

The present INTOSAI Framework of Professional Standards

The present framework is formally named the 'INTOSAI Framework of Professional Standards' (IFPS). It is often also just referred to as the 'ISSAI Framework' (i.e. the framework of International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions). The IFPS defines how INTOSAI's different standards and related guidance documents are organized and presented to users.

The IFPS results from INTOSAI's first strategic plan 2005-2010. Goal 1 of the plan, under the responsibility of the Professional Standards Committee (PSC), aimed to provide INTOSAI's members with an *up-to-date framework of professional standards*. The IFPS was the PSC's first deliverable and became reality in 2007 when INCOSAI endorsed the document '*The International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) – INTOSAI's Framework of Professional Standards*'.

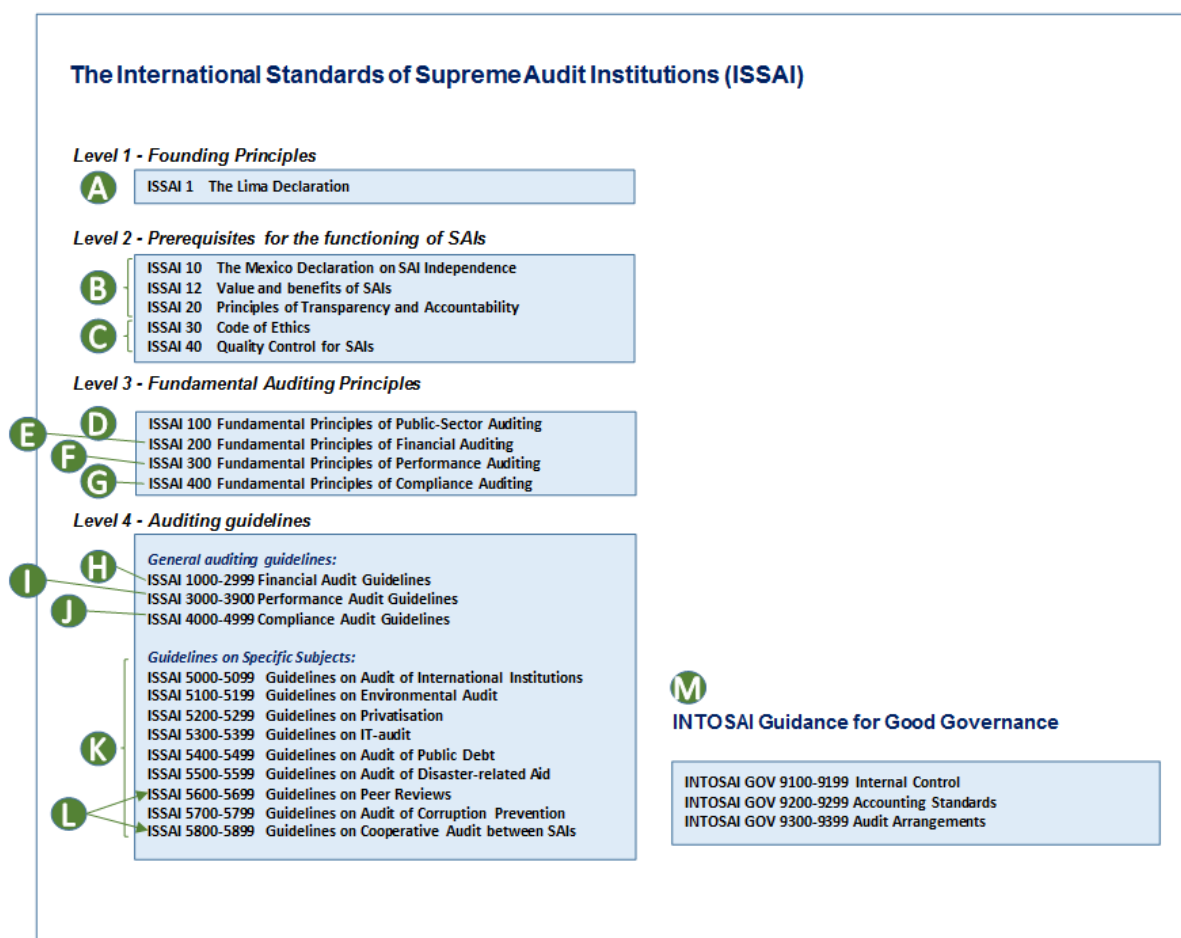
With this decision, all the relevant official INTOSAI documents were merged into the IFPS and presented together as a set of standards on www.issai.org. The outline of the IFPS was based on a review of all existing documents on auditing practices or the closely related matters of independence, internal control and accounting upon which INCOSAI had pronounced its views. An important part of these documents has been developed by INTOSAI working groups outside the PSC and concerned audits of specific subject matters such as environmental issues, public debt or IT. As it stands today, the framework reflects the PSC's forward planning to provide a comprehensive set of ISSAIs covering financial, performance and compliance auditing as well as other key issues.

