

**PROGRESS REPORT
OLACEFS WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING (COMTEMA)**

1. INTRODUCTION

COMTEMA (Olacefs Committee on Environmental Auditing) was created in November 1998, during the 8th General Assembly of the Organisation of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (Olacefs). It is composed of the SAIs of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela; Brazil is the current co-ordinator. The main mission of the group is to develop studies and documents to supply SAIs with the necessary support to accomplish environmental audits. This document aims to present a summary of the activities developed in the 2006-2006 Work plan until now, by COMTEMA and the results of the 5th Meeting carried out in April, in Chile, as well as the actions developed by the SAI of Brazil in the environmental area.

2. Vth MEETING OF COMTEMA

On April 24th and 25th of this current year took place the 5th Annual Meeting of the COMTEMA in the city of Viña del Mar, in Chile.

There were representatives from 11 countries: 9 of them were members of COMTEMA and the other two observers (Canada and Panama). The main subjects discussed during the meeting were: a) presentation and evaluation of the past actions and the results achieved in the last Work Plan; b) presentations by some members (Chile, Honduras, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, and Paraguay) regarding environmental audits carried out in their countries. In addition, the SAI of Canada, as a guest at the meeting, presented the WGEA Work Plan.

At the Meeting, the members approved the Internal Regulation of the Commission and the Guidelines of the 2006-2008 Work Plan. Furthermore, they defined the areas with most relevance for the control, and decided that the SAI of Brazil will continue co-ordinating the work of the group during this new period.

The SAIs of Brazil and Colombia agreed to carry out a joint environmental audit focusing on the Amazon region, with the scope and the objectives to be defined later. The discussions between Colombia and Peru involving a joint environmental audit with the objective of evaluating the environmental conditions of the river Putumayo were started at the meeting.

The next COMTEMA meeting is been planned and is likely to take place in November 2007.

3. ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED

The majority of the activities presented in the 2006-2008 Work Plan have been carried out successfully, especially in the qualification of auditors to conduct environmental audits and the co-operative audits.



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Supported by IDI/INTOSAI and by Olacefs, the Regional Course on Environmental Auditing was carried out, from 11/20/2006 to 11/28/006, in Brasilia. The course had a module called Training the Trainers which had representatives from the following SAIs: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. At the end of the course, each participant elaborated an Environmental Auditing Proposal focusing on each country's needs, making the commitment to present the proposal to the heads of their SAIs and promote the performance of the respective audits.

SAIs from Brazil and Colombia have started the planning activities of the joint audit that is scheduled to take place in the second semester of 2007. We are discussing what will be the object and objective of the audit, composition of the audit teams, means for evaluating and disseminating results, methodology to be applied and the timetable for carrying out the audit works. We are also discussing the terms of the agreement to be signed between the institutions in order to establish a regulatory framework between the superior organisations in support of the activities to be carried out.

The SAI of Colombia is organising a seminar for the second semester of 2007 which will discuss poverty and environment.

Regarding the exchange of information, the COMTEMA Web Page has been brought up to date and has been redesigned, in order to expedite research regarding legislation, methodologies and general activities of the Special Technical Committee on Environment. In the next COMTEMA meeting we will present, for evaluation and approval, an interactive form that allows the automatic inclusion of data by SAIs, so that information may be made immediately available to those who access the site.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL OF THE SAI OF BRAZIL

Brazil's Supreme Audit Institution, The Tribunal de Contas da União (TCU), conducts diverse activities in order to guarantee that Federal Government actions in the management of natural resources are sustainable.

TCU would like to draw special attention to the environmental evaluation that we normally do in projects of the Federal Government with significant environmental impact. For instance, the evaluation of the impacts and the benefits of the Project of Integration of the River San Francisco with other Basins. The San Francisco River is the most important one in the north-eastern region of Brazil. This Project, estimated at US\$ 2.5 billion, aims to benefit 12 million inhabitants of a region with frequent lack of water.

Moreover, we are working on the development of a system to provide follow-up and monitoring process of concessions of public forests to private companies, a process which the Brazilian Government is starting to implement.

Regarding Intosai, we are working with the SAI of Canada, to write the document named "Moving towards auditing biodiversity", in order to guide SAIs in conducting environmental audits related to biodiversity issues.

Between November 28 and December 12, 2006, the Brazilian Court of Audit promoted the 1st Study Cycle on Environmental Management Control, as a part of the Co-operation Activities Program of the Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for the period of 2005/2006. The primary goal of this initiative was to make participants familiar with the environmental auditing techniques and disseminate what has been done by the Brazilian Court of Audit in this area.



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The event lasted two weeks. During the first week, there was a course called Introduction to Environmental Management Control given to auditors from SAIs of the following Portuguese-speaking countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe. On the second week, TCU auditors presented the main environmental audits carried out by the Brazilian Court of Audit. Participants also had the opportunity to visit agencies and institutions of the Brazilian Government in charge of elaborating and executing Brazilian environmental policies.

Brasília, May 2007