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A Comparative Analysis of the 2017 and 2024 Global Internal Auditing Standards and Their Implementation Challenges in Developing Countries: Toward Adapting to Change

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ABSTRACT

The mandatory implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) in 2024 marks a significant transformation in the regulation and practice of internal auditing worldwide, particularly in developing-country contexts. This study provides a comparative analysis of the 2017 International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) standards and the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards, with a focus on structural changes, conceptual evolution, and implementation challenges. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative documentary analysis, combined with a descriptive and comparative approach. It analyzes official IIA standards and supporting documents, complemented by professional reports and recent peer-reviewed academic literature published between 2022 and 2025. The findings reveal that the 2024 Standards introduce a unified, principle-based framework that strengthens governance integration, quality management, stakeholder engagement, and the strategic role of internal audit, while embedding emerging priorities such as digital transformation, sustainability, and risk-based value creation. However, the analysis also indicates that the increased prescriptiveness and strategic expectations of the 2024 Standards pose significant implementation challenges in developing countries, where institutional maturity, regulatory support, technological readiness, and professional capacity often remain limited. The study contributes to the internal auditing literature by providing a critical synthesis of the evolution of global internal audit standards and by advancing an interpretive, context-sensitive perspective on their adoption in developing-country contexts. It provides insights for Chief Audit Executives, regulators, and policymakers on how to balance global standardization with contextual adaptation, capacity building, and phased implementation strategies.

Keywords: Global Internal Audit Standards, Documentary analysis, Comparative study, Implementation challenges, Developing countries

INTRODUCTION

Internal auditing represents a cornerstone of good governance and a key mechanism for enhancing transparency, accountability, and organizational performance. Its role has become increasingly strategic in today's dynamic environment, characterized by complex risks, rapid technological change, and growing expectations from stakeholders. To ensure consistent and high-quality practice across jurisdictions, the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) developed the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), which has long served as the global reference for internal audit professionals. The 2017 version of the Standards embodied a comprehensive structure that unified the principles, requirements, and implementation guidance necessary to promote professional integrity and consistency.

However, the accelerating pace of digital transformation, the growing complexity of governance frameworks, and the heightened focus on sustainability and risk management demanded a major revision. In response, the IIA issued the Global Internal Audit Standards (2024) on January 9, 2024, marking a significant evolution in both philosophy and structure. These new Standards integrate all components of the IPPF into a cohesive framework and became mandatory for implementation in May 2025. Their introduction reflects not merely an update of technical requirements but a strategic redefinition of internal auditing as a value-creating and forward-looking function.

This study aims to conduct an analytical and comparative examination of the IIA Internal Auditing Standards (2017) and the Global Internal Auditing Standards (2024). It investigates their differences in structure, content, and underlying philosophy, while assessing their broader implications for practice and institutional governance. The study also examines professional debates surrounding the new framework, as well as the challenges and requirements for its implementation, particularly in developing countries where institutional capacity and resources are limited.

The analysis employs a descriptive, comparative methodology, drawing on official documents, professional reports, and relevant academic literature to assess the conceptual evolution and practical implications of the 2024 reforms. The study is structured to provide a logical and comprehensive flow of analysis. It begins with an overview of the 2017 Standards, presenting their general framework, structural organization, and defining characteristics. It then examines the 2024 Global Standards, outlining the context of their development, their new structural model, and their distinctive features. The subsequent part offers a comparative analysis between the two versions, focusing on differences in structure, content, objectives, and guiding philosophy, followed by a discussion of their significance for the internal auditing profession. The study further examines the requirements for professional and institutional adaptation and the critical perspectives raised regarding the new framework. It concludes with an integrated synthesis of findings and insights that encompass both analytical discussion and practical reflections on the implementation of the 2024 Standards, particularly in developing countries.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative documentary analysis combined with a descriptive comparative research design to examine the evolution of the Institute of Internal Auditors' (IIA) internal auditing standards, with a specific comparison between the 2017 International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) standards and the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards. This methodological approach is consistent with the study's objective of analyzing structural changes, conceptual evolution, and implementation challenges associated with the transition to the new global standards, particularly in developing-country contexts.

Documentary analysis was selected as the primary methodological approach because the core objects of analysis consist of formal regulatory texts, professional frameworks, implementation guidance, and scholarly interpretations issued by authoritative bodies. Such an approach enables a systematic examination of how internal auditing standards have evolved in terms of structure, principles, terminology, and strategic orientation, while also allowing for critical interpretation of their implications for practice, particularly in developing-country contexts.

