



# Accelerated Peer-Support Partnership in The Gambia 2018-2019 Annual Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of progress and plans in the PAP-APP project in The Gambia.

This report covers the period September 2018 through March 2019. It includes background information, details on progress against planned outputs and milestones, an update on the budget, an assessment of major successes and challenges, and a summary of the upcoming activities.

## Background

The National Audit Office of The Gambia (NAO) and the Accelerated Peer-Support Partnership (PAP-APP) signed a cooperation agreement in September 2018 to strengthen the NAO's strategic management and external support coordination systems. This project came at a good time for the NAO because the strategic plan was due for renewal, the opening of the new office has made much-needed recruitment possible, and the anticipated clearing of the audit backlog has allowed the leadership more time to focus on holistic development.

The project team is co-led by NAO's Director of Audit, Mr Baba S. Drammeh and PAP-APP project manager, Ms Dana Wilkins. It includes four additional members of the NAO's management team as well as three expert peers from AFROSAI-E, the Office of the Auditor General of Norway, and the Office of the Auditor General of Ghana.

## Progress

### Outputs

The project has delivered the following major outputs:

- A stakeholder expectations briefing completed in October 2018, included in both the NAO's new stakeholder engagement strategy and the needs assessment report
- A comprehensive needs assessment report completed in January 2019, presented to all staff and shared with current and potential external partners
- Core components of a new strategic plan expected in August 2019, including: a new vision, mission and list of core values; priority outcomes, outputs and capacities; associated risks; and an updated SWOT
- Meaningful representation of female staff in the needs assessment and strategic planning workshops and the identification of gender and diversity measures as a strategic priority
- The first quarterly external support coordination meeting, attended by eight current and potential partners, many of whom have now expressed interest in providing support
- An informal project proposal submitted and approved in March 2019, linked to the strategic planning process and emerging priorities

More detailed information on these outputs can be found in the updated results framework in Annex I.

## Milestones

Milestone	Planned	Actual	Expected
Project functions are established	Sep-18	Sep-18	
The stakeholder expectations report is approved by the AG	Oct-18	Oct-18	
The needs assessment report is approved by the AG	Dec-18	Jan-19	
The strategic plan is approved by the AG and shared widely	Sep-19		Aug-19
The operational plan is approved by the AG and communicated internally	Dec-19		Dec-19
Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems are in place	Feb-20		Feb-20
Project proposals have been approved by the AG and submitted	Dec-19		Dec-19
The phase 1 report is approved by the steering committee	Jun-20		Jun-20

## Budget

All figures below are reported in US dollars and exclude staff costs.

### Overall

2018 planned	2018 actual	2019 budget	Total expected
12,410	13,280	29,296	42,576

The peer team spent US\$870 more than was planned at the time the cooperation agreement was signed primarily because of an unanticipated visit by the PAP-APP project manager. The purpose of the trip was to support the drafting of the needs assessment report and the cost of flights was reduced because she combined it with a visit to Sierra Leone for another project.

A more detailed breakdown of expenses can be found in Annex II.

### Additional funding

The project team has identified several activities that would significantly increase the impact of the project but for which there is no funding in the current 2019 budget (see the challenges section below for more details on the limitations). These activities include:

- A week-long country visit by the PAP-APP project manager to support an in-person debrief on the operational planning process and initiate the annual performance reporting process. This approach worked very well for past processes and we think it will be effective here as well, helping to address the human resource limitations also noted in the challenges section.
- The participation of another Europe-based peer in the operational planning workshop. There is only enough funding at the moment for the PAP-APP project manager and one Africa-based peer to attend. Though the two peers could support the workshop adequately on their own, the event would benefit a lot from both the experience of the other peer (which includes supporting strategic management and other capacity development projects in other SAIs) and the relationship building with a potential external support partner (OAGN).
- The attendance of two NAO participants in the joint AFROSAI-E and PAP-APP training on effective communication to be held in Freetown in August 2019. Communication has been identified a priority capacity for the next strategic plan and it makes sense to have the NAO participate in this workshop since it is partly run by the PAP-APP programme.

We have already revised the activity plan to reflect current priorities and cost estimates in an effort to fund these activities. However, it is clear now that we need to seek additional funding and will coordinate with the PAP-APP programme manager to secure funding from other sources, likely DFID.

