



1st Meeting

Steering Committee for the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing

Hosted by the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom
8-9 April 2002, London, U.K.

MINUTES

Participants:

Present:

Brazil

Ricardo de Melo Araújo

Canada

Johanne Gélinas (Associate Chair)

Liliane Cotnoir

Sylvie McDonald

John Reed

China

Wang Benqiang

Liu Dazhu

Mi Jintao

Zhou Xun

Costa Rica

Guillermo Barquero

Guillermo Matamoros

Czech Republic

Miroslav Kruchina

Sylva Müllerová

Egypt

Samia Labib

Jordan

Mohammad Amin Elmugrabi

Abed Kharabsheh

Netherlands

Saskia J. Stuiveling

Peter van Roozendaal

New Zealand

Gareth Ellis

Norway

Øivind Berg Larsen

Lillin Cathrine Knudtzon

Poland

Zbigniew Wesolowski

Malgorzata Romanowicz

United Kingdom

Joe Cavanagh

Chris Shapcott

United States of America

Steven Elstein

Zimbabwe

Abdulman Eric Harid

Absent:

Republic of South Africa

Khalid Hamid

In attendance:

IDI Norway

Else-Karin Kristensen

Koyoshi Okamoto



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Agenda Item 1

Agenda

Discussion:

The Chair welcomed all delegates to the 1st meeting of the Steering Committee for the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing which was held at the Victoria Park Plaza Hotel in London, U.K. The Chair also thanked the National Audit Office, specifically, Joe Cavanagh for hosting this event.

Result:

The agenda for the meeting was approved by all delegates.

Agenda Item 2

Welcome and Introductions

Discussion:

Meeting objectives were outlined. Members introduced themselves and informed the group as to environmental audits presently underway in their offices. Members were also asked to address what, for them, would make the next three years most successful and how the new Chair could build upon the work of the previous Chair.

Results and Next Steps:

Following is a list of initiatives which the SC deemed important for the Chair to address during its three year term:

- Make our work known within our organizations, other institutions and outside the audit community;
- The 2nd generation of guidelines could focus on more practical tools and guidance;
- Increase number of members within the WG;
- Broaden dissemination of the information we produce;
- Share more of our experience with less experienced countries;
- Encourage joint work on environmental auditing;
- Increase effective networking worldwide and regionally (Earth Summit - send clear message to be acknowledged by world leaders to express concerns about water and waste);
- Roles of SC – clear split of co-groups – leave strategic decision to SC, pass practical guidance;
- Provide creative incentives for countries to solve environmental issues;
- Accessing funds from existing financial institutions;
- Enhance the application of guidance (make auditing to be more systematic);
- Help us to define strategic guideline for environmental auditing;
- Help make head of institutions aware of environmental issues; and
- Help to develop practical guides for carrying out audit.

Agenda Item 3**Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities****Discussion:**

Respective roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the full Working Group Assembly were clarified. Chair also emphasized that it was important that all members share the workload and attend meetings on a regular basis.

Results and Next Steps:

Committee accepted proposed roles subject to the following amendments:

- At the WG meeting an extra day will be added for a seminar on environmental auditing, to allow for broader information exchange;
- Remove the sentence on "The need to be part of the RWG before joining the WG". Countries are still encouraged to be a member of a RWG;
- SC to make decisions regarding implementation of the Work Plan approved by the WG.
- The Steering Committee will immediately and regularly communicate outcomes of Steering Committee meetings to membership of the group and beyond.

Agenda Item 4**Regional Round-Up - Regional Coordinators****Discussion:**

Regional Coordinators gave a brief summary of activities under way at the regional level. These presentations were followed by an open discussion about possible ways for the Secretariat or WGA to further support and enhance the regional working groups.

Agenda Item 4a**Regional Round-Up - Brazil (OLACEFS)****Results and Next Steps:**

Mr. Ricardo de Melo Araújo informed the SC that the three-year Work Plan (2002-2004) includes training activities on the following general topics:

- Environmental law and legislation;
- Environmental economics;
- Environmental management; and
- Specific aspects of regional interest such as methods, indicators, benchmarks and techniques for obtaining and evaluating evidences.

Two environmental pilot audits were carried out in co-operation with the SAI of Peru: the environmental management audit of the Alexander Von Humboldt Project of Forest Management and the environmental management audit in the River Mantaro Basin.

Internet site (www.contraloriagen.gov.co/cdmedioambiente/contenido/olacefs) has been created in order to disseminate the information collected.

Two of the main difficulties faced by the INTOSAI WG are the lack of funds implementing the Work Plan activities at the regional level and the different priorities and perspectives that the regional institutions confer to the theme of environmental auditing.

