

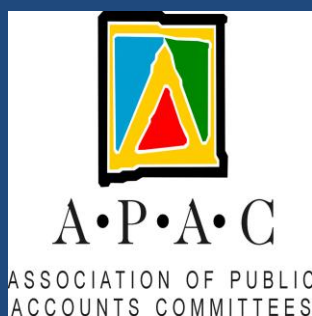
# ***SAME INDICATORS***

*(Pty Ltd) Registration No. 2012/048922/07*

**SAME (SOCIAL  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION)  
INDICATORS FOR  
GOVERNANCE AND  
HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT**

## **REPORT**

### **EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF APAC TRAINING INTERVENTIONS BETWEEN 2009 AND 2011**



*This evaluation was sponsored by the Swiss Agency for  
Development and Cooperation*



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
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**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC**

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23 November 2012

# Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 3
- Report Overview ..... 6
- Section 1: Evaluation Approach – *What did the Evaluation Involve?*..... 7
  - 1.1 The Role of the Public Accounts Committee..... 7
  - 1.2 The Importance of PAC Training and Staff Development and APAC’s role..... 10
  - 1.3 Challenges facing PACs and APAC support for Training, Research and Development ... 10
  - 1.4 Evaluation: Scope of Work ..... 12
  - 1.5 Methodology ..... 13
    - 1.5.2 Evaluation Process ..... 15
- Section 2: Training Analysis – *Were APAC Training Courses Effectively Designed, Delivered and Assessed?* ..... 18
  - 2.1 Introduction..... 18
  - 2.2 Course Design..... 19
    - 2.2.2. Develop a Course Framework ..... 21
    - 2.2.3. Identify content ..... 22
    - 2.2.4. Identify training methods..... 23
  - 2.3 Course Delivery ..... 25
    - 2.3.1 Learners ..... 25
    - 2.3.2 Facilitators ..... 28
    - 2.3.3 Course Administration ..... 29
  - 2.4 Course Assessment and Evaluation ..... 31
    - 2.4.1. Levels of evaluation ..... 32
- Section 3: Course Content Analysis – *Did APAC Training Courses Cover Required Capacities?* ..... 36
  - 3.1 Introduction..... 36
  - 3.2 Findings..... 37
  - 3.3 Conclusion..... 42
- Section 4: Capacity Analysis – *How did participants rate their current capacities and perceive APAC courses to have contributed to their capacities?* ..... 43
  - 4.1 Introduction..... 43
  - 4.2 Perceptions of current capacities ..... 44

4.3 Perceived contributions of course(s) in strengthening capacities .....	47
4.4 Conclusion.....	52
Section 5: Recommendations for Future PAC Training Courses .....	53
5.1 Develop a Training Framework.....	53
5.2 Recommendations.....	54
Annexure A: List of Skills and Capacities .....	55
Annexure B: Questionnaire .....	57
Introduction .....	57
A. Background Information .....	57
B. Quality of the Training Courses presented .....	58
C. Capacities .....	58

## Executive Summary

Public Accounts Committees (PACs) play a crucial role in the oversight of public finances. They are required to exercise scrutiny over public sector financial statements and financial management at least annually. In addition to establishing whether funds have been spent in accordance with the purpose approved by the Legislature, the focus of their work has now been widened to include questions about whether funds have been spent 'efficiently, effectively and economically'. This raises the question of whether PAC members and support staff have the training necessary to perform their mandate.

The Association of Public Accounts Committees of South Africa (APAC) was established in 1997 precisely for purposes of the sharing of best practices between PACs and to facilitate necessary training. To assist APAC in achieving its aim to promote the effectiveness of all Public Accounts Committees, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) provided financial support to APAC for training interventions between 2010 and 2011. At the end of 2011, SDC provided additional financial support to conduct an evaluation of APAC training. The APAC Executive suggested that the scope of the training evaluation not be limited to training conducted by APAC in 2010 and 2011, but also include 2009.

During the evaluation period of January 2009 to December 2011, APAC presented a total of four short courses to PAC members and support staff in South Africa, as well as 2 courses in the SADC region (Namibia and Botswana). The scope of work for the evaluation was, however, limited to the impact of South African training interventions rolled out for members of Public Account Committees (PAC) in the nine provincial legislatures and National Assembly (NA) from 2009 to 2011.

**Methodology.** In the absence of a baseline assessment of the capacities of PAC members and support staff (conducted prior to the initiation of training interventions), or a clearly stated and measurable set of specific learning outcomes articulated prior to training, the starting point for the evaluation involved the development of a list of 10 *core* PAC capacities and skills by *SAME Indicators (Pty)*. This list provided a basis for the evaluation team to review the content of the courses presented and to generate comparisons between core capacities and the actual content provided during training. It also provided the basis for interview questions regarding PAC members and support staffs' perceptions of their current capacities and the perceived contribution of APAC courses to their acquisition of core capacities. A total intended (purposive) sample of 46 PAC members and support staff (specifically researchers) was identified for interviewing. Seventy per cent of the intended sample (32 out of 46) was achieved.

### Findings: Analysis of APAC Training Materials

This analysis set out to establish whether APAC training courses offered during the evaluation period were effectively designed, delivered, and assessed. It also evaluated course content against the core capacities and skills required by PACs.

**Design.** It was found that the APAC training courses were designed based on requested topics from PAC members and support staff rather than on the basis of a needs analysis or the prior identification of key skills and capacities required by PAC members and support staff to fulfil their roles. No course framework was produced prior to the design of each course.

**Delivery.** The analysis of APAC training course delivery found that this was overly dependent on the provision of lectures by subject-matter specialists, rather than relying on the use of

participatory exercises that would engage participants more effectively and transfer the skills and capacities PACs require for effective oversight. Feedback from interviewed training participants repeatedly highlighted the need to revise the training methods used. The course presented in August 2012 showed a marked improvement in its use of participatory methodologies, although learning was hampered by a a distracting venue (Emperor's Palace).

**Assessment.** While feedback from course participants was gathered after the training courses, the extent to which PAC members and support staff successfully achieved the (unarticulated) learning outcomes of the courses was not assessed. It is therefore impossible to determine whether learning actually took place. Course assessments and other necessary training records were not maintained and consequently could not be made available for evaluation.

**Content.** The analysis of APAC training course content, which was compared to a list of core capacities required by PAC members and support staff, highlighted a number of gaps in current APAC training course content. Whilst certain capacities, such as the ability to evaluate financial statements, were covered in all courses, other core capacities were either omitted or only partially covered. For instance, the capacity to understand the internal control systems of the departments or agencies overseen by South African national and provincial PACs, and the capacity to invoke disciplinary processes, were not covered at all. The capacity to hold effective PAC hearings, and the capacity to draw up PAC operational plans, were only partially covered.

### *Findings: Interviews*

**Perceptions of current capacities.** PAC members and support staff were asked to rate their current capacity to perform their roles in respect of each of 10 core capacities using the following scale:

1. *I do not understand this / I am unable to do this*
2. *I do not fully understand this / I am unsure of how to do this*
3. *I mostly understand this / I am fairly confident of how to do this*
4. *I understand this / I am confident I know how to do this*

PAC members and support staff both indicated a high degree of confidence in their capacity to fulfil their mandate. PAC members rated their capacity between 3 and 4 (3.4) on the above scale on average, while support staff rated their capacities similarly high (3.3 on average).

**Perception of course contribution to current capacities.** On average 3 out of 4 PAC members perceived the APAC courses to have contributed significantly to their acquisition of the 10 core capacities (an average of 74% said the courses had contributed, an average of 13.2% said they had not, and an average of 13 % said they had partly contributed). By contrast, 1 out of 2 PAC researchers perceived the courses to have contributed significantly to their current capacities (an average of 48.3%). An average of 31% believed the courses had not contributed to their acquisition of core capacities, while an average of 19.3% believed the courses contributed partially to the acquisition of these capacities.

**Analysis.** Despite the high levels of confidence in the 10 assessed capacities, the training analysis and content analysis call into question both the basis for this level of confidence and for the perceived contribution of the courses to strengthening certain core capacities. The verification of PAC member and support staff perceptions regarding their capacities fell beyond the scope of the evaluation. For future reference, however, APAC is advised to conduct a rigorous training needs analysis prior to future training to more accurately assess the acquisition

of skills and capacities by training participants against articulated learning outcomes. Only on this basis will APAC be able to determine the actual capacity of members and support staff and the contribution of training interventions to strengthening identifiable capacities.

### **Recommendations**

The evaluation team recommends that:

- APAC develop a training framework based on the same principles as **a results framework or a results chain**. This framework should identify the relationship between future training programme *activities* (e.g. the development of training tools), *outputs* (e.g. training materials), *immediate outcomes* (changes in thinking/behaviour of participants against baseline measures), *intermediate outcomes* (continued changes in thinking/behaviour) and final outcomes or *impacts* (long-term changes in capacity). This framework should be informed by a baseline analysis.
- Future APAC training course content, training methods, and training materials, as well as course delivery, should be based on the above framework.
- Future course assessment should also be informed by this framework and should make use of pre- and post-course assessment questionnaires, as well as other ways of measuring intermediate and long-term outcomes.

The evaluation report concludes with the following practical recommendations to the APAC Executive:

- Appoint a Director of Training (or training manager) and establish a dedicated training directorate within the APAC Secretariat.
- Develop a basic level training course on PAC Oversight, including generic oversight tools, training materials and workshops designed to facilitate participatory learning by participants.
- Appoint a team of qualified facilitators to provide training of trainers (ToT), including training on how to undertake mapping of local regulatory provisions, undertake a baseline and needs analysis, and how to adapt generic tools, materials and workshops to local conditions.
- Appoint a training course coordinator and administrator.
- Develop an intermediate and advanced course in PAC Oversight to cater for the needs of more experienced and longer-standing PAC members and support staff (after successfully piloting the basic level PAC Oversight course).

## Report Overview

This report is divided into five main sections:

Section 1: Evaluation Approach – what did the evaluation involve?

Section 2: Training Analysis – were APAC training courses effectively designed, delivered and assessed?

Section 3: Content Analysis – did APAC training courses cover required capacities

Section 4: Capacity Analysis – participants' perceptions of their current capacities and the contribution of APAC courses to strengthening these.

Section 5: Recommendations for Future PAC Training Programmes

The first section of the report describes the methodology adopted by the evaluation team in conducting this evaluation. The methodological approach and evaluation process adopted are informed by an understanding of the role played by PACs and by the capacities required by PAC members and support staff to perform this role.

The second section of the report sets out an analysis of the design, delivery and assessment of the four courses presented by APAC in South Africa during the period under review.

The third section provides an analysis of the course content based on the extent to which the courses addressed identified skills and capacities required by PAC members and support staff to fulfill their mandate.

The fourth section explores how training recipients perceive their current capacities. It also discusses whether training recipients feel the courses contributed to improving these capacities.

The findings and recommendations for sections 2 - 4 are based on interviews conducted with PAC members and support staff who attended training and a desk-based review of the training material available, as well as correspondence with the APAC secretariat and interview responses from training recipients.

The report concludes in section five with a summary of recommendations for the design and implementation of future APAC (and/or SADCOPAC) training programmes.

## Section 1: Evaluation Approach – *What did the Evaluation Involve?*

### 1.1 The Role of the Public Accounts Committee

#### 1.1.1 The Vital (But Changing) Role of PACs in South Africa

Public Accounts Committees within South Africa's Parliament and nine Provincial Legislatures are established in terms of the provisions of sections 55 (2) and 114 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Constitution requires Parliament and Provincial Legislatures to provide mechanisms to maintain oversight of the exercise of the Executive authority, including the implementation of legislation, as well as oversee all organs of state within their respective domains. At the start of the financial accountability cycle the Legislature must authorise the collection of public revenues and appropriate funds for spending. At the end of the cycle it must review and approve spending that has been incurred.

Public Accounts Committees (PACs), or Standing Committees on Public Accounts (SCOPAs) as they are more commonly known, play a crucial role in the oversight of public finances. They are required to exercise scrutiny over public sector financial statements and financial management at least annually. The in-year oversight of departments and public entities is mostly carried out by portfolio committees in Parliament and Provincial Legislatures.

The traditional focus of PACs has been on year-end or *ex post facto* oversight. This involves reviewing external audits of the financial statements of departments and public entities – undertaken by the Auditor-General – to establish whether appropriated funds were properly and effectively utilised. However, given the increasing importance of improving service delivery in recent years, highlighted by the increasing prevalence of service delivery protests, many PACs have now started to exercise some degree of in-year oversight.<sup>1</sup> The traditional PAC focus on establishing whether funds have been spent in accordance with the purpose approved by the Legislature has now been widened to include questions about whether funds have been spent 'efficiently, effectively and economically'.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.1.2 Powers of PACs

Public Accounts Committees have significant and formidable powers, including the power to initiate investigations.<sup>3</sup> Sections 56 and 115 of the Constitution give the Committees of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures the power to summon any person or institution to appear before them to give evidence on oath or to produce documents. The Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act spells out procedures for enforcing the constitutional power to compel people to appear before a Committee. National Treasury

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<sup>1</sup> A Survey of the Oversight Practices of Public Accounts Committees in South Africa, 2007, APAC, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> These terms can be defined as follows: Economical – to procure resources of the right quality in the right quantities at the right time and place at the lowest possible cost. Efficient – to achieve the optimal relationship between the output of goods, services or results and the resources used to produce them. Effective – to achieve policy objectives, operational goals and other intended effects.

<sup>3</sup> These derive from the Constitution; the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act 4 of 2004; the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 as well as Rules of Parliament.

guidelines to accounting officers of government departments and public entities warn those heads of departments and entities who fail to take effective action to prevent the misuse of public funds that PACs (SCOPA) may recommend sanctions against them 'to the executive authority, ranging from salary deductions, demotions to dismissal. In serious cases it may also recommend that charges of financial misconduct be brought'.<sup>4</sup> The South African National Treasury deems PACs to be 'the ultimate arbiter of the financial performance of accounting officers'.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.1.3 PAC's role and responsibilities in the oversight process**

The Public Finance Management Act, 1999, and Public Service Act, 1994, set out the reporting requirements of all national and provincial government departments and public entities and provide regulations and guidelines for the production of key public resource management documents. These include strategic plans, service delivery plans, in-year financial statements, the production of internal audit reports, externally-audited annual financial statements and annual reports.

