

Leadership in Strategic Planning – The Kenya Story



Nairobi

54,985,698

The Office of the Auditor-General of Kenya is one of the largest SAIs in the English-speaking region of Africa. It serves as a model institution in its regional community and supports its peers in many ways.

No surprise, then, that Ms. Nancy Gathungu of Kenya was more than willing to support OAG Botswana on their journey of a SAI PMF assessment and strategic planning in September 2019. She acted as a resource person within the Strategy, Performance Measurement, and Reporting (SPMR) initiative of IDI.

Ms. Gathungu quickly realised through her work with Botswana that Kenya shares many of the same organisational challenges as their peers and recommended her SAI to join the initiative. At this point the SAI was in a transitional phase with no appointed AG and a strategic plan about to run out.



Auditor-General Nancy Gathungu exercised leadership qualities to ensure the successful finalisation of the SAI PMF assessment during challenging times

At the same time, other SAIs in the region had advanced with the SPMR initiative. This did not discourage SAI Kenya from joining and aiming at catching up on the progress of their peers. On short notice, Ms. Gathungu compiled a team to conduct an accelerated SAI PMF assessment. IDI supported this by organising a SAI-level fast-tracked training for the team in Nairobi.

High levels of motivation among staff members ensured fast initial progress in the assessment; the SAI faced challenges in finalising it, however. The appointment process for a new AG took several months, leaving a leadership vacuum in the SAI, and preventing progress for a while.

After a process that took longer than anticipated, Ms. Gathungu was named the first female Auditor-General in the history of Kenya in 2020. She focused vigorously on finalising the SAI PMF assessment with her team, which was subsequently independently reviewed by an IDI-appointed reviewer. She formed a new team to take forward the SAI's strategic planning efforts and finalise a strategic plan towards mid-2021.



At a workshop in Nairobi, the OAG's SAI PMF team got trained and planned the SAI PMF assessment, under the able leadership of Elizabeth Odede (Sitting, far left)

During all that, Kenya had to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic much like the rest of the world. Intermittent lockdowns and working-from-home arrangements posed an additional challenge to the team while it was working on defining the SAI's strategic priorities based on its SAI PMF assessment.

Simultaneously, OAG Kenya continued to live up to its model character in the region, for example by supporting a gender and inclusiveness assessment of its peer institution in South Sudan. Learning from that experience, the SAI set out to conduct a similar assessment in Kenya.

The assessment provided an additional priority for the SAI's strategic plan. This ensures that the SAI will become more gender responsive. It also shows a continuous practice of the SAI to adopt new impulses and to learn from supporting its peers. The strategic planning team is now faced with a wide field of priorities and resource constraints that have become more pronounced during the pandemic.



View from the OAG's premises in Nairobi

While the SAI is still working on its final strategic plan, its main priorities are shaping up, based on its SAI PMF assessment, assessment of stakeholder views, and gender assessment: Improving the SAI's audit work by updating its methodology for emerging challenges, strengthening the SAIs communication towards its stakeholders, and streamlining the SAI's organisational management to make best use of its limited resources. While SAI Kenya is a provider of support to some of its neighbours, it also has benefited from support by its peers from Sweden for many years. The OAG of Sweden is committed to continue its support and align it to the new strategic plan from 2021 onwards.

OAG Kenya, under the leadership of its AG Gathungu has recently published an abridged version of its SAI PMF assessment and is about to publish its new strategic plan. It is committed to the quality of its audit, to improving organisational practices for ensured implementation of its strategic plan and to contributing to gender equality in its society. With those ambitions, the SAI of Kenya continuous to set standards for the peers in its region.



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