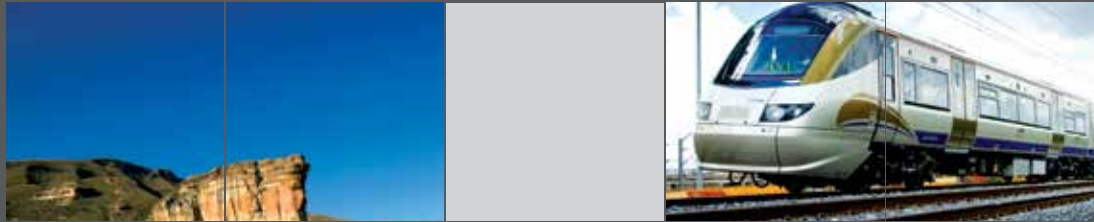
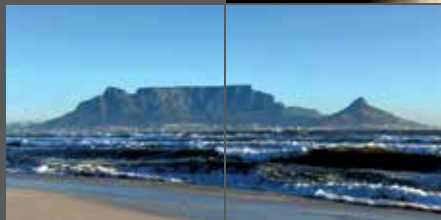
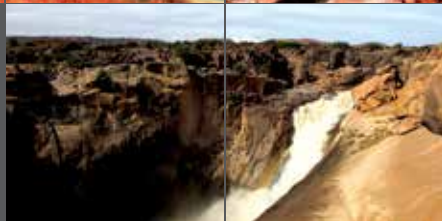


