

**IPPF – Practice Guide**

**MEASURING  
INTERNAL AUDIT  
EFFECTIVENESS  
AND EFFICIENCY**

**DECEMBER 2010**

## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction .....	1
Defining Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency .....	2
Internal and External Stakeholders .....	3
Internal Audit Performance Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency .....	4
• Establishing the Performance Measurement Process .....	4
• Categories of Performance Information for Internal Auditing.....	5
• Characteristics of Performance Measures: Quantitative vs. Qualitative .....	6
• Specific Measures .....	6
Monitor and Reporting Results.....	7
Appendix A: Reference Material .....	8
Appendix B: Questions that Should be Answered to Adequately Gauge and Provide to Varied Stakeholders Reasonable Assurance of Internal Audit Quality .....	9
Appendix C: Examples of Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency Metrics.....	10
Appendix D: Example of Reporting Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency Dashboard.....	13
Appendix E: Example of Customer Survey Sent After Internal Audit is Completed.....	14
Authors / Reviewers and Contributors.....	16

## Executive Summary

Internal auditing plays a critical role in the governance and operation of an organization. When effectively implemented, operated, and managed, it is an important element in helping an organization achieve its objectives. Organizations that effectively use internal auditing are better able to identify business risks and process and system inefficiencies, take appropriate corrective action, and ultimately support continuous improvement. To maintain and enhance internal auditing's credibility; however, its effectiveness and efficiency must be monitored.

Establishing performance measures is critical in determining if an audit activity is meeting its goals and objectives, consistent with the highest quality practices and standards. This practice guide provides guidance to internal audit activities on measuring their effectiveness and efficiency and the level of customer service they provide to stakeholders.

The first step is to identify key performance measures for activities that stakeholders believe add value and improve the organization's operations. Examples of stakeholders include the board, executive management, external government bodies and regulators, the external auditor, as well as the internal audit activity itself.

Sources to consider when identifying key performance effectiveness and efficiency measurements of the internal audit activity include The IIA's International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), the internal audit charter and mission, applicable laws and regulations, and audit strategies and plans.

Effectiveness and efficiency measurements can be quantitative and qualitative. In addition to compliance with The IIA's International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards), audit activity performance measures may include:

- Level of contribution to the improvement of risk management, control, and governance processes.
- Achievement of key goals and objectives.
- Evaluation of progress against audit activity plan.
- Improvement in staff productivity.
- Increase in efficiency of the audit process.
- Increase in number of action plans for process improvements.
- Adequacy of engagement planning and supervision.
- Effectiveness in meeting stakeholders' needs.
- Results of quality assurance assessments and internal audit activity's quality improvement programs.
- Effectiveness in conducting the audit.
- Clarity of communications with the audit client (often referred to as "auditee") and the board.

Once key effectiveness and efficiency measurements and targets have been identified, a monitoring process and a method of reporting to stakeholders should be established (e.g., format, timing, and metrics). It is important for the internal audit activity to obtain feedback from key stakeholders on audit effectiveness and make adjustments where needed.

## Introduction

The IIA's International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) defines internal auditing as "an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes."

The following *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards)* are relevant to measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal audit activity.

### 1300 – Quality Assurance and Improvement Program

The chief audit executive must develop and maintain a quality assurance and improvement program that covers all aspects of the internal audit activity.

#### Interpretation:

*A quality assurance and improvement program is designed to enable an evaluation of the internal audit activity's conformance with the Definition of Internal Auditing and the Standards and an evaluation of whether internal auditors apply the Code of Ethics. The program also assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal audit activity and identifies opportunities for improvement.*

### 1310 – Requirements of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Program

The quality assurance and improvement program must include both internal and external assessments.

#### 1311 – Internal Assessments

Internal assessments must include:

- Ongoing monitoring of the performance of the internal audit activity; and
- Periodic reviews performed through self-assessment or by other persons within the organization with sufficient knowledge of internal audit practices.

#### 1312 – External Assessments

External assessments must be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent reviewer or review team from outside the organization. The chief audit executive must discuss with the board:

- The need for more frequent external assessments; and
- The qualifications and independence of the external reviewer or review team, including any potential conflict of interest.

Additional guidance on applying the *Standards* is found in:

- Practice Advisory 1300-1: Quality Assurance and Improvement Program.
- Practice Advisory 1310-1: Requirements of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Program.
- Practice Advisory 1311-1: Internal Assessments.
- Practice Advisory 1312-1: External Assessments.

