



## 14<sup>th</sup> INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Steering Committee Meeting Virtual Sessions, 5-6 October 2021

### Summary

The 14<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee (SC) meeting was conducted virtually with two sessions to facilitate participants from all time zones. Both sessions were opened by Mr. Brynjar Wiersholm, Deputy Director General of GFU. Opening remarks were delivered from the Donor Chair of the Cooperation, Mr. Arun Manuja on behalf of Mr. Edward Olowo-Okere and the INTOSAI Vice-Chair of the Cooperation and Mr. Gene Dodaro for the session on October 5, 2021. 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 October 6, 2021.

Following the opening remarks the new video for the Cooperation was shown and approved by the members. The video will be added to the IDC website and published widely.

The SC meeting covered three 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 and Goal 3 – SAI-led Capacity Development. Both days were well attended with 50 persons attending Day 1 and 34 persons attending Day 2.

### GOAL 1 - Independent, Professional, Capable, transparent and Well-governed SAIs

The topic of SAI independence was featured for a third consecutive year. The Donor and INTOSAI Chairs, in their respective sessions, recognized the increased importance of SAI Independence and the challenges in sustaining and increasing independence. They referred to findings from the World Bank Independence Index and IDI SAI Global Stocktaking Report with concern over SAI independence and reiterated the benefit of working together through IDC to create powerful and nimble coalitions to support SAI independence.

#### 1.1 – SAI Independence Goodwill Ambassador

Ms. Natalie Bertsch, SECO, presented an update on the Goodwill Ambassador process that was undertaken by the task force. She elaborated on the role of Goodwill Ambassador who will act on behalf of the IDC. She explained how the position could add value in terms of awareness raising outside the INTOSAI community, providing high-level policy access and bringing neutrality. Ms. Bertsch further highlighted the background of the process which started with discussions at the SC in Kuwait in 2018, establishment of the task force and approval of the ToR and selection process at the SC in 2020. Following the selection process

she added that Rt Hon. Helen Clark had been approved on a non-objection basis and requested to become the Goodwill Ambassador and that an answer was still outstanding.

#### **Decisions:**

1. The SC noted that if the answer by the end of the year from Rt Hon Helen Clark is positive, the SC will be informed via email of her acceptance.
2. The SC noted that if the answer from Rt Hon Helen Clark is negative, the task force will consider other candidates and get a no-objection from the SC before approaching the next candidate. The SC agreed that the efforts should focus on 1-2 candidates more closely linked to auditing, public financial management, and the international donor community, such as a former high-ranking World Bank or IMF official, and that they be individuals nearly certain to accept the position and with clear back channel means to directly connect with them.

## **GOAL 2 - Enhanced partnerships and scaled-up support to SAIs**

### *2.1 – Leveraging on the results achieved so far – GCP T2 (current round). Reporting on how to ensure scaled-up and long-term support to remaining GCP T2 SAIs in the current round.*

Mr. Jostein Tellnes, IDI presented an update of the current round of the GCP T2 and the achievements of the SAIs and PAP-APP programme to date. He noted that most of the nine highly challenged SAIs had achieved the milestones set in the past years. He added that in terms of securing phase 2 support, the SAIs have been grouped in three groups, according to the level of support secured. He highlighted that all nine SAIs are likely to secure multiyear support for implementation of their strategic plans, but the main challenges being finalization of funding agreements for the SAIs of Togo, Guinea and DRC, new funding for The Gambia project beyond 2022 as well as funding for infrastructure needs, such as new main HQ in Madagascar and Togo, and regional offices in DRC.

The SC members expressed satisfaction with the achievements made in the current round of the GCP T2, which had enabled nine highly challenged SAIs to set their own strategic priorities and on that basis, request for capacity development support. It was underlined that support to the most needy SAIs would take time and that the concrete results made was a testimony to the model.

The SC members were informed that the main initiative to link the SAIs to the donors at the global level, was a seminar held in April 2021 where donors with their global representatives were invited. The initiative aimed to supplement the main track, which is the SAIs' country-level engagement to mobilise support through the so called "Project Support Groups". In addition, the regular Donor Coordination meetings held two or three times a year were used to communicate the SAIs' needs. The session Chair added that support was built on a country-by-country basis and had been successful so far, although there was need to look

for other ways to augment input to donors who do not have a country presence in these countries.

Following a suggestion, SC members agreed that it was a good idea to consider to use the SC to give those SAIs who did not get funding a voice to highlight their requirements for funding to donors from HQ present. One suggestion was to let the individual SAIs that need help/funding participate in the SC meeting.

Finally, Mr. Tellnes noted that success stories on Niger and Madagascar would be added to the meeting summary. The story by the two First Presidents summing up how the SAIs embarked on the GCP Tier 2 process can be seen here: [INTOSAI Capacity Building Committee and Updated ACCC Good stories: Using Strategic Planning to Build Partnerships \(intosaicbc.org\)](#). The summary of phase 1 achievements can also be seen in the INTOSAI Journal article by the three PAP-APP partner organizations here: [Nine SAIs in Challenging Contexts Poised for Greater Performance \(intosaijournal.org\)](#). Mr. Tellnes agreed to follow up the suggestion by the SC to make a video highlighting Tier 2 success stories.

#### **Decisions:**

1. The SC 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. IDC Leadership will follow up to on how to give SAI's that need funding an opportunity to present their case to SC members.

#### *2.2 – Global SAI Accountability Initiative (GSAI) (GCP T2 new round)– Reporting on the process so far and next steps*

Ms. Susanne Wille, EC, provided a status on the process so far highlighting the agreement in the 2020 IDSC meeting that two criteria should be met before the moving forward with a new round of the GCP T2/GSAI:

- 1) Funding is established for the 1st phase of the GCP Tier 2/GSAI and
- 2) Peer providers and a technical implementing partner are identified to implement the new round.

