

OLACEFS contribution for Theme I - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The position of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS) in relation to their role in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is in line with the great interest and commitment perceived in various International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) forums, and in other multilateral organizations. According to the new INTOSAI Strategic Plan, which considers implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as one of five key crosscutting topics for the whole organization, OLACEFS have chosen SDGs as one of the main focuses of their work.

Accordingly, that theme is one of the two selected for debate and deliberations during the 26th OLACEFS General Assembly (October, 2016). Furthermore, as discussed below, a coordinated audit and a parallel audit are being initiated to prepare and support the regional SAIs to accomplish their mission concerning the Sustainable Development Goals.

The attitude of the Latin American SAIs is also revealed in their responses to two surveys on the subject. The first survey was conducted by the organizers of the 22nd International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions (INCOSAI) to prepare for the debates and deliberations on Theme I of the Conference: “How can INTOSAI contribute to the 2030 Agenda for UN Sustainable Development Goals?” As of the consolidation date of the answers for this work, seven SAIs had submitted their responses to the survey. The second survey was conducted by TCU, the Supreme Audit Institution of Brazil, to gather information about SAI views on the SDGs for the 26th OLACEFS General Assembly and for the 22nd INCOSAI. Nine SAIs had responded until the consolidation of the answers.

The TCU Survey showed, for example, that OLACEFS member SAIs have unanimous interest in participating in forums organized by OLACEFS on the assessment of national systems that should be used by governments to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (Question 1 – TCU Survey). Another example demonstrating the attitudes of SAIs are the answers to the following question from the INTOSAI Survey: “Is your SAI planning on including themes related to the preparation and/or implementation of SDGs in your country in its next auditing strategy and/or work plan?” (Question 3 – INTOSAI Survey). All SAIs responded affirmatively, with the exception of two who responded “maybe” because they were depending on government definitions.

Next, we describe the perspective, first initiatives and expectations of the SAIs in the Region, and of OLACEFS, as coordinator of the efforts of these institutions regarding the SDGs. To

accomplish this we will divide the issues according to the working approach recommended by INTOSAI to which they most relate

Approach 1

“Assess the readiness of the national systems to report on the progress of SDG achievement, and subsequently, readiness to audit its performance and reliability of produced data”.

Based on the replies to the INTOSAI preparatory questionnaire for the 22nd INCOSAI, we noticed that most of the respondent SAIs have the perception that the government systems of their respective countries are not yet sufficiently prepared to report progress on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. These SAIs consider that the preparations to establish a framework and harmonize strategies, priorities, policies and programs to implement the 2030 Agenda are still in the initial stage (reply to Question 1 of the questionnaire). Exceptions are the perceptions of the Brazil and Mexico SAIs. In addition, some SAIs said that they had no knowledge about how well the government systems are prepared.

The Mexican SAI reported that the country already has a National Development Plan whose priorities were set on education, health, housing, water and other areas. On its turn, the Brazil SAI informed that the Brazilian government made an effort to align the country’s 2016-2019 multi-annual plan with the 2030 Agenda. It is also worth mentioning that Brazil is working on the creation of a National System of Official Information (SNIO), which should integrate all national information-producing bodies, aiming at establishing a single stream of information to the international organizations.

Specifically with regard to the preparations for the definition of basic-references to measure progress in the implementation of the Agenda (INTOSAI Survey – Question 6) and for data collection and validation for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Agenda (Question 7), the majority of respondents think they are just beginning. Again, the exception lies in the Brazilian SAI and Mexican SAIs. On a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" corresponds to no preparation and "5" to full preparation, Brazil replied "3" to questions 6 and 7, while Mexico gave "5" to both.

SAI Brazil reported that the country contacted the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) asking for assistance to produce a first survey on the available data and existing indicators that would be part of a strategy for monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. SAI Mexico observed that it “supports the creation of global and regional indicators that will enable the use of evaluation tools to assess the progress between countries”. They also stated that “it has strongly supported that the statistical information rely on data separated by income, gender, age, ethnic origin, immigration status,

disability, geographic location, etc., capable of measuring levels of inclusion and welfare in this era of data revolution.”

