iCED as Global Training Facility: Summary of 2nd international training programme on environmental auditing held in iCED

A proposal was mooted in 2011 by SAI India to make iCED the Global Training Facility (GTF) for The International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA) which was accepted by INTOSAI WGEA, keeping in mind the need for training in environment audit expressed by SAIs across the world.

A need analysis showed that most WGEA members wanted an introductory basic course, at least for the beginning of GTF. GTF was adopted in the WGEA work plan for 2011-13 and extended up to 2013-16. Accordingly, the 1st international training programme of the GTF was held from 25th November to 11th December, 2013. The 2nd international training programme of the GTF was held from 14th November to 27th November 2014.

A sub-committee comprising of Norway, Estonia, USA, India and Finland was set up to develop the course module. All of these SAIs also committed to sending their course developers to deliver the course in iCED Jaipur. This course is very unique as the various modules have been developed by SAIs of different countries and the course developers from the different SAIs are also coming to iCED to deliver these
modules. For example for the biodiversity module we had trainers from Brazil, for the sustainable development module, we had a trainer from Estonia, for the waste module we had a trainer from India, for the water module we had a trainer from Indonesia etc. We believe that this is a unique model and offers participants different perspectives of how environment systems are managed and audited across the world.

The training programme was inaugurated on 14 November 2014 by the CAG of India who is the head of SAI of India. CAG of India welcomed the participants and also thanked the sub-committee members and WGEA for their support. He also talked about the relevance of environment auditing, especially, in light of climate change and environmental degradation that we see in the world around us.

The second course had a total of 21 participants from 13 countries across the world viz. Bhutan, Cameroon, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Iraq, Kuwait, Latvia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tuvalu and Uganda. The participants, before coming to iCED, were to do home study and prepare a short paper on environment challenges as well the responses of their government to these environment challenges. This paper served not just the participants to relate more closely to the modules, but also enabled the trainers
to customize their course materials. To sum up the training module which stretched over 14 days, we had sessions on performance auditing, environment auditing, sustainable development, biodiversity, climate change, waste issues and water issues. To illustrate the concept of sustainability, we also had a walk in Jaigarh Fort to look at the old water harvesting systems used to store and conserve water, built almost 350 years ago. Each of these modules like biodiversity, waste issues, water issues and climate change issues were spread over 2 days and consisted of giving participants a background and introduction as well as steps to audit these effectively. The water walk was woven into the sessions on sustainable development and served to stimulate discussions relating to sustainability. As part of our biodiversity module, we planned a biodiversity trip to Tiger Reserve, Ranthambhore and a session on protection of tigers in the Tiger Reserve. The participants found the trip very relevant to appreciating the concept of
biodiversity and its preservation. During the trip, the participants also engaged in impassioned and informed discussions with the Field Director, Ranthambore Tiger Project, Sawai Madhopur who talked about measures taken for preservation and conservation of tigers in the National Park.

We also had a review session over the last day of training whereby the participants had to write a paper and discuss it with the course directors, Ms. Tuuli Rasso and Ms. Nameeta Prasad. This course paper was supposed to be like a detailed audit plan on an environment audit of relevance to their country, which they could conduct back home. The participants worked very hard on their papers and delivered papers of very high quality. We received very interesting papers on issues like management of waste, effectiveness of water quality, management of health care waste, audit of biodiversity, evaluation and efficiency of water lab, auditing the raising of total dissolved salt & its effect, marine pollution, climate change, management of waste etc. These plans also discussed in detail a design for audit as well as issues like criteria and audit questions. The one to one sessions the course directors had with the participants regarding the paper was also found to be very fruitful and relevant. In fact, due
to the good quality of papers received, we put all the papers in a compilation which will be available to all the participants for guidance and reference.

We also planned a lot of evening and weekend activities. The purpose of these activities was that the participants should grasp environment concepts in an informal setting as well as during activities built for fun and enjoyment. In the first category, we also had a lot of activities to enable the participants to experience the rich cultural diversity of India. To achieve this, we had a heritage walk along the bazaars of old Jaipur, a light and sound show on Jaipur at Amber Fort as well as shopping trips to various shopping malls and markets of Jaipur. Most of the participants found these activities very stimulating and pleasant. The diverse colours of rural life in Rajasthan were visible in the trip to Chokhidhani- a resort designed to showcase the life in rural Rajasthan. The participants also enjoyed a home cooked meal by volunteers of the community kitchen. These volunteers cooked delicious street food for the participants like idiappams with stew, daal pakwaan, tikki paav, salad and khajur and mewe ke laddo. These were also served by the volunteers of
the community kitchen and the participants enjoyed tucking into these home cooked delicacies.

The feedback received from the participants showed that the participants learnt a lot from the sessions, that the sessions had improved their understanding of the subject, sessions met their expectations and the sessions were capable of stimulating their interest. The feedback also indicated that the participant felt that the trainers’ knowledge of the subject matter was excellent, trainers had organised their material effectively, trainers were very well prepared and responsive to needs of the participants. The overall feedback of the 2nd program indicated that the length of the training program was just right, no modules needed to be deleted and that their SAIs would be interested in future such courses and specialised courses too.

Commenting on the quality and usefulness of the training programme, Nenise Teulilo, a participant from Cook Islands, wrote “It was wonderful experience as lots of new learning with broader perspective was made in an interesting manner. Hopefully, it will help in value addition of contribution to SAI, India.” Liz Nambuya of Uganda commented “register my deep and heartfelt appreciation. The course was very
helpful to me and the faculties were top notch. Thank you for the opportunity and hope this can also be extended to other participants from my SAI.” The course concluded with a valedictory session and presentation of certificates to the participants.