

Dear reader,

A common challenge that many SAIs face, is that their audit reports fail to make the desired impact. In this issue, we share more on our first regional Effective Report Writing workshop, that was held as a virtual event in August to address this important topic. The workshop included among other things, experiences of SAIs who have used visuals to capture key outcomes in reader-friendly, citizen-centric reports.

Using visuals to convey complex audit messages, is fast becoming an essential tool for auditors. If this is a skill you would like to learn, there is good news! The Visuals in Audits online learning programme, developed by the Netherlands Court of Audit, is now available at no cost for SAI staff globally, in five languages. In addition to English, you can now access the programme in Portuguese, French, Arabic and Dutch, for self-paced learning. Read more below on how you can enrol for the course.

The African Professionalisation Initiative (API) has taken another crucial step to implement their long-term goal of building and enhancing accounting and auditing capacity across the African public sector. In a recent information sharing session, the API team elaborated on their invitation to countries to formally express their interest to be the first implementors of the API's capacity building approach. Continue reading to learn more about the initiative, the API learning resources and the available capacity building support.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

First regional Report Writing Workshop wraps up



Developing high impact, citizen-centric and user-friendly audit reports is crucial for SAIs to elevate their audit impact. To strengthen SAI capacity to produce effective consolidated annual audit reports, we held a virtual workshop from 16 to 19 August on this topic. It was highly gratifying to note the significant interest from SAIs following the workshop announcement. Just over 100 participants from 21 SAIs participated.

The workshop was aimed at staff who are directly involved with developing the SAIs' annual audit report/s as well as summary or graphic reports. Our goal for the workshop was to enable participants to identify areas for improvement in their annual audit reports, with emphasis on stakeholder (reader) expectations. To this end, we started the workshop with presentations by the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee of Namibia, Hon Dudu Murorua, and a representative from a Civil Society Organisation in Sierra Leone, Mr Abu Bakarr Kamara, to share their views.

Effective Report Writing workshop continued...

Highly interactive sessions followed on audit planning, risk analysis and robust root cause analysis as methods to identifying underlying concerns and report more effectively on key issues. Through engaging experience sharing sessions, several SAIs also shared the processes they have followed to simplify their audit messages into graphic content.

This was a valuable workshop for SAIs to determine the areas they plan to focus on to make their reports more effective. We also gained important feedback on the capacity building needs in this area, which will guide us in developing new training material and SAI support plans going forward.

VISUALS IN AUDITS – online course now available in five languages



SAI auditors can convey complex audit information that educates, motivates and engages audiences by using visuals effectively. Learn how to apply this skill with the Visuals in Audits online learning course, available on the AFROSAI-E Learning Platform (ALP). The Netherlands Court of Audit developed the course by building on the insights of their [Design Audit Team](#).

The course is now available in five languages, English, Portuguese, French, Arabic and Dutch, and can be found under the category: **Innovative Audit Skills**. Staff from all SAIs world-wide can access the course free of charge for self-paced learning.

Do you want to know more about this topic? Click on the link to read the article, [Visual Stories That Transform Audit Speak Into Engaging, Understandable Reports](#), that appeared in the INTOSAI Journal in [Winter 2019](#).

The course includes five modules and will take a learner about 90 minutes to complete in full.

- **(1) Basics of visual theory:** The basics of visual theory.
- **(2) Visuals to analyse:** How to use visuals to structure and analyse audit data.
- **(3) Visuals to get on the same page:** How visuals can help you, your team and your supervisors collaborate to get on the same page.
- **(4) Visuals to get the message across:** How visual stories can deliver your audit message to your audience.
- **(5) How to brief a designer?** How to brief a designer to make visual stories that fit your audit.

To access the course, go to the AFROSAI-E Learning Platform (ALP) www.afrosai-e-learning.com. If you are a first-time user, click on register and complete the profile information. You will receive an email confirming access within 24 hours. With your confirmed username and password, you can then log in on ALP, go to the **Innovative Audit Skills** category, enrol for the Visuals in Audits course in your preferred language, and start learning.

- Queries regarding access to ALP, can be sent to Annerie Pretorius at annerie@afrosai-e.org.za.
- Comments on this course can be sent to Marike Noordhoek (NCA) at m.noordhoek@rekenkamer.nl.
- For questions on the course content, please contact das@rekenkamer.nl.



AFRICAN PROFESSIONALISATION INITIATIVE

Partnering to professionalise accounting
and auditing in the public sector

The API hosts an interactive information session to explain the Call for Expression of Interest

The African Professionalisation Initiative (API) hosted a multi-stakeholder information session on 4 August 2021, to issue out its Call for Expression of Interest. This call enables countries to indicate their interest to be the first implementors of the API's capacity building approach. This is a crucial step towards the API's long-term goal, to build and enhance accounting and auditing capacity across the African public sector.

Professor Rashied Small, an Executive at the South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA) and Chairman of the API's Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) gave the opening address. He spoke about the pressing need for such an initiative, especially considering Africa's abundance of natural resources. These resources, if used effectively, can place Africa on a firm path to reduce and eliminate poverty, and achieve the objectives of the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#). However, the lack of service delivery has become a perennial challenge for Africa. This is largely due to shortcomings in the management of the same resources, for the benefit of citizens. The API intends to be part of the solution by prioritising effective management of resources with its strategic goal, to promote public value management through the implementation of professionalisation and capacity building programmes.

In speaking about the need for capacity, Professor Small said that the professionalisation of staff contributes to the value that a government can render to its citizens by, amongst other benefits, ensuring that:

- Staff are competent to perform their responsibilities in changing environments, particularly because of technological changes as well as varying citizen expectations and demands.
- Professionals are held accountable for the work they perform, by their employers, the government, and the profession at large.
- Professionals understand the importance of high-quality information in the decision-making processes of government, leading to government being able to fulfil its service delivery mandate.

The API aims to implement high-quality learning programmes that address the needs of the identified target audiences in the public sector. These include professional accountants and auditors wanting to specialise in the public sector, students, non-finance officials overseeing finance processes and **incumbents in the public sector without a professional accounting or auditing certification or designation.**

The API also aims to provide professional capacity building support to countries that express such an interest, to adopt and implement a path towards the professionalisation of its accounting and auditing sector.

Interested countries can formally apply to implement the API capacity building methodology, by completing and submitting a **Call for Expression of Interest** by **30 September 2021**. The applications will be reviewed by the API secretariat in line with set **criteria.**

During the interactive information session, participants asked several questions. [Click here](#) to see the answers to these questions, as well as more information on the initiative, the API learning resources and the available capacity building support.

The API secretariat is organising for another session that will focus on technical matters related to the initiative. Please let us know of any matters of interest that need to be covered in the upcoming session by completing a short survey [here](#).

For any queries, please send an email to: info@professionalisation.africa

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