



Our Ref.: C/EC

By Email dorothyofori@ifac.org and By Fax (0062 1 212 286 9570)

2 May 2007

Ms. Jan Munro
Senior Technical Manager, IESBA
International Federation of Accountants
545 Fifth Avenue
14th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Jan,

IESBA Strategic Review Questionnaire

We are pleased to note that the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) is conducting a strategic review to develop a new strategic plan for its activities for the period 2008-2009 and is seeking views to identify key issues for discussion in 2007. We have pleasure in enclosing the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountant's response to the IESBA Strategic Questionnaire (**Annex I**). We have also updated this information into the on-line Questionnaire.

In summary, we recommend that the IESBA should develop more guidance on:

- (a) Fraud and illegal acts;
- (b) Independence in respect of legal protection clauses;
- (c) Independence in respect of compilation and agreed upon procedures engagements; and
- (d) Conflicts of interest for professional accountants in business.

Should you require any further clarification in relation to the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact me or Steve Ong, Deputy Director, Standard Setting (ong@hkickpa.org.hk).

Yours sincerely,

Patricia McBride
Executive Director

PM/SO/jc
Encl.

IESBA STRATEGIC REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) plans in 2007 to conduct a strategic review and develop a new strategic and operational plan for the Board's activities for the period 2008-2009. We are seeking the views of interested parties at an early stage to identify key issues for discussion during this review.

We would be grateful if you could complete the following questionnaire, and return it to dorothyofori@ifac.org by **May 4, 2007**. Individual responses to the questionnaire will not be on public record. They will be summarized for discussion purposes. The summary, which may be made public, will not identify the names or organizations of the respondents.

Name or Organization:

Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA)

Email address:

standardsetting@hki CPA.org.hk

Please provide your name and/or organization and, should your email address should you wish to receive an electronic copy of the proposed IESBA strategy and work plan for 2008-2009 when it is issued for public comment during 2007.

SECTION 1 – ACHIEVING THE IESBA'S OBJECTIVE

The IESBA's objective is to serve the public interest by setting high quality ethical standards for professional accountants and by facilitating the convergence of international and national ethical standards, thereby enhancing the quality and consistency of services provided by professional accountants throughout the world and strengthening public confidence in the global accounting profession.

To achieve these objectives the IESBA has identified three initiatives on which it could focus:

1. Development of Standards – Establish high quality ethical standards for professional accountants.
2. Facilitating Convergence – Promote the acceptance and adoption of the Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants throughout the world.
3. Communications – Promoting good ethical practices and fostering international debate on ethical issues faced by professional accountants.

The IESBA has identified the following groups that are affected by its activities (i.e., its stakeholders) and, therefore, will be consulted in developing the IESBA's future strategy and work program (they are listed alphabetically):

- Accountants in business
- Accountants in public practice

- Audit oversight bodies
 - IFAC member bodies
 - National ethical standard setters
 - Preparers of financial statements
 - Regional professional accounting organizations
 - Securities and other regulators
 - Users of financial statements (other than regulators)
- a) Please list any other groups that, in your view, are stakeholders of the IESBA.
- **Suppliers of resources to IESBA**

b) Which, if any, stakeholder group do you belong to?

HKICPA belongs to:

- **Audit oversight bodies**
- **IFAC member bodies**
- **National ethical standard setters**
- **Preparers of financial statements**
- **Regional professional accounting organizations**
- **Securities and other regulators**
- **Suppliers of resources to IESBA**

c) What, in your view, does the stakeholder group to which you belong expect from the IESBA?

We expect the IESBA to carry out continuing improvement in the scope and quality of pronouncements with reference to developments in the market place.

SECTION 2 – STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

Existing projects

In 2008 the IESBA will complete three projects it already has in progress. These are

- i) Revisions to the independence requirements contained in the Code as proposed in the exposure draft issued in December 2006 proposing revisions to existing Section 290 Independence – Audit and Review Engagements and proposing new Section 291 Independence – Other Assurance Engagements;
- ii) The following additional independence matters:

- Whether it is appropriate to revise the existing guidance related to the provision of internal audit services to audit clients;
 - Whether it is appropriate to include additional guidance related to economic dependence in the paragraphs dealing with fees in Section 290 (and proposed Section 291); and
 - Whether it is appropriate to revise the existing guidance relating to contingent fees.
- iii) Revisions to the Code to clarify how the guidance in Parts A, B and C applies to accountants in government.

