



# EUROSAI

Working Group on  
Environmental Auditing

## NEWSLETTER 1/2013

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear colleagues,

The coming year marks my 6<sup>th</sup> and final year as Chair of the EUROSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing. As I have shared with my colleagues, the head of SAIs in EUROSAI, I have decided to resign. It has been

an honour to chair the EUROSAI WGEA in two terms, 2008–2011 and 2011–2014. I would like to use this opportunity to thank you all for giving me the opportunity and trust to chair the working group. The experiences have absolutely been both productive and exciting, and I am looking forward to future working group activities under the auspices of the next chair. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for your excellent cooperation and active contribution to the working group's activities. I will take this opportunity to encourage you all to volunteer for being the next chair of the EUROSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing. If your SAI is interested to be the next chair, please let me know.

The EUROSAI WGEA seminar on auditing water management was successfully conducted in Oslo, Norway, 23–24 April 2013, followed by a kick-off meeting on the cooperative audit on biofuels. I am pleased to see that SAIs continue to willingly cooperate within the area of environmental auditing, strengthening SAIs' messages to governments nationally and internationally.

Upcoming is the 11<sup>th</sup> annual EUROSAI WGEA meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, 15–17 October 2013. The meeting will focus on the highly relevant topics of sustainable land use and assessment of

validity and reliability in quantitative and qualitative analyses. I am convinced that the meeting will be professionally and successfully hosted by the SAI of the Czech Republic.

As Chair, I am looking forward to continued productive cooperation throughout my last period. I wish you all a great summer!

Sincerely yours,

Jørgen Kosmo

Chair of EUROSAI WGEA

Auditor General of Norway

### UPCOMING EVENTS

***The 11th Annual EUROSAI WGEA Meeting, 15-17 October 2013, in the Czech Republic***

The 11th Annual EUROSAI WGEA Meeting will be organised in Prague, Czech Republic, 15-17 October 2013. The main topics of the seminar are sustainable land use and assessing validity and reliability in quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Two of the keynote speakers will be Dr Andrus Meiner from the European Environmental Bureau (EEA), and Dr Patrick Sieber from Charles University in Czech Republic.

The first day, keynote speeches will be held and followed by three parallel sessions on subtopics within the topic of sustainable land use. The second day is



dedicated to the audit related topic of assessing validity and reliability. The day will consist of keynote speeches, SAI presentations and speed-dating. At the end of the day, the SAI of the Czech Republic will organise an environmental excursion. On the third day the usual business meeting is held, allowing for presentations of current cooperative activities. The EUROSAI WGEA secretariat and the SAI of the Czech Republic will facilitate project group meetings in connection with the meeting.

For further information, please contact the EUROSAI WGEA secretariat or visit the website:  
[www.eurosaiwgea.org](http://www.eurosaiwgea.org)

### **Training seminar on Fraud and Corruption**

The EUROSAI WGEA secretariat and the Office of the Auditor General of Norway will organise a one-day training seminar on fraud and corruption the day prior to the 11th Annual EUROSAI WGEA Meeting, Monday 14 October 2013.

The purpose of the seminar is to present the new INTOSAI WGEA Guidance on *Addressing Fraud and Corruption Issues when Auditing Environmental and Natural Resource Management*, and to illustrate how this guide may be used in practice by environmental auditors. Group sessions on practical cases will be a central part of the seminar. The cases will deal with central elements such as fraud and corruption risk assessments, internal controls, audit procedures and documentation/reporting. Mr André Standing, anti-corruption expert from the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, will be keynote speaker at the seminar.

For further information, please contact the EUROSAI WGEA secretariat or visit the website:  
[www.eurosaiwgea.org](http://www.eurosaiwgea.org)

## **NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

### **Albania**

#### ***Protecting forests and improving urban waste management in Albania***

Forests in Albania account for over 1 million hectares (or 23 percent of the total surface). During the first five months of this year, the AI-SAI has conducted audits in the Ministry of Environment, in the State Agency of

Environmental Protection and in the forest management local authorities in two of the richest (in forests) districts of Albania, Diber and Lezhe. AI-SAI auditors have found several breaches of legal rules safeguarding this patrimony and have recommended valuable actions and measures to stop on-going damage to forests, the illegal occupation of State forests and the strengthening of fines collection. A persistent issue is the damage occurred to forests from intentional fires, which have increased in number over the recent years. AI-SAI auditors have proposed harsher sanctions against fire perpetrators.

