
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY BOARD FOR AUDITORS
COMMITTEE FOR AUDITING STANDARDS

The IRBA Issues the Updated South African Assurance Engagements Practice Statement 1, *Sustainability Assurance Engagements: Rational Purpose, Appropriateness of Underlying Subject Matter and Suitability of Criteria*

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The Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors' (IRBA) Committee for Auditing Standards (CFAS) has approved for issue the updated South African Assurance Engagements Practice Statement (SAAEPS) 1, *Sustainability Assurance Engagements: Rational Purpose, Appropriateness of Underlying Subject Matter and Suitability of Criteria* (SAAEPS 1), for use by practitioners.

SAAEPS 1 was issued for use by practitioners on [5 September 2018](#), effective for the Acceptance and Continuance - Preconditions for the Assurance Engagement phase of the sustainability assurance engagement for reporting periods beginning on or after 15 December 2020, with early adoption permitted. The effective date for the updated SAAEPS 1 remains the same as that of SAAEPS 1.

The updated SAAEPS 1 is aimed at providing practical assistance to practitioners on certain preconditions that need to be present when requested to accept a sustainability assurance engagement in accordance with the requirements of the International Standards on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3000 (Revised), *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information*.

An extended period of two years was provided before the effective date of SAAEPS 1 to give practitioners time to prepare for its implementation, receive training, implement it and then [provide feedback to the IRBA](#) on any implementation lessons. Also, the extended effective date allowed time for preparers of sustainability reports to receive training on the content of SAAEPS 1, as it relates to them.

Subsequent to the original issue of SAAEPS 1 in September 2018, SAAEPS 1 has been updated based on feedback from practitioners and other interested parties as follows:

- Tabulated questions contained in SAAEPS 1:
 - The questions have been converted into considerations that may assist the practitioner in making professional judgments in determining whether the sustainability assurance engagement exhibits the characteristics set out in the objective paragraph of SAAEPS 1, thereby easing the responsibility on practitioners to answer the questions, with corresponding changes made throughout.
- The extent of work to be performed during this pre-engagement stage of the assurance engagement:
 - Paragraph 12 of SAAEPS 1 has been updated to acknowledge that, for example, when the sustainability assurance engagement is an initial engagement, it is likely that the work effort to determine whether the preconditions are present may be

greater than in the case of a continuing engagement. This is especially so when the entity's process to prepare the sustainability report is in the early stages and still evolving, or when the sustainability assurance engagement is complex.

The effective date of SAAEPS 1 remains unchanged and early adoption is allowed.

The updated SAAEPS 1 is available in PDF and Word formats and may be downloaded from the IRBA website at www.irba.co.za. Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Standards Department by emailing standards@irba.co.za.

Imran Vanker

Director: Standards

About the IRBA

The objective of the IRBA is to endeavour to protect the financial interests of the South African public and international investors in South Africa through the effective and appropriate regulation of audits conducted by registered auditors, in accordance with internationally recognised standards and processes.

The statutory responsibilities of the CFAS are to assist the IRBA to develop, maintain, adopt, issue or prescribe auditing pronouncements; to consider relevant international changes by monitoring developments by other auditing standard-setting bodies and sharing information where requested; and to promote and ensure the relevance of auditing pronouncements.