

TERMS OF REFERENCE¹

BACKGROUND

In response to a strong interest in public debt matters by members of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), at its 35th meeting in October 1991, the INTOSAI Governing Board authorized the establishment of a Public Debt Committee (now a Working Group) with the original mandate to: *“To publish guidelines and other informational materials to be used by Supreme Audit Institutions to encourage proper reporting and sound public debt management”*.

The Working Group on Public Debt (WGPD) mandate clearly falls within the structure of INTOSAI’s Goal 3, “Knowledge Sharing,” which is defined as to “encourage SAI cooperation, collaboration and continuous improvement through knowledge development, knowledge sharing, and knowledge services, including 1) producing and revising INTOSAI products; 2) providing benchmarks and operating a community portal and; 3) conducting best practices studies and performing research on issues of mutual interest and concern.”

A. Introduction

The INTOSAI WGPD Terms of Reference are developed within the context of its vision, mission and mandate as stated in its Strategic Plan. Accordingly, the following tasks have been determined:²

- Prepare and publish guidelines and other materials for use by SAIs to encourage the proper reporting and sound management of public debt;
- Develop, prepare and propose to the KSC Steering Committee and to other INTOSAI counterparts (ex FIPP) any GUIDs on Public Debt for harmonization according to the new debt control perspectives.
- Develop and prepare handbooks, guidelines and all other materials to be used by SAIs to encourage proper public debt reporting and promote sound management of public debt.
- Identify key issues for the development of responsibilities and procedures for auditing and evaluating public debt;
- Prepare papers examining matters of definitions, reporting, and evaluating public debt;
- Exchange knowledge with other institutions dealing with public debt issues;
- Promote specific studies relating to the mandate of the Working Group.
- Create and sustain a virtual Community of Practice on audit of Public Debt to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience.

The Working Group on Public Debt also has permanent collaboration with the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI).

¹ The source document for this proposed revised Terms of Reference is the version endorsed by the members of the INTOSAI Working Group during their meeting held in Kyiv, Ukraine (October 2009).

² Lifted from the INTOSAI WGPD website.

B. Mandate

To develop guidelines and other informative materials for the use of SAIs to encourage proper reporting and sound public debt management; and
To support SAIs in developing their knowledge and skills in Public Debt Audit through exchange of knowledge, experiences, information and collaboration among WGPD members, partners and stakeholders.

VISION:

To be recognized by Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) as the leading forum on audit of public debt and its debt management.

MISSION:

To advance the highest standards in audit of public debt and promote sound practices for debt management.

C. The WGPD Annual Meeting

1. The Annual Meeting of the INTOSAI WGPD is a gathering where its members meet annually to discuss key issues brought before the body and arrive at an agreement for endorsement by the Working Group.
2. The Annual Meeting shall be presided by a Chairman or his authorized representative and shall be assisted by a Vice Chairman.

Decision-Making

- a) Decisions on any subject to be taken during the Annual Meeting shall be made by consensus of all Members of the Working Group via meetings or circulation. As a general rule, all agreements during meetings shall be voted upon by 2/3 of the members except where, upon proposal by the members in attendance with the concurrence of the Vice-Chair, the Chair shall set the threshold at majority or 50%+1.
- b) For the purpose of seeking decisions or comments from the Annual Meeting, a proposal paper stating the objective/s, requirements, and such other supporting documents shall be submitted to the Chairman at least two months ahead of the date where the decision is required. The same documents shall also be made available to the participants not later than two weeks before the meeting in order to allow the representative of the member-SAI to obtain the necessary mandate to make a decision for and on behalf of the SAI.

- c) A quorum should be reached in all Annual Meetings which is set at 50% of the member-SAIs to ensure more substantive discussions on issues that need to be approved by the SAI-Members in these meetings.

