs. Carolyn Lewis of SAI Jamaica presented the lead paper on "Targeting Superior Audit Impact", while the country paper and panel discussion on "Small Island Challenges" was led by Mrs. Xiomara Croes-Williams, followed by a panel discussion on the topic of Real Time Audit, which was presented by Mrs. Miriam de Cuba of SAI Aruba and Ms. Fiona Kingston from SAI Guyana.

The Congress was held in a hybrid format (face to face and virtual) and live streamed, which provided the opportunity for greater real-time participation of our members and stakeholders. This format fostered inclusivity and facilitated knowledge sharing and awareness building. CAROSAI was pleased to have participants from different countries attend the sessions virtually and



interact on the various topics, thereby targeting impact at our regional and international level. Virtual presentations were made by: Mrs. Patricia McKenzie of the World Bank in Washington D.C., who spoke on enhancing accountability through independent SAIs; Mrs. Sinaroseta Palamo-Iosefo of Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), who shared experiences on small island challenges, and; Goodwill Ambassador the Right Honorable Helen Clark of IDI, who gave



a brief recording on SAI independence. Mrs. Deborah Spietzer, Mrs. Allison Milicich, Mr. Brian Barnier, and Mr. Osvaldo Rudloff of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) presented on the Digital Technology, Leveraging on Technological Advancement (LOTA), and pICTure initiatives.

The acting and incoming chair of INTOSAI, represented by Minister Vital do Rêgo Filho, was present during the Congress, invited CAROSAI delegates to the INTOSAI Congress that will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on November 7 to 11, 2022. The Superior Auditor of the Federation of Mexico, Mr. David Colmenares Páramo, gave a presentation on the topic of "*SAI Impact: Audit of the SDGs*".

During the General Plenary sessions, an amendment was passed establishing that member states can both participate and cast their votes virtually during meetings. The minutes and the financial reports from the last Congress held in Georgetown, Guyana, in June 2019, were approved by members present. The chairmanship of CAROSAI was passed from the Auditor General of Supreme Audit Institute (SAI) Guyana, Mr. Deodat Sharma, to the Chairwoman of Court of Audit Aruba, Mrs. Xiomara Croes-Williams. The following members were elected as new and returning officers to the Executive Committee: Mr. Alphons Gumbs of SAI St. Maarten; Mrs. Sandra Stephens-Malcolm of SAI Turks and Caicos Islands; Mr. Terrance Bastian of SAI Bahamas, Vice Chairman; Mrs. Pamela Monroe-Ellis of SAI Jamaica, Secretary General, and; Mr. Deodat Sharma of SAI Guyana, Immediate Past Chairman. Mrs. Sue Winspear of SAI Cayman Islands was elected as the CAROSAI representative to INTOSAI Governing Board, and Mr. Dean Evanson of SAI Antigua and Barbuda was re-elected as Auditor.



The Second General Plenary concluded with sessions on developing CAROSAI's Strategic Plan facilitated by Mr. Freddy Ndjembia of IDI.

In addition to the Congress, the program included social, educational and cultural events. A symposium was organized together with the University of Aruba focusing on small island challenges. Secondly, a cultural night was hosted together with the National Archaeological Museum of Aruba. Finally, an island bus tour was organized, where participants visited the Aloe factory & museum, the mural artworks in San Nicolas, and the water and energy plant (WEB). The various cultural, social and educational events showcased the talents and skill sets that exist in Aruba, and also showed that audit institutions in the Caribbean region, despite language differences, exist in similar environments and contexts and thus, face similar challenges.

The Congress forum created a safe space where the regional SAI leadership shared their experiences, challenges, and processes. The forum also provided opportunities for shared learning as SAIs all strive to develop strategies that can

create more impactful supreme audit institutions across the region.

SAI Aruba commended members and participants for their attendance, expressed its commitment to serving as Chair of CAROSAI for the upcoming three years, and looked forward to continuing CAROSAI's vision of a "strong CAROSAI for stronger SAIs in the Caribbean".

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**SAI Aruba looks forward to continuing CAROSAI's vision of a "strong CAROSAI for stronger SAIs in the Caribbean".**

# ■ CCC Launches the 2022-2024 OLACEFS Training Plan

*Author: TCU/ OLACEFS CCC Team*

The Capacity Building Committee (CCC) of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS) launched the 2022-2024 OLACEFS Training Plan, which contemplates the offer of capacity building initiatives for the three-year period.

In 2021, the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU-Brazil), as chair of the CCC, carried out the Third Capacity Needs Assessment to serve as supporting information to develop the OLACEFS Capacity Building Plan. For 2022-2024, the proposed diagnosis model is similar to the one adopted in 2016, but it now encompasses questionnaires adapted to three target groups: employees, SAI's top management (institutional level), and cooperative organizations.

SAIs members of the OLACEFS have different profiles and responsibilities—nonetheless, all of them oversee governmental issues of great diversity, many of which are of high complexity. Developing a capacity assessment within this scenario was not a simple task. Therefore, a high granularity was applied so the three target groups could assess the competencies. During the priority stage, 38 out of the 116 most relevant competencies to the three groups were selected (68% of the assessed competencies were considered a non-priority). During the second

priority stage, these competencies were reorganized in three thematic groups: (1) external control processes; (2) technology and innovation, and; (3) control areas.

There are some actions addressed in the planning that are a complement to the diagnosis, such as: document elaboration; time optimization; emotional intelligence in the control environment; knowledge management; conflict negotiation and management; integrity and ethical dilemmas; effective time management, among others.

The 2022-2024 OLACEFS Training Plan involves capacity initiatives based on the needs identified in the diagnosis process. In addition, the experience acquired in the previous three-year period (2019-2021) regarding the offering of courses and their satisfaction surveys was also considered, with particular attention to courses addressing the development of priority competencies or specific needs of SAIs. This early information survey helps identify priorities and the proper distribution of resources.

Online courses continue to be the main platform to offer capacity-building initiatives. From 2016 to 2021, the CCC engaged with more than 6,000 employees, mostly through virtual courses. This investment in online education, as well as in other technology tools that support CCC's management,



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**This investment in online education, as well as in other technology tools that support CCC's management, was essential to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

was essential to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The 2022-2024 Plan also includes in-person events, such as workshops and seminars regarding new themes. In addition to stimulating debate, the events help explore SAI applicability in different external control contexts and, therefore, help identify specific needs required for a continuous development in this area.

It is important to note that the activities proposed in this plan depend on the support of SAIs members of the CCC, the availability of OLACEFS resources, and the technical and financial support of partner organizations. The plan should be regarded as a proposition, and the Committee's Presidency may only guarantee the implementation of specific programs and initiatives if the required conditions for resource availability and active participation are met.