To fulfil its oversight functions and meet its responsibilities, once the annual reports of relevant departments and entities have been tabled in the Legislature, the PAC is required to review, examine and evaluate the financial and administrative activities of these departments and public entities.

The committee's responsibilities are onerous, and the scope of its work is broad. In reviewing the annual report alone PAC's are expected to engage with:

- Issues raised in the General Report of the Auditor-General on Audit Outcomes;
- Issues of financial probity (e.g. fraud), as highlighted in the audit report or disclosed in the management report or in notes to the financial statements, or that come to the committee's attention in any other way;
- Compliance with the PFMA and associated Treasury Regulations
- The interrogation and evaluation of instances of over-expenditure (relative to appropriations), unauthorised expenditures and the authorisation or non-authorisation of these expenditures for purposes of drawing up the Finance Bill, or initiating processes to recover the funds;
- The interrogation of instances relating to irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
- The functioning of risk management systems, including fraud prevention, financial management systems, personnel management systems (e.g. leave management and disciplinary processes).
- Supply chain management and procurement, particularly large tenders, large capital projects and Public Private Partnership deals;
- The disposal of significant state assets, and any major financial or related losses suffered by government.<sup>6</sup>

The key mechanism of oversight through which the PAC performs its oversight functions is via the holding of a hearing where executing authorities of departments and public entities and other witnesses are required to account for expenditure and performance in implementing

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<sup>4</sup> Guide for Accounting Officers. Public Finance Management Act, October 2000, National Treasury, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.12, states: "Should accounting officers not implement appropriate financial management measures, or not adequately address audit queries, the relevant public accounts committee is expected to encourage executive authorities to utilise the specified sanctions."

<sup>6</sup> Guide for Legislative Oversight through Annual Reports. 26 January 2005, National Treasury

necessary financial management mechanisms and controls. This is preceded by preparatory meetings, where committee members are briefed by the Auditor-General as well as researchers forming part of the committee's support staff.

#### **1.1.4 Key role-players in the oversight process**

The key role-players within the PAC oversight process are as follows:

##### **The Auditor-General**

Undertakes audits of each national and provincial government department and public entity<sup>7</sup> and produces audit reports. These reports are the primary source document for PAC meetings. The Auditor-General's office meets with PAC, prior to committee hearings and briefs committee members on key findings and issues. In its discussions the committee draws on the Auditor-General's Office as an expert advisor.

##### **Committee Support Staff**

A number of support staff are required to facilitate the work of the PAC. These include the PAC coordinator; PAC researchers; secretary to the PAC Chairperson; Hansard official (responsible for ensuring that an accurate record of all proceedings is kept); legal advisor; Committee assistants; and, staff of Auditor General (who provide expert advice and specialised support).

##### **Committee Members**

PACs are composed of the following:

- Committee Chairperson – the norm is for the Chair to be a member of an opposition party
- Committee Members – MPs and MPLs appointed in proportion to party representation

##### **Witnesses**

A number of potential witnesses can be called to appear before a PAC hearing. The key witness is usually the 'accounting officer' for the relevant entity. This person is usually accompanied by senior officials who have an understanding of the issues under examination. However, additional witnesses could include auditors; subject matter experts; and, researchers from academic institutions or NGOs.

#### **1.1.5 Key PAC Outputs**

The key outputs of the committee generally include:

- Identifying matters for investigation
- Undertaking or commissioning investigations
- Making findings and recommendations
- Producing reports containing findings and recommendations
- Publishing reports by tabling these in the relevant Legislature
- Communicating their findings by holding press conferences
- Tracking the implementation of committee resolutions (for instance, by monitoring whether recommended actions appear in departmental/entity strategic plans, whether required activities and necessary materials are accurately costed and included in

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<sup>7</sup> The Auditor-General also undertakes audits of all Municipalities, which fall outside of the scope of this evaluation.

relevant budgets, whether indicated activities are effectively implemented and whether desired outcomes are achieved).

## **1.2 The Importance of PAC Training and Staff Development and APAC's role**

Given the above responsibilities and key outputs, it is easy to understand why the generally accepted international practice is that PAC 'members are exposed to specialised training and professional development'.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, however, given the vital role played by committee support staff it is equally important that key PAC support staff are also exposed to necessary specialised training and professional development.

The Association of Public Accounts Committees of South Africa (APAC) was established in 1997 precisely for purposes of the sharing of best practices between PACs and role in facilitating necessary training. APAC is a voluntary association consisting of representatives of all PACs in South Africa (at the point of establishment it only included Parliament and the 9 Provincial Legislatures). Its aim is to promote the effectiveness of all Public Accounts Committees and their members in order to more effectively and efficiently perform their oversight function. The APAC sub-committee on Training, Research and Development is primarily concerned with training and professional development of PAC members and support staff.

## **1.3 Challenges facing PACs and APAC support for Training, Research and Development**

Because MPs and MPLs sitting on PAC are likely to also sit on other committees, they are inevitably subject to time pressures. Given these time pressures, and given the expectation of increasing in-year monitoring activity, PACs need to prioritise key issues that the committee will pursue over the course of the oversight year. It is also advisable to effect a clear division of labour between different committee members, researchers and support staff. The ability to track these issues throughout the year requires some form of project management capacity as well as a strategic plan and mechanism for tracking issues and undertaking investigations. This mechanism should be capable of capturing information on:

- the issue to be tracked
- the member responsible for tracking the issue
- any resolution taken on the issue
- date of tabling of the resolution and adoption by committee, date referred to department, date of response, action taken, previous reports containing the same resolution

To ensure their practical efficiency, PACs need to draw up strategic plans setting out their annual oversight agenda and list of planned activities. This should take key events on the Legislature calendar into account. In the absence of such a plan, the committee may end up responding to issues on an ad hoc basis. This requires project management skills on the part of the committee coordinator, chairperson and other support staff and raises the question of appropriate training for this purpose.

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<sup>8</sup> Cobus Botes, Adopting the Public Accounts Committee Model for Financial Oversight in South African Municipalities, March 2011, Master of Public Administration, Thesis, University of Stellenbosch.

The Constitution also requires the National Assembly and Legislatures to facilitate public involvement in their processes. This raises the question of what capacity PACs and their support structures have to convene public meetings, facilitate public submissions and petitions, host press conferences and conduct media interviews (with print, radio and television journalists).

The role of the PAC chair is clearly a critical factor in ensuring the successful functioning of the committee. It involves:

- managing the committee's budget
- ensuring that meeting agendas are drawn up
- directing and chairing committee debates
- identifying witnesses, subject matter experts and organisations to deliver briefings to the committee
- initiating meetings

This raises the question of what training and support is offered to PAC chairpersons to fulfil this role.

The committee co-ordinator also performs a vital administrative role in support of PAC to ensure that the affairs of the committee are handled efficiently and effectively. This includes:

- issuing notices as directed by the chair
- compiling minutes and reports (to be approved by the committee)
- acting as custodian of committee documents
- advising the chairperson and committee in respect of standing rules and orders
- ensuring that the business of the committee proceeds effectively
- deals with correspondence of the committee as per resolution of the committee or instructions of the chair
- accounts for expenditure incurred by the committee
- organising meeting venues

Again, this raises the question of what training is available to PAC co-ordinators.

Finally, to perform their roles effectively, researchers supporting PACs should ideally have the capacity to undertake proactive research as well as to conduct research into issues identified by committee members. They perform a crucial role in accessing information that members need and in helping develop the expertise that members require to pose effective questions during committee hearings. Effective co-operation and a division of labour between the researchers, the committee co-ordinator and the chairperson is critical to the effectiveness of the committee.

Researchers should be in a position to brief the PAC on key information and findings drawn from the department or entity's:

- strategic plan
- quarterly reports
- annual reports
- other reports or information sources

Researchers should also ensure that they obtain copies of previous Auditor-General reports and annual reports for previous financial years for the entities concerned, as well as previous PAC minutes and resolutions. These should be summarised into a suitable format to brief committee members on the history of material issues raised and implementation of previous recommendations to address these issues.<sup>9</sup>

National Treasury guidelines on legislature oversight suggest that committee researchers develop the following key capacities:

- become specialists in a particular functional area. They need to be fully familiar
- with the challenges, current policies and policy developments in that area, as well as the
- department and other entities delivering services in the area;
- be fully familiar with the strategic plans, budgets, in-year reports and previous
- annual reports of the department and public entities in their area of focus;
- talk (informally and formally) to the relevant treasuries, auditors and any other
- stakeholders when preparing research for their portfolio committees;
- monitor developments in their area of focus on an ongoing basis;
- be trained on the measurement of performance within their area of focus;
- be trained on how to critically evaluate the different kinds of information
- presented in annual reports, and
- be trained on how to write briefing documents, oversight reports, and
- resolutions so that they can support the oversight work of the portfolio committees to the maximum extent.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.4 Evaluation: Scope of Work

In order to assist APAC in achieving its aim to promote the effectiveness of all Public Accounts Committees and their members in order to more effectively and efficiently perform their oversight function, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) provided financial support to APAC for training interventions between 2010 and 2011. At the end of 2011, having expressed an interest in providing support for the training of PACs in Southern Africa - and potentially supporting a SADCOPAC training programme – SDC provided the financial support necessary to conduct an evaluation of APAC training. The APAC Executive suggested that the scope of the training evaluation not only be limited to training conducted by APAC in 2010 and 2011 (and funded by SDC), but that it should also include training conducted in 2009 (prior to SDC funding).

### 1.4.1 Training conducted by APAC

During the evaluation period of January 2009 to December 2011, APAC presented a total of four short courses to PAC members and support staff in South Africa as follows:

#### 1. 28 - 29 July 2009

A two-day course presented to 186 participants, including PAC members and support staff from all nine provincial legislatures and National Parliament, members of the APAC executive committee and the APAC secretariate, among others.

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<sup>9</sup> A Handbook on Strengthening Oversight Practices for Members of Provincial Portfolio Committees on Safety and Security. 2006. Open Society Foundation. P.18

<sup>10</sup> Guide for Legislative Oversight through Annual Reports. 26 January 2005. P.24/25

2. 24-26 May 2010  
A three-day course, presented to 183 participants divided into two parts. The first part, held on 24 May, was presented to PAC support staff including managers, researchers, legal advisors and coordinators. The second part, held on 25 – 26 May, was presented to PAC members.
3. 10 – 11 May 2011  
A one and a half day course presented to 100 PAC support staff members in May 2011.
4. 2 – 3 August 2011  
A two-day course presented to 134 PAC members.

In addition to the above South African courses, APAC also presented two courses in the SADC region with PAC members and support staff from Namibia and Botswana:

1. 23 – 24 May 2011  
A two-day course presented to 21 members of the Namibian PAC and support staff.
2. 30 – 31 May 2011  
The same course presented in Namibia was presented in Botswana to 25 PAC members and support staff.

In August 2012, *SAME Indicators (Pty)* was appointed by APAC (after a competitive tender process) to evaluate the impact of its training interventions in the period between 2009 and 2011.

#### **1.4.2 Scope of Work**

The scope of work stipulated within the APAC Request for Proposals (RFP) indicated that the purpose of the evaluation was to assess:

'the impact of training interventions that were rolled out for members of Public Account Committees (PAC) in the nine provincial legislature and National Assembly (NA) from 2009 to 2011'

This definition of scope excludes an assessment of training provided by APAC to municipal public accounts committees (MPACs). The RFP did not indicate how the 'impact of training interventions' should be defined or measured. During the early stages of its interaction with the APAC Secretariat the *SAME* evaluation team established that no baseline data had previously been collected to provide a measure of the pre-training capacity of PAC members and support staff, against which the evaluation of the post-training impact of its training interventions could be measured.

### **1.5 Methodology**

A realist evaluation approach was followed the *SAME* evaluation team in order to try and explain the relationship between APAC training interventions and their outcomes. In the absence of a baseline assessment of the capacities of PAC members and support staff (conducted prior to the initiation of training interventions), or a clearly stated and measurable set of specific learning outcomes articulated prior to training, the starting point for the evaluation

involved the development of a list of required PAC capacities and skills by *SAME Indicators (Pty)*.

### **1.5.1 PAC Capacities**

The following list of capacities of PAC members and support staff was produced by the evaluation team, in consultation with the APAC Executive and APAC Secretariat. The list identifies 10 core capacities which PAC members and support staff require in order to give effect to their mandate. These capacities include:

1. *Understanding of:*
  - a. *Duties*
  - b. *Authority and powers of PACs*
  - c. *Protections of PAC members & witnesses*
  
2. *Understanding of oversight process and timeframes:*
  - a. *Key events in financial calendar*
  - b. *Steps in oversight process*
  - c. *Key role players in Executive and administration, Institutions supporting Oversight (Supreme Audit Institution, Public Service Commission) and other key role players (Treasury, Accountant General)*
  
3. *Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out:*
  - a. *Oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events*
  - b. *Division of labour between committee members*
  
4. *Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports:*
  - a. *SAI/External Audit requirements*
  - b. *Audit process and work plan*
  - c. *Audit sample*
  - d. *Audit opinion*
  - e. *Key auditing terms*
    - i. *Basis for opinion*
    - ii. *Emphasis of matter*
  
5. *Capacity to evaluate financial statements:*
  - a. *Cash flow statements*
  - b. *Balance sheet (Statement of financial position)*
  - c. *Income statement (Statement of financial performance)*
  - d. *Actual versus budgeted expenditure comparison*
  - e. *Capacity to read budget documents (to compare with expenditure reports)*
  
6. *Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen:*
  - a. *Payroll controls*
  - b. *Cash management controls*
  - c. *Debt management controls*
  - d. *Procurement controls*
  - e. *Internal audit and risk management controls*
  
7. *Capacity to hold effective committee hearings:*

- a. *Identify focus areas*
  - b. *Draft and ask effective questions (eg, open-ended versus leading questions, dealing with avoidance techniques)*
  - c. *Identify and invite subpoena appropriate witnesses*
  - d. *Hold executive members to account in meetings*
  - e. *Focus on strategic – not operational – issues*
  - f. *Minute meetings*
8. *Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action*
  9. *Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions*
  10. *Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations*

This list provided a basis for the evaluation team to review the content of the courses presented. Specifically, it enabled the evaluation team to generate comparisons between these *required* capacities and the *actual* content provided to training participants during APAC training courses in the evaluation period. Finally, the list of skills and capacities also served to provide the basis for interview questions regarding perceived current capacities and perceptions of the contribution of APAC courses to developing needed capacities. The use of interview questionnaires during the evaluation was complemented by an analysis of training materials as presented to PAC members and staff during the period 2009 and 2011.