Membership

- a) The WGPD is based on open and voluntary members, which consists of SAIs with expertise, experience and/or interest in Public Debt matters. The WGPD should ensure a balanced representation of the INTOSAI membership, taking into account SAIs from all INTOSAI Regional Working Groups and the diverse audit systems.
- b) SAIs that wishes to join as members of the Working Group may apply through a written communication addressed to the WGPD Chair, subject to the latter's approval, in consultation with the WGPD Vice Chair.
- c) Upon acceptance of any SAI as member of the WGPD, the Chair shall notify all the Members stating the effective date of the new membership. The effective date of membership shall not be earlier than the date of application or acceptance of the invitation thereof, whichever is applicable.
- d) A member may withdraw its membership from the WGPD at any time by notification given to the WGPD Chair, which shall immediately acknowledge receipt of the intention to withdraw and subsequently inform the other Members through a written communication. The termination of membership shall take effect on the date stated in the notification sent to the WGPC Chair. In cases where the date is not stated in the notification, the withdrawal of the Member of the WGPD shall take effect three months after the date of receipt of the notification by the WGPD Chair.
- e) A member, after having withdrawn from the Working Group for more than five years, may re-apply as a member, following Items b) and c) under this Section. In addition to the requirement under item (b) of this Section the written communication for application must state a justifiable reason for reconsideration as a member.
- f) The WGPD Chair shall proceed to inform all the WGPD Members, the INTOSAI General Secretariat, the Chair of the INTOSAI Knowledge Sharing Committee and the INCOSAI on any changes in the WGPD membership resulting from acceptance of new members and/or withdrawal of members.

Observers

- a) Observers may be admitted to the WGPD based on written request made to the WGPD Chair or the WGPD Chair may also suo motu initiate action for admission as an Observer. In either case, the Chair shall endorse the request to the members with a recommendation for a decision.

- b) Observers admitted to the WGPD may be the full/associate/ affiliate member-SAls of (1) the INTOSAI, INTOSAI organs (including the INTOSAI Journal of Government Auditing [IJGA], the INTOSAI Development Initiative [IDI], etc.) and regional organizations; or of (2) international organizations such as, but not limited to, funding organizations, development partners, donors, etc., with expertise, experience, and/or interest in public debt matters.
- c) During meetings, the presence of observers are not considered to constitute the required 50% quorum. Likewise, observers do not possess voting power where a decision has to be made. Nevertheless, their suggestions, recommendations, and comments may be taken into consideration with the consent of the participating members.
- d) Observers may attend annual meetings and such other activities of the group as may be scheduled. Their expertise and service may also be tapped by the Chair thru the Secretariat as needs arise.
- e) An observer who wish to have its status terminated shall at any time notify the WGPD Chair, and the latter shall acknowledge receipt of the notice and subsequently inform the other Members through a written communication. The termination of observer status shall take effect on the date of acknowledgement of the WGPD Chair, as stated in the written communication to other Members. Such termination shall be without prejudice to the reconsideration and re-acceptance as observer.
- f) Observers may request the services of the group such as, but not limited to, technical assistance, provision of reference materials like audit guidelines and conduct of capacity building programs.
- c) INTOSAI members admitted officially to the WGPD as observers are encouraged to apply as full-fledge members. In such case, the provision under C.2-b) on Membership shall apply.

Minutes of Meeting

- a) The minutes of the meeting shall be drawn up by the Secretariat for purposes of documenting significant discussions and decisions taken during the Annual Meetings, unless other member-SAls offer to prepare the minutes.
- b) The draft minutes of the meeting shall be circulated to all Member-SAls for their comments and proposed amendments. The revised draft minutes of meeting shall be submitted to the WGPD Chair for approval.
- c) The approved minutes of meeting shall again be circulated to all Member-SAls within two months from the date of the Annual Meeting.
- d) The final version of the minutes must be uploaded to the WGPD Website for information of all WGPD members and rendered to the INTOSAI Goal 3 Steering Committee's Chair.