This 2022-2024 Training Plan consolidates activities that involved the participation of, and/or support of the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ), the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) and the Inter-American Development Bank (BID). The GIZ, as provided by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has cooperated with OLACEFS for almost a decade to promote technical exchanges and good practices, institutional strengthening, and capacity development of SAIs. The GIZ has also been active in promoting and supporting the introduction of innovative approaches and methodologies of external government audit to improve transparency, rendering of accounts and governance within regional countries.

The IDI, in turn, is a traditional OLACEFS partner and will continue promoting joint actions with the region for the 2022-2024 period. For this term, IDI's work agenda will follow the diagnosis from the Global SAI Stocktaking Report 2020 launched in September 2021, in addition to the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Finally, the BID has worked with OLACEFS in the past few years in several initiatives and has provided support on many occasions.

A better comprehension of the challenges involving knowledge management will lead to better results for OLACEFS. In this context, the Capacity Building Committee (CCC) is the platform to promote the needed exchange to improve SAIs' work and boost innovation. Thus, as new opportunities are open and the support of different tools, the current capacity plan can contribute to the development of knowledge and capacities for SAIs in OLACEFS.

For more information on the Training Plan please click on the following links: [English](#) and [Spanish](#) versions.

# Task Force Incorporates Stakeholder Feedback to Draft Strategic Plan

*Author: INTOSAI Task Force on Strategic Planning*

The INTOSAI Task Force on Strategic Planning continues to make significant progress in developing the INTOSAI Strategic Plan for 2023-2028.<sup>1</sup> Based on the results of the internal and external scans the Task Force conducted, the Task Force subsequently drafted the new plan. The Task Force then presented the draft plan to the INTOSAI Governing Board in December 2021 for approval, highlighting three key changes between the existing and new plan. Specifically, the Task Force:

1. Made the strategic plan more concise and reached agreement that detailed information on actions to implement the strategic objectives will go into operational plans for each goal. The Task Force proposed that the four Goal Chairs develop the operational plans prior to INCOSAI 2022 using a standard template. The operational plans will be available on the INTOSAI website and the Goal Chairs will have the option of updating them each year to adapt to changing circumstances.
2. Changed the crosscutting priorities to organizational priorities and substantially decreased the amount of related text in the plan. The organizational priorities in the draft plan focus on SAI Independence, contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, resilient SAIs, equality and inclusiveness, and enhancing strategic partnerships.

3. Retained the existing four-goal structure but revised the underlying text to focus less on specific committees and apply more broadly across relevant INTOSAI bodies and functions.

In April 2022, the Task Force collected feedback from all INTOSAI members on the draft strategic plan and operational planning template. The Task Force is very pleased that the response from INTOSAI members has been overwhelmingly positive and constructive and looks forward to continued engagement with members as it finalizes the strategic plan. The Task Force plans to circulate a final draft plan to all members for review, in time to deliver a consensus strategic plan for adoption at INCOSAI 2022.

The Task Force will continue to provide updates on its planning efforts through the INTOSAI website, International Journal of Government Auditing, and summaries of meetings attended by Task Force members.

The Task Force intends to ensure that INTOSAI continues to evolve as a dynamic and inclusive organization while

further enhancing our role in promoting SAI independence, good governance and accountability.

If anyone would like further information or has additional insights or suggestions, please contact the Task Force at [intosaisp@gao.gov](mailto:intosaisp@gao.gov).



**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS**

<sup>1</sup> The TFSP includes the INTOSAI General Secretariat; Goal Chairs and Vice-Chairs; Policy, Finance and Administration Committee (PFAC) members; Regional Organization Chairs and Secretariats; INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI); INTOSAI Journal; and the Forum of INTOSAI Professional Pronouncements (FIPP) Chair and Vice-Chair. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) chairs the TFSP.

## IDI Signs Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women as a Key Partner for the Equal Futures Audit Initiative

*Author: Jessica Du, INTOSAI Journal Editorial Staff*

On July 17, 2022, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UN Women to become stakeholders on IDI's Equal Futures Audit Initiative (EFA). In recognizing the trend of growing inequality, the IDI aims to promote and support high quality and high impact audit practice focusing on audit in high priority areas of inequalities and marginalization. The MOU with UN Women is part of a strong stakeholder coalition that will first contribute to IDI's strategy development for the EFA.

This MOU signing was a part of a series of IDI meetings and brainstorming sessions for the EFA and the Global Cooperative Audit of Climate Change Adaptation Actions in New York City in July 2022. IDI utilized this opportunity to engage INTOSAI and external stakeholders attending UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) events and side events concurrently occurring that week.

The EFA, recently launched in 2022, supports the role of supreme audit institutions (SAIs) in contributing to equal futures, explores innovative solutions for equal futures audits, and facilitates cooperative audits on high priority areas related to gender and inclusiveness. Through the EFA, IDI will map trends of inequalities, help SAIs to develop strategic audit portfolios for auditing inequalities, and support SAIs in conducting such audits as per standards, facilitating the impact of these audits and promoting the role and contribution of SAIs in auditing for equal futures.

During the July 2022 meeting, IDI provided UN Women with an overview of the EFA, and discussed opportunities for UN Women to serve as a key partner throughout the initiative to help contribute to the gender focus area, but also in ways that gender intersects with the other EFA focus areas of poverty, disability, migration and ethnicity. UN Women brought together technical experts from the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) office, Governance and National Planning office, and the Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion, the Ending Violence against Women, and the Gender Equality

and the Empowerment of Women areas to have an initial discussion about SAI EFA change makers, and ways to assess gender equality within the existing UN system framework. UN Women representatives discussed prior and ongoing audits, and discussed challenges associated with intersectionalities in auditing gender equality. They also emphasized UN Secretary General's call to action on the prevention of violence against women.

IDI plans to continue the discussion and information sharing with UN Women as the EFA continues to progress. Ms. Elaine Souza from the Tribunal de Contas da União (SAI Brazil), invited UN Women to attend the upcoming 2022 INCOSAI in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. IDI noted that they plan to hold a side event at INCOSAI to officially launch the EFA syllabus, and to have a discussion with the broader SAI community on poverty and gender equality audits, and invited UN Women to participate. Both IDI and UN Women expressed enthusiasm for the start of this partnership, and will continue to share knowledge and resources to further gender equality audits and accountability frameworks in both organizations.



# INTOSAI - UN High Level Political Forum Side Event Highlights SAI Contributions to the 2030 Agenda

*Author: Jessica Du, INTOSAI Journal Editorial Staff*

On July 15, 2022, the INTOSAI General Secretariat, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), and the Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA) jointly organized a discussion panel in New York City to spotlight Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) contributions to the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda and efforts to address UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This panel discussion coincided with the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the main UN platform on sustainable development to engage world leaders, non-governmental organizations, civil society and relevant stakeholders, and keep sustainable development high on national, regional and global agendas.

