

**EUROSAI**

**GOAL TEAM 4: GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATION**

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# EUROSAI Strategic Plan 2011-2017

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A practical guide for  
organising EUROSAI  
training events

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May 2014

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>SAI</b>	<b>Supreme Audit Institution</b>
<b>ECA</b>	<b>European Court of Auditors</b>
<b>EUROSAI</b>	<b>European Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions</b>
<b>INTOSAI</b>	<b>International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions</b>
<b>IDI</b>	<b>INTOSAI Development Initiative</b>
<b>GT3</b>	<b>EUROSAI Goal Team 3 - Knowledge Sharing</b>
<b>GT4</b>	<b>EUROSAI Goal Team 4 - Governance and Communication</b>

## 1. Introduction

Training events are one of the key tools for enhancing professional and institutional development, for promoting the efficient operation of SAIs, and for creating professional communication networks among experts on various subject matters. They are also a way of encouraging the exchange of ideas and experience, and of supporting the activities of the EUROSAI working groups.

The EUROSAI Strategic Plan 2011-2017 gives to **all Goal Teams** the ability to use this important management tool to develop and disseminate their objectives, activities and tasks. The same applies to the Working Groups, Task Forces and other committees.

In turn, **Goal Team 3**, whose overall commitment is to encourage cooperation and exchange of experience among EUROSAI members, within INTOSAI and with external partners, and **Goal Team 4**, responsible for the Governance and Communication, are entrusted with specific objectives and tasks related to training activities, and, within their scopes, support the Governing Board in dealing with these matters.

The aim of this document is to facilitate the work of the SAIs, to encourage SAIs to host training events and to provide help in organising training events by offering advice and recommendations.

SAIs are invited to work together on regularly updating this document. Running training events is a living and continuously changing process and the SAIs should benefit from maximising what they can learn from the experience of others.

## **2. Main concepts**

Training events:

Planned activity in which a person/or persons who have expertise in a specific area of knowledge, share, in a systematized and informative way, previously organised, with other persons, interested in the matter under stake, their Know-How, expecting that listeners and participants gain theoretical knowledge and practical experience to enable them to better perform their duties.

Training materials:

Manuals, presentations, bibliography, exercises and other documents made available by the monitor to the trainees.

Contributors:

The external experts, the facilitators and the trainers that have a special skill on the training subject, and, therefore, are invited to teach and share their related experiences.

Participants:

SAIs or other partners students (auditors and other staff) that are willing to learn and to disseminate knowledge acquired in training events.

Trainer:

A person/or persons who has a special expertise in some subject and, therefore, educates in that same topic, employees in order to enhance their competence and aptitudes to work.

Facilitator:

Someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to achieve them without taking a particular position in the discussion, growing to a strong basis for future actions.

Workshop:

Discussion group among people who are interested in a specific subject, coordinated by a trainer/facilitator who introduces the theme and bounds the conversation, taking conclusions out of it.

Case-study:

Intensive analysis of a specific example, linked to the main subject of learning, stressing developmental factors in relation to context and main conclusions and recommendations.

### **3. Overall framework**

When a SAI plans to deliver a training event, it must be acknowledged that human, financial and logistic resources must be available, and that a thorough challenge is ahead. Quality of trainers, materials and organisation are fundamental to deliver a successful event. In order to achieve this, it is advisable to frame the task into the following phases:

**Analysis Phase**, aiming to plan and select the objective of the event, preferably within EUROSAI training objectives, taking into account, inter alia, the identification of the target audience, the need of an organisational team, language requirements, budgetary arrangements, and calendar.

**Design Phase**, to ensure that the event is targeting its precise focus, the objectives of the event and the scale of the event (in particular, the number of participants) must be clearly determined in this phase.

**Development Phase**, which happens already at a non-return point and is focused on the programming of the event, especially in what concerns the choice of contributors/trainers/facilitators, drafting the programme and agenda, deciding the location, obtaining registrations from participants and finalising logistic arrangements.

**Delivery Phase**, which aims to effectively carry out the event in an organised, fruitful and consistent way, taking care of trainers and participants, giving them the needed information and materials, maintaining the sessions in schedule and facing and solving unexpected problems.

**Evaluation Phase**, with the goal of giving feed-back to trainers, participants and EUROSAI bodies about the training event, both in what as regards contents and learning issues, and logistic related matters.