### **1.5.2 Evaluation Process**

The evaluation was conducted in six stages. Each of these stages is discussed briefly below:

#### **Stage 1: Analysis of required capacities and skills**

An analysis of the capacities and skills required by PAC members and support staff was undertaken (as above). This activity involved the development of a list of relevant capacities and skills based on an analysis of legislative mandates, regulatory provisions, and Legislature guidelines as well as an analysis of the practical skills, capacities and tools required to exercise effective oversight of the public resource management cycle (drawing on a model made up of five indispensable public resource management processes using the *SAME Framework* for Governance and Human Development).

The SAME Framework maintains that five underlying public resource management processes are necessary to ensure socially accountable governance and human development.



The effectiveness of these processes is dependent on the capacity of supply and demand-side governance stakeholders to produce and engage with evidence-based justifications and explanations for the use of available resources.

### **Stage 2: Training Analysis**

In order to analyse the courses presented, a desk-based review of all available training materials was conducted, including course outlines, presentations and training reports. In addition, the design, delivery and assessment of the courses was evaluated based on best practise and feedback from APAC course coordinators.

### **Stage 3: Gap Analysis**

A gap analysis was undertaken via a comparison between the list of required capacities and skills and the content of courses presented between 2009 and 2011.

### **Stage 4: Design of Questionnaire**

A draft questionnaire made up of structured and semi-structured questions was then developed. It included questions relating to the training received by PAC members, including whether respondents believe the training interventions between 2009 and 2011 were useful and met acceptable standards. It also included questions based on the key capacities and skills PAC members require to perform their roles (identified in task 1 above). These questions aimed to establish how PAC members currently rate their possession of identified capacities, as well as the contribution of APAC training to their acquisition and use of these capacities. The questionnaire is included as Annexure A to this report.

**Stage 5: Administration of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was piloted with PAC members and support staff at SADCOPAC's annual conference in Mpumalanga in September 2012. It was then administered telephonically to a purposive sample of training recipients in the National Assembly, the nine provincial Legislatures as well as training recipients from Botswana and Namibia. The sample was made up of the chairperson, two members and a researcher attached to the relevant PAC (i.e. four interviews per interview site). Where telephonic interviews were not possible, PAC members were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire electronically and submit their responses via email. A total intended (purposive) sample of 46 respondents was identified for interviewing. Seventy percent of the intended sample (32 out of 46) was achieved. Please see Section 4.1.1 below for more detailed information.

**Stage 6: Data Capture and Analysis**

Responses to structured questions were captured and analysed using a spreadsheet. Responses to all open-ended questions were transcribed (where necessary) and subjected to a narrative analysis to identify main themes, concerns and recommendations. Data obtained from the combined dataset of responses to the structured questions and to open-ended questions was then analysed in conjunction with the findings of the training analysis in order to produce the findings and recommendations as set out in this report.

## **Section 2: Training Analysis – Were APAC Training Courses Effectively Designed, Delivered and Assessed?**

### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.1.1 Methodology**

The list of capacities and skills required by PAC members developed during stage 1 of the evaluation process was used to inform the evaluation team's analysis of the training courses presented by APAC between 2009 and 2011.

The usual starting point for evaluating a training course consists of a comparison between the learning outcomes to be achieved by the course, which are identified prior to training, the actual delivery of the course, and the impact of the training in subsequently bringing about the intended outcomes (changes in participants thinking, actions or capacities). However, learning outcomes were not identified by the APAC Secretariat prior to presenting the courses. In order to analyse the courses presented, the evaluation team undertook a desk-based review of all available training materials (or training analysis), including course outlines, presentations and training reports. This analysis was strengthened, where possible, by correspondence with members of the APAC Secretariat and structured and semi-structured interview responses by training recipients.

#### **2.1.2 Section Overview**

The findings of the training analysis are presented in three sub-sections:

1. Course design
2. Course delivery
3. Course assessment

Each section provides an overview of best practise when designing, delivering and evaluating short courses. For learning purposes, in each instance it provides a comparison between the best practice and the actual approach adopted by the APAC Secretariat. In addition, it includes recommendations for the design, delivery and evaluation of future courses.

#### **2.1.3 Limitation of Scope**

The analysis set out in this section focuses on the four courses presented in South Africa to provincial and national PACs and their support staff. The two courses presented in Namibia and Botswana did not form part of the training analysis conducted.

The scope of the training analysis was also limited by the absence of the following information which was unavailable to the evaluation team:

- **2009 course outline unavailable**  
Without this document it was impossible to determine whether the training material received by the evaluation team represented the entire course content presented. This had a significant impact on the gap analysis.
- **Absence of learning outcomes**  
Learning outcomes were unavailable for each of the four courses presented. The courses should be evaluated on the basis of whether they address the knowledge,

skills and attitudes articulated in the learning outcomes. Such an analysis was not possible in the absence of learning outcomes.

- **Limited training material**

The only training materials made available to the evaluation team were PowerPoint presentations. These offered a limited reflection of the course content that was actually presented (as presenters could presumably have elaborated verbally on particular slides in some instances and skipped slides entirely in others). These materials also do not capture how the material was presented (whether there was meaningful interaction and participation by the training participants, whether sufficient time was allowed for questions and answers, etc). In addition, some presentations identified in course outlines were unavailable for review. In the absence of detailed facilitator's guides, only a very superficial analysis could be conducted when considering the content of the course and the way in which it was delivered. This limitation was compounded by the unavailability of course assessment forms (completed by participants on completion of each course).

- **Course assessment forms**

Completed post-training course assessment forms were unavailable for all four courses. This information would have provided important information from participants on their immediate reaction to the courses. While training reports for the 2010 and 2011 courses summarise some of this feedback, no report for 2009 was available for review.

- **Facilitator feedback**

Feedback from facilitators, including a reflection on the content and delivery of their individual courses, was unavailable for all of the courses and appears not to have been captured at all.

These limitations should be taken into consideration in relation to the findings and recommendations by *SAME Indicators* regarding the design, delivery and assessment of future training programmes or courses intended to strengthen the capacities of PAC members (whether via APAC or SADCOPAC training interventions).

## 2.2 Course Design

All too often training courses are not effective in bringing about the desired change in participants' behaviour. While "the dominant finding of most evaluations of training in a development context is that it has proved less effective than expected"<sup>11</sup>, we should not conclude that *all* training is ineffective or that courses are an inappropriate tool to address absent or weak skills and capacities. Rather, a number of key principles should be employed when designing effective training courses.

Five steps<sup>12</sup> should form the basis of any effective training course design:

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<sup>11</sup> Nelson, Mark (2006) Does Training Work? Re-examining donor-sponsored training programs in developing countries, World Bank Institute, Capacity Development Briefs, No. 15.

<sup>12</sup> These steps are based on the work of Peter Taylor, whose research explores the effectiveness of participatory approaches to education and, in particular, participatory curriculum design. Taylor, P. (2003), *How to Design a Training Course – a guide to participatory curriculum development*. London: VSO/Continuum.

1. Begin with a training needs analysis
2. Develop a course framework
3. Identify content
4. Identify methods
5. Identify materials

These steps are discussed briefly below; each step is followed by an analysis of the approach adopted by the APAC Secretariat for the training courses presented between 2009 and 2011.

### **2.2.1 Begin with a training needs analysis**

The most important step in course design is identifying the needs of training recipients for the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes that they require prior to conducting training. These should be identified by conducting a training needs analysis.

The analysis is influenced by the approach to curriculum design adopted by the course designer. A **content approach**, which simply lists “things that the learners need to know”, is one of the most common and least effective approaches. These lists are often drafted by subject matter specialists rather than those in need of training. Because it is possible to identify the skills and capacities PAC members and support staff require to fulfill their mandate, a more appropriate approach is a **product approach**. This approach focusses “on what the learners will be able to do (and the knowledge and skills they require) after the course has finished.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, what do they need to ‘produce’ using the skills acquired from the course. Using this approach, a training needs analysis tries to identify the skills and capacities training participants require to effectively perform certain tasks.

Given the above, it is recommended that the design of future short courses begin by identifying the skills and capacities (in general) that PAC members and support staff require to fulfill their mandate. This process should ideally include input from both subject matter specialists and PAC members and support staff. This list of skills and capacities should then be used to identify which skills and capacities existing PAC members and support staff currently lack.

Because training is not the solution to every problem, it is important to question whether a short course is in fact the most appropriate way in which to address the identified needs of PAC members and PAC support staff. It may be the case that additional interventions are required to enable PAC members and support staff to fulfill their mandate.

**Evaluation findings:** According to the APAC Secretariate, a training needs analysis was not conducted prior to the 2009 course because the course was primarily an orientation for PAC members and support staff. For this reason, training focussed on core responsibilities and the role of various strategic partners. The content of the July 2009 course was informed by orientation courses presented in 2004, as well as information identified as crucial for PAC members to fulfil their mandate. This approach to the design of the 2009 course suggests a ‘content approach’ (described above). By contrast, a training needs analysis would have assisted in the design of an orientation course which addressed the most pressing needs of PAC members and support staff, and provided a baseline against which the impact of the training interventions over the subsequent three years could be evaluated.

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<sup>13</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniast, J. (2003) *Training in Agroforestry: a toolkit for trainers*, pp. 19 – 20. World Agroforestry Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. Available at <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/downloads/publications/PDFs/b12460.pdf>.

In 2010 and 2011, however, APAC did conduct a (limited) needs analysis. A training needs form was developed. Committee clerks were required to engage with their PAC Chairpersons to discuss what training the committee required and to suggest topics on the (blank) form. Suggested topics could be both broad (such as “the PFMA”) and specific (such as “Supply Chain Management in the public sector”). The APAC Secretariat consolidated the responses from the different committees and re-worked the general topics into a suggested programme which was then circulated for comment. Completed training needs forms were not reviewed by the evaluation team.

While the needs analyses conducted in 2010 and 2011 represent a step in the right direction, a more rigorous and systematic approach would be recommended by the evaluation team. This would begin by identifying the skills and capacities required by both PAC members and support staff to fulfil their mandate. The needs of potential training recipients would then be analysed against this list of skills and capacities in order to design training courses which met their most pressing training needs.

#### **Recommendation:**

- Future training courses to be developed by APAC should be preceded by a rigorous training needs analysis. This analysis should involve at least two steps:
  - **Step 1:** identify the skills and capacities that PAC members and support staff require to fulfil their mandate. This should be a participatory process and should produce a more detailed list than that developed by SAME Indicators and Diagnostics for the purpose of this evaluation. Where necessary, the list should separate the skills and capacities required by PAC members, and those required by support staff.
  - **Step 2:** identify the current skills and capacities of PAC members and support staff. Again, this evaluation should be participatory and should form the basis on which training courses are designed in order to ensure courses address the most pressing needs of training participants. This is particularly important given that previous training interventions have already addressed some of the skills and capacities required by members and support staff.

#### **2.2.2. Develop a Course Framework**

A training Course Framework provides a comprehensive overview of a training course. The framework should set out the broad aims of the course, together with the main learning outcomes. These should be based on the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in the training needs assessment. The aims and learning outcomes are used when evaluating the effectiveness of the course (i.e. ‘did the course achieve the aims and learning outcomes it set out to achieve?’). In addition, the framework should identify critical content areas, provide a guide to methods of teaching and learning, suggest learning materials and provide an overview of the evaluation process.

While time-consuming to articulate, the course framework ensures the course is designed intentionally as a means of effectively meeting the identified needs of participants. In essence, the framework provides a skeleton of the course and is used to clarify learning outcomes (changes to participants’ thinking, actions capacity), guide material developers and facilitators and inform stakeholders. The framework may be extremely detailed or minimalist; “the most important point is that the framework is clear, useful and comprehensive”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniast, J. (2003) p. 105.

**Evaluation findings:** It is unclear whether APAC developed a course framework for the courses presented between 2009 and 2011. No documentation setting out a course framework, including training aims or learning outcomes, could be produced for any of the four courses presented during the period under review. Instead, courses were designed using suggested topics by Committees. While the APAC Secretariat describes these topics as the broad 'aims' of the course, they are more accurately described as 'critical content areas' as they do not speak to the long-term desired outcomes of the training intervention. Identifying course content is described in more detail below.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Course frameworks should be designed for future courses, based on the outcomes of a rigorous training needs analysis. The course framework should include:
  - Aims
  - Learning outcomes
  - Critical content areas
  - Guide to methods of teaching and learning
  - Suggested learning materials
  - Overview of the course assessment and impact evaluation process
- Everyone involved in the development of the course should rely on this framework as a guide for their activities.

#### **2.2.3. Identify content**

The content of a training course should be arrived at on the basis of the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in the training needs analysis and articulated in the learning outcomes of the course. In other words, course developers need to ask: in order for learners to have this knowledge/skill/attitude, what content do I need to present in this course? It is critical for course developers not to begin by identifying content without previously identifying the training needs of participants or articulating a course framework.

Once the content has been identified, it should be sequenced. Well-sequenced content moves from the simple to the complex, and from the known to the unknown. It is organised logically. Where possible, it is better to cover the content in the order of job performance.<sup>15</sup>

**Evaluation findings:** Correspondence with the APAC Secretariat indicates that while training recipients identified broad topics for courses, individual presenters were responsible for determining the specific content of their presentations. The presenters were selected based on their experience or area of work and how this related to the topics of the course. The presentations were logically sequenced in line with the PAC oversight process. For example, courses started with the mandate, role and functions of PACs, before covering the use of annual reports as an oversight tool. A meeting with presenters prior to the training course aimed to ensure there was minimal overlap in content. This meeting also aimed to enable presenters to build their presentations on the content of other presenters.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

### Recommendation:

- The design of future short courses should be overseen by a designated individual or committee. Their responsibilities should include ensuring that sessions developed for the course by various stakeholders cover all the content required to achieve the course's learning outcomes and aims.