The event, titled, "Accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda – The contribution of Supreme Audit Institutions", highlights SAIs' important role in conducting follow-up reviews and audits to track progress of SDG

implementation, which has been uneven across Goals and between countries. The INTOSAI panel presented examples of audit work that contributes to the in-depth review of three key SDGs:

- **SDG 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **SDG 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- **SDG 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

To start the event with opening remarks, Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, discussed the importance of SAIs to track UN SDG implementation progress

and how intra-institutional cooperation is necessary to achieve the goals. Dr. Isma Yatun, Chairperson of the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, noted that high quality audits can contribute to SDG implementation, and can further accelerate the 2030 Agenda. The Federal Court of Accounts – Brazil (Tribunal de Contas da União -- TCU) Minister, Benjamin Zymler, stated that there is more work to be done in the international community, in governments and public administrations worldwide, to nurture public governance for sustainable and equitable public policies.

To highlight the contribution of SAIs to the follow up and review of the SDGs, Ms. Silke Steiner, Director of the INTOSAI General Secretariat, noted that SAIs' core objectives directly contribute to SDG 16, specifically target 16.6, developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. She also discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic deepened SDG implementation asymmetries, set back progress, and slowed down the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In light of these challenges, Ms. Steiner noted that SAIs are more important than ever to track and review the progress of achieving the SDGs. Ms. Archana Shirsat, Deputy Director General of IDI, discussed the ways in which SAIs contribute to shaping a resilient, equal and sustainable future, and how IDI's Equal Future Audit Initiative will support SAIs in audits connected to a number of SDGs such as gender equality.





Through presentations and a panel discussion moderated by Principal Kimberly Leach of SAI Canada, speakers provided overviews of INTOSAI contributions to SDGs:

Ms. Vivi Niemenmaa, the Secretary General of the INTOSAI WGEA, presented INTOSAI contributions to SDG target 17.14, enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, and stakeholder engagement. Through the lens of a range of environmental audit topics, such as water pollution, SAIs recommended governments have planning and long-term considerations, conduct cost assessments, improve coordination and collaboration, and better utilize public funds. She discussed how the WGEA continues to work with environmentally focused SDGs, but also stays alert to possible emerging topics outside of the SDG framework.

Mr. Mark Gaffigan, Managing Director at the U.S. GAO, provided an overview of how the U.S. GAO's work is aligned with the UN SDGs, and provided additional detail on SDG 14, and auditing marine environment. He

outlined the methodology behind GAO performance audit elements of findings and recommendations in the context of oil and gas pipeline oversight and decommissioning; efforts to share ocean acidification information; and the U.S. partnership with other nations to build capacity to prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Mr. Adriano Martin Juras, Audit Coordinator from TCU, discussed SDG 15 as applied to the coordinated audit on protected areas in Latin America. In 2019, OLACEFS and TCU conducted a new international coordinated audit on protected areas, with the participation of 17 countries to assess over 2,400 protected terrestrial and marine areas. The audit results show an ongoing improvement in efficacy of the systems of protected areas of the participating countries.

Additionally, Mr. Bahtiar Arif, Secretary-General of the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia provided an overview of Indonesia's third National Voluntary Review Process and analysis conducted in 2021, which included audit in its process.



MP Petra Bayr, Interparliamentary Union, Mr. David Le Blanc, Chief of UNDESA, and Mr. Ronald Roedl, Director General of the INTOSAI General Secretariat, provided commentaries, reflections on SAI contribution to SDGs, and closing words to cap off the panel discussion.

The event was jointly organized by the Permanent Mission of Austria, the Permanent Mission of Indonesia, the INTOSAI General Secretariat, INTOSAI Development Initiative and the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing, and was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations.

# News in Brief

■ NEWS FROM EGYPT

# The AFROSAI Governing Board's Extraordinary Meeting and the 15th AFROSAI General Assembly Part 2: SAI Egypt's Summary and Participation

*Author: Central Department for International Relations and Conferences, ASA*

H.E. Counsellor Hesham Badawy, the Accountability State Authority of Egypt (ASA) President, led SAI Egypt's delegation that participated in the AFROSAI Governing Board's Extraordinary Meeting, as well as the 15th AFROSAI General Assembly Part 2, held during from March 16 to 18, 2022 in Dakar-Senegal. The AFROSAI Governing Board's Extraordinary Meeting discussed the most important issues that were submitted to the 15th AFROSAI General Assembly Part 2 for adoption.

Resolutions of 15th AFROSAI General Assembly Part 2 included:

- The adoption of the AFROSAI Statute as well as the Governing Board's Rules of Procedures. The Governing Board was mandated to apply the new Statute.
- The General Assembly's declaration and ratification of the composition of the two technical committees. The first committee is the Technical and Institutional Capacity Building Committee, chaired by SAI Kenya and includes 21 member SAIs, including ASA. It aims to enhance the cooperation, transparency and capacity building at the continental level, implement the African Union's Agenda 2030 and 2063, as well as integrate the concept of Big Data in improving SAI's performance. The second committee is the Organizational Capacity Building Committee, chaired by SAI Niger and includes 21 member SAIs. This committee aims to eliminate the institutional and organizational weaknesses noted.
- The endorsement of the 2020 AFROSAI Scientific Competition results that were approved by the AFROSAI Governing Board's Extraordinary Meeting. SAI Libya requested that the General Secretariat call for translating the winning articles, as well as publishing them on the website. SAI Libya offered that it will translate the foreign articles into Arabic. A member of SAI Egypt shared the

second prize of the competition with a member from SAI Kenya. In its capacity as Chair of the Editorial Board of the African Journal of Comprehensive Auditing, SAI Egypt will include the winning articles in different languages within the Journal's special issue that will published to highlight the 15th AFROSAI General Assembly.

In the 15th AFROSAI General Assembly Part 2, the AFROSAI General Assembly discussed two technical themes: the first theme's session was held on March 17th, 2022, entitled "Auditing the Extractive Industries' Sector in Africa". This session comprised of three workshops on the following topics:

- Institutional and organizational framework for extractive industries resource management;
- Auditing the value chain from the extractive industries sector, and;
- Auditing the environmental and social impact of extractive industries.

The second theme focused on "Integrating the Concept of Big Data into the Public Sector Audit".

## NEWS FROM ALGERIA

# The Algerian Court of Accounts (COA) Implements Cooperation Programs and Engages the INTOSAI Community in High-Level Regional and International Events

*Author: Algerian Court of Accounts*

The Algerian Court of Accounts (COA) has recently concluded and implemented a number of cooperation programs, further demonstrating the COA commitment to effective partnerships.

