



Summary of decisions– INTOSAI working group on program evaluation (WGEPPP)
Meeting of May 20 & 21st - Vilnius

1. **Minutes of the last meeting** : approved during the previous WGEPPP meeting on June 12th and 13th 2018 in Paris
2. **Agenda of the day** : approved
3. **Objective of the day** :

The INTOSAI Working Group on program evaluation (WGEPPP) met on May 20 and 21st 2019 in Vilnius, Lithuania, for its annual session, hosted by the Lithuanian Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) and presided over by the French Cour des comptes (Rémi Frentz, Director of International affairs Department, representing Didier Migaud, First President of the French Cour des comptes). The SAIs of Algeria, Czech Republic, the European Union, Finland, France, Gabon, Hungary, India, Italy, South Korea, Lithuania, Norway (observer), Philippines, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States were represented. The OECD and academia were also represented with the presence of two experts.

This meeting was the third one taking place after the adoption of the guidelines on the evaluation of public policies – INTOSAI GOV 9400 – at the occasion of the XXII INCOSAI in December 2016, as well as of a new work plan for the group.

The objective of the 2017 meeting had been to delve deeper into the practice of public policy evaluation, focusing on the optimal combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Last year meeting's objective was to concentrate on the application of past years conclusions in the domain of public health policies.

This year meeting offers a combination of those two themes :

- a focus on methodological approaches through the lens of:
 - o the use of qualitative tools
 - o the involvement of stakeholders in the conduct of evaluation.
- three case studies (French social housing policy, Italian sanitary housing and building policies, Algerian perinatology policy).

4. Main observations

The meeting was characterised by the diversity of presentations from its members, who presented completed evaluations and methodological tools.

This year meeting welcomed the participation of new member SAIs (European Court of Auditors and Indian Comptroller and Auditor General's Office) as well as the presence of already member SAIs which had never participated in a WGEPPP meeting (Commission on Audit of Philippines). The secretariat of Performance Audit Subcommittee (PAS) of INTOSAI was also invited (SAI Norway) to maintain the liaison between PAS and WGEPPP.

The meeting was organized as such:

- 1/ Follow-up survey on the implementation of INTOSAI GOV 9400 Guidelines;
- 2/ Methodological approaches on stakeholders' involvement and use of qualitative tools;
- 3/ Practical cases of evaluations.

In his introductory words, the French Cour des comptes' Director of International affairs had echoed the conclusions of the June 2018 meeting of the working group, stressing the importance of issuing constructive recommendations for them to be used by decision-makers. In that sense, the issues of communication and citizen's involvement have been raised through the question of the follow-up of those recommendations.

Presentations by SAIs' staff and academics exposed the benefits and methodologies of qualitative methods of evaluation. External speakers (OECD, French member from University) provided needed insights into evaluation.

Some new members expressed the need for better clarification on the difference between performance audit and evaluation and on the methodological requirements of an evaluation (such as the involvement of stakeholders, the measurements of outputs, outcomes and impacts, and the production of a feasibility note). It was recalled that it is precisely the goal of the group, made to identify and disseminate relevant evaluation methods and practices and to facilitate the appropriation of this specific mission by new members.

The question of the qualitative means to be used to conduct evaluations was also raised many times. Discussions were raised about the stakeholder's involvement (composition of the advisory group, ethics and agenda of the stakeholders...), the size and composition of samples in the conduct of qualitative/quantitative surveys and the involvement of citizens in this evaluation process.

Speakers and attendees highlighted this point through their feedback as evaluators or auditors. There was many exchanges about how recommendations should be implemented and how to better communicate with citizens on their implementation and follow-ups.

It was noted that some SAIs had undertaken the evaluation process either by conducting evaluations per say or by conducting performance audits with an evaluative scope. It is worth noted that the attendees acknowledged the use of INTOSAI GOV 9400 in both situations as a framework for the conduct of their evaluation or performance audit. It has also been mentioned that there were some room for SAIs to develop EPPP even without a clear and specific legal mandate to do so. This was an encouraging sign of the SAIs' willingness to embrace the evaluation exercise.

The acquisition of evaluative skills is an ongoing process in many SAIs and should be followed closely. The works presented show that SAIs have different approaches but there is a will to progress towards further evaluation.

5. Main conclusions

- a. Considering the implementation of INTOSAI GOV 9400 and its relevance to the SAIs, the WGEPPP chair suggested and the attendees approved the following:
The INTOSAI GOV 9400 will be open to modification for the XXIV INCOSAI in Brazil in 2022, or before by interim INTOSAI Governing Boards if possible. Insufficiently detailed topics within the Guidelines will be identified during the work plan 2019-2022 in order to improve the current version of the INTOSAI GOV 9400. It will be up to the WGEPPP members to come out with propositions of topics to be added to the following list and to discuss those items during the next meetings:
 - modification of the title of the INTOSAI GOV 9400 to include a mention to “programs”;
 - follow-up of evaluation recommendations;
 - involvement of stakeholders (enlarged definition of stakeholders/ethics and experts / issue of confidentiality/relevant levels of representatives within the advisory group);This list is opened to other proposals.
- b. Considering the need for a better understanding of the qualitative and quantitative methodological framework, all the attendees agreed on working on a paper that will be later added as an annex to the INTOSAI GOV 9400 Guidelines. The Vilnius presentation of qualitative tools will be forwarded to comments in the group and could be later be the basis of such an annex.
- c. The WGEPPP members recalled the vocation of the working group to accompany SAIs in the exercise of evaluation through the exchange of good practices and the sharing of experience.

6. Next deadlines

The chair of the WGEPPP opened a call for proposals for hosting the next Working Group meeting in 2020. **WGEPPP members are free to come out with propositions before next INTOSAI Congress in Moscow in September.**

Considering the 2019-2022 work plan, the attendees agreed on several subjects that may be put forward as themes for the coming meetings:

- Follow-up, impact and medialization of recommendations after evaluations;
- Digitalization as a new methodological tool that can be used in the conduct of evaluations (citizens’ contributions, big data...);
- Several themes of case study:
 - Education
 - Economics
 - Environment issues
 - Health
 - Employment
 - Sovereign topics (justice, defense, security, tax policy ...)

- Invitation of a past evaluation stakeholder to attend part of the next meeting, to give his insight on the added value of an advisory body.

All presentations will be made available on the working group's website.