

Public participation in the audit process

Key points from the Auditing in Complex and Challenging Contexts Workstream Webinar 11 June 2019

To increase the responsiveness and impact of audits, SAIs are seeking a wide variety of ways of strengthening relations with citizens and civil society organisations. In this webinar, David Gichana, Deputy Auditor General of SAI Kenya, explained how they were in the process of putting citizens at the heart of their audit process. They have held focus groups with citizens in many different parts of Kenya and discussions with civil society organisations, donors and others to identify what are the main concerns that Kenyans have and how they want to work with the SAI. They have also visited the Philippines and looked closely at the work of SAI India so that they can build on their participative audits. From this work, they have developed a framework for conducting citizen accountability audits, drawn up procedural protocols with civil society organisations which share the aims and aspirations of the SAI, and provided sensitization training for audit staff. There is immense goodwill from citizens and other stakeholders in support of this and the SAI is using the opportunity to move the agenda forward.

The SAI recognises that it is embarking on a journey and it may take several years before it starts to see the full benefits in terms of capturing the specialist knowledge of local people, of producing clearer and more user friendly audits, and of seeing a greater take up by public bodies of their recommendations. But already they are seeing some impacts. In one county the citizens demanded a public meeting with county officials and insisted that audit report recommendations were implemented and that timetables were established to confirm their implementation.

A lively discussion followed with participants querying SAI Kenya on how:

- Risks of politicisation would be managed – by only working with civil society organisations whose mandates are aligned with the SAI, by being clear about what was possible, and by training citizens so they understand fully the SAI's role;
- Capacity of SAI staff was being developed – by running awareness raising sessions, being clear about how the process would work; and seeking to deal with staff fears and concerns;
- Expectations would be managed, and the SAI would not be swamped – by being clear from the beginning that choices would need to be made, resources are limited, and by looking for inputs for citizens; and
- Confidentiality would be maintained – by establishing a secure platform for the exchange of information and development of recommendations until the audit is completed and could be formally published.

Participants urged SAI Kenya to keep sharing information on this initiative as it evolves so that others can benefit from the lessons learned.

On the CBC website you can find: a recording of the webinar -;[CBC workstream on Auditing in Complex and Challenging Contexts. - recording 2](#) and a copy of the [slides](#) used in the presentation.

Other relevant resources on this topic include:

- The IDI the **Stakeholder engagement guide** especially chapter 8: <http://www.idi.no/en/idi-library/global-public-goods/sais-engaging-with-stakeholders>.
- The CBC Guide on **How to use and increase the impact of audit reports** - [file:///C:/Users/dvgol/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Howtoincreasetheseuseandimpactofauditreports_English%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/dvgol/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Howtoincreasetheseuseandimpactofauditreports_English%20(1).pdf)
- A world bank participatory guide on <http://www.e-participatoryaudit.org/>

If anyone wishes to share any further thoughts on this issue, please feel free to draft a [Blog](#) for the CBC website and/or a [Good Story](#) for the workstream page.