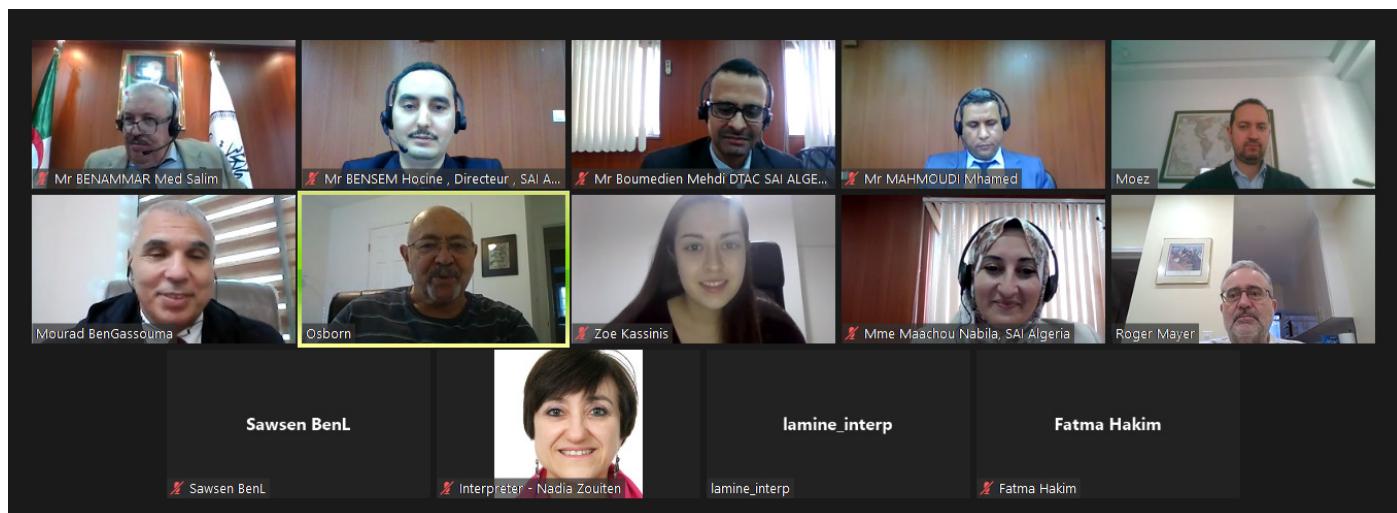
In 2021, the U.S. Embassy in Algeria selected the Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC) to implement an 18-month U.S. State Department-funded cooperative program for the benefit of the COA. From February to June 2022, the COA and the FSVC jointly organized several meetings and distance learning workshops related to the four areas of cooperation: (1) performance audit and evaluation of public policies, (2)

International Public Sector Accounting Standards, (3) information technology audit, and, (4) communication.

In 2022, the COA concluded an institutional partnership with its French and Portuguese counterparts regarding the certification of State's accounts, in accordance with international standards and best practices. In this context, the COA organized several training workshops in May and June 2022, bringing together COA auditors and experts from the two counterpart SAIs to discuss the audit of state accounts for certification purposes, and financial audit methodology.

The COA also took part in the SHARAKA 2 cooperation program, launched by

SAI Netherlands, and included SAIs of eight countries, namely Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia. In addition to sharing experiences and knowledge, the SHARAKA 2 program has three major objectives aimed at (1) auditing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (2) developing institutional communication strategy, and (3) implementing audit quality assurance. In May 2022, the COA and the Federal Board of Supreme Audit of Iraq (FBSA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation during Mr. Raffel Yassin Khudair Al-Assadi, President of the FBSA's visit to the COA. The memorandum covers external audit methodology and procedures in



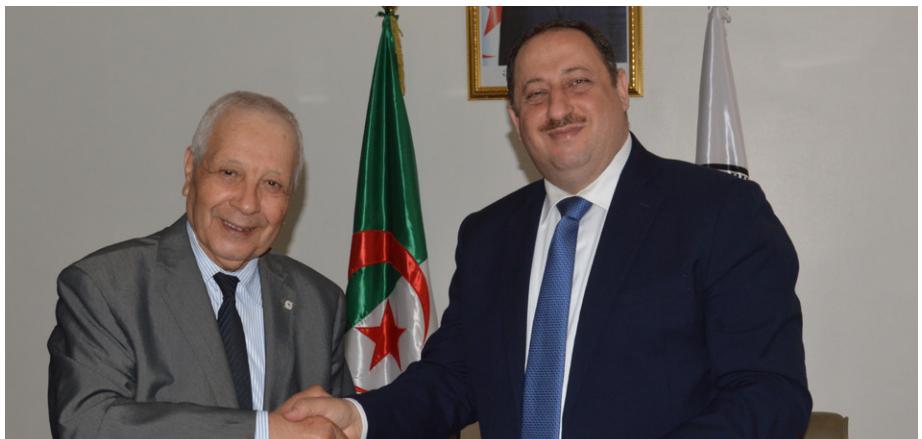
the areas of SDG auditing, evaluation of public programs and policies, certification of State's accounts, and IT audit.

The COA also has taken part in high-level regional and international events, both through in-person and virtual settings.

A delegation from COA chaired by Mr. Abdelkader Benmarouf, COA President, participated remotely on: March 16th, 2022 in the extraordinary meeting of AFROSAI's Steering Committee; March 17 and 18th, 2022 in the 2nd part of the 15th General Assembly of AFROSAI, and; March 20th and 21st, 2022 in the work of the 63rd meeting of the Executive Council of ARABOSAI held in Doha, Qatar, in which Mr. Abdelkader Benmarouf held additional discussions with his Qatari and Iraqi counterparts.

From January through June 2022, the COA took part in several regional and international remote meetings and webinars. A delegation from COA took part in the 14th, 15th and 16th meetings of the ARABOSAI Strategic Plan Committee held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for 3 days in February, in March and in May. Additionally, a COA delegation took part in March 2022 in the 9th specialized session of the ESCWA 2022 Forum on "The Challenges of Coordination, Methodologies and Modern Resources in Statistical Data Collection for the Improvement of their Quality and their Role in the Recovery and Achievement of the SDGs".

The COA also jointly organized, with the European Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange



Instrument (TAIEX), a remote workshop on "Improving the Quality of Public Procurement Audits on January 4, 5, 11 and 12, 2022. COA continued its participation in February 2022 in webinars organized by the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) in cooperation with ARABOSAI, as part of the *Auditing Transparency, Accountability and Inclusiveness – Global Cooperative*

*Compliance Audit* initiative. COA additionally took part in two workshops in February and April of 2022 on "Combating Desertification, Food Security and Sustainable Development" and on "Audit of Extractive Industries", organized by SAI India in cooperation with the International Centre for Environmental Auditing and Sustainable Development (iCED) and the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA).

