**How are SAIs contributing to business development?**

**Key points from the Auditing in Complex and Challenging Contexts Workstream Webinar 15 October 2019**

Instability in many countries is fueled by the inability to develop businesses capable of generating the wealth needed to pay for public services and to create decent jobs to absorb educated but unemployed young people. The President of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau of Palestine, Mr Iyab, made an impassioned plea for SAIs to think more carefully about how their work impacts on business and economic development. He pointed out that government actions can both help and hinder the growth of a strong private sector and that it was imperative that SAIs shine a light on what government is doing in this area and whether it is being done effectively.

In his presentation he provided a wide range of examples of the kinds of audits being done by his SAI which have a direct impact of the world of business. His cited an example one of their audits of the Ministry of Communications and its oversight of the telecommunications sector, finding that the regulatory system was not functioning as intended, that many companies were not complying fully with their contracts, and that, as a result, citizens and other businesses were not reaping expected benefits. Another example mentioned was that of an audit of taxes paid by the self-employed which showed that some 70% of the self-employed were not properly registered and paying their taxes. He explained also that just producing the reports were rarely enough to bring about change but that his SAI would make sure that key audiences understood the findings and acted on them. So, they ran meetings with telecommunications firms and the Ministry of Communications to help them understand the reports and participated in television discussions to explain why it was so important that more self -employed people to register and pay their taxes.

Participants in the webinar found the presentation stimulating and thought provoking recognizing that SAIs should focus more audits on those areas of government activity directly impacting on business, and also should develop closer links with this important stakeholder, seeking their input in identifying possible areas for future audit and other SAI work.