The analysis draws on three categories of documentary sources. First, primary normative documents issued by the IIA were examined, including the 2017 International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards, as well as official supporting materials such as glossary comparisons, quality assessment manuals, and IPPF mapping documents. Second, professional and institutional reports published by international audit firms and professional organizations were analyzed to capture practitioner-oriented interpretations, implementation guidance, and emerging concerns regarding the new standards. Third, peer-reviewed academic literature published between 2016 and 2025 was reviewed to situate the analysis within ongoing scholarly debates on internal audit evolution, prescriptiveness, governance, and professional judgment.

The analytical process was conducted in three interrelated stages. In the first stage, a descriptive analysis identified and documented the structural and conceptual features of both the 2017 and 2024 standards, including their organizational architecture, core principles, and scope. In the second stage, a comparative analysis systematically contrasted the two frameworks in terms of structure, content, purpose, and underlying philosophy, highlighting the shift from a compliance-oriented model toward a more principle-based and value-oriented approach. In the third stage, a critical interpretive analysis examined the practical implications of the 2024 Standards, with particular attention to implementation challenges in developing countries, such as institutional maturity, regulatory support, technological readiness, and professional capacity constraints.

The selection of documents was guided by relevance, authority, and recency. Only official IIA publications, widely cited professional reports, and peer-reviewed academic studies directly addressing internal auditing standards, governance, or implementation challenges were included. This triangulation of sources enhances the robustness of the analysis by balancing normative prescriptions, professional practice perspectives, and academic critique.

Several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. As a documentary-based study, the analysis does not incorporate primary empirical evidence such as interviews, surveys, or case studies, which limits insights into how organizations operationalize the standards in practice. In addition, although the study focuses on developing countries, it does not empirically differentiate between regions or sectors and therefore treats developing economies as a broad analytical category. These limitations do not undermine the conceptual contribution of the study, but rather indicate opportunities for future research that employs empirical and region-specific methodologies.

To enhance methodological transparency and provide a structured overview of the documentary sources underpinning the analysis, **Table 1** presents the key documents examined in this study.

Table 1. Key Documents Analyzed in the Study

Category	Document	Issuing Body	Purpose in the Analysis
Primary Standards	International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (2017)	IIA	Baseline framework for structural and philosophical comparison.
Primary Standards	Global Internal Audit Standards™ (2024)	IIA	Core object of analysis reflecting revised principles and requirements.
Supporting Documents	Glossary Comparison: 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards to 2017 Standards	IIA	Identification of conceptual and terminological changes.
Supporting Documents	Two-Way Mapping: 2017 IPPF Mandatory Elements to 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards	IIA	Structural alignment and continuity analysis.
Quality Frameworks	Introducing the New Quality Assessment Manual: Aligned with the Global Internal Audit Standards	IIA	Examination of changes in quality and performance evaluation.
Professional Reports	Implementation and impact reports (e.g., Protiviti, Grant Thornton, PKF)	Audit Firms	Practitioner perspectives and implementation challenges.
Academic Literature	Peer-reviewed studies on internal audit evolution (2022–2025)	Academic Journals	Theoretical grounding and critical interpretation.

Source: Compiled by the author based on IIA publications and selected academic and professional literature.

OVERVIEW OF THE IIA INTERNAL AUDITING STANDARDS 2017

1. General Framework

The 2017 Standards are based on the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), which serves as the primary reference for setting out general principles and practical guidelines for the work of internal auditors. This framework consists of two main levels:

- Mandatory Guidance: This includes the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the International Standards of Professional Practice. These components are mandatory for all practitioners under the IIA umbrella.
- Recommended Guidance: This includes practice guides and application tips, which are used to assist auditors in applying the standards effectively, but are not legally binding (IIA,2017).

2. Structure of the Standards

The 2017 International Standards are divided into two main sections:

- Attribute Standards: These address the characteristics of internal auditors and the organization, such as independence, competence, and objectivity.
- Performance Standards: These define the nature and quality of audit work, from planning to reporting and follow-up on recommendations.
- These standards are divided into numerical materials, ranging from Standard 1000 to Standard 2600, with sub-standards for assurance and consulting engagements (IIA,2017).

3. Key Features of the 2017 Standards

- Focus on compliance and professional discipline.
- Clarity in the structure of the digital division and organization.
- Providing a unified framework that enhances consistency in application across jurisdictions.
- Reliance on a risk-based approach to audit work, which was a core strength that has been further developed in the new edition.

Despite the advantages of this edition, some criticisms have been directed at it, such as its limited adaptation to the digital environment and the need to update concepts related to data management and digital transformation (IIA,2017).