In addition to trying to protect forests, AI-SAI is dedicated to improve urban waste management in large cities of the country. Last month, a team of AI-SAI auditors concluded a performance audit in the municipality of Fier, considered the most polluted city of Albania. Fier is the one of the largest cities in the country, after the capital Tirana, situated in the southwest of the capital, where oil fields are. AI-SAI's audit report aimed at helping municipality managers see more clearly the deficiencies of the urban waste system. Their recommendations oriented them how to limit pollution in the areas where waste was collected and reduce costs.

For more information, please contact Mr Fatos Cocoli ([fcocoli@klsh.org.al](mailto:fcocoli@klsh.org.al))

### **Azerbaijan**

#### ***Chamber of Accounts of Republic of Azerbaijan keeps environmental audit in the focus of attention***

Solving the environmental problems in a timely manner and conducting proper environmental policy to provide a healthy development of society, is one of the factors that promote economic development. As a result of the successful environmental policy, the state environmental programs are implemented successfully.

Considering the importance of this area, the Chamber of Accounts keeps the issues of environmental audit in the focus of attention. In 2012, the Chamber of Accounts carried out three audits in the area of environment and related fields, including hydro-meteorology, forest regeneration and landscape gardening of non-forest lands.



During the audits it has been uncovered that potential on revenues for formation of extra-budgetary funds in Hydrometeorology system is not fully used, and that there is a need to improve the existing rules.

"Greenery and Landscape Structure" OJSC has been established in 2008, under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan. The main aim of this OJSC is to ensure the implementation of landscaping services, green building, cultivation, restoration and enhancement of the landscape structure in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Following agro-technical rules during restoration and landscaping of non-forest areas, and selecting wood and saplings according to local climatic conditions have been recommended as a result of the audit.

As a result of the audit of forest restoration it has been recommended to follow the contract terms within the expense article of State budget "topography, geodesy research services" and accomplish the works of forest reproduction.

### ***Environmental audits conducted by the Chamber of Accounts in 2012***

In 2012 Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan conducted 2 audits:

- Audit of the state budget funds allocated under the paragraph "Hydrometeorology Actions" for the National Hydrometeorology Department of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.
- Audit of the state budget funds allocated under the paragraph "Restoration of Forests" for the Department of the Forest Development of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.

Today in the period of global climate change and activation of hydrometeorological processes during the auditing of the state budget funds allocated under the paragraph "Hydrometeorology Actions" was suggested to up-grade regulations concerning payments for the purchase of equipment for monitoring these processes and for the use of hydrometeorological data.

During the auditing of the funds allocated under paragraph "Restoration of Forests" was proposed to improve the activities on forest-planting, topography, and geodesy.

It was recommended to use potential of the extra-budget foundations operating in the fields of hydrometeorology and forestry.

For more information, please contact the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan ([office@acho.gov.az](mailto:office@acho.gov.az))

## **Belgium**

### ***Audits on the ecology premium and the municipal co-operation agreements in the Flemish Region***

In the course of 2012, the Belgian Court of Audit carried out two audits relating to the environmental policy of the Flemish Region.

The first audit is about the granting of the ecology premium, a financial grant for enterprises that carry out ecological investments in the Flemish Region. With it the government tries to stimulate enterprises to green their production process by taking care of a portion of the additional investment costs. The Court audited the framework of the premium (policy objectives, budgetary and legal framework); it examined also the policy implementation and evaluation. One of the methods used was a survey of enterprises in order to assess the stimulating effect of the premium.

The second audit deals with an aspect of the regional climate policy, namely the support of the region for a sustainable local energy policy through municipal co-operation agreements. The Court audited whether the cooperation agreements stimulated municipalities in the way that energy policy wants. For that purpose it analyzed the degree of municipal participation and the realized activities. It also examined their energy consumption and the production of renewable solar energy.

For further information, please contact Mr Christian Leflere ([leflerec@ccrek.be](mailto:leflerec@ccrek.be))

## **Czech Republic**

### ***Funds collected in accordance with Act on Hazardous Waste Management***

The Czech Supreme Audit Office (SAO) finished and approved an audit conclusion of audit focused on finances collected by law in respect of disposal of



hazardous waste in May 2013. Main attention was paid to the tipping charge, especially to one of its two parts – the risk component.