### 2.2.4. Identify training methods

Once the content of the course has been identified, it is important to decide *how* it will be taught. There are numerous possible training methods that can be used: lectures, presentations, group work, demonstrations, case study analysis, field visits, etc. When selecting training methods, course designers need to consider which methods will best achieve the learning outcomes of the course, within available resources, given the capacities of the learners. Simultaneously, these methods must cover all the identified content of the course.

**Evaluation findings:** The course materials made available to the evaluation team by the APAC Secretariat suggest that one training method was used predominantly for three of the four courses presented by APAC from 2009 to 2011: lecturing (supported by slideshow presentations). Although it is one of the most common traditional training methods, the actual effectiveness of lecturing to training participants (with or without visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations) is dependent on the learning outcomes motivating the training intervention. "The lecture is a very effective and economical method of transferring information to a big group or when there is a need to present a large number of items of information in a short period. However, it is unsuitable to use it for teaching skills or very detailed issues."<sup>16</sup> One of the ways in which lecturing can be made more participatory and engaging is to allow sufficient time for questions and answers either after or during the presentation, or to use it as an informative introduction to topics with which learners can engage through other training methods (e.g. group work).

The May 2010 course outline suggests that while presentations dominated the three days of the course, consideration was given to alternative training methods, including question and answer times and a workshop session. However, it is clear from the course feedback, as summarised in the report on the May 2010 training, that these more participatory methods were insufficient. The 2010 report notes that: "There seem to be a need to manage the plenary in a way that ensures maximum participation. Presenters need to be more interactive and this can be achieved through proper guides on presentations."<sup>17</sup> From the points raised above, the evaluation team is of the view that instead of developing 'proper guides', it would have been better to re-evaluate the heavy reliance on lecturing as a training method.

The course outline for May 2011 indicates that, while again presentations were the most-used training method, two sessions were 'workshop sessions'. Unfortunately, no material for these two workshop sessions could be located or made available to the evaluation team and so it is unclear how these workshops were structured or facilitated. Feedback from learners who attended previous courses (in addition to the 2011 course) suggest that, despite these two workshop sessions, the course was "less interactive" and that there was a greater need for more practical sessions that included alternative training methods such as group work, case studies, etc.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniast, J. (2003) p. 122.

<sup>17</sup> APAC (2010) 'Annual Training Report', p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> APAC (2011) 'Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members', p. 7.

The August 2011 course outline is by far the most participatory in its design and incorporates other training methods to complement the use of lecturing and presentations. Following each presentation, the course outline indicates that time was allocated for small group discussions and case studies. These sessions were followed by group feedback, interaction and questions in a plenary session, according to the course outline. The design of this course marks a significant improvement on that of previous courses. However, feedback from the PAC members who attended the course (as set out in the 2011 Training Report) is extremely limited; while there is no evidence that the more participatory approach was more effective, there is also an absence of negative feedback regarding participation and the training methodologies employed.

Interview responses from both PAC members and support staff confirm that the training methods used for the courses require revision. PAC members argued that more opportunities to share experiences were needed in the courses and that participants should be divided into smaller groups to facilitate this. Peer learning was considered by PAC members to be highly valuable, both in terms of the learning experience and in terms of networking with other departments, committees and institutions. Members also requested more practical learning opportunities involving case studies, role play, etc.

Similarly, one of the most consistent criticisms of the course by researchers focussed on the training methods used. Researchers felt that lecturing was “merely instructive and less participatory”, providing participants with an orientation rather than real tools or skills. Repeatedly researchers felt that there was insufficient emphasis on practical exercises. Echoing the interview responses of PAC members, researchers felt: “the practical part of it is missing.” Researchers argued that additional time should be given in the courses, which should also include more practical examples, case studies, small group work sessions and even simulated activities such as ‘mock hearings’. Researchers also said the course(s) did not provide sufficient opportunities for sharing of experiences and peer learning.

Teaching and learning methods are discussed in more detail in section 2.3 (course delivery) of this report. Recommendations for future courses regarding methods are also set out in this section.

### **2.2.5. Identify training materials**

The final step in designing a course is to identify appropriate training materials. These materials should complement the chosen training methods and ensure that all identified content is covered in sufficient detail to assist in the achievement of the learning outcomes of the course and to become a lasting resource to which learners can refer in the future. Taylor suggests that, “as a basic rule, educational learning materials should be attractive, interesting, challenging, durable, economically viable to produce and well organised in terms of content to enhance the learning process.”<sup>19</sup>

Taylor identifies nine characteristics of good training materials:

1. They are developed for a specific purpose.
2. They target a specific audience (educational level, experience, existing or desired knowledge).
3. They reflect clear teaching/learning objectives and outcomes.

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<sup>19</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniest, J. (2003) p. 114.

4. Their content is technically correct.
5. They are enhanced using various 'instructional components'.
6. They are presented logically and systematically.
7. They have been field-tested and evaluated.
8. They are attractive to the users.<sup>20</sup>

**Evaluation findings:** According to the APAC Secretariat, participants were provided with a training manuals consisting of course outlines, copies of PowerPoint presentations and (where relevant) case studies. Manuals also included additional reference material as well as PFMA and MFMA booklets. However, these manuals were not made available to the evaluation team for review. Feedback from the May 2011 course suggests that training materials were not made available prior to this particular course: "The presentations must be circulated to the invitees prior to the training" and "APAC should adopt the culture of distributing training material to all confirmed jurisdictions so that members and their support staff can familiarise themselves with the content of the lessons prior to training as a way of encouraging more interactive training."<sup>21</sup>

#### **Recommendations:**

- Learning materials should be developed intentionally to meet the needs of PAC members and support staff attending the courses and should meet the nine characteristics of good training materials identified above.
- In order to achieve this, an individual or committee should be appointed to review the materials developed by subject matter experts.

## **2.3 Course Delivery**

The effectiveness of a well-designed course is, to a large extent, dependent on the quality of course delivery. It is important to emphasise that the reverse is not true: no matter how well a course is delivered, no matter how knowledgeable the presenters, or how administratively organised the coordinators, a poorly designed course is unlikely to have meaningful and sustainable impact. For this reason, effective course delivery needs to be underpinned by a well-designed course, as described in Section 1.1 above.

In order to achieve the learning outcomes of the course, facilitators need to consider three key aspects of course delivery:

1. Learners
2. Facilitators
3. Course administration

Each of these aspects is discussed in more detail below.

### **2.3.1 Learners**

Before delivering a course, it is critical for facilitators to have an understanding of the learners attending the course: their needs and their levels of experience. While training needs should be identified by a training needs analysis during the design of the course, when delivering a course, facilitators should also consider *how participants* learn best.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 139 – 140.

<sup>21</sup> APAC (2011) 'Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members', pp. 7-8.

Adult learners, for example, learn best “through experience, being given the possibility to reflect on this experience, and then taking some appropriate action.”<sup>22</sup> They are experiential learners and need to be given opportunities to situate the presented knowledge, skills or attitudes within the context of their experiences.<sup>23</sup> While these principles of adult education should feed into the design of the course, course facilitators need to prioritise the learning needs of the learners by allowing sufficient time for learners to interact and reflect on the content of the course without rushing through participatory exercises or meaningful discussions. Facilitators need to respond to the design of the course in a flexible and creative way to ensure learners *learn* instead of simply *attend* the course.

Facilitators should also consider the experience (including prior learning experiences) of learners. Learners attending the course will (inevitably) be lacking a skill or capacity in one area identified as a learning outcome for the course. However, course facilitators should remember that adult learners also bring to the course a wealth of personal experience, and while they may be lacking in one area, they may be a valuable resource from which facilitators can draw in other areas. Training methods which promote reflection on experience and peer-to-peer learning will promote learning. In addition, a simple form completed by potential participants prior to the course can help facilitators identify learners with useful work experience or education; the form may also be used to indicate whether learners have previously attended similar courses.

**Evaluation findings:** The course outlines made available to the evaluation team suggest that some of the courses did not allocate sufficient time for learners to situate new knowledge or skills within the context of their previous experiences or to reflect on how they could apply course tools and skills in the future. In addition, there appears to have been limited opportunities for participants to engage meaningfully with the course content and to interact with the material presented in May 2010 and May 2011. This is indicated by the over-reliance on lecturing and presentations in the first two courses, as discussed in section 2.1 above, and confirmed by summarised feedback from participants. Given that the evaluation team could access neither a course outline nor feedback for the July 2009 course, we were unable to establish whether participants on this course had similar experiences.

### **May 2010**

The May 2010 course, for example, consisted of 16 presentations and one workshop over a 3-day period. The lack of opportunities to share and reflect on experiences is revealed in the participants’ comments: “The current format of APAC workshops does not reach far in encouraging sharing of best practices amongst individual provinces. It is recommended that training topics be shared further into seminars with provinces grouped and allocated topics for further discussions.”<sup>24</sup> With regard to participation and interaction, the 2010 APAC training report indicates that “there seems to be a need to manage the plenary in a way that ensures maximum participation. Presenters need to be more interactive...”<sup>25</sup>

### **May 2011**

It is clear from support staff feedback on the course presented in May 2011 (which was compressed into a single day for support-staff) that learning was sometimes sacrificed in an attempt to get through the content of the course. Participants said the limited number

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<sup>22</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniast, J. (2003) p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

of training days resulted in information being “compressed/squeezed” and recommended that the courses be lengthened “to avoid running through the lessons and compacting topics in a short period of time”. Participants added: “APAC should refrain from running through the program/s and [...] sacrificing the content of the lessons.”<sup>26</sup>

Support-staff who attended the May 2011 course were clear about their desire for more interactive training methods. They raised the following challenges: “more theory than practical on presentations (need time for more case studies/analysis/group discussions”); and “less interactive training”. Participants recommended that “the training methodology should change into more interactive, group discussions and simulation exercises to balance both theory and practical way of executing functions.”<sup>27</sup>

The course presented to PAC members in **August 2011** marks an important change in APAC’s approach to training. The course outline for this course gives equal weight to lectures (with presentations), group-work and plenary feedback sessions, offering participants more time to engage with the content presented and to reflect on their own experiences, as well as opportunities to share experiences within their groups and in plenary sessions. Feedback on this course as set out in the 2011 Training Report is unfortunately extremely limited and the impact of this new approach is unclear.

A consolidated list of participants indicates that some learners attended all three courses presented for PAC members during 2009 and 2011. This may or may not be problematic, depending on what each course aimed to provide to members and whether the course design took into account the possibility that learners would attend multiple courses. Clearly articulated learning outcomes for each course would have helped to show how these learners would benefit from their repeated attendance of the courses, while simultaneously managing learner expectations. The latter is crucial as feedback from the 2010 courses indicates that while first-time attendees found the course valuable, those who had attended previous courses found the course less beneficial:

*‘It is recommended that a new breed of speakers be used during training sessions as members complain that they have been getting the same/similar speakers over the years... There seem to have been a few members that are new and appreciate the training; however members that have been attending the training before are expressing that new training topics be introduced and speakers be changed.’*<sup>28</sup>

The need to balance the varying needs of training participants was raised by both PAC members and support staff in their interviews. Researchers, for example, argued that while some participants have very limited experience working with public finances, others with a financial background wanted to build on their existing experience and to “go deeper and more detailed” when analysing annual financial statements. Similarly, PAC members with more experience wanted to be introduced to new topics or wanted to be able to go further and conduct deeper analysis. While it was acknowledged that a ‘course on the basics’ was needed for newer members, there was also a need for more in depth work. It is critical for the courses to creatively facilitate learning opportunities for both novice and advanced participants, or for APAC to present both introductory and advanced courses. As one member said succinctly: “in

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<sup>26</sup> APAC (2011) ‘Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members’, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

as much as training does need to expose people to new things, it must also respond to peoples' needs for it to be useful.”

#### **Recommendations:**

- Future APAC training course design and delivery should take into account the principles of adult learning and provide learners with opportunities to engage meaningfully with the content of the course through interaction, peer learning, reflection on experience and experiential learning (whether real or simulated). The structure of the course presented in August 2011 is a valuable starting point in this regard and specific feedback from this course should be considered when designing future courses.
- Learners should be asked to complete a form prior to attending future APAC training courses, indicating their strengths and weaknesses (and relevant experience) in relation to course learning outcomes.
- A training policy (forming part of the course framework) should stipulate clearly in advance whether learners are welcome to attend multiple courses, or whether course participation is restricted for purposes of addressing the needs of those new to oversight (whether support staff or PAC members). If multiple attendance is permitted, the design and delivery of the course should cater for both experienced and inexperienced learners. Alternatively, separate courses should be developed for novice and advanced participants.

### **2.3.2 Facilitators**

Effective facilitation requires that facilitators must, firstly, “absolutely master the content of the training.”<sup>29</sup> Subject matter experts, including those with extensive relevant experience, are extremely valuable in this regard. However, according to Taylor (2003), “facilitating learning in adults requires much more from the trainers than being a simple source of information.”<sup>30</sup> Facilitators, by prioritising *learning* above *teaching*, should focus on encouraging interaction, keeping participants actively involved in the learning process through the use of a range of training methods. Skilled facilitators introduce new information (whether skills, knowledge or attitudes) to learners in a way that gives them sufficient time to reflect on it and situate it in the context of their experience.

**Evaluation findings:** The evaluation team was able to establish that presenters identified in the course outlines for the 2010 and 2011 courses were indeed subject matter experts, capable of speaking authoritatively on the sessions they presented. However, their knowledge did not always translate into effective learning. For example, support staff who attended the May 2010 course felt the presentations were “more technical than expected”; the 2010 Training Report recommends that presenters be guided “on the required level of presentations in the future”.<sup>31</sup> While course design could also have played an important role in articulating the training needs of the participants (and therefore the required level of information presented in sessions), it is the view of the evaluation team that facilitators could have more effectively communicated necessary technical knowledge through more practical and interactive training methodologies. Participants of the May 2011 course indicate this in their feedback when they recommend balancing theory with practical case studies, analysis and group discussions.<sup>32</sup> One member

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniast, J. (2003) p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p 44.

<sup>31</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> APAC (2011) ‘Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members’, p. 7.

suggested in an interview that APAC personnel, rather than external consultants, should facilitate the courses as they would be more able to share experiences and be in touch with the reality PAC members face.

