



The maintenance of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs

The Due Process for INTOSAI's Professional Standards defines the responsibility of the chairs and subcommittees of the PSC, the Knowledge Sharing Committee (KSC) and the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) for ensuring appropriate maintenance of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs. According to the Due Process, information on the agreed frequency of maintenance reviews of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs should appear from the website issai.org.

The PSC Secretariat has asked all relevant subcommittees of PSC, KSC and CBC to decide on the maintenance frequency for the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs at level 4 of the ISSAI Framework, but for many of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs the issue still unresolved.

For the ISSAIs at level 1-3 of the ISSAI Framework there are no standing subcommittees. It is therefore the responsibility of the PSC Chair to ensure appropriate maintenance.

The PSC Chair wishes to consult the PSC Steering Committee on the issue.

The PSC Steering Committee members and observers are invited to provide any comments they may have in relation to the following proposed maintenance frequencies:

- 15 years for ISSAI 10 The Mexico Declaration on SAI independence and ISSAI 20 Principles of Transparency and Accountability. 9 years for the supplementary ISSAIs 11 and 21 providing examples of good practice.
- 15 years for ISSAI 30 Code of Ethics
(Implying that it is to be reviewed in connection with the PSC's planning for 2013-2016)
- 9 years for ISSAI 40 Audit Quality Control
(Minor revisions may be relevant in the meantime)
- 9 years for ISSAI 100-999 The Fundamental Auditing Principles (under revision)
(The frequency is to be reconsidered at the completion of the ISSAI Harmonisation project)
- It is generally advised that the maintenance frequency decided by the subcommittees for guidelines at level 4 is between 3-6 years.

The proposal is further explained in this paper. The purpose of the following two sections is to describe:

- the responsibility for maintenance of ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs;
- the considerations behind the proposed maintenance frequencies for the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs at the different levels of the ISSAI.

An overview of the proposed maintenance frequencies and the subcommittee's decisions is [included for reference](#).

1. The responsibility for maintenance

The ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs are issued by INTOSAI in accordance with the Due Process for INTOSAI's Professional Standards as decided on by INCOSAI in 2010. The due process provides for credible, reliable and transparent processes for the maintenance of INTOSAI's standards in line with

good practices among other international standard-setting bodies as well as INTOSAI's general processes of decision-making.

When the INTOSAI's Framework for Professional Standards was established in 2007 the relevant INTOSAI committees, subcommittees and working groups were each assigned a range of ISSAI and INTOSAI GOV numbers for those of their official documents that fell within the scope of the Framework. The INTOSAI due process provides that each subcommittee is responsible for the maintenance of the documents it has developed. If the subcommittee that developed a document no longer exists, the chairs of the PSC, the KSC or the CBC are responsible for ensuring the maintenance.

According to the INTOSAI Due Process this responsibility for maintenance involves two elements:

- **Ongoing monitoring:** The subcommittee monitors new developments that may lead to a need for the development of new ISSAIs or changes in existing ISSAIs or INTOSAI GOVs.
- **Maintenance review:** At fixed intervals, the subcommittee reviews the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs for which it has the maintenance responsibility. The responsible subcommittee decides on an appropriate frequency at which the maintenance review is carried out. The maintenance frequency is communicated on www.issai.org.

Based on a maintenance review or other developments, the responsible subcommittee decides whether to initiate the process for developing, revising or withdrawing standards. With the exception of minor and conforming editorial changes or withdrawals, the two first steps of this process are:

- **The initial assessment:** The purpose of the initial assessment is to determine the categories of auditing or other tasks that will be covered by the document, to consider the differences among SAIs that must be accommodated and to ensure consistency with existing ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs. In the initial assessment, it is determined to what extent 1) it will be possible and desirable to build on guidance from other internationally recognized, regional or national standard setters and if so, 2) to what extent supplementary guidance is needed in order to meet the needs and concerns of the INTOSAI community.
- **The project proposal:** Based on the initial assessment the responsible subcommittee works out a project proposal for approval by the steering committee. The project proposal should specify the timeline and include suggestions for appropriate ISSAI or INTOSAI GOV numbers and working titles for any envisaged new documents.

For ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs that draws on standards from IFAC, IIA or other external sources it will be part of the ongoing monitoring to observe any changes in these external standards and consider needs for conforming changes or revisions in response to these. This may lead to revisions or withdrawals at any point in time. In case the full text of the external standard is included in the ISSAI or INTOSAI GOV it is further provided that such revisions can be carried through via the 'fast track' process for minor editorial and conforming changes, which does not require project proposal, approval of drafts, public exposure or endorsement by INCOSAI. The relevant purpose of the maintenance reviews at fixed intervals will therefore be to consider the additional text developed by INTOSAI and provided in the ISSAI or INTOSAI GOV.

