PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ON AUDITING 520

(REDRAFTED)

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

(Effective for audits of financial statements for periods beginning on or after December 15, 2009)

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International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 520 (Redrafted), “Analytical Procedures” should be read in conjunction with ISA 200 (Revised and Redrafted), “Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the Conduct of an Audit in Accordance with International Standards on Auditing.”
Introduction

Scope of this ISA

1. This International Standard on Auditing (ISA) deals with the auditor’s use of analytical procedures as substantive procedures (“substantive analytical procedures”), and as procedures that assist the auditor in drawing reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor’s opinion. The use of analytical procedures as risk assessment procedures is dealt with in ISA 315 (Redrafted).\(^1\) ISA 330 (Redrafted) includes requirements and guidance regarding the nature, timing and extent of audit procedures in response to assessed risks; these audit procedures may include substantive analytical procedures.\(^2\) [ISSUE B]

Effective Date

2. This ISA is effective for audits of financial statements for periods beginning on or after December 15, 2009.

Objectives

3. The objectives of the auditor are: [ISSUE C]

   (a) To obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence when using substantive analytical procedures; and

   (b) To design and perform analytical procedures that assist the auditor in drawing reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor’s opinion.

Definition

4. For the purposes of the ISAs, the term “analytical procedures” means evaluations of financial information through analysis of plausible relationships among both financial and non-financial data. Analytical procedures also encompass such investigation, as is necessary, of identified fluctuations or relationships that are inconsistent with other relevant information or that differ from expected values by a significant amount. (Ref: Para. A1-A3)

Requirements

Substantive Analytical Procedures

5. When designing and performing substantive analytical procedures, either alone or in combination with tests of details, as substantive procedures in accordance with ISA 330 (Redrafted),\(^3\) the auditor shall: (Ref: Para. A4-A5) [ISSUE E]

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\(^3\) ISA 330 (Redrafted), paragraphs 20 and A43 – A47.
(a) Determine the suitability of the planned substantive analytical procedures given the assertions, taking account of the assessed risks of material misstatement and tests of details, if any, directed towards the same assertion; (Ref: Para. A6-A11)

(b) Evaluate the reliability of data from which the auditor’s expectation of recorded amounts or ratios is developed, taking account of source, comparability, and nature and relevance of information available, and controls over preparation; (Ref: Para. A12-A13)

(c) Develop an expectation of recorded amounts or ratios and evaluate whether the expectation is sufficiently precise to identify a misstatement that, individually or when aggregated with other misstatements, may cause the financial statements to be materially misstated;\(^4\) and (Ref: Para. A14)

(d) Determine the amount of any difference of recorded amounts from expected values that is acceptable without further investigation as required by paragraph 7. (Ref: Para. A15-A16).

Analytical Procedures that Assist in Drawing Reasonable Conclusions

6. The auditor shall design and perform analytical procedures that assist in drawing reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor’s opinion. (Ref: Para. A17-A19)

Investigating Results of Analytical Procedures

7. If analytical procedures performed in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 identify fluctuations or relationships that are inconsistent with other relevant information or that differ from expected values by a significant amount, the auditor shall investigate such differences by:

(a) Inquiring of management and obtaining appropriate audit evidence relevant to management’s responses; and

(b) Performing other audit procedures as necessary in the circumstances. (Ref: Para. A20-A21)

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Application and Other Explanatory Material

Nature of Analytical Procedures (Ref: Para. 4)

A1. Analytical procedures include the consideration of comparisons of the entity’s financial information with, for example:

- Comparable information for prior periods.

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\(^4\) ISA 450 (Revised and Redrafted), “Evaluation of Misstatements Identified during the Audit,” paragraphs 12-14.
• Anticipated results of the entity, such as budgets or forecasts, or expectations of the auditor, such as an estimation of depreciation.
• Similar industry information, such as a comparison of the entity’s ratio of sales to accounts receivable with industry averages or with other entities of comparable size in the same industry.

A2. Analytical procedures also include consideration of relationships, for example:
• Among elements of financial information that would be expected to conform to a predictable pattern based on the entity’s experience, such as gross margin percentages.
• Between financial information and relevant non-financial information, such as payroll costs to number of employees.

A3. Various methods may be used to perform analytical procedures. These methods range from performing simple comparisons to performing complex analyses using advanced statistical techniques. Analytical procedures may be applied to consolidated financial statements, components and individual elements of information.

**Substantive Analytical Procedures** (Ref: Para. 5)

A4. The auditor’s substantive procedures at the assertion level may be tests of details, substantive analytical procedures, or a combination of both. The decision about which audit procedures to perform, including whether to use substantive analytical procedures, is based on the auditor’s judgment about the expected effectiveness and efficiency of the available audit procedures to reduce audit risk at the assertion level to an acceptably low level.

