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# Algeria's Public Accounting Reform and Its Convergence with IPSAS Principles: A Legal and Institutional Analysis of Law No. 23-07

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## Abstract

Public sector accounting reforms have become a central component of contemporary public financial management strategies aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of public resource management. In this context, the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) have emerged as a major international reference framework for modernizing governmental accounting systems. Algeria has recently undertaken a significant transformation of its public financial governance framework through the adoption of Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws and Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules. This article examines the extent to which Algeria's public accounting reform converges with IPSAS principles and analyses the legal and institutional factors influencing its implementation.

The study adopts a qualitative doctrinal legal methodology combined with comparative institutional analysis. It examines the normative foundations of Law No. 23-07 and assesses its alignment with key IPSAS orientations, particularly regarding accrual-based accounting, financial reporting, transparency, accountability, and the recognition of the economic dimension of public operations.

The findings demonstrate that Algeria's reform represents a significant shift from a traditional compliance-oriented accounting model toward a more governance-based framework centred on the production of reliable financial information and improved public sector management. However, the analysis also reveals that convergence with IPSAS remains progressive rather than complete, as effective implementation depends on institutional capacities, professional expertise, digital transformation, and administrative adaptation.

This article contributes to the literature on public sector accounting reform by providing an institutional and legal analysis of the Algerian experience, which remains insufficiently explored in international research. It highlights that the success of IPSAS-oriented reforms depends not only on the adoption of international principles but also on the ability of national institutions to translate these principles into effective administrative practices.

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**Keywords:** Public Sector Accounting; International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS); Public Financial Management Reform; Accounting Modernization; Financial Transparency; Institutional Change; Algeria.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, public sector accounting has undergone profound transformations as governments worldwide have sought to modernize public financial management systems, enhance fiscal transparency, and strengthen accountability mechanisms. These transformations have been driven by the growing recognition that traditional public accounting systems, primarily focused on budgetary compliance and legal control, provide limited information regarding the economic substance of public operations, the sustainability of public finances, and the effectiveness of public resource allocation.

In this context, international accounting reforms have increasingly emphasized the transition from cash-based and compliance-oriented accounting models toward more comprehensive frameworks based on accrual accounting, financial reporting quality, and performance-oriented governance. Among the most influential international initiatives, the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) have emerged as a major reference framework for improving public sector financial reporting and promoting greater comparability, transparency, and accountability across governmental entities (IPSASB, 2023).

The adoption or adaptation of IPSAS principles has become an important component of public financial management reforms, particularly in countries seeking to strengthen institutional governance and align their financial systems with international standards. However, international experiences demonstrate that the implementation of IPSAS is not merely a technical accounting process; rather, it represents a complex institutional transformation requiring adjustments in legal frameworks, administrative structures, professional capacities, and information systems (Christiaens et al., 2015; Polzer et al., 2022).

Within this global context, Algeria has undertaken a significant reform of its public financial management system through the adoption of Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws and Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules. These reforms reflect the country's ambition to modernize its public financial governance framework by introducing new principles related to performance-based budgeting, financial transparency, and the modernization of public accounting practices.

Law No. 23-07 represents a particularly important stage in this transformation because it redefines the role of public accounting beyond its traditional function of controlling the regularity of financial operations. The new legal framework seeks to establish accounting as a tool for producing reliable financial information capable of supporting decision-making, strengthening accountability, and improving the management of public resources.

However, the transition toward a modern public accounting system raises several questions regarding the extent to which the Algerian reform is effectively aligned with international accounting developments, particularly IPSAS principles. While the reform introduces several concepts consistent with international trends, the specific institutional and legal context of Algeria raises important issues concerning the adaptation, implementation, and operational effectiveness of these principles.

**Research Problem and Research Gap**

Despite the increasing international literature on public sector accounting reforms and IPSAS implementation, existing research has mainly focused on countries that have formally adopted IPSAS or have undergone advanced public management reforms, particularly in European, Latin American, and Anglo-Saxon contexts (Brusca et al., 2016; Oulasvirta, 2014). These studies have provided valuable insights into the benefits and challenges associated with international accounting harmonization.

Nevertheless, limited attention has been devoted to countries characterized by a centralized administrative tradition and a legalistic approach to public financial management, particularly in the North African context. In such environments, the relationship between international accounting standards and domestic legal-institutional frameworks remains insufficiently explored.

Furthermore, existing studies often analyze IPSAS adoption from a technical accounting perspective, focusing on issues such as accrual accounting, financial reporting, and standard implementation. However, fewer studies examine public accounting reform as an institutional transformation process involving the interaction between international norms, national legislation, administrative culture, and organizational capacities.

This creates a significant research gap regarding the Algerian experience, particularly following the adoption of Law No. 23-07. Although this law constitutes a major reform of public accounting, academic research remains limited regarding its degree of convergence with IPSAS principles and the institutional conditions necessary for its effective implementation.

Therefore, this article seeks to address this gap by examining Algeria's public accounting reform through a legal and institutional perspective, while assessing its relationship with international public sector accounting standards.

**Research Question and Objectives**

Based on this research gap, the article addresses the following central research question:

***To what extent does Algeria's public accounting reform introduced by Law No. 23-07 converge with IPSAS principles, and what institutional factors influence its effective implementation*?**

To answer this question, the study pursues three main objectives:

First, it examines the legal foundations of Algeria's public accounting reform and analyzes the transformation introduced by Law No. 23-07.

Second, it evaluates the extent of convergence between the Algerian accounting framework and key IPSAS principles, particularly regarding accrual accounting, financial reporting, transparency, and accountability.

