

Meeting: IESBA CAG
Meeting Location: New York, NY
Meeting Date: September 9, 2019

Agenda Item G2.2

eCode Update

Objective

1. To receive an update on the eCode initiative.

Background

2. With the release of the [International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants \(including International Independence Standards\)](#) (“the revised and restructured Code” or “the Code”), the IESBA is committed to taking steps to support the Code’s adoption and effective implementation. The eCode is an innovative way to enhance access to and use of the Code, and to respond to stakeholders’ requests for tools aimed at facilitating learning, compliance and enforcement of the Code.
3. At its March 2019 meeting, the CAG provided feedback on the developing eCode to inform refinements for launch and/or future phases of the product.
4. Phase 1 of the eCode was successfully launched in June 2019. The eCode is accessible to everyone, on any device, and for free (www.IESBAeCode.org/). An eCode icon (as shown) was developed to facilitate creating a quick link on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet.



Activity since the March 2019 Meeting

5. Following the March meeting, the Working Group (WG) considered feedback from the IESBA, the CAG, beta testers and participants from the May 2019 IESBA NSS meeting.
6. The WG made the following key refinements to the eCode, taking into account all feedback received:
 - Search
 - i. Search results are ordered by paragraph number;
 - ii. A strict search using Boolean operators is an advanced search feature;
 - iii. Moved the list of prohibitions to the search page, and enabled filtering by Part, whilst retaining appropriate introductory language to caveat such a list;
 - iv. Included suggestions for alternate terms to consider (e.g., for bribe, consider searching for inducement);

- v. Created a link to Get Help with search from the Search page and added explanations to assist users make best use of the search options (including an explanation of the Boolean operators); and
 - vi. Bug fix to enable user to go back to search results easily.
- Finalized the approach for agreement of Terms of Use upon entry and adjusted the appearance of the permissions text so as to distinguish it from the text of the Code when copying and pasting.
 - Additional assistance in the Get Help section to assist users to make best use of the key features.
 - Pop-ups in the toolbox to assist users' understanding of the tools available.
 - Streamlined menu, with less emphasis on Parts 4A¹ and 4B² of the Code.
 - Bug fixes generally.

Promotion and Awareness Raising

7. A publication, [Preparing for the IESBA eCode](#), was released on April 8, 2019. The publication, which is essentially a status report, provides an overview of the initiative, highlights the eCode's key features and explains the timeline for launch.
8. An eCode postcard was made available as part of a spoiler alert and a webinar was held June 12, ahead of the launch.
9. Tutorial-styled [videos](#) introducing the eCode and video demonstrations of its key features are available on the IESBA website, and within the eCode.
10. The Accounting Today Podcast is also available on the IESBA website.
11. Phase 2 WG Chair, Brian Friedrich, was interviewed for an International Accounting Bulletin article on the eCode. He also presented a video segment highlighting the eCode for a forthcoming ACCA ethics CPD course.
12. The IESBA and IFAC are planning additional extensive promotion over a year long period. This promotion will target all stakeholders, incorporate all communication channels and leverage the IESBA's and IFAC's collective networks.
13. The eCode was promoted at several conferences and outreach meetings during the year, including the Forum of Firms meeting in Tokyo, Japan; the IESBA-National Standard Setters (NSS) meeting and Less Complex Entity (LCE) Conference in Paris, France; the CReCER 2019 Conference in San José, Costa Rica; the AAA's Annual Ethics Symposium; and outreach in France and Russia.
14. The IESBA continues to welcome feedback from all stakeholders via email at IESBAeCode@ethicsboard.org. In particular, views are sought about usability features, national adoption of the eCode platform, and areas for further improvement from firms, national standard setters, regulators and audit oversight bodies, professional accountancy organizations, investors and academia. CAG representatives are encouraged to use and help promote the eCode.

¹ Part 4A, *Independence for Audit and Review Engagements*

² Part 4B, *Independence for Assurance Engagements Other Than Audit and Review Engagements*

Next Steps

15. The eCode initiative continues as Phase 2, which involves considering new features, exploring ways to transfer the platform to selected NSS, and streamlining operations and maintenance activities in collaboration with IFAC.

New Features

16. The Phase 2 Working Group (WG) has developed a “wish list” of possible new, or enhancements to existing, features and is seeking information about the associated costs from the developer. This “wish list” includes functionality tied to the ability to transfer the platform externally, as well as additional items such as:
 - Adding an effective date filter to enable users to travel between versions of the Code as it is updated.
 - Developing a more efficient way to copy, print, and share multiple paragraphs.
 - Adding an option to expand all accordions in the Menu.
 - Adding a Forthcoming Pronouncements page linked from the Menu.
 - Considering additional types of non-authoritative material that may be linked (e.g., non-IESBA publications).
 - Adding a filter to distinguish between PIE and non-PIE paragraphs, although this will be deferred for further consideration as the Non-assurance services and Fees projects evolve.

Transfer Platform

17. IFAC has successfully finalized the intellectual property (IP) agreements with the developer, confirming that IFAC has ownership of the relevant IP associated with the eCode.
18. IFAC is working to finalize IP agreements for sharing the eCode platform with third parties, including the system and support specifications necessary to host and manage the eCode.

Maintenance

19. The WG is monitoring usage of the eCode since launch. If and when maintenance work is identified, it will be actioned. Maintenance work and monitoring will be ongoing.
20. The WG plans to progress work on the new features as needed. The target date for the effective date filter is mid-2020, ready for use when the forthcoming Part 4B amendments are expected to be approved for issue. Timing on implementing the other new features identified is subject to the Working Group’s negotiations with the developer, as well as available resources. Work to pilot test sharing the eCode platform is tentatively planned for Q4 2019.

Action Requested

21. Representatives are asked to note the update of the eCode initiative.