



13th INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Steering Committee Meeting Virtual Sessions, 16-17 September 2020

Summary

The 13th Steering Committee meeting was conducted virtually with 2 sessions in order to facilitate participants from all time zones. Both sessions were opened by Mr. Brynjar Wiersholm the new Deputy Director General of GFU. Opening remarks were delivered from the Donor Chair of the Cooperation, Mr. Edward Olowo-Okere and the INTOSAI Vice-Chair of the Cooperation and Mr. Gene Dodaro for the session on September 16, 2020. Dr. Hussam Al-Angari, INTOSAI Chair of the Cooperation, and Ms. Rosmarie Schlup, Donor Vice-Chair of the Cooperation delivered the opening remarks for the session held on September 17, 2020.

The SC meeting covered 2 key IDC Goals; namely IDC Goal 1 – Independent, Professional, Capable, Transparent and Well Governed SAIs; Goal 2 – Enhanced Partnerships and scaled up support to SAIs. Goal 1 was discussed in the open session while Goal 2 was discussed afterwards in a closed session on both days. Both days were well attended with 84 persons attending the open session on Day 1 and 51 persons attending the closed session. Day 2 saw 61 and 25 persons attending the opening and closed sessions respectively.

Agenda Item 1: GOAL 1 Independent, Professional, Capable, transparent and Well-governed SAIs

The topic of Independence was featured for the second time at the INTOSAI-Donor Steering Committee. The Donor and INTOSAI Chairs, in their respective sessions, recognized the increased importance of SAI Independence as the first strategic priority under Goal 1 is to increase and sustain SAI Independence. They reiterated that over the last two years, the IDC held several Strategic Discussions on SAI Independence which recognised the benefit of working together to create powerful and nimble coalitions to support SAI independence. They reflected on the strategic importance topic for the IDC moving forward and introduced the session.

1.1 – Update from the World Bank on SAI Independence

Srinivas Gurazada, World Bank, presented an update on the work being done by the World Bank on SAI Independence. The Steering Committee welcomed updates from the World Bank on a Global Research Product on SAI Independence which will equip World Bank teams to better support SAIs in collaboration with INTOSAI and contribute to strengthen global initiatives on mitigating emerging threats to SAI Independence. The research which will be conducted annually, will use ten parameters drawn from the INTOSAI Standards and global best practices to assess specific dimensions of independence. The report issued from the research product, which will be publicly available, will help identify emerging issues on SAI independence and the correlation between SAI independence and various parameters.

1.2 – How can the SAI Goodwill Ambassador add the most value?

Natalie Bertsch, SECO, presented an update on the Goodwill Ambassador process that was undertaken by the task force. She highlighted the process followed and informed that a shortlist of potential candidates for the SAI Goodwill Ambassador had been presented to the SC leadership. The final selection would be circulated to the full SC for approval. She also elaborated on the role and reporting lines of Goodwill Ambassador who will act on behalf of the IDC and might be complemented at a later stage by Regional Ambassadors. She indicated what could be the value added of such position in terms of awareness raising with the general public, providing high-level policy access, and bringing neutrality. The discussions centered around the role and the reporting lines of the Goodwill Ambassador and his/her appointment process. On the first point, it was indicated by several SC members that there might be a need for greater clarity around the role and the reporting lines of the Ambassador. It was suggested to that end to develop/update and circulate to the SC members detailed Terms of Reference and Terms of condition. On the second point, it was stressed that the approval process should take into consideration the need for a vetting by each MOU signatory organisation. It was therefore suggested to update the process and timelines for the approval of the Goodwill Ambassador to clarify it and allow sufficient time for the vetting.

