

CANADIAN AUDIT & ACCOUNTABILITY FOUNDATION

Advancing public sector audit, oversight and governance



FONDATION CANADIENNE POUR L'AUDIT ET LA RESPONSABILISATION

Faire progresser l'audit, la surveillance et la gouvernance dans le secteur public



Engaging with Audit Institutions, Governments and Elected Officials on the Implementation of SDG #5 - Gender Equality

Towards the Creation of a Guide for Citizens and Civil Society Organizations

Proof of Concept

The Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation is an independent research and education organization that is dedicated to promoting and strengthening public sector performance audit, oversight, and accountability in Canada and abroad. Our programming is designed to help auditors and oversight bodies play their roles in making accountability work more effectively.

We provide a focal point for education, training, knowledge-sharing and networking to foster collaboration and discussion on issues of mutual interest. We work at local, provincial, national, and international levels with people and organizations across a broad spectrum of interests.

Purpose

To initiate an interactive dialogue between Citizens & Civil Society Organizations; and, Elected Officials, public administrators, and Audit Institutions leading to the creation of a hands-on tool to equip all parties with necessary knowledge and strategies to:

- Engage with each other to promote gender equality and the implementation of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; and,
- Better equip Citizens and Civil Society Organizations to leverage existing democratic avenues and institutions to inform decision-making and have their voices heard!

Background

In all corners of the world, gender inequalities persist and impact us all. When girls and women do not have equal access to and control over resources, or equal opportunities to participate in decision-making, their families, communities and countries feel the social and economic costs.



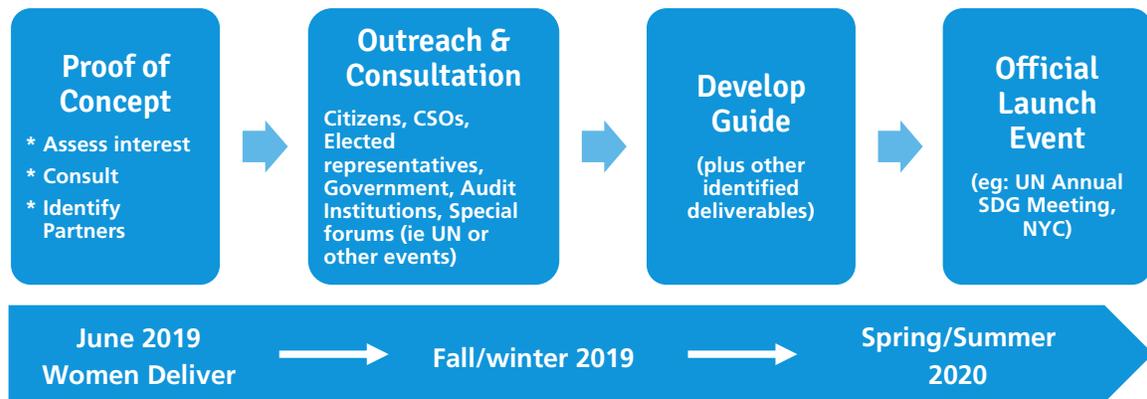
In recent years, audit institutions across Canada and globally have expressed a growing interest in how they can more effectively engage with citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the audit and public accountability process, with a view to generating audits with meaningful outcomes that can contribute to positive changes within society. Nearly all national governments have committed to gender equality and have now reaffirmed their commitment through the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which gender equality is both a standalone goal and a cross-cutting priority. Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

targets and indicators will have broad impact, not only on a national level but will resonate at all levels including provinces and municipalities.

Yet, a preliminary review of the literature reveals a lack of information and guidance for citizens and civil society organizations to advance their goals by working with audit institutions and legislative oversight bodies. In late 2016, the CAAF forged a partnership with Women Deliver – an advocacy organization for women and girls worldwide – to explore this issue more deeply. This partnership was established through the publishing in 2017 of a CAAF Practice Guide to [Auditing the Sustainable Development Goals: Gender Equality](#).

Advocates and Agents Working Together

This side event at the Women Deliver Conference is the beginning of a collaborative process between advocates and agents. It is designed to inform the writing of a Guide for Citizens and CSOs on how to work with Audit Institutions and Elected Oversight Bodies to hold government accountable for the implementation of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more specifically, SDG 5 – “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls to reach their full potential.”



Why Engage with Audit Institutions, and Elected Oversight Committees?

A country’s governments, legislatures, audit institutions and advocates for gender equality, working together as change agents, have the power and voices to make a difference by turning their attention to gender inequalities. In many governments, accountability arrangements generally follow the structure outlined in the Accountability Triangle.

Audit institutions can contribute to the successful implementation of SDGs by assessing the performance of public sector programs and services in various areas (health, education, environmental protection, gender equality, etc.).

The oversight bodies (parliamentarians/Public Accounts Committees) that audit institutions report to are key players in ensuring that audited organizations carry out the recommendations of the audit institutions and have a significant impact in holding governments to account. Through collaboration or other consultation mechanisms, citizens and civil society organizations can be important advocates in the accountability cycle.



Engagement Strategies for Citizens & Civil Society Organizations

By collaborating and consulting with audit offices and elected oversight bodies, citizens and civil society organizations can be important advocates in the accountability cycle – the proposed guide will provide strategies and tools to help them do so.

Examples of Citizens and Civil Society Strategies

'Push' Strategies

- Promote knowledge and Awareness raising
- Mobilise base and network with interested parties
- Promote participatory accountability
- Promote whistle blowing and use of Fraud and Waste hotlines



'Pull' Strategies

- Hold government to account
- Offer expertise in development of policies
- Provide advisory services in assessing implementation of projects
- Identify when service targets and standards not published and/or not met



Questions to Explore

In the peer exchange part of the session, share your ideas for the development of our new guide to help CSOs engage in the accountability process.

Here are the 2 questions that we will be exploring during the session:

- What strategies are citizens, civil society organizations, audit institutions, governments and elected officials currently employing to engage together to promote gender equality?
- What guidance and/or support would citizens, civil society organizations, audit institutions, governments and elected officials require in order to engage with each other more effectively?
What is currently lacking to be able to pursue these avenues of engagement?

Want to Continue Being Involved?

If you want to continue being involved in the discussion and to provide input as we develop and publish future guidance, please email your contact information to Marie-Hélène Bérubé, Program Officer in Gender Equality and Ethics at mhberube@caaf-fcar.ca.

Thank you for being part of this dialogue!