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**INDEPENDENT REGULATORY BOARD FOR AUDITORS**  
**COMMITTEE FOR AUDITING STANDARDS**

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**Reminder: IRBA seeks feedback on implementing SAAEPS 1**

Johannesburg / 26 June 2019

**Background**

The Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors' (IRBA) Committee for Auditing Standards (CFAS) approved the issuing of the South African Assurance Engagements Practice Statement (SAAEPS) 1, *Sustainability Assurance Engagements: Rational Purpose, Appropriateness of Underlying Subject Matter and Suitability of Criteria* (SAAEPS 1), in August 2018 for use by practitioners.

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*. The characteristics dealt with in SAAEPS 1 are whether the sustainability assurance engagement exhibits:

- A rational purpose;
- That the underlying subject matter is appropriate; and
- That the criteria that the practitioner expects to be applied in the preparation of the subject matter information are suitable for the engagement circumstances.

The preparation of appropriate engagement documentation is emphasised.

The guidance is supplemented by a series of questions that the practitioner may ask. After receiving feedback from the reporting entity, the practitioner may consider the responses collectively to determine whether the sustainability assurance engagement exhibits the characteristics set out in the objective paragraph of SAAEPS 1.

**Effective date**

SAAEPS 1 is 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. Early adoption is permitted.

Two years were provided to allow time for practitioners to prepare for and implement the guidance, receive training and provide feedback to the IRBA on any implementation lessons. This timeframe also allows time for preparers of sustainability reports to receive training on the content of SAAEPS 1, as it relates to them.

## Providing feedback on implementing SAAEPS 1

Should you have any comments on implementing SAAEPS 1, please contact the Standards Department by email at [standards@irba.co.za](mailto:standards@irba.co.za). Please provide your feedback by **15 December 2019**.

To assist you with providing feedback on implementing SAAEPS 1, please consider responding to the following questions:

<p>1. Have you/has your firm raised awareness and developed/presented training to assurance practitioners on SAAEPS 1 so that the guidance it contains can be readily implemented by assurance practitioners? If not, what other initiative have you/your firm taken? And/or, how do you/your firm propose to raise awareness among assurance practitioners on SAAEPS 1?</p>
<p><b>Response:</b></p>
<p>2. In your/your firm's preparations to implement SAAEPS 1, what initiatives have you taken so as to be able to provide feedback to the IRBA on lessons learnt regarding any specific aspects of SAAEPS 1? If none, what initiatives do you/your firm plan to take in order to be able to provide feedback to the IRBA on lessons learnt regarding any specific aspects of SAAEPS 1?</p>
<p><b>Response:</b></p>
<p>3. Are there any specific aspects of SAAEPS 1 that you have found helpful? If so, please provide a description thereof and why.</p>
<p><b>Response:</b></p>
<p>4. Are there any specific aspects of SAAEPS 1 that create implementation challenges to you/your firm/your client(s) in practice? If so, are there particular enhancements to SAAEPS 1 or support materials that would assist in addressing these challenges?</p>
<p><b>Response:</b></p>

## **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.*