

# Strategic development plan for the INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements in 2023-2025

## Introduction

INTOSAI's Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 focuses on five key organisational priorities and four strategic goals. Goal 1 is to “*Develop, Advocate for and Maintain Professional Standards for SAIs*”, which provides that:

***“INTOSAI will support the effective functioning of SAIs in the public interest by providing, maintaining and advocating for internationally recognized professional principles, standards and guidance that promote the quality, excellence, credibility, independence, and relevance of public sector audits.”***

This Strategic Development Plan (SDP) aims to support the achievement of INTOSAI's Goal 1. The SDP assembles all initiatives that may result in development, revision or withdrawal of INTOSAI Professional Pronouncements. INTOSAI Professional Pronouncements are the formal and authoritative announcements or declarations of the INTOSAI Community. They rest upon the common professional expertise of INTOSAI's members and provide INTOSAI's official statements on audit-related matters. The INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements (IFPP) categorize the pronouncements into principles, standards and guidance.

The overall aim of the SDP is to develop the IFPP towards a clear, consistent and relevant set of professional pronouncements and thereby ensure its quality. In this way the SDP supports the full value chain of standard setting, including the processes of implementation and providing feedback to further improve the standards to ensure auditing that benefits the citizens.

A framework of international standards is fundamental for Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and INTOSAI. For INTOSAI – an organisation, which has, among others, the task of providing principles, standards and guidance to its members – the IFPP makes an important contribution to supporting the effective functioning of SAIs. For SAIs, the IFPP is important as a support for demonstrating the quality, excellence, credibility, independence, and relevance of public sector audits and other products anchored in their mandate. The IFPP is also a tool that helps SAIs underpin the value of their work, their accountability to the public, and to strengthen trust in their role and output.

The IFPP is also of benefit to parliaments, governments, auditees, academia, civil society and the public. It helps assure them that SAIs fulfil their mandate by applying a set of reputable principles and standards that are followed by the majority of SAIs around the world.

As the INTOSAI Strategic Plan covers the period 2023-2028, the new SDP covers the same timespan. The SDP would potentially be updated in 2025, depending on progress made, developments in the audit profession and user feedback.

This plan has been developed according to the *Due Process for INTOSAI's framework of professional pronouncements* by the Forum for INTOSAI Professional Pronouncements (FIPP) in close cooperation and dialogue with the Capacity Building Committee (CBC), the Knowledge Sharing Committee (KSC), the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) and the INTOSAI General Secretariat. The responsible Goal Chairs and FIPP will ensure the initiatives are coordinated and involve relevant stakeholders (see INTOSAI's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and the INTOSAI due process for the IFPP).

This SDP outlines the strategic initiatives that INTOSAI will pursue in updating and revising the IFPP.

## Vision and strategic rationale for developing the IFPP

**INTOSAI's vision for developing the IFPP is:**

***To enhance the understandability and the recognition of the INTOSAI professional pronouncements both with SAIs and with external stakeholders  
and thereby encourage increased and consistent application of the ISSAIs  
leading to a global improvement in audit quality.***

The IFPP consists of three main categories of pronouncements - The INTOSAI Principles (INTOSAI-Ps), International Standards for Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs) and Guidance (GUIDs) that serve different but complementary purposes:

- **The INTOSAI Principles** specify the role and functions, that SAIs should aspire to in light of their mandate and national context as well as prerequisites for their proper functioning and professional conduct;
- **The ISSAIs** set the principles and requirements governing different types of audits performed by SAIs; and
- **The GUIDs** support the implementation and practical use of the INTOSAI-Ps and ISSAIs.