The audit found that the beneficiary of this fee, the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic (SEF), has no legal powers to check the payment and transfer of these charges by landfill operators. SEF has no possibility to determine whether it receives the right amount of money or not.

Despite increasing of the risk component tariff income from the fee is falling. An audited sample showed a growing difference the quantity of chargeable and not chargeable landfilling of hazardous waste. In 2007 92.79 % and in 2011 98.49 % of weight of hazardous waste was disposed of in ways exempted from fees even though it is actually being placed in landfills. This was all allowed by the system.

Based on this audit, the SAO recommended that the system and legal framework of hazardous waste management should be in these points reassessed.

For further information, please contact Mr Michal Rampír ([michal.rampir@nku.cz](mailto:michal.rampir@nku.cz)), Mr Hana Balcarova ([hana.balcarova@nku.cz](mailto:hana.balcarova@nku.cz)) or Ms Eva Rekova ([eva.rekova@nku.cz](mailto:eva.rekova@nku.cz))

### Denmark

#### ***Finalised audit on public funding provided to energy research, development and demonstration***

In May 2013 the report about public funding provided to energy research, development and demonstration was published. The objective of the study was to assess whether the ministries and the organisations providing funding through the energy programs, manage and administer the contestable public funds for energy research, development and demonstration efficiently. The report answers the following questions:

- Are the contestable public funds for energy research, development and demonstration managed by the ministries in a manner that contributes efficiently to fulfilment of the political goals?
- Are the programs administered in a manner that provides a generally efficient system for

contestable public funds for energy research, development and demonstration?

A summary of the report is available in English:

[http://uk.rigsrevisionen.dk/media/1932582/11\\_2012.pdf](http://uk.rigsrevisionen.dk/media/1932582/11_2012.pdf)

For further information, please contact Mr Jan Østergaard ([joe@rigsrevisionen.dk](mailto:joe@rigsrevisionen.dk))

### European Court of Auditors

#### ***Training seminar on Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, and Life Cycle Assessments***

In February 2013 the European Court of Auditors organised a training seminar on the subject of Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, and Life Cycle Assessments.

This training built on ECA's guidelines for Environmental auditing, issued in 2012, which focused on environmental risk assessment.

The purpose of the seminar was to describe the main elements of each of the assessments, when they need to be applied, and to discuss their relevance for environmental auditing. Experts from the private sector, the European Court of Auditors and the Norwegian Audit Office facilitated the seminar. The topics discussed included how to identify and categorise risks; the components of each type of assessment (with examples of related audit work from SAI's) how to scope potential audits; and links to other policy areas.

Participants worked on case studies, to explore how these assessments are applied in practice to public policy, and to discuss potential audit approaches.

For more information, please contact Ms Dilyanka Zhelezarova, ([dilyanka.zhelezarova@eca.europa.eu](mailto:dilyanka.zhelezarova@eca.europa.eu))

### France

#### ***The audit of the French National Agency for Water and Aquatic Environments - ONEMA***

Created by the 2006 Law on water and aquatic environments, the Agency operates under the supervision of the Ecology ministry. Its mission is to contribute to overall and sustainable management of



water resources and aquatic ecosystems, with a view to reach the goals set by the European Water Framework Directive.

The Agency has been given an increasing number of missions without well-managed financial and human resources and a sure legal framework for its interventions. Governance was an area of weakness. Water information system projects, necessary to have a good knowledge of water quality status and report to EC have not been well prioritized. Coordination of the State departments in charge of water uses inspections remained weak as a result of the lack of a shared tool concerning the follow-up of offences reports and adapted indicators. The pressure of inspections remains a strong challenge.

The audit had positive outcomes. A new six-year contract of objectives, which includes a plan to implement all the recommendations of the Court, has been approved. Furthermore, the Ecology ministry decided to audit water policy and its instruments.

For more information, please contact Mr Philippe Dedryver, ([pdedryver@ccomptes.fr](mailto:pdedryver@ccomptes.fr))

## The Netherlands

### *Ammonia discharges in the Netherlands*

The Netherlands Court of Audit has carried out a follow-up to its 2008 audit of sustainable intensive livestock farming in the Netherlands. We looked at the measures taken by the State Secretary for Economic Affairs and the State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment to reduce ammonia discharges and associated nitrogen deposition.