MFMA 2011-12



Consolidated general report on the LOCAL GOVERNMENT audit outcomes

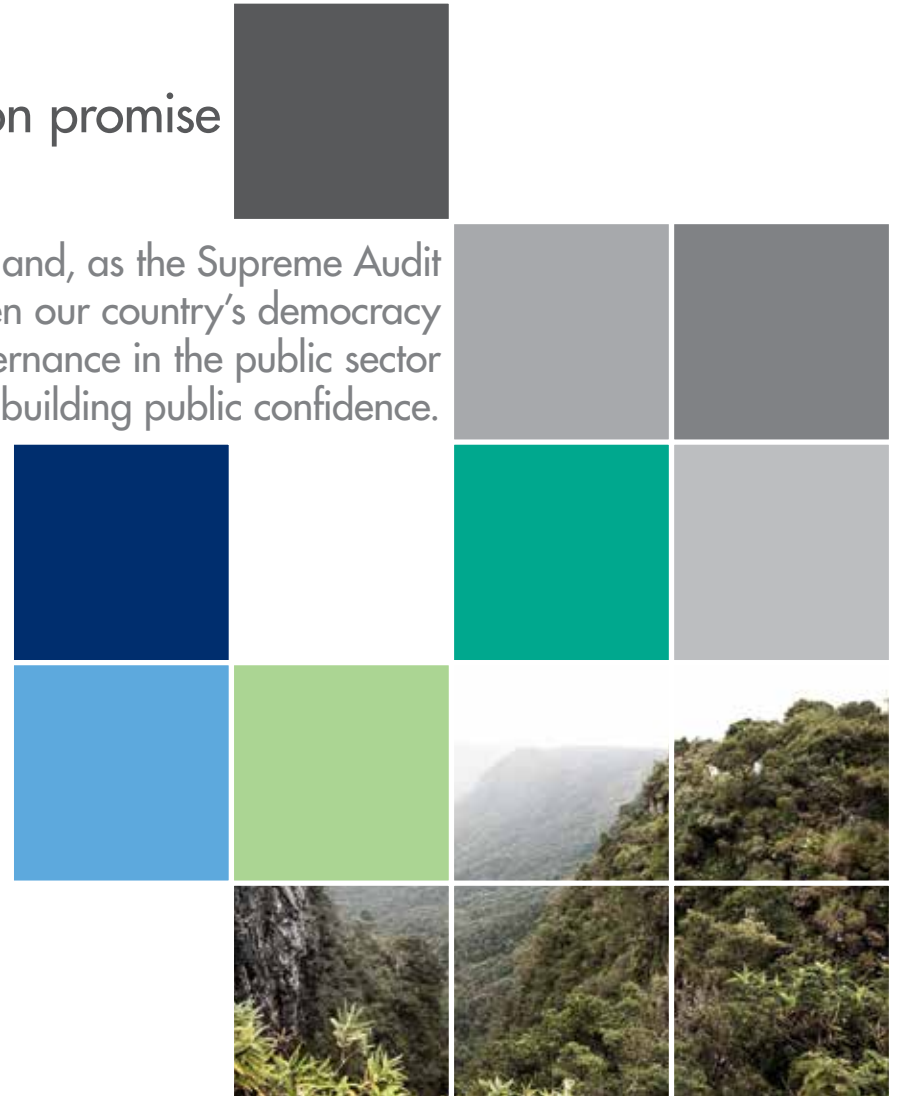
FOREWORD



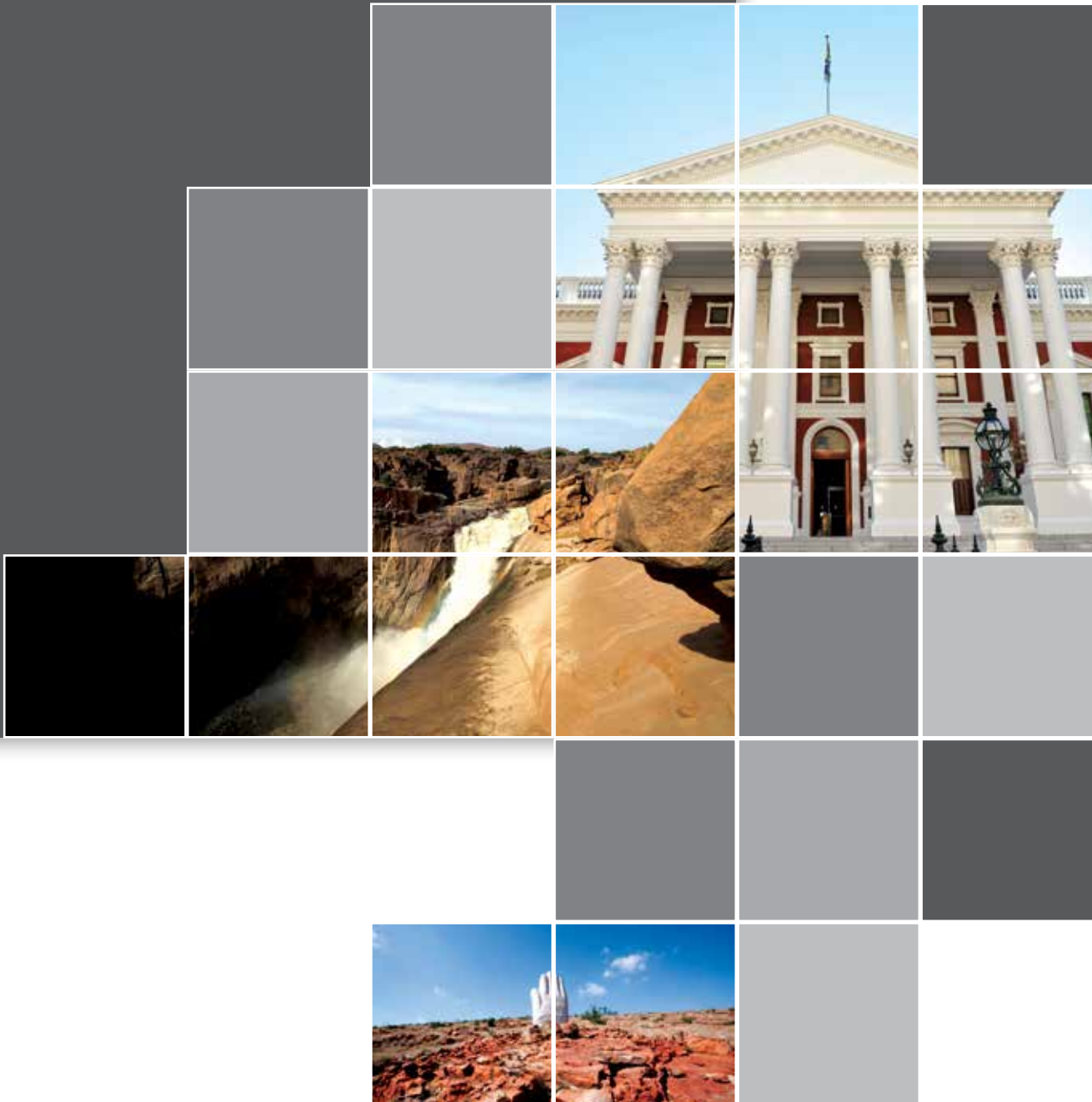
AUDITOR-GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

