

Strategic Plan of IR Division 2025-2029

Executive Summary

The CAG of India is a highly visible figure internationally not only as an active member of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) but also as a professional body of public sector auditors for auditing the United Nations and its agencies. Broadly, the international engagements of CAG of India are of two kinds:

- Providing mutual support to SAIs and fostering exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences with peers through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with SAIs, regional and international associations of SAIs like ASOSAI and INTOSAI, as well as multilateral groups like BRICS, SCO, SAI20 and Commonwealth Auditors General Forum.
- Promoting good governance internationally, as external auditors of the United Nations and its agencies, and as members of the UN Panel of External Auditors.

The International Relations (IR) Division of the CAG of India is the dedicated wing of the office that handles all matters pertaining to the international engagement of the CAG of India.

The Strategic Plan of IR Division has been developed for a five-year period from 2025-2029, and identifies four strategic priorities, through which the IR Division shall strive to further enhance and strengthen the international role and standing of the CAG of India. The strategic priorities of IR Division are proposed as a sub set of the overall strategic goals of IA&AD's Strategic Plan of 2023-30, specifically Goals 1 and 2.

Following Strategic Priorities for IR Division have been identified for the period 2025-2029

Strategic Priority 1- *Actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with the international auditing community — including engagement with supreme audit institutions (SAIs) under bilateral cooperation agreements. Engagement with other SAIs allows the CAG of India to participate in international dialogue on best practices in public administration and developments in public sector auditing.*

Strategic Priority 2- *Leverage SAI India's IT expertise to promote high quality audit products and audit practices internationally*

Strategic Priority 3- *Enhance and strengthen the role of CAG of India as global leader in international public sector auditing.*

Strategic Priority 4- *Enhance, strengthen and qualitatively improve the internal resources and processes of the IR Division*

A mid-term review of the Strategic Plan will be conducted in June-July 2027, to identify redundant actions, propose mid-course corrections and adjust strategic priorities to emerging domestic and international scenarios.

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1. Introduction

In the global community of 195 Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI), the institution of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), is one of the oldest SAIs having a rich history of more than one hundred and sixty years. The CAG of India is a highly visible figure internationally not only as an active member of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI)¹ but also as a professional body of public sector auditors for auditing the United Nations and its agencies.

Broadly, the international engagements of CAG of India are of two kinds

- Providing mutual support to SAIs and fostering exchange of ideas , knowledge and experiences with peers through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with SAIs, regional and international associations of SAIs like ASOSAI² and INTOSAI , as well as multilateral groups like BRICS, SCO, SAI20, GALF, etc.
- Promoting good governance internationally, as external auditors of the United Nations and its agencies, and as members of the UN Panel of External Auditors.

The International Relations (IR) Division of the CAG of India is the dedicated wing of the office that handles all matters pertaining to the international engagement of the CAG of India. The CAG of India engages with international auditing organisations and associations to maintain its capability in contemporary audit practices, and actively seeks to collaborate with peer associations, professional bodies and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) for information exchange and peer to peer learning.

The CAG of India, through his leadership in the INTOSAI Committee on Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Services (KSC) , the INTOSAI Working Group on IT Audit (WGITA) and the Compliance Audit Subcommittee (CAS), has a significant role is contributing towards global auditing practices. Additionally, the CAG of India actively participates in other key INTOSAI organs, like the ASOSAI and the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI).

The CAG of India has bilateral cooperation agreements with twenty-nine SAIs across Asia, Africa and Europe. The CAG of India is an active member of multilateral forums like the BRICS , SAI20, SCO and the Commonwealth Auditors General Forum.

Further, at present the CAG of India is appointed as external auditor of five specialised agencies of the United Nations, namely, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and its five hosted entities, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA). The CAG of India is a long standing member of the prestigious UN Panel of External Auditors, and till recently, also held the position as the Vice Chair of the Panel.

¹ *International Organisation of Supreme Audit institutions (INTOSAI) is a global, autonomous, independent and non-political organization with 195 members*

² *Asian Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions is a regional association of 48 SAIs in Asia*

2. Strategic Plan of the IR Division for 2025-2029

The Strategic Plan of IR Division has been developed for a five year period from 2025 to 2029, and identifies four strategic priorities through which the IR Division shall strive to further enhance and strengthen the international role and standing of the CAG of India. The Strategic Plan of IR Division echoes the Vision Statement of the CAG of India which is to *Continue to provide independent and credible assurance on public resources and be a global leader in public sector auditing.*

The strategic priorities of IR Division are proposed as a sub set of the overall strategic goals of IA&AD's Strategic Plan of 2023-30, specifically of the Strategic Goals¹³ and 2⁴.