Manure production of livestock brings about ammonia discharges. Livestock farming accounts for more than 80 % of ammonia discharges in the Netherlands. Ammonia discharges are a main cause of nitrogen deposition, which may lead to the decline of endangered species and habitats. In many nature areas (Natura 2000 areas) in the Netherlands the ammonia discharges are too high to protect endangered plant species and habitats. That means that the Netherlands probably will not comply with European legislative requirements on nature conservation because biodiversity in nature areas cannot be ensured.

Government policy for reducing ammonia discharges and associated nitrogen deposition is providing inadequate protection to biodiversity in the Netherlands. The introduction of a new programme to reduce nitrogen deposition and ammonia discharges (PAS) has been delayed. Furthermore, the government will use half the environmental gains achieved by the PAS programme in order to permit an increase in livestock farming. This way, nitrogen deposition is expected to remain too high for the coming decades.

For more information, please contact Mr Koos Postma ([k.postma@rekenkamer.nl](mailto:k.postma@rekenkamer.nl))

### *Impact of an audit of fisheries policy*

In 2012 we assessed the impact of an audit of the sustainability of plaice and sole fishing we carried out in 2008. The audit had considered the catch quota policy and its enforcement, and innovation in the fishing industry. The Minister followed up our recommendations in broad lines. She developed a long-term strategy for the fishing industry, for example, and improved the coordination of the fisheries and nature management policy fields. Systematic procedures have been introduced to manage plaice and sole stocks in the North Sea, so that fish catches may not exceed the increase in fish stocks. Enforcement, however, is still under pressure and measures to avoid by-catches have still not been taken.

The playing field has changed in recent years. A significant development has been the emergence of private fish quality labels, such as that of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). These standards have been of mutual benefit to both the government and certified cutter fleet operators. Fishing companies wanting to be certified, for example, stand to benefit from the sustainable management of fish stocks and effective enforcement. We recommended the minister to consider options to support this development.

For more information, please contact Dr Arien Blee-Booij ([a.blees@rekenkamer.nl](mailto:a.blees@rekenkamer.nl)) or see <http://www.courtfaudit.nl/english/>



## Norway

### ***Document 3:13 (2012-2013) The Office of the Auditor General's investigation on grants for biodiversity and outdoor recreational purposes***

The Office of Auditor General Norway has assessed whether the Ministry of Environment's grants management is structured in a way that ensures goal attainment, and to what degree the grant schemes contribute to the realization of goals. The audit also looks into whether the administration of grants is in accordance with the decisions and intentions of the Parliament (Stortinget).

A wide range of methods were used in the investigation, spanning from case studies, surveys of county governors and county authorities, case file reviews of cases from the county governors and county authorities, and interviews.

The audit found that the Ministry of Environment did not follow up the grant schemes with evaluations. There were also weaknesses in performance reporting on the grant schemes.

Furthermore there were weaknesses in the compliance with general principles of public management and existing rules and regulations for financial assistance schemes. The audit documented that the processing of applications were severely delayed and it was therefore concluded that the response time towards applicants should be improved. The OAG of Norway recommended that the Ministry of Environment ensures that the grant award letters comply with the relevant regulations.

The OAG of Norway also recommended that the Ministry of Environment improves information about how the grant schemes contribute to the realization of goals through evaluations and enriched performance reporting.

In addition, the OAG pointed out that the ministry should consider improving the administration of grants managed by The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, the county governors and county authorities.

For further information, please contact Hilde Solli ([hilde.solli@riksrevisjonen.no](mailto:hilde.solli@riksrevisjonen.no))

## Romania

### ***International audit regarding the execution of the provisions of the Danube Convention on cooperation for the protection and sustainable use of the Danube River (2013-2014)***

At the invitation sent by the SAI of Ukraine, the Romanian Court of Accounts will take part in the international audit of the execution of the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River.

