

PPUG SEMINAR “PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AUDIT”

Lisboa, 14-15 October 2010

EVALUATION REPORT

1. BACKGROUND OF THE SEMINAR

A Seminar about ‘*Public Procurement Audit*’ was held in Lisbon by October 2010, under the initiative of the Public Procurement Updating Group created within the Contact Committee of the Supreme Audit Institutions of the European Union.

This Seminar was meant to promote the knowledge and use of the 4 documents formerly approved by the Public Procurement Working Group¹:

- A *Guideline for Auditors*: based on the EU Public Sector Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC and including summaries of the most important judgments of the European Court of Justice;
- A *Procurement Performance Model*: including key questions developed as reference pointers for auditors evaluating the performance of the procurement function in public sector bodies;
- A *Checklist for Financial and Compliance Audit of Public Procurement*: to be used when auditing public procurement processes. The checklist is relevant and applicable to auditors operating within different frameworks and with different objectives, requirements and procedures and includes fraud and corruption risks;
- *Summaries of relevant public procurement related audit reports* published by EU SAIs.

2. OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN OF THE SEMINAR

The main objective of the training event was to make auditors aware of the updated documents formerly mentioned and to promote the effective use of those documents in SAI’s audits.

¹ See

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/contactcommittee/workinggroups/reportsproductsOfWorkinggroups>

Next to that, the Public Procurement Updating Group also expected this seminar to be an instrument to evaluate the usefulness and eventual need of improving or developing those documents, thus guiding the future tasks of the working group.

Finally, the participating SAIs would have a new opportunity to share audit results in the area of Public Procurement Audit. For this purpose, some participants were invited to make short presentations on findings of their SAIs' public procurement related audits.

The Seminar was, thus, designed to include:

- Presentations about the above mentioned documents
- Workshops to work out audit cases using those documents
- Assessment of the documents usefulness
- Presentations by participants on their SAI's audit cases and audit results

3. THE SEMINAR

The Seminar took place in Lisbon, on 14/15 October 2010.

90 participants from 18 European SAIs participated in the Seminar.

SAIs from the following countries were participating:

	PRESENTERS	PARTICIPANTS
Austria	X	X
Belgium	X	X
Bulgaria		X
Cyprus	X	X
Czech Republic	X	X
Estonia	X	X
European Court of Auditors (ECA)	X	X
Germany	X	X
Hungary	X	X
Italy		X
Luxembourg		X
Malta	X	X
Netherlands		X
Poland		X
Portugal	X	X
Slovak Republic	X	X
Slovenia	X	X
Spain	X	X

An expert from AFROSAI-E was invited to conduct one of the workshops and participated actively in the Seminar.

The programme for the event was as follows:

14 Oct 2010		
9,00h	Welcome	Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins (President of <i>Tribunal de Contas</i>)
9,15h	Public Procurement Principles and Audit purposes	Igor Soltes (Slovenia)
10,00h	PPWG Guideline for Auditors	Constant De Koninck (Belgium) Michael Hadjiloizou (Cyprus)
11,00h	PPWG Procurement Performance Model	Werner Pelzer, Thomas Lutze (Germany)
11,45h	PPWG Checklists for financial and compliance audit	Helena Lopes, Helena Fernandes (Portugal)
12,30h	SAIs audit reports and Database Model for sharing Public Procurement Audit Information	Blanka Bolerazkà (Czech Republic)
13,00h	Access to CIRCA and SIMAP websites	Hendrik Fehr (ECA)
15,00h	WORKSHOPS	<i>Facilitators</i>
	1. Workshop on Financial and Compliance Public Procurement Audit	Werner Pelzer, Thomas Lutze (Germany)
	2. Workshop on Performance Public Procurement Audit	Gabriela Ramos, António Garcia (Portugal)
	3. Workshop on Public Procurement European funded projects Audit	Hendrik Fehr, Angelika Zych (ECA)
	4. Workshop on Public Procurement & fraud and corruption prevention Audit	Nick van der Merwe (AFROSAI-E)
15 Oct 2010		
9,00h	Sharing conclusions of Workshops	Facilitators and/or appointed participants
10,00h	SAIs Public Procurement Audit Cases and Findings	Jens Budischowsky (Austria) Rait Sannik (Estonia) Jussi Bright (European Court of Auditors) Attila Boros (Hungary) Wilfred Aquilina (Malta) Iveta Marincáková (Slovak Republic) Pilar Cobos (Spain)
11,15h	COFFEE BREAK	
11,30h	European Court of Justice public procurement case-law	Thierry Ronse (Belgium)
12,30h	Evaluation of PPWG products and possible developments	Werner Pelzer (Germany)
13,00h	Closing	

All the participating SAIs made presentations or participated actively in the workshops, leading to a strong share of experiences.