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Third, it identifies the institutional challenges that may affect the successful implementation of the reform, including human resources, digital transformation, administrative culture, and oversight mechanisms.

**Methodological Approach and Contribution**

To achieve these objectives, the study adopts a qualitative doctrinal legal research methodology combined with a comparative institutional analysis. This approach enables an examination of Algerian legal reforms while evaluating their compatibility with international public sector accounting principles.

The article makes three main contributions to the existing literature.

First, it contributes to the limited body of research examining public accounting reforms in North African countries by providing an in-depth analysis of the Algerian case.

Second, it extends the discussion on IPSAS implementation by moving beyond a purely technical accounting perspective and considering reform as an institutional transformation process shaped by legal, organizational, and cultural factors.

Third, it highlights the distinction between formal convergence and effective convergence. While Law No. 23-07 demonstrates significant alignment with international accounting orientations, the achievement of genuine modernization depends on the capacity of public institutions to translate legal principles into operational practices.

Accordingly, this article argues that Algeria's public accounting reform represents an important movement toward international standards-based financial governance, but its success remains dependent on the development of adequate institutional capacities and implementation mechanisms.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. The first section reviews the literature and theoretical foundations relating to public accounting reform and IPSAS. The second section presents the research methodology. The third section analyzes the legal and institutional foundations of Algeria's reform and examines its convergence with IPSAS principles. The final section discusses implementation challenges and provides conclusions and policy implications.

Algeria's Public Accounting Reform and Its Convergence with IPSAS Principles: A Legal and Institutional Analysis of Law No. 23-07**

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Public Sector Accounting Reform: From Legal Compliance to Governance-Oriented Management

Public sector accounting has historically been shaped by the specific characteristics of governmental activities, particularly the principles of legality, budgetary authorization, and public fund protection. Unlike private sector accounting, which primarily aims to provide information to investors and economic stakeholders, public accounting has traditionally been designed as an instrument of administrative control ensuring compliance with legal provisions governing public expenditure and revenue.

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Under this traditional model, accounting information was mainly oriented toward verifying the regularity of budget execution rather than evaluating the economic consequences of governmental decisions. The central concern was therefore not the measurement of financial performance but the respect of budgetary rules and procedural requirements.

However, the evolution of public sector governance has progressively challenged this traditional approach. The emergence of New Public Management (NPM) during the 1980s and 1990s introduced a new vision of public administration based on efficiency, effectiveness, performance measurement, and managerial accountability (Hood, 1991). This transformation profoundly influenced public financial management systems by encouraging governments to reconsider the role of accounting information in the decision-making process.

According to Hood (1991), the reforms associated with New Public Management sought to introduce managerial principles into the public sector, including greater autonomy for managers, measurement of results, and increased accountability for the use of public resources. Within this framework, public accounting evolved from a purely control-oriented mechanism into a governance instrument capable of supporting strategic management and evaluating public policies.

The international literature emphasizes that modern public accounting systems should provide information not only about compliance with budgetary authorizations but also about the financial position, performance, and sustainability of public entities (Guthrie, 1998). Consequently, accounting information has become an essential element in strengthening transparency and improving the quality of public decision-making.

This transformation explains the growing interest in accrual accounting and international accounting standards. Unlike cash-based systems, which recognize transactions only when payments or receipts occur, accrual-based systems capture economic events at the moment they arise. This provides a more complete representation of governmental assets, liabilities, costs, and financial obligations (IPSASB, 2023).

Nevertheless, the transition toward governance-oriented accounting does not represent a simple technical adjustment. It involves a profound institutional transformation affecting legal frameworks, professional practices, organizational structures, and administrative cultures. As emphasized by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), public management reforms are complex processes in which formal institutional changes interact with existing administrative traditions and organizational behaviors.

Therefore, public accounting reform should be understood as a multidimensional process combining legal modernization, managerial transformation, and institutional adaptation.

### 2.2. IPSAS as an International Framework for Public Financial Modernization

The International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) represent one of the most important international initiatives aimed at improving the quality and comparability of public sector financial reporting. Developed by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

Board (IPSASB), these standards seek to establish a coherent accounting framework enabling public entities to provide reliable and transparent financial information.

The fundamental objective of IPSAS is to enhance accountability and decision-making by ensuring that financial reports provide relevant information concerning the financial position, financial performance, and resource management of public entities (IPSASB, 2023).

A central feature of IPSAS is the promotion of accrual-based accounting. The adoption of this approach reflects the recognition that public financial management requires a comprehensive understanding of economic activities beyond simple cash movements. Through accrual accounting, governments are able to identify assets, liabilities, expenses, and future financial commitments, thereby improving fiscal sustainability and long-term planning.

The literature identifies several potential benefits associated with IPSAS-oriented reforms. These include:

* improving transparency of public finances;
* strengthening accountability mechanisms;
* increasing comparability of financial information;
* supporting better resource allocation decisions.

According to Christiaens et al. (2015), IPSAS implementation contributes to the modernization of governmental financial reporting by introducing accounting practices closer to international standards. However, the authors also emphasize that the adoption of IPSAS involves significant organizational challenges, particularly concerning institutional capacities and professional expertise.

Similarly, Brusca et al. (2016) argue that IPSAS should not be considered merely as a technical accounting framework but as part of broader public financial management reforms. Their effectiveness depends on the interaction between accounting standards and the institutional environment in which they are implemented.

The international experience demonstrates that countries do not adopt IPSAS uniformly. Some jurisdictions implement IPSAS directly, while others adapt selected principles according to their legal traditions, administrative structures, and reform objectives (Oulasvirta, 2014).

