

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF EUROSAI-OLACEFS JOINT CONFERENCES

Background information

EUROSAI has taken on a firm commitment in its collaboration with other INTOSAI Regional Organizations. This cooperation was started up progressively by means of joint conferences between the Chairs of SAIs and Auditors General, as well as through additional initiatives, such as the exchange of materials, delivering of training and contributing with articles in each other's publications.

Joint conferences have been usually organized every two-three years for discussing topics of relevance for both Regional Organizations, being such topics approved by the Governing Boards of the respective Regional Organizations. These events commenced with OLACEFS in 2000, with ARABOSAI in 2006, and with ASOSAI in 2011.

Taking into account that almost 20 years have gone by since this type of cooperation was launched, the Regional Organizations abovementioned have deemed convenient to reflect on this interregional cooperation tool and work together to determine the most appropriate actions to enhance it, identifying areas for improvement. With this aim in mind, the present document contains the Terms of Reference (ToR) to be applied in the organization of Joint Conferences.

The general purpose of this ToR is to increase the overall interest in these conferences by reinforcing the topic selection process; promoting a more inclusive target audience; enabling a more interactive format and ensuring that they are organized in more manageable timeframes. What is more, to make the Joint Conference more than an advisable experience for SAI in terms of added value.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF JOINT CONFERENCES

1. Objective

1.1. EUROSAI and OLACEFS agree to co-organize joint conferences on topics and issues of common interest and added value for both Organizations, according to these terms of reference.

1.2. The theme of the Conference should preferably be connected with or in development of the main areas of cooperation identified by both Regional Organizations.

2. Host and timing

2.1. The hosting of the conferences will alternate between both INTOSAI Regional Organisations.

2.2. The hosting Organisation will propose the theme, the host SAI, the venue and date for the conference.

2.3. The timing of the conferences will be negotiated between the two Regional Organisations, to ensure that it is convenient and feasible for both parties. They will have a regular periodicity, but not a fixed one, since it is important to be able to coordinate the timing with INTOSAI's and the parties' agendas.

2.4. The host SAI must explicitly adhere to these terms of reference. Consequently, it will include such a commitment within its official letter of expression of interest in organizing the Joint Conference.

3. Target audience and theme

3.1. The joint conferences will have a flexible target audience, to enable a wider access of auditors. In this regard, participants in these conferences should include not only Heads of SAI, but also auditors. A combined solution might also be adopted; for instance, events for auditors as a general rule, complemented with events for both target groups (Heads and auditors), or, alternatively, the combination in the same conference of differentiated activities for Heads and auditors.

3.2. The central theme of the joint conference will be carefully chosen and agreed, to ensure its relevance. It is essential that the conferences respond to participants' real needs and address topics of great interest for the Regions. This will ensure a wide variety of participating members and enable fruitful debates and experience sharing sessions. To this end, the hosting Regional Organization will define it according to its own internal procedures, in close cooperation with the host SAI. When doing it, advisable criteria to consider are the following:

- The input received from their Governing Board members, committees/Strategic Plan's implementing bodies which are a source of valuable information about areas of interest.
- The strong areas of expertise of the participant Organisations, as well as those areas where cooperation is most needed to learn from colleagues in other regions identified by both Regional Organizations.
- The selection of the topic should be adapted to the target audience, including strategic and technical themes according to participants.

3.3. The Governing Board of the host Regional Organisation will agree with its counterpart the final theme, via the Secretariats of both Organizations.

3.4. The host SAI will organize the event with the assistance of its regional Secretariat, who will also coordinate with its counterpart in this regard. An Organizing Committee is to be set up in charge of coordinating the arrangements and monitoring the event. The Committee might be composed of the host SAI and both Regions' Secretariats. Both Presidencies could also join the committee if needed.

4. Duration and Format

4.1. To maintain a focused approach, the technical part of the joint conference must be focused and organized in a way that it takes no more than 1,5-2 days. It is up to the host SAI to decide whether a social program will be included in the program of the conference. In that case, it is recommended that the total duration does not take up more than 3 days.

4.2. The conference might be composed of various sessions designed for different levels of participants, such as a working-level meeting, to support a high-level meeting, or a sub-committee to seek solutions to commonly interested issues, or a joint meeting between similar functions/ structures. It will be organized using dynamic formats that foster interactive discussion and participatory dialogue and offer added-value to SAIs, e.g., workshops, breakaway sessions, keynote addresses, TED type talks.

4.3. Interpretation into the Regions' official languages¹ will be offered during the plenary sessions, whereas English will be the working language of the other sessions. Participating SAIs may be allowed to arrange their own interpretation facilities if they wish during the other sessions. In such case they will bear the related costs.

4.4. Preparation of the joint conferences will be based in documentation drafted by the host with feedback from the Committee, explaining the background, objective, approaches, et cetera. However, it does not need to be based on national papers prepared by participants and when these are deemed essential by the host SAI, they should not exceed 2 pages. The aim is for the debate to take place at the conference itself.

5. Results and follow up.

5.1. The conferences will aim at attaining concrete actions and measurable results (e.g. joint technical seminars, cooperative audits, exchange of information on concrete areas...). In line with the above, the conferences could aim at setting up some kind of concrete operational cooperation (on the conference themes or other subject matters) for the period following the conference.

5.2. No formal joint declarations or statements need be issued as a final result of the Joint Conferences. These should be replaced by summaries of main conclusions and agreements on concrete initiatives to be launched.

5.3. Either Regional General Secretariats or the competent organ within the Region (according to mandates) will be responsible of the follow up of the actions, initiatives or projects to be launched and will inform on them to their respective Governing Boards.

5.4. The host will conduct an evaluation of the Conference among participants right after the Conference takes place and share the results with the host Secretariat. In order to ensure the comparability of results over the years, a standardized part of the questionnaire should be used by the host in the assessment of the conference. The later will analyze these results with the other counterpart Secretariat.

6. Shared responsibilities

6.1. The host agrees to commit all necessary resources to successfully organize the joint conference, despite the financial support could receive from its Regional Organization for that purpose.

¹ To identify which of the official languages must be offered it is recommended that the registration forms include the language option of the participants.

6.2. The host may not unilaterally cancel the conference. If the host deems appropriate to cancel or postpone the conference, it will consult with the Committee who will analyze if there are reasonable circumstances that recommend changes in the terms of the planned conference. The proposal of the Committee to authorize such changes will be sent for both Governing Boards' approval.

6.3. The logistic preparation and execution of the joint conference will be coordinated by the host SAI, with close coordination and support offered by its regional Secretariat, following the minimum requirements agreed by both Secretariats.

7. Amendments and settlement of disputes

7.1. These terms of reference may be amended through a numbered amendment to be signed by the signatories.

7.2. Both parties will try to settle all disputes that may arise relating to the interpretation and implementation of these terms of reference through amicable agreements.

Done in two originals, one for each party.

Signatories and date(s) of signature:

For EUROSAI:

For OLACEFS:

Ramón Álvarez de Miranda,
Secretary General