**Recommendations:**

- Future APAC training programmes should seek to ensure that course facilitators be both subject matter experts and skilled facilitators.
- Where this is not possible, course presenters with little facilitation experience should be supported by detailed facilitator guides and a course structure which promote the principles of adult learning.

### 2.3.3 Course Administration

An important aspect of course delivery is the administration involved in organising a training event. Course administration can significantly influence participant satisfaction and profoundly effect the success of a course. While there are numerous factors to consider when organising a training course, the following are perhaps some of the more significant considerations:

#### **Communication with participants and facilitators**

In practise, course administration begins long before the course is delivered. Organisers need to communicate with both potential participants and facilitators, ensuring they have all relevant information, including invitations, the dates and venue of the course, accommodation options, a detailed course outline, and learning outcomes. Pre-course preparation should include the sending of reading materials and collecting completed participant information forms. Course facilitators, in particular, should have regular communication with organisers as they prepare for their sessions. Communication should be the responsibility of a named and clearly identifiable contact person (often the course coordinator) who participants and facilitators can contact with any questions or concerns they have about the course.

**Evaluation findings:** According to feedback from the **May 2010** course, “the majority of support staff members rate the efficiency of communication before the even as either good or excellent and they also rate the administration of the event by the APAC Secretariate as satisfactory and good.”<sup>33</sup>

#### **Venues**

Selecting a venue for training is an important decision when delivering a course. Venues away from cities in more isolated places may help participants to focus on the course content (rather than the surroundings) and support increased dialogue and networking between both participants and facilitators. However, this benefit must be weighed up against the cost of transporting participants to more distant locations as well as increased travel time to get there. The alternative, an easily accessible venue in the city, may offer logistical simplicity but may also enable numerous distractions too. When selecting a venue, it is important to consider availability, cost and size (given the number of participants). The type and arrangement of furniture should also be selected on the basis of its appropriateness. While more participants can be accommodated in a training venue if seated in rows on chairs, this lecture-style layout does not promote interaction or peer-learning. The venue should be sufficiently well- equipped to meet the needs of the course, with spaces for group work and plenary sessions if required. Equipment, such as computers, projectors, teaching aids, sound systems and microphones (for

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<sup>33</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

larger courses) must support rather than distract from the learning experience and therefore the organiser should ensure technical support is available.

**Evaluation findings:** The training courses presented between 2009 and 2011 made use of three different venues, all of which were located very close to OR Tambo International Airport. Feedback suggests that the Birchwood hotel was a better venue than the other two venues because it had fewer distractions.

#### **Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg**

Venue for the July 2009 and May 2010 courses. While there is no feedback available for the first course, feedback summarised from the May 2010 course states that “support staff members were happy with the venue and accommodation mostly rating is as satisfactory and good in their evaluation forms.”<sup>34</sup> While a few indicated a desire for a venue change, this may be because the venue had been used the previous year rather than because the venue itself was problematic.

#### **Kempton Park Life Hotel, Johannesburg**

The venue for the May 2011 course received the most criticism from participants who found its proximity to OR Tambo International Airport a distraction rather than a convenience. Summarised feedback from the support staff who attended the course lists the venue as the first challenge raised by participants who found air traffic noise disturbed presentations. In addition, appliances in the rooms did not work properly, adding to their frustrations. The 2011 report on training recommends: “APAC should make sure the venue/s for training [...] is conducive to carry out training without any noise disturbance and the accommodation meet the necessary standard.”<sup>35</sup>

#### **Emperor’s Palace Hotel, Johannesburg**

Perhaps in response to feedback from the previous course, the August 2011 course for PAC members was held at Emperor’s Palace. This venue proved distracting for other reasons; summarised feedback indicates that “members were not always at the training venue” and a suggestion was made “that training of this magnitude should be conducted at the remote areas with less [distractions].”<sup>36</sup>

### **Logistical Arrangements**

Travel and accommodation, where required, are an important part of course administration. While it is impossible to meet the expectations of all stakeholders, it is important that accommodation should be clean, close to the training venue and affordable or within the course budget. It is preferable for participants to be accommodated at the training venue as this promotes the use of free time and meal times for networking and ongoing learning and experience-sharing.

**Evaluation findings:** Summarised feedback from PAC members on the **May 2010** states that the course was successful “but not without challenges, most flops are [...]”

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<sup>34</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> APAC (2011) ‘Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members’, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

logistical in nature.”<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that no course is without its logistical challenges and that it is the response of the course organisers to these challenges that is most important.

### **Record-keeping**

Finally, it is critical for course organisers to document and enter key information relating to the administration and implementation of the course into a course database. Key information would include the names, positions and contact details of all participants and facilitators; participant information forms, course outlines, presented training materials, and evaluation forms (including participant and facilitator feedback). Notes taken during the course reflecting which activities or sessions worked, or ideas for how future courses could be improved, should also be documented and stored. The effectiveness of any record-keeping system will be the ease of retrieving information from the database.

**Evaluation findings:** The inability of the APAC Secretariat to make the most basic of course information available to the evaluation team, including the 2009 course outline, all course evaluation forms and some training material, as well as some participant information (personal contact details, in particular), indicates that APAC need to focus on improving this area of course administration prior to embarking on future training.

### **Recommendations:**

- Venues for training should be carefully chosen so that distractions are limited and group learning is promoted. The logistical challenges of training outside of major cities like Johannesburg should be weighed up against the potential benefits of a more isolated learning environment.
- An effective administration and record-keeping system should be developed for future courses. The system should capture and enable easy access to participant and facilitator information as well as course information including training materials and completed evaluation forms.

## **2.4 Course Assessment and Evaluation**

When designing an assessment and evaluation system for training courses it is important to identify the *reason* for the evaluation (i.e. why are you evaluating the course and how will the evaluation findings be used?). While evaluation is often seen as the final step in the training process, it should also be seen as part of the learning process and can be viewed as a useful opportunity for participants to reflect on their own learning as well as on the effectiveness of the course. Evaluation should feed into the constant refinement of the training courses so that these are improved and adapted according to the changing needs of the learners.<sup>38</sup>

It is also important to question what is being assessed or evaluated. There are multiple aspects of course design and delivery (as described in parts 1 and 2 above); a course evaluation may aim to evaluate some or all of them. The most important aspect of course assessment and evaluation, however, will always be whether “learners are actually learning (changing their behaviour) as a result of the training.”<sup>39</sup> Such an evaluation requires, firstly, articulated learning outcomes and, secondly, some kind of baseline information against which change can be measured.

<sup>37</sup> APAC (2010) ‘Annual Training Report’, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Taylor, P. and Beniest, J. (2003) pp. 166-7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

### 2.4.1. Levels of evaluation<sup>40</sup>

There are a number of ways in which the impact of a training course can be evaluated. Kirkpatrick<sup>41</sup> has developed a very useful model for evaluating training programmes which considers four levels of impact. Each of these are briefly discussed below.

#### **Level 1: Reaction**

The first level of evaluation aims to measure the *reactions* of participants to the training course. This is usually done immediately after the course using an assessment or evaluation form. The evaluation should cover specific key components of the course, such as the course content, facilitators, administration, venue, etc. While this level of evaluation cannot indicate whether *learning* has taken place, participants are more likely to learn when their reaction to the course is positive. In addition, reactionary feedback may assist course developers and organisers in revising and improving the various components of the course. For example, a good level 1 evaluation will highlight content areas which participants felt were missing from the course.

#### **Level 2: Learning**

The aim of the second level of evaluation is to determine what participants *learned* from the course. This requires the prior identification of learning outcomes including changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes. The different learning outcomes will require different kinds of evaluation: knowledge is usually tested using knowledge tests, while skills are evaluated using performance tests and attitudes by using questionnaires. It is important that level two evaluations only evaluate what was covered by the course; this should be done in the most cost-effective and practical way possible. In addition, an evaluation of learning will be more meaningful if baseline information exists regarding the knowledge, skills and attitudes of participants prior to attending the course. Evaluating learning in level two is important in understanding and interpreting the results of level three evaluation (the application of learning in the workplace). It is also useful in refining training courses to ensure that learning outcomes are adequately covered by the course.

#### **Level 3: Behaviour**

In the third level of evaluation, the goal is to determine whether participants changed the way that they act or their on-the-job behaviour as a result of attending the training course. This requires that a sufficient time lapses between the course and the evaluation to enable participants the opportunity to change. The previous two levels of evaluation are important for understanding this level: participants who responded positively to the course (level 1) and who attain the learning outcomes of the course (level 2) are more likely to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes in their workplace. However, the transfer of learning is dependent on both training factors and workplace factors. Transfer is more likely to happen when the training context is similar to the actual work environment, real world examples are used and participants are able reflect on how general principles and learning outcomes can be applied in their everyday work. Transfer of learning is also dependent on whether participants are provided the opportunity to apply their new knowledge, skills and attitudes in the workplace. It is

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<sup>40</sup> Johnson, R.B. (2006) 'The Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation' (lecture notes), Educational Research, University of South Alabama. Available online at [www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/660lectures/Kirk1.doc](http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/660lectures/Kirk1.doc).

<sup>41</sup> Kirkpatrick, D. L. and Kirkpatrick J.D. (2006). Evaluating Training Programs (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

important, therefore, for a level three analysis to not only determine whether participants changed their behaviour but also the reasons for this.

#### **Level 4: Results**

The final level of evaluation, and the most difficult to conduct, aims to determine whether the training course contributed to an overall improvement in the capacities of the training participants or functioning of the organisation concerned. In the case of APAC, did Parliamentary Accounts Committees improve their ability to hold the executive and administration to account for the use of public funds? This evaluation is difficult because there are often numerous factors which contribute to such an improvement and it is not always possible to produce evidence that a particular training course is responsible (even in part) for the change. A theory of change is a useful tool in helping to articulate how the training course contributed (in theory) to the achievement of the long-term change; this can be supported through interviews with training participants.

**Evaluation findings:** From the two reports on training made available to the evaluation team, it is clear that APAC conducted course evaluations for the May 2010, May 2011 and August 2011 courses. These evaluations would fall under Level 1 evaluation as they measured the participants' reactions to the courses. The completed evaluation forms were not made available for review and therefore it is difficult to analyse the design of the form as well as the feedback from participants. However, the following could be determined:

#### **May 2010**

According to the summarised training report, the evaluation forms assessed the reaction of participants to the value of the course, the facilitators, the venue and accommodation, the efficiency of communication prior to the course and the administration of the training event. Participants were also able to provide feedback on the way in which content was presented and to make recommendations for improving future courses. This would have produced useful information for course organisers and designers.

#### **May and August 2011**

Course evaluations, as summarised in the 2011 report on training, again capture the reactions of participants to the course's value, venue, accommodation, communication prior to the course, length of course, content, training methods, facilitators and course administration. Participants were also able to make recommendations for additional content to be included in future courses.

There is no evidence that the actual *learning* of participants was evaluated after each course through knowledge or performance tests or questionnaires. Such testing would be required if the APAC courses be accredited, as suggested by one researcher. The researcher argued that by having to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or attitudes, training participants would have to be more disciplined and committed to the courses. An evaluation of actual learning would have proven useful in both evaluating the effectiveness of the course in terms of achieving learning outcomes and in evaluating the application of learning by PAC members and support staff in their work practices.

It is interesting to note from the May 2010 course outline that participants completed evaluation forms at the beginning and at the end of the course. These evaluations were not made available for analysis by the evaluation team and therefore it is unclear what was being evaluated. Baseline information is most useful to determine learning (i.e. what knowledge, skills and attitudes did participants have before attending the course) and should be guided by the

learning outcomes of the course. The course outlines for 2011 indicate that this practice was not continued.

With regard to evaluating behaviour changes, it is worth noting that the 2011 report on training included a recommendation for APAC to “develop a tracking/monitoring mechanism to assess/assist in the application of knowledge and skills gained during the training of both PAC and MPAC support staff.”<sup>42</sup> This demonstrates the desire of participants to apply their learning and should be supported in the future.

To some extent, the impact analysis conducted by *SAME Indicators* falls under Kirkpatrick’s third level of evaluation. The questionnaire administered to training participants aims to establish whether participants have applied their knowledge, skills and attitudes in their workplace. However, in the absence of baseline information on participants’ previous level of learning and skill (and learning outcomes for each course), it is difficult to determine the impact of the training courses and whether, if there were positive changes in actions of participants or their on-the-job behaviour, this could be attributed to their attendance at APAC training courses.

Feedback from participants in both 2010 and 2011 indicates repeated requests for more training because in the view of participants their attendance at APAC training courses has helped empower PAC members and support staff to do their work. This was echoed in the responses of interviewed training participants. PAC members said the courses were useful to remind and re-focus members, helping to keep them ‘on track’ with their work and keeping them up-to-date with developments. The courses helped to build self-confidence and reinforced their “resolve to forge ahead and do the work.” However, it is critical to continually evaluate whether their positive reaction to the courses translates into actual learning and changes in behaviour and improved oversight by parliamentary accounts committess.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Learning Outcomes**

In order to evaluate the impact of training courses, it is critical for APAC to articulate the aims of the course and the learning outcomes it seeks to achieve via the course. Meaningful course evaluation will focus on whether these learning outcomes were achieved, whether learners acquired the identified knowledge, skills and attitudes the course aimed to provide and whether these were subsequently applied in their workplace.

- **Baseline Information**

The learning outcomes of the course should be based on the identified needs of participants (established through a training needs analysis). This analysis should provide valuable baseline information regarding the current knowledge, skills and attitudes of participants against which evaluation findings can be compared. APAC should establish baseline information prior to conducting further training. This should overlap with the recommended training needs analysis.

- **Evaluation Reactions**

APAC should continue to evaluate the reactions of participants to their courses and ensure that their feedback is recorded and, where possible, incorporated into future courses.

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<sup>42</sup> APAC (2011) ‘Report: Training of PAC and MPAC support staff and PAC members’, p. 8.

### **Recommendations (continued):**

- **Evaluating Learning Outcomes**

It is critical for APAC to evaluate what participants learned from each course in terms of knowledge, skills or attitudes. This learning should be evaluated on the basis of learning outcomes. In other words, if the course aimed to provide participants with the knowledge and skill of analysing financial statements, they should be tested on whether they can, in practice, evaluate financial statements (rather than simply whether they feel more capacitated to evaluate financial statements). This evaluation should be done creatively and in such a way that strengthens and consolidates participants' learning.