## **4. Analysis Phase**

### **4.1. Selection of the topic**

GT3 maintains and updates the list of preferred topics that the EUROSAI community considers important to be covered by training events and SAIs interested in organising a training event are invited to choose, preferably, one of these topics. The interested SAI should consult the list of preferred topics displayed on the EUROSAI website and, if necessary, contact GT3 Chair for further information.

A SAI may also decide to organise a training event that is not on the EUROSAI's preferred list. If, in such a case, the SAI wants to list that training event as a EUROSAI official event (and thus be able to benefit from a EUROSAI contribution to the training event), it must inform GT3 and the EUROSAI Secretariat, explaining how the EUROSAI community would benefit from such a training event. The Secretariat will then inform the EUROSAI Governing Board, who will decide if it can be qualified as a EUROSAI event.

#### **4.2. Appointment of the organisational team**

Events are organised by EUROSAI members. Once the offer made by a SAI is accepted, it is advisable to assign a dedicated team of experts to organise the event.

There are two main directions in which these preparations may go: these are the professional issues (the topic of the training event) and the logistical issues (general organisation). It is up to the SAI to decide whether one or two separate teams should be set up. The team(s) might be supported by audit organisations, training agencies, other SAIs and institutions and they can also ask GT3 for assistance and guiding.

#### **4.3. Identification of the target audience**

It is necessary to identify the target audience on the basis of the selected topic. Some topics might be interesting for all EUROSAI members; while other topics are of major interests for some of the members. It is advisable to invite a certain group of SAIs in order to ensure the homogeneity of the audience and those who have expressed prior interest in the subject. It is recommended that the objectives of the seminar are explained in detail in order to achieve the target audience envisaged. The participants are to have adequate competencies and experience.

#### **4.4. Identification of language needs**

The EUROSAI training events should be carried out in, at least, one of the EUROSAI languages. It is up to the host SAI to decide whether interpretation services will be provided and/or whether materials will be translated into other languages or not. This depends on the financial resources available, the target audience, the policy of the host SAI, technical facilities, etc.

#### **4.5. Identification of the timescale for course development**

Starting with the organisation early is important: depending on the complexity of the topic chosen, preparation of a EUROSAI training event can take 1 year, in some cases even longer. The host SAI should take this into account when planning an event.

The organisational team shall suggest the length and date of the seminar/training course (taking into account other similar international events), draft the programme/agenda, suggest the schedule of activities and set deadlines for major tasks concerning the organisation, like setting the dates by which:

- the accommodation and the venue should be secured;
- the draft and final programme/agenda should be approved;
- the seminar-related information should be disseminated;

- the registration forms should be distributed and collected;
- et cetera.

The final decision on these issues is entrusted to the competent body within the SAI. Preparatory meetings with presenters/trainers are strongly recommended in this phase, to ensure a correct planning.

The host SAI shall inform GT3 about the details of the training event planned.

#### **4.6. Identification of major stakeholders and preparation of the budget**

The host SAI is typically responsible for covering expenditures relating to renting premises and technical equipment, refreshments (coffee breaks and lunches), back office services (copying, etc). Gifts and photos and social events can be offered if the host considers it appropriate. It is up to the host SAI to decide whether transportation to and from the airport and local travelling between the hotel and the venue will be covered or not. Costs are strongly influenced by whether the training event is held at the host SAI or at rented premises.

Participants are usually expected to cover travel costs, accommodation and some meals (usually breakfasts and dinners; and some working lunches).

In the case of contributors/trainers/facilitators, the host SAI may decide to cover some of their expenses (such as travel, accommodation, per diem allowance, meals etc.), especially if the expert is not from the EUROSAI or SAI community. This again depends on the financial resources available.

#### **4.7. Support from the EUROSAI budget**

The host SAI may apply for financial support for covering part of its expenses from the EUROSAI budget. These expenses may cover costs that will be necessary for the appropriate development of technical aspects of the training event.

Exceptionally, it is also possible to obtain a subsidy after the event, on a reimbursement basis, with clearly justified costs. For such, see EUROSAI Financial Rules, Rule 42.

In case costs are extremely high or even exceed available financial resources, SAIs may consider charging participants with a fee. In some cases SAIs may find an external sponsor, however only if this complies with local legal regulations applicable to SAIs, and respects EUROSAI independence and the fulfilment of EUROSAI priorities.

The application, granting and justification procedure of subsidies from the EUROSAI budget is fully explained in annex 8 of the document, which includes templates for applying for EUROSAI funding and justifying its application.

