Day 1 – Tuesday 5 March 2024

The 15th annual PAS meeting was hosted by the State Audit Office of Georgia and chaired by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Ireland. It took place in Tbilisi, Georgia on 5 - 6 March 2024.

Agenda item 1a - Opening remarks by Mr. **Tsotne Kavlashvili, Auditor General of the State Audit Office of Georgia (SAI Georgia) and Mr Seamus McCarthy, Comptroller and Auditor General (SAI Ireland).**

The Auditor General of SAI Georgia opened the meeting and welcomed PAS representatives to Tbilisi. The PAS Chair, the Comptroller and Auditor General from SAI Ireland**,** joined the meeting by video link. He welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to SAI Georgia for hosting the meeting.

Agenda item 1b - Presentation of the agenda

The PAS Chair secretariat ('the Chair'), Ms Deirdre Quaid (SAI Ireland), presented the agenda and expressed her gratitude to the hosts for the warm welcome and excellent planning of the event. The Chair welcomed members and observers, with a special welcome to one of the newest members, SAI Ghana and a new observer (SAI Latvia) who were present at the meeting.   The Chair also noted her thanks to Lars Florin from SAI Sweden and Nadine Cormier from SAI Canada for their contributions to the work of PAS upon their departure from the committee.

Agenda item 1c - Round table introductions

24 member SAIs and three observers as well as a representative from the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) attended the meeting. SAI Azerbaijan attended the meeting virtually. Please see participant list for a complete overview.

Agenda item 1d - Group Photo

A group photo of all participants was taken in the meeting venue.

Agenda item 2a – Supporting SAIs in building sustainable performance audit practices
                Presenter: IDI - Ms. Archana Shirsat

Archana Shirsat began by providing an overview of IDI's strategic plan 2024 to 2029.   IDI plans to introduce a diagnostic tool for sustainable audit practices in 2024. IDI also plans to introduce playbooks for planning for audit impact, robust follow-up mechanism and strong stakeholder coalitions in 2024.

Archana spoke about a number of IDI initiatives relevant to performance audit beginning with the Professional Education for SAI Auditors (PESA) programme, which has a performance audit stream. PESA has been very successful with 288 SAI auditors receiving their certificate of competence to date. Archana then highlighted a new IDI initiative, sponsored by the Asian Development Bank, whereby IDI work with SAIs in the Asia and the Pacific regions on sustainable performance audit practices. This project is supported by PAS.

IDI offers support for SDG audits. Archana outlined some of IDI's other initiatives such as LOTA Pioneers and Equal Futures Audit Changemakers. Archana asked that any members conducting work in the area of inclusion and/or equality to contact IDI if they have an interesting case study to share.

A discussion followed the presentation on planning for impact and involving stakeholders in audit planning, the pass rate for the PESA programme, and helping smaller, developing SAIs in building a system of audit quality management.

Please see PowerPoint presentation for more details.

Agenda item 2b – Annual PSC Chair address – approved SDP and relevant updates
Presenter: PSC (ECA) - Mr. Alan Findlay

The purpose of this presentation was to update delegates on the approved Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and the PSC operational planning dashboard 2023 – 2025. The SDP was approved in 2023. It comprises five initiatives, which vary in complexity and size. Alan Findlay set out the timeline of the projects until final completion in 2028, taking into account that quality will not be comprised so additional time may be required.

A core group will oversee the overall implementation of the SDP. Project groups will be formed for each project. Cooperation and participation by subcommittee members is critical for the success of the SDP projects. Each project will be subject to due process.

Alan then moved onto the PSC operational planning dashboard 2023 to 2025 and outlined that of its four objectives, which come from the INTOSAI strategic development plan, three are addressed in the SDP. The fourth is 'advocate for support and monitor the implementation of the IFPP by SAIs'. Enhancing the FIPP selection process and an external evaluation of INTOSAI standard setting are among the action items related to this objective.

A discussion followed the presentation highlighting the need for clearer terminology and the potential merits of a drafting convention and glossary. Alan advised that these matters would tie into the 'T' initiative. Alan also outlined the translation process and the recent addition of a revision process to complement translation and ensure quality. The value of PAS members being involved in SDP projects was also underlined.