Our reputation promise

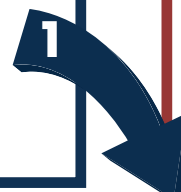
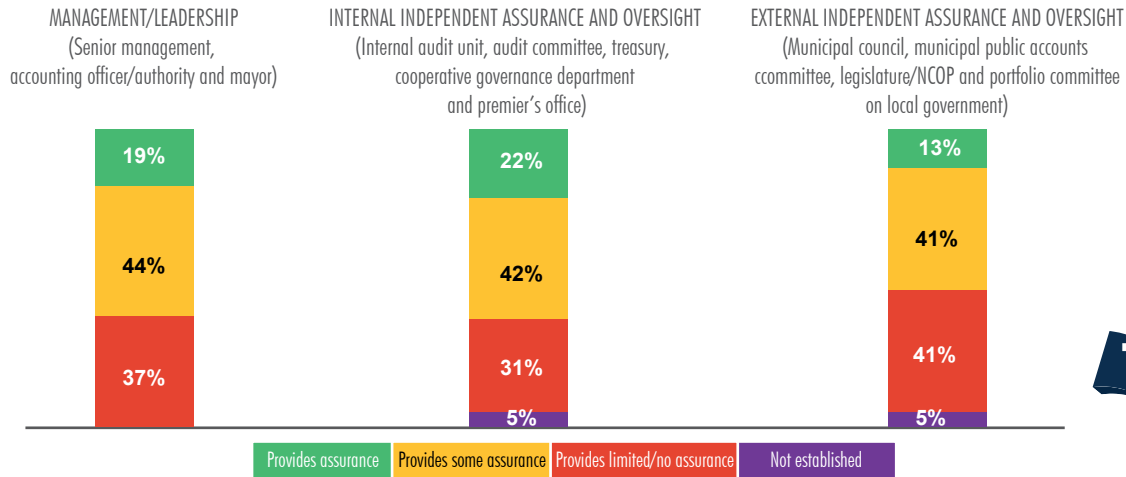
The Auditor-General has a constitutional mandate and, as the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of South Africa, it exists to strengthen our country's democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector through auditing, thereby building public confidence.