## **5. Design Phase**

### **5.1. Identifying relevant knowledge areas**

The organisational team may prepare a questionnaire from which they can deduce the interest in specific topics that should be covered during the training event. It is advisable to distribute it among EUROSAI members together with the **Preliminary registration forms** and a short introduction 6-8 months before the date of the training event. Preliminary registration can be useful to verify the interest in the topic and event, as well as to help Organisers to find the right premises on which the event will be held. It is recommended that the SAI uses a standardised version of the document (see annexe 4).

### **5.2. Identification of the timing of the course**

The organisational team of the host SAI shall propose the length and date of the training event (taking into account other international events).

### **5.3. Limits on the number of participants per training event**

The organisational team of the host SAI may specify a limit on the number of participants for obtaining the best impact and higher efficiency of the event.

### **5.4. Setting the objectives of the training event**

The organisational team should determine the objectives of the training event, which will focus its preparation and development and which will make evaluation easier after the event.

## **6. Development Phase**

### **6.1. Identification and invitation of contributors**

The organisational team shall contact the envisaged “contributors” (external experts/trainers/facilitators) well in advance (at least 6 month before). It is of paramount importance that the organisational team informs the contacted institutions on the topic of the training event, its background, and what exactly is expected from the nominated expert.

### **6.2. Sustainable view on preparation of the training event**

By organising EUROSAI training events, you can conserve energy, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions and save money. EUROSAI Sustainable meeting checklist was prepared and should give some basic ideas on what you can do to organise meetings that are sustainable, more environmentally friendly and more efficient.

The document offers an sustainable view on preparation of the training event, venue and accommodation, transport, catering, communication (see annexe 10).

Take a look at our green meeting tips and you'll be well on your way to reducing the environmental impact of your event.

### **6.3. Drafting the training event programme**

The first version of the programme/agenda should be drafted based on the results of the above-mentioned questionnaire and/or the feedback received from the contributors.

Contributors need to be informed about the desired length of their presentations. Sufficient time needs to be reserved in the programme for discussions and it is a good idea to have presentations or sessions followed by either a discussion or a short time for questions and answers.

The agenda coordinator should go through all presentations before the event in order to avoid overlaps or inadequate coverage of certain aspects.

It is advisable that the training event programme also contains information on the time and length of coffee and lunch breaks, as well as meeting times and points, and on the possible social programme (if offered by the host). Coffee breaks can usually take from 15 to 30 minutes. For lunches, 1 to 1.5 hours are normally reserved. The same applies to the dinner if the SAI hosts it. An official dinner could be hosted by the SAI organising the event. It is advisable to recommend a dress code for dinner.

Any updates and organisational changes prior to and during the training event must be clearly announced.

#### **6.4. Preparation of information and training materials**

The organisational team's Organisers prepare the information about the programme, timing and guidance for the trainers. Organisers must make sure that they have all presentations and supporting documents from the contributors in advance. Since printing, copying and completion of materials is time-consuming, it is recommended that these materials are sent to the Organisers at least 1 week before the event starts, and earlier if possible. In case translation is needed, materials should be collected, at least, one month before the event.

It is advisable **to prepare background papers** on each of the topics covered by the training event as well as the programme/agenda, general information, travel issues, downloads of documents, etc. **for each participant of the training event.**

It is a good idea to launch a **website** dedicated to the given training event and, at the same time, to inform all EUROSAI members about the website, either by e-mail or by posting it in the EUROSAI website with the rest of the training event information. This website may cover a wide range of issues related to the organisation of the event. If the host SAI does not have the possibility to create a separate website for the training event, it will display, through GT3, as much information as possible about the event in the EUROSAI website training events database. Prior to the training event, the Organisers may send the materials to the participants and/or ask GT3 Chair to make these materials available on the EUROSAI website.

It is advisable to provide participants with the information of the contact persons in charge of practical and professional issues; this information may include mobile phone numbers in case of emergency.

Organisers may send and/or make available on the event's or EUROSAI's website the electronic version of the materials for participants prior to the training event. It is advisable to distribute the printouts at the venue or to provide technical facilities on-the-spot for "paperless" events.

It is advisable to distribute the participant's registration packs upon arrival to each participant, which may contain training event papers and presentations, the final programme/agenda, the list of participants, additional information on specific national habits, gifts and invitations for dinner, if applicable, badges, pens, blocks of paper and other materials that are considered important.