Four strategic priorities for the period 2025 to 2029, that have been identified for the IR Division are:

2.1 Strategic Priority 1 (SP1)

Actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with the international auditing community — including engagement with supreme audit institutions (SAIs) under bilateral cooperation agreements. Engagement with other SAIs allows the CAG of India to participate in international dialogue on best practices in public administration and developments in public sector auditing.

At present, we have entered into bilateral cooperation agreement with twenty-nine SAIs, which are mainly focused on capacity building and knowledge transfer in identified areas of specialised audits and IT. Many SAIs have sought capacity building support beyond training of their staff, in the form of expertise in specialised audits like IT, Environment, Fraud and Procurement.

This kind of support could be extended by deputing selected IA&AD staff as subject experts for short (two to four weeks) to medium (upto six months) term duration, in the supported SAIs. This model of secondments will enable CAG of India to provide expert/s guidance through the entire audit cycle for specified number of expert supported pilot audits, provide onsite support to the SAI in review of audit manuals and provide onsite training to a larger group of SAI staff for sustaining the capacity built.

Sending our officials on such assignments would take away some of the burden from our training resources on one hand, and on the other hand, will provide our people opportunities and exposure to global auditing environment, and motivation of working in international settings.

Another strategic reason to foster bilateral secondments is to diversify the international portfolio of CAG of India in the next 3-5 years, since India will not be contending as external auditor in the UN Board of Auditors.

During 2025-29, the SP1 will focus on following specific actions:

- i- Secondments-** Implementing short and medium term secondments of IA&AD officials to the SAIs which have requested this support. Requests for deputation have been received from four SAIs , namely, Seychelles, Srilanka, Uzbekistan, and for

³ Promote Good Governance and Accountability through professional and effective public sector audit- IA&AD Strategic Plan Document , 2023-30

⁴ Enhance public outreach and communication with stakeholders – IA&AD Strategic Plan Document, 2023-30

continuation of secondments to SAI Oman. Out these, discussions with SAI Seychelles and SAI Oman are in an advanced stage.

Deputation of IA&AD officials to other SAIs not only furthers SAI India's goodwill with peers, the exposure to our own staff through these assignments is immensely beneficial to our officers as it familiarises them with the international auditing environments and diverse auditing practices.

- ii- Bilateral Trainings** –CAG of India is well-positioned to support capacity building for **other** SAIs due to its well established training infrastructure including three international training centres. SAI India is in receipt of requests from other SAIs for training and capacity building through short-term tailored courses especially in the field of IT Audit, emerging technologies like Artificial intelligence, Machine Learning, audit of SDG etc.

The strategy of IR wing involves providing trainings/capacity building to other SAIs at the international training centers of SAI India and developing a pool of experts and specialists trainers. We plan to train around 100 officers/officials from other SAIs every year. This will reinforce SAI India's leadership in public sector auditing, fostering bilateral cooperation, and promoting good governance practices.

- iii- Twinning Projects** – CAG of India is participating in the Global SAI (GSAI) project of the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), under which India is a technical advisor to SAI Belize for improving their auditing practices, reviewing their audit manuals, digitalisation of audit practices and supporting the SAI in its negotiations with the government on implementing the legislation for the independence of the SAI. This is a tripartite arrangement, wherein, the IDI is a development partner, European Union and the US Government are funding partners and SAI India is a technical partner.

Similarly, SAI India is a technical partner for implementing IT Audits in four SAIs of the Caribbean Association of SAIs (CAROSAI), wherein the development partner is the CAROSAI secretariat and funding partner is the World Bank.

The GSAI and the CAROSAI projects have put in place a useful template that can be used for other such twinning projects. Under this model, SAI India, acts as a technical partner along with one or more multilateral and development agencies as funding partners, in a tripartite agreement signed between the supported SAI, SAI India and other agencies.