Working Group meetings (III Ordinary Meeting) of the Special Technical Commission for the Environment will be held from 6-7 May 2002. An exchange of experiences and techniques with a view to improving the work of the SAIs will take place during the International Seminar on environmental auditing in the city of Villa de Leyva, in Colombia from 8-10 May 2002.

Agenda Item 4b

Regional Round-Up - Egypt (ARABOSAI)

Results and Next Steps:

Ms. Samia Labib informed the SC that ARABOSAI Governing Board had previously approved, in its 27th meeting, the activity plan for the regional Sub-Committee for Environmental Auditing.

ARABOSAI has a Training and Scientific Research Committee which aims at promoting audit work and improving expertise, competence and skills of SAIs staff in Arab countries by holding training and scientific seminars and encouraging scientific research.

Joint Audits to be undertaken at the Regional Level of ARABOSAI will be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the ARABOSAI RWG.

SC was asked to contribute to the following:

- Organize training courses, on the part of IDI or UNEP;
- Collect detailed performance indicators concerned with auditing environment from all available sources; and
- Avail the experience of SAIs of the developed countries in the field of environmental auditing to all other INTOSAI member SAIs.

The Arab Regional Environmental Auditing Working Group will convene on the margin of ARABOSAI Governing Board meeting intended to be held during October 2002 in Lebanon.

Agenda Item 4c

Regional Round-Up - New Zealand (SPASAI)

Results and Next Steps:

Mr. Gareth Ellis informed the SC that fourteen offices had expressed an interest in being a member of the ACAG/SPASAI RWGEA. Members will be asked to:

- Present the findings of environmental audits they have completed;
- Identify and discuss common themes and issues relating to the development and implementation of audits with an environmental perspective; discuss training and development requirements; and
- Discuss and agree on a work plan for the group including any potential areas for joint or parallel audits.

They also plan to invite a speaker with specialist knowledge in environmental auditing, accounting or report to address the group.

The first formal meeting of the ACAG/SPASAI RWGEA will be held in Melbourne in July 2002.

Agenda Item 4d**Regional Round-Up - People's Republic of China (ASOSAI)****Results and Next Steps:**

Mr. Wang Benqiang informed the SC of the ASOSAI Work Plan for 2002:

- Completion of ASOSAI Guidelines on Environmental Auditing. (Process to be completed by end of September);
- ASOSAI WGEA website will be updated every two months starting March 2002; and
- INTOSAI WGEA secretariat will organize research and studies on regional environmental issues of common concern.

Key obstacles to organizing collaborative audits include the difference in economic development and the variety in the extension and profundity of environmental protection activities.

Agenda Item 4e**Regional Round-Up - Poland (EUROSAI)****Results and Next Steps:**

Mr. Zbigniew Wesolowski informed the SC that the principles of the Working Group's activities are as follows:

- Initiation of international environmental audits in the European region;
- Exchange of experience in the field of environmental auditing and training activities;
- Ongoing contacts with members of EUROSAI WG through the Internet pages and Group's meetings;
- The promotion of the Working Group within the EUROSAI structure which is achieved by the yearly presentation of Group's activities at the EUROSAI Board's meetings; and
- Acquisition of new Group members (recently the National Audit Office of Denmark and the State Audit Office of Croatia).

The Polish SCC in co-operation with the SAI of France are preparing the 2nd Meeting of the EUROSAI WGEA to be held on 11-12 April in Paris. The meeting is aimed, among others, at developing a summary of the activities completed by the Group so far for presentation at the Moscow EUROSAI Congress. Members will approve the Working Group's strategy for 2003-04.

The fourth meeting of the Co-ordinator and Sub-coordinator is planned in October 2002 in Warsaw as part of the Sea Protection Seminar. The proposals for the Work plan for the year 2003 will be worked out.

Agenda Item 4f**Regional Round-Up - Republic of South Africa (AFROSAI)****Results and Next Steps:**

Mr. Khalid Hamid informed (in writing) the SC that the working group is viewing itself in the longer term as simply a technical section that will generate environmental and sustainable development issues that will be carried forward by the relevant financial or performance auditors. It was, therefore, suggested that it would be worth considering disbanding the AFROSAI group and putting in place the three language sub groups of English, French and Arabic groups. (Information exchange with some SAIs is very difficult due to problems with internet service providers and telephone exchanges.) They will, therefore, report to the Secretariat of AFROSAI in Togo.

Currently awaiting to see if they will get accreditation for their seminar at the World Summit in Johannesburg in August 2002.

AFROSAI group will meet in Libya in September 2002.

Agenda Item 5

Implementation of the 2002-04 Work Plan

Discussion:

The primary objective for the SC meeting was to set in motion implementation of each element of the approved 2002-04 Work Plan.

See attachment – for key dates/milestones for all projects.

Agenda Item 5a

Restricted Mandate and Regularity Auditing - New Zealand

Discussion:

New Zealand presented a progress update. This was used to clarify status and identify next steps with the Restricted Mandate paper. The SC discussed the possibility of adopting the paper as an INTOSAI document.