In the case of the PSC, a project to develop or revise ISSAIs or INTOSAI GOVs may either be carried out by one of the subcommittees or a project group established for a limited period of time for that par-

ticular purpose. The establishment of project groups may be relevant when there is no need for continuous maintenance of documents or alignment of document contents across the different levels of the ISSAI framework. Project groups may include representatives of subcommittee and other INTOSAI committees (as in the case of the projects on quality control and ISSAI harmonisation). Project groups are dissolved when the project is completed and will therefore normally not have maintenance responsibility. Instead it may be relevant that the project group considers the need for future maintenance of the proposed new ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs and suggests a maintenance frequency. It will then be up to the PSC Chair to ensure ongoing monitoring and maintenance reviews at fixed intervals and to take the initiative to establish a new project group next time a revision is required.

The requirements of the INTOSAI Due Process regarding maintenance will be reflected in the information on the status of each ISSAI and INTOSAI GOV at www.issai.org. It will be clearly stated if an ISSAI or INTOSAI GOV is in the process of being revised or withdrawn. For users of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs it may also be very relevant to be informed of maintenance reviews that have been carried out since the original endorsement of the document by INCOSAI. Since some documents are rather old it may be useful to know that the responsible subcommittee has reviewed the text and decided that it was sufficiently up to date and that no changes were needed. Some documents may also have been subject to minor conforming or editorial changes which – according to the due process - do not require a new endorsement by INCOSAI. Such ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs are referred to as ‘revised ISSAIs’ or ‘revised INTOSAI GOVs’. The financial auditing guidelines, for instance, are very likely to be subject to conforming changes in order to reflect changes in IFAC’s standards. But also other categories of ISSAIs may be subject to changes of this nature, for instance, if cross references between various ISSAIs are updated or if some of the 5 official language versions are corrected after endorsement to ensure more consistent translation. In the coming years the www.issai.org will be developed to ensure that it can provide accurate status information on the various ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs. The PSC Secretariat will need assistance from the PSC’s Subcommittees as well as the relevant Subcommittees of the KSC and CBC under goal 2 and 3 to ensure accurate and updated information on all ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs.

II. The maintenance frequencies

The Due Process requires that the maintenance frequency is decided on and published on www.issai.org. This information may be important for SAIs’ decisions on how to implement the ISSAIs and use the INTOSAI GOVs in their national context. SAIs can only be expected to invest resources in considering their alignment with ISSAs if the text of the ISSAIs is relevant and up to date. On the other hand SAIs may wish to know if frequent changes in the text are expected before they, for instance, translate ISSAIs into their national languages. As described above the maintenance review does not necessarily result in a revision of the document and revisions may also be implemented between the regular reviews. However, the maintenance frequency will influence the users’ expectations as to how up-to-date the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs are and the extent to which they can be expected to be ‘living documents’ in the future. The maintenance frequency is INTOSAI’s guarantee to the users of the ISSAIs and INTOSAI GOVs that the text is reviewed with certain intervals, as a minimum.

In light of the above, the maintenance frequencies should generally reflect and underline the hierarchal relationship between the ISSAIs which is defined by the ISSAI framework:

Level 1 of the Framework is referred to as the Founding principles and contains only one document - ISSAI 1 The Lima Declaration. This is an historical document that has remained unchanged since 1977 and is widely regarded as a permanent foundation for INTOSAI. It is unlikely to be revised and it is not relevant to make it subject to maintenance review. As the only exception it is therefore proposed that the maintenance requirements of the INTOSAI Due Process are not applied to this special document.

Level 2 of the ISSAI Framework is the Prerequisites for the functioning of SAIs. These ISSAIs state and explain the basic prerequisites for the proper functioning and professional conduct of SAIs. In general these texts are therefore developed with the aim of being sustained for rather a long time. This is especially true for ISSAI 10 The Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence and ISSAI 20 Principles of Transparency and Accountability. Both these documents are highly important and the INTOSAI community expects to rely on them for many years without amendments. On the other hand, their significance and the level of detail in these documents make it very relevant to apply the INTOSAI Due Process as decided and ensure that the documents are at some point subjected to a maintenance review. Relevant maintenance frequencies to consider would be between 12 and 18 years. The frequency of maintenance for the supporting ISSAIs 11 and 21, that provide examples of good practices, should perhaps be higher.

The other documents at Level 2 includes ISSAI 30 The code of ethics, which was last endorsed in 1998 and has not been reviewed since. At present the maintenance frequency will therefore need to be at least 15 years and a review is therefore due before 2013. Level 2 also includes the new ISSAI 40 Quality Control for SAIs from 2010. This ISSAI draws on the ISQC 1 issued by IFAC. It will therefore be part of the ongoing monitoring to consider any future changes in this standard. The responsible project group is continued until 2013 for the purpose of considering supplementary guidance, which might be integrated into ISSAI 40 or provided in a separate ISSAI. The group might also have to consider changes in the ISQC 1 or further IFAC guidance. It will be important, however, to convey to the users that the general guidance for SAIs contained in the ISSAI 40 can be relied upon and will be sustained in the coming years. The document has just been endorsed by INCOSAI and is part of level 2 of the ISSAI framework. It is deemed that this situation is best reflected by setting the maintenance frequency to 9 years – even if some limited revisions may be relevant in the meantime.

