



ISSA 5000 and IESSA™: Global Baseline Standards for Sustainability Assurance



FACT SHEET JANUARY 2025

WHAT IS ISSA 5000 and the IESSA?

ISSA 5000¹ and **IESSA**² constitute a cohesive package of global standards for **sustainability assurance** that responds to market demand and calls from regulators and other stakeholders for reliable, credible, comparable, and trustworthy sustainability information. The **IAASB**'s overarching sustainability assurance standard **ISSA 5000** provides robust requirements that support the consistent performance of quality limited or reasonable assurance engagements, underpinned by firms' systems of quality management, in accordance with the IAASB's ISQM 1.³ The **IESBA**'s **IESSA** provides a robust and clear framework for ethics and independence requirements for sustainability assurance engagements. It underpins the ethical mindset, behavior and independence of sustainability assurance practitioners as a foundation to the delivery of quality sustainability assurance engagements and for public trust in their assurance reports.

RELIABLE, CREDIBLE, COMPARABLE, AND TRUSTWORTHY SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION TO SUPPORT USERS' DECISIONS

The IAASB and IESBA® closely coordinated to develop innovative, fit-for-purpose, and interoperable global baseline sustainability assurance standards and ethics and independence standards for sustainability reporting and assurance. ISSA 5000 and the IESBA Code of Ethics⁴ (including IESSA), together with suitable reporting frameworks, provide the standards needed for a robust sustainability reporting and assurance ecosystem.



WHO DO THE STANDARDS APPLY TO?

- All sustainability assurance practitioners, including professional accountants and other practitioners, conducting sustainability assurance engagements
- All sustainability assurance practitioners who use the work of an external expert in their sustainability assurance engagements

The IESBA has also revised its Code of Ethics for professional accountants who prepare or present sustainability information (including when using the work of an external expert). See the IESBA's Sustainability Reporting fact sheet.

The IESBA's new standard on Using the Work of an External Expert also applies to professional accountants for other, non-sustainability-related activities. See the IESBA's Experts fact sheet.

Learn More Through These Additional Fact Sheets:

IESBA IESSA		IESBA Experts	
IESBA Sustainability Reporting		IAASB ISSA 5000	

¹ International Standard on Sustainability Assurance™ 5000, *General Requirements for Sustainability Assurance Engagements*

² *International Ethics Standards for Sustainability Assurance™ (including International Independence Standards™)*

³ International Standard on Quality Management 1, *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements*

⁴ International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants™ (including International Independence Standards™)

WHY WERE THE STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

Sharp rise in market and public demand for sustainability information in recent years.



Sustainability information is increasingly used to support not only capital allocation by investors, but also decisions by other stakeholders including lenders, customers, suppliers, employees, government, regulators and interest groups.

Rapidly increasing amount of readily available sustainability information, including mandatory reporting and assurance of such information.



Evolving area of reporting with systems and processes that may still be under development leading to increased risk of fraud (including greenwashing) or error.

Pressing public interest need for sustainability information that is reliable, credible, comparable and trustworthy, and therefore capable of being subject to assurance.



HOW DO THE STANDARDS ADDRESS THE PUBLIC INTEREST?

IESBA Code of Ethics

Together with the IESSA, the IESBA's Code of Ethics also provides a robust ethics framework addressing the ethical mindset and behaviors of professional accountants preparing or presenting sustainability information, including when they use the work of an external expert. See the IESBA's Sustainability Reporting fact sheet.

ISSA 5000

Assurance engagements on sustainability information that are conducted under ISSA 5000 enhance intended users' confidence in that information. Assurance engagements also add transparency regarding any identified material misstatements or limitations on obtaining sufficient appropriate evidence in support of entities' reported information. Assurance under ISSA 5000 is underpinned by the firm's system of quality management and the practitioner's ethical behavior and independence in compliance with ISQM 1 and the IESBA Code of Ethics, or equivalents. See the IAASB's ISSA 5000 fact sheet.

IESSA (Part 5, IESBA Code of Ethics)

The IESSA, including the standard addressing using the work of an external expert, provides a robust ethics and independence framework that supports the proper conduct and independence of sustainability assurance practitioners globally. The IESSA is included in the IESBA Code of Ethics as a standalone part and is based upon the existing and tested ethics and independence provisions for audits of financial statements. See the IESBA's Sustainability Assurance and Experts fact sheets.