In addition, the IESBA will consider the implications on the Code of the new drafting conventions adopted by the Clarity Project by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

Possible future projects

The IESBA is seeking your input on future projects which should be addressed in the next 3-4 years. The following is a list of possible projects, in alphabetical order, which could be addressed. Please consider this list and determine whether you believe any of these projects should be addressed in the time-frame noted. If there are other projects which you feel should be addressed please provide a description of the project.

Conflicts of Interest – additional guidance in the Code related to conflicts of interest which might be faced by a professional accountant.

Fraud and Illegal Acts – additional guidance in the Code related to ethical issues faced by professional accountants in business and professional practice when encountering fraud or illegal acts.

Independence – Actuarial services – additional guidance on the independence considerations related to providing actuarial services to an audit client.

Independence – Compilation and Agreed Upon Procedures Engagements – develop guidance in the Code on the standards against which independence would be judged in engagements to perform agreed-upon procedures and engagements to compile financial statements.

Independence – Financial interest held in trusts – additional guidance on independence considerations of trustee holdings of financial interests by the firm or members of the firm of an audit client of the firm.

Independence – Legal protection clauses – additional guidance related to the independence implications of legal protection clauses such as auditor indemnification and limitations on auditor liability.

Independence – Mutual funds and other similar collective investment vehicles – additional guidance related to independence implications for audit clients that are mutual funds or other similar collective investment vehicles.

Please identify the projects that, in your view, would best contribute to the IESBA's objectives over the next 3-4 years? Please identify no more than 5 projects (either from the list of potential projects above or other projects that you may have identified),

giving reasons for each choice, and rank in order of importance (where 1= most important and 5=least important):

1. *Fraud and Illegal Acts*

Reason: Some of the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) concern the accounting profession. It would be useful for members to have more guidance in this area.

2. *Independence – Legal protection clauses*

Reason: The scope of professional accountants’ work is expanding and developing beyond the traditional “core” work of audits or reviews of statutory financial statements. Amongst the “non-core” work, engagements concerning investment circular reporting and assistance to sponsors/underwriters are becoming more important in many jurisdictions as regulators are increasingly relying on the professional accountants’ opinion. We are concerned about the inconsistencies in practice internationally and the increasing level of risks that reporting accountants are exposed to because of the increasing complexity of securities transactions and onerous regulatory requirements. Additional guidance from the IESBA on this subject would be useful.

3. *Independence – Compilation and Agreed Upon Procedures Engagements*

Reason: See reasons in (2) above.

4. *Conflicts of Interest*

Reason: Additional guidance for professional accountants, especially for those in business would be useful.

SECTION 3 – OTHER INITIATIVES

a) For each of the following initiatives, please suggest one or more specific activities relating to the initiative that you believe the IESBA should undertake during the period 2008-2009?

- Facilitating Convergence

As well as its private consultations, the IESBA should participate in public forums with relevant regulators in all major regional areas to encourage an understanding of the objectives and effectiveness of the IESBA standards.

- Communications

The HKICPA would encourage the IESBA to start debates and develop papers on ethical issues and make these readily available on the IESBA website for member’s reference.

The IESBA may consider holding forums on issues arising from the adoption of the Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants in the Far East region. The HKICPA would welcome an ethical forum to be held in Hong Kong.

b) Are there any other specific initiatives you believe the IESBA should prioritize for the period 2008-2009? If so, what are they?

1. The project on *Ethical Guidance for Professional Accountants in Business when encountering Fraud or Illegal Acts* should be given priority with the aim to issue the exposure draft within 2007. Currently there is no indication of the completion date of the project.

SECTION 4 – OTHER

a) Are there any other issues you feel the IESBA should consider when it conducts its strategic review in 2007? In particular, do you have any comments and suggestions as to how the IESBA can best ensure it serves the public interest? Please write as much as you like in the space below:

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Please mark the box(es) that best describe the capacity in which you are responding to this questionnaire

- IESBA Member (current or former)
- IESBA Technical Advisor
- IESBA CAG Member Organization / Representative
- Member or Technical Advisor of Other IFAC Board or Committee –
please specify

IFAC Member Body

- Preparer of Financial Statements
- Professional Accountant in Public Practice
- Professional Accountant in Business
- User of Financial Statements (e.g., Investor, Customer, Creditor / Supplier, Lender, Analyst, Researcher etc.; Other than Regulator) –
please specify

Governmental or legislative body

Regulator

Audit Oversight Body

Standard setter

- Academia
 - Private Sector
 - Public Sector
 - Small and Medium Sized Entity
 - Small and Medium Sized Practice
 - Other – please specify
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The HKICPA is the only statutory licensing body of accountants in Hong Kong responsible for the professional training, development and regulation of the accountancy profession. The HKICPA sets auditing and assurance standards, ethical standards and financial reporting standards in Hong Kong.