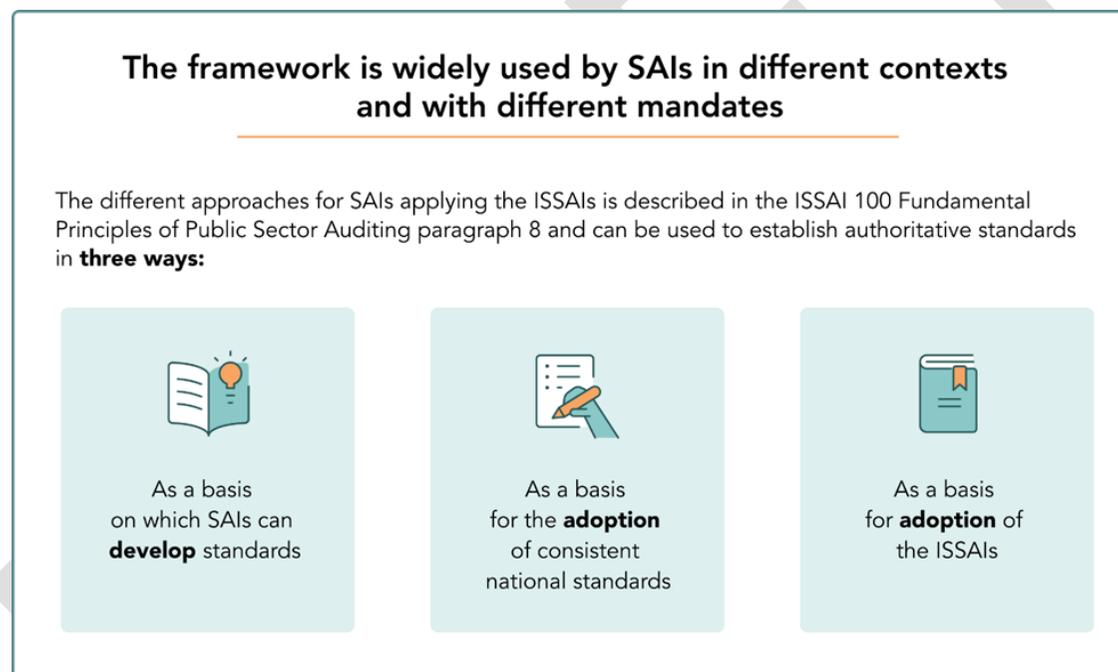


Figure 1: The framework is widely used by SAIs in different contexts and with different mandates.

The overall ambition for INTOSAI is to encourage even more SAIs to apply the ISSAIs and to do so more consistently. Depending on their mandates, individual SAIs carry out financial, compliance and performance audits in various combinations and also combine these with other assignments, such as jurisdictional functions. In 2020, a review through the SDP 2020-2022 was initiated by the PSC (INTOSAI Goal 1) to examine amongst other things if and how the framework is implemented and to identify obstacles to implementation and compliance with the requirements (Component 1). The PSC's final report review (the Final report on the review and analysis of the IFPP) is available here: [Final Report Review Analysis IFPP Component One 2022.pdf \(psc-intosai.org\)](https://psc-intosai.org/~/media/psc-intosai/2022/01/2022-01-20-Final-Report-Review-Analysis-IFPP-Component-One-2022.pdf).

The review and analysis of the IFPP concluded that the following qualities of a good framework were not always being achieved:

- Clarity, including consistency, logical structure and plain language, across INTOSAI's Professional Pronouncements is essential to ensure their authority and effectiveness. Clarity is also important to producing high quality audits, which leads to enhancing the credibility of INTOSAI and its members.
- Relevance is key for users to decide whether or not to apply the IFPP. Such a decision stems from acknowledging that a framework is practically useful, covers the work they do, and adds to the credibility of their work.
- Robustness is critical not only in the sense of having a framework underpinned by technically sound material, but also leads to reliable results. This includes clarity in what should be achieved (the way requirements are calibrated) and what it means to apply and claim compliance with the framework.
- Accessibility represents availability to all users, including stakeholders, in ways that suit their needs. Beyond linguistic accessibility, this includes presenting content in a way that is user-friendly and intuitive. A key way to improve accessibility is by digitalising.

In addition to *the review and analysis of the IFPP*, the *IDI Global SAI Stocktaking Report 2020* [file \(idi.no\)](#) and feedback from working bodies within INTOSAI engaged in standard setting have also been key sources in the development of this SDP. The *IDI Global Stocktaking Report 2020* is based on an analysis into key areas of SAI performance:

- Independence and mandate
- Governance including strategic management and accountability
- Core audit services
- Professionalization and human resource management
- Stakeholder management and communications
- Capacity development
- Cross-cutting issues such as gender, inclusiveness and digitalisation.