OLACEFS can contribute to their member institutions regarding this issue by coordinating actions aimed at transforming the perception of SAIs about the abovementioned governmental arrangements into a well-grounded assessment. Through a coordinated audit, the OLACEFS is supporting its members’ efforts to assess how well prepared their government systems are to inform about the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is a coordinated audit within the OLACEFS Special Technical Committee on the Environment (COMTEMA) at an early stage. It aims to assess the preparedness of national systems to implement Sustainable Development Goals. This audit will produce a diagnostics of the government's readiness regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on a particular topic of environmental auditing. Other products will be a consolidated report and development of a method to assess such governmental readiness that can be replicate in other control bodies.

From August 2016, training activities have taken place and will continue until December for SAI auditors of SAIs who are participating in this audit. Such training unfolds in performance audit and in Sustainable Development Goals audit. In the same period, SAI Brazil has been performing a pilot audit. This pilot is carrying out a basic evaluation on the general preparedness of the Brazilian government to implement Sustainable Development Goals. A further evaluation is also underway, regarding the specific preparedness to implement SDGs on a theme encompassing environmental audit. The methodology to be applied to the coordinated audit in Latin America will be discussed and defined in January and February of 2017, whereas the coordinated audit will start in March. It is expected that the outcome will be consolidated by the end of September 2017.

The OLACEFS region has already accumulated experience in conducting coordinated audits on topics of regional interest. From early 2012 to date, the Latin American SAIs performed eleven coordinated audits (and some are still in progress). Issues raised by some SDGs and targets, either have been or still are subject of coordinated audits carried out by OLACEFS SAIs. Among the coordinated audits in planning or field work s, we mention the audit on road works whose purpose is related to SDG 11; the audit on housing developments, related to the same SDG 11; and the audit on indicators of the UNESCO Education for All Program, connected to SDG 4. In the realm of completed audits are the audits on the 2003-2015 Agro Plan regarding agriculture and rural life (object of SDG 2); on water resources (SDG 6), on protected areas in different Biomes of OLACEFS countries (SDG 15); on gender equality and equity (SDG 5), and on IT governance in public organizations (SDGs 9 and 16).

The coordinated audits are an established activity in the Region that can provide valuable support to the SAIs. As products of such audits, not only individual reports are produced by each SAI team member, but also consolidated reports that aggregate results. In the case of the audit organized by COMTEMA to assess the preparedness of national systems for reporting on SDGs, this consolidated report will reflect the regional situation of government preparedness.

The support to SAIs via a coordinated audit is in line with the comments made by some SAIs in response to the TCU survey question 11, "Would you like to present suggestions about the way INTOSAI and OLACEFS support SAI actions towards SDG implementation?" Costa Rica SAI responded, for example, that "it seems important to share mechanisms employed by other SAIs for monitoring SDG indicators", whereas Colombia SAI said that "(...)" it would be nice if one could participate in the planning and execution of OLACEFS coordinated audits regarding the defined objectives and goals (...)". The execution of the coordinated audit is also in harmony with the responses given by OLACEFS SAIs to Question 12 of the INTOSAI survey, "Would your SAI be interested in participating in cooperative performance audits on SDG specific themes?" All SAI respondents said "yes", with the exception of the Ecuador SAI that answered "maybe", because its skills are currently being defined in the context of the constitutional reform presently in progress.

Still in the context of approach 1, which defends the evaluation of the preparation stage of national systems to report on the SDG, as well as the audit of how these systems work and the reliability of data they produce, it is important to highlight how important it is for the SAIs to be properly trained for the task. This issue was raised by the SAI of Brazil, the TCU, in its comments.

The works SAIs are being requested to conduct include complex problems and a large amount of data. Control already has available technical solutions to conduct the proposed evaluation and monitoring. Therefore, it is up to the SAIs to invest in innovation and professional training – including those related to data evaluation – so that they can face the challenges presented to them. In their audit teams, the SAIs will often have to use technological solutions and combine competences in the fields of audited business, statistics and data mining and analysis.