The purpose of an external evaluation was discussed in more detail. Alan advised that an external evaluation was being considered but that private sector evaluators may not have the necessary public sector experience. PSC will keep members updated on developments.

Agenda item 2c – Due Process
Presenter: PSC (ECA) - Mr. Alan Findlay

Alan Findlay provided members with an overview of the procedures for developing, revising and withdrawing pronouncements.

A discussion followed the presentation on how potential duplication of work and/or differences of opinion between projects groups can be dealt with, as well as balancing resourcing and the merits of ensuring openness and transparency in the work of project groups.

Please see PowerPoint presentations for more details.

Agenda item 3a – Maintenance of Performance Audit Standard and Guidance
Presenter: SAI Ireland - Ms. Patricia Devlin

Patricia Devlin explained that the purpose of this short presentation was to provide an update on the status of the PAS scheduled maintenance project and to outline the objectives of the discussion session.

Patricia presented feedback received from members in relation to a survey issued by the PAS secretariat on potential revisions required to the performance audit standard. The key point is that if members are of the view that the pronouncements require performance audit specific revisions/amendments then a standalone PAS project is required. Otherwise, the SDP projects will address revisions common to all pronouncements.

There was a discussion on what the SDP projects intend to address as well as how the other subcommittees are dealing with scheduled maintenance balanced against the SDP projects. Concept papers on each SDP project are due to be published soon and may assist in the decision on the need for a standalone project group.

Please see PowerPoint presentation for more details.

Agenda item 3b and c - Group discussion - Maintenance of Performance Audit Standard and Guidance

The purpose of this session was to discuss the scheduled maintenance of the standard and associated GUIDS and to discuss the conforming amendments to ISSAI 140. Participants were divided into four discussion groups. Groups were asked to consider two questions:

- Is there a need for a standalone PAS project outside of the SDP projects?
- How should the conforming amendments resulting from ISSAI 140 be dealt with?

Groups were as follows:

1. Australia, Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Hungary, Uganda, Latvia, PSC and Ireland.
2. Canada, India, Romania, Sweden, WGEPPP and Ireland.
3. ECA, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Thailand, UK and US.
4. Qatar, Norway, South Africa, IDI and Ireland.

The groups provided feedback on the items discussed.

Conclusion: The PAS secretariat will consider the feedback and liaise with PSC and FIPP on the matter. Once a proposal on how to proceed is formulated, this will be communicated to members.

The Chair gave closing remarks and thanked all the presenters and participants for their input and engaging discussion during the meeting.

Day 2 – Wednesday 6 March 2024

The Chair opened the meeting on day 2 and welcomed everyone back.

Agenda item 4a – Performance audit of environmental issues: the ECA's approach and recent experience.
Presenter: ECA - Mr. Wilfred Aquilina

Wilfred Aquilina began the presentation by outlining the ECA's strategy for 2021 – 2025 along with the programme process to implement the strategy. He explained ECA's methodology and guidance system (AWARE) and its use at each stage of the performance audit process. The overarching categories of ECA's performance audit of environmental issues were outlined followed by an overview of a number of ECA's environmental performance audits.
The presentation concluded by noting that appropriate criteria, a clear message and concrete recommendations are critical to achieving an impactful environmental performance audit.

The subcommittee discussed ECA's strategic planning process and its types of audits and why an audit might stop at the planning stage and how this is dealt with. Skills mix, the use of experts, the duration of audits and stakeholder interaction were also discussed.

Agenda item 4b – ISAM implementation through Study Survey Using Design Thinking Method
Presenter: SAI Thailand - Dr. Matulee Yokee

The purpose of the presentation was to outline the background of the SDG study survey, show design thinking in action and laboratory contributions to auditing. The implementation of design thinking in performance audits and the application of a design thinking approach involves understanding people, defining the problem, generating ideas; testing, creation and experimentation. Design thinking in action is intertwined with stakeholder expectations. Matulee Yokee concluded the presentation by noting that SAI Thailand's laboratory SDGs audit enhanced their understanding of SDG audit, increased their capability to implement ISAM and assisted in the development of critical skills.

A brief discussion on the use of ISAM to develop team capacity followed. IDI noted that it is currently reviewing ISAM and that any feedback on its use would be welcome.