Results and Next Steps:

Steering Committee will recommend to the Working Group that the paper become a formal INTOSAI document. Following approval from the WG, the Chair will announce to Governing Board that we will be presenting the document for approval. (Next Governing Board meeting is in Vienna on 16-18 October 2002.)

Agenda Item 5b

Paper on Experience with the Water Theme - Netherlands

Discussion:

Project plan for the Paper on Experience with the Water Theme (prepared by the Netherlands) was discussed.

Results and Next Steps:

Proposal for water was accepted subject to the following 3 amendments:

1. Elements on the "how to" conduct audits will be added. Move from the "what is" to the "how to" compendium of audit practice. This will link to audit training. Will address findings – what they covered, what they found and resources available. Sort of a pilot for things to come;
2. Identification of policy information for decision-making; and
3. Capture lessons learned and implications.

Committee emphasized the need for the paper to capture the reality of each country or region.

The WGEA will prepare a paper summarizing the collective experience of SAIs, drawing out lessons learned and practical tips for SAIs.

Sub-committee created for the water theme:

Brazil; Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe

Agenda Item 5c

Paper on Waste as a Central Theme - Norway

Discussion:

The WGEA has adopted the new central theme of “waste management” to provide a suggested focus for future audits by SAIs. Norway will prepare an overview paper on waste in order to provide SAIs with the necessary background to conduct such audits.

Results and Next Steps:

Proposal for waste was agreed upon, subject to the following amendments:

1. Make it clear that all types of wastes (nuclear, household, toxic, solid, hazardous, etc.) are included in the scope of the paper except for emissions in water and air;
2. Norway will produce an Outline/Table of Contents of the paper by 15 Sept 2002; and
3. Information on International Treaties related to the waste issue will be included.

All members will be asked to provide a copy of reports that are not on the web-site and they will be invited to help translate when needed.

Chairs of AFROSAI, ARABOSAI, ASOSAI, OLACEF and SPASAI to present concept of the paper to their RWG meetings, unless the Norwegian team visits the meeting to do the presentation. The initial proposal included 3 stages. SC agreed that 3rd stage (Conclusion and Recommendations) would be formed on the basis of the discussion at the next SC meeting in Costa Rica.

Sub-committee is created:

Canada, China, Costa Rica, Norway and Poland;
Brazil has later joined.

Agenda Item 5d

Paper on Policy Information - Chair
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Discussion:

Members of the SC were invited to consider the need for and possible scope of a Paper on Policy Information (as discussed at previous Working Group meetings).

Results and Next Steps:

The Netherlands will take the lead on this issue and will include consideration of the policy information for decision-making in the Water theme (item 5b). A separate paper will not be developed at this time but could be re-considered based on the water paper.

Agenda Item 5e**Paper on Sustainable Development - United Kingdom****Discussion:**

SC was invited to consider what further action, if any, was required with respect to the paper on Sustainable Development.

Results and Next Steps:

It was decided that the SC will recommend to WGEA that it be adopted as a formal INTOSAI document. Due to the imminent risk of becoming outdated by Budapest 2004, the United Kingdom will have to make sure that amendments are current.

Agenda Item 5f**4th Questionnaire/Survey on Environmental Auditing in SAIs - Chair****Discussion:**

Members were invited to give their views on the content of the next survey:

1. How to improve the quality of the survey; and
2. How to increase the participation of the SAIs, particularly ones from AFROSAI, SPASAI, low-income countries, and those lacking new information technologies.

Results and Next Steps:

Project was accepted as proposed with the following suggestions:

The WGEA will conduct the 4th Questionnaire/Survey on Environmental Auditing among all SAIs commencing in 2003. Canada will lead the project and the U.S.A. has accepted to review a draft.

1. The quality of the survey will be much improved if we try to better elaborate on what governments have formulated on environmental policy.
2. It was also suggested that regions could add a section (annex) to get more information on specific subjects of interest in their regions.
3. Must "prune" the existing content and keep additions to a minimum.

Agenda Item 5g**Collaborative Audits - Chair/All****Discussion:**

Members were asked to share experiences in conducting collaborative audits between regions and determine interest in collaborating on an audit of global interest.

Results and Next Steps:

The global idea of conducting collaborative audits will be postponed for the time being because it is a complicated task. Before moving in that direction we will organize activities to better understand the "force" and constraints. Following is a list of activities which have been proposed to do this:

- A theme on collaborative audit could also be chosen from Earth Summit 2002;

- A portion of the symposium planned at the next WGEA meeting could be on lessons learned while undertaking collaborative audits;
- Present possible themes of collaborative audit on waste issues at the next WGEA meeting; and
- Send a letter to the Heads of SAI to present our work plan to them on waste.

