

Recruiting and Retaining Financial Audit Staff

Key points from the Auditing in Complex and Challenging Contexts Workstream Webinar 16 March 2021

'As soon as our staff are qualified, they leave us' is an oft heard lament from senior SAI managers. This webinar examined some of the challenges facing SAIs in complex and challenging contexts but also provided some suggested solutions for recruiting and retaining staff.

We heard from the Auditor General of Rwanda, Mr Obadiah Biraro who took us through how they use data to monitor staff turnover and how they had substantially reduced staff losses. His SAI now has the highest number of qualified accountants of any organisation in the country. They are paid well but equally importantly can see opportunities for promotion and career enrichment.

Ms Adama Renner, the Deputy Auditor General of Sierra Leone showed how by benchmarking their pay against private sector standards, they had been able to recruit and retain highly qualified financial auditors. However, as she pointed out, this is a not a one-off arrangement and if salaries do not keep pace with those being paid by other parts of the public sector as well as the private sector the risk is again losing staff starts to rise.

In both SAIs, staff motivation, and an emphasis on non-financial rewards, are also a vital part of the armoury used to retain good staff. To this end, SAI Sierra Leone is providing new opportunities for staff to gain additional internationally recognised qualifications, for example the CISA for IT auditing. and SAI Rwanda has public awards for audit staff who perform outstandingly.

Both SAIs also pointed out that some turnover of staff is a good thing. It means that the SAI can bring in new skills and expertise and as such staff move into senior positions externally this benefits the whole country.

To capture and share experiences, the Workstream has produced an infographic which SAIs can use in thinking about the range of approaches which can be used to recruit and retain staff. This was launched during the webinar and can be viewed on: www.intosaicbc.org/accc-recruiting-and-retaining-staff/key-questions/