

Center for Audit Excellence Capability Statement

On October 1, 2015, the U.S. Government Accountability Office launched the Center for Audit Excellence. The Center’s mission is to promote good governance and build the institutional auditing capacity of domestic and international accountability organizations by providing high-quality fee-based training, technical assistance, and related products and services that leverage GAO’s experience as a global leader in public sector auditing. The U.S. Congress authorized the Center by law and established its mission and funding mechanism.

The Center can provide support to international public sector audit and oversight organizations including Supreme Audit Institutions, internal audit organizations at the national, provincial, state, and local levels; and legislative oversight bodies. The Center may also provide services to government agencies at the ministry, provincial, state, or local levels that are responsible for managing public resources to help them achieve their goals and demonstrate accountability and transparency to their constituencies.

In providing training and technical assistance services, the Center has the capacity to leverage GAO’s institutional knowledge and experience in applying audit standards, methodologies and leading practices. Center project consultants are drawn from a group of highly experienced audit professionals and trainers who have previously served as senior audit executives and managers, instructors, and professional development coaches at GAO and other organizations. They have skills in a wide array of audit topics and methodologies, and are committed to sharing knowledge to enhance the capacity of other accountability organizations. These professionals are former GAO employees who are no longer engaged in supporting GAO audit and oversight work. This approach helps ensure that the Center’s operations will not impact GAO’s independence and ability to provide a high level of service to the U.S. Congress.

CORE AREAS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The Center is well positioned to provide training, technical assistance, and other services such as conducting needs assessments and peer mentoring. The Center responds to specific requests for services and works in a collaborative fashion with other accountability organizations. After being contacted by an organization, the Center works with the organization to better understand the types of services that would address its needs, determine the most cost-effective way to provide services, and reach agreement on the scope of the services and associated fees. Fees collected are used to recover the Center’s labor, travel and other costs of providing services.

The Center can help support accountability organizations by providing support in the areas of performance and financial auditing, institutional capacity building, and leadership and supervision. During the first 15 months of operation, the Center responded to multiple requests from accountability organizations in the United States at the federal, state, and local levels for training on performance auditing, internal control, statistical methods and design, and message development and report writing. The Center also provided training and peer to peer audit mentoring to an SAI on information systems



control auditing. (See next section for more details on these projects.) Core areas of capacity building services are shown below:

Performance Auditing:

The Center can help accountability organizations improve their capacity to conduct performance audits that assess the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of public-funded programs and activities in accordance with International Standards for Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs). For example, the Center can provide training classes, mentoring and technical assistance services to help auditors understand and implement ISSAIs for performance audits; design and apply audit methodologies; gather and analyze data using appropriate standards of evidence, and draft clear, concise and well-supported reports that communicate audit findings and recommendations in a convincing manner. Also, the Center can help organizations enhance their capacity to undertake specialized performance audits on a wide range of topics, including procurement, information technology, environment, public debt, financial markets, revenue collection, health care, social services, extractive industries, public infrastructure, and many other topics.

Financial Audits

The Center can provide training and mentoring to help accountability organizations effectively implement financial audit standards in accordance with the ISSAIs and leverage GAO's significant expertise in developing financial audit standards and conducting financial audits. Center staff can train and mentor staff at all levels of an organization to implement methodologies and techniques for planning and conducting financial audits; incorporate risk-based approaches; apply evidence standards, and draft financial audit reports that are complete, clear, concise and balanced.

Institutional Capacity Building

The Center can provide training and technical assistance and services to help audit organizations, legislative oversight bodies, and other types of government public financial management organizations to develop and implement sound strategic plans, internal controls, quality assurance frameworks, human capital strategies, communication and outreach strategies, change management approaches, and performance management systems. The Center can also support needs assessments conducted under the SAI Performance Measurement Framework to identify capacity building needs. In addition, the Center can help organizations to assess their independence and internal governance and ethics frameworks and develop and implement strategies and proposals for improvement. Finally, the Center can help oversight bodies, such as legislatures, to strengthen their processes for conducting oversight of government funding and programs, and using the results of audits to improve economy, efficiency and results.



Leadership and Supervision

The Center can train and mentor individuals to hone their leadership and supervisory skills in effectively managing the planning and reporting of financial, performance and other types of audits. It can also provide training and/or technical assistance to senior managers on topics such as engaging effectively with stakeholders such as the public and media, and leading and implementing organizational change.