- **Evaluating Changes in Behaviour**

APAC should consider ways in which learners can be supported in applying their learning to their work contexts. This may be in a format other than training courses, such as a mentoring programme, peer learning groups and other creative options of creating support and promoting on-going learning and behavioural change.

## Section 3: Course Content Analysis – *Did APAC Training Courses Cover Required Capacities?*

### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of this evaluation is to establish whether the design and delivery of APAC training interventions formed a plausible basis for strengthening the skills and capacities required by PAC members and support staff to effectively perform their roles, and whether training recipients perceived these skills and capacities to have improved. The first part of this report analysed the **design, delivery and evaluation** of APAC's training interventions in South African between 2009 and 2011. The second part focuses on the **content** of these courses, in particular, whether the content covered the skills and capacities PACs required. Part 3 explores how training recipients perceive their current **capacities** and whether training recipients feel the courses contributed to improving these capacities.

Course content should be evaluated against the aims and learning outcomes of the course, which in turn should express identified training needs. In the absence of a needs analysis and articulated learning outcomes for the APAC courses, course content was evaluated on the basis of the extent to which it addressed the skills and capacities required by PAC members and support staff to fulfil their mandate. Using this approach, the evaluation team conducted a **gap analysis**.

#### 3.1.1 Methodology

The content of each of the courses presented (as identified in available course outlines and training material) was compared with the list of skills and capacities required by PAC members and support staff to fulfil their mandate (see part 1 above). Findings were grouped using three categories:

1. the capacity was covered;
2. the capacity was partially covered;
3. the capacity was not covered.

Because PAC members and support staff attended different courses in May 2010 and 2011, the content of courses presented to members was analysed separately to that of courses presented to support staff.

#### 3.1.2. Limitations

It should be noted that the analysis is significantly limited by the extent of the training material made available to the evaluation team. Without a course outline for the July 2009 course, for example, it was impossible to determine whether the presentations provided represent the entire content for the course. Therefore any conclusions that the course did not cover a particular capacity is subject to correction.

The analysis is further limited by the availability of only powerpoint presentations. Again, the slides provided to the evaluation team may not represent all the content covered in the course, as presenters may have included additional information during their presentations or supplied more detail in question and answer or workshop sessions. Highly summarised slides are also difficult to interpret in terms of what content was actually covered. Alternatively, some of the content in the slides may not have been presented at all as presenters may have skipped over slides due to time constraints. The analysis of the course's content, therefore, using these

training materials, in the absence of learning outcomes or other supporting documentation, is inherently limited.

These limitations notwithstanding, a gap analysis was conducted by the evaluation team and is summarised in Table 3.1 (PAC members) and Table 3.2 (Support Staff). The following colour coding is used to indicate three categories:

- **Green:** the capacity was covered
- **Orange:** the capacity was partially covered
- **Red:** the capacity was not covered.

## 3.2 Findings

### 3.2.1 PAC Member Courses

Three courses were presented to PAC members during the period under review. The first, in July 2009, was also attended by support staff. The second two, in May 2010 and August 2011, were only presented to members. Findings of the gap analysis are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1 Gap Analysis: Members**

	Jul-09	May-10	Aug-11
1. Understanding of:			
a. Duties	Orange	Green	Red
b. Authority and powers of PACs	Orange	Green	Red
c. Protections of PAC members & witnesses	Red	Orange	Red
2. Understanding of oversight process and timeframes:			
a. Key events in financial calendar	Green	Orange	Red
b. Steps in oversight process	Orange	Orange	Red
c. Key role players	Orange	Orange	Orange
3. Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out:			
a. Oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events	Orange	Orange	Red
b. Division of labour between committee members	Orange	Green	Red
4. Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports:			
a. SAI/External Audit requirements	Green	Green	Green
b. Audit process and work plan	Green	Orange	Orange
c. Audit sample	Red	Red	Red
d. Audit opinion	Green	Green	Red
e. Key auditing terms	Green	Orange	Orange
5. Capacity to evaluate financial statements:			
a. Cash flow statements	Green	Green	Green
b. Balance sheet	Green	Green	Green
c. Income statement	Green	Green	Green
d. Actual vs budgeted expenditure	Red	Green	Green
e. Capacity to read budget documents	Red	Green	Green
6. Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen:			
a. Payroll controls	Red	Red	Red
b. Cash management controls	Red	Red	Red
c. Debt management controls	Red	Red	Red
d. Procurement controls	Red	Red	Red
e. Internal audit & risk management controls	Orange	Red	Red
7. Capacity to hold effective committee hearings:			
a. Identify focus areas	Green	Green	Red
b. Draft and ask effective questions	Green	Green	Red
c. Identify and invite appropriate witnesses	Green	Green	Red
d. Hold executive members to account	Red	Green	Red
e. Focus on strategic issues	Green	Green	Red
f. Minute meetings	Red	Red	Red
8. Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action	Red	Red	Red
9. Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions	Orange	Red	Orange
10. Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations	Red	Green	Red

### Capacities covered

The gap analysis suggests that the following capacities were covered between the three courses:

1. Understanding the duties, authority and powers of PACs (although the protection of PAC members and witnesses was not well covered in any of the courses)
4. The capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit Reports
5. The capacity to evaluate financial statements
7. The capacity to hold effective committee hearings

### Capacities partially covered

The three courses presented to members appear to have only partially covered the following capacities:

2. Understanding the oversight process and timeframes
3. Drafting a committee operational plan
9. Draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions
10. Establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations and responses to resolutions.

### Capacities not covered

The gap analysis suggests that the following capacities were not covered by the three courses:

6. Understanding Supreme Audit Institution evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen them
8. Understanding of the disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action

An overview of the above analysis is depicted graphically in figure 3.1 below.

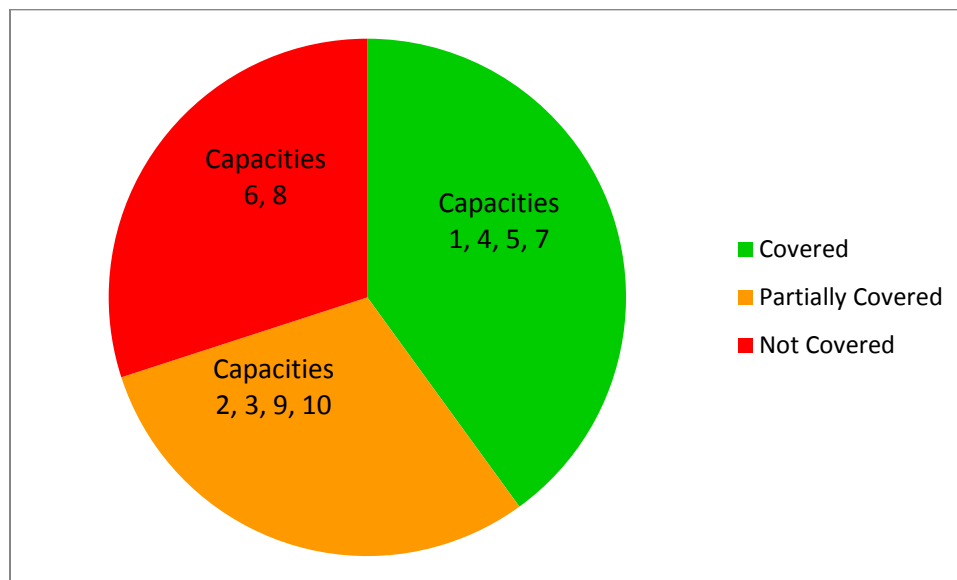


Figure 3.1 Gap Analysis Overview: Members

### **3.2.2 Support Staff Courses**

Three courses were presented to support staff during the period under review. The first, in July 2009, was also attended by PAC members (as described above). The second two, in May 2010 and May 2011, were only presented to support staff. Findings of the gap analysis are summarised in Table 2 below.

#### **Capacities covered**

As in the courses presented to members, it appears that the courses covered the following capacities:

1. Understanding the duties, authority and powers of PACs (although the protection of PAC members and witnesses was not well covered in any of the courses)
4. The capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit Reports
5. The capacity to evaluate financial statements
7. The capacity to hold effective committee hearings

#### **Capacities partially covered**

The three courses appear to have only partially covered the following capacities:

2. Understanding the oversight process and timeframes
9. Draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions
10. Establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations and responses to resolutions.

#### **Capacities not covered**

The gap analysis reveals that the two capacities not covered in the courses for members were also not covered in the courses for support staff:

3. Drafting a committee operational plan
6. Understanding Supreme Audit Institution evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen them
8. Understanding of the disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action

**Table 3.2 Gap Analysis: Support Staff**

	Jul-09	May-10	May-11
1. Understanding of:			
a. Duties	Orange	Orange	Green
b. Authority and powers of PACs	Orange	Orange	Green
c. Protections of PAC members & witnesses	Red	Red	Orange
2. Understanding of oversight process and timeframes:			
a. Key events in financial calendar	Green	Orange	Orange
b. Steps in oversight process	Orange	Orange	Orange
c. Key role players	Orange	Red	Orange
3. Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out:			
a. Oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events	Orange	Red	Red
b. Division of labour between committee members	Red	Red	Red
4. Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports:			
a. SAI/External Audit requirements	Green	Red	Green
b. Audit process and work plan	Green	Orange	Orange
c. Audit sample	Red	Red	Red
d. Audit opinion	Green	Red	Red
e. Key auditing terms	Green	Red	Red
5. Capacity to evaluate financial statements:			
a. Cash flow statements	Green	Red	Green
b. Balance sheet	Green	Red	Green
c. Income statement	Green	Red	Green
d. Actual vs budgeted expenditure	Red	Red	Green
e. Capacity to read budget documents	Red	Red	Green
6. Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen:			
a. Payroll controls	Red	Red	Red
b. Cash management controls	Red	Red	Red
c. Debt management controls	Red	Red	Red
d. Procurement controls	Red	Red	Red
e. Internal audit & risk management controls	Orange	Red	Red
7. Capacity to hold effective committee hearings:			
a. Identify focus areas	Green	Red	Red
b. Draft and ask effective questions	Green	Red	Red
c. Identify and invite appropriate witnesses	Green	Red	Red
d. Hold executive members to account	Red	Red	Red
e. Focus on strategic issues	Green	Red	Red
f. Minute meetings	Red	Red	Red
8. Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action	Red	Red	Red
9. Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions	Orange	Red	Orange
10. Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations	Red	Red	Orange

An overview of the above analysis is depicted graphically in figure 3.2 below.

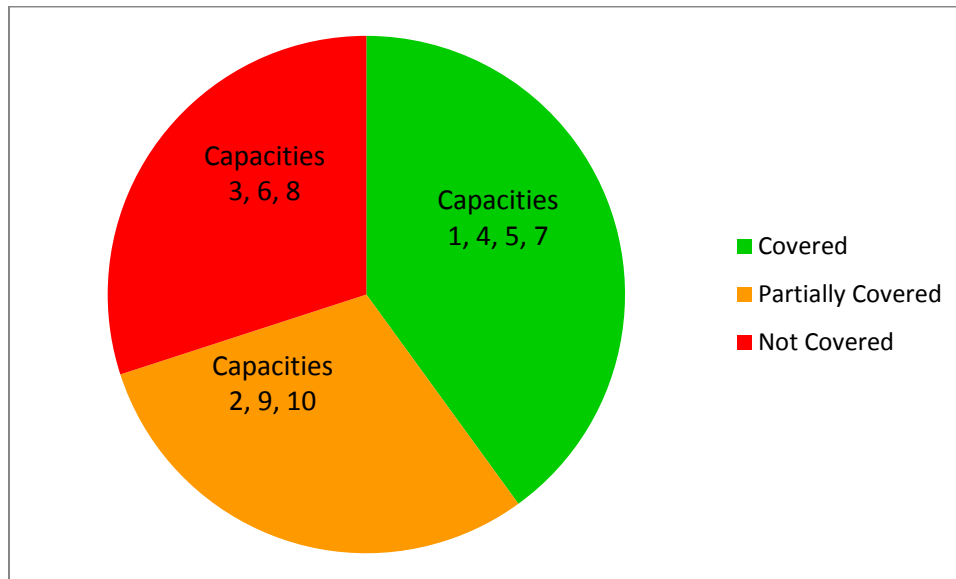


Figure 3.2 Gap Analysis Overview: Support Staff

### 3.3 Conclusion

The gap analysis suggests that only 40% of the capacities required by PAC members and support staff were adequately covered by the four courses presented between 2009 and 2011. Given the limitations of the analysis, however, the evaluation team does not recommend that capacities covered in previous courses should not be covered in future courses. This is because it was not possible within the scope of this evaluation to determine whether the content covering core capacities actually resulted (or substantially contributed) to the attainment of the identified capacities of training recipients. (An evaluation of the perceived contribution of courses to the strengthening of capacities is set out in Section 4.)

The design of future courses should be based on a training needs analysis which compares the current capacities of PAC members and support staff to a detailed list of required capacities (as described in Section 2 of this report). As Section 4 demonstrates below, the training needs analysis should not be limited to a subjective self-assessment of capacities, but rather an external assessment is necessary in order to accurately determine the needs to be met by training.

## **Section 4: Capacity Analysis – How did participants rate their current capacities and perceive APAC courses to have contributed to their capacities?**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The findings of the training analysis and gap analysis, discussed in sections 2 and 3 above, were triangulated with an analysis of how training recipients perceived their current capacities and the extent to which they perceived the course(s) they attended to have strengthened these capacities.

#### **4.1.1 Methodology**

The perceptions of training participants were gathered through a questionnaire made up of structured and semi-structured questions. Part C of the questionnaire required interviewees to rate their confidence in relation to the key capacities and skills PAC members and support staff are deemed to require to perform their roles. The following scale was used:

- 1. I do not understand this / I am unable to do this*
- 2. I do not fully understand this / I am unsure of how to do this*
- 3. I mostly understand this / I am fairly confident of how to do this*
- 4. I understand this / I am confident I know how to do this*

The questionnaire also asked interviewees to indicate whether the APAC training course(s) they attended contributed to improving each of the capacities listed.