Agenda item 4c – The Role of AI in Performance Audit
Presenter: SAI India - Mr. Abhishek Singh

SAI India uses AI in its performance audit work to enable complex tasks to be performed on large amounts of data or on a continuous basis. AI includes predictive modelling, cloud computing and robotic process automation. It was noted that bots are capable of collecting data at a transactional level and AI can learn year on year and improve.

The '3 Vs' were presented - volume, velocity and variety. These factors are considered when deciding if it is appropriate to adopt AI in a particular audit. The main benefits of AI are a shift from the use of sampling to analysis of an entire population and increased confidence of auditors in expressing an opinion. The uses of AI at each audit stage were outlined.

Abhishek Singh then presented three case studies that demonstrated the successful use of AI in situations where standard audit tools were not sufficient to deal with the problem that existed. The presentation concluded with an overview of the factors that should be considered when auditing the use of AI in a SAI and the development by SAI India of a large language model for use by auditors while conducting fieldwork.

Please see PowerPoint presentations for more details.

Agenda item 5a – Professionalisation of Performance Auditors
Presenter: SAI Azerbaijan - Mr. Sanan Aghakishiyev

This presentation looked at the practice of the professionalisation of performance auditors in SAI Azerbaijan and the methods used by the SAI to strengthen the performance audit function were outlined. The audit of SDG implementation as part of performance audit was also outlined. The presentation concluded with an overview of the challenges faced by the SAI in the professionalisation of performance audits.

Agenda item 5b - IDI Performance Audit Handbook
Presenter: SAI United States - Ms. Cathy Berrick

The IDI performance audit handbook was published in 2001. The handbook was developed by the IDI in partnership with PAS. It is used as a basis for the IDI's PESA training and it will be used as a basis for the IDI's sustainable performance audit practices in Asia and the Pacific.

It was noted that even though IDI documents are outside of the INTOSAI framework of professional pronouncements, documents still go through a rigorous quality management process, which includes inviting comments on draft documents.

A discussion followed the presentation highlighting the value of the handbook to SAIs in both developing and developed countries. The importance of stakeholder involvement in planning an audit was also discussed.

Agenda item 5c - Certification of Performance Auditors
Presenter: SAI Georgia - Mr. Giorgi Kapanadze

Giorgi Kapanadze delivered a presentation on SAI Georgia's experience of building its performance audit capacity and the certification of its performance auditors. The process began by learning through pilot projects, supplemented by training received by experts in the field. Currently, SAI Georgia contribute to the Public Audit Institute as trainers and uses materials from international cooperation with other SAIs and expert bodies. SAI Georgia has gained significantly from its involvement in IDI's PESA programme and the GAO's Centre for Audit Excellence.

The presentation concluded with an overview of the next steps for SAI Georgia in strengthening and broadening its performance audit function.

Please see PowerPoint presentations for more details.

Agenda item 5d - Panel discussion on performance auditor capacity development
        Panellists: Mr. Giorgi Kapanadze (SAI Georgia), Ms. Archana Shirsat (IDI),
        Ms. Deirdre Quaid (SAI Ireland), Ms. Cathy Berrick (SAI United States)

Dr Nino Kereselidze (SAI Georgia) moderated the panel discussion, which explored approaches to strengthening performance audit capacity and sustainability.

Archana Shirsat discussed the key ingredients for SAIs in achieving capacity development and performance audit impact. The success of a variety of IDI initiatives was also discussed.

Deirdre Quaid spoke of SAI Ireland's experience of performance audit and professional practice and resources associated with this mandate. She also spoke about the insights gained since becoming PAS Chair and how these have added value to the performance audit function.

A discussion on the use of financial audit software (such as Teammate) for performance audit and its merits followed. PAS's position on the CIPFA performance audit qualification was discussed.

Cathy Berrick shared some insights into the GAO's internal certification programme, continuous professional education and graduate training programme. GAO's mix of skills for performance audit was discussed. She also outlined how PAS cooperation with the IDI worked on the preparation of the handbook.

Giorgi Kapanadze shared some of SAI Georgia's current performance audit practices, focusing on desirable performance audit skillsets and the PAS and IDI resources that were of benefit to the SAI.