It is evident that the SAIs must not focus all their attention only on their own preparation and capacity building. They must also pay attention to governments' pre-conditions to adopt systems that will report on the implementation of the SDG. Just as the SAIs, governments must invest strongly in professional training and in forming teams that are capable of dealing efficiently with technological innovations. Once governments are aware of that, they must take care of the quality and reliability of the data they make available; ensure

transparency and encourage social participation, including initiatives to make available the so-called open data; and address digital inclusion policies.

Reliable data make it easier the monitoring of government actions, offer support to decision-making processes, improve the distribution of public funds, and improve the lives of citizens. The latter involves digital inclusion and is a process that aims at enabling universal access to information and communication technologies.

Approach 2

“Carry out performance audits to check the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of government programs that contribute to specific SDG aspects.”

OLACEFS has the ability – as well as the intention – to coordinate activities to support SAI regarding the adoption of the second approach proposed by INTOSAI: to carry out performance audits of key-government programs that may contribute to specific aspects of the SDGs. Two ways to provide such support to SAIs are already structured within the Region. They are the aforementioned coordinated audits, and the training activities.

In the survey sent by SAI Brazil to the other OLACEFS members, most of the respondent institutions said that the training offered by the Organization contributed to capacitate auditors to carry out audits on themes covered by the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the training offered under the coordinated audits.

One of the examples mentioned by more than one SAI was the auditing of education indicators, presently underway. The two training activities offered under the coordinated audit in education – performance audit training and education indicators – have contributed to expand the vision of SAI auditors regarding key issues in the field of education, which is the object of SDG 4. Another point highlighted by the answers to the survey was that the training activities on performance audit, carried out in preparation for different coordinated audits, were useful to train and form auditors in the region in a methodology applicable to other audit works in topics included in the Sustainable Development Goals. It should be noted that, in 2013, 64 auditors from OLACEFS SAIs were trained in performance auditing. Likewise, in 2014 and 2015, 122 and 91 auditors, respectively, were trained in performance auditing. Some of the trained auditors even become instructors of the virtual course on performance audit offered to all institutions of the Region.

Not only training, but also the experience itself of carrying out coordinated audits were mentioned by the surveyed SAIs as actions that made the Region SAIs capable of executing audits on specific themes raised by the Sustainable Development Goals. It was considered that

the knowledge obtained by doing and the exchange of knowledge and learning acquired on methodologies to evaluate results and build indicators contributed to prepare all SAIs to perform audits, as proposed in Approach 2.

It is worth noticing that, besides the coordinated audit regarding the readiness of governments to report on the implementation of the above mentioned Sustainable Development Goals, a parallel audit about the SDGs 1 (End of Poverty), 2 (End of Hunger) and 5 (Gender Equality) is underway within the scope of OLACEFS.

The audit will be carried out under the coordination of the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) and ten OLACEFS SAIs are expected to participate: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru. The purpose of the audit is for each SAI to evaluate the implementation of indicators and targets of SDG 1, 2, and 5 in their country. The attempt is to check whether the country has the operational capacity to implement and monitor the public policies regarding all three SDGs.

In addition to the training and execution of audits, participation in committees and commissions of OLACEFS was also considered a contribution to SAI training to audit the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of the activities of these groups have promoted the sharing of experiences on methodologies related to performance evaluation and the development of professional and institutional capacities.

The value of experiences of training and fieldwork in preparation for performance audits that examine topics and aspects mentioned by the Sustainable Development Goals refers to the fact that such goals deal with various themes already well known and studied by SAIs. In fact, we mentioned the coordinated audits carried out by OLACEFS whose themes related to the Sustainable Development Goals. As these themes are well known and aiming at using all knowledge acquired from the control actions already conducted about them, the Framework of Audit Results about Sustainable Development Goals was created. This framework, produced by Brazil SAI (TCU), consists of a methodology to organize and analyze past performance audits results from the perspective of ten predetermined risk factors. This tool can assist in reporting results of performance audits related to the SDGs in a systematic and structured way.