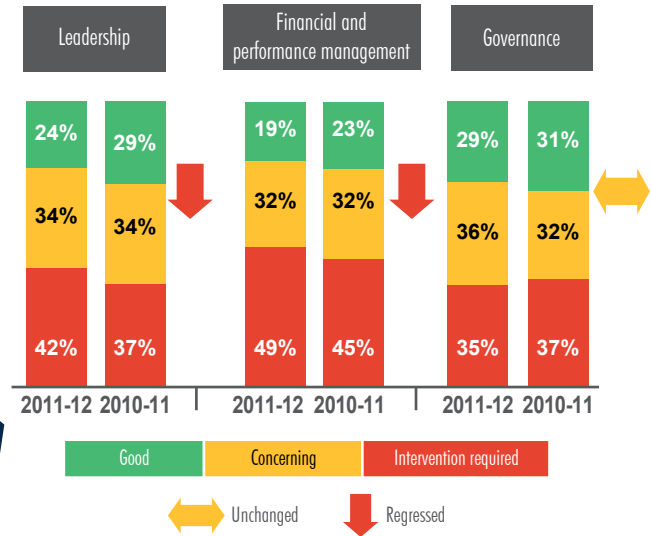
FOREWORD



KEY ROLE PLAYERS NOT PROVIDING ASSURANCE



DRIVERS OF KEY CONTROLS NOT IMPROVING



THE KEY ROLE PLAYERS NEED TO...

...TO ENSURE IMPROVED RESULTS...

...TAKE SOME VITAL ACTIONS...

...IN SIX KEY AREAS...

KEY RISK AREAS NOT RECEIVING REQUIRED ATTENTION



Concerning Intervention required

ROOT CAUSES NOT BEING ADDRESSED

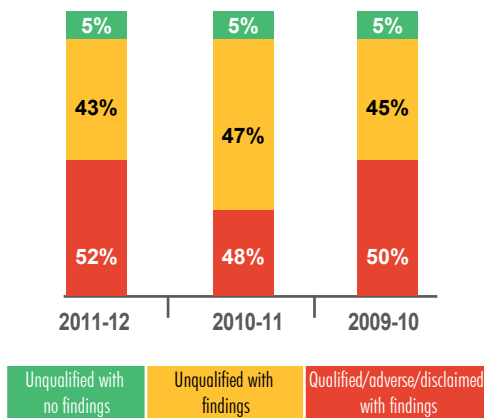
Key positions vacant or key officials lacking appropriate competencies
A root cause at **73%** of auditees (2010-11: 72%)

Lack of consequences for poor performance and transgressions
A root cause at **71%** of auditees (2010-11: 73%)

Slow response by political leadership in addressing the root causes of poor audit outcomes
A root cause at **76%** of auditees (2010-11: 57%)

Unchanged Regressed

REGRESSION IN AUDIT OUTCOMES



FOREWORD

I present my 2011-12 general report on local government audit outcomes to Parliament, the provincial legislatures and the municipal councils.

My 2010-11 general report drew attention to the root causes of poor audit outcomes and shared the commitments of oversight structures, provincial and national government as well as political leaders to support local government in a focused and cooperative manner to address these root causes.

Although the national, provincial and local spheres of government as well as oversight structures have started to implement actions to address the root causes, these initiatives have not yet had the desired effect on audit outcomes. Audit outcomes have regressed, with only 48% of the auditees being able to obtain financially unqualified audit opinions; most of which did so by correcting the mistakes identified through the audit process.

Except for the 5% that received clean audit opinions, all the auditees had material findings on either the usefulness or reliability of their annual performance reports or non-compliance with legislation, or findings on both these aspects. Even though I have consistently encouraged role players to urgently address the weaknesses in supply chain management, the quality of their annual performance reports and submitted financial statements, human resource management and information technology controls, this report shows that there has been little improvement. My report also highlights risks to the financial health of local government.

If local government attends to the key controls and addresses the risk areas and root causes I highlight in my report and sustain good practices, positive audit outcomes can be achieved and maintained. I call on municipal managers and mayors, the treasuries, the



cooperative governance departments, the offices of the premier and the South African Local Government Association to accelerate their efforts and cooperation to address the following root causes of the poor audit outcomes that I also highlighted in my 2010-11 report:

- The lack of capacity in local government is affecting its ability to account for the public resources it has to administer on behalf of society. At 73% of the auditees, vacancies in key positions and key officials without the minimum competencies and skills continued to make it difficult for these auditees to produce credible financial statements and performance reports. In order to fill this gap, 71% of the auditees depended on consultants to assist with financial reporting. Although capacity building and the professionalisation of local government is an ongoing, multi-year project, I am concerned that municipalities are not using all the opportunities available for skills development.