This observation is particularly relevant for Algeria, where the reform introduced by Law No. 23-07 does not constitute a direct adoption of IPSAS but rather a process of gradual convergence with international public accounting principles.

### 2.3. Institutional Theory and the Analysis of Public Accounting Reform

The analysis of public accounting reform requires an institutional perspective capable of explaining how international standards interact with domestic legal and administrative systems. Institutional theory provides an appropriate analytical framework for understanding this process. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), organizations operating within the same institutional environment tend to adopt similar structures and practices due to processes of institutional isomorphism.

The authors identify three main mechanisms through which institutional convergence occurs:

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1. **Coercive isomorphism**, resulting from legal requirements and regulatory pressures;
2. **Normative isomorphism**, associated with professional standards and expertise;
3. **Mimetic isomorphism**, resulting from the imitation of perceived successful models.

Applied to public accounting reform, this theoretical perspective explains why governments increasingly integrate international accounting standards such as IPSAS. These reforms are influenced not only by technical considerations but also by international expectations regarding transparency, governance, and financial credibility.

However, institutional theory also highlights that the transfer of international models does not necessarily produce identical outcomes across countries. Domestic institutional characteristics, administrative traditions, and organizational capacities influence how reforms are interpreted and implemented.

In the Algerian context, the adoption of modern public accounting principles occurs within a public administration historically characterized by a legalistic tradition emphasizing hierarchical control and procedural compliance. Therefore, the implementation of Law No. 23-07 represents an interaction between international reform pressures and national institutional specificities.

This perspective allows the present study to move beyond a simple assessment of legal conformity and examine the deeper institutional dynamics shaping Algeria's public accounting transformation.

# 2.4. Analytical Framework of the Study

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundations, this study develops an analytical framework structured around three interconnected dimensions.

First Dimension: Legal Modernization

This dimension examines the extent to which Algeria's legislative reforms introduce new principles compatible with contemporary public financial management requirements.

The analysis focuses on:

* the transformation of the legal conception of public accounting;
* the evolution of accounting functions;
* the integration of transparency and accountability principles.

Second Dimension: Convergence with IPSAS Principles

This dimension evaluates the relationship between Law No. 23-07 and IPSAS requirements, particularly regarding:

* accrual accounting;
* financial reporting;
* recognition of public assets and liabilities;
* quality of accounting information.

Third Dimension: Institutional Implementation Capacity

This dimension analyzes the conditions necessary for translating legal reform into effective practices, including:

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* professional competencies;
* digital financial systems;
* administrative culture;
* oversight mechanisms.

This analytical framework provides the basis for examining Algeria's public accounting reform as both a legal transformation and an institutional change process.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on doctrinal legal analysis combined with comparative institutional analysis. This methodological approach is appropriate for examining public accounting reforms because such reforms are not limited to technical accounting adjustments but involve complex interactions between legal rules, institutional arrangements, administrative practices, and international standards.

The doctrinal legal approach enables an in-depth examination of the normative framework governing Algeria's public accounting reform, particularly Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws and Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules. Through this approach, the study analyzes the objectives, principles, and mechanisms introduced by the Algerian legislator in order to identify the nature and scope of the transformation affecting the public accounting system.

However, legal analysis alone cannot fully explain the implications of public accounting reform. Therefore, the study complements the doctrinal approach with an institutional analysis aimed at understanding how international accounting principles interact with Algeria's administrative and organizational environment.

This combination of approaches reflects the perspective adopted in contemporary public management research, which considers reforms as processes shaped by both formal legal changes and institutional capacities (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

### 3.2. Research Materials and Data Sources

The study relies primarily on documentary analysis of legal, institutional, and scientific sources.

The first category consists of Algerian legal sources, including:

- Organic Law No. 18-15 of 2 September 2018 relating to Finance Laws;
- Law No. 23-07 of 21 June 2023 relating to public accounting and financial management rules;
- related regulatory texts governing public financial management.

These legal instruments constitute the primary sources for analyzing the transformation of Algeria's public accounting framework.

The second category includes international institutional documents, particularly:

- the IPSAS Conceptual Framework;
- the Handbook of International Public Sector Accounting Pronouncements issued by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB);

- reports published by international organizations concerning public financial management reforms.

These sources provide the international reference framework against which the Algerian reform is assessed.

The third category consists of academic literature addressing:

- public sector accounting modernization;
- IPSAS adoption and implementation;
- public financial management reforms;
- institutional transformation.

The use of multiple sources allows for a comprehensive analysis combining legal interpretation, international comparison, and theoretical examination.

### 3.3. Analytical Approach

The analytical framework of this research is based on a comparative assessment between Algeria's public accounting reform and the main principles promoted by IPSAS.

The analysis is structured around four main areas.

**First: The Transformation of the Conceptual Role of Public Accounting**

This dimension examines whether Law No. 23-07 moves public accounting beyond its traditional role as an instrument of budgetary control toward a broader governance function.

The analysis focuses on:

- the informational role of accounting;
- decision-making support;
- accountability requirements.

**Second: The Adoption of Accrual-Based Accounting Principles**

This dimension evaluates the extent to which the Algerian reform incorporates economic-based accounting principles consistent with IPSAS orientations.

The analysis examines:

- recognition of assets and liabilities;
- recording of economic events;
- improvement of financial representation.

The importance of this dimension derives from the fact that accrual accounting constitutes one of the main indicators of public accounting modernization internationally (IPSASB, 2023).

**Third: Financial Reporting and Transparency Requirements**

This dimension analyzes the evolution of public financial reporting under the new Algerian framework.