It is a good idea to set up a welcome desk on the day of arrival of the participants or on the day the training event starts. It is also possible that the final programme/agenda, the list of participants, gifts and invitations, if applicable, badges, et cetera are made available in the hotel rooms (if it does not incur extra costs) and that papers and presentations, pens, blocks of paper and other materials are put on the table in the equipped training room.

## **6.5. Selection of training facilities**

Depending on the host SAI's possibilities and nature of the training event, the event can be held at the host SAI or at a rented premises. Another possibility could be a courtesy arrangement with certain third parties, for example the Parliament. The organisation of an event may be time-consuming and depending on the venue, it may be required to reserve premises up to one year in advance, especially if the host city is a popular tourist/conference centre. The time of year may also be important.

Depending on the nature of the training event, organisation may require one or more rooms where the desired number of participants can be comfortably seated. The nature of the training event may require different types of room settings (typically school, theatre or U-shape). The back office that provides access to PCs, Internet, printing, copying may be run by the host SAI and it is recommended that it remains available throughout the training event and be easily accessible.

In case the event is not held at the SAI's premises, it is advisable to organise the event at the hotel or close to the hotel where the participants are accommodated. The hotel may offer more competitive prices (perhaps a competitive conference package fee) in such a case.

The seating order is not usually such an important issue at training events but it can be important for the moderator/facilitator of the discussion. Article 16 of the EUROSAI Standard Procedures includes a list of official precedence in EUROSAI. Putting country flags or name cards on the tables is highly recommended in order to make it easier for the chair/speakers/attendants of the training event to identify the participants. It is also good to distribute name badges that participants may want to carry. Unlike working group member events, training events are usually made up of a group of people that have never met before.

It is a good idea to put some information papers that can be of interest to the training event's participants in some place close to or in the meeting room.

In order to ease orientation for the participants and to raise awareness of EUROSAI among the general public it is useful to display EUROSAI logos at the training venue.

It is recommended that coffee breaks are held in close proximity to the venue, at best in the adjacent lounge.

It is suggested that lunch be served in a restaurant close to the venue, at best at the venue itself, or within its walking distance to save time and avoid excessive travelling. A light buffet lunch can be sufficient.

## **6.6. Final registration for the training event**

Usually 2-3 months before the event the final registration form and hotel reservation form are sent out. It is recommended that a standardised version of these documents is used (see annexes 1 and 2). The forms are usually accompanied by a cover letter, clarifying if there is a limit on the number of participants per SAI, based on the host's capacity and available financial resources.

Organisers should be fully aware of any possible dietary requirements of each participant and take them into account when ordering meals (usually no meat, no fish, no pork, but others may also occur). In order to find this out in advance, it is best to ask about any specific dietary requirements in the registration form.

Breakfasts are usually served at the hotel. Information on whether breakfast is included in the accommodation fee or whether it is charged separately should be announced in advance in the registration form.

Some participants might require visas to enter the host country. It is necessary to ask participants whether an invitation letter may be needed. Such a letter should be issued and sent as soon as possible since visa procedures may be complicated in some countries (the host countries embassy might not be in the participant's country and he may need to travel to another country to obtain a visa). It is advisable to ask about any specific visa requirements in the registration form.

The host SAI may also ask in the hotel registration form for information on any accompanying persons.

It is recommended that registrations and hotel reservations are collected 1-1.5 months before the event (this is usually necessary due to reservation deadlines of the selected hotel/hotels).

It is a good idea to make and maintain a list of all registered participants. This will come in handy at a later date for multiple reasons – separate lists may be created for purposes of holding contact information, arrival and departure details, technical requirements of contributors, hotel registrations list, dinner and dietary information lists, etc. It is useful to distribute an official list of participants. It is recommended that a standardised version of the document is used (see annexe 5).

In time, it is recommended that participants are reminded of application(s) deadlines and are informed on other issues related to the training event such as updates of the agenda in e-mails etc.

## **6.7. Overview of EUROSAI and INTOSAI Project Management Handbooks/Guidelines**

Both EUROSAI and INTOSAI have created a number of project management handbooks / guidelines that can help you with organisation of events. The overview of these documents can be found in the annexe 11.

## **7. Delivery Phase**

### **7.1. Arrangement of the technical equipment**

Availability of technical equipment is of paramount importance: typically data projectors, overhead projectors, notebooks, audio equipment (microphones, headsets if applicable), copiers and printers are needed. Contributors should be asked what kind of technical equipment and software will be required. It is a good idea to try opening the presentation and check if it is compatible with the available version of software.