The structure of the IFPS was defined by a set of **classification principles**. These classification principles provide the basis for deciding whether a pronouncement belongs to the IFPS or not, whether it is an ISSAI or INTOSAI GOV, at which of the four levels any ISSAIs belong and how the document is numbered. The basic definitions of the IFPS are:

- the IFPS comprises all documents endorsed by INCOSAI with the purpose of guiding the professional standards used by SAIs. The documents are listed in a systematic number system;
- the name International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) is used as the common name for the body of documents concerning the responsibilities of SAIs. Each document gets an ISSAI-number;
- the name INTOSAI Guidance on Good Governance (INTOSAI GOV) is used for documents issued by INTOSAI for guidance to the administrative authorities, e.g. on internal controls and accounting. Such documents get a 4-digit INTOSAI GOV-number;
- the IFPS emphasizes the hierarchical relationship between the documents. The number of digits in the ISSAI-number indicates the document's level in the hierarchy.

Since 2007 the IFPS has developed considerably. Taking into account the documents that are likely to be endorsed by INCOSAI 2016, we estimate that the framework will consist of some 93 pronouncements extending over some 3100 pages.

As shown in the diagram below, the present INTOSAI Framework of Professional Standards is grouped in four levels and has 13 distinct “clusters” of documents.



The four levels

Level 1 - Founding Principles (ISSAI 1-10): This level contains the founding principles of INTOSAI. These are found in the Lima Declaration.

Level 2 - Prerequisites for the Functioning of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI 10-99): Based on the founding principles, the documents on this level develop further on the basic prerequisites of the proper functioning and professional conduct of SAIs. These documents contain general statements and principles on a high level and should not be changed very often.

Level 3 - Fundamental Auditing Principles (ISSAI 100-999): Documents on this level are based on level 1 and 2 and contain the fundamental principles for carrying out audits of public entities. Whereas institutional issues will be regulated by the documents on level 2, the documents on level 3 concern issues related to the process of carrying through an audit.

Level 4 - Auditing Guidelines (ISSAI 1000-5999): Documents on this level translate the fundamental auditing principles into more specific, detailed and operational guidelines that can be used on a daily basis for auditing tasks.

In addition, there is often also a certain hierarchy within each series of documents: Numbers dividable by 1000 (or 100 or 10) are preferably given to documents of a general scope while the subsequent numbers x001-x999 (or xx01-xx99 or xxx1-xxx9) are used for documents on more specific subjects within the same general theme.

The 13 “clusters” of documents

The main clusters of documents, as numbered in the diagram above, are described in the following:

A. the Lima Declaration from 1977 – generally regarded to be an important historical document for INTOSAI

B. high level principles on overall institutional issues – provides guidance to SAIs and advocate for their important role and status to the wider public. These include prominent statements on the importance of SAIs applying auditing standards.

C. requirements of SAIs at an organisational level. In ISSAI 100 these are treated as important preconditions for undertaking individual audit engagements.

D. ISSAI 100 - Fundamental Principles of Public-Sector Auditing from 2013. Represent the officially endorsed consensus within INTOSAI on the key principles and concepts that should underpin the full set of ISSAIs in the future. It also provides a common INTOSAI platform and point of reference for SAIs that prefer to use national standards rather than the ISSAIs.

E, F and G. – Fundamental Principles for the three main types of public-sector auditing as defined by ISSAI 100. Supplements ISSAI 100 and provides a more elaborate common basis for ISSAIs as well as national standards on financial, performance and compliance auditing.

H. Financial Auditing Guidelines. As a result of Governing Board’s decisions in 2002-2004 and a massive investment by interested SAIs as well as external donors these ISSAIs consist of the ISA’s issued by IAASB (IFAC) supplemented by practice notes developed by INTOSAI.

I, J. the general performance and compliance audit guidelines. These will be replaced by a new set of standards for performance as well as compliance auditing by 2016.

K. guidelines on specific subject matters. In general these describe a subject matter which SAIs may have to audit. Often the audit will be a performance or compliance audit (often both types combined) but some guidelines also concern aspects of financial auditing. In general the terminology established by ISSAI 100 is still to be implemented in these guidelines so they do not necessarily refer to these three audit types. Some guidelines include descriptions of a general subject that might be of interest to government authorities or other parties as well as auditors.

L. two guidelines in the 5000-series stand out as they concern issues of collaboration and capacity development of SAIs rather than audits of specific subject matters. These have been developed by the Capacity Building Committee.

M. INTOSAI GOVs includes an increasingly diverse collection of documents. This includes products by the Internal Control Sub-Committee of the PSC as well as documents produced by working groups in KSC who are responsible for guidance to auditors in the 5000-series on a specific matter and also have important messages to convey to government authorities on the subject.