The overall objective of the audit is to review the progress and the status of the provisions of the Danube Convention by Romania and every county situated along the river, for a distance of 1000 km:

- apply jointly established quantity and quality water parameters and appropriate methodologies
- take measures to prevent or reduce trans-boundary impacts for the sustainable use of water resources and for the conservation of the environmental resources, in particular:
  - identify underground water resources
  - prevent pollution of the groundwater resources
  - minimize risks of accidental pollution
  - improve the conditions of coastal and aquatic environment
- prevent and reduce the discharge of hazardous substances and nutrients from diffuse sources and to limit their emission in order to reduce pollution
- prevent, control and reduce the negative effect of environmental pollution of the Black Sea
- protect the marine living resources
- increase the quality of the Black Sea water for tourism activities

For more information, please contact Mr Dumitru Alămiie ([dumitru.alamiie@rcc.ro](mailto:dumitru.alamiie@rcc.ro)) or Ms Andreea Motoc ([andreea.motoc@rcc.ro](mailto:andreea.motoc@rcc.ro))



## Russia

### ***Activity of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation in the field of the environmental protection in the first half of the year 2013***

The Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation together with the SAI of Norway, Denmark, USA and Sweden conducted a multilateral performance audit of the activity of the corresponding state bodies of the country participants of the Arctic council in the field of maintenance of preservation of the environment and a sustainable development of the Arctic regions and performance of recommendations of the Arctic council. Signing of the Final Memorandum is planned in the 1st quarter of 2014.

During the current half-year within the framework of the multilateral audit we carried out the following audits:

- The delegation of the Russian SAI has taken part in a working meeting of representatives of the participating SAIs of the multilateral audit and in the session of committee of the senior officials of the Arctic council.
- In Salekhard an expanded session on a theme «Ecology of Arctic regions» was held that joined together the SAI of Russia, SAI of Norway and the SAI of Denmark, the Government of the Yamalo - Nenets autonomous region, Legislative Assembly of the Yamal – Nenets autonomous region, a management of the audit bodies of subjects of the Russian Federation located in the Arctic zone and representatives of the Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Russia.
- In June of the current year coordinators of the multilateral audit, the SAIs of Russia and Norway, plan to carry out in Moscow an interview with the management of the Working group of the Arctic council on preservation of the Arctic flora and fauna and an interview in Washington, with the management of the Working group on protection of the Arctic sea environment.

At the same time we also prepare for the second stage of the parallel audit of protection of the Black sea from pollution. At the initiative of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation at V session of the EUROSAI Task Force on the Audit of Funds Allocated to Disasters and Catastrophes a decision was made to conduct in 2013 – 2015 an audit of protection of the rivers of the Black sea pool from pollution together with 11 SAIs. Till July, 2013 it is planned to prepare a draft of joint position about carrying out of the given audit.

Together with the SAI of Norway we carry out a parallel audit in the field of efficiency of maintenance of radiating safety of the population and protection of environment against radioactive pollution. In March of the current year in Stockholm the meeting of working groups was held, and in June we will carry out the interview of the state bodies of the executive power of Russia and Norway in Moscow and in Oslo .

During the current half-year the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation spent the following audits: of water resources, of protection of lake Baikal, and of wood complex. The results of the audits are planned to be considered in II and III quarters of 2013.

For more information, please contact Ms Tamara Toloknova ([totam@ach.gov.ru](mailto:totam@ach.gov.ru))

## Slovenia

### ***Waste audits in progress***

The audit report on municipal waste management, published in 2009, revealed numerous inefficiencies in separate waste collection, managing packaging and biodegradable waste and showed the delays in reaching the goals regarding rising the share of waste being recycled and consequently reducing the share of waste disposed. Study on the measures required and proposed by the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia to improve the situation in waste management carried out in 2012 exposed that almost all problematic areas remained unimproved. The Court of Audit has therefore decided to conduct a follow up audit in which the following areas are covered:

- examining how the municipal waste is being treated after its collection and how the tracking of it is ensured



- assessing whether the data and official records of municipal waste generated and treatment of it is accurate, reliable and complete
- efficiency of managing the schemes for packaging waste
- benchmarking of efficiency and effectiveness in managing waste between Slovene municipalities

Methodologically, the data on which the audit is based will be mainly gathered through questionnaires to the municipalities and public companies dealing with collection and disposing of waste.