*Figure 2: Sources used in the analysis leading up to the SDP 2023-2025.*

## Strategic standard-setting initiatives

To pursue INTOSAI's vision for developing the IFPP this SDP defines the following 5 strategic initiatives:

- The '**A**' initiative – Improving **accessibility** to the pronouncements.
- The '**T**' initiative – Developing a clear and consistent **terminology** for the IFPP.
- The '**P**' initiative – Updating the content and presentation of the INTOSAI **Principles**.
- The '**I**' initiative – Ensuring clarity of the **ISSAIs**.
- The '**G**' initiative – Developing a better approach to providing **guidance**.

## Improving accessibility to the pronouncements (the 'A' initiative)

Accessibility of the framework is a key element in helping users approach the framework with confidence, and finding it intuitive to use. Digitalizing the framework provides us with new opportunities to improve accessibility which can lead to a better understanding and more intensive use of the pronouncements, and provide the users with a more interactive way of accessing them.

A digitalized framework requires the development of terminology, updating of content and consideration of a more intuitive way to access the pronouncements. Therefore this initiative will be closely linked to the 'T' initiative (Developing a clear and consistent terminology for the IFPP) below. In the meantime, improvements will be made to IFPP website (issai.org) to address some of the challenges identified.

The 'A' initiative consists of two sub-initiatives:

- Short-term initiative: updating the issai.org website to make it more user-friendly and to communicate as clearly as possible the purpose and authority of the different classes of pronouncements as currently defined.
- Longer-term initiative: based on the development of terminology and definitions and following the other initiatives, to digitalize the framework to allow its users to access content that suit their needs.

To ensure continuity for IFPP users and to allow for a test-period, the current document-based framework will be applicable while the digital platform is being prepared, and, at least, for a transitional period after it is approved for use and has proven its usefulness in practice.

The *ambition* for this 'A' initiative is to digitalize the entire IFPP and to make its content more accessible for SAs and auditors, and thereby allowing them to use the pronouncements more frequently.

The *output* of this 'A' initiative will be a full set of pronouncements that can be accessed in a more interactive way.

## Developing a clear and consistent terminology for the IFPP (the 'T' initiative)

The INTOSAI pronouncements were developed over many years by different teams and working bodies. This has resulted in some inconsistent use of terminology, as well as outdated content. The individual pronouncements provide definitions of certain key terms but there is currently no consolidated glossary. These were also the major findings and conclusions from *The review and analysis of the IFPP*.

In order to be able to clarify the content of ISSAs and other pronouncements, a first important step is therefore to develop a clear and consistent terminology for the IFPP, focusing on substance rather than form.

The ‘T’ initiative includes activities related to:

- Establishing a list of terms and definitions currently used in the IFPP, and identifying where clarity could be improved and addressing multiple terms covering the same concept or issue;
- Based on that list and accompanying analysis, deciding on a consistent terminology to be implemented in any subsequent development of pronouncements and when updating the current ones;
- Ensuring that the same matters are described in the same way while at the same time emphasizing the key differences between the audit types or other relevant circumstances.

The ‘T’ initiative aims for harmonizing the concepts and definitions across the pronouncements when relevant. This ambition should be achieved without moving away from the initial idea that the IFPP provides the SAIs with three audit types that should be used according to the mandate of the individual SAI. The glossary and language convention could potentially affect both the current and new pronouncements.

The *ambition* for this ‘T’ initiative is to define the terminology that will be used in all future professional pronouncements and when updating the current ones. Future revisions and updates of the terminology will be carried out when relevant. The terminology developed will be based on the concepts defined in ISSAI 100 *Fundamental principles of public sector auditing* and the additional concepts defined in other key pronouncements. The resulting terminology will include the professional language for different types of audits and steps in the audit process as well as the concepts used to define the authority of the ISSAIs and what it means to comply with them.