The Framework of Audit Results about Sustainable Development Goals is mentioned in the preparatory survey for discussion of Theme I during the 22nd INCOSAI meeting. Survey Questions 10 and 11 asked if SAIs “would be interested in using a results framework as an analysis tool for the results of its performance audits related to any of the SDG topics” and if “they would be willing to share the assessments made through the results frameworks with the INTOSAI community”. Respondent SAIs answered the first question with “yes”. As for the second question, one SAI answered “maybe” whereas the others answered “yes”.

Such reactions point to the willingness of OLACEFS member SAIs to work with information related to SDGs with which they are already familiar with as is being proposed. The organization of the results obtained in previous audits within the proposed Framework will allow SAIs to work on a given theme supported by initial references. They will be able to communicate clearly to government agencies and other stakeholders as they deem appropriate, information and conclusions gathered in the Framework.

Finally, it is worth mentioning SAI answers regarding the execution of individual audits to assess the implementation of specific SDGs. During the survey, TCU asked the following “Has your SAI planned audits to assess the results of the implementation of specific SDGs?” Among the respondent SAIs, the ones that are already planning audits on specific Sustainable Development Goals are Panama, (SDGs 1, 4, 5, 6 and 15) and Guatemala (SDGs 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16). The SAI of Brazil is planning audits on SDGs 1, 2 and 5. Some respondents clarified that the 2017 plan was not ready yet. In any case, despite the non-inclusion in their respective plans, the SAIs said that a discussion on the subject is underway within their institutions.

Approach 3

“Assess and support the implementation of SDG 16 that partially deals with transparent, efficient, and accountable institutions.”

The implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals is a process that depends on good public governance. Nevertheless, SDG 16 – *Promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels* – is more clearly and directly linked to public governance, because it specifically mentions building effective and inclusive institutions. Considering this, we understand that good results regarding SDG 16, involving building transparent, efficient, and responsible institutions, reverberate favorably in other Sustainable Development Goals. This becomes clear when one considers that the achievement of Goals requires a governmental work guided by principles of good governance, such as rule of law, transparency, integrity and the ability to be accountable.

Whereas one of the determining factors for good governance is effective financial management, SAIs can provide a very significant service to enhance the effectiveness of the government agencies responsible for public financial management. According to Approach 3In proposed by INTOSAI, SAIs are called to understand the conditions of public financial management, and to work towards its improvement. It should be noted that analyzing the government conditions necessary to implement and report on SDGs – in this case the conditions of financial management – is a task referring SAIs to the first of the Approaches.

In assessing the readiness of public systems to report on SDGs implementation, the SAIs should also check the readiness of the financial management systems. The SAIs' contribution in this regard should cover the evaluation and the pursuit of financial systems improvements regarding timeliness, reliability, accuracy, range, and ability to work with huge amounts of data. This action on the part of SAIs should promote the transparency and the capability of the government institutions to be accountable.

The United Nations in its resolution A/RES/69/228 recognizes the role of SAIs as promoters of good governance. The UN encourages member states and relevant UN institutions to continue and intensify their cooperation with INTOSAI, aiming at the promotion of good governance at all levels by assuring efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency through strengthened SAI, including improvement of public accounting systems.

SAIs unanimously responded “yes” when asked if they considered public financial management and SAI role in improving it among the themes that should be developed by OLACEFS actions (Question 7 of TCU Survey). The Chile SAI stated that regarding SDG 16, all SAIs “could have a more direct contribution to the achievement of goals”. On its turn, the Costa Rica SAI pointed out that the improvement of public financial management is the “main input for strengthening transparency in the management of Public Finances, self-promoting political, and citizen participation, and control.”

As ways for OLACEFS to work to deepen the financial management theme, the SAI respondents suggested:

- Build upon the results of financial audits and budget compliance audits carried out by the Region SAIs to seek improvement or specialization in this kind of auditing.
- Promote training activities in the area to emphasize the best practices.
- Foster SAIs and work to get them to develop themes related to accountability.
- Consider the General State Account theme as part of the collaboration actions, given that such account consolidates the information on financial management and on the compliance with the budget programs.
- Understand and discuss the best international practices in public financial management.
- Work to reduce the delay in the implementation of international standards and in the consolidation of reliable and updated financial information.
- Work so that all SAIs have the best tools to assess public financial management in their countries.