## ■ NEWS FROM SLOVENIA

# Jana Ahčin Appointed the President of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia

*Author: Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia*

On 1 July 2022, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, by secret ballot voting, decided on the proposal of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, to appoint Jana Ahčin as the new President of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia. Jana Ahčin received majority votes and thus assumed the post of the President of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia for the period of nine years, thereby succeeding Tomaž Vesel whose term of office terminated on 31 May 2022.

The newly appointed President of the Court of Audit of Republic of Slovenia thanked for the support and assured that she and her colleagues will continue to ensure regular and efficient use of public funds by independence and professionalism of the institution when auditing operations of the users of public funds, as well as through its advisory role. The guiding principle in all future activities will be independence, objectivity and efficiency of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia.

The President of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia, Jana Ahčin, graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics. She has over 20 years of experience in leadership positions within public administration bodies. Ms. Ahčin worked for the former National Financial Administration Service and its successors, actively participated in establishing the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services and the Public Payments Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, and headed the Public Payments Administration by 2013. In the same year, she assumed the post of Director-General at the Tax Administration of the Republic of Slovenia and in 2014 at the Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. In 2019, she joined the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia as advisor to the President. In May 2022, she was awarded the title state auditor. In July 2022, Ms. Ahčin was appointed the President of the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia.



## NEWS FROM THAILAND

# SAI Thailand Champions the FAIR Concept to Respond to COVID-19 Operations Challenges

*Author: Dr. Sutthi Suntharanarak, Director of International Affairs Office, State Audit Office of the Kingdom of Thailand*

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the landscape of public sector auditing around the world. All Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) have important lessons learned from this pandemic. SAIs face challenges in maintaining SAI independence, and in creating value and benefit for citizens during a global crisis. Even though COVID-19 disrupts the public sector auditing sector, a digital revolution could support SAIs to soften the pandemic's consequences. The modern auditing mindset can be reflected in the FAR approach, which stands for flexibility, agility, and resilience. Likewise, AG Prajuck Boonyoung, Auditor General of Thailand, extends the FAR approach to include information technology. Thus, SAI Thailand utilizes the FAIR concept to confront the post-pandemic environment for public sector auditing.

## Flexibility

Since 2020, the pandemic has broadly affected the public sector audit in Thailand. However, SAI Thailand reacted to foreseen and unforeseen changes in a pre-planned manner. AG Prajuck explained that flexibility is essential to preparing for a crisis. To enhance work flexibilities, all auditors

and staff continued to work on routine tasks through teleworking and remote auditing.

## Agility

SAI Thailand prepared a business continuity plan for audit and non-audit activities during the pandemic. The Work From Home Policy (WFHP) and Vaccination Policy ensure that daily SAI operations could continue to run, with safety considerations for the SAI and for staff. Presently, most SAI Thailand staff have received four jabs of the COVID-19 vaccination. Therefore, the agile approach could be implemented in the organization. AG Prajuck established a special team to react to emergency issues related to COVID-19, like topics related to auditing vaccination and public debt. As ad hoc task forces, these special audit teams could agilely conduct audits during the crisis. Hence, the agility mindset shows SAI Thailand's reaction to unforeseen changes and unplanned situations.

## Information Technology

Information technology assists SAI Thailand in preparing for digital transformation. AG Prajuck has focused on investments in digital infrastructure and human resources development in digital literacy. He emphasizes that hardware (infrastructure), software (IT



FAIR

องค์กรที่-รับมือการเปลี่ยนแปลงได้ต้องเป็นองค์กรที่ไม่ว่าจะไปไหนก็ได้

F = Flexible มีความยืดหยุ่นปรับตัวง่าย ไป哪儿ได้

ไม่ว่าจะไปไหนก็ได้

A = Agile เก็บข้อมูลเร็วไว้ใช้ในการตัดสินใจได้เร็ว

I = Information Technology นำเทคโนโลยีมาปรับใช้ในการทำงาน

R = Resilient ผู้คนที่พร้อมอยู่ในทุกสถานะ

เมื่อรวมกันแล้วจะเป็น F A I R

เพื่อการดูแลลูกค้าที่ต้องมีความยั่งยืน

เข้าที่เกิด เสื่อมเสีย ไม่ต้องตัดสินใจครั้งเดียวเท่านั้น

เดินไปพร้อมกันแบบ F A I R กับทุกนายเลือด

องค์กรที่จะดีเด่นในโลกดิจิทัล และยังคงอยู่

เกิดความยั่งยืน เป็นผลลัพธ์ที่ดีที่สุด

นายประจักษ์ บุญอัจฉริยะ

ผู้อำนวยการตรวจสอบภายใน

13 ธันวาคม 2564

GHB : CG&CSR Day 2021 "CG for Sustainable Growth"

จัดโดย ธนาคารอาคารสงเคราะห์ และธนาคารแห่งประเทศไทย

Mr. Prajuck Boonyoung, Auditor General of Thailand

programs), and "peopleware" (digital literacy) are key success factors for SAI Thailand in the next era. AG Prajuck promotes digital culture in SAI Thailand, and encourages all staff to adapt to lifelong learning.

## Resilience

Lastly, the resilience concept represents the ability to survive foreseen and unforeseen changes, and cope with the long-term impacts. AG Prajuck supports the Build Back Better (3Bs) concept, initiated by IDI. He views that SAI Thailand could develop sustainable resilience through lessons learned from the pandemic. Meanwhile, SAI Thailand has built a strategic audit portfolio focused on the public health sector, public debt, and social security. AG Prajuck has created a stakeholder coalition to enhance the audit capacity of SAI Thailand after the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of audit impacts, which facilitate the future value and benefit of SAI Thailand for Thai citizens.

## NEWS FROM BELGIUM

# Belgian Court of Audit Receives ISO 9001:2015 Certification

*Author: Belgian Court of Audit*

The Belgian Court of Audit received its ISO 9001:2015 certification for the following processes leading to its core products:

- financial audit;
- performance and compliance audit;
- budget analysis;
- lists of mandates and declarations of assets .

The ISO 9001:2015 certification demonstrates the Belgian Court of Audit quality management system (QMS)'s ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and aims to demonstrate continuous improvement.

In view of the ever present and continuously growing importance of quality, the Court decided to restructure its QMS. The QMS must guarantee the high quality of the Court's products and demonstrate that every effort is made to achieve and continuously improve quality. The Court made a list of requirements for the future QMS, ensuring that the system should be authoritative and internationally recognized, and able to evolve along with new insights into quality thinking. The QMS should also be compatible with the INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements (IFPP). Additionally, the QMS needs to be able to be certified externally and independently, and able to be integrated in the existing processes of the Court.

Based on those requirements, the Belgian Court of Audit decided to restructure the QMS according to the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, and to prepare for external certification during the first quarter of 2022. The result was highly positive: the Belgian Court of Audit's QMS fulfills the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, and the official certification was awarded to the Court on 6 April 2022.

