UN Public Administration Programme

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Citizen Engagement Practices
by Supreme Audit Institutions

Compendium of Innovative Practices of Citizen Engagement by Supreme Audit Institutions for Public Accountability

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The future we want…

✓ Rio + 20 renewed commitment by the international community to the 3 pillars of sustainable development:

  –Economic
  –Social
  –Environmental

✓ the need to accelerate progress on MDG's and define SDG's for the post 2015 development agenda.

✓ enablers that put people at center of sustainable development:
  –Democracy, good governance, rule of law→
    Citizen engagement.
  –Effective, transparent and accountable institutions →
    SAIs.

Public accountability in the future we want

- ✓ Is there an opportunity to help conceptualize the accountability framework for the post-2015 development agenda?

- ✓ How can SAIs better target their contribution to public accountability in a world of multi-stakeholders who define public policies and deliver services?

- ✓ What advice should the audit community give for safeguarding streams of financing, from traditional and new sources, for sustainable development initiatives?

- ✓ How do citizens figure in public accountability in the future?

Citizen engagement levels

Information ↔ **Consultation** ↔ **Decision-Making**

Citizen engagement levels

Levels

| 1. Governments providing and giving access to information to the citizens | 2. Governments initiating consultations with citizens in order to solicit their feedback on issues that might concern them | 3. Governments engaging citizens in decision-making, more integrally, interactively and jointly with itself and other relevant actors |

Citizen Engagement.

The Rhetoric:

"In principle, a more engaged citizenry should be able to achieve a higher level of cooperation and make government more accountable".

(World Bank: Localizing Development, Does Participation Work? 2013).

"… Convinced that strong partnerships between supreme audit institutions and citizens significantly advance economic and sustainable development, improved service delivery and the fight against corruption; …"

(INTOSAI: Conclusions and Recommendations, 21st UN/INTOSAI Symposium, 2011)

Citizen Engagement.

The Practice:

"In practice, little is known about how best to foster such engagement."

(World Bank: Localizing Development, Does Participation Work? p. 1, 2013).

"… Recognizing that supreme audit institutions need to safeguard their own reputations by only collaborating with those organizations representing citizens in legitimate, honest and inclusive ways and through channels that will secure the good standing of the supreme audit institution; …"

(INTOSAI: Conclusions and Recommendations, 21st UN/INTOSAI Symposium, 2011).

Involving citizens promotes public accountability, which will eventually translate into further trust in the public institutions. For this purpose, institutions should: **inform, consult and include citizens in decision-making**.

Types of Accountability

Democratic Accountability

- When elected politicians are accountable to citizens through elections and other means.

Vertical Accountability

- Internal to Governments.
- When government officials answer for their decisions and actions upwards to superiors and require answerability from subordinate officials.
  - **Hierarchical Accountability.**

Horizontal Accountability

- When 'third parties' collaborate or partner with government, in some way to deliver services to citizens.
- Sometimes involves a formal contractual relationship where the 'principal' and the 'agent' are clearly identifiable.
- Involves a collaborative or even a
- network relationship.