OVERVIEW OF THE IIA'S GLOBAL INTERNAL AUDITING STANDARDS 2024

1. Background to the New Edition

In light of the rapid developments in the global business environment and the challenges they pose to governance and risk management systems, it has become necessary to revisit the framework governing internal auditing. In response to this need, the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) launched a new, comprehensive edition in January 2024, known as the Global Internal Auditing Standards (GIAS), replacing the previous IPPF framework of 2017. This update followed an extensive international consultation process spanning more than two years, during which the views of professionals, academics, and practitioners from more than 125 countries were sought. The primary objectives of this edition are to (IIA,2024):

- Simplify and unify the standards.
- Improve global applicability.
- Enhance the added value of internal auditing within organizations.
- Respond to modern challenges such as digitization, artificial intelligence, and sustainability.

According to KPMG (2020), the rapid development of digital technologies such as big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and advanced automation has transformed the role of auditors from merely reviewing historical records to acting as forward-looking strategic advisors. This digital shift created pressure on professional bodies like the IIA to revise and modernize their standards, which explains why the 2024 edition places stronger emphasis on technology competence, sustainability, and proactive risk management compared to the 2017 Standards.

2. The New Structure of the 2024 Standards

The new standards focus on core principles, integrating the concepts of quality, governance, and risk into a unified structure. Their structure can be summarized as follows (IIA,2024):

- Core Principles (15 key principles): These principles form the backbone of the standards and organize professional practice according to five areas:
  - Purpose: Clarify the role of internal audit in providing assurance and advice.
  - Ethics and Independence: Includes principles related to integrity, objectivity, and independence.

• Governance, Risk Management, and Control: Enhances the internal audit's contribution to these areas.

• Performance of the Audit Activity: Organizes methods of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

• Quality and Continuous Improvement: Emphasizes self-assessment and continuous improvement.

- Practice Requirements: These are the conditions that must be met to ensure the implementation of each of the principles. They integrate the previous performance standards and attributes into an integrated framework.
- Implementation Guidance: Provides flexible examples and guidance to assist in implementing the standards in diverse settings.
- New quality framework: Includes assessments of the quality of the audit activity, both internal and external, based on the quality management system and not just compliance checks.

As further highlighted by Sandlana and Newsome (2024), the 2024 Standards introduce a more agile and principle-driven architecture that replaces the segmented structure of the previous IPPF. This redesign aims to create a single, cohesive document where purpose, ethics, governance, performance, and quality are interconnected rather than treated as separate domains. The authors note that this integration enhances clarity and usability, ensuring that internal audit activities are guided not only by compliance but also by performance outcomes, innovation, and value creation. Moreover, the inclusion of practical implementation guidance and a strengthened quality framework reflects the IIA’s intent to promote global consistency while maintaining flexibility for different organizational contexts.

3. Key Features of the 2024 Standards

- Integration of the previous framework (IPPF) into a unified system, rather than dividing the standards into mandatory and non-mandatory.
- A fundamental shift in professional thinking, from a focus on compliance to a focus on outcomes and value.
- Simplification of language and terminology to make them universally understandable and easy to apply in different contexts, reflecting a trend toward global standardization of practices.
- Focus on digital innovation, considering it part of the internal auditor's role in assessing the resilience of systems.
- Integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues into modern audit engagements (IIA,2024).

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS ISSUED IN 2017 AND 2024

1. Comparison of structure and organizational structure

Table 2. Comparison of the organizational structure and framework

Item	2017 Standards	2024 Standards
General Structure	Double frame (mandatory/recommended)	Unified structure (principles + requirements + guidelines)
Internal Division	Attribute Standards + Performance Standards + Assurance and Consulting Engagement Standards	15 principles within 5 key areas, followed by practice requirements for each principle
Numbering and Organization	Numerically numbered from 1000 to 2600	Textual organization according to principal areas (without numerical numbering)
Code of Ethics	separate and independent document	Integrated within the framework as a basic principle
Self-Assessment Guide	Self-assessment based on Performance Standards	An integrated system for quality management and internal and external performance assessment

Source: IIA (2017), International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing; IIA (2024) Global Internal Audit Standards™.

Table 2 illustrates that the 2024 Standards mark a significant structural shift in the design of the professional framework for internal auditing, transitioning from a dual framework based on the distinction between mandatory and prescriptive requirements to a unified structure that integrates principles, practice requirements, and guidelines into a single framework. This shift has contributed to simplifying understanding, reducing duplication, and enhancing consistency across various aspects of the profession. Furthermore, the integration of the Code of Ethics within the framework reflects the integration of the ethical dimension with professional performance. At the same time, the inclusion of a quality management system represents a qualitative development that enhances a culture of continuous improvement, rather than focusing solely on compliance.