For more information, please contact Ms Jerneja Vrabcic ([jerneja.vrabcic@rs-rs.si](mailto:jerneja.vrabcic@rs-rs.si))

### Sweden

#### ***Report RiR 2013:8 Energy efficiency in industries – effects of the Central Government's actions***

The Swedish NAO has audited the Central Government's actions for energy efficiency in the industry, especially the voluntary programme for energy efficiency in energy intensive industries (PFE). The audit also involves whether energy efficiency in industry sectors contributes to emission reductions, in the short and long term perspective, nationally and at the European level. The Swedish NAO's general conclusion is that energy efficiency as a result of PFE is probably not as large as the Swedish government and the Swedish Energy Agency have reported. The audit also concludes that policy instruments for energy efficiency, for example PFE, do not contribute to emission reductions for companies within the EU Emissions Trading System, until 2020.

#### ***Report RiR 2013:9 Sweden in the Arctic Council – effective return from membership?***

The Swedish NAO has examined whether Sweden receives an effective return from its membership of the Arctic Council. The overall conclusion is that Sweden does not receive an effective return in all respects from its membership. The assessment of the Swedish NAO is that there is insufficient transparency in the Government's priorities for the work of the Arctic Council. It is therefore difficult to assess whether

Sweden's work in the Arctic Council proceeds from stated priorities. The Government has not ensured that recommendations from the Arctic Council are assessed and where relevant implemented in Sweden. Nor has the Government assigned responsibility for such a process.

The Swedish NAO has published 11 audits within its audit strategy on Climate Change. The audit strategy will be concluded in a report in December this year.

Summaries of the audits until 2012 are available at:

<http://www.riksrevisionen.se/en/>

### United Kingdom

#### ***Briefing on public sector organisations' compliance with mandatory sustainability reporting requirements***

We prepared a briefing for Parliament on public sector organisations' compliance with mandatory sustainability reporting requirements that were introduced with effect from 2011-12 annual reports. We also posted on our website a "fact sheet" which further addressed the lessons learned from this briefing and from our engagement with Price Waterhouse Coopers in judging the best public sector sustainability reporting as part of the Building Public Trust awards. Our key messages were that all of the largest central government organisations that we reviewed produced a sustainability report for 2011-12. Although they did not manage to comply with all of the mandatory reporting requirements in that first year many of the organisations went beyond the mandatory requirements in some respects, for example by providing a description of their organisation's sustainability governance structure.

Building on this work the NAO has further developed its own sustainability reporting, as published in its 2013 annual report.

In February 2013 we completed a briefing for the Environmental Audit Committee on the government's progress in meeting its sustainable procurement commitments. We found that there has been limited monitoring of the extent to which government departments' procurement has met Government Buying Standards. The Government is working to build the



Government Buying Standards into relevant central procurement exercises, to further develop the Standards and to improve engagement with suppliers. It has also undertaken work to establish the impacts of a priority list of suppliers under its centralised procurement frameworks.

Following on from these two briefings, the Environmental Audit Committee has requested that we review the sustainability performance of one of the main government departments, as a “pilot” exercise that they may then roll out to other government departments. Our review of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills is to be completed by summer 2013.

We have continued our work on energy issues, with work underway on the Levy Control Framework, a budgetary control framework for controlling the costs of energy policy falling on consumers’ electricity bills, and on nuclear decommissioning, and on government support for low carbon research and development.

For further information, please contact Jill Goldsmith ([jill.goldsmith@nao.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jill.goldsmith@nao.gsi.gov.uk))

## NEWS ON COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

### **Say Yes!**

In 2014 the Netherlands Court of Audit (NCA) will be hosting the IX EUROSAI Congress in The Netherlands. But first: In the run-up to the EUROSAI congress, we will be holding a Young EUROSAI Conference in Rotterdam from 20 to 22 November 2013. The title of the congress is: YES.

The theme of the YES-congress is innovation, the same theme as the IX EUROSAI Congress. The YES-congress is an excellent opportunity for young staff members to bring forward new ideas and to exchange their knowledge with their European peers at first hand. YES will put the theme into practice, for example during short plenary lectures and presentations, participants can look forward to hands-on activities! The event will be an interactive experience with all manner of creative interventions.