### References

*1 Besides its usual audit tasks (financial, performance and compliance audits) and an advisory role concerning the government budget, the Belgian Court of Audit has been entrusted with a number of specific tasks. Amongst these is a series of tasks ranging from review and filing to the publication of the lists of mandates and declarations of assets that certain categories of political representatives and senior officials are required to file.*



## NEWS FROM EGYPT

# SAI Egypt Participates in a Number of INTOSAI Meetings and Events, and Leads Key Accountability Efforts

*Author: Central Department for International Relations and Conferences, ASA*

Since January 2022, the Accountability State Authority of Egypt (ASA) participated in a number of meetings and events, contributing to knowledge sharing within the INTOSAI community, as well as the broader auditing community. ASA participated in the following:

- ASA participated in the 3rd Meeting of the Global Experts Team (IGET), organized virtually by Supreme Audit Institution of (SAI) United Arab of Emirates (UAE) in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on March 10, 2022. The Global Experts team is presided over by SAI UAE with the membership of 8 SAIs including SAI Egypt. The Experts Team was established to enhance the cooperation between SAIs and the Anti-Corruption Authorities (ACAs) in the field of combating corruption.
- On April 21, 2022, ASA participated in the first meeting of the Global Collaborative Planning and Review Project Team on Climate Change Adaptation. This team was recently established by the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA) in cooperation with the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), and includes participation from a representative of the Climate Change Adaptation Division of the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- ASA joined the membership of the African Regional Partnership for Sustainability and SDGs Reporting, and virtually participated in its 2nd meeting, organized by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Cameroon on April 28, 2022 under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- ASA attended a workshop on "The Experience of the General Auditing Bureau in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the application of SAI-PMF," organized in-person by the Saudi Bureau from March 13 to 15, 2022. The workshop, within the framework of the memorandum of understanding, enhances cooperation, develops joint and constructive work, and supports supervisory efforts between the two agencies at various levels. In accordance with the twelfth INTOSAI principle, and the value and benefits of SAIs, the ASA has recommended strengthening the SAI role in supporting accountability, transparency, and integrity in government and public business sector units.
- ASA participated as a member of the Financial and Administrative Control Authority of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (Alexo) in an in-person meeting from March 14 to 22, 2022 at the organization's headquarters

in Tunis. The organization's financial statements for the last financial year was audited, and an audit report and recommendations were presented.

- ASA participated in the meeting of the Strategic Plan Committee of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) and the consultative meeting for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028, in an in-person capacity from March 27 to 30, 2022 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the consultative meeting, the chair of the committees and the representative of the Secretariat presented their achievements on the preparation of the organization's new strategic plan, and those within the current 2018-2022 plan. The group also discussed challenges, future plans, and regional plans.

## ASA Leadership of the Working Group on the Fight Against Corruption and Money Laundering (WGFACML)

ASA holds the Chairmanship of the Working Group on the Fight Against Corruption and Money Laundering (WGFACML). ASA led and organized the WGFACML's 15th Working Group meeting, held virtually on May 11, 2022 under the auspices of H.E. Counsellor, Hesham Badawy, the Chair of the WGFACML. The 15th Meeting was presided over by H.E. Counsellor, Mohamed El-Faisal Youssef, the Vice President of the Accountability State Authority, with the participation of 22 member SAIs, in addition to the ASA's delegation that included the WGFACML Secretariat members. During the meeting, the WGFACML Secretariat presented the progress report of the achievements made since the working group's last meeting on November 24, 2020. Additionally, the working group member SAIs of Austria, Mexico, the United States of America, the Russian

Federation, Indonesia and France presented on a number of topics in the field of anti-corruption and money laundering. During the meeting, the participating SAIs endorsed selecting SAI Thailand as the host country for the 16th INTOSAI WGFACML Meeting in 2023, to be held in-person.

### **ASA Audit of the African Union Commission**

ASA is mandated to audit the African Union Commission (AUC) and its institutions for the fiscal year ending in December 31, 2021. This audit took place from February 14, 2022 to March 4, 2022 for the interim audit, and from April 4, 2022 to April 15, 2022 for the final audit, where the ASA team participated in auditing the following entities: (1) the AUC Information System in Ethiopia; (2) the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), and; (3) the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child- ACERWC in Lesotho.

H.E. Counsellor Hesham Badawy, President of ASA, mandated the Counsellor Mohamed El-Faisal Youssef; Vice President of the ASA, participate in the virtual meeting of the African Union's Board of External Auditors (BoEA) on May 26, 2022 in order to adopt the Audit Report of the African Union and its institutions for the fiscal year ending in December 31, 2021 with the participation of the General Auditors of

the Board's member states. ASA carried out the audit work of the AUDA-NEPAD, as well as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). Moreover, the meeting addressed the presentation and adoption of the Audit Operation Committee's (AOC's) report, which convened on May 23-24, 2022, as well as the minutes of the previous meeting of the African Union's Board of External Auditors held on November 18, 2021.

ASA Participates in First Coordination Meeting of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)  
The COMESA's twenty-first summit occurred on November 23rd, 2021, entitled "Strengthening Resilience through Strategic Digital Economic Integration", and the COMESA Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was launched. On March 9, 2022, in light of Egypt's presidency of the COMESA, a member from SAI Egypt participated in the first coordination meeting of the Coordinating Committee for Technical Development, which is responsible for setting the timeline and implementing Egypt's vision during the year of its COMESA chairmanship, which was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Finance. The main elements and themes of the implementation plan discussed as part of Egypt's vision for the COMESA reformation includes:

- Rationalizing the use of COMESA's financial resources and setting regulations for the use of the COMESA's cash reserves fund resources.
- Reviewing the regulations for selecting the General Secretariat

staff and taking into account the quotas and the geographical representation upon the selection of the General Secretariat staff. It was proposed to consider restructuring the Committee on the Establishment of Selection Mechanisms and Criteria for COMESA Candidates.

- Studying the issue of setting a determined pension age for the General Secretariat staff.

### **ASA Participates in Financial and Administrative Control Authority of the Arab Organization for Industrial Development, Standardization, and Mining Efforts.**

ASA, in its role as the head of the Financial and Administrative Control Authority of the Arab Organization for Industrial Development, Standardization, and Mining, participated in the organization's twenty-sixth meeting, held in-person from March 7 through 18, 2022 at the organization's headquarters in Rabat, Morocco. During this meeting, the audit of all financial and administrative transactions of the Arab organization for the fiscal year 2021 and the submission of a report on the audit's recommendations and proposals were completed, presented and discussed with the organization's Governing Board and General Assembly, the committee of Arab organizations, and the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States.