The first of the above suggestions is in line with the presentation of Approach 3 in the "Information Paper" on Theme I, distributed by the organization of the 22nd INCOSAI. On this document, it is emphasized that the Approach "intends to use the results of financial and compliance audits of SAIs to assess how Goal 16 is being achieved by the different entities. The audits results will be used to evaluate governance and financial management practices of the entities, and to report to the UN about it."

The OLACEFS SAIs answered yes to two questions related to the topic of financial management assessment made by the INTOSAI (except for one who answered "maybe"). One question was about the interest in "assessing the maturity of the management system of public finances in their country of origin according to a framework developed by INTOSAI" (Question 14 of INTOSAI Survey) and the other focused on "monitoring the progress of their country in developing its public finances management system" (Question 15). The first of the questions includes the possibility of the development by INTOSAI of a framework for financial audits outputs, as was done for performance audits (Approach 2). OLACEFS SAIs pointed out that, in principle, they would accept and be interested in such tool.

Finally, it is worth noting that the OLACEFS Technical Committee on Good Governance Practices (CTPBG), a group dedicated to studying and promoting good governance, in cooperation with the Colombia Citizen Action Cooperation (AC-Colombia)], drafted a proposal for structuring and developing a Monitoring and Oversight System of SDGs. The proposal is based on the principles of good governance and effective government accountability of the Asunción Declaration¹. This proposal is available on the CTPBG web page (<http://buenagobernanza.agn.gov.ar/>).

Approach 4

"To become a model of transparency and accountability in its activities, including audits and reports."

The fourth approach addresses how SAIs can be models of transparency and accountability and refers to the fact that SAIs need to detect their weaknesses and needs in order to improve and become models for other organizations. Hence, the relevance of the two assessment tools available in the INTOSAI community that enable institutional diagnoses: Institutional Capacity Building Framework (ICBF), by Afrosai-E, and Supreme Audit Institutions Performance Measurement Framework (SAI PMF).

¹The Asunción Declaration is available at <http://www.olacefs.com/?s=Declaraci%C3%B3n+de+Asunci%C3%B3n&lang=es&lang=es>

The briefing paper on Theme I, prepared by INTOSAI, suggests the possibility of combining SAI PMF and a modified version of the ICBF to establish an effective approach to improve the performance of SAIs and report on it. It would be a world (or global) framework for SAI performance evaluation.

Based on this concept, the organization of INCOSAI asked the SAIs whether they would support the idea of having a global framework for measuring SAI performance (Question 20). All SAIs answered “yes”, except the Brazilian SAI that answered “maybe”, considering that “INTOSAI invested heavily on SAI PMF development and, in spite of the tool’s prevailing flaws, its potential should be fully analyzed before initiating any plans to build a new tool (...)”. INTOSAI also asked if SAIs would be interested in participating in this global benchmarking for performance measurement and whether they would render information about the organization and performance of the institution to prepare a comprehensive report on SAI performances (Question 21 and 23 of INTOSAI Survey). All SAIs answered yes to the two questions, except for one who answered “yes” to the first, but “maybe” to the second.

Latin American SAIs are well acquainted with SAI PMF, because OLACEFS is the region of INTOSAI that held the largest number of pilot assessments in this phase of testing and refinement that preceded the 22nd INCOSAI. By the end of 2015, 12 SAIs had already used the SAI PMF pilot and 21 had sent auditors to training seminars on the subject. A total of 70 auditors were qualified. The SAI Performance Evaluation and Performance indicators Committee (CEDEIR) has largely contributed to achieve these results. Since 2012, it has worked to disseminate SAI PMF across the region, and to foster and support the execution of pilot evaluations. To accomplish this the Committee had the cooperation of the INTOSAI Working Group on the Value and Benefit of SAIs