Meetings other than the annual WGPD meetings

- a) When a decision is taken in order for a task to be broken down into subprojects, each subproject will be undertaken voluntarily by SAIs, which might choose to meet at Working Group's meetings or at other times. These meetings could even take place in a virtual way, either via teleconference, taking advantage of online discussion facilities available in the INTOSAI Community Portal, or using any other Information and Communication Technologies, which must be defined by the project or investigation leader.

D. Responsibilities and Rights

■ Chairman of the WGPD

1. The term of office of the Chairman starts on the date of acceptance of application to the position and shall serve until such time that a new Chairman is approved by the incumbent Chairman who has signified ending its SAI's tenure.
2. When the INTOSAI WGPD is invited to be represented at an event of an external organization, the Head of the SAI which is the Chairman of the INTOSAI WGPD or authorized representative shall participate, on behalf of the Working Group in attending the event, such as the INTOSAI Governing Board meetings, as well as in those of the KSC Steering Committee, the KSC Main Committee and the INTOSAI Congress, or such other events.
3. Specifically, the functions and responsibilities of the Chair are the following:
 - a) To initiate, plan, and coordinate the WGPD activities and projects on Public Debt auditing. The WGPD Chair shall ensure that the WGPD activities are aligned with Goal 3 of the INTOSAI Strategic Plan.
 - b) To manage invitations among WGPD member-SAIs to integrate the specialized sub-groups required, making the necessary arrangements to define the respective project leader.
 - c) To promote initiatives to periodically evaluate the WGPD's work, as well as the validity of its products, terms of reference and Strategic Plan, in order to improve the Working Group's performance and contribution for the benefit of the INTOSAI community and for the achievement of the Organization's Strategic Goal 3.
 - d) To coordinate with any project or investigation leader on the development, timely report, and execution of project related activities; and monitoring its alignment to the WGPD Strategic Plan and working plans in force. In this regard, to provide guidance and due assistance to the project/investigation leader.

- e) To integrate a comprehensive WGPD work plan and supervise, in coordination with the project leaders, the corresponding progress, taking into account each project's terms of reference as defined by the respective project leader.
- f) To inform WGPD members in relation with any updates and relevant information regarding public debt auditing that might have an impact on the WGPD work, and that might arise within INTOSAI context, in other bodies and in the international arena.
- g) To promote information exchange, both internally and externally, through information technologies, specifically the WGPD Website and electronic communications; as well as the use of electronic forums and videoconferences among its members.
- h) To provide timely response to any information requests from WGPD members or from the international audit community, regarding the Working Group's work and products.
- i) To coordinate activities with other INTOSAI bodies, so as to avoid the overlapping of activities on matters of common interest.
- j) To prepare an annual report to the KSC Steering Committee Chair in relation to the WGPD activities carried out, current initiatives, ongoing products, and projects planned for the upcoming years.
- k) To prepare a triennial report, to be presented before the KSC Main Committee on the WGPD activities carried out, current initiatives, ongoing products, and projects planned for the upcoming years.
- l) To make the necessary arrangements for the WGPD projects to be endorsed by the INTOSAI Congress as official INTOSAI products. The WGPD will take into account the appropriate INTOSAI procedures for the drafting, revision and withdrawing of IFPP documents.
- m) To maintain communication and coordination with the KSC Steering Committee Chair (Goal 3), and also with the SAI responsible for the ISSAI Framework, in relation to those products endorsed by the INTOSAI Congress, or those subject to approval for public exposure and comments from the INTOSAI community.
- n) To coordinate with the SAI responsible for the INTOSAI Community Portal, the INTOSAI Journal and also with the INTOSAI General Secretariat, on the WGPD's information disclosure (including notifications of scheduled meetings, news to the INTOSAI community, outstanding outcomes, endorsed products and general information), through these bodies' official Websites.
- o) To provide the WGPD Website in the INTOSAI Community Portal with the corresponding Web hosting and maintenance. The latter includes the information organization and contents' constant updating.
- p) To assess/evaluate the possibilities of external funding together with the KSC Chair, the INTOSAI Secretary General, and the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, taking into

consideration the INTOSAI's independence requirements and, depending on the particular subject, need for specialized research or particular project on Public Debt related matters. (NOTE: In relation to H.2 on Funding.)