2. Comparison in content and concepts

Table 3. Comparison of content and concepts

Item	2017 Standards	2024 Standards
Focus on Compliance	Compliance with procedures and standards	Impact-based assessment and performance quality
Risk-Based Review	Application of philosophy within some standards	A central part of all audit phases
Innovation and Digital Transformation	Limited or unclear presence	A main and integrated axis within the principles
Flexibility in Implementation	Specific but less flexible guidelines	More flexible and accommodating of cultural and institutional specificities
Alignment with Modern Governance	Partially linked to risk and control	Deep connection to governance, risk management, and sustainability (ESG)

Source: IIA (2017), International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing; IIA (2024) Global Internal Audit Standards™.

Table 3 shows the significant shift in the philosophy of the professional content of internal auditing standards. The standards no longer focus solely on compliance with procedures, but rather are directed toward measuring impact and performance quality. The adoption of risk-based auditing as a fundamental methodology reflects a more mature response to the complexity of business environments. The strong presence of concepts such as innovation, digital transformation, and the specificity of cultural contexts demonstrates a deep understanding of contemporary challenges. It enhances the standards' ability to adapt and be applied globally, especially in changing environments and developing countries.

3. Comparison in purpose and general philosophy

Table 4. Comparison of purpose and general philosophy

Item	2017 Standards	2024 Standards
Primary Purpose	Quality Assurance of Internal Auditor Performance	Delivering value and enhancing the strategic impact of internal audit
Role of the Internal Auditor	Compliance Examiner and Control Evaluator	A strategic partner in decision-making and achieving the organization's goals
Professional Mindset	Traditional – Compliance-Based	Advanced, grounded in critical thinking and adaptability
Target Audience of the Standards	Internal Auditors Only	Auditors, management, oversight committees, and shareholders

Source: IIA (2017), International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing; IIA (2024) Global Internal Audit Standards™.

Table 4 illustrates a radical shift in the philosophy of internal auditing, from a traditional role based on inspection and compliance to an effective strategic role that contributes to decision-making and enhances the value of the organization. The goal is no longer limited to ensuring quality, but rather to creating a tangible institutional and strategic impact. Furthermore, expanding the audience of the standards to include senior management, shareholders, and oversight committees expresses a genuine desire to establish internal auditing as an integrated governance tool, not merely an administrative support function.

4. Glossary Comparison

Table 5. Glossary Comparison

Concept	2017 Standards	2024 Standards
Consulting Services	Consulting services: Advisory and related client service activities intended to add value without assuming management responsibility.	Term replaced by 'Advisory Services'.
Advisory Services	Not included as a separate term.	Advisory services: Internal auditors provide advice without assuming management responsibilities (e.g., training, facilitation, or policy design).
Internal Audit Activity	Internal audit activity: Department, division, team, or consultants providing independent assurance and consulting services.	Replaced by Internal Audit Function: Professional group or individual providing assurance and advisory services.
Internal Audit Function	Not included as a separate term.	Introduced as a formal definition that specifies authority, responsibilities, and accountability for managing internal audit services.
Chief Audit Executive (CAE)	Senior position managing internal audit activity in accordance with the IPPF and audit charter.	The role expanded to managing all aspects of the internal audit function, ensuring quality, independence, and alignment with global standards.
Professional Skepticism	Not included as a term.	New term: A questioning mindset that critically assesses the reliability and sufficiency of information.
Residual Risk	Not included as a term.	New term: The remaining risk after management's risk responses have been applied
Overall Opinion	Overall opinion: Broad-level conclusion provided by the CAE on governance, risk management, and control processes.	Removed and replaced by the Results of Internal Audit Services.
Results of Internal Audit Services	Not included.	New term: The outcomes of internal audit engagements, including conclusions, themes, and organizational-level insights.
Competency	Not included.	New term: The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform internal audit responsibilities effectively.
Internal Audit Mandate	Not included.	New term: The authority, role, and responsibilities granted to the internal audit function by the board or governing body.

Source: IIA (2024), Glossary Comparison: 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards to 2017 Standards.

Table 5 illustrates the key conceptual and terminological developments between the 2017 and 2024 IIA Standards. The glossary comparison highlights significant shifts that reflect the ongoing evolution of the internal auditing profession. For instance, the term "consulting services" used in 2017 was replaced by "advisory services" in 2024, emphasizing a more collaborative and strategic role for internal auditors in supporting management without assuming managerial responsibilities. Similarly, the transition from "internal audit activity" (2017) to "internal audit function" (2024) signals a broader recognition of internal audit as an institutionalized professional function with defined authority, responsibilities, and strategic alignment.

Moreover, the 2024 Standards introduced several new terms, such as professional skepticism, residual risk, competency, and internal audit mandate. These additions underscore the growing focus on critical thinking, enhanced risk management, and the continuous professionalization of internal audit practices. At the same time, some terms were removed or reframed, for example, overall opinion was replaced by results of internal audit services, reflecting a shift toward more comprehensive, outcomes-oriented reporting.