The questionnaire was piloted with PAC members and support staff at SADCOPAC's annual conference in Mpumalanga in September 2012. It was then administered telephonically to a purposive sample of training recipients in the National Assembly, the nine provincial Legislatures as well as training recipients from Botswana and Namibia. The sample was made up of the chairperson, two members and a researcher attached to the relevant PAC (i.e. four interviews per interview site). Where telephonic interviews were not possible, PAC members were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire electronically and submit their responses via email. A total intended (purposive) sample of 46 respondents was identified for interviewing. Seventy percent of the intended sample (32 out of 46 training participants) was achieved.

The table below summarises the number of interviews conducted by country and by South African province.

## Evaluation of Regional Courses

In May 2011, training courses were presented in Namibia and Botswana. The evaluation team was asked to include a very small sample (of 3 participants for each country) in the interview sample. However, an analysis of the content of courses offered in Namibia and Botswana fell outside of the scope of this evaluation. In addition, the restricted sample and lack of interview responses by Namibian and Botswana participants meant that meaningful information regarding their perceived capacities and of the contribution of the courses to their capacities could also not be determined. However, given that the same approach to training was adopted by APAC in the region as was employed in South Africa, the evaluation team proposes that the recommendations made in Section 5 be similarly applied to future training interventions by either APAC or SADCOPAC in the SADC region.

**Table 4.1: Interview Responses**

		Interviews		
		Sample	Actual	Non-responses
South Africa	Eastern Cape	4	4	0
	Free State	4	4	0
	Gauteng	4	4	0
	KZN	4	3	1
	Limpopo	4	4	0
	Mpumalanga	4	3	1
	North West	4	0	4
	N. Cape	4	2	2
	W. Cape	4	2	2
	Parliament	4	4	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>
	As % of sample		75%	25%
Regional	Botswana	3	1	2
	Namibia	3	1	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
	As % of sample		33%	67%

Total	Sample	46
	Actual	32
	As % of sample	70%

## 4.2 Perceptions of current capacities

Interview responses indicate that both PAC members and support staff have a high degree of confidence in their capacity to fulfil their mandate. Across the ten capacities assessed in the questionnaire, the overall confidence of interviewed South African (national and provincial) PAC members was 3.4 on average, while support staff rated their overall confidence as 3.3 on

average. The perception of South African PAC members and support staff regarding each of the ten capacities is summarised in table 4.2 below.

The average perceived capacity for all ten assessed capacities was between three (I mostly understand this / I am fairly confident of how to do this) and four (I understand this / I am confident I know how to do this) for both PAC members and support staff. PAC members seldom ranked their capacity below two for any of the ten assessed capacities during their interviews.

Some support staff, however, identified a degree of uncertainty in their ability to:

- Understand and engage with Auditor General reports (capacity 4)
- Evaluate financial statements (capacity 5);
- Understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls (capacity 6);
- Establish and maintain a database for tracking committee investigations and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations (capacity 10).

Interestingly, these four capacities were also rated the lowest (although above 3) for PAC members.

**Table 4.2: Average Perceived Capacity of PAC members and support staff**

	Average	
	Members	Support Staff
1. Understanding of duties, authority and powers of PACS and protections of PAC members and witnesses.	3.7	3.9
2. Understanding of oversight process and timeframes including key events in the financial calendar; steps in the oversight process; key role players	3.6	3.6
3. Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out: oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events and division of labour between committee members.	3.5	3.3
4. Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports, including: audit requirements; audit process and work plan; audit sample; audit opinion; key auditing terms.	3.2	3.0
5. Capacity to evaluate financial statements, including cash flow statements; income statements; actual vs budgeted expenditure; capacity to read budget documents.	3.2	3.0
6. Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen: payroll controls; cash management and debt management controls; procurement controls; internal audit and risk management controls.	3.0	2.6
7. Capacity to hold effective committee hearings: identify focus areas; draft and ask effective questions; identify and invite appropriate witnesses; hold executive members to account; focus on strategic issues; minute meetings.	3.4	3.4
8. Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action	3.6	3.3
9. Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions	3.5	3.5
10. Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations	3.1	3.0

Figure 4.2 provides a graphic representation of the responses of both PAC members and support staff.

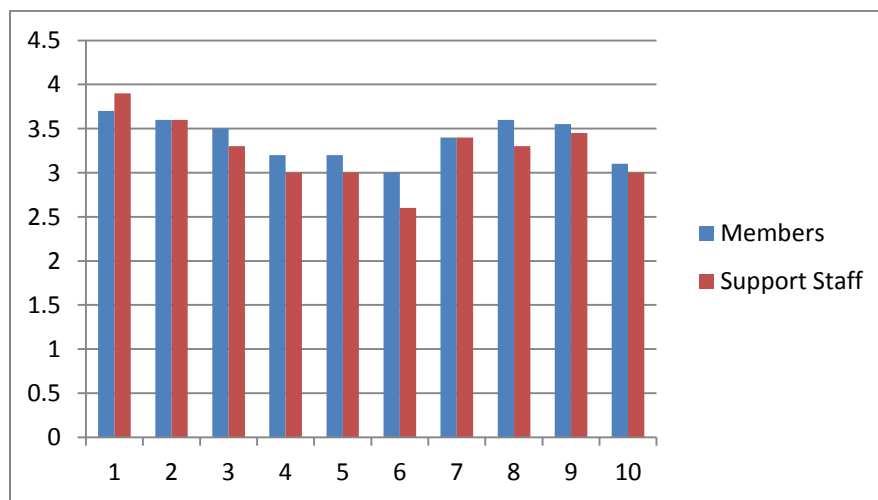


Figure 4.2: Average Perceived Capacity of PAC members and support staff

### 4.3 Perceived contributions of course(s) in strengthening capacities

During interviews, PAC members and support staff were asked to indicate whether the APAC training course(s) they attended had contributed to improving each of the ten capacities listed in the questionnaire. They were asked to do so using the following scale:

- Yes
- No
- Partly

Each of the capacities and the responses of interviewees is discussed below. Please see Table 4.3 for a summary of responses. The table also indicates the extent to which the identified capacity was covered using the same colour coding as before (**green**: covered; **orange**: partially coloured; **red**: not covered).

#### **Capacity 1**

*Understanding of the duties, authority and powers of PACs and the protections of PAC members and witnesses*

PAC members rated their confidence in capacity 1 as 3.7 on average. 90% of PAC members said the course(s) helped to strengthen this capacity. The capacity was covered in the May 2010 course for PAC members. Support staff rated their confidence in this capacity as slightly higher on average (3.9) but only 71% said the course(s) contributed to this, while 29% said the courses had only partly done so. The content analysis (section 3 above) indicates that this capacity was adequately covered in the courses presented to support staff.

#### **Capacity 2**

*Understanding of the oversight process and timeframes, including: key events in the financial calendar; steps in the oversight process; and, key role players.*

Confidence in capacity 2 was rated by PAC members as 3.6 on average; 76% of members felt the courses helped to strengthen this capacity despite the content analysis indicating that it was only partially covered in the courses presented to members.

Support staff rated their confidence in capacity 2 equally high (3.6 on average). The content analysis indicates that this capacity was only partially covered in the courses presented to support staff; this is reflected in their interview responses; 57% of respondents said the courses had helped strengthen their capacity to understand the oversight process, while 29% said that the course had only done so partly and 14% it had not done so at all.

#### **Capacity 3**

*Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out oversight activities (taking into account the annual financial calendar of events and a division of labour between committee members.*

PAC members rated their confidence in capacity 3 as 3.5 on average. Although the capacity was only partially covered in the courses presented to members, 71% of members said the courses contributed towards their ability to draw up committee operational plans.

The content analysis, however, indicates that this capacity was not covered in courses presented to support staff during the period under review. Despite this, support staff rated their confidence in capacity 3 as 3.3 on average. Highlighting the disparity between the gap analysis and interview responses, 57% of support staff said the courses helped to strengthen their capacity, while 43% indicated that it had not.

#### **Capacity 4**

*Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports, including: audit requirements; audit process and work plan; audit sample; audit opinion and key auditing terms.*

PAC members rated their overall confidence in this capacity as 3.2 on average, while support staff rated theirs as slightly lower (3.0 on average). While the content analysis suggests that this capacity was covered in both member and support staff courses, only 43% of support staff indicated that the courses had strengthened this capacity and 29% the course(s) only partially contributed to their capacity. This appears inconsistent with responses by support staff to unstructured questions, where they indicated that presentations by the Auditor General were the most useful part of the courses. Support staff also indicated that, as a result of the courses, they were able to analyse and engage more meaningfully with annual reports and audit reports in particular.

Seventy-one percent of members felt that the courses did contribute to their capacity. In their answers to unstructured interview questions, members felt that one of the most useful sessions they attended were on how to read and use Auditor-General reports for oversight and understanding audit outcomes and opinions. They found the presentations by the Auditor-General very informative and requested more sessions on auditing in the future.

#### **Capacity 5**

*Capacity to evaluate financial statements, including: cash flow statements; balance sheets; income statements; actual versus budgeted expenditure; and, capacity to read budget documents.*

Confidence in their ability to evaluate financial statements was rated by PAC members as 3.2 on average. The content analysis suggests this capacity was covered in the courses presented to PAC members, although 24% indicated that the courses did not strengthen their capacity to evaluate financial statements. During the interviews, members identified the sessions on how to read and analyse financial statements as particularly useful and 67% of members responded that the course(s) contributed to an improvement in their capacity. Members did, however, request that the topic be covered in more detail in future courses so that they could interrogate the financial statements of departments and public entities more rigorously.

On average, support staff rated their confidence in capacity 5 as 3.0. Only 29% of support staff felt the courses had strengthened their capacity, while 57% said the course did not contribute at all to their ability to evaluate financial statements. This is despite the content analysis indicating that the capacity was adequately covered in the courses presented to support staff. Their perception regarding the contribution of the courses is inconsistent with responses to unstructured questions during the interviews. Support staff said they were able to implement tools to analyse annual financial statements in their workplace following the courses and identified analysing financial statements as one of the most useful topics. The apparent contradiction may be explained by the request of researchers for a deeper analysis of annual

reports. They argued that they required more technical skills with regard to analysing financial statements, in particular key calculations and practical accounting exercises.

Table 4.3 Summary of Perceived Capacity and Course Contribution

	Members					Support Staff				
	Perceived Capacity	Covered	Did the course contribute?			Perceived Capacity	Covered	Did the course contribute?		
			Yes	No	Partly			Yes	No	Partly
1. Understanding of duties, authority and powers of PACS and protections of PAC members and witnesses.	3.7	Yes	90%	0%	10%	3.9	Yes	71%	0%	29%
2. Understanding of oversight process and timeframes including key events in the financial calendar; steps in the oversight process; key role players	3.6	Partially	76%	10%	14%	3.6	Partially	57%	14%	29%
3. Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out: oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events and division of labour between committee members.	3.5	Partially	71%	10%	19%	3.3	No	57%	43%	0%
4. Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports, including: audit requirements; audit process and work plan; audit sample; audit opinion; key auditing terms.	3.2	Yes	71%	5%	24%	3.0	Yes	43%	14%	29%
5. Capacity to evaluate financial statements, including cash flow statements; income statements; actual vs budgeted expenditure; capacity to read budget documents.	3.2	Yes	67%	24%	10%	3.0	Yes	29%	57%	14%
6. Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen: payroll controls; cash management and debt management controls; procurement controls; internal audit and risk management controls.	3.0	No	62%	29%	10%	2.6	No	29%	71%	0%
7. Capacity to hold effective committee hearings: identify focus areas; draft and ask effective questions; identify and invite appropriate witnesses; hold executive members to account; focus on strategic issues; minute meetings.	3.4	Yes	76%	12%	12%	3.4	Yes	46%	37%	17%
8. Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action	3.6	No	81%	0%	19%	3.3	No	50%	0%	50%
9. Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions	3.5	Partially	73%	18%	10%	3.5	Partially	58%	17%	25%
10. Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations	3.1	Partially	76%	24%	0%	3.0	Partially	43%	57%	0%

### **Capacity 6**

*Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen: payroll controls; cash management controls; debt management controls; procurement controls; and internal audit and risk management controls.*

PAC members rated their confidence in capacity 6 as 3.0 on average, their lowest average rating of the ten capacities. The content analysis suggests this capacity was not covered in the courses, contradicting the claim by 62% of members that the courses helped to strengthen their capacity to understand internal financial controls.

This capacity was also not covered in the courses presented to support staff, according to the content analysis. Support staff rated their confidence in understanding internal financial controls as 2.6 on average, the lowest average rating of the ten capacities (echoing the findings for PAC members). When asked whether the courses contributed to strengthening this capacity, 71% of support staff said that they did not; they requested more information on internal controls and risk management in future courses.

### **Capacity 7**

*Capacity to hold effective committee hearings, including: identify focus area; draft and ask effective questions; identify and invite appropriate witnesses; hold executive members to account; focus on strategic issues; and, minute meetings.*

Both PAC members and support staff rated their confidence in capacity 7 as 3.4 on average. The capacity to hold effective committee hearings was covered in courses presented to members and support staff. Members said the sessions on how to ask questions in committee hearings (in particular, how to probe, how to ask relevant questions and how to focus questioning on the real issues) were useful. Some members also said that sessions on how to conduct public hearings were also helpful to them in their work. Again, the courses were perceived to have been valuable, with 76% of respondents saying their capacity to hold effective committee hearings was strengthened by the course(s) they attended.

Only 46% of support staff felt the courses had contributed to strengthening their capacity, and 36% said the courses did not contribute at all. Despite this, researchers said that sessions on preparing questions for hearings and how to hold public hearings were useful for their work practices.

### **Capacity 8**

*Understanding of the disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/ poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action.*

On average, PAC members rated their confidence in capacity 8 as 3.6. While 81% of respondents attributed the course with having strengthened this capacity, the course content analysis indicates that this capacity was not covered at all in the courses presented to members during the period under review.

Support staff indicated a similarly high confidence in their capacity to understand the disciplinary process and recommend appropriate disciplinary action, with an average of 3.3. While the capacity was not covered in the courses presented to support staff, 50% said the courses contributed to strengthening their capacity.