Social Accountability

- When citizens, through various formal and informal mechanisms, hold government to account.
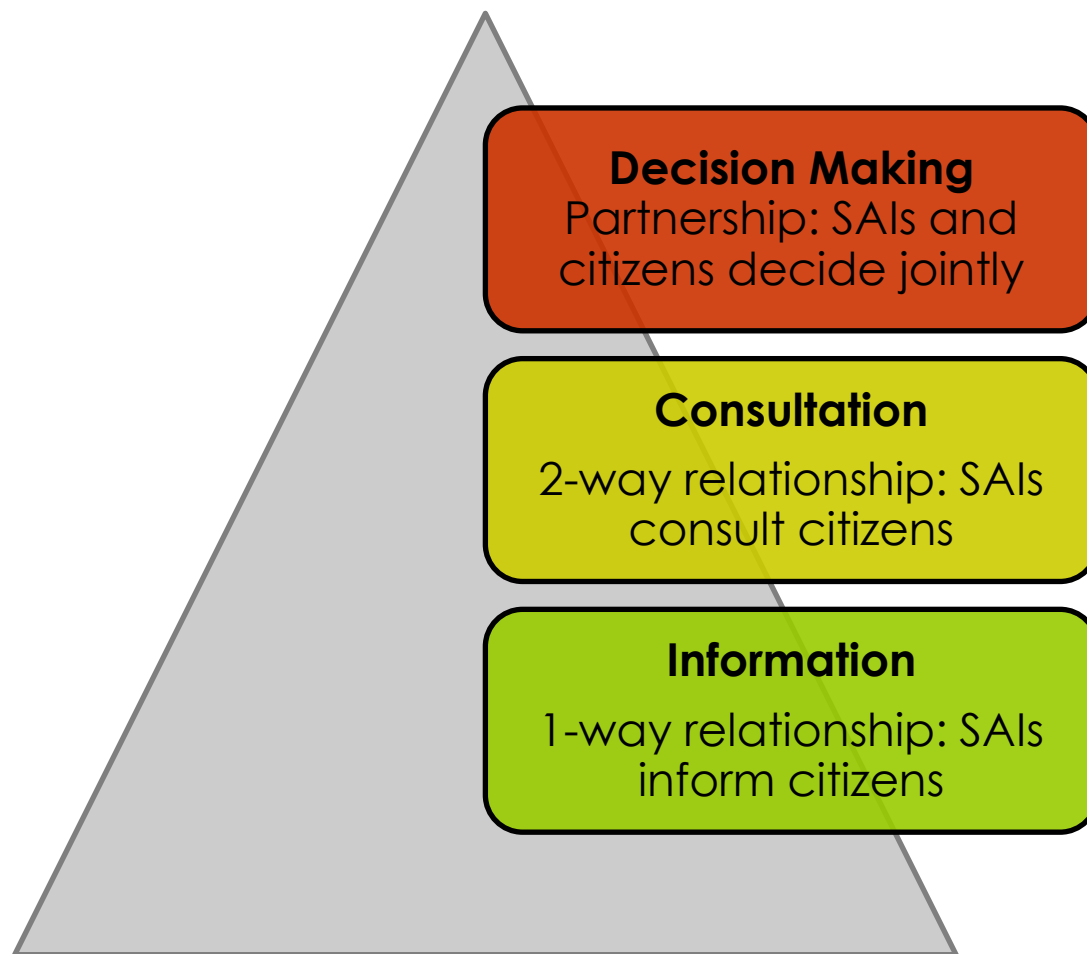- Relies on civic engagement.
- **Diagonal Accountability**

SAIs and public accountability

- Domestic and external resource mobilization essential to the post-2015 development agenda.

- Quantitative aid and development effectiveness targets help quality of aid.

- Greater mutual accountability, based on multi-stakeholder participation, needed between recipient and donor countries.

- National accountability mechanisms at heart of successfully implemented development programmes.

- SAIs contribute to formal, procedural accountability by measuring effectiveness and efficiency of public sector expenditures and performance in key sectors and advise on institutional capacity-building measures and improving administrative performance.

- SAIs can engage citizens for improving public accountability.

- SAIs can better contribute to sustainable development.

Citizen engagement levels with SAIs

2011 INTOSAI survey based on three types of interactions between SAIs and citizens:
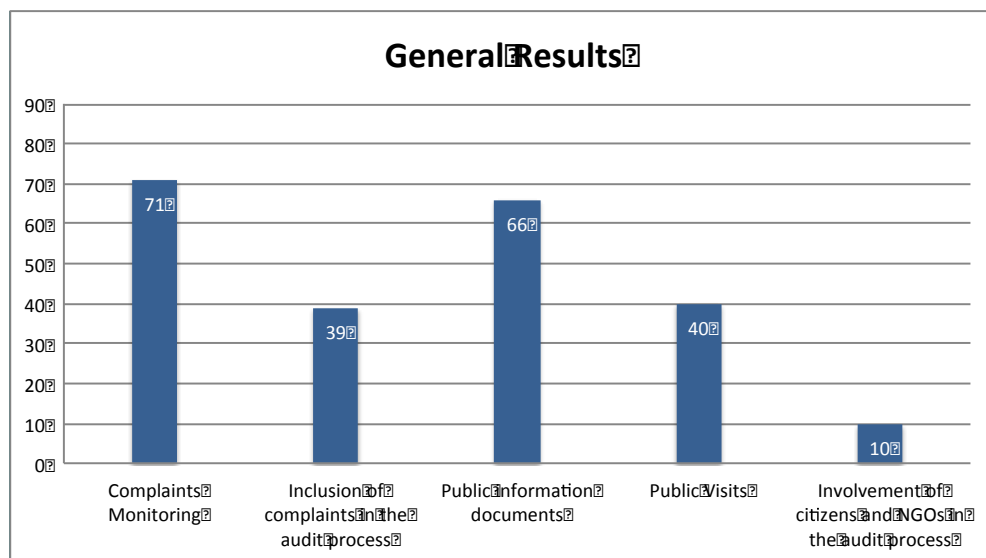
Decision Making
Partnership: SAIs and citizens decide jointly

Consultation
2-way relationship: SAIs consult citizens

Information
1-way relationship: SAIs inform citizens

Survey results

During the last symposium a survey was given to 191 INTOSAI SAI members, from which 91 responded.

General Results

Category	Value
Complaints Monitoring	71
Inclusion of complaints in the audit process	39
Public information documents	66
Public Visits	40
Involvement of citizens and NGOs in the audit process	10

Management of Complaints:
✓ 78% (71 members) of the SAI's have mechanisms to receive complaints from the public.
✓ 43% (39 members) of the SAIs that receive complaints include them in the audit process.