Overall, these glossary updates signify not only a structural revision but also a philosophical transformation in the purpose and orientation of internal auditing. The 2024 Standards move the profession beyond compliance-driven practices toward a forward-looking, value-adding function that integrates governance, ethics, and technology. This transformation demonstrates the IIA's commitment to aligning internal audit standards with the realities of modern governance and the emerging challenges of risk and digital transformation.

5. Significance of the Differences

The differences between the 2017 and 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards represent far more than a routine update; they signal a fundamental reorientation in both structure and strategic intent. Whereas the 2017 Standards were fragmented across multiple discrete components, such as the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, Core Principles, and International Standards, the 2024 Standards consolidate these elements into a single, principle-based framework organized into five domains and fifteen guiding principles. This integrated model enhances clarity, coherence, and usability while aligning more effectively with today's dynamic governance and risk environments (IIA, 2023).

This transformation is further illustrated by the major updates introduced through the IPPF Evolution project, which strengthened governance frameworks, offered specific guidance for public sector and small audit functions, and provided a more flexible structure adaptable to diverse contexts. As emphasized by O'Bannon (2024), these standards provide a streamlined and dynamic framework that enhances audit quality and strengthens the internal audit's strategic partnership with boards and senior management.

Among the notable differences in the 2024 Standards is the elevation of practices that were previously discretionary, such as internal audit strategy (Standard 9.2), stakeholder engagement (Standard 11.1), and performance measurement (Standard 12.2), to mandatory requirements. This shift compels Chief Audit Executives (CAEs) to adopt long-term strategic planning and maintain robust documentation as evidence of alignment. Yet, evidence shows a significant gap in practice. According to the Audit Board's "Focus on the Future 2024" survey, only one in five audit functions currently maintains a documented multi-year strategic plan. At the same time, the Standards introduce clearer expectations for communication between CAEs, boards, and executive leadership, with specific "Essential Conditions" prescribed for effective governance. Together, these requirements reinforce organizational alignment, accountability, and long-term value creation (Miller & Chambers, 2024).

Beyond structural consolidation, the 2024 Standards signal a strategic inflection point for the profession. They expand the role of internal auditors from compliance-focused assurance providers to forward-looking partners in governance, risk management, and digital transformation. Emerging areas such as data analytics, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity now fall explicitly within the remit of internal audit, reflecting the profession's evolution toward being technology-driven, agile, and value-focused (Parlak, 2025). This outcome-oriented orientation is further reinforced by the introduction of strategic planning and performance metrics, moving the profession away from a purely procedural framework and toward a model of continuous improvement and value creation (Protiviti, 2025).

Nevertheless, the scope and depth of these changes remain contested. Lenz and Jeppesen (2022) argue that internal audit's true evolution should be philosophical rather than merely technical, reframing auditors as "gardeners of governance" who nurture ethical foresight and strategic alignment. From this perspective, the 2024 Standards represent structural refinement but fall short of redefining the profession's ultimate purpose. Similarly, Lenz and O'Regan (2024) view the revisions as "old wine in new bottles," suggesting that the updates reorganize existing content without fully addressing the growing demands of sustainability, digital risk, and strategic foresight. Lenz and McNamee (2024) further critique the Standards' prescriptive orientation, contending that while adopting a principles-based structure, they continue to emphasize compliance at the expense of values-driven professional judgment.

Despite these criticisms, the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards still represent substantial and transformative changes that internal audit departments must carefully consider. As Guttenplan and Connor (2024) note, the updates create opportunities for growth, innovation, and added value within organizations, yet they also necessitate additional resources and specialized expertise. To bridge these gaps, CAEs and boards are encouraged to leverage external resources and adopt co-sourcing models, strengthening audit effectiveness and reinforcing stakeholder confidence. In this sense, the transition from the 2017 to the 2024 Standards reflects not only structural reorganization but also a strategic redefinition of the profession, shifting the focus from "How is the mission executed?" to "What value does the mission deliver?"

Overall, the 2024 Standards embody both continuity and change: continuity in their reaffirmation of independence, governance, and assurance, and change in their expanded emphasis on technology, sustainability, and strategic alignment. While the debate over whether these revisions are truly transformative remains unsettled, they undeniably raise expectations for internal audit to act as a resilient, adaptable, and forward-looking function that adds sustained value to organizations navigating today's complex business environment.

PROFESSIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION REQUIREMENTS

The implementation of the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards highlights the need for comprehensive adaptation at both the professional and institutional levels. Adaptation in this context extends beyond procedural compliance; it represents a strategic requirement to ensure alignment with the new unified framework and to realize its intended objectives.