A5. The auditor may inquire of management as to the availability and reliability of information needed to apply substantive analytical procedures, and the results of any such analytical procedures performed by the entity. It may be effective to use analytical data prepared by management, provided the auditor is satisfied that such data is properly prepared.

**Suitability of Planned Analytical Procedures Given the Assertions** (Ref: Para. 5(a))

A6. Substantive analytical procedures are generally more applicable to large volumes of transactions that tend to be predictable over time. The application of planned analytical procedures is based on the expectation that relationships among data exist and continue in the absence of known conditions to the contrary. However, the suitability of a particular analytical procedure will depend upon the auditor’s assessment of how effective it will be in detecting a misstatement that, when aggregated with other misstatements, may cause the financial statements to be materially misstated.

A7. In some cases, even an unsophisticated predictive model may be effective as an analytical procedure. For example, where an entity has employed a known number of staff at fixed rates of pay throughout the period, it may be possible for the auditor to use this data to
estimate the total payroll costs for the period with a high degree of accuracy, thereby providing audit evidence for a significant item in the financial statements and reducing the need to perform tests of details on the payroll. The use of widely recognized trade ratios (such as profit margins for different types of retail entities) can often be used effectively in analytical procedures to provide evidence to support the reasonableness of recorded amounts.

A8. Different types of analytical procedures provide different levels of assurance. Analytical procedures involving, for example, the prediction of total rental income on a building divided into apartments, taking the rental rates, the number of apartments and vacancy rates into consideration, can provide persuasive evidence and may eliminate the need for further verification by means of tests of details, provided the elements are appropriately verified. In contrast, calculation and comparison of gross margin percentages as a means of confirming a revenue figure may provide less persuasive evidence, but may provide useful corroboration if used in combination with other audit procedures.

A9. The determination of the suitability of planned substantive analytical procedures is influenced by the nature of the assertion and the auditor’s assessment of the risk of material misstatement. For example, if controls over sales order processing are weak, the auditor may place more reliance on tests of details rather than on analytical procedures for assertions related to receivables.

A10. Planned substantive analytical procedures may also be considered suitable when tests of details are performed on the same assertion. For example, when obtaining audit evidence regarding the valuation assertion for accounts receivable balances, the auditor may apply analytical procedures to an aging of customers’ accounts in addition to performing tests of details on subsequent cash receipts to determine the collectability of the receivables.

Considerations Specific to Public Sector Entities

A11. The relationships between individual financial statement items traditionally considered in the audit of business entities may not always be relevant in the audit of governments or other non-business public sector entities; for example, in many public sector entities there may be little direct relationship between revenue and expenditure. In addition, because expenditure on the acquisition of assets may not be capitalized, there may be no relationship between expenditures on, for example, inventories and fixed assets and the amount of those assets reported in the financial statements. Also, industry data or statistics for comparative purposes may not be available in the public sector. However, other relationships may be relevant, for example, variations in the cost per kilometer of road construction or the number of vehicles acquired compared with vehicles retired.

The Reliability of the Data (Ref:Para. 5(b))

A12. The reliability of data is influenced by its source and nature and is dependent on the circumstances under which it is obtained. Accordingly, the following are relevant when determining whether data is reliable for purposes of designing substantive analytical procedures:
(a) Source of the information available. For example, information may be more reliable when it is obtained from independent sources with an established reputation outside the entity;\(^5\)

(b) Comparability of the information available. For example, broad industry data may need to be supplemented to be comparable to that of an entity that produces and sells specialized products;

(c) Nature and relevance of the information available. For example, whether budgets have been established as results to be expected rather than as goals to be achieved; and

(d) Controls over the preparation of the information that are designed to ensure its completeness, accuracy and validity. For example, controls over the preparation, review and maintenance of budgets.

A13. The auditor may consider testing the operating effectiveness of controls, if any, over the entity’s preparation of information used by the auditor in performing substantive analytical procedures in response to assessed risks. When such controls are effective, the auditor generally has greater confidence in the reliability of the information and, therefore, in the results of analytical procedures. The operating effectiveness of controls over non-financial information may often be tested in conjunction with other tests of controls. For example, in establishing controls over the processing of sales invoices, an entity may include controls over the recording of unit sales. In these circumstances, the auditor may test the operating effectiveness of controls over the recording of unit sales in conjunction with tests of the operating effectiveness of controls over the processing of sales invoices. Alternatively, the auditor may consider whether the information was subjected to audit testing. [Proposed] ISA 500 (Redrafted) establishes requirements and provides guidance in determining the audit procedures to be performed on the information to be used for substantive analytical procedures.\(^6\)

Evaluation whether the Expectation is Sufficiently Precise (Ref: Para. 5(c))

A14. Matters relevant to the auditor’s evaluation of whether the expectation can be developed sufficiently precisely to identify a misstatement that, when aggregated with other misstatements, may cause the financial statements to be materially misstated, include:

- The accuracy with which the expected results of substantive analytical procedures can be predicted. For example, the auditor may expect greater consistency in comparing gross profit margins from one period to another than in comparing discretionary expenses, such as research or advertising.