- Political leaders and municipal officials that deliberately or negligently ignore their duties and disobey legislation should be decisively dealt with through a formal performance management process that is complemented by the legislated consequences for transgressions. At just over 70% of the auditees, the lack of consequences for poor performance and transgressions slowed down the improvements in local government audit outcomes. Role players in local government often say that they do not know what remedies to apply to deal with transgressions. To help them, we have compiled a separate booklet on the legislation they can use, as a starting point for responsible leaders to set the correct tone.

I also call on the councillors of 76% of the auditees where I have encountered slow responses to addressing the poor audit outcomes to focus on the following:

- Prioritise their pursuit of the knowledge and skills they need to perform their oversight duties and insist on support from national and provincial government for their continuous development. If councillors do not feel equipped and enabled to effectively oversee municipal administration, they will not be able to hold municipal management to account and enforce consequences for poor performance and transgressions.
- Effectively and ethically apply the leadership skills that earned them the trust of their communities and strengthen their resolve to oversee and steer their municipalities towards achieving developmental objectives, adhering to legislation and accounting for actions in a credible and transparent manner.
- Further strengthen the municipal public accounts committees and support the important role they play.
- Insist, through their speakers, on sharing and reviewing regular and credible information on the status of the finances, service delivery and compliance activities of their municipalities.

The provincial legislatures' commitments to improve their oversight over local government in a cooperative manner have not been realised yet, but there is a renewed resolve to overcome the obstacles. I again invite legislatures to regularly cooperate with my office on local government matters.

National and provincial support and oversight for local government by treasuries and cooperative governance departments should be strengthened to improve municipalities' administrative and financial abilities. There needs to be a shift towards enabling municipalities in a practical and sustainable manner by providing operational guidelines and access to training and specialised skills. In this regard, district municipalities can play a larger part in fulfilling this role for municipalities struggling to find their own expertise. The legislation and initiatives recently announced by the ministers of public service administration and of cooperative governance should have a significant impact in strengthening local government, if supported at a municipal level and implemented in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

