

IESBA Technology Initiative



April 2021 Update

In March 2021, the IESBA reflected on the progress made to date on its Technology Initiative, and considered next steps and timing, also recognizing the increased burdens stakeholders have shouldered as a result of the pandemic.

Major developments in technology are having a transformative effect on the global accountancy profession. In March 2020, the IESBA commenced a project to explore enhancements to the [International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants \(including International Independence Standards\) \(the Code\)](#) so that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

The project was informed by the findings and recommendations of the [IESBA Technology Phase 1 Report](#). The 2020 report summarized the IESBA's information gathering, analysis and impact of trends and developments in artificial intelligence, (AI) big data and data analytics on the ethical behavior of accountants, both in business and in public practice. The [project plan](#) contemplated a multi-phased approach and anticipated IESBA approval of an Exposure Draft (ED) in June 2021.

Targeted stakeholder outreach in 2020 indicated a need to focus on a broader range of technology developments.



Instead of a multi-phase approach that progresses specific types of technology as part of each phase, responsive to stakeholder suggestions, the IESBA asked that the Task Force develop the technology-related revisions to the Code in a more holistic manner and that such revisions should be principles-based.

Furthermore, the IESBA identified a pressing need for technology-related guidance and educational materials to help stakeholders in dealing with ethics and independence issues that arise from using technology-based platforms and tools that were put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To enable agile and accelerated responses to stakeholder needs, the IESBA agreed to an updated pathway.

Multiple Work Streams

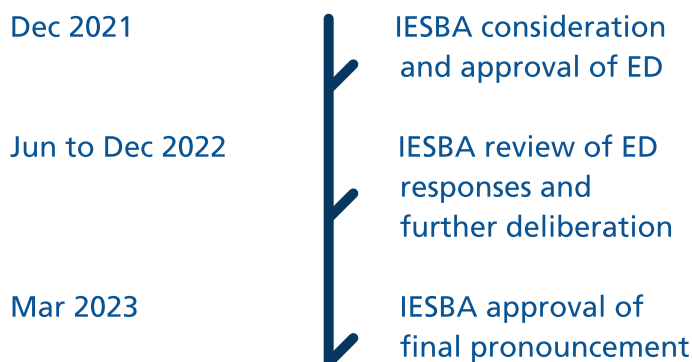
Activities led by Technology Task Force

- Develop technology-related revisions to the Code using a holistic and principles-based approach covering a broad range of technology developments.
 - Better supports the goal of establishing technology-related revisions that remain relevant and fit for purpose as technology continues to evolve.
 - Involves a short-term deferral of the ED to help alleviate the current pandemic-related pressure on stakeholders.

Activities led by Technology Working Group

- Develop and release technology-related non-authoritative material (NAM).
 - Responds to stakeholder calls for guidance.
 - Includes developing and issuing at least four piece NAM on prioritized topics during 2021, either directly or in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Fact finding and information gathering on the broader technology environment will be progressed to feed into the development of the ED.

Revised timeline for revisions to the Code



Learn more

[Access March 2021 IESBA Agenda Materials](#)

[Working Group Approved Terms of Reference \(March 2021\)](#)

[IESBA Technology Initiative Project History Page](#)