This practice guide suggests using the analysis of performance measures as an element in conducting these internal/external reviews. It provides examples to be considered when measuring an internal audit department's effectiveness and efficiency for various internal and external customers. The examples should not be considered the only factors to use. Also see Appendix A for additional reference material on this topic.

## Defining Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency

A general description of *effectiveness* and *efficiency* is “the degree (including quality) to which established objectives are achieved.” The same description can be used for *internal audit effectiveness and efficiency*. Internal auditing should establish performance metrics and related measurement criterion appropriate to its environment/organization to measure the degree (including quality) of achievement of objectives for which the internal audit activity is established. (See Appendix B for examples of questions that could help determine internal audit quality.) Internal audit effectiveness and efficiency should be monitored and assessed periodically as part of the internal audit process.

## Internal and External Stakeholders

Typically, the key stakeholders for the internal audit activity are divided into internal and external.

Internal stakeholders may include:

- Board of directors (or a committee such as the audit committee).
- Senior management.
- Operations and support management.
- Internal auditors.

External stakeholders may include:

- Regulatory bodies and standard setters.
- External auditors.
- Third-party vendors.
- Third-party customers.

The internal audit activity should identify all relevant stakeholders and their respective interests in the work of or support from the internal audit activity and should solicit feedback from each of these stakeholders as appropriate. Specific feedback will provide insight into:

- The purpose and responsibility of internal auditing and whether that is understood by different levels within the organization.
- Adequacy of internal audit independence and objectivity.
- Target deliverables and expectations of the internal audit activity.
- Current or planned business priorities and correlation of those with the activity's scope, as appropriate.
- Current shortcomings, if any, of the internal audit activity.

- Quality and sufficiency of communication from the activity.
- Current level of satisfaction, or lack thereof, with the frequency and nature of engagements planned and performed.
- Current level of satisfaction, or lack thereof, with the internal audit activity's resources.
- Changing needs of business, related risks, and ability of internal auditing to provide assurance and consulting services.

Considerations in identifying relevant stakeholders and their satisfaction include:

- The extent of regulation of the organization and internal audit activity.
- Internal auditing's relationship with key internal and external stakeholders and establishment of function expectations and objectives with these groups.
- Consideration of the authority and relevancy of the stakeholder to the internal audit activity.
- The activity's internal feedback from key individuals, groups, or standard setters that will help further optimize the activity's quality, scope, and effectiveness.
- The nature of the organization (e.g., public or privately held and levels of management/management hierarchies).
- Types of engagements performed by the internal audit activity.
- Specific stakeholders identified within the internal audit activity's charter.
- Applicable content of the board's charter.

## Internal Audit Performance Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency

Internal auditing must effectively demonstrate its value as a key component of the organization’s governance framework. The audit activity can lead by example with strong, relevant, and reliable performance measures.

### Establishing the Performance Measurement Process

To create effective performance measures, the chief audit executive (CAE) needs to establish a process for:

- Identifying critical performance categories such as stakeholder satisfaction, internal audit processes, and innovation and capabilities.
- Identifying performance category strategies and measurements. Strategies should be pursued in compliance with IIA Standards, other applicable professional standards, and applicable laws and regulations and should ensure stakeholder satisfaction. The use of performance measures can be an element of the internal audit activity’s internal assessment process to comply with The IIA’s Standards.
- Routinely monitoring, analyzing, and reporting performance measures.

The process could follow these types of steps:

<b>Define Internal Audit Effectiveness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review relevant IPPF guidance including Standards.</li> <li>• Review the strategic plans of the internal audit activity and organization.</li> <li>• Review the board, audit committee, and internal audit activity charters.</li> <li>• Assess basic, expected, and targeted/preferred internal audit activity deliverables.</li> <li>• Formulate an initial definition of internal audit effectiveness and efficiency.</li> <li>• Define agreement from key stakeholders of the definition of effectiveness and efficiency.</li> </ul>
▼
<b>Identify Key Internal and External Stakeholders</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine key internal and external stakeholders for the activity and organization.</li> <li>• Determine who directly or indirectly relies upon the internal audit activity’s work.</li> <li>• Determine who benefits, directly or indirectly, from the internal audit activity’s work.</li> <li>• Consider who supports the internal audit activity.</li> </ul>
▼
<b>Develop Measurements of Internal Audit Effectiveness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand key stakeholders’ expectations of the internal audit activity.</li> <li>• Understand what internal audit attributes, deliverables, and capabilities key stakeholders value and related shortcomings or advancements in these areas.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop measurement tools such as a balanced scorecard to document relevant attributes of effectiveness and efficiency and related performance against these.</li> <li>• Agree upon effectiveness and efficiency metrics with key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
▼
<b>Monitoring and Reporting Results</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an agreed upon format and frequency for reporting that considers the organization’s size, nature, and governance structure.</li> <li>• Establish a periodic review of such monitoring and reporting to ensure relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness.</li> <li>• Use the results of reporting to shape and guide internal audit activities.</li> <li>• Align internal audit activities to the defined measures of internal audit effectiveness and efficiency.</li> </ul>

