

New Web Page Cooperation between SAIs

Opinion about the project by the project leaders Poland and the Netherlands

At the 11th meeting of the Working Group in Tanzania, the Workplan 2008-2010 was approved. With regard to the web pages for WG papers, the minutes contained the following statement:

Goal 3: Maintain and enhance the dissemination and exchange up-to-date information on, and training in, the techniques of environmental auditing among SAIs.

(...)

• Providing web support for the development of web pages—similar to the Focus on waste and water pages for the guidance papers on cooperative audits, and biodiversity—will be led by the SAI of Estonia and coordinated by the authors of the respective guidance papers.

The authors of the Cooperation between SAIs-paper, the Polish Chamber of Accounts and the Netherlands Court of Audit, have explored the possibilities of developing web pages that would add value to the original paper.

Their joint conclusion is that web pages could at best add marginal value to what is already available on the WGEA website. The cooperation paper and the survey bibliography database provide respectively tips and examples, and a frequently updated overview of cooperation between SAIs. The authors believe that it is sufficient that both paper and database are available at the WGEA website and are brought under attention when appropriate.

The authors of the cooperation paper propose to refrain from developing web pages for cooperation, and to assess the need for an update of the paper when a critical mass of new experiences has led to new insights.

The authors base both conclusion and proposal on the next assumptions:

- The tips in the paper are abstracted from multiple experiences. They can only be updated on the basis of a critical mass of new experiences and new insights, that would make it possible to falsify, sharpen up or add tips. If that is the case, it would probably be more appropriate to produce a follow-up paper.
- The gathering of examples to deduce and illustrate the tips for the paper itself took a lot of effort. This will probably be even more the case for web pages.
- Sharing and publishing less positive experiences has proved to be unpopular, although interesting lessons can be learned of them. Those kind of experiences have led to tips in the paper, but the publication of the illustrating examples was much more difficult. This will also apply to web pages, and maybe even stronger.
- The cooperation paper, the survey bibliography database and the Working Group itself provide enough possibilities to contact colleagues who have dealt with similar situations. Webpages can't add to that.