■ NEWS FROM NORWAY

## Appointment of Mr Karl Eirik Schjøtt-Pedersen as the new Auditor General of the SAI of Norway



By The Office of the Auditor General of Norway

The Norwegian Parliament has elected Mr Karl Eirik Schjøtt-Pedersen to be the new Head of the Office of the Auditor General of Norway for a four-year term from 1 January 2022. Contemporaneous Mr Schjøtt-Pedersen became the Chair of IDI Board - the INTOSAI Development Initiative.

Mr Schjøtt-Pedersen has been a member of the Norwegian Parliament from 1985 to 2009. He chaired the Finance Committee from 1993 to 1996, and has served in several ministerial posts up to 2013, including as Minister of Finance from 2000 to 2001.

From 2014 to 2017 Mr Schjøtt-Pedersen served as the Vice Chair on SAI Norway's Board of Directors.

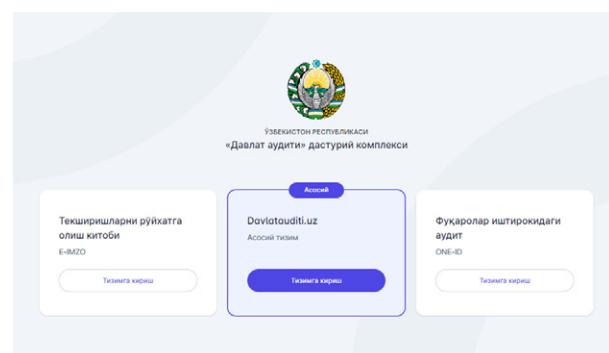
■ NEWS FROM UZBEKISTAN

## The Uzbekistan Chamber Accounts Launches a "State Audit" E-Platform

*Author: Department of International Relations, Chamber of Accounts, Uzbekistan*

As of January 1, 2022, the Uzbekistan Chamber of Accounts launched a special e-platform, named "State Audit", in accordance with the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan. This platform will allow the Chamber of Accounts to track control activities of public funds through a centralized system. The e-platform serves to streamline inspections in public organizations, increase the effectiveness of audit control and improve the objectivity of control activities.

All Uzbekistan public financial control activities, including internal audit services, are required to be registered in the "State Audit" e-platform now. Carrying out control activities without pre-registration in the e-platform will not be authorized, and such activities are declared illegal. Public organizations will be able to provide oversight of financial activities, and will be able to use the e-platform to document written opinions about the accomplished financial control and assess the results of the control activities in a centralized manner.



In addition, the e-platform features the ability for the Executive Officer of the audited organization to track and verify the validity of the inspection and control activity through a QR code.

The newly launched "State Audit" e-platform protects the interest of public organizations, and promotes efficiency. The e-platform will reduce duplication in public organizations, and prevent the occurrence of repeated inspections and illegal interference in public financial inspection activities.

## NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

# SAI New Zealand Publishes New “Good Practice Guidance on Performance Reporting”

*Author: Nicole Ayo von Thun, (Senior Advisor International Engagement) and David Eng (Performance Reporting Director)*

In April 2022, SAI New Zealand published good practice guidance on performance reporting. We developed this guidance to support public organisations to improve how they report to Parliament and the public on their performance.

As known in the INTOSAI community, performance reporting plays an important role in maintaining public trust and confidence in the public sector. From SAI New Zealand's research, we know that this is very important to New

Zealanders. Each year, the public sector spends large amounts of public money, and, as taxpayers and rate payers, New Zealanders have a right to know whether it is being spent wisely. They also have a right to know whether funds are used economically, efficiently, and effectively to deliver high-quality services and better outcomes.

Without effective performance reporting, there is a risk that trust and confidence in government could be lost. With the rise of social media, and information (of varying quality) coming from a variety of sources, the importance of reliable and trustworthy reporting about how the public sector is performing has never been more apparent.

Alongside existing good practice guidance that SAI New Zealand provides, the new guidance was the result of collaboration between the Office of the Auditor-General, Audit New Zealand, and the Treasury. Together, the group looked at about 40 annual reports and selected good examples of:

- reporting on what is important;
- providing a coherent account of performance; and
- reporting on impacts and the contribution to outcomes.

The goal is that this guidance will support more meaningful and clear performance reporting that can improve and give New Zealanders more trust and confidence in government.

The “performance story” reflects the strategy and business model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects the business</li> <li>• Tells the story</li> <li>• Considers attribution</li> <li>• Links different aspects of achievements</li> <li>• Gives sufficient context to explain the links between actions and effects</li> <li>• Is clear about what the entity controls, what it is trying to influence, and what it is responsible for</li> <li>• Reflects its place in the system and relationship to the work of others</li> <li>• Information is sufficiently disaggregated</li> <li>• Is responsive to changes in strategy   direction   operations</li> </ul>

Concentrates on what’s important to the public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is relevant to users</li> <li>• Answers “so what”</li> <li>• Is meaningful</li> <li>• Does not focus on internal activity</li> </ul>

Rigorous
Performance measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are well defined</li> <li>• measure what they say they measure</li> <li>• are objective and verifiable</li> <li>• are balanced   neutral</li> <li>• are supporting reliable data and systems</li> </ul>

Helps the public to become better informed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases public awareness</li> <li>• Is easy to understand</li> <li>• Is appropriately sized   proportionate   takes cost–benefit into account</li> <li>• Is accessible and tailored to audience</li> <li>• Is timely</li> </ul>

Enables an informed assessment of performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a basis for assessing effectiveness and efficiency</li> <li>• Distinguishes good from bad performance</li> <li>• Standards   targets are justifiable</li> <li>• Level of targets   measures need to be challenging</li> <li>• Shows accountability for past actions   intentions</li> <li>• Shows how things have changed</li> </ul>



## Performance reporting

Clear and meaningful service performance information and reporting is crucial for accountability reasons, and in helping to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public organisations.

As citizens, we need reliable and timely information about the performance of public organisations to ask the right questions of those who govern and lead them. Most public organisations are required to report on:

- the amount of public money they’ve spent;
- the services they’ve delivered with that money; and
- the difference they’ve made.

There are legislative requirements for most public organisations to prepare information (in various forms) about their performance.

Statutes governing public organisations' performance reporting obligations include:

- The Public Finance Act 1989;
- Crown Entities Act 2004;
- Local Government Act 2002;
- Education Act 1989; and
- Energy Companies Act 1992.

There might also be performance reporting obligations in the public organisation's enabling Act.

## Being accountable to New Zealanders

An important purpose of performance reporting is to give an account to the public about the responsible use of public resources and regulatory powers. The reporting should include meaningful information that a reader can use to assess the performance of the organisation.

This means that public organisations report on both their service delivery (often referred to as outputs), including the costs of delivering the services, and the effects of their services (usually referred to as impacts or outcomes).