Decisions:

1. Task force to update and circulate the Terms of Reference, Terms of Condition, for approval by the IDSC
2. Task force to update the approval process of the Ambassador to take into consideration internal vetting within each member of the Cooperation, and final approval at the IDSC level
3. IDSC Leadership to submit the nomination for the SAI Goodwill Ambassador to the IDSC for internal vetting by each signatory and final approval by the Steering Committee

1.3 – How can we operationalize the SAI Independence Rapid Advocacy Mechanism (SIRAM), and how can donors and INTOSAI support this?

Presentations on an overview, status and importance of SIRAM were made by Freddy Ndjemba, IDI, Mohamed M Ali, Auditor General of Somalia and Susanne Wille, EC. Members and participants underlined the importance of SIRAM and highlighted that it already was producing tangible results. The importance of learning from the first cases and further strengthening the communication on SIRAM cases with Donors globally, when relevant was highlighted. It was recommended to include an additional step, an after-process review, and to keep the response time to a minimum. The importance of including the INTOSAI Regional bodies at various stages in the roll-out of the SIRAM was also agreed.

Decisions:

1. IDI to update TORs to include after-process review
2. IDI to work towards having reduced timelines



1.4 – Enabling in-country donor staff to advocate for SAI Independence via the SAI Independence Resource Kit

Freddy Ndjemba, IDI presented an update on the resource kit. All SC members supported the resource kit and its intended roll out. They were very positive about the potential impact on the work currently being done to achieve de facto independence. Several donors expressed their willingness to assist with its dissemination to in-country staff. It was highlighted that it was important to have this tool kit in multiple languages. IDI confirmed that online interaction and virtual courses will be developed to support dissemination. It was further noted that a virtual roll out strategy is being developed. It was recommended to incorporate other tools and documents to further strengthen the resource kit. It was highlighted that a potential challenge may be linked to the dissemination strategy as it relates to ensuring that it reaches the correct staff on the ground.

Decisions:

1. IDI to update the SAI Independence Resource Kit to include relevant additional resources such as the World Bank's Global Research Product on SAI Independence.
2. Translation of the resource kit in all IDI working languages (Arabic, French, and Spanish) by end of 2020.
3. IDI to develop and circulate to all SC members the dissemination strategy of the SAI Independence Resource Kit for donor in-country staff.

** Research project on SAI Independence*

Building on the INTOSAI P-1 Lima Declaration, P-10 - Mexico Declaration and the GUID9030, the INTOSAI Knowledge Sharing Committee and SAI France take the opportunity of these discussions to inform about a research paper coming soon that intends to advocate for and provide tools to protect, support and increase the independence of SAIs.

Agenda item 2: GOAL 2 Enhanced partnerships and scaled-up support to SAIs

2.1 Responding to COVID-19 SAI needs (GCP Tier 1) Discussion on the IDC response and proposed support mechanism

Mike Hix from the US GAO presented the INTOSAI COVID-19 support initiative which is focussed on assisting SAIs affected by the global pandemic with continuity of operations. The importance of this INTOSAI initiative was highlighted by SC members. Several donors expressed that they would like to share proposals received with their in-country representatives. Some donors however noted that there could be challenges in terms of mobilizing funds quickly to meet the immediate challenges facing SAIs while others have organizational policies that makes it difficult to fund ICT infrastructure. The importance of managing expectations and keep the application process light was also highlighted. It was agreed that once the proposals are received by IDI from the SAIs, they would be shared with Donor members who in turn would indicate their interests if any.

Decisions:

1. IDI to develop an application template/expression of interest template
2. IDI to share proposals received through the GCP T1 related to ICT support and the Covid-19 impact to donor members

2.2 – Leveraging on the results achieved so far – GCP T2 (current round). Discussion on how to ensure scaled-up and long-term support to the current GCP T2 SAIs

Jostein Tellnes, IDI presented an update of the current round of the GCP T2 and the achievements of the SAIs and PAP-APP program to date. The SC members expressed satisfaction with the achievements made in the current round of the GCP T2, which has enabled nine highly challenged SAIs to set their own strategic priorities and on that basis request for capacity development support. The importance of the role played by IDI, AFROSAI-E and CREFIAF in the PAP-APP was highlighted as a key reason for the progress made. Mr. Tellnes explained that while two of the nine SAIs have got commitment of scaled-up support for their key strategic priorities as envisaged by the GCP T2, the other seven have not yet secured such support. The SC was reminded that all SAIs have general external support plans as well as specific project proposals. The project proposals could be further developed in terms of scope and design for any donor wishing to come in. The SAIs are expected to invite all interested partners in online Project Support Group meetings to present and get feedback on proposals.