This model is useful in many ways. Many SAIs that seek capacity building support prefer to partner with bigger SAIs (instead of engaging consultants from private sector) as this arrangement is more customised to the needs of the respective SAIs. CAG of India is in a position to support such SAIs due to a fairly large pool of officials who are experts in different specialised audits who can be associated with such projects for technical hand holding. The financial resources are provided by the funding partner/s.

For example, the Delhi based regional office of the USAID, in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs, GoI, has informally reached out to the CAG of India for negotiating such tripartite agreements with some SAIs in Asia and Africa.

Under SP1, the IR division will take specific actions to identify and formalise some of these twinning projects, as a way to promote bilateral relations with peer SAIs.

- iv- Cooperation on Upskilling IA&AD Human Resources**

Apart from being a provider of capacity building and training services, CAG of India also needs to collaborate with other SAIs with demonstrated public sector auditing prowess. Some such SAIs are, Brazil, Australia, Denmark, Israel, European Court of Auditors, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

Under SP1, IR Division will explore the avenues of cooperation with some of the SAIs under which IA&AD officials could be given exposure on new approaches and technology used in evidence gathering, audit reporting etc.

2.2 Strategic Priority 2 (SP2)

Leverage SAI India's IT expertise to promote high quality audit products and audit practices internationally.

CAG of India is well recognised for its leadership in deployment of technology, IT expertise, data management and use of AI and machine learning in auditing. SP2 aims to build upon the IT strength of SAI India, by focusing on the following specific actions.

- i- SAI India's audit management software-** One IA&AD One System (OIOS) has been developed as an organisation wide one stop solution for managing the entire audit cycle from audit planning to audit reporting. The OIOS has been deployed across 130 Audit offices and 29 A&E offices of CAG of India since past two years, and has sufficiently stabilised.

There is a wide demand for a customised audit management software for SAIs across the globe. This is supported by the fact that considerable number of SAIs that have signed bilateral agreements with CAG of India, have shown a keen interest in the AMS deployed by us. The OIOS has the potential to be positioned as a tailor made solution for the SAIs, as against off-the-shelf solutions that currently are available in the market.

For this, a time bound project for a period of two years during 2025-2026, in consultation with the CAG's Chief Technology Officer (CTO) will be initiated for customisation, piloting and promotion of "*OIOS-international*".

- ii- Auditing Guidelines for Audit of Digital Public Infrastructure-** CAG of India, while taking over as Chair of the ASOSAI, has committed to contribute to strengthening of capacities and skills of auditing community of public sector auditors for auditing DPI projects. The New Delhi Declaration of the ASOSAI also centres around the theme of DPI.

The second specific action under SP2 is to meet the goal of developing the guidelines for auditing of the DPI by SAI India. Further, SAI India will conduct **two fully funded training programmes for auditing DPI** during 2025 and 2026, as part of its commitment to the ASOSAI New Delhi Declaration.

- iii- INTOSAI Community Portal**

An INTOSAI Community Portal has been developed by CAG of India, as chair of KSC. The portal provides an online platform to the INTOSAI community in general, and INTOSAI working groups in particular, a common platform for sharing documents, resources, updates and discussion forums.

Under SP2, the IR division will work to widely disseminate the usage by taking specific actions like migration of the INTOSAI working groups' stand-alone websites to the

common portal and creating communities of practice. The portal will be updated real time to share news and updates including messages from the heads of SAIs.

iv- INTOSAI Community App

INTOSAI Community App is envisioned as a digital platform to enhance collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and professional engagement among Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) worldwide. This app aims to provide a centralized hub for auditors from across the world to exchange insights, access resources, and strengthen audit practices globally.

The app will be developed on the lines of INTOSAI Community Portal website and will have the facility to create Communities of Practise as available in the website.

2.3 Strategic Priority 3 (SP3)

Enhance and strengthen the role of CAG of India as global leader in international public sector auditing.

i- International Portfolio of Audits

CAG of India has been appointed as the external auditor of five specialised agencies of the UN system. The assignment as the external auditor of these agencies is an excellent window to the IA&AD officials to get an exposure of the international auditing environment. Moreover, these assignments encourage the staff to upgrade their skills and professional qualifications in public sector auditing and accounting.