The acceptance of the idea of using a global assessment tool is certainly linked to the fact that the SAIs are familiar with SAI PMF. The OLACEFS institutions are aware of the benefits that the application of a self-assessment tool can bring to their own performance and development. Here are some SAI comments after completing the pilot application, when asked “Did the SAI PMF results contribute to define the necessary improvements for your SAI to become a model of transparency and accountability?” (Question 9 of TCU Survey):

- ✓ “Especially in audit procedures improvements, ensuring traceability according to operational planning proposed by the SAI and publication of monitoring action taken with respect to the provisions issued in audit reports.” (Costa Rica SAI)
- ✓ “Gaps were identified and a plan of action is underway to implement corrective actions.” (Peru SAI)
- ✓ “Gaps were established to improve regarding SAI transparency and accountability.” (Guatemala SAI)

Still regarding performance and the approach 4, the OLACEFS SAIs have expressed their willingness to participate in peer reviews. They answered “yes” or “maybe” to Question 24 of INTOSAI Survey: “Would your SAI be willing to undergo cyclical peer reviews, carried out by your region or another INTOSAI organization?”

Support from organizations outside of INTOSAI

It is worth mentioning two responses to the request made by TCU for “suggestions of national, regional or international companies external to INTOSAI, to support SAIs in their endeavors regarding the implementation of SDGs”:

- ✓ “International organizations such as IDB and the World Bank have contributed heavily to generate a culture of reliable public financial information. In addition, organizations such as International Transparency and OECD have set a benchmark for the minimum elements of an open government.” (SAI Costa Rica)
- ✓ “On one hand, we should strengthen relations with all international organizations whose work is directly related with any of the Goals (...)”
“On the other hand, regarding monitoring of compliance with the objectives at regional level, our focus should be on CEPAL, which will be in charge for issuing a progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin America and the Caribbean.” (Chile SAI)

The SAIs and technological innovation

As member of Olacefs in charge of presenting how the SAIs in the Region understand the 2030 Agenda implementation process, the TCU wishes to offer one brief contribution to the discussion about this theme and reinforce one issue that the Court considers to be a core one.

When monitoring the implementation of the SDG, audit institutions will be dealing with highly technological environments in which information is produced in a fast pace and in huge amounts. In this context, traditional audit solutions and methods will play a limited role. The SAIs must aim at innovation and work to develop tools, train their professionals and use existing technical solutions to play their role.

Since the beginning of 2015, TCU has been conducting an internal program to encourage innovation that is influencing all its audit fields. The development of this program involves, among other things, the use of advanced data treatment techniques – and includes the so-

called “*Big Data Analytics*” – as well as the introduction of mechanisms, such as continuous audits and audit with predictive analyses.

Once information is made available in fast manner and there is the possibility of using methods and techniques to analyze it, it is possible to conduct a “continuous audit,” which is an action carried out simultaneously or right after the event in question, being repeated in predetermined occasions. This means the timely detection of issues to be corrected. Likewise, the use of predictive models can become a reality for SAIs thanks to the current possibility of applying analytical techniques to sets of transactions and information to draw conclusions that allow the anticipation of future events. Considering this aspect, it is important to refer to the use of cognitive algorithms as an important assisting tool for the auditing work. It is about mapping out relations and recognizing standards in large databases to help auditing bodies in various ways: in risk evaluation, fraud identification, and offering support to production of knowledge, among others.

In TCU, predictive models have been developed based on risk mapping and classification methodology to detect indications of irregularities in the decentralization of federal funds; this aims at identifying schemes in public procurements. The TCU intends to expand the construction of predictive models for risk classification to other audit works.

Simultaneously, the TCU defends and encourages the expansion of open data in Brazilian public administration. The opening of government data allows access to government information and actions, which facilitates social control and leads to the improvement of public management, in addition to strengthening democracy. It is a measure on behalf of transparency and strengthening of citizenship. In 2015, the TCU conducted an audit to evaluate the opening of data from Brazilian agencies in the field of education. This work resulted in guidelines to open data of two major national education funding programs.