From preparation to evaluation, the YES conference is organised by young professionals of the Netherlands Court of Audit. From each SAI two young professionals (age  $\leq 35$ ) are invited to join the YES conference. For more information on the IX EUROSAI Congress and YES please go to [www.eurosai2014.nl](http://www.eurosai2014.nl)

### ***Kick-off meeting of the cooperative audit on biofuel***

24–25 April 2013 the EUROSAI WGEA secretariat organised a kick-off meeting for the cooperative audit on biofuels. 8 SAIs attended the meeting. Common audit questions and the relative coverage of these among the SAIs were established and potential findings and final product were discussed. The next project meeting will be organised in connection with the 11th annual EUROSAI WGEA meeting in Prague.

### ***Multilateral Audit on the Challenges and Opportunities in the Arctic and National Authorities work with the Arctic Council***

The Supreme Audit Institutions of Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States of America are in the middle of conducting and analysing data. The plan is to submit our respective national reports in fall/winter 2013/2014. The NAO of Sweden submitted their national report on 28 May.

In addition to the independent work that each SAI is carrying out we are collaborating in our data collection efforts. The SAI of Sweden and Norway have for instance conducted an interview with the Swedish representative to one of the working groups. Norway and Russia are conducting a number of interviews both with officials who are involved in Arctic Council work



and also representatives of our respective national governments. In addition Norway and Russia will conduct interviews together with our colleagues at the US GAO in Washington DC.

The next working meeting for all the SAIs will take place in Copenhagen in the second week of October. On the agenda are national audit findings and the process of structuring and writing a Joint Memorandum. The Joint Memorandum is to be finalized in first half of 2014.

For more information, please contact Mr Bjørn Martin Ørvim ([bjorn-martin.orvim@riksrevisjonen.no](mailto:bjorn-martin.orvim@riksrevisjonen.no))

### **Update of the Cooperative Audit on National Parks**

Since March 2012 when the kick-off meeting of the cooperative audit on national parks was held in Warsaw, a lot has happened in the life of the project. Three more countries have joined the project team, and in addition to the original group of the SAIs of Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Ukraine, we now have the SAIs of Bulgaria, Croatia and Armenia participating in the joint effort to assess the management, financing, and protection of biodiversity in the national parks of 8 countries.

During the second project meeting held in Vilnius (Lithuania) on 16-17 May 2013, the final version of the joint Matrix of audit objectives, questions, and criteria was agreed and included in the project plan, according to which the final joint report is to be compiled and approved in December 2014.



The members of our international team consist of a combination of those who are experienced in conducting international audits, as well as relative

newcomers; the representatives are not only from the central, but also regional offices of SAIs. The team is really enthusiastic about the project and committed to making it a success, regardless of the fact that the concepts of national parks differ among the participating countries.

For further information, please contact Lina Balenaite ([lina.balenaite@vkontrole.lt](mailto:lina.balenaite@vkontrole.lt))

## **NEWS FROM THE INTOSAI WGEA**

### **15th meeting of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WG15)**

The National Audit Office of Estonia hosted the 15th meeting of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing in Tallinn, Estonia from 3 to 6 June 2013.

The assembly was largest in the row by bringing together 158 delegates from 70 SAIs, among them 15 Heads of SAIs, as well as several international organisations. Participation of SAIs from Europe showed an increase - 21 now in Tallinn versus 15 in Buenos Aires in 2011 (WG14).

Sharing experiences and knowledge has always been one of the cornerstones of the assemblies of the INTOSAI WGEA. WG15 was no exception in this regard - 30 SAIs presented their recent audit experiences in either plenary or parallel sessions of the meeting.

Novel WGEA environmental auditing guidance materials and research studies over the working period of 2011-2013 were introduced in parallel session tutorials:

- Addressing Fraud and Corruption Issues when Auditing Environmental and Natural Resource Management: Guidance for Supreme Audit Institutions
- Auditing Water Issues: An Examination of SAIs' Experiences and the Methodological Tools They Have Successfully Used
- Sustainability Reporting – Concepts, Frameworks and the Role of Supreme Audit Institutions
- Impact of Tourism on Wildlife Conservation;



## EUROSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing

- Environmental Issues Associated with Infrastructure Development
- Environmental Data: Resources and Options for Supreme Audit Institutions
- Land Use and Land Management Practices in Environmental Perspective

A panel of experienced WGEA members was convened, comprised of SAI representatives with vast experience, to reflect upon the major environmental auditing trends and developments in recent years as well as for future to come.