4. In performing its functions, the WGPD Chair shall be assisted by a Secretariat.

■ Vice-Chair of the WGPD

1. The primary responsibility of the Vice-Chair is to represent the Chair, in any events/occasions usually presided over or attended by the Chair, in the event that the latter is unable/unavailable to attend. Specifically, these events may be any or all of the following:
 - a) INTOSAI Governing Board meetings, as well as in those of the KSC Steering Committee, the KSC Main Committee and the INTOSAI Congress; and
 - b) Other INTOSAI bodies and/or other external organizations.
2. To render the Working Group's report to the KSC Main and Steering Committees, whenever the Chair is unable and when necessary.
3. To chair and moderate the Working Group's meetings in the absence of the Chair and/or his authorized representative and whenever requested by the latter.
4. To assist the Chair in evaluating, together with KSC Steering Committee's Chair, INTOSAI General Secretariat and Policy, Finance and Administration Committee (PFAC), the possibilities for external funding, depending on the particular subject, the need for specialized research or the development of a specific public debt audit-related project. In this regard, the requirements for SAs' independence must be taken into account; previous arrangements made –such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the INTOSAI and the Donor Community-, must be the corresponding framework. (Note: In relation to H.2 on Funding.)
5. To provide comments on any project proposals submitted by any member to the WGPD for which the Chair has requested the Vice Chair's comments on.

■ Project Leaders

Formation of Project Teams

- a) The Project Teams of the INTOSAI WGPD to be formed and their composition shall be decided during its Annual Meeting.

- b) The Project Teams shall be formed from among the Members of the Working Group who have signified their interest to join in the development and implementation of projects that have been agreed upon by the Working Group to be pursued or carried out.

Dissolution of Project Teams

- a) A Project Team may be dissolved at the completion of the project and its expected product/s and outcome/s, subject to the approval of the WGPD Chair.
- b) The Project Team Leader should recommend to the Working Group Chairman the dissolution of the project with the reasons indicated therein (e.g. project completion and/or delivery of expected product/s and outcome/s). After which, the Chairman of the Group should inform the member of the dissolution of the project with its corresponding reason.

Appointment of Project Team Leader

- a) The choice of Project Team Leader shall be put forth during annual meetings and by agreement of the members in attendance. If the selection of a project team leader cannot be decided in an annual meeting, surveys and other online mechanisms may be resorted to.

Functions and responsibilities

- a) To initiate, plan, and coordinate specific projects and research topics regarding public debt auditing.
- b) To define the respective project's or research theme's terms of reference, which shall include at least the objectives, scope, methodology, member SAIs, responsibilities assigned, expected outcomes and project timeframe.
- c) To coordinate and supervise the individual progress of the corresponding subgroup's member-SAIs, providing them with guidance and due assistance.
- d) To inform the subgroup's member-SAIs about the project's terms of reference, agreements achieved, requirements or relevant information provided by the WGPD Chair.
- e) To make use of information technology (e-mail, WGPD Website forums, videoconferences, et.al.) in order to guarantee efficient and effective communication among subgroup's SAI-members.
- f) During each project's planning and execution, to maintain constant communication with the WGPD Chair, informing the Chair on established terms of reference, progress attained and other relevant information.

- g) In agreement with the WGPD Chair, to coordinate activities with other WGPD subgroups, whose investigation theme or outcomes could be linked or could impact the referred project.
- h) To make the necessary arrangements before the WGPD Chair for the draft versions, previously endorsed by the subgroup's member-SAIs, to be subject to WGPD members' analysis and feedback, for later comments incorporation and final presentation of the guideline, draft project, investigation, plan or any other related issue.
- i) By own behalf or at the Chair's or any other members' request in a working meeting, to establish the mechanisms and work plan needed to evaluate the validity of the undertaken project, in order to guarantee the validity of products and investigations published by the Working Group. The controls in relation to the validity of the revision of any WGPD official products must take into account the appropriate INTOSAI procedures for the drafting, revision and withdrawing of ISSAIs.