PROJECT HISTORY

To date, the Center has provided training to one Supreme Audit Institution and is in discussions with other international accountability organizations and donors on several other potential projects. The Center's first international capacity building project was a three phased project to provide IT auditing training and technical support to an SAI. During the first phase of the donor-supported project, the Center provided a week long, highly interactive IT audit training course. The Center is currently working with the SAI on the second phase, which involves providing peer-to-peer mentoring on the SAI's first IT audit since the training was provided. The third phase will involve providing quality assurance support. The scope of other projects currently under discussion involve conducting needs assessments, providing strategic planning support and providing training in various areas such as performance auditing. The Center works to engage appropriate subject matter experts specific to each request.

The Center has also had experience in providing training in a wide variety of subjects to accountability organizations within the United States. Within the past 15 months, the Center has provided training to internal and external organizations on performance auditing, internal control, audit planning, statistical methods, and message development and report writing.

CENTER STAFF

The Center operates in an agile manner and has taken steps to minimize costs while providing quality fee-based training and technical services. Because a core operating principle is that Center services will be driven by demand from other accountability organizations, the Center uses a flexible staffing approach to increase and decrease staff as needed to support projects. This approach helps minimize Center operating costs and ultimately the project costs. To support projects, the Center has a cadre of over 80 former GAO senior executives and audit managers who have many years of experience in leading and conducting financial and performance audits and mentoring and coaching staff members. In addition to having broad experience in the field of auditing, Center staff have skills in a wide array of specialized topics such as information technology, procurement, statistical sampling, audit methodologies, environmental issues, financial institutions, health care, strategic planning, performance management, human capital planning, and internal control. Many Center staff have also served as instructors for Center training classes and GAO's internal training center. In addition, numerous Center staff have experience working with other SAIs and donor organizations. Upon receiving an inquiry or request for services and after preliminary discussions, the Center Director consults the Center's roster of staff to identify those staff that have the specific skills and experience to best meet the client organization's needs.



The Center’s Director and Assistant Director are both former senior executives at GAO who have led many complex audits; testified before the United States Congress on the results of GAO audits; served as adjunct faculty for GAO’s internal training center; and led and managed capacity building projects with other SAIs and federal, state and local audit organizations in the United States (see attached bios). The Center maintains resumes for numerous other project specialists on its roster that we can make available as needed to support specific projects.

Specifics of the SAI / INTOSAI Body as a Provider of Support

Please complete and include the following table to provide donors with an overview of issues relating to potential funding and contractual arrangements.

<p>1. <i>Is the body a legal entity capable of entering into contracts?</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence is an office of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and has the authority to enter into agreements with public sector accountability organizations, donors, and other organizations.</p>
<p>2. <i>Does the body receive core funding (i.e. not linked to specific projects) that it <u>could</u> utilise to support activities under the GCP? (If so, provide details)</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence establishes and collects fees to recover the cost of training, technical assistance and related products and services that it provides to other organizations.</p>
<p>3. <i>Is the body able to provide its staff to support GCP activities as in-kind support? If so, please indicate possible volumes and whether short or long term.</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence is not able to provide in-kind staff support for GCP activities. As noted above, the Center operates on a cost recovery basis.</p>
<p>4. <i>Is the body able to provide any other forms of in-kind support, e.g. provision of training facilities? (If so, provide details)</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence can provide training facilities at GAO as part of a capacity building agreement if it receives reimbursement for labor and other costs associated with providing training and if conducting training at GAO is the most cost effective approach to supporting GCP activities.</p>
<p>5. <i>Is the body required to operate on a full cost recovery basis?¹</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence must establish fees for training, technical assistance and related products and services to operate on a full, cost recovery basis.</p>
<p>6. <i>Does the body have the mandate to compete for service delivery contracts against other INTOSAI providers of support?</i></p>	<p>As a matter of policy, the Center for Audit Excellence does not respond to Requests for Proposals or compete for service delivery agreements against other providers. The Center may engage in dialogue with other organizations and provide them with documentation such as course syllabi and statements of work so that organizations who are considering working with the Center can obtain a good understanding of the services that the Center can provide.</p>
<p>7. <i>Does the body have the mandate to compete for service delivery contracts against private sector providers of support?</i></p>	<p>As a matter of policy, the Center for Audit Excellence does not compete for service delivery agreements against other providers.</p>

¹ Defined as covering full staff costs, reimbursables and a reasonable allocation / apportionment of the organisation’s overheads and indirect costs.



