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.

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. 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 (d) monitoring and follow-up to recommendations related to budget credibility.

The development of the handbook’s contents started in 2021. The draft handbook will be validated with SAI and other experts in 2022, and finalized and launched in 2023.

The INTOSAI community has been engaged in the development of the handbook through several activities, including webinars, a survey conducted in early 2022, and participation in technical meetings. The side event in the margins of the XXIV International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions
(INCOSAI) will contribute to disseminate the handbook within the global SAI community and to promote further discussions on SAIs’ role in assessing and addressing budget credibility.

Objective

The objective of the side event is to disseminate the draft contents and key messages of the handbook in order to raise awareness among the global SAI community and SAI stakeholders about the role of SAIs and current audit practices to assess and address budget credibility. The discussion will highlight some of the commonalities and differences across SAIs when conducting this type of audits, and lessons learned from current experiences and audit practices related to budget credibility. It will also aim to promote the adoption and use of the handbook by SAIs, and reflect on how budget credibility assessments through external audits can be further promoted and institutionalized within INTOSAI.

Participants

Participation will draw on attendees from the SAI community and other stakeholders to the XXIV INCOSAI (participation is by invitation). The number of in-person participants that can be accommodated in the venue of the side event is approximately 150 people. DPIDG and IBP will discuss with the organizers the possibility of inviting to the side event other participants not attending INCOSAI.

In addition to DPIDG and IBP staff working on the budget credibility initiative, representatives from the SAIs working on the development of the handbook’s contents will be invited to participate in person and present their work. Other SAI experts from the wider reference group engaged in the initiative and non-SAI experts attending the INCOSAI could also be invited to participate and engage as speakers.

Date and venue

The side event will be held on 9 November 2022 (12.30 to 2.00 pm) at the ExpoMag, venue for the XXIV INCOSAI, in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

Structure and format

The side event will be organized in a hybrid format, with both in-person and remote participation. Please register [here](#) and indicate in-person (registered INCOSAI participant) or virtual participation.

The interactive session will have a duration of 90 minutes, including presentations and interactive plenary discussion and dialogue. Discussions will be conducted in English.

Outputs

Outputs of the side event will comprise draft materials for the handbook developed by resource experts and the DPIDG/IBP team, expert presentations, and communication materials to disseminate the handbook. A brief report of the side event will document the discussions.

For further information, please contact Ms. Claire Schouten (cschouten@internationalbudget.org) and Ms. Aránzazu Guillán Montero (guillammontero@un.org)
Agenda

WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2022
EXPO MAG, CR2, RIO DE JANEIRO
12.30-14.00 HRS. (GMT-3)

12:30 - 12:37 HRS. Welcome and opening by moderator

Introduction of participants

Moderator: Ms. Claire Schouten, Senior Programme Officer, IBP

12:37 - 12:44 HRS. Budget credibility and external audits: Overview of the handbook

Presenter:
• Ms. Aránzazu Guillán Montero, Senior Governance and Public Administration Officer, UN DESA.

12:44 – 13:20 HRS. Auditing budget credibility in practice: Experiences, lessons learned and key messages

Presenters:
• Mr. Neemias Albert de Souza, Federal Auditor, SAI Brazil
• Mr. Thopan Aji Pratama, Senior Auditor, SAI Indonesia
• Mr. Ngawa Mphande, Principal Auditor, SAI Zambia
• Mr. Mouhcine Hanoun, Magistrate, SAI Morocco
• Ms. Cora’Lea Dela Cruz, Assistant Commissioner, SAI Philippines
• Mr. Anibal Kohlhuber, Advisor, SAI Argentina

13:20 – 13:27 HRS. Further advancing budget credibility audits within INTOSAI

Discussant:
• Ms. Cora’Lea Dela Cruz, Assistant Commissioner, SAI Philippines


13:55 - 14:00 HRS. Closing by moderator