The *output* of this ‘T’ initiative is:

- a glossary of key terms for professional practice used within the IFPP defined in the official INTOSAI languages;
- a set of language conventions that will provide the basis for all future development or revisions of content in the IFPP
- a solution on how the terminology developed and its consistent application across the IFPP can be sustained in the future

### **Updating the content and presentation of the INTOSAI Principles (the ‘P’ initiative)**

The INTOSAI-Ps address the role and function, and set the principles that form the basis of the legal, institutional and organisational frameworks for SAIs. This is how the INTOSAI supports SAIs, legislators and governments in establishing relations, setting out the values and benefits of SAIs, and demonstrating their contribution to improving the overall system of public accountability.

*The review and analysis of the IFPP* identified a high degree of overlap between the INTOSAI-Ps, notably INTOSAI-P 1 *The Lima Declaration*, INTOSAI-P 10 *The Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence*, INTOSAI-P 12 *The Value and Benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions – making a difference to the lives of citizens* and INTOSAI-P 20 *Principles of Transparency and Accountability*. There is a need for consolidating these important documents into a clear set of INTOSAI Principles for the IFPP.

The 'P' initiative will progress in two steps:

- Step 1 will be an analysis on how the INTOSAI-P 1 *The Lima Declaration* is used in the INTOSAI community in order to determine how this important historical document can best be treated in the consolidation of the INTOSAI-Ps. If changes in the content or status of INTOSAI-P 1 is required, FIPP will submit a proposed update to this SDP allowing the PSC Steering Committee and Governing Board to consider the matter before any further steps related to INTOSAI-P 1 can be taken.
- Step 2 will be a process to revise the INTOSAI-Ps to achieve a clear set of INTOSAI Principles.

The *ambition* for this 'P' initiative is to achieve a clear set of INTOSAI principles stemming from the current INTOSAI-P documents.

The *output* of this 'P' initiative will be a consolidated set of updated INTOSAI Principles for the IFPP, presented in a way that is easily accessible for users both inside and outside INTOSAI.

### Ensuring clarity of the ISSAIs (the 'I' initiative)

The ISSAIs are the international standards on public sector auditing. They define the audit types and the principles and requirements for these audit types as well as a set of organisational requirements. The standards assist public sector auditors in providing high quality audits. When SAIs refer to the ISSAIs, external stakeholders are assured that the audit reports are of high quality and that they can rely on the conclusions of the audit work.

The purpose of the 'I' initiative is to revise the ISSAIs to implement the terminology and language conventions resulting from the 'T' (Developing a clear and consistent terminology for the IFPP) initiative. This includes activities to:

- identify text that could be used across the full set of ISSAIs to ensure clarity for users of the ISSAIs;
- identify unnecessary repetition through the framework and ensure consistency by describing the same matters in the same way, while at the same time emphasising the key differences between the audit types; and
- define and distinguish appropriately between auditing principles, requirements and application materials

The *ambition* of this 'I' initiative is to achieve a clear and understandable set of ISSAIs that can support SAIs in delivering high quality audits regardless of the approach the SAI is using when applying the ISSAIs (see figure 1).

The *output* of this 'I' initiative will be an updated set of ISSAIs.

## Developing a better approach to providing guidance (the ‘G’ initiative)

The INTOSAI Guidance pronouncements (GUIDs) support the SAI in enhancing its performance related to the organisational requirements, development of competencies and ISSAI implementation. Through this guidance, the SAI finds support on how to apply the ISSAIs in the financial, performance or compliance audit processes and other engagements, and gets a better understanding of subject matter-specific issues.

*The review and analysis of the IFPP*, feedback from users and consultations with key bodies involved in standard setting showed that there is potential for improvements in content and accessibility to relevant guidance. This applies to the status and definition of guidance in its various forms within and outside the IFPP such as:

- the current inconsistent approach to presenting and making available guidance prepared by various INTOSAI bodies (including the IDI, INTOSAI regions, other groups etc.);
- the lengthy and complex process for including the GUIDs in the IFPP, which does not support a timely revision of existing - or development of new - material particularly when responding to urgent needs;
- insufficient clarity about the need for and format of guidance, notably when covering subject matter-linked material; and
- the audit methodology in a GUID is inconsistent with the audit methodology required by the ISSAIs.