### Categories of Performance Information for Internal Auditing

The internal audit activity should identify key performance measurement categories such as stakeholder satisfaction, audit processes, and internal audit innovation and capabilities. Audit processes could include risk assessment, planning, and audit methodologies. Innovation and capabilities could include effective use of technology, training, and industry knowledge.

When developing performance measures, the internal audit activity should consider:

- How effective are the performance measures linked to the internal audit activity’s strategy?
- Do performance measures include both leading and lagging indicators?
- Do performance measures reflect the mandate and role of the activity?
- How effectively are performance measures used for continuous improvement?

Performance metrics can be established along dimensions, interests, and perspectives of a variety of key stakeholders. Each perspective would include related measures.



Source: Adapted from A Balanced Scorecard Framework for Internal Auditing Departments, by Mark Frigo, copyright The IIA Research Foundation, Altamonte Springs, FL, 2002 used with permission.

## Characteristics of Performance Measures: Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Both quantitative and qualitative metrics are important in demonstrating an internal audit activity's performance to key stakeholders, and both can be benchmarked against accepted standards, prior performance, and/or agreed-upon expectations.

- Quantitative performance metrics are often based on existing or obtainable data and are easily understood (e.g., percentage of completed vs. planned audits). They often require less effort to collect and are readily comparable to the same metrics in other organizations.
- Qualitative metrics are often based on the collection of unique information through more time intensive methods such as survey research or interviews. They offer a broad view of performance on a range of topics that can provide depth to quantitative metrics.

## Specific Measures

In addition to compliance with the Standards, internal auditing's performance measurement objectives may include: level of contribution to the improvement of risk management and control and governance processes; achievement of key goals and objectives assigned; evaluation of progress against audit plan; staff productivity; cost-efficiency of the audit process, number of action plans for process improvements; effectiveness in meeting the needs of stakeholders; and the sufficiency of quality assurance reviews.

Following is an example of a balanced scorecard type approach that an internal audit activity could use.

Each of these measures would need to be carefully and fully defined so they could be used in a consistent, transparent, and sustainable manner.



## Monitoring and Reporting Results

Internal auditing's effectiveness and efficiency should be reported to its stakeholders periodically. The CAE should obtain feedback from key stakeholders on internal auditing's effectiveness and efficiency in reporting (e.g., format, timing, metrics) and make efforts to align reporting to their needs.

**Contents:** What should be reported varies based on stakeholder requirements and the organization's specific needs. A good practice is to survey key stakeholders to determine their needs and expectations, which then helps define the criteria upon which internal auditing should be measured (see Appendix E, Survey Example). Appendix C provides examples of effectiveness and efficiency measurement criterion.

**Type of reporting:** The CAE should evaluate stakeholders to whom reporting is required and customize the reporting package to their individual needs.

**Frequency:** The frequency of reporting should be based on stakeholder needs. Quarterly reporting on internal audit effectiveness and efficiency could be a good starting point.

**Format:** Standards for reporting internal audit effectiveness and efficiency should be similar to standards followed for reporting other audit-related information. There are many formats for reporting, including Word, PowerPoint, dashboards based on automated tools, and e-mail. The chosen format should be tailored to meet stakeholders' specific needs. For example, reporting to the board might be less frequent and in less detail to meet its needs in overseeing the activities of internal auditing. Reporting to management would likely be much more detailed. Refer to Appendix D for a dashboard reporting example.

Consistent processes are needed for gathering, summarizing, and analyzing measurement data. Responsibility for performing and validating measurement data should be established similar to any other audit engagement.

The CAE may consider periodic benchmarking of its current metrics and criteria with those being used by peer organizations. This can help ensure current and appropriate criteria are in place for measuring internal auditing's effectiveness and efficiency.

## Appendix A: Reference Material

*Quality Assessment Manual*, by The IIA (IIA Research Foundation, 2009).

The IIA's Global Auditing Information Network (GAIN), which enables organizations to compare their audit department's size, experience, expertise, and other metrics against the aggregated averages of similar-sized organizations in their industry.