Some donor representatives informed that they are encouraging their country offices to consider supporting SAIs not yet supported. While others expressed that there may be changes to their priority countries in the near future, thus, there may be an increased possibility to support countries where they earlier couldn't. It was proposed that the GFU circulates amongst donor members brief proposals from those GCP T2 SAIs yet to find committed funding. It was clarified that donors have opportunity to support both long-term and/or short-term projects of the current GCP T2 SAIs.

Decisions

1. The Steering Committee took note of the status of GCP Tier 2 round 1, and will continue efforts on enabling long-term support for the SAIs in the first round not yet supported
1. IDI to circulate brief proposals (max.2pages) for the GCP T2 SAIs yet to get committed funding to the SC members
2. Donor members will share these proposals with their in-country offices.

2.3 – GCP T2 (New Round)– The Way Forward; Discussion on a potential new round of Tier 2 design and way forward

Kerry Crawford, IDI, presented the proposed new design for a 2nd round of the GCP Tier 2 as developed by a group of IDSC members. It was highlighted that mobilisation of financial and

technical support at a very early stage can underpin the success of the initiative as well as helps to manage expectations. It was explained that a proposed new round would see an adjustment to the selection process by building on the successful process used in round 1 while seeking to better reflect more regional representation. It was noted that in a possible new round, donors would be able to engage in bilateral capacity strengthening with selected SAIs at an earlier stage, focused on improving the SAIs capacity on an agreed type of audit.

SC members were in principle positive to having a new round of the GCP T2 and lauded the achievements of the current round as indications of what could be achieved in a new round. Several SC members highlighted the principles of agility and flexibility in a new round. It was explained that there will be different opportunities and needs in each country, and the design of the new round should take this into account. It was recommended that the selection process refinement does not eliminate the key metrics used in the previous round to ensure that the most challenged SAIs are considered for inclusion. Several representatives expressed that it would be good to invite SAIs from all regions in a new round, to ensure a broad appeal and to make it more likely to mobilize funding as some donors only operate in certain regions. There was agreement that in-country offices and staff should play an integral role and should come onboard at an early stage of a GCP T2 new round. Some SC members highlighted the need to consider the stage of the current round of GCP T2 SAIs as well as having a more detailed concept paper prior to initiating a new round. It was noted that mobilising funding should be a top priority. SECO proposed to conduct a survey of donors to identify the potential countries and areas that could be supported while DFID expressed that political buy-in was crucial to getting more donors on board. It was recommended that the GFU and PAP-APP team consider the following avenues to mobilise funding for the current GCP T2 SAIs; (i) utilising the IDI SPMR initiatives as this is a natural link with the GCP T2. (ii) A virtual roadshow where the SAIs can have dialogue with potential donors and explain their proposals

Decisions:

1. In principle agreement that a second round of the GCP Tier 2 should be carried out in line with the concept and process described in the discussion note.
2. It was agreed that GCP Tier 2 round 2 will be open for all regions.
3. Donor members to discuss at next donor coordination meeting practical ways to support a new round of Tier 2 (including potentially a donor survey)
4. A GCP Tier 2 round 2 implementation roadmap to be developed and presented for the IDSC for approval.
5. The pre-launch phase of the second round is initiated upon approval of the implementation roadmap and when funding agreements have been entered for capacity development projects for the majority of the SAIs included in round 1.