The *ambition* of this ‘G’ initiative is to ensure that the INTOSAI community has easy access to relevant and high quality guidance material regardless of the history of its development, and that guidance closely related to the implementation of the ISSAIs is refined to support SAIs implementing the standards. In addition the ambition is to encourage INTOSAI bodies and SAIs to develop and share guidance material as a manifestation of the mutual benefit this brings. This could be done through a digital “gateway” to relevant guidance, white papers, knowledge sharing papers and so forth to address the need for guidance.

The *output* for this ‘G’ initiative will be a set of recognised criteria for the nature of guidance that should be an integral part of the framework, an appropriate due process for such material, and to make guidance material within the IFPP easily available with links to guidance outside the framework.

While the ‘G’ initiative is ongoing all working groups are invited to continue to develop material on various topics as part of the general knowledge sharing within INTOSAI. Material that meets the criteria resulting from the ‘G’ initiative could potentially at a later stage provide the basis for development of INTOSAI Guidance for the IFPP.

## Sequencing of the execution of the initiatives

With a view to advance as quickly as possible and to ensure that the work is of good quality, the initiatives need to run in parallel where this is feasible while maintaining a sequencing that allows for an effective coordination and division of work between the initiatives. The ‘T’-initiative will provide terminology and language conventions that will be implemented through the revisions of INTOSAI-P’s and ISSAIs under the ‘P’-initiative and the ‘I’-initiative. The ‘T’-initiative will also provide a basis for

distinguishing application material within the ISSAIs from the issues of guidance considered under the 'G'-initiative. In the initial phase the progress of the T-initiative may therefore be decisive for the other initiatives.

The Goal chairs and FIPP will maintain a close coordination and collaboration on all aspects on the sequencing and timelines in the execution of the SDP.

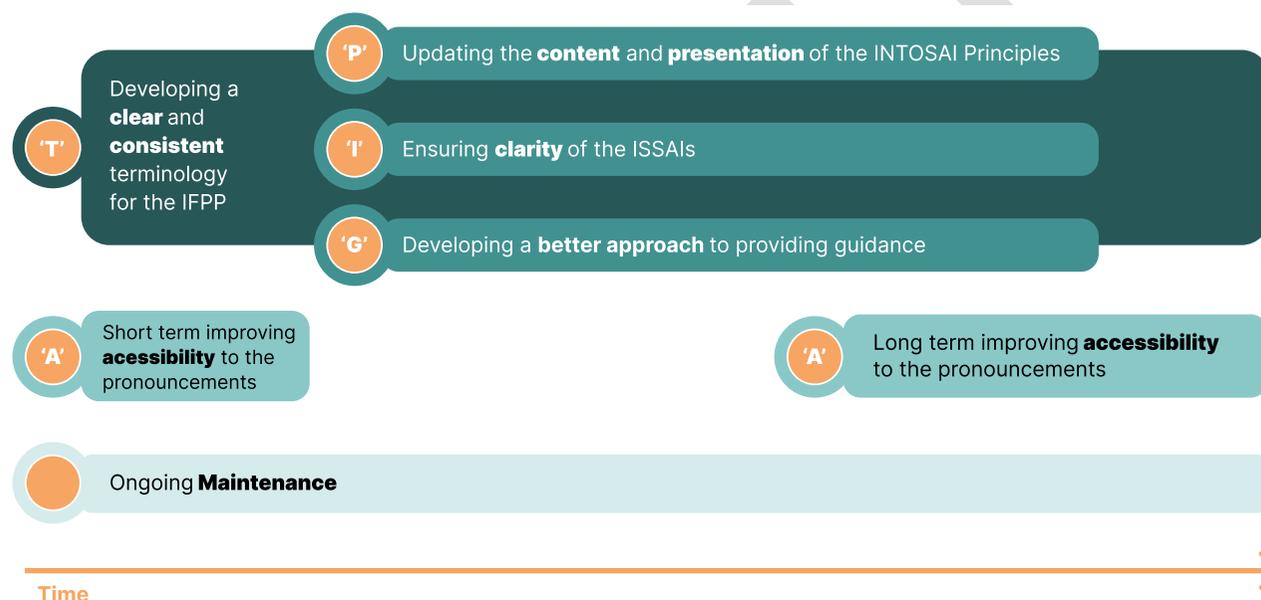


Figure 3: Diagrammatic process of the initiatives

## Due Process

Any changes affecting the IFPP follow the *Due Process for the IFPP*.