On the professional level, adaptation entails the continuous development of auditors' skills and competencies in response to an environment marked by digital complexity and rapid transformation. Internal auditors are now expected to demonstrate advanced critical thinking, the ability to manage complex and emerging risks, and proficiency in leveraging digital tools and data analytics. This professional transformation requires structured training, certification programs, and the cultivation of a culture of innovation and agility, positioning auditors as strategic partners rather than compliance enforcers (Lenz & Jeppesen, 2022; IIA, 2023; Parlak, 2025).

At the institutional level, adaptation requires organizations to restructure internal audit policies, methodologies, and reporting practices to align with the consolidated structure of the 2024 Standards. Unlike the 2017 framework, where elements such as the Code of Ethics and Core Principles were separated, the new standards integrate these components within a cohesive document. This consolidation demands not only the revision of documentation and quality assurance programs but also the establishment of governance mechanisms that ensure board and senior management awareness of their expanded responsibilities (IIA, 2024; Protiviti, 2025).

Technology integration represents a central pillar of adaptation. While previous standards merely encouraged the use of technology, the 2024 Standards elevate it to a strategic expectation. Chief Audit Executives (CAEs) are now required to incorporate technology deployment, covering acquisition, maintenance, staffing, and training, into their strategic plans, thereby embedding digital tools as essential enablers of audit quality and cross-organizational collaboration (Chambers & O'Reilly, 2024).

Equally significant is the requirement for strategic planning within internal audit functions. Principle 9 of Domain IV mandates that audit units adopt a formal planning process that sets a clear vision, measurable objectives, and performance indicators supported by capable talent and optimized processes. This repositions the internal audit function as a strategic advisor contributing to governance and value creation, rather than a unit focused solely on compliance (IIA Quality Services, 2024).

To achieve effective alignment, internal audit departments must first conduct gap assessments to evaluate their current state against the new requirements, followed by the design of structured implementation roadmaps with defined milestones and communication strategies (Miller & Chambers, 2024). The introduction of Topical Requirements, such as those addressing cybersecurity, fraud, and operational risks, further underscores the importance of readiness assessments, targeted training, and the adoption of advanced methodologies and technologies to ensure consistency in high-risk domains (Levy, 2025).

Scholars emphasize that such adaptation cannot be achieved without active board engagement, stakeholder alignment, and cultural transformation within organizations (Lenz & O'Regan, 2024). This involves reinforcing the independence of the audit function, embedding governance and sustainability values, and institutionalizing mechanisms of continuous quality assurance, including both self-assessment and external evaluation (Guttenplan & Connor, 2024). In contexts where audit maturity is still developing, such as in many emerging economies, flexibility in implementation timelines may be essential to build robust infrastructure before full compliance can be achieved (IFAC, 2016).

In sum, the adaptation required by the 2024 Standards is multidimensional: professional upskilling, institutional restructuring, technological integration, and strategic repositioning. Only through this holistic transformation can organizations leverage the full potential of the new framework to enhance credibility, strengthen governance, and sustain long-term value creation.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND PROFESSIONAL DEBATES ON THE 2024 STANDARDS

Although the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards introduced by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) have been widely welcomed as streamlined, principle-based, and responsive to evolving audit environments, they have also sparked extensive professional and academic debate concerning their philosophical depth, practical applicability, and long-term implications.

At the philosophical level, several scholars argue that the revision reflects a cautious, technocratic approach rather than a bold, innovative transformation. Lenz and McNamee (2024) contend that the IIA missed an opportunity to embed moral leadership and ethical autonomy within the framework, thereby risking a model of auditing that remains overly procedural and reactive. Similar concerns are raised by Lenz and Jeppesen (2022), who argue that auditing continues to be excessively compliance-driven, narrowly focused on risk, control, and assurance. They emphasize the importance of cultivating moral courage and adaptive judgment, stressing that auditing should be about "asking the right questions, even when it is uncomfortable." Lenz and O'Regan (2024) reinforce this criticism by highlighting the committee-driven, technocratic revision process, which they argue prioritized clarity and structural organization over ethical substance. From their perspective, reorganizing the standards under fifteen guiding principles represents "old wine in new bottles," reframing rather than transforming the conceptual underpinnings of the profession.

Beyond philosophical critiques, practical concerns have emerged regarding implementation feasibility. IIA Quality Services (2024) underscores the persistent gap between strategic planning requirements and their operationalization, noting that many audit functions either lack formal plans or fail to embed them effectively. Grant Thornton (2024) similarly cautions that full compliance with the new standards may not be immediately realistic, particularly for smaller or resource-constrained audit functions. Public feedback during the exposure draft process also expressed unease with the standards' prescriptive tone, especially the heavy reliance on "must" and the lack of clarity surrounding external quality assessments and applicability to smaller or public-sector functions (IIA, 2023).