<p>8. <i>Is the body restricted to work in specific countries or regions, or does it have specific focus countries or regions? (If so, provide details)</i></p>	<p>The Center is authorized to work with accountability organizations anywhere in the world. Prior to accepting projects, the Center for Audit Excellence has a vetting process that considers issues such as potential security risks and the extent to which projects are consistent with broader United States policy and interests.</p>																								
<p>9. <i>Does the body have any preference for providing support under tier 1 or tier 2?</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence is open to providing Tier 1 or Tier 2 support as long as the services are (1) consistent with the Center’s mission and core competencies and (2) personnel with the specific skills and expertise required are available to meet the project’s needs within the desired timeframe.</p>																								
<p>10. <i>Does the body restrict its support to countries with a specific administrative heritage or type of SAI (E.g. Court model SAIs, Parliamentary model SAIs)</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence can work with all types of SAIs and is open to supporting countries’ capacity building efforts when Center personnel with the specific skills and expertise required are available to meet the project’s needs within the desired timeframe.</p>																								
<p>11. <i>Does the body have a dedicated department responsible for coordinating and implementing peer-to-peer capacity development support?</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence has a small core staff who coordinate the Center’s activities and may bring on additional support if appropriate.</p>																								
<p>12. <i>In what languages can the body provide comprehensive support (I.e. respond to demand for support in a wide variety of subject areas, with a pool of possible experts in each area) or ad hoc support?</i></p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Comprehensive</th> <th>Ad Hoc</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Arabic</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>X</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>French</td> <td></td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Portuguese</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Russian</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spanish</td> <td></td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other: (Please state)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Comprehensive	Ad Hoc	Arabic			English	X		French		X	Portuguese			Russian			Spanish		X	Other: (Please state)		
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<p>13. <i>Would the body be willing to act as the lead responsible body for provision of long-term support under the GCP?</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence is willing to serve as the lead for long-term support of SAI capacity building projects.</p>																								
<p>14. <i>Would the body be interested in taking on a supporting role for provision of support, in partnership with another SAI / INTOSAI body which acts as the lead responsible body? (E.g. an emerging provider partnering with a mature provider).</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence is willing to serve in a supporting role working with other SAI/INTOSAI organizations where appropriate.</p>																								
<p>15. <i>In order to support a capacity building project in a peer SAI, how long in advance does this need to be planned to incorporate it into the SAI’s annual work plan?</i></p>	<p>The Center’s mission is to provide capacity building services and its organizational structure is designed to be able to quickly respond to requests for services. Depending on the scope of the project, the Center typically works with other organizations for 2 to 6 months to plan for and reach agreement on the provision of support for a capacity building project.</p>																								
<p>16. <i>Please include any additional information relating to the body as a potential provider of support to initiatives under the GCP.</i></p>	<p>The Center for Audit Excellence opened on October 1, 2015, and has the goal of enhancing the capacity of domestic and international accountability organizations to help improve</p>																								



**CENTER FOR
AUDIT EXCELLENCE**

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

government performance, transparency, and the sound use of public funds. In April 2016 the Center signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Agency for International Development that establishes a framework for collaboration on training and technical assistance efforts aimed at enhancing the capabilities of audit organizations in developing countries. For more information on the Center, please go to our webpage at:
<http://www.gao.gov/resources/centerforauditexcellence/overview>



Janet St. Laurent



Ms Janet St Laurent is the Director of the Center for Audit Excellence, an organization at GAO whose mission is to build institutional auditing capacity and promote good governance by providing high quality training, technical assistance, and related services to domestic and international accountability organizations. As Director of the Center, Ms St Laurent is responsible for leading the development of Center training and technical assistance services and projects; developing relationships and partnerships with domestic and international organizations with similar goals to build institutional audit capacity; recruiting and supervising Center staff; and developing and implementing sound business processes and internal controls to manage Center activities and facilitate achievement of the Center’s mission.