In 2024, CAG of India had planned to bid for the UN Board of Auditors for the period 2026-2032. Successful bid was expected to provide opportunity to approximately 40 UN Audit teams annually, for audits of the main UN and other agencies. Since the main UN audit required bulk of our audit resources to be deployed and anticipating a successful bid, the bids for external audits of other UN agencies was kept on hold. Subsequently, on the advice of MEA, India's bid as external auditor in the UNBoA has been withdrawn. Under SP3 we will renew our focus on other bids in the next two years, targeting a diverse portfolio of external audits and maintaining a minimum of 25 External audit parties per annum.

Tentative Diversification of portfolios and man-days required over the next five years is projected as follows:

| Organisation | No of teams deployed | Audit Man-days | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 2024-25 (27) | 2025-26 (27) | 2026-27 (30) | 2027-28 (29) | 2028-29 (31) |
| FAO | 7 | 651 | 651 | | | |
| IAEA | 5 | 512 | 512 | 512 | 512 | |
| ILO | 7 | 669 | 669 | 669 | 669 | 669 |
| OPCW | 1 | 328 | 328 | 328 | | |
| WHO | 7 | 528 | 528 | 528 | 528 | |
| ICAO [@] | 3 | | | 420 | 420 | 420 |
| IMO* | 3 | | | | | 400 |
| UNIDO* | 4 | | | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| WFP* | 7 | | | | | 550 |
| WMO* | 4 | | | | | 400 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| International Telecommunication Union* (ITU) | 2 | | | 300 | 300 | 300 |
| World Tourism Organisation* (WTO) | 1 | | | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| TOTAL MANDAYS | | 2688 (utilized) | 2688 (Planned) | 3407 (Projected) | 3079 (Projected) | 3389 (Projected) |

Note: The number of audit parties in bracket; numbers in colour are projected

@Bid for ICAO is already submitted

*Projected man-days

Man-days have been calculated by taking into account IA&AS, Sr. AOs and AAOs.

This will entail planning and preparing for the upcoming bids for the external audits during 2025-2029. SAI India has already put in a bid for external audit of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for the audit cycle period of 2026-31. During 2027, IR Division will target to bid for IMO, WFP and WMO for audit periods beginning 2028.

ii- Visibility in UN Panel of External Auditors

Continuing the tradition of being an active participant in the UN Panel of External Auditors, which is the most prestigious forum of external public sector auditors, CAG of India will play a key role in contributing to the strategic policy making and decisions of the Panel with regard to the current and evolving focus areas of audit and promoting new techniques and tools for auditing of IT systems. The Community of Practice in the INTOSAI Community Portal will be promoted to foster closer and periodic interaction among Panel members.

Membership in the UN Panel is closely linked with our role as external auditors of UN bodies and specialised agencies.

iii- Contribute to standard setting and knowledge transfer in INTOSAI community

(a) The INTOSAI has launched a massive project of reviewing and improving the existing standards and guidance documents that form the INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements (IFPP), under its five year strategic plan of 2023-2028. The aim of the review process is to Achieve a framework fit for the future generations. There are five specific initiatives under the review process, namely,

‘A’ initiative – fully digitalising and presenting all our IFPP pronouncements in the most accessible way

‘G’ Initiative- easy access to relevant and high-quality guidance material

‘I’ Initiative- Improving the clarity and consistency of terminology, language and formatting of IFPP documents

‘P’ Initiative- Clear definition of INTOSAI principles, their positioning and required amendments

‘T’ Initiative- define terminology for use in all future professional pronouncements

India, as the Chair of KSC, has volunteered to **lead the ‘G’ Initiative**, as well as participate as a **member in ‘P’ Initiative**. Our participation in the INTOSAI standard setting project will be one of the components that will drive SP3.

(b) **Participation in INTOSAI’s Forum for INTOSAI Professional Practices (FIPP)** , another platform through which CAG of India contributes to the INTOSAI standard

setting. During 2025-2026, FIPP will be recruiting new members in the FIPP board, through an application and interview based process. Preparing SAI India's applicants for participation in the FIPP's recruitment process will be a strategic priority in next two years.