The due process for the IFPP regulates how this SDP and the classification principles defining the IFPP may be amended or supplemented as well as how individual pronouncements are developed, classified, revised or withdrawn. The initiatives 'A' (Accessibility – long term part) and 'T' (Terminology) may result in new material and decisions that are not necessarily defined in the due process, but potentially will affect the content or format of future INTOSAI pronouncements. The development and conclusion of any such material or decisions will follow the process for developing pronouncements as will the 'I' and 'P' initiatives (Section 2.1 of *the Due Process for the IFPP*). The 'G' initiative will adhere to the provisions on how to amend classification principles (section 1.1.), exempt other categories than ISSAIs from the full due process (section 1.1.) and develop (section 2.1), revise (section 2.2) or withdraw (section 2.3) pronouncements as relevant.

All initiatives under this SDP will be carried through in close collaboration between FIPP and the relevant project groups. Each project group will be composed of members with a broad set of relevant competences and perspectives and include members drawn from the relevant parties within INTOSAI contributing to the IFPP.

The due process provides that the project group may seek guidance from FIPP at any stage of the project (cf. section 1.1.). In light of the high ambitions of this SDP and experiences by FIPP from earlier SDP projects it will be part of the project group's assignment to present issue-papers. These will cover any key issues that require FIPP's attention and guidance before the resulting draft material is finalized by the project group and referred to FIPP for approval. The issue-papers will serve to enable sufficient alignment in the outcomes developed under the different initiatives. In order to ensure full transparency, the issue-papers and FIPP's preliminary conclusions on the issues presented will be made publicly available within INTOSAI, before the outcome of each initiative is exposed publicly for comments and finalized and referred to INCOSAI for final endorsement.

### Initiatives to allow for ongoing maintenance and development

In addition to the five strategic initiatives above projects to develop, revise or withdraw pronouncements can be carried out under the following initiatives if recourses allow.

Initiative
Conforming changes to new ISSAI 140
Completion of the categories of organizational requirements (ISSAIs 130-199) and related guidance
Scoping of compliance audits (GUID and/or improvements in ISSAIs) – scope and extent of substantive testing
Revision and update of GUID 2900
Scheduled maintenance of ISSAI 3000
Scheduled maintenance of GUIDs 3910 and 3920

FIPP will also remain observant of SAI needs and any new developments that may call for a response in INTOSAI's professional pronouncements. To this end research, analysis or other preparatory work may be initiated through the network of INTOSAI Standards Liaison Officers (ISLO) or other means.

### **Initiatives/projects resulting from previous SDPs**

The following initiatives from the first SDP approved in 2016 have resulted in approved project proposals but have not yet resulted in exposure drafts. If an exposure draft has not been approved by the 1. January 2025, the responsible goal chair, in conjunction with the working group, should conclude any project aiming at producing a professional pronouncement. The material developed may instead be published as a non-official document outside the IFPP. This is in order to allow the G-initiative to be carried through and release the resources of the project team for the purpose of the activities launched through this SDP.

1. 2.6 Internal auditors
2. 2.5 Internal control
3. 2.3 Combined audits
4. 2.7 Public-private partnerships
5. 2.8 Audit of security of information systems

### **Actions needed to ensure progress**

#### **Resources**

In order to deliver according to this SDP the following is needed.

- people with the necessary competency within each initiative
- administrative support such as the development of templates, translations, communication and information to the INTOSAI community.
- identify interdependencies between initiatives and the need for coordination

The PSC Secretariat and FIPP will work closely together to ensure we use our resources in the best way possible, enabling an efficient way of working.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating the SDP**

To ensure that this SDP delivers the outcomes, there is a need for a mid-term review including monitoring and evaluation. Follow-up questions to create a feedback loop in order to provide the Goal Chairs and FIPP with relevant information in this regard, will be included in the future INTOSAI Global Survey. This feedback loop can potentially also provide us with possible new ways to improve the initiatives and processes.

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