## Successes

### Interactive workshops

The needs assessment and strategic planning workshops were productive, inclusive and very well reviewed by participants. The needs assessment workshop was facilitated by members of the NAO's management team and included 17 members of staff, while the strategic planning workshop was facilitated by peers so that the management team could participate fully, alongside 9 other staff members. Participants were carefully selected for their knowledge and enthusiasm, and represented a wide range of levels and perspectives. Though the peer team provided some frameworks and global and regional reference material, all of the content came from the NAO staff and that is reflected in high quality, context-specific products.

One key success factor was flexible peer presence on the ground for major activities. For example, the initiation visit a few weeks before the strategic planning workshop was critical for making big decisions on the approach, convening the planning team, and doing some of the foundational work ahead of the main strategic planning workshop. Early arrival and late departure around the workshop also enabled smoother preparation, quick follow up and important side meetings.

### New external support

The first quarterly meeting of current and potential development partners was very productive. The NAO used it as an opportunity to present the strategic planning process and draft strategic priorities, and answer partners' questions about major needs and challenges. The meeting was attended by representatives from IDI, AFROSAI-E, the World Bank, African Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, International Republican Institute (IRI), Global Fund, and SAI Norway.

Though the original plan was to hold the first quarterly meeting much earlier, delaying it until after the strategic planning workshop seems to have been the right decision because the NAO was able to present something specific and actionable for the partners to engage with and to get them thinking about possible support.

The NAO also leveraged the strategic planning process and previously expressed interest from IRI to request support for: 1) three stakeholder consultation events on the draft strategic priorities; 2) the development of radio programs on the NAO's mandate and work; and

#### Current and potential partners

The NAO has two current partners in addition to PAP-APP and IRI as detailed in the main text. AFROSAI-E is providing specialised support for financial, compliance and performance auditing and quality assurance, and will continue to offer training through regional programmes. IDI is also providing support for stakeholder engagement and a NAO staff member was recently accepted into a mentoring programme for young leaders.

The UNDP has said they are interested in supporting the implementation of the strategic plan and will consider providing support as early as the second half of 2019 (they had previously said 2020 was the earliest). The World Bank has said they might provide limited support for quality assurance under a larger programme on governance of state-owned entities. AfDB also reached out to the NAO separately and it is possible they will provide support as part of a larger PFM and procurement reform programme.

Other potential partners include the EU, OAG Norway, the Global Fund and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

3) participation in PFM-related workshops. The informal project proposal was almost immediately approved and has already begun to be implemented.

## Challenges

### Human resource limitations

The original risk matrix anticipated that the availability of NAO management to participate in activities would be a challenge. Though this caused a slight delay in the finalisation of the needs assessment report, it has been very well managed by the NAO project lead and there is not much more that can be done to mitigate the risk beyond continuing to be flexible in our approach and building in buffer time.

Perhaps the bigger challenge has been the availability of the peers. Because of the scope of this project and the great opportunity for impact, a full-time project manager would have been more appropriate. Demands in other project have at times meant slower or lighter support than desired. Additionally, one of our peers was not able to attend the strategic planning workshop as expected because of family obligations, which meant we missed out on some of his unique expertise. Another of our peers has had to leave the project because her role changed and—though she has been replaced by a colleague who will be well briefed—the project will have lost some of her contextual knowledge.

### Financial limitations

Budget constraints have prevented the peer team from providing the amount of in-person support that the needs assessment and strategic planning processes demand. Though we have been able to accomplish a lot through remote discussions and electronic communication, it will never be as effective or efficient. For example, had funding allowed, the PAP-APP project manager would have been present to support the September 2018 and April 2019 stakeholder consultations, and planned a peer visit during the drafting of the strategic plan or to support the launch.

We will minimise this challenge by continuing to be active in electronic communications and economic in spending. Though not originally budgeted for, we are hopeful that the budget will cover at least one additional peer visit to plan and initiate the operational planning process because it was such a successful approach for strategic planning (as noted above).

An updated version of the risk matrix can be found in Annex III.

## Upcoming activities

### Strategic planning

- Finalising consultations with key stakeholders on the draft strategic priorities
- Drafting the strategic plan and sharing with all staff for comment
- Revision, validation, design and launch of the plan

### Operational planning

- Agreement on the approach and development of planning materials
- Drafting of the operational plan and sharing with all staff for comment
- Finalisation of the plan and sensitisation of staff

### **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

- (Relevant and accessible indicators to be included in the strategic and operational plans)
- Strategic priorities and risks to be discussed in monthly management team meetings
- Annual performance report to be developed and launched

### **External support coordination**

- Quarterly external support coordination meetings (next one in June 2019)
- External support plan to be developed
- Strategically-grounded project proposals to be submitted as soon as possible

## Annex I – Updated results framework

Updates in red text.