She further added that two working groups had been formed to focus on (i) Resource Mobilisation and (ii) Implementation Roadmap. Ms. Wille explained that the GCP T2/GSAI committee believed that a proposed list of beneficiaries and an outcome of the resource mobilisation was planned ready by the end of the 1st quarter of 2022. At this point, the GCP T2/GSAI committee would be able to indicate to the SC its proposal on going forward with a new round and if the two key criteria have been met.

Finally, the SC endorsed the new name of Global SAI Accountability Initiative (GSAI) proposed by the Committee in response to negative connotations to the existing GCP T2 name.

**Decisions:**

1. Global SAI Accountability Initiative (GSAI) agreed as the new name for the GCP T2 initiative.
2. Agreement that the second round of the GSAI be carried out in line with the process described in the update note and roadmap.
3. IDC Leadership to consider involvement of existing SAIs in the process, including participating on the GSAI Committee, to share their experiences to inform the design of the process to increase its chance of success.

*2.3 Responding to COVID-19 SAI needs (GCP Tier 1) Update on PFAC grant and discussion on the IDC response and proposed support*

Mr. Brynjar Wiersholm, IDI presented the update on INTOSAI COVID-19 support initiative. He highlighted its success with around EUR 600 000 of EUR 700 000 disbursed in less than two years and to more than 50 SAIs. He added that this came in addition to the 18 SAIs from ASOSAI that have received the Saudi Fund for Improved SAI Performance (Saudi FISP). He pointed to the success criteria being simple application procedure, efficient approval procedure given that funding already was in place and that SAI needs related to ICT and safety measure was clear for all. The SC members commended the teams involved in the PFAC and SAI Saudi FISP grants for both the approach and results.

Mr. Wiersholm presented the latest status on the rolling call for proposals where results were less promising. The session Chair noted that there was a higher success rate in matching SAIs and donors when the call for proposals was done within a specific time period. The Chair said this needed to be explored and that input from SC members to any of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Cooperation was welcome. That SAIs receive funding through their PFM or other in-country programs could have affected the results and should be considered.

**Decisions:**

1. SC members to provide input to Leadership on revitalising GCP T1 including consideration of pool funding to make funds readily available.

## GOAL 3 - SAI-led capacity development

### *3.1 How can IDC do more to support SAIs in meeting new challenges with background in findings from the Global Stocktaking report and IDC Session series.*

Mr. Einar Gørrissen, IDI presented an update on the five sessions leading up to the SC Meeting:

- Session 1 – GCP Tier 2: Recipe for Success – Cultivating an environment for SAI capacity development in states in a complex and challenging context
- Session 2 – Leaving no SAIs behind
- Session 3 – How can we improve support to SAIs based on findings from the 2020 Global SAI Stocktaking Report?
- Session 4 – Coordination - a key pillar in building resilient SAIs
- Session 5 – Responsive SAIs – Auditing of Emergency Funds during the Global COVID-19 Pandemics

He highlighted a number of key findings from the engaging sessions that could be helpful in informing IDC's priorities in its work going forward, including:

- The importance of leadership commitment and peer-to-peer support that is based on strong communication and trust between the parties.
- IDC should continue prioritizing support to SAIs in terms of developing good project proposals, including a focus on developing clear objectives for the support, how the support links in with challenges in the PFM system and how it will enhance the performance of the SAI at the organizational level.
- SAIs stand a better chance of receiving support if they lead by example in terms of transparency, results reporting and strong financial accountability systems.
- The key role of the INTOSAI regions, both in terms of regional delivery of support and in terms of advocating vis a vis donors for support to SAIs.
- Donors could step up their efforts to support peer-to-peer cooperation and support in implementation of the many Global Public Goods that have been developed in the SAI community.
- The need to support SAIs and technology including remote auditing and software as well as supporting SAIs in terms of developing strategic foresight, agility and resilience was
- While the guiding principle should be that the SAI leads in the coordination, it may in some cases be necessary for donors to either support the SAI or take the lead in the coordination efforts.
- IMF recognition of the need to strengthen SAIs ability to audit the use of all emergency funds.



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- How SAI independence and responsiveness are both fundamental to an effective SAI response to the pandemic and how these could be reconciled through closer engagement between SAIs and the IMF around short-term emergency financing, and in the longer term policy dialogue, capacity development and monitoring.

Recordings of the session are available on the event website

<https://www.idsc2021.org/Programme>

Following the call by the session Chair on how to take results of these findings forward, SC members expressed an interest in setting up working groups on three main topics:

- On technological improvements in SAIs, particularly as a response to COVID-19 both on infrastructure, hardware and software as well as technical capability in areas such as data analysis. How to support technological and digital transformation, remote auditing etc.
- On the need for climate change considerations to be built into auditing systems and the importance of effective SAIs contributing to this agenda.
- On the need for gender equality and inclusivity as another topic of focus for all SAIs

The Chairs also underlined the need for these potential working groups to be explored in light of work done in existing INTOSAI working groups on Environmental Auditing, Information Technology Auditing, Science and Technology etc. They also mentioned being open to see what other instruments could complement IDCs efforts such as the World Bank's GovTech Global Partnership.

#### **Decisions:**

1. Explore the need for working groups on Technology, Climate, Gender and Inclusivity with consideration of existing INTOSAI working groups in similar areas. World Bank and GIZ proposed to lead discussion on potential working group on Climate and Technology respectively.
2. SC members encouraged to lead the discussion on a potential working group on Gender and Inclusivity.