GOALS OF ISSA 5000 and IESSA

Cohesive package of standards

- After robust and close coordination, the IAASB and IESBA developed comprehensive global standards for assurance, ethics, and independence for sustainability assurance engagements:
 - ISSA 5000 is premised on sustainability assurance practitioners complying with ISQM 1 for quality management, and the IESBA Code of Ethics (including independence), or requirements that are at least as demanding. ISSA 5000 sets requirements for the performance of a sustainability assurance engagement that covers all elements of an engagement, from preliminary engagement activities, acceptance and continuance of an engagement, and planning, through to designing and performing procedures, and concluding and issuing an assurance report.
 - The IESSA (contained in a new Part 5 of the IESBA Code of Ethics) supports trustworthy engagements under ISSA 5000 by establishing the ethical mindset, behaviors and independence required of assurance practitioners when performing sustainability assurance engagements.
 - ISSA 5000 and IESSA provide a robust and cohesive package of standards for sustainability assurance which is equivalent to the IAASB standards and IESBA Code of Ethics requirements for audits or reviews of financial statements.

Global baseline and level playing field

- ISSA 5000 and IESSA meet market demand and regulatory calls for profession-agnostic global standards from the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), Financial Stability Board (FSB), and the Public Interest Oversight Board (PIOB).
- The standards bolster the public interest by providing all sustainability assurance practitioners, irrespective of their backgrounds, a global baseline of robust assurance and ethics (including independence) requirements when undertaking sustainability assurance engagements that enhance the trust and confidence of intended users about entities' general-purpose sustainability reporting.

Framework-neutral standards

- ISSA 5000 and IESSA can be applied in relation to sustainability information prepared under any suitable sustainability reporting framework.⁵ The standards can be applied globally across frameworks that may apply in each region or jurisdiction.

Support informed decisions based on trusted, independently assured sustainability information

- Robust assurance, ethics, and independence standards support reliable, credible, comparable and trustworthy sustainability information. Reported sustainability information is more trusted when it has been subject to assurance in accordance with globally accepted assurance, ethics, and independence standards.
- ISSA 5000 and IESSA meet the information needs of intended users, whether the reporting framework is intended to inform investors' capital allocation decisions or users' concerns about an entity's sustainability-related impacts.

Address risks of fraud, including greenwashing, and non-compliance with laws or regulations™

- Assurance, ethics, and independence standards play a crucial role in addressing the risks of fraud, including greenwashing, and non-compliance with laws or regulations™ (NOCLAR®), in sustainability reporting.

⁵ For example, the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards, European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Integrated reporting.

15 DECEMBER 2026

EFFECTIVE DATE AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

ISSA 5000 will be effective for assurance engagements on sustainability information reported for periods beginning on or after **December 15, 2026**, or reported as at a specific date on or after **December 15, 2026**.

The IESSA has the same effective date, except for certain provisions pertaining to **value chain components**, which will be effective from **July 1, 2028**. The IESSA also provides some transitional provisions.



IFEA

International Foundation for Ethics and Audit

ABOUT IFEA

The International Foundation for Ethics and Audit (IFEA) is a nonprofit organization that supports high-quality, international standard setting in ethics, audit, and assurance in the public interest. IFEA fulfills its mission through its two standard-setting boards, the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants®.



View IAASB Sustainability Assurance focus page here.



View IESBA Sustainability Reporting and Assurance focus page here.



About IAASB



IAASB

International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board
AN IFEA BOARD

The IAASB is an independent standard-setting body that serves the public interest by setting high-quality international standards for auditing, quality management, review, other assurance, and related services. These standards are used in more than 130 jurisdictions to enhance the quality and uniformity of audit and assurance engagements and strengthening public confidence in markets and economies.

About IESBA



IESBA

International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants
AN IFEA BOARD

The IESBA sets high-quality, international ethics (including independence) standards as a cornerstone to ethical behavior in business and organizations, and to public trust in financial and non-financial information that is fundamental to the proper functioning and sustainability of organizations, financial markets, and economies worldwide.

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