# Issues to consider in deciding to change the name of the workstream

SAIs in fragile contexts were initially discussed at the CBC annual meeting in Lima, Peru in 2014, at the initiative of CREFIAF. As a result of those discussions, a small task group was set up to explore the issues and propose a way forward. (Netherlands, Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and IDI.) The original terms of reference were developed based on experiences by SAIs currently or previously working in states in different levels of fragility, and by donors and partners working with SAIs in such contexts. The experiences were collected through a selection of interviews and discussions as well as reports and articles. The terms of reference (from 2016) state:

*The CBC will, through this work stream, lead INTOSAI’s efforts to identify what support is needed and good practices to address those needs, adjusted to the preconditions of SAIs in fragile situations and the organizations supporting them.*

In the 2017 annual CBC meeting, the steering committee decided that all CBC workstreams would have terms of reference in line with the committee’s terms of reference and the INTOSAI Strategic Plan. The draft terms of reference read:

*In line with INTOSAI’s crosscutting priorities and the strategic objectives defined for the CBC in the INTOSAI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, project group in support of SAIs in fragile situations works to achieve CBC’s key strategy 7:*

*Focus attention on SAIs in fragile situations with particular emphasis on the impact of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on their capacity development needs.*

*The CBC will, through this work stream, lead INTOSAI’s efforts to identify what support is needed and good practices to address those needs, adjusted to the preconditions of SAIs in fragile situations and the organizations supporting them.*

When considering a name change, we need to maintain a focus on the mandate of the workstream, in line with CBC’s goals and objectives and the INTOSAI Strategic Plan.

(Please also read the last agenda point of the minutes from the workstream skype meeting on 29 May, which provide further background information. See appendix.)

## Arguments against changing the name

The OECD fragility framework is an internationally recognized multidimensional framework, developed and used by development practitioners and donor agencies in policy making and programming. By changing the terminology used INTOSAI would lose the direct connection with the international discourse. It may be more difficult for us to answer questions from different international bodies about what INTOSAI does to support SAIs working in what the rest of the international community calls “fragile situations”. Donors may also lose interest in INTOSAI’s initiatives in this area if they cannot provide a clear link to their organisations’ funding priorities.

If the workstream changes its name without consultation with the broader INTOSAI community, we run the risk of INTOSAI members not understanding why the change was made and/or not understanding the purpose of the workstream. We also run the risk of different bodies in INTOSAI using different terminology.

On a more practical level, the workstream has recently completed its’ first output, the report *State building in fragile situations – the role of Supreme Audit Institutions and their international partners.* Would the report be considered obsolete if we move away from the terminology of “fragile situations”? Would it need to be rewritten, if the content is still considered relevant but the terminology used is not?

## Arguments for changing the name

The current name has already kept SAIs from engaging in our work and questions have been asked both by workstream members and SAIs outside the workstream. This in itself is argument enough to change the name.

The terminology is perceived as demeaning and patronizing and labels the SAI’s context, and thus their stakeholders. This in turn complicates the SAIs’ ability to explain their participation in the workstream’s initiatives to their stakeholders.

The issue was considered important enough to be discussed at the AFROSAI-E Governing Board, and resulted in a letter to the CBC Chair and Vice Chair with a proposal to change the name. The CBC needs to be responsive to the will of its members and thus needs to consider the proposal.

Fundamentally, those who are affected by the issues at hand should have the ownership of the discourse and label their own context, as appropriate.

## Possible names to consider

Any name we consider needs to maintain focus on the mandate of the workstream and:

* Ideally be an existing definition (by someone else) that is easily understood and clearly distinguishes the target group.
* Keeps the focus on the context, not the SAI, and
* Does not require (or create the appearance of) any type of ranking or prioritizing by the CBC of different SAIs and their needs.