From January 2008 to January 2014, Ms St Laurent served as Managing Director of GAO’s Defense Capabilities and Management team. Her principal duties included managing GAO’s work on defense issues including force structure, readiness, logistics, infrastructure, defense budget, emerging threats, and military and civilian personnel issues. During her tenure, she led her team to achieve more than \$30 billion in financial savings as a result of recommendations made to and implemented by the Department of Defense. She has testified numerous times before congressional committees, including the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. As Managing Director, she also mentored and supported the professional development of 250 staff members by developing team-based training, serving as an Adjunct Faculty member in GAO’s Learning Center, and hiring and promoting staff.

While serving as Managing Director, Ms St Laurent was also appointed by the Comptroller General to co-lead GAO’s first two congressionally-mandated annual reports examining duplication, overlap, and fragmentation among federal government programs. In that capacity, she worked with numerous GAO teams to develop a methodology and approach and developed a first-of-a-kind report that summarized GAO’s analysis. She also testified before the bi-partisan Presidential Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (Simpson-Bowles Commission).

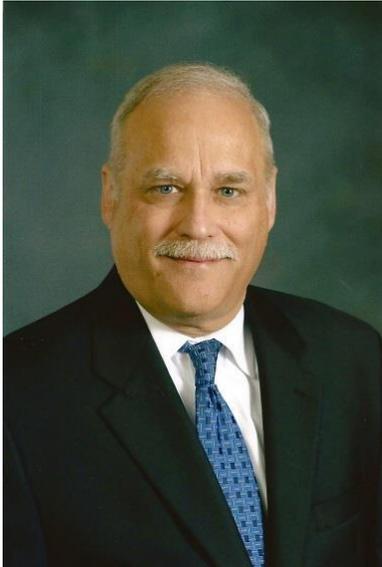
Ms St Laurent received a Master degree in Public Administration from Syracuse University and a Master of Science degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Ms St Laurent has received numerous awards at GAO including the Comptroller General leadership award. In 2015, she received the Distinguished Public Administration Alumni Award from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. In 2011, she was selected as a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America



Medal finalist in recognition of her work on national security issues. She has participated in numerous public speaking engagements, including appearances on CSPAN, Bloomberg News, and public radio.

JOHN HUTTON



Mr. John Hutton is a member of the Center for Audit Excellence, an organization at GAO whose mission is to build institutional auditing capacity and promote good governance by providing high quality training, technical assistance, and related services to domestic and international accountability organizations. Mr. Hutton supports the Center Director in overseeing the operations and management of Center projects and activities. His responsibilities include conducting outreach with domestic and international organizations to discuss and develop Center projects; assisting with the design and delivery of Center training courses and technical assistance services; and developing and supporting Center business processes.

Mr. Hutton served the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for nearly 35 years, most recently as a Director for the Acquisition and Sourcing Management Team. In this capacity, he provided direct support to congressional committees and members on a range of acquisition and sourcing issues aimed at improving the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security and other federal agencies' ability to buy products and services efficiently and effectively. Such support included testifying before Congress as an expert witness nearly two dozen times on his work. Throughout his career, he planned, supervised, and executed performance audits on a wide range of issues that led to numerous reports, testimonies, and recommendations for improving federal agency programs and activities. Prior to his appointment to the Senior Executive Service, he led reviews on such diverse issues as Iraq and Afghanistan reconstruction, U.S.-Mexico border infrastructure, US and international efforts to combat AIDS, the promotion of U.S. exports, and tax policy and administration. Mr. Hutton also served in GAO's European Office in Frankfurt, Germany, where he traveled and focused largely on defense and foreign affairs issues. In conducting and leading performance audits, Mr. Hutton ensured that all work performed was conducted with competence, integrity, objectivity, and independence as prescribed by the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Mr. Hutton also served as an Adjunct Faculty member at GAO helping to develop internal training courses and delivering training in the areas of report message development and review, as well as preparing for testimony.



Mr. Hutton received a Masters in National Security Strategy from the National War College, a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School, and a Bachelor of Arts, Public Administration, from American International College. He also attended the Senior Executive Fellows Program at Harvard and MIT's Seminar XXI on Foreign Politics, International Relations, and the National Interest.

Mr. Hutton has received numerous awards at GAO for outstanding performance, including GAO's Distinguished Service Award and Meritorious Service Award. He also received the 2014 Syracuse University Maxwell School Public Administration Alumni Award.