*A Balanced Scorecard Framework for Internal Auditing Departments*, by Mark Frigo (IIA Research Foundation, 2002).

*Internal Auditing: Assurance & Consulting Services*, by Kurt Reding, Paul Sobel, Urton Anderson, Michael Head, Sridhar Ramamoorti, Mark Salamasick, and Chris Riddle (IIA Research Foundation, 2007).

*Essentials: An Internal Audit Operations Manual*, by Archie Thomas (IIA Research Foundation, 2009).

*Performance Auditing: A Measurement Approach*, by Ronell Raaum and Stephen Morgan (IIA Research Foundation, 2009).

*Best Practices: Value-Added Approaches of Four Innovative Auditing Departments*, by James Roth (IIA Research Foundation, 2000).

*Internal Audit Effectiveness: Pushing the Right Buttons*, by David Lukeman (IIA Midlands District Society – PriceWaterhouseCoopers, March 21, 2007).

## Appendix B:

### Questions that Should be Answered to Adequately Gauge and Provide to Varied Stakeholders Reasonable Assurance of Internal Audit Quality

Source: [www.theiia.org/guidance/quality](http://www.theiia.org/guidance/quality). Under *Advocacy*, click on *The Audit Committee: Internal Audit Oversight*

1. Does the internal audit activity have a quality assurance and improvement program?
2. Has the activity performed its work in accordance with its charter?
3. Do the internal auditors adhere to The IIA's Code of Ethics?
4. Are internal audits conducted in conformance with The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing?
5. Does the activity operate effectively and efficiently?
6. Is the staff size adequate?
7. Are the existing skill sets appropriate?
8. Does the activity contribute to the improvement of organizational operations, and is it perceived by stakeholders to add value?
9. Does the activity have the tools and other resources it needs?
10. Does the activity engage in ongoing internal reviews and analysis of supervision, documentation, policies, and procedures?
11. Does the activity engage in periodic reviews that include customer surveys, risk assessments, work-paper reviews, analysis of performance metrics, and best-practice benchmarking?
12. Do members of the team participate in professional development training?
13. Have team members acquired professional designations that demonstrate their competency?
14. Has the internal audit activity obtained an independent external quality assessment within the past five years?

## Appendix C:

### Examples of Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency Metrics

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CATEGORY	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY	MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS
<b>Basic Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of audits scheduled.</li> <li>• Number of audit completed.</li> <li>• Timeliness of performance feedback.</li> <li>• Staff utilization – direct vs. indirect time.</li> <li>• Completed audits per auditor.</li> <li>• Actual hours vs. budgeted hours.</li> <li>• Audit report cycle time: elapsed time from opening conference to fieldwork completion and elapse time from fieldwork completion to final report.</li> <li>• Number of internal audit reports issued vs. planned internal audits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client satisfaction ratings.</li> <li>• Staff satisfaction ratings.</li> <li>• Number of significant audit findings.</li> <li>• Percent of recommendations implemented.</li> <li>• Number of repeat findings.</li> <li>• Number of open audit findings past planned corrective action date.</li> <li>• Number of unsatisfactory internal audit opinions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training/CPE hours.</li> <li>• Staff turnover/retention.</li> </ul>
<b>Service to Stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsiveness to special requests.</li> <li>• Average response time to management request.</li> <li>• Number of control self-assessment (CSA) sessions conducted.</li> <li>• Number of auditors per 1,000 employees.</li> <li>• Number of auditors per \$1 million of revenue/\$1 million of assets.</li> <li>• Completed vs. planned audits.</li> <li>• Cost savings as a percentage of department budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of high quality service.</li> <li>• Management of auditee expectations.</li> <li>• Building strong relationships.</li> <li>• Number of management requests.</li> <li>• Number of committees and task forces audit is involved in.</li> <li>• Amount of identified cost savings and percent of recoveries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client survey scores (see example survey letter in Appendix E).</li> <li>• Senior management survey scores.</li> <li>• Audit committee survey scores.</li> <li>• Number of positive and negative feedback about audits/auditors.</li> </ul>

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CATEGORY	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY	MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS
<b>Knowledge of Business</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying that knowledge to help solve complex client issues.</li> <li>• Development of deep industry knowledge.</li> <li>• Developing and contributing best practices, emerging issues, and industry trends.</li> <li>• Best practices benchmarked.</li> </ul>	
<b>Technical Development</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of relevant technical knowledge:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal auditing.</li> <li>• Accounting.</li> <li>• Regulatory.</li> <li>• Business.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Compliance with audit methodology set.</li> </ul>	
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of technology in audits.</li> <li>• Creativity and efficiency.</li> <li>• Number of internal audit improvement teams and time spent (by team).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced audit process.</li> <li>• Number of best practices identified and communicated within an organization or internal audit activity.</li> <li>• Number of hours spent in industry or other specialized training.</li> <li>• Involvement in professional organizations (e.g., IIA, auditor roundtables).</li> <li>• Thought leadership.</li> </ul>	