The assessment focuses on whether the reform contributes to:

- improving the quality of financial information;
- strengthening transparency;
- facilitating external evaluation of public resource management.

This dimension reflects the growing international recognition that financial reporting represents a central instrument of public accountability (Brusca et al., 2016).

**Fourth: Institutional Capacity and Implementation Conditions**

The final analytical dimension examines the practical conditions influencing the effectiveness of the reform.

The analysis considers:

- availability of qualified human resources;
- digital infrastructure;
- administrative adaptation;
- capacity of oversight institutions.

This dimension is based on the assumption that institutional effectiveness determines the success of accounting reforms beyond the existence of formal legal provisions (Christiaens et al., 2015).

**3.4. Research Propositions**

Although the study does not adopt a quantitative hypothesis-testing methodology, it is guided by three analytical propositions derived from the literature.

**Proposition 1:**

Algeria's Law No. 23-07 represents a significant movement from traditional compliance-based public accounting toward a governance-oriented accounting model.

**Proposition 2:**

The Algerian public accounting reform demonstrates substantial convergence with IPSAS principles, particularly concerning transparency, financial reporting, and accrual-based approaches.

**Proposition 3:**

The effectiveness of the reform depends primarily on institutional implementation capacities rather than solely on the adoption of new legal provisions.

These propositions guide the subsequent analysis of the legal and institutional foundations of Algeria's public accounting reform.

**3.5. Methodological Limitations**

This research presents certain methodological limitations.

First, the study is based primarily on documentary and legal analysis; therefore, it does not include empirical investigation through interviews or surveys with public sector accounting practitioners.

Second, because Law No. 23-07 is a recent reform, the study focuses mainly on the legal and institutional foundations of implementation rather than measuring its long-term operational outcomes.

Nevertheless, the adopted methodology remains appropriate for analyzing a recent legal reform whose practical effects are still developing. It provides an initial analytical framework for

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understanding the direction, objectives, and institutional challenges of Algeria's transition toward a modern public accounting system.

## 4. Legal and Institutional Foundations of Algeria's Public Accounting Reform

The modernization of Algeria's public accounting system forms part of a broader reform process aimed at transforming public financial governance. This transformation is based on a progressive restructuring of the legal and institutional framework governing public finances, particularly through the adoption of Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws and Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules.

Unlike previous reforms that mainly focused on improving budgetary procedures and strengthening financial control mechanisms, the recent reform introduces a more comprehensive approach based on performance management, transparency, accountability, and the production of reliable financial information.

The significance of this transformation lies in the fact that public accounting is no longer considered merely a technical mechanism for recording financial operations. Instead, it has become an essential component of public governance, enabling decision-makers and oversight institutions to evaluate the use of public resources and assess the financial sustainability of government actions.

This evolution reflects international trends in public financial management, where accounting systems have progressively moved from a traditional legal-control approach toward models emphasizing managerial responsibility and performance measurement (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

### 4.1. The Reform of Public Financial Governance under Organic Law No. 18-15

The adoption of Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws represents a fundamental stage in the modernization of Algeria's public financial management framework. This legislation introduced a new approach to budgetary governance by replacing a traditional input-based system with a performance-oriented model.

Under the previous framework, public budgeting was primarily organized around administrative allocations and expenditure authorizations. The central concern was ensuring compliance with approved budgetary limits rather than evaluating the results achieved through public spending.

Organic Law No. 18-15 introduced a new philosophy based on:

- programme-based budgeting;
- multi-year financial planning;
- performance objectives;
- evaluation of public policies.

This approach corresponds with international public management reforms that seek to link financial resources with measurable outcomes. According to Hood (1991), modern public administration increasingly emphasizes performance indicators and managerial accountability as mechanisms for improving public sector efficiency.

The introduction of programme budgeting constitutes a major institutional change because it modifies the relationship between budget allocation and public policy objectives. Instead of focusing exclusively on expenditure categories, the new approach seeks to identify the objectives pursued by public programmes and evaluate their effectiveness.

However, the transition toward performance-based budgeting requires not only legal reform but also significant institutional capacities, including strategic planning, evaluation mechanisms, and reliable financial information systems.

Therefore, Organic Law No. 18-15 should be understood as the foundation upon which subsequent reforms, particularly public accounting modernization, have been constructed.

**4.2. Law No. 23-07 and the Transformation of Algeria's Public Accounting Framework**

Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules constitutes a decisive step in the restructuring of Algeria's public accounting system.

The main innovation introduced by this law lies in redefining the functions and objectives of public accounting. Traditionally, public accounting in Algeria was largely based on principles of legality control, separation between authorizing officers and public accountants, and verification of the regularity of financial operations.

While these principles remain essential for protecting public funds, contemporary public financial governance requires accounting systems capable of providing broader information concerning:

- the financial position of public entities;
- the management of public assets;
- financial commitments;
- the economic consequences of governmental decisions.

Law No. 23-07 reflects this evolution by strengthening the informational dimension of public accounting and promoting a more comprehensive representation of public finances.

This transformation is consistent with the conceptual foundations of IPSAS, which consider financial reporting as a mechanism designed not only to demonstrate compliance but also to provide useful information for accountability and decision-making (IPSASB, 2023).

Consequently, the Algerian reform introduces a gradual movement toward an accounting model that integrates both legal and economic perspectives.

**4.3. The New Functions of Public Accounting under Law No. 23-07**

The reform introduced by Law No. 23-07 modifies the traditional understanding of public accounting through the expansion of its functions.

**4.3.1. From Control Function to Information Function**

Historically, public accounting systems were primarily designed to ensure that public expenditures complied with legal authorizations. The accountant's role was therefore strongly associated with verification and control.