- (c) **Regional Knowledge Partners:** We aim to establish close partnerships with SAIs within each regional organisation of INTOSAI in the form of Regional Knowledge Partners to disseminate knowledge products developed by SAI India. **iv- Other Bilateral and Multilateral Commitments**

Stewardship of INTOSAI KSC- Under Goal 3 of the INTOSAI, CAG of India chairs the INTOSAI's Knowledge sharing and knowledge services committee (KSC). There are 13 working groups and one special committee which at present function under the aegis of the KSC. These bodies of the KSC work on developing guidance materials, case studies on specialised subjects , as well as serve as the knowledge sharing platform for the INTOSAI community. The IRD's strategic plan 2025-2029 envisages that all the digital presence of working groups will be brought under one umbrella of INTOSAI Community Portal, as has been described in Para 2(iii) above.

Besides this, during 2025 we will focus on improving the functioning of the working groups through a target and timeline driven approach. It is proposed to lay down criteria for closure of dormant working groups and make the existing working groups' work relevant and topical by proposing sunset and sunrise clauses in the individual projects taken up by them. These proposals are being developed as a White Paper on review of functioning of KSC Working Groups, to be presented during the 2025 meeting of the KSC's steering committee to address these issues.

Stewardship of ASOSAI- CAG of India will be in Chair during 2025-2027, wherein our priority will be to fulfil the commitments of the ASOSAI New Delhi Declaration. Our strategy for promoting the auditing guidelines for DPI has been described in paragraph 2 (ii) above.

Multilateral Commitments – CAG of India is a member of multilateral fora, namely, BRICS, SCO, SAI20 and Auditors of Commonwealth Nations

These fora are mainly engaged in knowledge sharing. Our strategy will be to participate in selected knowledge sharing events, which are pertinent and topical to the needs of SAI India as well as those where SAI India can make value added contributions.

2.4 Strategic Priority 4 (SP4)

Enhance, strengthen and qualitatively improve the internal resources and processes of the IR Division

In order to be able to meet the commitments under each of the three strategic priorities, the IR division is required to also review and strengthen its own resources and work processes. Under SP4, concerted efforts will be made to improve the deployment of manpower resources and IT resources , and strengthen the standard operating procedures in place.

Following specific actions are envisaged: **i-**

Upgrade and Upskill Human Resources

- a. Encourage all Sr. Audit Officers to acquire certification in IPSAS. Having a professional pool of people to review and quality assure the CAG's external audit

reports is a high priority area. As more and more UN entities become fully IPSAS compliant, it is essential that the vetting team in IR division is also equally qualified to carry out reliable vetting and quality assurance of draft management letters and long form reports of the UN entities.

- b. Conduct regular meetings with the UN entities' internal oversight bodies and audit committees for information exchange and to ensure that relevant and topical issues and high risk areas are being addressed in the process of providing assurance through our audit reports
- c. Strengthen training of UN audit teams, especially in technical areas like actuarial valuation , pension funds, investments and ERPs of UN entities. For this, IR division, in collaboration with the Capacity Building Wing of the CAG's office , will rope in technical and professional institutions for training of the personnel selected for UN audits.

ii- Upgrade and Improve Internal Processes

- a. Pilot deployment of OIOS for conduct of External Audits- The audit teams are required to conduct the audits of UN entities by logging into the entity's own Sharepoint. Most entities do not allow external machine to log into their workspace, and issue the clients' desktops/laptops to the auditors. The audit team's documentation is shared with the IR division through MS Teams. Since the OIOS provides a complete solution for the audit process, it is proposed to pilot the deployment of OIOS to our external audits which will contribute to improved documentation.
- b. Digitising internal work processes- Apart from working through e-office, it is also proposed to develop a few in-house applications to strengthen IR division's documentation of internal documents and dak.

These include portal for monitoring e-mails received in IR Division, portal for dissemination of information to members of INTOSAI working groups, and an application for processing and monitoring of IA&AD's official international tours.

- c. **Website monitoring Cell-** The success of the IR division managed websites, namely, the INTOSAI Community Portal, and ASOSAI Journal website apart from the technical support of the service provider, critically depends on committed resources which are full time engaged in continuous updating of information and handling errors, and addressing and resolving complaints from users. For this, a dedicated cell of two or more resource persons is envisaged, who will be deployed exclusively for websites' monitoring.

3. Operational Plans

- i- The annual operational plan for the years 2025 and 2026, under the Strategic Plan 2025-2029, is being submitted shortly.
- ii- A mid-term review of the Strategic Plan will be conducted in June-July 2027, to identify redundant actions, propose mid-course corrections and adjust strategic priorities to emerging domestic and international scenarios.