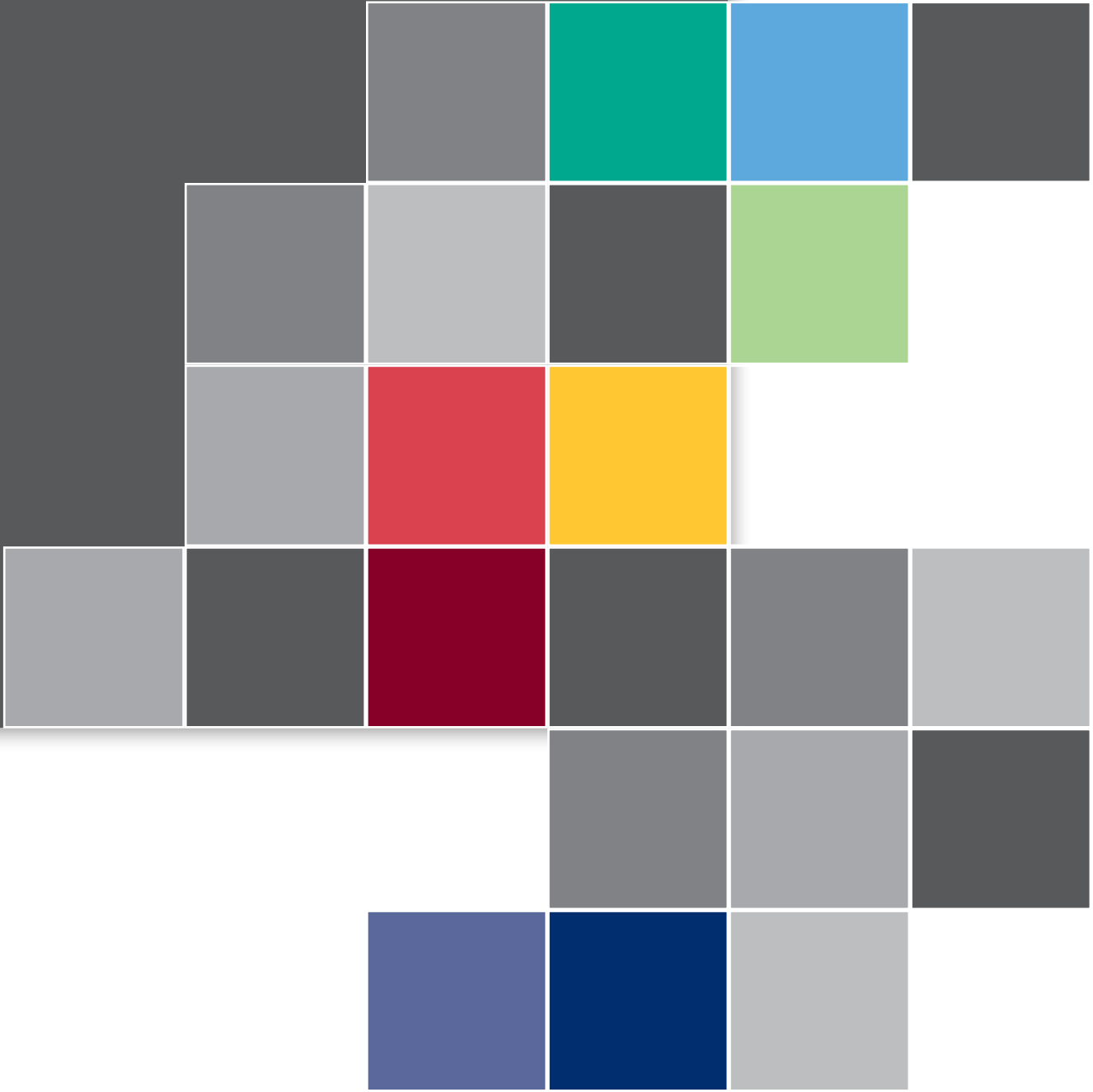
Although progress towards clean audits is slow, I am encouraged by examples across the country where the commitment of leaders and officials has resulted in examples of improved audit outcomes. I am confident that similar results can be achieved by the smallest local municipality to the biggest metro.

Together, we will continue to contribute towards strengthening our country's democracy.

Auditor-General

**Auditor-General
Pretoria
July 2013**

OVERVIEW OF
FULL REPORT





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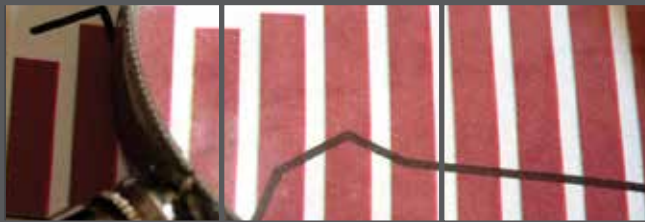
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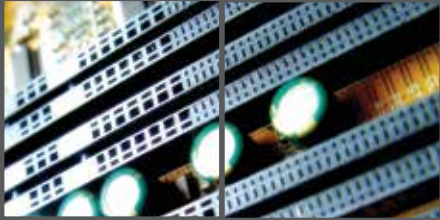
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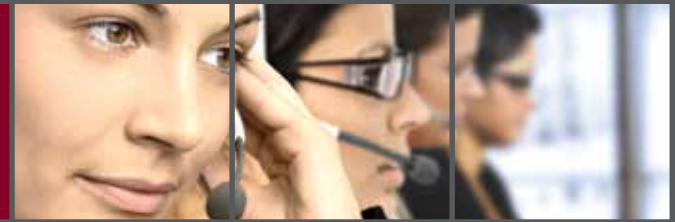
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Consolidated general report on the 2011-12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT audit outcomes

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