

Promoting budget credibility through external audits

Launching of the handbook

July 26, 2023

8.30 am to 9.30 am EST

Background

Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) have an important role to play in strengthening the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Checking and reporting on the legality and accuracy of public accounts, as well as the credibility of budgets, can be instrumental in governments delivering on their sustainable development promises. The importance of budget credibility is recognized in SDG indicator 16.6.1, and is relevant across all SDGs. Lack of credibility of the planning and budgeting system as a whole can compromise the delivery of critical services necessary for attainment of the SDGs, and more broadly inhibit the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

SAIs, the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DPIDG/UNDESA) are collaborating to develop a handbook on SAIs' contribution to strengthening budget credibility through external audits.

The handbook aims to share SAI audit practices relevant to assessing issues related to budget credibility and to support SAIs in improving their analyses of the credibility of government budgets. Specifically, the handbook will (i) expose to SAIs how their work can inform analyses of budget credibility; (ii) illustrate how audit work already conducted by SAIs provides insight on budget credibility; (iii) outline and illustrate key steps that SAIs can contemplate when aiming to assess and address budget credibility; and (iv) share existing SAI practices and experiences in this area.

The handbook has been developed in collaboration with a group of SAI resource experts from Argentina, Brazil, Georgia, Indonesia, Morocco, the Philippines, Uganda, and Zambia, and the ongoing support of the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), SAI Jamaica and SAI South Africa. SAI experts have been working together in four workstreams, which focus respectively on (a) recurrent audits of the state budget execution, (b) audits of the performance of the entire public finance management system or its components, (c) ad hoc audits of credibility risks across the budget cycle, and (4) monitoring and follow-up to recommendations related to budget credibility.

The development of the handbook started in 2021. Since then, the INTOSAI community has been engaged in the development of the contents through several activities, including webinars, a survey conducted in early 2022, participation in technical meetings, and a side event in the margins of the XXIV International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions (INCOSAI) to promote SAIs' role in assessing and addressing

budget credibility. A comprehensive peer review process has benefited from the contributions of members of the INTOSAI community as well as other stakeholders. The engagement with various INTOSAI working groups and regions is a critical part of a user-driven approach to developing, launching, disseminating and rolling out the handbook.

Objective

During the global launch session, participants will explore how SAIs can assess and address budget credibility in the audit process. Following an overview of the handbook, speakers will reflect on opportunities to strengthen budget credibility in their audit process, foster knowledge sharing and capacity building, and advance budget auditing in the INTOSAI community.

Agenda

Duration: 60 minutes

Moderator: International Budget Partnership

8.30 am Welcome from Moderator

8.32 am Opening remarks – President of TCU and Chair of INTOSAI, UNDESA DPIDG, IBP

8.40 am Overview of the initiative and Handbook – UNDESA DPIDG

8.47 am Moderated discussion – Two rounds of questions to each speaker on the opportunities to strengthen budget credibility. Each speaker has approximately 3 minutes to respond to each question.

9.25 am Synthesis and Closing Remarks – Silke Steiner, Director INTOSAI General Secretariat