The new framework gives greater importance to the production of financial information capable of supporting public management.

This transformation reflects the international evolution of public accounting, where accounting information has become a strategic resource for evaluating governmental performance and ensuring transparency (Guthrie, 1998).

### 4.3.2. Strengthening Financial Transparency

Transparency represents one of the fundamental objectives of contemporary public financial reforms.

Reliable accounting information enables citizens, legislative bodies, and oversight institutions to better understand how public resources are managed.

In this regard, Law No. 23-07 contributes to strengthening transparency by establishing a framework aimed at improving the quality and reliability of public financial information.

However, transparency depends not only on the existence of accounting rules but also on the capacity of institutions to produce, publish, and interpret financial information effectively.

### 4.3.3. Recognition of the Economic Dimension of Public Operations

One of the most significant aspects of modern public accounting reforms is the gradual integration of economic concepts into governmental accounting.

Unlike traditional cash-based systems, modern accounting approaches recognize that public entities possess assets, incur liabilities, and undertake financial commitments that extend beyond annual budget execution.

This perspective is consistent with IPSAS principles, particularly those relating to accrual accounting and financial position reporting.

Accordingly, Law No. 23-07 represents an important step toward recognizing the economic reality of public management.

## 4.4. Institutional Significance of the Reform

Beyond its legal content, Algeria's public accounting reform reflects a broader institutional transformation.

The reform modifies the relationships between:

- public managers and financial controllers;
- accounting information and decision-making processes;
- legal compliance and performance evaluation.

From an institutional perspective, this transformation illustrates the interaction between international governance standards and domestic administrative traditions.

As explained by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), institutional reforms often result from pressures encouraging organizations to adopt internationally recognized models. However, the implementation of these models depends on national institutional capacities and organizational characteristics.

In Algeria, the challenge therefore consists not only in adopting modern accounting principles but also in ensuring their effective integration into administrative practices.

## 4.5. Preliminary Assessment of the Reform

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The analysis of Algeria's legal framework demonstrates that Law No. 23-07 represents a significant modernization effort consistent with international public accounting trends.

The reform introduces several elements of convergence with IPSAS principles, particularly:

- improving the quality of financial information;
- strengthening transparency;
- moving toward economic-based accounting;
- enhancing accountability mechanisms.

Nevertheless, this convergence remains progressive rather than complete. The effectiveness of the reform will depend on the capacity of public institutions to overcome implementation challenges related to professional training, digital systems, and administrative adaptation.

Therefore, the following section examines in detail the extent to which Algeria's public accounting reform converges with IPSAS principles and identifies the institutional factors influencing its implementation.

### 4.6. The Convergence of Law No. 23-07 with IPSAS Principles: A Comparative Analysis

The assessment of Algeria's public accounting reform requires examining the extent to which the principles introduced by Law No. 23-07 converge with the conceptual and technical orientations promoted by IPSAS. Such an assessment does not imply that Algeria has adopted IPSAS as a binding accounting framework; rather, it seeks to determine the degree to which the national reform incorporates international principles aimed at modernizing public sector financial reporting.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that Law No. 23-07 reflects a gradual movement toward an international model of public accounting based on transparency, accountability, and the recognition of the economic dimension of public activities. Nevertheless, this convergence remains selective and progressive, taking into account Algeria's specific legal and institutional environment.

#### 4.6.1. Convergence Regarding the Conceptual Objective of Public Financial Reporting

One of the fundamental contributions of IPSAS lies in redefining the objective of public sector financial reporting. According to the IPSAS Conceptual Framework, general-purpose financial reports are designed to provide information useful for accountability and decision-making by users, including citizens, legislative bodies, and oversight institutions (IPSASB, 2023).

This approach represents a significant evolution from traditional public accounting models, where the primary objective was to ensure compliance with budgetary authorizations and legal requirements.

The Algerian reform introduced by Law No. 23-07 demonstrates convergence with this orientation by reinforcing the informational function of accounting. The new framework considers accounting information as an instrument supporting public management and improving the understanding of financial operations.

This transformation reflects a broader international trend whereby public accounting has progressively moved from a control mechanism toward a governance instrument. As

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emphasized by Brusca et al. (2016), modern public financial management reforms increasingly consider accounting information as a prerequisite for transparency and institutional accountability.

However, the degree of convergence remains mainly conceptual. The effectiveness of this transformation depends on the ability of public institutions to produce high-quality financial information and ensure its effective use by decision-makers and oversight bodies.

#### 4.6.2. Accrual Accounting and the Recognition of Economic Reality

Accrual accounting constitutes one of the most significant elements distinguishing modern public accounting systems from traditional cash-based approaches.

Under IPSAS principles, transactions are recognized when economic events occur rather than only when cash is received or paid. This approach enables public entities to provide a more comprehensive representation of their financial position by recognizing assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenses according to their economic substance (IPSASB, 2023).

The Algerian reform reflects this international orientation by introducing a framework that moves beyond purely budgetary accounting toward a system capable of capturing broader financial realities.

The importance of this transition lies in the fact that public entities manage substantial economic resources, including:

- infrastructure assets;
- public buildings;
- financial commitments;
- long-term obligations.

Traditional accounting systems based exclusively on cash movements provide limited information regarding these elements. Consequently, the introduction of economic-based accounting principles represents a significant improvement in the quality of public financial information.

Nevertheless, international experiences demonstrate that the transition to accrual accounting is one of the most challenging components of public accounting reform. It requires:

- reliable asset inventories;
- appropriate valuation methods;
- qualified accounting personnel;
- adapted information systems.