Indicator	Key expected outputs	Status
<b>Outcome 1. The NAO has a stronger strategic management cycle</b>		
<p>Strategic and operational plans are in place that measure well against SAI PMF Indicator 3</p> <p><u>Target:</u> Score of 1 in SAI PMF Indicator 3 by December 2019</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> Partnership baseline methodology</p>	a. A comprehensive needs assessment report, including a review of the implementation of the 2014-2018 strategic plan	The needs assessment report was completed in January 2019, including a review of the previous strategic plan. It was based on stakeholder consultation events in September 2018 and a needs assessment workshop in October 2018.
	b. A briefing on stakeholder expectations, to also be included as an annex to the new stakeholder engagement strategy	A briefing on stakeholder expectations was completed in October 2018 and included in the new stakeholder engagement strategy and in the needs assessment report.
	c. A new strategic plan based on the needs assessment, informed by stakeholder expectations, and containing core elements for measuring effective performance of the SAI	The strategic plan is expected to be launched in August 2019. A strategic planning workshop was held in March 2019 where the planning team: developed a new vision, mission and list of core values; identified priority outcomes, outputs and capacities; analysed risks and resource needs; and updated a SWOT chart. The next step is consultations on the draft priorities with key stakeholders and then the actual drafting and design of the plan.
	d. A new operational plan with a clear performance and results orientation	Work on the operational plan is expected to begin in July 2019 and will include performance indicators and a focus on results.
	e. An annual performance report	Work on the annual performance report is expected to begin in November 2019. We will include an M&E plan as well as relevant and easy to access indicators in the strategic plan, and design the operational plan to be easily monitored and reported on.
	Other notes	If activities proceed as planned, the NAO will reach a score of 3 in SAI PMF Indicator 3 by December 2019.
<b>Outcome 2. The NAO is able to drive externally-supported capacity development projects in a coordinated and strategically based way</b>		
Project proposals have been finalized and submitted	a. Dedicated NAO staff and procedures	To date, responsibility for external support coordination has been spread across different members of the senior management team. There is a recognition, however, that

<p><u>Target:</u> Submission by December 2019</p>		<p>dedicated staff time will be needed and may be addressed through ongoing recruitment. Staffing and procedures will be discussed further in the autumn.</p>
<p><u>Measurement:</u> Partnership baseline methodology, qualitative assessment</p>	<p>b. Submitted project proposals for external support</p>	<p>Following the first partners meeting in March 2019, one informal project proposal was submitted (and approved) in March 2019 based on existing donor interest and the emerging strategic priorities. One other potential partner has said that support in the second half of this year is very likely and others have expressed strong interest.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3. The NAO leads by example in the areas of gender, diversity, and inclusion</b></p>		
<p>Women are represented in strategic and operational planning processes in a decision-making capacity, and gender, diversity, and inclusion issues are incorporated in the strategic plan</p>	<p>a. Measures around gender, diversity, and inclusion are included in the strategic plan</p>	<p>During the strategic planning workshop, participants also identified Gender &amp; Diversity as one of the priority capacities for the new strategic plan. Likely measures include the identification of a gender focal point, the development of a gender and diversity policy, and an audit of gender issues.</p>
<p><u>Target:</u> Confirmation by December 2019</p>	<p>Other notes</p>	<p>Women were very well represented in the needs assessment and strategic planning workshops, in meaningful roles and numbers far exceeding the ratio of women to men in the office.</p>
<p><u>Measurement:</u> Partnership baseline methodology, qualitative assessment</p>		

## Annex II – Detailed expenses breakdown

All figures below are reported in US dollars (at a rate of 0.11513 to NOK) and exclude staff costs.

Additional funding in red text.