When mentioning this institutional progress, it is important to point out that the TCU intends to disseminate it among the SAIs of our Region and other Regions of Intosai as well. In this context, we must note that the “Laboratório de Inovação e Participação do TCU” (TCU’s Innovation and Participation Laboratory) (coLAB-i), which opened in September 2015, is an important instrument of said innovation-encouraging program. It is a center for the development of new technologies and for advancing their use and dissemination.

The coLAB-i aims at encouraging creativity, promoting the sharing of ideas and disseminating innovative actions. Since its creation, the laboratory has been giving support to TCU’s technical units in the development of innovative projects, in the management of knowledge of developed solutions and in promoting capacity building actions on innovation-related themes. The support given to TCU internal units is being expanded to reach other institutions.

The TCU makes the coLAB-i available to other SAIs, since the Court is aware of the positive impact the use of new technologies can have on the monitoring of public policies and in the implementation of the SDG, and also considering the benefits that technical cooperation can bring about in all involved institutions.

Understanding and benefiting from the full potential of innovation include a change of culture within each SAI and in its external environment. Changing organizational culture is a gradual process that involves the adoption of new values as well as change in the perception and attitude of managers, auditors, auditees and other stakeholders of the SAIs. However, the challenge we face regarding the SDG is – besides a priority task – an encouragement to this cultural transformation towards innovation and valuing technological progress. Therefore, it is up to all of us who are responsible for the SAIs to make efforts towards the desired change.

Conclusion

The entire INTOSAI community is examining how to contribute best to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the same happens with all the OLACEFS SAIs that are also engaged with the issue. As is the case in relation to other extremely important issues affecting them, SAIs are seeking ideas and proposals from international cooperation that will add to their own experiences and that they can adapt to their national realities to help them face such a big challenge. Responses and comments from surveys constitute a significant sample of how Latin American SAIs are focused on the discussion and deepening of the theme, and how they are relying on collaboration of OLACEFS and other INTOSAI bodies to discuss and identify effective ways to cope with the vast work of monitoring the implementation, which already begins.

OLACEFS SAIs also have their experiences and suggestions to offer to the ongoing INTOSAI debate that will have a special slot for discussion in the 22nd INCOSAI. During the two surveys mentioned throughout this work, the SAIs presented comments that can contribute to the discussions. Some are transcribed below (our underlines):

- ✓ “The experiences passed on by INTOSAI could strengthen government management regarding the issuance of strategies and policies that ensure compliance with SDGs and with our audit institution through the generation of standardized working methodologies” (Ecuador SAI – INTOSAI Question 5)

- ✓ “It is important to consider INTOSAI guidance to avoid the temptation of SAIs seeming to take on roles or prerogatives that are not inherent to them. We should emphasize the collaborative strategy with state institutions that are leaders of the subject as opposed to wanting to be seen as executors of plans and policies.” (Chile SAI – TCU Question 10)
- ✓ “It is considered essential to advance, together with other SAIs, a SDG prioritization exercise to be reviewed and evaluated initially”. (SAI Chile – TCU Question 10)
- ✓ “With the development of the General Audit Manual, based on ISSAIs, performance audits would be implemented and the management indicators of some Sustainable Development Goals could be measured within a framework of quality and best practices.” (Panama SAI, answering INTOSAI Question 4)
- ✓ “Formal acceptance of SDGs implies that nations design and implement public policies or redesign the existing ones, focused on compliance of the goals, so that the information generated in OLACEFS forums would be a reference, in this case, to assess the implementation of such national systems in Mexico.” (Mexico SAI – TCU Question 1)
- ✓ “It seems important to share practices of mechanisms employed by other SAIs to monitor SDG indicators, even though their application may vary depending on the context of each SAI. We also propose to enable forums where SAIs can share experiences on their performance regarding SDG implementation.” (SAI Costa Rica – TCU Question 11).
- ✓ “Each SAI has the role of investing in innovation and in professional training – which include data treatment and evaluation – to face the challenges that are presented to them.” (SAI of Brazil (TCU) – general comments made in the survey conducted by the TCU itself).