- The degree to which information can be disaggregated. For example, analytical procedures may be more effective when applied to financial information on


\(^6\) [Proposed] ISA 500 (Redrafted), paragraph 12.
individual sections of an operation or to financial statements of components of a diversified entity, than when applied to the financial statements of the entity as a whole.

- The availability of the information, both financial and non-financial. For example, the auditor may consider whether financial information, such as budgets or forecasts, and non-financial information, such as the number of units produced or sold, is available to design substantive analytical procedures. If the information is available, the auditor may also consider the reliability of the information as discussed in paragraphs A12 and A13 above.

**Amount of Difference of Recorded Amounts from Expected Values that is Acceptable (Ref: Para. 5(d))**

A15. The auditor’s determination of the amount of difference from expectation that can be accepted without further investigation is influenced by materiality\(^7\) and the consistency with the desired level of assurance, taking account of the possibility that a misstatement, when aggregated with other misstatements, may cause the financial statements to be materially misstated. ISA 330 (Redrafted) requires the auditor to obtain more persuasive audit evidence the higher the auditor’s assessment of risk.\(^8\) Accordingly, as the assessed risk increases, the amount of difference considered acceptable without investigation decreases in order to achieve the desired level of persuasive evidence.

A16. The matters discussed in paragraphs A12(a) – A12(d) are relevant irrespective of whether the auditor performs substantive analytical procedures on the entity’s period end financial statements, or at an interim date and plans to perform substantive analytical procedures with respect to the intervening period as part of the period end. ISA 330 (Redrafted)\(^9\) establishes requirements and provides guidance on substantive procedures performed at an interim date.

**Analytical Procedures that Assist in Drawing Reasonable Conclusions (Ref: Para. 6)**

A17. The conclusions drawn from the results of analytical procedures designed and performed in accordance with paragraph 6 are intended to corroborate conclusions formed during the audit of individual components or elements of the financial statements. This assists the auditor to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor’s opinion.

A18. The results of such analytical procedures may identify a previously unrecognized risk of material misstatement. In such circumstances, ISA 315 (Redrafted) requires the auditor to revise the auditor’s assessment of the risks of material misstatement and modify the further planned audit procedures accordingly.\(^10\)

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\(^7\) ISA 320 (Revised and Redrafted), “Materiality in Planning and Performing an Audit,” paragraph A13.
\(^8\) ISA 330 (Redrafted), paragraph 7(b).
\(^9\) ISA 330 (Redrafted), paragraphs 23-24.
\(^10\) ISA 315 (Redrafted), paragraph 30.
A19. The analytical procedures performed in accordance with paragraph 6 may be similar to those that would be used as risk assessment procedures.

**Investigating Results of Analytical Procedures** (Ref: Para. 7)

A20. Audit evidence relevant to management’s responses may be obtained by evaluating those responses taking into account the auditor’s understanding of the entity and its environment, and with other audit evidence obtained during the course of the audit.

A21. The need to perform other audit procedures may arise when, for example, management is unable to provide an explanation, or the explanation, together with the audit evidence obtained relevant to management’s response, is not considered adequate.
CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO OTHER ISAs

ISA 315 (Redrafted), “Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement Through Understanding the Entity and Its Environment”

Analytical Procedures

A7. Analytical procedures performed as risk assessment procedures may identify aspects of the entity of which the auditor was unaware and may assist in assessing the risks of material misstatement in order to provide a basis for designing and implementing responses to the assessed risks. Analytical procedures performed as risk assessment procedures may include both financial and non-financial information, for example, the relationship between sales and square footage of selling space or volume of goods sold. [ISSUE A]

A78. Analytical procedures may help identify the existence of unusual transactions or events, and amounts, ratios, and trends that might indicate matters that have audit implications. Unusual or unexpected relationships that are identified may assist the auditor in identifying risks of material misstatement, especially risks of material misstatement due to fraud.

A89. However, when such analytical procedures use data aggregated at a high level (which may be the situation with analytical procedures performed as risk assessment procedures), the results of those analytical procedures only provide a broad initial indication about whether a material misstatement may exist. Accordingly, in such cases, consideration of other information that has been gathered when identifying the risks of material misstatement together with the results of such analytical procedures may assist the auditor in understanding and evaluating the results of the analytical procedures. ISA 520, “Analytical Procedures,” establishes requirements and provides guidance on the use of analytical procedures.

Considerations Specific to Smaller Entities

A10. Some smaller entities may not have interim or monthly financial information that can be used for purposes of analytical procedures. In these circumstances, although the auditor may be able to perform limited analytical procedures for purposes of planning the audit or obtain some information through inquiry, the auditor may need to plan to perform analytical procedures to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement when an early draft of the entity’s financial statements is available.

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