### **7.2. Providing transportation services**

It is up to the Organisers to decide whether airport pick-ups will be arranged. This depends on the financial resources of the host SAI, as well as on the number of participants and contributors arriving.

In case no transfer is organised by the host it should be ensured that participants are given instructions on how to get to the hotel (if possible a variety of options should be given – local public transport, taxis, hotel transfer service, et cetera). This information is of paramount importance to all participants and should be announced to them well in advance.

It is recommended that transportation to lunch, dinner and other social events is arranged unless they are all located within close walking distance from the training venue.

### **7.3. Assignment of the support staff**

It is necessary to ensure that the event is well catered for by the host SAI's staff. It is recommended that IT experts and technicians are present as well as representatives from the host SAI itself who can offer their services to the participants, give them advice and help organise the venue. The organisation should be as smooth as possible. It is up to the SAI and their experience to decide how many staff is needed, and each member of staff should be provided with clearly divided and specified responsibilities.

### **7.4. Delivering the opening of the training event**

A welcome reception in the evening before the training event officially begins may be a good way to introduce the participants to each other.

The official opening of the training event is usually delivered by a senior representative of the host SAI. His/her presence is not necessarily required throughout the whole training event.

It is recommended that the chair/host of the training event (moderator) goes through the agenda, informing participants of any changes and further organisational details. The person(s) who can be contacted by participants with any questions should be introduced.

## **7.5. Delivering the general and/or topic-based sessions of the training event**

Regardless of whether the event will be organised as one plenary session or several (sometimes even in parallel) topic-based sessions/workshops, it is always advisable to have a person that would chair/moderate the specific session. The host SAI can assign such a person or some of the external experts/contributors/trainers/ facilitators may be asked to fulfil this role. It is advisable that such a moderator is familiar with the specific topic. It is also useful to appoint counter-speakers in advance to stimulate the discussions.

## **7.6. Organisation of social events**

The host SAI is not required to organise cultural programmes. Nevertheless, as stated in item 6.2, an official dinner could be hosted by the SAI organising the event.

## **7.7. Taking photographs**

Taking a group photograph of all participants is a nice souvenir that will remind the participants of the training event. Offering this service could be considered by the host.

## **7.8. Delivering the closing of the training event**

On the last day of the training event it is useful if the chair/host of the training event (moderator) gives a summary of the outcomes of the training event, and asks participants about their opinion and views. It is also useful to agree on common conclusions and a summary paper of the training event.

All participants and contributors are to be asked to fill in standard questionnaires on the spot after the event ends up (see annexes 6 and 7).

It is a welcome addition if a senior representative of the host SAI closes the meeting.

It is recommended that the host SAI uses the agreed checklist (see annexe 3) to ensure that all preparatory work is fully considered and completed.

## **7.9. Minimising the environmental footprint of the event**

It is a good idea to make a data storage device, for example flash drive with information on the training event, especially all related materials, presentations and recommended papers. All materials on the data storage device should be disclosed only with consent of the author.

Host SAIs should try to minimise the environmental footprint of the training event as best they can, favouring paperless events whenever it is possible.

## **8. Evaluation Phase and Post-Training Activities**

### **8.1. Summarizing feedback forms, evaluation of the seminar and reporting**

The host SAI has to prepare an evaluation of completed standardised questionnaires and prepare a standardised report that should be sent both to the EUROSAI Secretariat and to GT3. The materials should be sent no later than one month after the event. The evaluation of the seminar should be carried out and a final report drafted in accordance with standardised procedure. (see annexe 9).

### **8.2. Updating and distribution of the training material**

It is advisable to make all materials (presentations, documents, supporting papers, summaries and conclusions of the discussions) available on the training event website once the event is over, as well as on EUROSAI's website. The SAI has to ask permission to do so from the contributing SAI, at best by asking the question in the initial registration form. The link to the website of the training event should be forwarded to GT3 in order to place it on the EUROSAI website (the Secretariat shall be copied in this communication). It is important to inform participants of any updates of the website.

As stated in point 7.9, it is also a good idea to provide the participants with all the training event's materials in a data storage device on the last day of the event.

### **8.3. Sending letters of acknowledgement to the contributors**

The host SAI should send letters expressing their thanks for the presentations and the helpful support to the heads of the contributing SAIs with a copy enclosed for the contributors.