According to Christiaens et al. (2015), many countries encounter implementation difficulties not because of conceptual disagreement with accrual accounting, but because of insufficient institutional and technical capacities.

Therefore, while Law No. 23-07 establishes the legal foundation for this transformation, its practical effectiveness remains dependent on implementation conditions.

#### 4.6.3. Financial Statements Presentation and Transparency Requirements

Another important area of convergence concerns the improvement of public financial reporting.

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IPSAS standards emphasize the importance of presenting comprehensive financial statements capable of providing users with a clear understanding of the financial situation and performance of public entities.

The main objectives include:

- improving comparability of financial information;
- strengthening transparency;
- facilitating accountability.

In this respect, Law No. 23-07 reflects a similar ambition by seeking to modernize the accounting framework governing public entities and enhance the reliability of financial information.

The importance of this evolution should be understood within the broader context of public governance. Transparency is not merely the publication of financial data; it requires the availability of accurate, understandable, and relevant information allowing stakeholders to evaluate governmental performance.

As argued by Pina and Torres (2003), accounting reforms contribute to administrative modernization when financial information becomes a meaningful instrument for evaluating public sector activities.

However, the production of improved financial reports does not automatically guarantee stronger accountability. Oversight institutions must also possess the analytical capacity necessary to interpret and utilize this information.

**4.6.4. Public Assets Management and IPSAS-Based Approaches**

The management and accounting treatment of public assets represents another important dimension of convergence between Law No. 23-07 and IPSAS principles.

IPSAS 17 concerning property, plant, and equipment establishes principles for the recognition, measurement, depreciation, and disclosure of tangible assets controlled by public entities.

This approach reflects a fundamental change in the perception of public property. Public assets are no longer viewed solely as administrative resources but as economic resources requiring effective management and accurate accounting representation.

In Algeria, the modernization of public asset accounting constitutes an essential component of financial governance reform. Improved knowledge of public assets can contribute to:

- better maintenance planning;
- improved investment decisions;
- more efficient resource allocation.

Nevertheless, implementing such principles requires overcoming practical challenges, particularly concerning the identification, valuation, and monitoring of public assets.

Therefore, convergence with IPSAS in this area depends heavily on the development of technical capacities and reliable asset management systems.

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### 4.6.5. Accountability, Financial Risks, and Long-Term Sustainability

Modern public accounting reforms increasingly emphasize the importance of identifying financial risks and long-term obligations.

IPSAS principles relating to provisions, contingent liabilities, and financial commitments aim to provide a more realistic picture of governmental financial responsibilities.

This approach contributes to improving fiscal sustainability by allowing governments and stakeholders to better understand future financial pressures.

The Algerian reform reflects this broader objective by strengthening the role of accounting information in public financial management.

However, achieving effective accountability requires more than adopting accounting rules. It requires institutional mechanisms capable of transforming accounting information into effective oversight and policy evaluation.

This confirms the argument developed by institutional scholars that formal reforms must be accompanied by organizational transformation in order to produce meaningful outcomes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

### .6. Overall Assessment of IPSAS Convergence

The comparative analysis reveals that Algeria's public accounting reform demonstrates significant convergence with IPSAS principles in several areas:

| Dimension | IPSAS Orientation | Law No. 23-07 Reform |
|---|---|---|
| Accounting objective | Accountability and decision-useful information | Strengthening the informational role of accounting |
| Accounting basis | Accrual accounting | Progressive movement toward economic recognition |
| Financial reporting | Transparency and comparability | Modernization of financial information |
| Asset management | Recognition and valuation of public assets | Improved accounting treatment of public resources |
| Governance | Accountability mechanisms | Strengthening financial management |

However, the analysis also shows that convergence remains incomplete. The Algerian reform represents a process of adaptation rather than a direct adoption of IPSAS.

This situation corresponds with international evidence showing that accounting reforms are shaped by national institutional contexts. Countries generally integrate international standards according to their administrative traditions, legal systems, and organizational capacities (Oulasvirta, 2014).

Accordingly, Algeria's experience illustrates the distinction between **normative convergence** and **operational convergence**. While the legal framework demonstrates a clear orientation toward international standards, effective implementation requires further institutional development.

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### 4.7. Institutional Challenges and Implementation Constraints of Algeria's Public Accounting Reform

Although Law No. 23-07 represents an important step toward the modernization of Algeria's public accounting framework and demonstrates significant convergence with international accounting principles, the effectiveness of this reform depends largely on the institutional conditions surrounding its implementation.

International experience shows that public accounting reforms frequently encounter difficulties not because of deficiencies in the legal framework, but because of the complexity of transforming administrative practices, professional behaviors, and organizational structures (Christiaens et al., 2015). Therefore, assessing Algeria's reform requires moving beyond the analysis of legal provisions and examining the institutional factors that may facilitate or hinder its practical implementation.

The main challenges relate to human resources, digital transformation, administrative culture, regulatory operationalization, and the capacity of oversight institutions.

#### 4.7.1. Human Resources and Professional Capacity Challenges

The transition toward a modern public accounting system requires a significant transformation in the skills and professional competencies of public financial actors.

Traditional public accounting systems generally rely on procedures focused on budgetary compliance, authorization control, and legal verification. In contrast, IPSAS-oriented accounting frameworks require additional competencies related to:

- accrual accounting techniques;
- financial statement preparation;
- asset valuation;
- financial analysis;
- risk assessment;
- performance evaluation.

Consequently, the implementation of Law No. 23-07 requires a change in the professional profile of public accountants and financial managers. Their role is no longer limited to verifying the legality of financial operations but extends to producing and interpreting accounting information useful for managerial decisions.