All the materials from the Seminar, including background documentation, presentations and photos, are available on the website of the Seminar, on the following link: http://www.tcontas.pt/pt/eventos/public_procurement/default.aspx# and are also reachable through CIRCA Contact Committee webpage.

A booklet with a CD, containing the documents produced by the PPWG was delivered during the Seminar and can be obtained by request to *Tribunal de Contas*, Portugal.

4. EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR

All the participants and presenters completed an evaluation questionnaire about:

- How objectives were clear and how were they met
- Usefulness of the content and documentation of the event
- How instructional methods adopted allowed practical approaches and group involvement
- Quality of training facilities and support of organisers
- Suggestions for improvement
- Suggestions for follow-up

86 % of participants rated the Seminar as 4 or 5 in a scale from 1 to 5.

Average scores were as follows, in a scale from 1 to 5:

Question N.º		ISSUE	AVERAGE SCORE
Participants Form	Presenters Form		
1		Understanding of objectives	4,3
3	1,3	Achievement of objectives	4,4
4		Adequacy of Seminar design	4,2
5		Professional relevancy of the Seminar	4
7		Usefulness of materials	4,2
10,13	6,7	Opportunities to participate/Amount of discussion/Exchange of experiences	4
11	5	Instructional methods	4

Question N.º		ISSUE	AVERAGE SCORE
Participants Form	Presenters Form		
12		Practical approach	3,7
14	8	Quality of training facilities	4,3
	9	Support from the organisers	4,9
15	10	Overall satisfaction with the Seminar	4,5

The **highest average scores** were found about the overall satisfaction, the achievement of objectives and the support from the organisers.

Participants pointed out several **new things** that they have **learnt** at the seminar, namely:

- The PPWG documents
- CIRCA and SIMAP websites
- ECJ case-law
- The importance of public procurement principles
- The work done by other SAIs in the field
- What to verify in procurement documents

Many participants stated that they intend to **use the knowledge and skills acquired** in their professional activity, by:

- Broadening the audit approach to public procurement
- Using the tools provided in their audit planning and audit work
- Completing their own SAIs' methodological tools and checklists
- Convincing their colleagues and leaders of the usefulness of the documents
- Sharing the documents with the internal auditors of the ministries to improve their results

Generally, evaluation comments made by participants about the seminar or about the PPWG documents were very **positive** and some of them were especially positive, such as:

- The programme was interesting and the themes were very practical
- Most of the presentations were clear and most interesting
- This seminar was the best I have ever participated
- Very instructive internet site

- Excellent handbook to be disseminated
- Good that the course was in the hands of professionals and not external experts
- I haven't seen better training facilities before
- This is the best working material I have ever seen. Personally I would say this booklet should be a kind of Bible for SAIs

Nevertheless, comments suggest that **improvements** could be introduced. Examples of those suggestions are:

- Workshops practical approach was highly appreciated, but some participants think that cases should have been delivered previously and that more time should have been allocated to the workshops, so that more discussion could have happened
- To find more room in the seminar to share experiences and methods of work
- More SAIs should have participated
- To have operating remote control for the notebook

5. FOLLOW-UP

Participants were also asked about suggestions to follow up the subject.

Several suggestions were made about:

- Adapting the booklet to the specific countries realities
- Sharing the information back home
- Prepare a follow-up seminar about how the checklists worked in actual audits: what worked and what did not
- Organise meetings to exchange experiences focusing on more specific themes and challenges faced by SAIs (v.g. PPP, EU Directives, risk management, contract management, performance audit techniques, comparison of audit programmes)
- To keep updating the documents and providing information on results of the work

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We consider that the objectives set for the seminar were achieved, since experiences were shared and most the participants left completely aware and enthusiastic about the PPWG documents and willing to use them and share them with their colleagues.

Tribunal de Contas has since then received several requests of the booklet and of editable versions of the PPWG documents, in order to be used by SAIs.

For these reasons, our judgement is that this Seminar had a significant value in the framework of the Contact Committee's activities.

Further impact can be reached by making sure that the participants of the seminar shared the information back home and/or by promoting national replications of the seminar.

Follow-up suggestions may also be considered by the PPUG.

Tribunal de Contas