Level 3 of the ISSAI Framework is the Fundamental auditing principles. These are currently under revision as part of the ISSAI Harmonisation Project which is reflected on www.issai.org. In general, frequencies between 9 and 15 years for these ISSAIs would be in line with PSC Steering Committee's previous discussions and the decision to use the name "*fundamental principles*" instead of "auditing standards". The current text dates back to 1992 and was last endorsed in 2001. An appropriate maintenance frequency would therefore be 9 years. Appropriate maintenance frequencies for the new documents at this level will be considered by the members of the ISSAI Harmonisation Project.

Level 4 contains the Auditing guidelines. As defined by the ISSAI classification principles these 'translate the fundamental auditing principles into more specific, detailed and operational guidelines that can be used on a daily basis for auditing tasks'. This purpose calls for frequent maintenance in order to provide the updated and relevant guidance generally requested by the INTOSAI community. The maintenance frequency should therefore normally be between 3 and 6 years, though exceptions might be relevant for some of the specific guidelines (ISSAI 5000-5999).

Appendix – Overview of maintenance frequencies

Proposed maintenance frequencies:

Document	Maintenance frequency	Responsible
<i>Founding principles</i>		
ISSAI 1 The Lima Declaration	(none)	
<i>Prerequisites for the Functioning of Supreme Audit Institutions</i>		
ISSAI 10 Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence	15 years (next by 2022)	PSC Chair
ISSAI 11 INTOSAI Guidelines and Good Practices Related to SAI Independence	9 years (next by 2016)	PSC Chair
ISSAI 20 Principles of Transparency and Accountability	15 years (next by 2025)	PSC Chair
ISSAI 21 Principles of Transparency - Good Practices	9 years (next by 2019)	PSC Chair
ISSAI 30 Code of Ethics	15 years (next by 2013)	PSC Chair
ISSAI 40 Quality Control for SAIs	9 years (next by 2019)	PSC Chair /Project group
<i>Fundamental Auditing Principles</i>		
ISSAI 100 INTOSAI Auditing Standards - Basic Principles	9 years (under revision)	PSC Chair /Project group
ISSAI 200 INTOSAI Auditing Standards - General Standards	9 years (under revision)	PSC Chair /Project group
ISSAI 300 INTOSAI Auditing Standards - Field Standards	9 years (under revision)	PSC Chair /Project group
ISSAI 400 INTOSAI Auditing Standards - Reporting Standards	9 years (under revision)	PSC Chair /Project group

The subcommittee's decisions on maintenance frequencies:

Document	Maintenance frequency	Responsible
<i>Implementation guidelines</i>		
ISSAI 1000-2999 Implementation Guidelines on Financial Audit	For all ISSAIs (1000- 1810): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject to revision whenever the underlying ISA is revised - First revision planned after 2013 In addition for ISSAI 1610 and ISSAI 1720 you can replace the first bullet point with; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject to revision 2012 	FAS
ISSAI 3000-3999 Implementation Guidelines on Performance Audit	5 years will be the maintenance frequency. As for the first review, we expect to conduct it	PAS

	after the Project on Harmonization of the IS-SAs is completed, i.e., in the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014.	
ISSAI 4000-4999 implementation guidelines on compliance audit	To be decided. CAS has not yet decided on a maintenance frequency, but will do so at our next meeting in Batumi, Georgia in September this year.	CAS
Specific guidelines		
ISSAI 5000-5099 Guidelines on International Institutions	To be decided by the Steering Committee of the Knowledge sharing and Knowledge Service Committee, Oct. 2011	No existing subcommittee – KSC chair responsible
ISSAI 5100-5199 Guidelines on Environmental Audit		
ISSAI 5200-5299 Guidelines on Privatisation	To be decided by the Steering Committee of the Knowledge sharing and Knowledge Service Committee, Oct. 2011	No existing subcommittee – KSC chair responsible
ISSAI 5300-5399 guidelines on IT-audit		
ISSAI 5400-5499 Guidelines on Audit of Public Debt	As for the frequency, 2011 sets the year of our first revision. Nonetheless, if this exercise will take place every three or five years (which are the most feasible time spans), or a different one, is also a matter to be discussed and agreed during the WGPD meeting, which we will inform in its due time	KSC Subcommittee on Public Debt
ISSAI 5500-5599 Guidelines on Audit of Disaster-related Aid:	Please note: No guidelines at present	
ISSAI 5600-5699 Guidelines on Peer Reviews	3 years. The date for the first review would therefore be Autumn 2013.	CBC Subcommittee on Peer Reviews
INTOSAI Guidance for Good Governance		
INTOSAI GOV 9100-9199 - Internal Control	To be decided	PSC Subcommittee on Internal Control Standards
INTOSAI GOV 9200-9299 - Accounting Standards	To be decided	PSC Accounting and Reporting Subcommittee