



INTOSAI
PSC

Professional
Standards
Committee

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Working together effectively within the PSC to achieve success in cross-cutting SDP projects

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Introduction

We are increasingly being required to work on complex standard-setting projects. A number of them cover multiple professional and technical disciplines, meaning they require expertise from one or more of INTOSAI's specialised working bodies. It is therefore essential for the technical robustness and quality of such projects that the PSC, its subcommittees, and other working groups (collectively 'working bodies'), cooperate effectively.

This requires us to address issues and opportunities together, to share resources and responsibilities, and to jointly plan, implement and evaluate standard setting projects to achieve our common goals.

The aim of this document is to:

- identify the main project types, and the type of cooperation necessary;
- clarify the responsibilities and processes for the different cooperation types.

These guidelines have been developed and agreed between the PSC secretariat and the chairs of its subcommittees (FAAS, CAS, PAS and ICS).

Different project types and the cooperation needed

Standard-setting projects need to be technically rigorous and robust. INTOSAI organises its technical resources into sub-committees and other working groups, in order to provide specialised expertise. This includes audit-type expertise (e.g. PAS, CAS, FAAS), specific professional issue expertise (e.g. ICS), and audit subject matter expertise (e.g. WGITA).

Standard-setting projects can cover a multitude of subjects. Some are very focused on specific issues, whereas others cover a wider range of issues. This means that some projects can be undertaken by a specific working body working alone, while those that involve cross-cutting issues will require the input from one or more of the working bodies from within the PSC, or from the CBC and/or KSC.

Depending on the nature and subject matter of the project, the required participation of working bodies can be one of three different ways:

- completely focused on a specialist topic covered by the mandate of the lead working body (**'sole project'**);
- concerns material that comes under the responsibility of one or more working body, in addition to that taking the lead (**'collaboration project'**);
- requires consultation with other working bodies as part of the quality process (**'consultation project'**)

These are explained in more detail below.

The roles of the project lead and contributing working bodies

Any standard setting project will typically have a lead working body identified in the SDP or appointed by a goal chair.

The nature, time, and timing for specialised input from other working bodies contributing to the project should be assessed as part of the research and preliminary assessment at the time of the project conception.

Before the project proposal is presented to the FIPP, there should be clear understanding and agreement of the project's scope and content as well as of the nature and level of the contribution required. All the working bodies involved have to agree on the technical content of the proposal, as well as the responsibilities of each participant in the development process. This is essential to ensure that the roles and deliverables are clear, and the developed material is sufficiently robust.

The selection and role of the project lead in 'collaboration' and 'consultation' projects is explained in more detail below.

For some projects the lead will be identified by the SDP, based on a reasoned assessment and appropriate consultation. For other projects the respective goal chair will initially identify the most appropriate project lead, and negotiate the acceptance of this role by the proposed project lead prior to the submission of the project proposal for approval.

Overall, the project lead is responsible for

- managing the project, including preparing the different project stages and timing in accordance with the approved project proposal;
- coordinating the input to ensure the draft pronouncement is complete, clear and technically robust, and that all points of view have been taken into account;
- liaising with the PSC secretariat and the FIPP during the development of the project; and
- bringing issues of disagreement – duly documented – to the attention of the PSC secretariat for resolution.

Differences of opinion can sometimes arise during a development process. The project lead must identify, address and document them in a structured way, to help ensure the timely and effective achievement of the project objectives. It is important to consider and resolve all disagreements in the development of projects, since they may represent views in the wider SAI community.

The project lead should use the most appropriate method to clear any differences of opinion. Such methods may include negotiating and resolving the difference of opinion with the parties that have different opinions, involving the Technical Support Function (TSF) in the process, seeking feedback

from stakeholders during the exposure process on the issue involved, and/or requesting from the respective goal chair an independent evaluation of any unresolved difference of opinion. By following a professional approach to addressing differences of opinion, it is expected that the majority can be resolved without the need for intervention by the goal chair.

The contributing working bodies are responsible for:

- assisting the project lead in developing the content and structure of the project proposal and pronouncement;
- providing specialised input;
- guaranteeing the level of commitment agreed in the project planning phase, regardless whether this takes the form of 'collaboration' or 'consultation';
- voicing concern if their input, or the input of other consulted or collaborating bodies, is not reflected appropriately.

Sole project: for subject matter entirely under the responsibility of the lead working body

This situation arises when the subject matter of the draft pronouncement is either completely, or very closely, aligned to the responsibility of the lead working body, and which has no relation with other audit types or issues. This would typically be the scenario for material related to a specific audit type, such as the ISSAI 2000 on financial audit.

For a sole project the project group would normally be comprised of members of the lead working body.