Agenda Item 5h

Training - Chair

Discussion:

The Paper "Sustainable Development" of INTOSAI WGEA from October 2000 made reference to the IDI's world wide survey, where approximately 100 SAIs rated the importance of five areas for the IDI's future agenda. The survey responses indicated that virtually every region highlighted their interest in environmental auditing, and specified in their written comments that there is a need to transfer the results of the WGEA's work to the operational level in the regions and SAIs by developing training strategies. Suggestions were also made that the IDI should play an active role in linking the pool of IDI training specialists closer to the committees and working groups. Ms. Else-Karin Kristensen and Mr. Koyoshi Okamoto of IDI Norway were therefore, invited to give a presentation on the possible role the IDI could play and to what level and degree they are willing to assist the WGEA.

Ms. Kristensen also informed the SC to the following advantages this cooperation with the IDI may bring to the WGEA. They are as follows:

- IDI has an information exchange programme which will shortly include an electronic training directory and global Bulletin Board in four of INTOSAI's five languages (English, Arabic, Spanish and French);
- They continuously improve cross regional networks between IDI training specialists;
- The IDI stores complete sets of regional training courses on CD;
- They have recruited regional programme staff recommended by the regions and subsequently cover five languages within their own staff, including Russian;
- Together with a pool of course designers and instructors they have a number of lead instructors and subject matter experts (SME) at their disposal;
- When needed, they expand the pool of course designers and trainers in the regions; and
- IDI continuously updates an electronic version of their general training guidelines and their framework for evaluation.

IDI's proposal is as follows:

Type of products:

- Approach centered on "Train the trainer"
- One binder for instructor
- Binders for participants

Budget is up to 2003 and it covers 2 pilot projects:

- One in a big region
- One in a small region

Long Term:

- Pilot project will be in English
- Pilot project in English area regions

Members were then asked to discuss the parameters of the training element of the 2002-04 Work Plan and agree on next steps as outlined in the proposal.

Results and Next Steps:

The IDI proposition to develop a training program with their collaboration was accepted. It was agreed to enter in a partnership in a major and exciting initiative to develop and deliver training for SAs in the conduct of environmental auditing. This training will focus on the needs of SAs in developing and emerging countries and will build upon existing training initiatives in the INTOSAI regions.

Regions where they will present the pilot projects will be chosen later on. A proposition on how to proceed will be presented by IDI, the Chair and the sub-committee.

A sub-committee is formed:

IDI, Brazil, Canada (Chair), China, Costa Rica, Jordan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland (maybe), United Kingdom, United States and Zimbabwe.

Agenda Item 5i**Networking and Information Exchange - Chair****Discussion:**

Members were asked to discuss and agree on suggestions to enhance information exchange and networking, including the WGEA Web site and the Greenlines Bulletin.

Results and Next Steps:

The WGEA discussed and agreed upon several actions aimed at improving communication and information sharing amongst SAs. These include:

- develop links with institutions like UNEP and World Bank;
- WGEA Web-site to include a section on activities in the regional working groups on environmental auditing. It is most useful and important that the web site be kept up-to-date;
- changes to the context and distribution of the “Greenlines”; and
- reorient Working Group meetings to focus on information exchange.

Each member should inform their ambassador when they come to a meeting (event, mission, etc.).

Agenda Item 6**INTOSAI and the World Summit - Chair****Discussion:**

Members were asked to consider and agree upon the extent to which the WGEA should have a presence at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to be held 26 August to 4 September in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Results and Next Steps:

The SC entrusted the Chair to represent the WGEA at the World Summit as she sees appropriate.

- Canada will organize an activity to increase the profile of the WG at the Earth Summit.

- A joint event could be organized with the members already on site.
- RWG of AFROSAI will have their meeting on 26 August 2002 before the summit. Norway will attend the meeting for the theme of waste.
- Material produced by Netherlands for the INCOSAI in Seoul could be used at the Earth Summit (CD + video-Kiosque). Netherlands might have to reproduce the CD.

Agenda Item 7**Open Discussion on Enhancements to Work Plan and Role of Secretariat - All****Discussion:**

Members were invited to share views on activities proposed for the 2002-04 period and ways to enhance the effectiveness of meetings and WG activities.

Results and Next Steps:

Members had no further comments to provide in regards to activities proposed for the 2002-04 period (in addition to those in Agenda Item 2).

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 15:30.

Next Meetings

The Steering Committee of the WGEA has determined the need for a meeting prior to the 8th WGEA meeting. This is a reflection of both the significant number of initiatives underway within the WGEA, as well as the desire of Working Group members to have their meetings focus on information exchange rather than day-to-day project management. We are pleased to inform you that the SAI of Costa Rica has offered to host the 2nd meeting of the SC WGEA in December 2002 and that the China National Audit Office has agreed to host the 8th meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Auditing in Beijing, in the spring of 2003.