Some ideas:

SAIs in particularly challenging situations

SAIs in severely challenging situations

SAIs in complex and challenging situations

SAIs in volatile situations

Neither of these ideas are connected to an existing definition, but they strive to keep the focus on the context and do not require any type of ranking/prioritizing. One option for the workstream could be that we change the name, and change the vocabulary we use, but we refer to OECD’s definitions and other international discourse to indicate the types of issues that we consider “particularly challenging” or “complex and challenging” etc.

# Appendix

## Excerpt from draft minutes from the CBC Work Stream for SAIs in Fragile Situations – skype meeting 29 May, 2018

The chair introduced the topic by providing the following background for the discussion:

The international discourse among researchers, development professionals and the donor community has now for some years focused on the issue of fragility. Initially the term “fragile state” was used to describe states which lived up to certain criteria. The criteria was initially focused on conflict/post-conflict situations but in the last few years the discussions has broadened in two ways, partially as a response to the reaction from some of the states classified as fragile, and some of those not included in the definition.

The concept of fragility has broadened to now include other aspects of fragility, in total five: violence, justice, institutions, resilience and economic foundations. This definition was developed by the OECD and is generally accepted in the international community (meaning researchers, development professionals and donors, but possibly not those living up to the criteria). Environmental issues have also been added to the discussion since the OECD originally developed its definition – at the request of countries in the PASAI region, for example.

The term used is no longer “fragile state” but rather “fragile situation” (or sometimes “fragile context”) to demonstrate that fragility is a fluid concept, not limited by borders, and not static over time.

In the discussions preceding Agenda 2030, it was concluded that, while extreme poverty (people living on less then USD 1.25/day) is generally decreasing in the world, the percentage of the world’s extreme poor living in fragile situations is rapidly increasing. Between 2015 and 2030 the share of the world’s poor living in the 50 states and economies currently affected by fragility is expected to rise from 43% to 62%. As a result, this is an area prioritized by donors in their funding priorities, and why we see the INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation developing a Tier II for the Global Call for Proposals.

When the workstream was created we chose to use this terminology for two reasons:

* We wanted to use existing definition/criteria developed by someone else so that we (the CBC) were never put in a position where we had to develop our own criteria.
* The focus of the criteria is on the context, and a lot of the development discourse is about how a multitude of complex issues affect the development of institutions and society in such a context, which is also what interested us.

The purpose of the workstream was to address issues that are unique to SAIs working in the type of context that is affected by a multitude of issues, whether it is violence, political instability or other environmental or societal issues. In the research done before we launched the workstream it was clear that, in this context, there are both strong SAIs with very competent leadership and SAIs with a weak mandate and weaker leadership – much like in any other context. We were very clear in the term of reference that the issue for the workstream to deal with was the context and never the relative strength of the SAIs in the context.

In other words, any term we chose to replace fragility with needs to live up to the same general criteria:

* Ideally be an existing definition (by someone else) that is easily understood and clearly distinguishes the target group.
* Keeps the focus on the context, not the SAI, and does not require (or create the appearance of) any type of ranking or prioritizing by the CBC of different SAIs and their needs.

As the we know that the terminology used has kept at least one SAI from participating in our activities and we have received a letter from AFROSAI-E, asking us to change the name, we need to consider this issue very carefully. In the letter AFROSAI-E proposes the term “SAIs with urgent development priorities”. However, as that expression implies that the CBC (or the workstream) have made an assessment of all SAIs’ development needs and decided which to prioritize, the chair suggested the workstream considers other alternatives.

Adama Renner shared some of the discussions from the AFROSAI-E Governing Board meeting in Kigali, where the issue was discussed and resulted in the letter. It was a broad discussion which resulted in a general consensus that the terminology needed to be addressed.

Andrea Connell raised some concerns with deviating from the terminology generally used in the international community but recognized the need to be sensitive to the issues raised by AFROSAI-E.

No workstream members had concrete suggestions to alternative terminology that would still be in line with the terms of reference of the workstream so it was agreed that all workstream members would be invited to provide their inputs in writing and we would then consider the need for another skype meeting.

The chair promised to confirm that the CBC Steering Committee had the mandate to change the name of the workstream and what procedure might need to be followed.