Reporting of Project Teams

- a) The Project Leader shall report to the WGPD Chair on all matters within its Terms of Reference (ToR) and Work Plan (WP) for the project. Accordingly, the Project Leader shall evaluate and monitor progress taken on the work plan and report the same to the WGPD Chair, as deemed necessary.
- b) Any changes made on the ToR and WP, as discussed among its project members, shall be reported to the WGPD Chair.

■ Member-SAIs

1. To the extent possible, all member-SAIs are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting of the Working Group. Letter-reminders shall be issued by the WGPD Chair to Members who remain inactive for a long time and/or who have not attended more than two successive Annual Meetings inquiring as well reasons for non-attendance. Failure by concerned member-SAIs to respond after a reasonable time shall mean that such member is no longer interested in continuing its membership under the WGPD.
2. As members of good standing, the SAIs are expected to fulfil the following responsibilities:
 - a) To submit, for the Chair's analysis and the WGPD members' approval, any proposals to develop specific projects or investigations related to public debt auditing.
 - b) To take part, actively participate in working sub-groups and, in some cases, lead sub-groups or task forces, which might be established to develop specific projects or investigations.
 - c) To present to the WGPD Chair any comments or amendments corresponding to documents, reports, working plans, meeting

agenda and minutes, and projects developed by member-SAs, and to WGPD products, terms of reference, strategic plan, and Website contents, pursuant to a general agreement or when requested by the WGPD, at any time or within the prescribed deadline. The Secretariat shall ensure that documents, reports, working plans, meeting agenda and minutes, projects developed by member-SAs, and such other correspondences requiring comments and/or feedback are circulated at least 10 working days before the required deadline. For matters that are very technical in nature, the timeframe for submission of comments may be extended.

- d) To cooperate in an efficient and effective manner with project or investigation leaders, according to the tasks and responsibilities entrusted. The terms established in the corresponding working plan must be considered.
- e) To timely present to the project leader, on its own behalf or due to a sub-group's task forces initiative, comments or amendments in relation to the respective sub-group's documents and projects.
- f) To obtain from the WGPD Chair updates and relevant information related to public debt auditing, which might impact WGPD's mandate, and might arise within the INTOSAI context, from other organizations or in the international arena.
- g) To obtain from the project leader information on the respective project terms of reference, agreements, requirements, or relevant information provided by the WGPD Chair.
- h) To make the most from IT provided by the WGPD Chair, such as Website, electronic forums, e-mail, among others, in order to exchange information with other member-SAs in relation to international best practices on public debt auditing.
- i) To present to the WGPD Chair or to the respective project leader the progress report on entrusted tasks, as well as any requests for information; likewise, to request the WGPD Chair or project leader any information, clarifications, guidance or assistance in relations to the WGPD's activities.
- j) To inform the WGPD Chair on thematic/model audits and outstanding case studies related to Public Debt auditing, for their publication on the WGPD Website and on that of the INTOSAI Journal.
- k) To inform the WGPD Chair on any updates or amendments needed in the WGPD directory, which includes modifications to the respective SAI address and contact details, positions held within INTOSAI, and contact information of head of SAI, INTOSAI liaison officer, WGPD contact and the expert(s) in Public Debt auditing.

■ Observers

1. Observers may attend annual meetings of the WGPD.

2. Observers may provide comments and/or suggestions, through the Secretariat, on projects undertaken by the Working Group or such other documents/papers at any time or when requested by the WGPLD.
3. As may be necessary, observers may –
 - a) Participate in WGPLD projects. As such, the observer may signify interest in joining any of these projects by written communication to the Project Leader who, in turn, shall recommend to the WGPLD Chair such participation as member.
 - b) Provide technical services upon the request of the members of the Working Group, through the Secretariat, in their individual capacity.