Under a sole project, the project lead works directly with the FIPP, and the PSC secretariat follows the development of the project, being informed of major developments in the project or emerging concerns and making submissions according to due process.

In the case of sole projects, the responsibility for the detailed content of the final product lies with the project lead.

Collaboration project: for subject matter that concerns the application of pronouncements developed by working bodies other than that taking the lead

This situation arises when the subject matter of the draft pronouncement concerns the application of requirements, or other pronouncement material, that comes under the responsibility of more than one INTOSAI working body.

The respective goal chair takes the lead in collaboration projects until the elaboration of the project proposal. They ensure the up-coming proposal is need-based, feasible and technically sound. At the stage of the elaboration of the project proposal, a project group is established.

The project group shall be comprised of members of a lead project group, as well as representatives of the working bodies dealing with the specialised content to ensure the effective implementation of the project. This project group will be designated to draft the project proposal, under the coordination of the goal chair. The project group will together with the goal chair agree on the final project proposal to be provided to FIPP for approval.

The representatives of the specialized working bodies would be involved in the drafting of the specialised material coming under their responsibility. Being part of the project teams helps the participants understand the context of the subject matter and thereby the consistency and coherence of the material they contribute.

This may typically apply to situations when the pronouncement deals with issues that affect how core audit processes are implemented.

Collaboration projects will generally imply considerable resources to be devoted by all those involved, as they will often require detailed research and drafting work as well as attendance at project group meetings. It is therefore likely that involvement in collaboration projects will require specific inclusion in the work plans of the participating bodies. The specific needs therefore must to be known well in advance.

Role of the project lead in collaboration projects

- the project lead coordinates and develops the content and the structure of the pronouncement, in collaboration with the other working bodies represented in the project group
- the lead is responsible for coordinating the specialised input from the other working body or bodies involved, in line with the project proposal
- the relevant experts will also be involved in addressing technical exposure comments
- the lead should ensure that the cooperating working bodies agree with the way the material on areas under their responsibility is used and presented in the draft
- the responsibility to ensure the effective achievement of the objectives of the project is shared with the members of the project group

Consultation projects: for pronouncements that require input by other working bodies as part of the quality process

If the parties agree that close involvement of the other working bodies concerned is not necessary, **the project group would normally be comprised only of members of the lead working body.** Representatives of the other working body or bodies concerned would not normally be members of the project group or otherwise be involved in drafting. However, the project lead will provide draft text for review by the working body or bodies concerned, for them to check for inaccurate, incomplete, unclear or ambiguous application of the material under their responsibility.

This may typically apply to projects dealing with the application of one or more audit types to specialised topics, such as public procurement.

The working groups that should be consulted as part of the quality process should be defined during the planning of the project and should be clearly mentioned in the approved project proposal. The project lead negotiates the participation of subcommittees or other working bodies, before submitting the project proposal for approval to FIPP.

Consultation projects are much less onerous for those being consulted, than collaboration projects, as they will not generally require detailed research or drafting work. The subcommittee may decide to include the involvement in consultation projects in their work plans. The project lead should allow

sufficient time for consultation and follow up. The expected timing and time required for the feedback should be agreed with the bodies concerned in advance, both as a professional courtesy and to allow effective planning. The project lead will maintain contact during the progress of the task with the working groups involved, to inform them if the planned timing for their input is expected to change.

Role of the project lead in consultation projects

- the project lead is the actual (sole) drafter responsible for the content, and specialised bodies are consultants (reviewers)
- the project lead makes the proposals for the detailed content of the final product but must ensure that all the feedback is discussed and considered
- the project lead will always consider, and typically accept, the input and opinions of the consulted bodies, unless they could lead to the objectives of the project not being met. Any professional discussion about differences of opinion should be documented, stating the points and the arguments for and against at a technical level.
- the consulted bodies do not necessarily need to be involved in addressing technical exposure comments
- the responsibility to ensure the effective achievement of the objectives of the project remains with the project lead.

Which cooperation option to apply?

On the organisation of project groups, due process (page 9) determines that:

Depending on the scope and purpose of the project, the proposal may entail that work will be performed by an existing working group (subcommittee) within the PSC, CBC or KSC, or that a special working group (project group) will be established to carry out the project. FIPP shall consult with the chairs of the PSC, CBC and KSC on any matters in this regard that have not previously been appropriately determined through the strategic development plan for the framework of pronouncements. The PSC Steering Committee may – with the consent of the chairs of the CBC and KSC – decide to provide directions on the organisation of the project in order to ensure the appropriate involvement of all relevant parties in the work. Each committee – the PSC, CBC or KSC – is responsible for the allocation of resources and the timeliness of projects referred to their respective working groups and for ensuring a result in line with the goals of INTOSAI's Strategic Plan.