Balanced perspectives acknowledge both the opportunities and risks inherent in the new framework. Protiviti (2025) highlights the philosophical shift from "conformance to performance," whereby internal audit functions are expected to demonstrate measurable strategic impact through planning, performance objectives, and stakeholder engagement. Parlak (2025) concurs that the 2024 Standards introduce meaningful advancements by embedding agility, adaptability, and technological integration into internal auditing. However, he warns that less mature or smaller audit units may struggle to meet these heightened expectations without deliberate planning, dialogue, and capacity-building support.

Placing these debates in a broader historical context, Muslim and Ramdani (2024) emphasize that internal auditing has continually adapted to socio-economic and technological changes, with the 2024 reforms representing part of this trajectory. Lenz and Enslin (2025) present a more visionary metaphor, describing auditors as "Gardeners of Governance" who should cultivate ethical maturity, organizational empathy, and environmental stewardship, an approach that contrasts with the rules-based orientation of the current standards.

In conclusion, the debates surrounding the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards reveal a persistent tension between structural enhancements and the perceived lack of deeper philosophical transformation. While the revisions have undoubtedly improved clarity, usability, and governance alignment, critics argue that the framework remains technocratic, procedural, and compliance-oriented. This divergence of perspectives underscores that the ultimate impact of the 2024 Standards will depend less on their textual provisions and more on how organizations, audit leaders, and practitioners interpret, contextualize, and operationalize them. Ultimately, the standards should be seen not as an endpoint but as a starting point for strengthening professional judgment, ethical agency, and adaptability, elements that will determine whether the reforms achieve their intended transformative role in shaping the future of internal auditing.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK OF THE 2024 STANDARDS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The implementation of the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards in developing countries presents both strategic opportunities and substantial challenges. The IIA (2024) emphasizes that one of the key goals of these standards is to unify practice globally while ensuring sufficient flexibility for adaptation to local contexts, a consideration of particular relevance in resource-constrained environments. By integrating the elements of the IPPF into a single cohesive framework, the new standards seek to facilitate wider adoption and strengthen audit effectiveness worldwide. For developing countries, this consolidation offers a chance to build stronger audit practices without navigating multiple fragmented requirements, though success will ultimately depend on gradual adaptation, regulatory support, and sustained investment in training and capacity building.

The 2024 revisions introduce a forward-looking, principle-based approach that emphasizes sustainability, governance, and technology integration (Protiviti, 2025). This orientation creates new opportunities for developing economies to position internal auditing as a strategic partner that enhances value. However, the successful adoption of these standards will require significant investment in technology, specialized training, and stakeholder engagement, as well as phased implementation tailored to local realities. As IIA Quality Services (2024) stresses, strategic internal audit planning assumes robust talent, mature processes, and access to modern technologies, conditions that are not always present in developing contexts.

At the same time, several scholars caution that globalized standards may not automatically translate into effective practice across diverse institutional landscapes. Lenz and Jeppesen (2022) argue that transformation requires more than importing external frameworks, emphasizing the need for contextual sensitivity, internal ownership, and ethical commitment. Lenz and McNamee (2024) add that the prescriptive structure of the standards risks rigidity in environments where institutional capacity and independence are limited. Lenz and O'Regan (2024) similarly note that the standards presuppose organizational maturity, board engagement, and institutional autonomy, introducing a "compliance paradox" in many developing countries where alignment may appear desirable but is practically unattainable without systemic reform.

From a practical standpoint, the IIA (2023) emphasizes that although the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards offer a unified and modernized framework, their implementation in developing countries faces major institutional and professional challenges. The new standards' focus on performance excellence, accountability, and the expanded role of boards and audit committees assumes a level of governance maturity, resource availability, and professional capacity that may be lacking in many developing contexts, where audit functions often suffer from limited independence, weak institutional support, and inadequate training. In line with this, Grant Thornton (2024) observes that smaller or resource-constrained audit functions, particularly in public sector entities and emerging economies, may struggle to comply fully with all requirements. The report emphasizes that "compliance should be viewed as a progressive continuum rather than a binary concept," advocating for a phased implementation, contextual flexibility, and ongoing investment in capacity building and technology adoption to achieve progressive alignment with the new standards.

Similarly, Levy (2025) highlights that resistance to change, limited resources, and knowledge gaps are among the most pressing barriers to the adoption of the 2024 Standards. To overcome these challenges, Levy emphasizes the importance of demonstrating the tangible value of alignment with the new IPPF, particularly in enhancing stakeholder confidence, organizational resilience, and governance credibility. He further recommends prioritizing high-risk areas for implementation, leveraging scalable technological tools, and investing in structured professional development programs focused on ESG, data analytics, and emerging technologies. As Levy concludes, the 2024 IPPF evolution represents more than a technical revision; it is a call to action for internal auditors to adapt, innovate, and lead transformation across their organizations with confidence and foresight (Levy, 2025).