The Assembly also approved the WGEA's new work plan for 2011-2013 and SAIs signed up for future study projects:

- Renewable energy
- Energy savings
- Environmental assessments
- Marine environment
- Market based instruments for environmental protection and management
- Greening the Supreme Audit Institutions
- How to increase the quality and impact of environmental audits
- Update the INTOSAI WGEA 2004 guidance material on Towards Auditing Waste Management
- Review the four ISSAI documents on environmental audit
  - ISSAI 5110: Guidance on Conducting Audits of Activities with an Environmental Perspective, 2001
  - ISSAI 5120: Environmental Audit & Regularity Auditing, 2004
  - ISSAI 5130: Sustainable Development: The Role of Supreme Audit Institutions, 2004
  - ISSAI 5140: How SAIs May Co-operate on the Audit of International Environmental Accords, 1998

INTOSAI WGEA has always encouraged and supported regional activities. Hence, similarly to the previous work plans, the new plan also includes the following proposed activities:

- Encourage regions to design and carry out a regional cooperative audit in each INTOSAI region. Regional coordinators and member SAIs to identify and pursue topics of common interest, select the audit coordinator, and define the precise scope and form of cooperation.
- Encourage regions to have cooperative work (e.g. audits, training courses) and to disseminate existing WGEA guidance materials, research papers, training materials.

For accessing the materials of the WG15 meeting, including presentations, compendium of workshop papers and a photo gallery, kindly refer to our website [www.environmental-auditing.org](http://www.environmental-auditing.org). The minutes of the meeting will become available in due course, of which all the participants will be notified via e-mail.



Auditor General of Estonia Dr Alar Karis giving an opening speech.



Delegates of the SAI of Lithuania participating at the WG15 in Tallinn.



## FROM THE SECRETARIAT

### ***EUROSAI WGEA thematic seminar on auditing water management***

23–24 April 2013, the EUROSAI WGEA organised a seminar on auditing water management in Oslo, Norway. 31 participants from 18 SAIs attended the seminar, which covered two main topics; water management models and water protection measures. Dr Sébastien Treyer from the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) at Sciences Po in Paris and Ms Martina Mlinaric from the European Environmental Bureau held keynote speeches on the two topics. Two parallel workshops with SAI presentations and discussions were organised according to the two subtopics. In addition, Steve Elstein from the United States Government Accountability Office, GAO, joined the seminar virtually through a video wired presentation of his work with the INTOSAI WGEA guidance paper on water issues. Finally, speed-dating and group and plenary discussions summed up the seminar.

For presentations and further information, see the EUROSAI WGEA website [www.eurosaiwgea.org](http://www.eurosaiwgea.org)

### ***EUROSAI WGEA Data and method: good examples***

Two additional examples of Data and method: good examples have been constructed by the SAI of Sweden and are available from the EUROSAI WGEA webpage. The EUROSAI WGEA secretariat encourages all to read and evaluate these examples, and distribute the examples to environmental auditors in your SAI. Comments are welcome at any time, and especially before the 11<sup>th</sup> annual EUROSAI WGEA meeting, where the practice will be evaluated during the Steering Committee meeting.

For further information see [www.eurosaiwgea.org](http://www.eurosaiwgea.org) or contact [eurosai-wgea@riksrevisjonen.no](mailto:eurosai-wgea@riksrevisjonen.no)

### ***The annual EUROSAI WGEA survey 2013***

The EUROSAI WGEA annual survey will be distributed to all members in mid-August 2013. The EUROSAI WGEA secretariat encourages all to respond to the survey as this facilitates choosing topics for future seminars and meetings. Because the working

group is entering a new strategic plan period in 2014, the survey of 2013 will also provide an opportunity to influence the working group's future strategic goals and focus areas.

### ***New head of EUROSAI WGEA secretariat***

Camilla C. Fredriksen has been appointed as new head of the EUROSAI WGEA secretariat and will lead the secretariat through Norway's last year as Chair of the working group.

### ***Contact information***

We encourage all SAIs to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or any news or information that you would like to post on the EUROSAI WGEA website and/or include in the next newsletter.



Camilla C. Fredriksen



Eivor Hovde Hoff

### ***EUROSAI WGEA Secretariat***

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