E. Hosting and Organization of Annual Meetings

1. The Annual Meetings of the Working Group shall be held at such timing as unanimously agreed upon in an Annual Meeting by the SAI-members in attendance.
2. The venue of the Annual Meetings of the Working Group shall be at the discretion of the SAI which has been chosen as the host of these meetings.
3. The host SAI, in coordination with the WGPLD Chair and Secretariat, shall ensure that the preparations and organization of these meetings shall facilitate the achievement of the meetings' objectives.
4. The functions and duties of the host SAI shall be those as described in the Handbook for Meetings of the INTOSAI WGPLD.

F. Reporting

1. In line with INTOSAI Handbook for Committees, the Handbook for INTOSAI Congresses, the Terms of Reference for the Knowledge Sharing Committee (KSC, INTOSAI Goal 3) and the INTOSAI 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, the WGPLD Chair will prepare report annually for the INTOSAI Governing Board and the KSC Steering Committee on the overall Working Group's activities, current initiatives and planned projects. Besides, the WGPLD Chair will report triennially before the INTOSAI Congress and during the Main Knowledge Sharing Committee's meeting. If agreed with the WGPLD Chair, the KSC Chair could report on the WGPLD activities to the INTOSAI Governing Board and to the INCOSAI, as well as to the KSC Main and Steering Committees.
2. The Chair of the Knowledge Sharing Committee, is expected to be in permanent contact with the WGPLD Chair and to send him his comments on the elaborated papers.
3. The WGPLD products, draft papers, and materials will be available on the WGPLD Website. The WGPLD products, once endorsed by the INTOSAI Congress, and also the exposure drafts for comments from the INTOSAI

community will be posted on the ISSAI Website [www.issai.org] or in the INTOSAI Community Portal in case of non-IFPP documents. Brief news, specialized articles prepared by the WGPD and relevant information could be included in the International Journal of Government Auditing (*INTOSAI Journal*).

G. Working Language

1. English is the working language of the Working Group on Public Debt. The host SAI is responsible for providing simultaneous interpretation and translation services into English when these are needed, particularly when the host SAI's official language is different to that of the Working Group.
2. The simultaneous interpretation and translation services into any other language different to those offered by the host SAI, must be paid by the requesting SAI. The need for these services must be informed and coordinated with the host SAI.

H. Funding

1. All costs, including those on account of participation in meetings (such as travel expenses, accommodation, and meals not offered by the host SAI) are covered by the respective attending delegates. The direct meeting expenses alone (those related to the organization, social programs, binders / folders, sound and equipment, venue, meals by invitation, transportation service, excursions and others) are covered by the SAI that hosts the meeting. The costs of the interpretation and translation services must be paid according to what is stated in Section F of this ToR on "Working Language".
2. The possibilities of external funding are to be considered by the WGPD Chair together with the KSC Chair, the INTOSAI Secretary General and the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, taking into consideration the INTOSAI's independence requirements and, depending on the particular subject, need for specialized research or particular project on Public Debt related matters.
3. As reference framework, special attention must be paid to arrangements previously made, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the INTOSAI and the Donor Community.

I. Communication

1. The e-mail is the preferred means of communication among WGPD members. Additionally, the WGPD Website is used for distribution of documents and other relevant information. The use of virtual Community of Practice should be maximized for efficient communication among the Working Group members.

2. This Website is aimed at disseminating the WGPD official products, activities projects, guidelines, study cases, paradigmatic audits, debates, databases, analysis and publications, as well as information regarding membership, meetings, and participation in special events.
3. To the extent possible, the use of the website has to be maximized to ensure that the meetings are paperless. Accordingly, all the digital documents have to be made available in the website not later than two weeks before the meeting.
4. All activities, report and technical material presented in the working meetings as well as reports presented by INTOSAI authorities (KSC Chair, INTOSAI Governing Board and INTOSAI Congress) should be made available in the WGPD's website.