Survey results (cont.)

Disclosure and Provision of Information

✓ 73% (66 members) of the SAIs disclose information to the public and provide regular written information: members periodically provide the public with the results of audits, additionally in other publications such as brochures or magazines and news about employment opportunities

Open to the Public

✓ 44% (40 members) of the SAIs allow the public to visit their offices.

– A few have an open door policy to meet with officials. The rest receive visits and others organise students tours.

Citizen engagement in the audit process

✓ 11% (10 respondents) have tools to involve citizens or NGOs in the audit process.

– A few showed proof in their website of involving citizens.

Typologies of SAI engagement with citizens

✓ "A" = One-way:
  ✓ Responds to inquiries
  ✓ Communicates with citizens through parliaments
  ✓ Distributes audit reports through established websites, media, requests
  ✓ Involves only a few experts in audits and fears compromising independence through engaging with citizens

✓ "B" = Two-way:
  ✓ Regularly conducts public opinion surveys
  ✓ Involves focus groups in performance audits
  ✓ Takes suggestions from MPs, trade unions, NGOs, social media statements
  ✓ VFM audits may be based on citizen preferences for topics

✓ "C" = Partnership:
  ✓ Communicates through every media outlet
  ✓ Makes disclosures through ATI provisions
  ✓ Links up with social accountability mechanisms

Conclusions of UN/INTOSAI's Symposia.

➢ Citizen's confidence in public audit institutions should be strengthened. INTOSAI advocates external communications to make audit institutions modern, open and transparent.

➢ Engaging citizens in decision-making is a big opportunity for all INTOSAI members.

➢ SAIs together can build stronger foundations for good governance for the post-2015 development agenda.

Examples of DPADM experience citizen and social audit

1. Support to the UN inter-governmental process: High-Level Panel on Safeguarding for Sustainable Development.

2. International recognition of excellence in public service: State Audit Institution in Oman granted UN Public Service Award for its initiative: 'Complaints Window'.

3. Research and analysis: Mechanisms of Social Accountability in Ghana, India and South Africa.

1. High-Level Panel on Safeguarding for Sustainable Development

- New York, May 2013,

- Over 110 Participants representing nearly 60 Permanent Missions,

- Highlighted importance of financing for sustainable development from a new and innovative "sourcing" perspective AND from an effective and accountable "spending" perspective,

- Followed up on the Rio+20 Conference which recognized need for mobilization of resources from variety of sources and effective use of financing to promote sustainable development

1. High-Level Panel on Safeguarding for Sustainable development: Conclusions

- The successful mobilization of the funds necessary to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) will depend on establishing _trust that the funds will end up in good hands_.

- The enabling environment for safeguarding financing is part of good governance and establishing that trust.

- The important oversight role of audit in good governance and in implementation must be part of the deliberations of the inter-governmental process on financing for sustainable development.

- Complaint window contributed to detection of administrative and financial irregularities: 644 complaints received July 2011-July 2013.

- Public complaints and feedback properly recorded, handled and monitored.

- SAI Oman shows to takes citizens' feedback seriously and to work hard to protect public funds.

- Initiative has improved the public's trust in government to eradicate corrupt actions or malpractices and to ensure transparency and accountability of government entities

3. Mechanisms of Social Accountability in Ghana, India and South Africa

Research focused on mechanisms allowing citizens to be engaged in parliamentary work related to the oversight of public service delivery and government spending.

Research findings common to these countries include:

- Citizens are involved in parliamentary oversight work to different degrees through information and consultation and especially at the local level. Active participation of citizens in the decision- making processes and other process is a rarity in all cases.

- Public engagement often occurs through informal or ad-hoc channels; although principles of inclusion are enshrined in the countries' constitutions and laws, citizen engagement is difficult to track in public service oversight mechanisms.

- Civil society organization play a relevant role in bridging the gap between citizens and government,

- Public Account Committees of Parliaments have very little interaction with citizens.

Implications for the future … we want

✓ Governments coordinating action for:

  –Eradicating poverty,

  –Fostering equitable social development and inclusion,

  –Changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable consumption patterns,

  –Protecting and managing natural resource base,

  –Promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

  Should provide a framework for optimally engaging citizens.

✓ SAIs can also benefit from optimally engaging with citizens.

Implications for the future … we want (cont.)

✓ Potential INTOSAI contributions:

–Advice to the international community on safeguarding new sources and streams of financing for sustainable development initiatives ,

–Defining auditing standards for citizen engagement

–Providing ex-ante advice in addition to audits on the costs and benefits of citizen engagement,

–Identifying and improving effective engagement with citizens in the work of SAIs.

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Thank You!

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