### **Capacity 9**

*Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions.*

PAC members rated their confidence in drafting and finalising committee reports and resolutions as 3.5 on average and 73% of respondents said the courses contributed to strengthening this capacity. This is despite the capacity only being partially covered by the courses presented in the period under review. Members did request more training on drafting resolutions in their interviews.

The response of support staff was similarly high in terms of their average confidence (3.5), although only 58% felt the courses had contributed to strengthening their capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions. The content analysis suggests this capacity was only partially covered by the courses presented to support staff during the period under review.

### **Capacity 10**

*Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive or administration to committee recommendations.*

On average, PAC members rated their confidence in capacity 10 as 3.1. While the capacity was only partially covered in the courses, 76% felt the courses did help strengthen their ability to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee investigations and resolutions. Some members responded in their interviews that the courses helped them to put better timeframes to resolutions and to acknowledge the importance of following up their implementation. However, they expressed the need for an effective mechanism to do this and training on what to do when resolutions are not implemented by the executive.

Support staff rated their confidence in capacity 10 as 3.0. Although one researcher said that as a result of the course he was able to track resolutions and produce progress reports on the implementation of resolutions, 57% of support staff said the courses did not strengthen their capacity to track resolutions. Support staff repeatedly raised the issue of resolutions in their interviews, arguing that courses did not cover how to track their implementation or how to follow them up.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

The interview responses suggest that both PAC members and support staff have a high level of confidence in the ten assessed capacities. However, the training analysis and content analysis call into question both the basis for their level of confidence and the contribution of the courses to strengthening their capacities. The verification of PAC member and support staff perceptions regarding their capacities is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

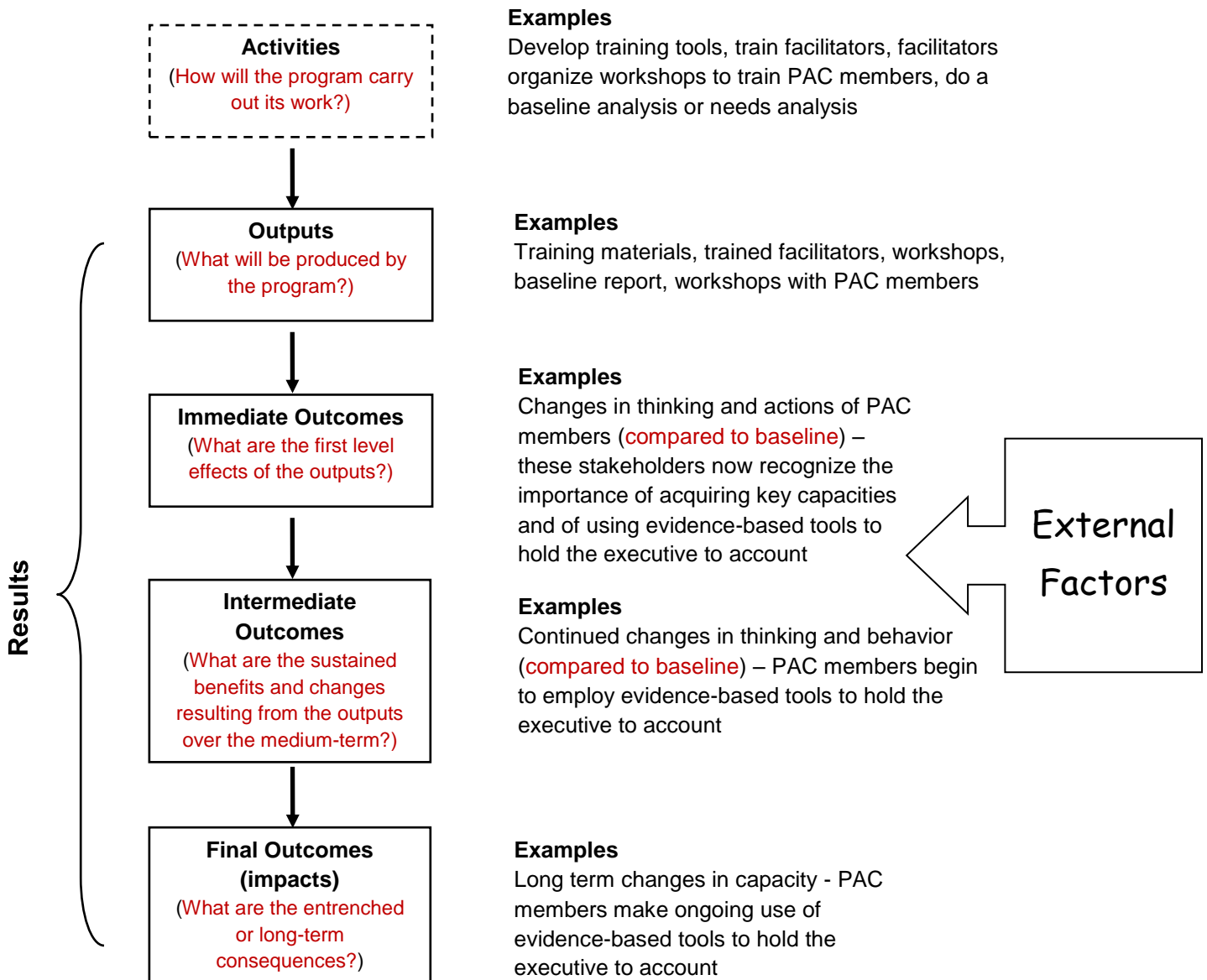
The evaluation team recommends that by conducting a training needs analysis prior to future training, and by assessing learning against articulated learning outcomes, APAC will be able to determine more accurately both the actual capacity of members and support staff and the contribution training interventions made in strengthening their capacity.

## Section 5: Recommendations for Future PAC Training Courses

### 5.1 Develop a Training Framework

The evaluation team recommends that APAC develop a training framework based on the same principles as **a results framework or a results chain**.

#### What is a results framework?<sup>43</sup>



<sup>43</sup> Diagram adapted from John Mayne, 2010, Contribution Analysis: Addressing Cause and Effect in *Evaluating the Complex*, K. Forss, M. Marra and R. Schwartz (Eds.), Transaction Publishers

In order to implement this framework, APAC needs to identify the conditions necessary for APAC/SADCOPAC to implement a training programme that achieves these immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes (capacity changes).

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The evaluation team recommends that APAC and SADCOPAC consider implementing the following practical steps as the basis for future training programmes and interventions:

- **Appointment of a Training Manager and Establishment of a Training Unit**  
A full time Training Manager should be appointed at an appropriate senior-grade to oversee the development of a training framework and the establishment of a dedicated training directorate. The incumbent should have the skills and experience necessary to design a high quality training programme, and high quality training materials and practical oversight tools, to be offered at basic and advanced levels. When required, the Training Manager should appoint qualified facilitators to roll out training interventions and to facilitate the training of local trainers.
- **Identify capacities required by PACs**  
The first task of the Training Manager should be to develop a detailed list of capacities required by PAC members and support staff to fulfil their mandate. This list should be developed in consultation with both subject matter experts and experienced PAC members and support staff.
- **Evaluate actual capacities of PACs**  
Once the list of capacities has been developed, the actual capacity of PAC members and support staff should be evaluated. This training needs analysis should form the basis for the design of future training courses.
- **Design courses to address needs of PACs**  
Courses should be designed to address three levels of need: basic (for new members and support staff); intermediate (for members and support staff with basic capacities and skills) and advanced (for experienced members and support staff who require more in-depth training). Training workshops and materials should be designed to facilitate participatory learning, and should include experiential learning exercises and the use of outcome-based pre- and post-course assessment tools.
- **Pilot training programmes**  
Before conducting multiple training interventions, each course (basic, intermediate and advanced) should be piloted. The evaluation of these pilots should feed back into the revision of the courses before they are presented again. The pilot training programme should contain a set of generic training materials and workshops based on the use of a set of generic oversight tools for use by PAC members. Separate tools for use by PAC researchers and support staff should be developed. A set of facilitator's manuals could be produced for the training of facilitators who will provide localised training based on the amendment and adaptation of generic oversight tools.

APAC should anticipate a lead-in time for the development of a pilot training programme at the basic level of at least six months. A further lead-in time of an additional 12 months should be anticipated for the development of an advanced training course.

## Annexure A: List of Skills and Capacities

5 September 2012

# Capacities for Effective PACs

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11. *Understanding of:*
  - a. *Duties*
  - b. *Authority and powers of PACs*
  - c. *Protections of PAC members & witnesses*
  
12. *Understanding of oversight process and timeframes:*
  - a. *Key events in financial calendar*
  - b. *Steps in oversight process*
  - c. *Key role players in Executive and administration, Institutions supporting Oversight (Supreme Audit Institution, Public Service Commission) and other key role players (Treasury, Accountant General)*
  
13. *Capacity to draw up a committee operational plan setting out:*
  - a. *Oversight activities taking into account annual financial calendar of events*
  - b. *Division of labour between committee members*
  
14. *Capacity to understand and engage with Supreme Audit Institution/External Audit reports:*
  - a. *SAI/External Audit requirements*
  - b. *Audit process and work plan*
  - c. *Audit sample*
  - d. *Audit opinion*
  - e. *Key auditing terms*
    - i. *Basis for opinion*
    - ii. *Emphasis of matter*
  
15. *Capacity to evaluate financial statements:*
  - a. *Cash flow statements*
  - b. *Balance sheet (Statement of financial position)*
  - c. *Income statement (Statement of financial performance)*
  - d. *Actual versus budgeted expenditure comparison*
  - e. *Capacity to read budget documents (to compare with expenditure reports)*

16. *Capacity to understand SAI evaluations of internal financial controls over expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to strengthen:*
  - a. *Payroll controls*
  - b. *Cash management controls*
  - c. *Debt management controls*
  - d. *Procurement controls*
  - e. *Internal audit and risk management controls*
  
17. *Capacity to hold effective committee hearings:*
  - a. *Identify focus areas*
  - b. *Draft and ask effective questions (e.g., open-ended versus leading questions, dealing with avoidance techniques)*
  - c. *Identify and invite subpoena appropriate witnesses*
  - d. *Hold executive members to account in meetings*
  - e. *Focus on strategic – not operational – issues*
  - f. *Minute meetings*
  
18. *Understanding of disciplinary process and steps relating to financial misconduct and/or financial management incapacity/poor performance – in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary action*
  
19. *Capacity to draft and finalise committee reports and resolutions*
  
20. *Capacity to establish and maintain a database for tracking committee initiated investigations (audits) and responses of the executive/administration to committee recommendations*

## Annexure B: Questionnaire

5 September 2012

# Interview Questions

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### Introduction

I am conducting an evaluation of APAC training courses held in the period between 2009 and 2011 on behalf of APAC and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. You have been selected to participate in this evaluation as you attended APAC training during one of these years.

The **purpose** of this questionnaire is get feedback from you on this training and on areas where future training could potentially be strengthened in order to meet your needs.

The questionnaire is **structured** into three parts:

1. Part A asks you for some background information;
2. Part B asks a few questions about the quality of the training course; and,
3. Part C asks some questions about whether the training increased the skills and capacities required for PACs to perform their role effectively.

Please be candid in providing your responses. Your identity will remain confidential, and your responses will not be traced back to you.

The entire interview will take less than an (one) hour. Thank you in advance for your time. I appreciate how busy you are and how difficult it is for you to set time aside from your busy schedule.

### A. Background Information

1. In which age group do you belong?

- Under 25 years     26 - 39 years     40 - 54 years     55 - 64 years     65 or older

2. Which training course(s) did you attend?

- July 2009     May 2010  
 May 2011     August 2011     None

3. What is your highest level of qualification?

4. What is your current occupation?

5. In which country do you work?

South  
Africa

Botswana

Namibia

6. In which level of governance do you work?

National  
Legislature

Provincial  
Legislature

District  
Assembly

Municipal  
Assembly

7. How many years have you worked in this position?

years

8. How many years have you worked with Parliamentary Accounts Committees?

years

## B. Quality of the Training Courses presented

9. Which tools acquired during the course have you applied in practice in your work? Please give examples.

10. What was the most useful part of the course?

11. What did you NOT learn that you needed to, or expected to, learn during the training?

## C. Capacities

Listed below are ten statements which describe the capacities required by PACs. I will read each statement to you. Please rate your level of confidence in respect of each statement using the following scale:

5. *I do not understand this / I am unable to do this*
6. *I do not fully understand this / I am unsure of how to do this*
7. *I mostly understand this / I am fairly confident of how to do this*
8. *I understand this / I am confident I know how to do this*

Please also indicate whether the APAC training course that you attended contributed to improving each of the capacities listed in these statements for you.

Statement	Rating 1 – 4	Did the course contribute? (Yes, No, Partly)
12. I know the duties, authority and powers of PACs		
13. I know all of the steps in the oversight process and can identify all important events in the annual financial calendar		
14. I can identify a detailed list of oversight activities needed to draw up an annual PAC operational plan		
15. I know how to engage with the detailed findings, technical terms and audit opinions in Supreme Audit Institution reports		
16. I know how the internal financial control systems within the institutions that I oversee are supposed to work (including payroll controls, cash management controls, debt management controls, procurement controls and internal audit/risk management controls)		
17. I can evaluate all relevant financial statements (including cash flow statements, balance sheets [or statements of financial position], income statements [or statements of financial performance], actual versus budgeted expenditure comparison)		
18. I can ask effective questions to witnesses, officials and the executive during committee meetings (e.g. by using open-ended instead of leading questions and dealing with avoidance techniques)		
19. I know how to identify and invite or subpoena appropriate witnesses to attend committee meetings.		
20. I can recommend appropriate disciplinary actions for financial misconduct for members of the executive and for public officials		
21. I can draft reports on PAC hearings (including reports on PAC commissioned investigations)		
22. I can draft clear resolutions on behalf of PAC to be tabled in the Legislature.		
23. I can apply the regulatory provisions for holding members of the executive and senior managers to account during my oversight work (including regulations covering financial management controls, financial reporting rules and Legislature rules governing committee hearings).		
24. I can track committee investigations and responses of the executive/administration to PAC recommendations for the current year and past five financial years		

25. Would you like to add any other comments on the APAC training course you attended?

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