Agenda item 6a - Engaging with Civil Society Organisations
        Presenter: SAI South Africa – Mr. Corrie Pretorius

Corrie Pretorius explained how civil society is defined in South Africa and the significant role it plays. The purpose of the SAI cooperating with civil society, how the resulting information is used and the expectations of civil society were outlined, along with the approach to selecting civil society partnerships. Corrie shared a number of insights from the SAIs experience of collaborating with civil society organisations such as timing considerations, differing methodologies and political concerns. Risks and benefits of collaboration were presented. The presentation concluded with three examples of the SAI collaborating with civil society organisations that added significant value to the audits.

Agenda item 6b - CITIZENEYE – a tool for engaging stakeholders and citizens
        Presenter: SAI Ghana – Mr. Lawrence Ayagiba

The purpose of this presentation was to outline areas of cooperation between SAI Ghana and civil society organisations, the associated benefits and to highlight a tool used to enhance citizen participation in audit work called CITIZENEYE.

CITIZENEYE allows citizens to express areas of interest for audit work, particularly performance audit work and report issues experienced with public service delivery and the opportunity to rate a public service. Among its benefits is that it enhances citizen trust in the work of the SAI. Lawrence Ayagiba explained that CITIZENEYE has been designed to be as user friendly as possible and easy to access for the citizen. It is heavily publicised by the SAI in Ghana.

A discussion followed the presentation focusing on the level of resourcing required for the CITIZENEYE tool and the skill sets available within the SAI to address the wide range of issues that may be reported.

Agenda item 6c – Indigenous/First Nations persons involvement in audits of indigenous land councils.
Presenter: SAI Australia – Ms. Christine Chalmers

Christine Chalmers began the presentation by providing some background information on indigenous persons in Australia and their history. There are a number of challenges in auditing land councils such as trust and access to documentation. All audits of SAI Australia are open to citizen input but due to a number of issues, the usual methods of providing input are not as accessible to indigenous communities. Therefore, to ensure that citizen input is still incorporated into these audits, the auditors visit the relevant communities. The stages of engagement were outlined along with issues to be considered when managing the associated risks. The importance of using plain English in reports and preserving independence were noted.

A discussion followed the presentation. IDI expressed its interest in this area and in collecting case studies in the equal futures/marginalisation space that can be shared with the broader SAI community. SAI India said that it shares similar challenges to Australia in auditing matters related to tribal communities in India. Barriers to the use of plain English were also discussed.

Please see PowerPoint presentations for more details.

Agenda item 7a - Involving Civil Society – three new actions in 2022-2023
Presenter: SAI France - Mr. Jean-Christophe Potton

A citizen's consultation platform was launched in March 2022. The platform facilitates citizen involvement directly in planning works by allowing citizens to propose audit topics. It has been very successful and has resulted in the selection of a number of major topics. In addition to the consultation platform, a reporting platform was launched in September 2022, which facilitates the reporting of potential irregularities by citizens. Jean-Christophe Potton outlined the principal categories reported. The presentation concluded by noting that it is currently difficult to measure the impact of citizen reporting. A discussion followed on the resources required to evaluate reports and methods of prioritising reports.

Agenda item 7b - Survey results of the annual meeting of WGEPPP 2023
Presenter: WGEPPP - Ms. Andrea Häuptli

The purpose of this presentation was to outline the WGEPPP survey results on the topic of how SAIs measure their performance. Andrea presented a range of ways that SAIs can measure their performance and the proportions of surveyed SAIs that use each measure. It was noted that it is desirable for SAIs to publish performance measures for maximum impact.

An analysis of surveyed SAIs views on if there is a need for more standardised performance indicators was presented. The presentation concluded that performance indicators that go deeper than output measurement are required and that a lack of benchmarks applicable to all SAIs presents difficulties in assessing existing performance indicators.

Please see PowerPoint presentations for more details.

Agenda item 8 - Any other business

There were no other business matters noted.

Agenda item 9 - The big reveal: next year's meeting location SAI to be revealed!

Adrian Gogolan informed members that the 2025 PAS annual meeting will be held in Bucharest in Romania.

Closing remarks

The Chair thanked SAI Georgia for hosting a successful meeting and for their exceptional hospitality. She thanked the attending members and those who attended virtually for their valuable contributions as well as those who assisted in the preparation of the PAS annual meeting 2024.