This transformation represents a major institutional challenge because professional practices are deeply influenced by historical administrative traditions. As institutional theory suggests, organizational change is often limited by established routines and professional norms that shape individual and collective behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The Algerian reform therefore requires a comprehensive capacity-building strategy including:

- continuous professional training;
- development of specialized accounting expertise;
- integration of modern accounting concepts into public administration education programs.

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Without adequate investment in human resources, there is a risk that the reform remains largely formal, with new legal requirements being applied through traditional administrative practices.

### 4.7.2. Digital Transformation and Financial Information Systems

The modernization of public accounting is closely linked to the development of efficient digital information systems.

Contemporary accounting frameworks require public entities to process large volumes of financial data, monitor assets and liabilities, generate financial statements, and ensure reliable information flows between administrative structures.

Therefore, digital transformation is not simply a technical support mechanism; it represents a fundamental condition for the success of accounting reform.

International organizations have emphasized that integrated financial management information systems contribute to improving transparency, strengthening expenditure control, and enhancing the reliability of public financial information (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2018).

In the Algerian context, the effectiveness of Law No. 23-07 depends partly on the ability to develop interconnected digital platforms capable of supporting:

- accounting operations;
- budget execution monitoring;
- public asset management;
- financial reporting.

However, digital transformation faces several challenges, including:

- interoperability between existing systems;
- data quality and reliability;
- cybersecurity requirements;
- user training.

Thus, digital modernization should be considered as an institutional reform component rather than merely a technological investment.

### 4.7.3. Administrative Culture and Resistance to Change

One of the most significant challenges affecting public accounting reform concerns administrative culture.

Public administrations are not only governed by formal rules but also by informal practices, professional values, and organizational traditions. In Algeria, as in many countries influenced by the continental legal-administrative tradition, public financial management has historically emphasized legality, hierarchy, and procedural control.

These principles remain essential for protecting public funds; however, they may create tensions with the managerial principles introduced by modern accounting reforms, such as:

- increased managerial responsibility;
- performance measurement;
- evaluation based on results;

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- greater flexibility in resource management.

The transition from a compliance-oriented culture toward a performance-oriented culture requires gradual institutional adaptation.

According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), successful public management reforms depend on the ability of administrations to reconcile imported managerial concepts with existing institutional traditions.

Therefore, Algeria's challenge is not to replace legal control with managerial flexibility, but to establish an appropriate balance between:

- legality and performance;
- control and responsibility;
- procedural compliance and strategic management.

#### 4.7.4. The Gap Between Legal Reform and Operational Implementation

A recurring issue in public sector reforms concerns the difference between formal adoption of new rules and their effective implementation.

The adoption of Law No. 23-07 establishes the legal foundation for modern public accounting; however, legal provisions alone cannot guarantee institutional transformation.

Implementation requires:

- detailed regulatory texts;
- accounting manuals and procedures;
- institutional coordination mechanisms;
- monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The international literature on public management reform highlights that many reforms experience an implementation gap because institutional capacities do not always evolve at the same pace as legislative ambitions (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

In the Algerian case, the challenge lies in ensuring that the principles introduced by Law No. 23-07 are effectively translated into daily administrative practices.

This requires a gradual implementation process involving experimentation, evaluation, and continuous adjustment.

#### 4.7.5. Strengthening Oversight Institutions and Accountability Mechanisms

The success of public accounting reform also depends on the capacity of oversight institutions to use the new financial information generated by the accounting system.

Modern accounting frameworks aim to improve accountability by providing stakeholders with more complete and reliable information. However, transparency becomes effective only when institutions possess the capacity to analyze and interpret financial data.

Therefore, parliamentary oversight bodies, audit institutions, and administrative control mechanisms require:

- technical expertise in modern accounting;
- capacity to analyze financial statements;
- ability to evaluate performance indicators.

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IPSAS principles emphasize that financial reporting contributes to accountability when users are able to understand and utilize accounting information effectively (IPSASB, 2023).
Consequently, strengthening oversight capacities should constitute an integral component of Algeria's public accounting reform.

**4.7.6. Critical Assessment of Implementation Prospects**

The analysis demonstrates that Algeria has established a modern legal foundation for public accounting reform. Law No. 23-07 reflects a clear orientation toward international standards and introduces principles compatible with contemporary public financial governance.
Nevertheless, the transformation from legal modernization to effective accounting modernization depends on overcoming several institutional constraints.
The main conclusion is that public accounting reform should not be understood as a purely accounting project. It represents a broader institutional transformation requiring:

- changes in professional practices;
- technological modernization;
- organizational adaptation;
- strengthening of accountability mechanisms.

Therefore, the future success of Algeria's reform will depend on the ability of public institutions to transform international accounting principles into locally effective practices.
This confirms the broader argument in the literature that international standards such as IPSAS provide a reference framework, but their effectiveness depends on the institutional environment in which they are implemented (Oulasvirta, 2014).

**5. Conclusion and Policy Implications**

The reform of Algeria's public accounting system constitutes a significant milestone in the modernization of public financial governance. Through the adoption of Organic Law No. 18-15 relating to Finance Laws and Law No. 23-07 relating to public accounting and financial management rules, Algeria has initiated a profound transformation of its financial management framework, moving progressively beyond a traditional model centred on budgetary compliance toward a system increasingly oriented toward transparency, accountability, and performance-based management.
This article examined the extent to which Algeria's public accounting reform converges with IPSAS principles and analysed the institutional conditions determining its effective implementation. Based on a qualitative doctrinal approach combined with comparative institutional analysis, the study demonstrated that Law No. 23-07 represents a substantial evolution in the legal conception of public accounting.
The first major finding of this research is that Algeria's reform reflects a significant conceptual transformation in the role attributed to public accounting. The accounting function is no longer limited to ensuring the regularity of financial operations but increasingly serves as a mechanism for producing reliable financial information supporting public decision-making and accountability.