Milestones and Activities	2018 actual	2019 expected	2020 expected	Details
Project functions are established	591	0	0	A MiFi and data package to cover through end of 2018
	0	186	0	Added data packages to cover through mid-2019 when we are hoping additional data will be unnecessary due to improved WiFi in the new office
The stakeholder expectations report is approved by the AG	3,252	0	0	Two 1-day consultation events at a local hotel, supported by an Africa-based peer
	0	+3,000	0	This addition would cover the attendance of two NAO participants in the joint AFROSAI-E and PAP-APP training on effective communication to be held in Freetown in August 2019
The needs assessment report is approved by the AG	9,420	0	0	A 4-day workshop at a local hotel, attended by 22 NAO staff members, supported by two Europe-based and one Africa-based peers
	0	601	0	A 2-day visit by the PAP-APP project manager (already in the region) to support the report drafting process
The strategic plan is approved by the AG and shared widely	0	2,499	0	A week-long visit by the PAP-APP project manager to debrief on the needs assessment process and initiate the strategic planning process
	0	12,489	0	A week-long workshop at a local hotel, attended by 13 NAO staff members, supported by two Europe-based and one Africa-based peers, with additional time spent before and after by the PAP-APP project lead to support the workshop preparation and the meeting with external partners
	0	1,440	0	A one-day validation event to be held at a local hotel, attended by 40 external participants
	0	2,000	0	Design and printing of the strategic plan
	0	1,502	0	A public launch event at the NAO office (refreshments provided), attended by up to 100 stakeholders
The operational plan is approved by the AG and communicated internally	0	850	0	A week-long visit by the PAP-APP project manager (already in the region) to attend the strategic plan launch, debrief on the strategic planning process, develop the external support plan and initiate the operational planning process
	0	7,729	0	A 3-day workshop at the NAO office (tea and lunch provided), attended by 75 NAO staff members, supported by one Europe-based and one Africa-based peers, with additional time spent before and after by the PAP-APP project lead to support the workshop preparation and the meeting with external partners
		+2,500		This addition would cover one more Europe-based peer with experience supporting strategic management and other capacity development projects to support the workshop
Monitoring, evaluation,	0	+2,500	0	This addition would cover a week-long visit by the PAP-APP project manager to debrief on the operational

and reporting systems are in place				planning process and initiate the annual performance reporting process
	0	0	2,000	Design and printing of the annual performance report
Project proposals have been approved by the AG and submitted	0	0	0	(Costs of in-country support are covered under the operational planning initiation visit)
The phase 1 report is approved by the steering committee	0			(Costs of NAO participation in the steering committee meetings are covered under the PAP-APP programme-level budget)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,280*</b>	<b>29,296</b> <b>+8,000</b>		

\* total including an additional \$17 in currency fluctuations charged to the account

## Annex III – Updated risk matrix

Updates in red text.

Risk	Description	SAI controls	Peer controls	Risk
<b>Availability of top management to participate in activities</b>	Top management are very busy and could be a bottleneck for activities if they aren't able to participate in activities that require their input	Delegate responsibilities as appropriate; revisit and iterate the activity plan on a regular basis to ensure good planning and timing of activities; act on the priority mandate and support from the AG	Revisit and iterate the activity plan on a regular basis to ensure good planning and timing of activities; minimize the workload burden on particularly busy SAI Team members, especially administrative tasks	low
<b>Availability of peers to support activities</b>	Demands in other project can result in slower or lighter support than desired, or gaps in the team's expertise due to unavailability for major projects	Be upfront about the support that is most important and most pressing	Be upfront about availability with the SAI and other peers, be flexible about the support approach and carefully consider prioritisation of activities	medium
<b>Poor communication within and between the SAI Team and Peer Team</b>	Information isn't communicated in good time	Make sure that all information is shared with all involved, <b>send out emailed updates when calls and in-person meetings are not necessary or possible, and the project co-leads keep in regular contact</b>	Same as the SAI Team	low
<b>Limited budget</b>	Budget constraints can prevent activities that could have a big impact but were not originally planned for	If there is something really important, consider funding it through the NAO's budget (which is itself extremely tight)	Continue with remote support as much as possible, be economic in spending and look into the possibility of supplementary/complementary support from other partners	medium
<b>Limited ICT tools</b>	Bad internet connections and limitations on internet use	Ensure that those working on the project are given priority access	Fund communication facilities, including some laptops, internet dongles, and a USB speaker	medium
<b>Uncoordinated support</b>	The support projects and capacity development programmes are not coordinated properly, leading to overlapping and perhaps even competing efforts	Be open with the Peer Team about new demands on their time related to other external support; host quarterly calls with the donors	Keep in regular contact with any other project leads and identify any potential conflicts and coordination opportunities as far in advance as possible; support the NAO to host quarterly calls with the donors	low