In this regard, Sandlana and Newsome (2024) emphasize that the transition to the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards requires a structured approach that includes gap analysis, stakeholder engagement, and a clear implementation roadmap. They note that many organizations, particularly in developing economies, will need to realign their audit charters, update internal methodologies, and invest in extensive training programs to meet the new quality and performance expectations. The authors further highlight that smaller or resource-constrained entities may struggle with the depth of the reforms, underscoring the importance of progressive implementation supported by strong governance commitment and professional development initiatives.

Beyond structural and governance limitations, technological capacity remains a pressing issue. As Alwadie (2024) highlights, many developing countries lag in adopting IT-based auditing tools and often rely on imported technologies without adequate safeguards, exposing them to risks such as cybersecurity breaches and IT-related fraud. Overcoming these challenges requires investment not only in technology infrastructure but also in long-term strategies for science, innovation, and education reform, drawing lessons from countries such as China and India that have embedded technology within their broader development agendas.

Historical reflections underscore these disparities. The IFAC (2016) report on the future of auditing highlights the gap between developed and developing countries in terms of audit profession maturity. While developed economies are advancing toward value-added audit reporting, developing countries remain focused on consolidating basic standards and strengthening traditional financial auditing. In such contexts, internal audit is still viewed primarily as a mechanism for building trust and enhancing the investment climate, rather than as a fully strategic partner. This reinforces the importance of gradual, context-sensitive approaches in applying the 2024 standards.

In conclusion, while the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards provide a unified, principle-driven framework for strengthening audit practices globally, their implementation in developing countries will hinge on localized adaptation, progressive capacity building, and strong institutional support. Without sustained investment in training, governance reform, and technological infrastructure, full compliance may remain aspirational. Nevertheless, if carefully phased and contextually grounded, these standards hold the potential to elevate internal audit functions in developing economies from compliance enforcers to strategic contributors of governance, risk management, and long-term value creation.

CONCLUSION

The transition from the 2017 International Professional Practices Framework to the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards represents a significant milestone in the evolution of the internal auditing profession. This study has demonstrated that the 2024 Standards go beyond a technical revision by introducing a unified, principle-based framework that repositions internal audit as a strategic contributor to governance, risk management, and organizational value creation. Through a comparative documentary analysis, the study highlights how the new standards consolidate previously fragmented elements, strengthen governance and quality expectations, and embed emerging priorities such as digital transformation, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the internal auditing literature by providing a critical synthesis of the conceptual and philosophical evolution of global internal audit standards. It advances existing debates by interpreting the 2024 Standards not merely as a regulatory update, but as part of a broader shift toward outcome-oriented and value-driven auditing. By integrating insights from normative frameworks, professional practice reports, and peer-reviewed research, the study offers an interpretive framework for understanding how global standards interact with institutional maturity and contextual constraints, particularly in developing economies.

From a practical standpoint, the findings generate important implications for Chief Audit Executives (CAEs), regulators, and policymakers. While the 2024 Standards aim to enhance consistency, credibility, and strategic alignment, their prescriptive requirements assume a level of governance maturity, technological readiness, and professional capacity that may not yet exist in many developing-country contexts. The study underscores that effective implementation will depend on localized adaptation, phased adoption strategies, capacity building, and sustained engagement by boards and senior management. Rather than viewing compliance as a binary outcome, organizations in developing economies may need to approach alignment with the standards as a progressive process, balancing global expectations with local institutional realities.

At the same time, this study acknowledges several limitations. As a documentary-based analysis, it does not incorporate primary empirical evidence on how organizations operationalize the 2024 Standards in practice. Moreover, developing countries are treated as a broad analytical category, without explicit differentiation by region, sector, or regulatory environment. These limitations do not diminish the conceptual contributions of the study but highlight important avenues for further research.

Future research could build on these findings in several directions. Empirical studies examining the early implementation of the 2024 Standards across different regions, sectors, and levels of audit maturity would provide valuable evidence on practical challenges and success factors. Comparative regional analyses could explore how governance structures and regulatory frameworks shape standard adoption in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. In addition, further research is needed on the impact of increased prescriptiveness on internal audit effectiveness, professional judgment, and innovation, as well as on the role of digitalization, data analytics, and artificial intelligence in reshaping internal audit practices under the new framework.

In conclusion, the 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards represent both continuity and change: continuity in their reaffirmation of independence, assurance, and governance principles, and change in their expanded emphasis on strategic value, technology, and sustainability. Their ultimate impact will depend not only on formal adoption but on how organizations interpret, contextualize, and internalize their principles. For developing countries in particular, the challenge lies in transforming the standards from formal requirements into living practices that strengthen governance, enhance risk resilience, and support sustainable value creation.

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