

Guam Experience on building SAI Capacity through SPMR



Over the past years, the Supreme Audit Institution of Guam encountered numerous challenges in the delivery of its mandate. Notwithstanding, the SAI has constantly been under pressure to demonstrate the value and benefits it contributes to the lives of citizens through its services. This apparent paradox lead to the question, “How can SAI Guam improve its performance to effectively deliver its mandate and meet the expectations of stakeholders?”



In a quest to improve its performance, SAI Guam identified, as a key priority, the need to strengthen its capacity. The starting point was to establish the baseline by conducting a performance assessment. In May 2017, the SAI Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and the PASAI Director of Practice Development independently assessed SAI Guam’s performance based on the SAI PMF. The results of the assessment were used to develop a new and streamlined Strategic Plan.

In March 2018, the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI) piloted the Strategy, Performance Measurement and Reporting (SPMR) initiative in the PASAI region. The programme was aimed at supporting SAIs to develop and maintain a strategic planning and management process, achieve strategic outcomes, and deliver value and benefits to citizens. The SPMR initiative was a perfect match to SAI Guam’s ambition to embark on a new and robust strategic management process. Accordingly, the SAI decided to join the SPMR initiative in April 2018.



Guam OPA office building

SAI Guam participated in the full SPMR SAI strategic management cycle, which commenced with a strategic planning training hosted in Tonga in April 2018. Guided by the SPMR methodology, the SAI developed a new and streamlined strategic plan 2019-2023, anchored on an objective and comprehensive analysis of its environment and stakeholder consultations. The SAI PMF assessment revealed the absence of annual operational planning in the SAI. Resulting from the SPMR interventions, SAI Guam has since adopted, as part of its routine organisational planning processes, the preparation of well-resourced annual operational plans that are clearly linked to the strategic plan.

The SAI PMF assessment results arrived at a time when Public Auditor Benjamin J.F. Cruz was appointed as the new Head of SAI Guam. The assessment results served as a solid base upon which Public Auditor Cruz could steer the SAI to greater heights of excellency in the delivery of its mandate. In March 2019, Public Auditor Cruz demonstrated his commitment to full transparency on the SAI’s performance by publishing the results of the SAI PMF assessment on the office’s website and provided copies to stakeholders.



Benjamin J.F. Cruz
Public Auditor

Based on the SAI PMF results and other analysis, SAI Guam identified the following strategic issues in its Strategic Plan 2019-2023:

(i) independence of the SAI

(ii) quality, timely and impactful audit reports

(iii) timely decision making on procurement appeals

(iv) effective engagement with stakeholders.

So far, it is evident from the SAI’s monitoring system that the pursuit of the strategic priorities is contributing to strengthening the SAI’s institutional, organisational and professional capacity. This has facilitated the SAI’s ability to demonstrate the value and benefits it is contributing to the citizens through its services. The steady rise in public trust and the earned goodwill of the oversight Chairperson in the Guam Legislature on the SAI’s independence, provide additional evidence that the implementation of the SAI’s strategy is on an upward trajectory.

But how did a small SAI with only 14 staff manage to successfully take the results of its SAI PMF assessment, develop and implement a new strategy? SAI Guam’s impressive results are anchored on strong commitment by SAI leadership. The Head of SAI allocated staff time and authorised staff directly involved in the SPMR initiative to attend the IDI training activities. SAI Guam is not eligible for development assistance under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD-DAC) assistance arrangements. As a result, the SAI participated in all the activities of the initiative at its own cost. By any standard, this level of commitment by the SAI Guam leadership is exemplary.



The amazing OPA team



Riza and Jerrick working on SPMR

SAI Guam has made its mark at the regional level by sharing its experience in the SPMR initiative with other SAIs within and outside the PASAI region. A resource person from the SAI, Mr. Jerrick Hernandez, is providing technical support to the strategic management team of SAI Philippines, one of the largest and leading SAIs in the ASOSAI region. In addition, Mr. Hernandez is occasionally invited by the IDI to participate in delivering regional SPMR training courses as a co-facilitator.

The strategic management journey embarked on by SAI Guam through its participation in the SPMR initiative is a demonstration of commitment to the principle of continuous improvement advocated by INTOSAI P-12. Against all odds, SAI Guam completed a SAI PMF assessment to establish a baseline for its performance, developed and implemented a streamlined strategic plan and focused on enhancing its ability to deliver value and benefits to the citizens. There is tangible evidence indicating that the implementation of the SAI’s strategy is yielding the desired results. Despite its size, SAI Guam has also made significant contributions to the regional and global implementation of SPMR.

SAI Guam’s participation in the SPMR initiative has been a worthwhile undertaking for the SAI.

“ Our office has been blessed with a tremendous experience working with true professionals at PASAI and IDI and we are grateful for their time and effort in providing training and conducting the PMF assessment. We took their assessment to heart and used it to reflect on where we needed to focus our limited resources on. There were a lot of moving parts put into motion as early as January 2017. As a result of all the resources provided to us by IDI and PASAI and the hard work and dedication of my staff, we were able to create a sound, impactful strategic plan that really focuses on how best to make our office a model for good governance in the Pacific. ”

Public Auditor Benjamin Cruz.



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