The information needs to be set within the context of their objectives, and compared with planned performance and expected impacts. Public organisations could usefully provide information about the other resources used in delivering services, such as physical resources.

## NEWS FROM MONGOLIA

# Mongolian National Audit Office Launches a New E-learning System

*Author: Mongolian National Audit Office, Communication and Cooperation Department*

In 2021, the Mongolian National Audit Office (MNAO) carried out major reforms to digitally transform its Electronic and Integrated Audit Management System. The MNAO developed a new web-portal, which provides virtual training, or e-learning accessibility for auditors. The development of this e-learning system has been recognized as an innovative approach among Mongolia's government agencies to provide lifelong education and management training in the workplace. The web-portal utilizes software that is familiar to audit and audited entity stakeholders. The system also incorporates the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) best practices for learner-centered participatory virtual training. Auditors had to quickly adjust and address the challenges of working through the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there has been a shift to develop a culture of remote work. Auditors utilized and employed electronic platforms to improve their knowledge and skills. Due to Mongolia's vast territory and geographically distant government agencies, e-learning can be more time and cost-efficient, allowing MNAO auditors to learn and develop their skills in an agile manner. The system can also be used to train other stakeholders beyond MNAO staff. For example, under a contract with the Mongolian MNAO, another auditing entity can utilize the web-portal to provide training and improve the knowledge and skills of its professional experts and consultants.

MNAO's e-learning system provides auditors the opportunity to learn and develop systematically and continuously, regardless of time or location, through two formats: Basic Training and Development Training. Basic Training is a systematic method of training, accrediting, and certifying auditors through a step-by-step training module. The core curriculum is taught by university professors, researchers, academics, methodological managers, and experienced auditors. It is an innovative practice that tailors training materials to each auditor's preferred learning approach to improve effectiveness. Development Training provides opportunities for continuous learning and is designed to build a culture of continuous understanding, in-depth expertise, and knowledge sharing.



The program presents solutions based on case studies, and provides a common understanding of audit policies, strategies, and procedures.

Additionally, to further auditors' personal development, the e-learning system connects auditors to professional courses offered by Mongolian universities, as well as training provided by reputable foreign universities. In the future, the MNAO plans to offer hybrid training, combining classroom and online methodologies, including e-learning. The MNAO is working to connect the e-learning system to training available from INTOSAI, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), and programs in other countries.

Although e-learning has some limitations, the MNAO believes there are advantages, such as the ability to determine participants' preferred learning approaches based on e-learning system management data. This information allows MNAO to assess auditors' participation in learning, including individual learning and development, knowledge and skills improvements, learning outcomes, and student satisfaction.

As the world is facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MNAO continues to improve its e-learning platform to provide a wide range of training options to its auditors, and to share best practices with other SAIs and international organizations.

## ■ NEWS FROM DENMARK

# Birgitte Hansen Appointed as the Head of the Danish Supreme Audit Institution

*Author: Mette E. Matthiasen, Special Adviser, SAI: Rigsrevisionen (SAI Denmark)*

With effect on May 2022, Birgitte Hansen has been appointed new auditor general of Rigsrevisionen. Ms Hansen comes from a position as permanent secretary in the Danish Ministry of Children and Education, which she held from 2019 to 2022.

Ms. Hansen has a Master of Science degree in Economics from the University of Copenhagen and began her career as personal adviser to the Danish minister of business and growth. She then transferred to the Danish Ministry of Finance, where she was soon appointed head of department with responsibility for labour markets and social affairs. In 2004, she founded – and was for nine years the director of – a management consulting company, specializing in political counselling and communication. Before returning to central public administration, Ms. Hansen worked for various municipal institutions in Denmark and spent several years in Toronto, Canada, where she worked in the private sector as a director of business development and communication and a director of strategic management.

Ms. Hansen is married with two sons.

Ms. Hansen succeeds Lone Strom, who stepped down in April, when her ten-year tenure expired.



## ■ NEWS FROM AZERBAIJAN

# The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan Expands International Cooperation

*Author: Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan actively participates in strengthening external public financial control at the international level in close cooperation with foreign partners. As one of its main

activities, the Chamber of Accounts is strengthening relationships with institutions performing relevant functions in foreign countries and with other Supreme Audit Institutions to further international cooperation.

In 2022, as part of these activities, the Chamber of Accounts signed a

Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen bilateral cooperation with the General Audit Court of Saudi Arabia, whose professional experience in public financial control is greatly valued in the international SAI community. The signing ceremony took place on May 5, 2022 during the visit of a delegation led by the President of the General Audit Court of



Saudi Arabia, Mr. Hussam Alangari to Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Chamber of Accounts plans to establish bilateral cooperation with the SAI of Saudi Arabia in the following areas:

- Study of modern approaches to auditing and application of international auditing standards;
- Study of experiences regarding conducting audits of sovereign fiscal funds, public debt, procurement, Sustainable Development Goals, auditing of information technology systems;
- Study of the application of quality control measures in the audit process and reports of external public financial control activities;
- Cooperation with the Training Center to increase the knowledge and skills of the staff of SAI Azerbaijan through trainings in the above mentioned areas;
- Improving SAI Azerbaijan staff knowledge and skills on financial, compliance and performance audits.

On May 20, 2022, as a next step in strengthening international relations, The Chamber of Accounts renewed the



Memorandum of Understanding with the Court of Accounts of the Republic of Turkey, which established friendly relations between the two organizations from the Chamber of Accounts' first day of establishment. For the renewal, a delegation led by the President of the Turkish Court of Accounts, Mr. Metin Yener, visited Azerbaijan. Under the renewed Memorandum, cooperation with SAI Turkey includes plans to organize the following:

- Knowledge exchange of field experience on external public audit methodology and procedures;

- Professional training, including improvement of practical knowledge of staff on professional standards;
- Exchange of information and documents on professional activity;
- Development of joint research and parallel audits, seminars, conferences and working meetings;
- Expansion of cooperation in other areas within INTOSAI, EUROSAI, ASOSAI, ECOSAI and their Working Groups, Committees and Task Forces.

**■ NEWS FROM AZERBAIJAN**

# The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan Scores Well on the Open Budget Index for Supreme Audit Institutions

*Author: The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

The Open Budget Index (OBI), developed by the International Budget Partnership (IBP), assessed the transparency of budget processes and the availability of budget information to the public. As a part of this index, the IBP developed a sub-index of supreme audit institutions to evaluate how well supreme audit institutions (SAIs) promote budget control. The audit report on the activities of the supreme audit institutions for the Open Budget Index consisted of seven questions.



In the 2021 report, the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan scored 89 out of 100 on budget control, and scored the maximum number of points on the three related questions. Overall, the Chamber of Accounts (89 points) ranked third among 120 countries on the evaluation of SAI activities to monitor budgets.



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