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CATEGORY	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY	MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS	MEASURES OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS
<p><b>People Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of coaching sessions in a year.</li> <li>• Tracking of development plan (plan vs. actual).</li> <li>• Achievement of minimum training hours required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average months in position.</li> <li>• Number of staff rotations in and out of the internal audit activity.</li> <li>• Average years of audit experience.</li> <li>• Percent of auditors with professional certifications.</li> <li>• Percent of auditors with advanced degrees.</li> <li>• Training hours per auditor.</li> <li>• Auditor turnover.</li> <li>• Number/percent of auditors transferred/promoted to other functions in the organization vs. the number that left the company.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance in recruiting by team members (participation in review of resume, interview etc.).</li> </ul>

## Appendix D:

### Example of Reporting Internal Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency Dashboard

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES						
Area	Measure	Target	Actual			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Budget management.	Budget vs. actual.					
Delivering the annual audit plan.	Percent of audit plan delivered during the year.					
CUSTOMER SERVICES						
Area	Measure	Target	Actual			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number/types of ad-hoc requests received for nonroutine work.	Record to be kept of ad-hoc nonroutine requests by the management.					
STAFF SATISFACTION AND DEVELOPMENT						
Area	Measure	Target	Actual			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Staff training hours/year.	Actual training hours vs. budget.					
Staffing plan (hiring).	Plan vs. actual hired.					
AUDIT DELIVERY/EFFICIENCY						
Area	Measure	Target	Actual			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Audit reviews completed within budget and to agreed target date.	Budget vs. actual.					
Revise the audit methodology.	Plan vs. actual revision.					
RELATIONSHIP WITH THIRD PARTIES						
Area	Measure	Target	Actual			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Use of subject matter experts. (SMEs)	Use of SMEs for specialized work.					

## Appendix E:

### Example of Customer Survey Sent After Internal Audit is Completed

Re: Internal Audit Feedback Survey

Dear XXXXX:

We recently performed an internal audit in your area. To continue to improve the level of service we provide our customers, we would appreciate your candid feedback on the attached Internal Audit Feedback Survey. We value the opinions of our clients and stakeholders and will use your feedback to continually evaluate the quality of our audit services. Please send the completed survey back to me by (date).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

CAE or Auditor

#### INTERNAL AUDIT FEEDBACK SURVEY

AUDIT REPORT TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_

The rating scale provided below is from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

	<b>AUDIT QUALITY</b>	<b>5 Strongly Agree</b>	<b>4 Agree</b>	<b>3 Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>1 Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Done</b>
1	Opening conference was held and all questions/comments were adequately addressed.						
2	The final audit objectives and scope were agreed to.						

3	The audit team was knowledgeable about your business.						
4	The audit was completed within the timeframe communicated.						
5	The audit was conducted efficiently and effectively with minimal disruption to your business.						
6	The audit was conducted in a professional and courteous manner.						
7	The audit team kept you informed of key issues throughout the audit.						
8	All of your key business concerns/risks were addressed during the audit.						
9	The closing conference allowed both sides to adequately discuss and address all comments.						
10	The audit report was accurate and findings clearly communicated.						
11	The audit report fairly reflected your team's comments and corrective action.						
12	The overall audit provided value to your area.						

Feel free to comment on any of the above questions.

What suggestions do you have to improve future audit quality?

Thank you for completing the above survey! Please return by (Date).

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## About the Institute

Established in 1941, The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) is an international professional association with global headquarters in Altamonte Springs, Fla., USA. The IIA is the internal audit profession's global voice, recognized authority, acknowledged leader, chief advocate, and principal educator.

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Practice Guides embody an IIA statement to assist a wide range of interested parties, including those not in the internal audit profession, in understanding significant governance, risk, or control issues and in delineating the related roles and responsibilities of internal auditors on a significant issue. Practice Guides are part of The IIA's International Professional Practices Framework. As part of the Strongly Recommended category of guidance, compliance is not mandatory, but it is strongly recommended and the guidance is endorsed by The IIA through formal review and approval process. For other authoritative guidance materials provided by The IIA please visit our Web site, [www.theiia.org/guidance](http://www.theiia.org/guidance).

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