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This evolution corresponds with the international movement toward modern public financial management systems, where accounting information has become a central instrument of governance rather than merely a tool of administrative control (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

The second major finding concerns the degree of convergence between Law No. 23-07 and IPSAS principles. The analysis demonstrates that the Algerian reform incorporates several orientations consistent with international public accounting standards, particularly regarding:

- improving the quality of financial information;
- strengthening transparency mechanisms;
- introducing economic perspectives into public accounting;
- enhancing accountability.

However, this convergence should be understood as progressive and adaptive rather than as a complete adoption of IPSAS. Algeria has developed a national reform inspired by international principles while maintaining its own legal and institutional specificities.

This finding confirms the conclusions of previous studies showing that IPSAS reforms are not implemented through a simple transfer of international standards but through processes of institutional adaptation shaped by national contexts (Oulasvirta, 2014; Polzer et al., 2022).

The third finding relates to the importance of institutional capacity in determining reform outcomes. The study demonstrates that legal modernization alone cannot guarantee effective transformation. The success of Algeria's public accounting reform depends on several complementary factors, including:

- professional training and capacity building;
- digitalization of financial management systems;
- administrative adaptation;
- strengthening of oversight institutions.

Therefore, the implementation of Law No. 23-07 should be considered as a long-term institutional transformation process rather than a purely regulatory reform.

### 5.1. Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the literature on public sector accounting reform in several respects.

First, it expands existing research on IPSAS-oriented reforms by providing an analysis of the Algerian experience, which remains relatively underrepresented in international academic debates. While previous studies have extensively examined IPSAS adoption in European and Latin American contexts, less attention has been devoted to North African public financial systems.

Second, the article contributes to the institutional analysis of accounting reforms by demonstrating that public accounting modernization involves complex interactions between international standards and domestic administrative structures. The adoption of accounting principles cannot be separated from the legal traditions, organizational practices, and professional cultures of each country.

Third, the study introduces an analytical distinction between **formal convergence** and **effective convergence**.
Formal convergence refers to the alignment of legal frameworks and reform objectives with international accounting principles.
Effective convergence refers to the actual capacity of institutions to implement these principles and generate meaningful improvements in transparency and accountability.
This distinction provides a useful analytical framework for understanding why some public accounting reforms achieve limited practical results despite ambitious legal objectives.

### 5.2. Policy Implications

Based on the findings of this research, several policy implications can be identified.

**First: Developing Sustainable Professional Training Programs**

The successful implementation of Law No. 23-07 requires significant investment in human capital development.
Training programmes should focus on:

- accrual accounting methodologies;
- preparation and interpretation of financial statements;
- public asset management;
- financial risk assessment;
- performance evaluation techniques.

The modernization of accounting practices depends fundamentally on the ability of public financial actors to acquire new professional competencies.

**Second: Strengthening Digital Public Financial Management Systems**

Digital transformation should constitute a central pillar of Algeria's public accounting reform.
The development of integrated financial information systems is necessary to ensure:

- reliable accounting data;
- efficient financial monitoring;
- improved reporting capacity;
- better coordination between administrative entities.

Digitalization should therefore be viewed as an institutional requirement supporting the practical implementation of accounting modernization.

**Third: Ensuring Gradual and Evaluated Implementation**

Given the complexity of the reform, a progressive implementation strategy is required.
Such a strategy should include:

- gradual application across public entities;
- monitoring of implementation difficulties;
- evaluation of results;
- continuous improvement of accounting procedures.

International experience demonstrates that successful public accounting reforms generally require time, institutional learning, and continuous adaptation.

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**Fourth: Enhancing Accountability and External Oversight**

The modernization of accounting information must be accompanied by strengthening the capacity of oversight institutions.

Parliamentary bodies, audit institutions, and financial control mechanisms should be equipped with the necessary expertise to analyse modern financial reports and evaluate public sector performance.

Improved accounting information can contribute to better governance only when it is effectively used by institutions responsible for accountability.

### 5.3. Research Limitations and Future Perspectives

This study presents certain limitations.

First, the research is primarily based on legal and institutional analysis and does not include empirical investigation involving public accountants, managers, or oversight institutions.

Second, because Law No. 23-07 is a recent reform, the study focuses mainly on the foundations and expected implications of the reform rather than measuring its long-term effects.

Future research could therefore extend this analysis through empirical studies examining:

- the practical implementation of Law No. 23-07 within public institutions;
- the perceptions of accounting professionals regarding reform challenges;
- comparative studies between Algeria and other countries implementing IPSAS-oriented reforms;
- the impact of digital financial systems on public accounting modernization.

### 5.4. Final Conclusion

Algeria's public accounting reform represents an important transition toward a more modern framework of public financial governance. Law No. 23-07 establishes the legal foundations for improving accounting information, strengthening transparency, and progressively aligning public accounting practices with international principles.

Nevertheless, the success of this reform will depend not only on the quality of legislative provisions but also on the ability of public institutions to transform these provisions into effective practices.

The Algerian experience illustrates a broader lesson in public sector reform: international standards such as IPSAS can provide valuable guidance, but their effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, administrative adaptation, and the ability to integrate global principles within national contexts.

Accordingly, Algeria's reform should be understood as an ongoing institutional transformation process, where legal modernization constitutes the starting point rather than the final objective of public accounting modernization.

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