

IESBA SMART Framework

Executive Summary

The SMART Framework provides a practical system to strengthen how the IESBA plans, delivers, and communicates its work. It translates strategic objectives into consistent, and ideally measurable practices aimed at making every project clear, actionable with a front focus on impact and stakeholders.

SMART is built around five mutually reinforcing pillars: Simplification, Mobilization, Adoption, Responsiveness, and Targeted Action. Together these enhance the Board's capacity to serve the public interest and enable ethical decision-making worldwide.

Each pillar contains a set of Guidelines (principles to be followed) with associated Checklists (operational conditions to ensure alignment).

To support its implementation, the Framework is supported by a Fast-Track SMART Checklist, which distills 15 core actions that every project must meet.

The SMART Framework aligns with the [Public Interest Framework](#) that governs IESBA standard-setting work. It ensures clarity, proportionality, and accountability across all activities, promoting coherence among technical development, communication, and stakeholder engagement.

1. Vision for IESBA SMART

For IESBA to serve as the global standard-setter enabling ethical decision-making through effective influence.

SMART five pillars:

Simplification: Promoting clarity, usability, and proportionality across IESBA's standards, communications, and internal processes, ensuring that every output is understandable, efficient, and fit for purpose.

Mobilization: Enhancing impact through collaboration and partnerships by building strong networks, co-owned initiatives, and shared advocacy for ethics in business, finance and public practice.

Adoption: Driving consistent uptake and implementation of the IESBA Code by fostering stakeholder commitment, offering tailored support, and demonstrating public-interest value.

Responsiveness: Ensuring timely, transparent, and evidence-based decisions that reflect stakeholder input, diverse perspectives, and emerging developments.

Targeted Action: Focusing where impact is greatest through data-driven prioritization, proportionate engagement, and a deeper understanding of stakeholders' needs and contexts.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Simplification: Promoting clarity, usability, and proportionality

Guidelines

Each project, process, and communication should be:

- **Purpose-Driven:** Each output demonstrates its relevance to the public interest and the ethical outcomes it seeks to promote.
- **Coherent:** IESBA's communications and processes follow a unified logic, tone, and structure that reinforce one another.
- **Proportionate:** Activities are calibrated to expected impact, resource needs, and the level of risk or stakeholder relevance.
- **Understandable:** Language and structure are clear and accessible, balancing simplicity with precision.
- **Efficient:** Shared tools and workflows foster collective efficiency and reduce duplication.
- **Usable:** The Code, website, and supporting materials are designed for easy navigation, comprehension, and implementation by diverse users.

PIF Characteristics: Clarity and Conciseness · Coherence · Relevance · Implementability · Timeliness · Scalability

2.2 Mobilization: Enhancing impact through collaboration and partnerships

Guidelines

Each project should ensure:

- **Value Proposition:** Engagement and communication highlight the urgency for change and the benefits of ethical standards for stakeholders, supported by examples or data where possible.
- **Unified Voice:** IESBA's messages consistently reflect a shared understanding of the Code, its purpose, and its public-interest value.

- **Partnerships:** Work is supported by sustained relationships with key stakeholders and alliances that strengthen adoption and influence.
- **Stakeholder Empowerment:** Initiatives are planned for activation over time, using targeted channels and tailored materials that help different groups act on IESBA's work.

PIF Characteristics: Relevance · Coherence · Implementability · Timeliness · Consistency

2.3. Adoption: Driving consistent uptake and implementation

Guidelines

Each adoption strategy is built on:

- **Clear Value Proposition:** The rationale and benefits of each standard are defined in public-interest terms, balancing costs and expected impact in a risk management logic and tailoring it to stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder and Jurisdictional Prioritization:** Adoption plans are informed by IESBA priorities and early mapping jurisdiction and key enforcement and adoption actors, considering jurisdictional size, readiness, and influence.
- **Realistic Objectives:** Goals are specific, measurable, and updated as adoption pathways, reflecting different regulatory cycles and existing capacities.
- **Coherent Communication and Outreach:** Efforts emphasize benefits and success stories, maintaining consistent positive framing across audiences.
- **Tailored Implementation Support:** When possible, tools and materials are adapted to the needs of different jurisdictions and user groups, facilitating practical adoption.

PIF Characteristics: Relevance · Scalability · Implementability · Completeness · Accountability · Coherence · Timeliness

2.4. Responsiveness: Ensuring timely, transparent, and evidence-based decisions

Guidelines

Each project should demonstrate:

- **Transparency and Clarity:** IESBA decisions clearly explain how feedback and evidence were considered and balanced.
- **Inclusivity:** Processes ensure diverse participation across geographies, market types, and professions.
- **Timeliness:** Stakeholders receive responses and updates while issues remain current and relevant.
- **Accountability:** All feedback receives due consideration and reasoned responses, reinforcing confidence in IESBA's processes.
- **Feedback Loop:** Lessons from consultations and outreach are captured systematically to inform future work and continuous improvement.

PIF Characteristics: Transparency · Inclusivity · Accountability · Clarity · Timeliness · Completeness

2.5. Targeted Action: Focusing where impact is greatest

Guidelines

Each project should apply:

- **Jurisdictional and Stakeholder Specificities:** Adoption Plans are supported by stakeholder and jurisdictional mapping that considers influence, needs, and capacities of stakeholders and desired public-interest outcomes.
- **Regional Sensitivity:** Strategies and messages respect cultural and jurisdictional contexts without compromising global consistency.
- **Evidence-Informed Decisions:** Planning and outreach are guided by reliable data, research, and stakeholder insight rather than perception.
- **Proportionate Engagement:** The intensity of outreach matches the scale and systemic importance of the issue at hand.

PIF Characteristics: Relevance · Completeness · Proportionality · Scalability · Consistency · Implementability

3. Fast-Track SMART - 15 Core Actions Every Project Must Meet

The Fast-Track SMART distills the 46 operational checks into 15 essential practices that every IESBA project must demonstrate. These represent the minimum common standards of quality, coherence, and accountability across all pillars.

Simplification: Promoting clarity, usability, and proportionality

1. **Objectives and strategic direction are clearly defined and aligned with IESBA's mission:** Every project begins with a concise statement of purpose showing how it serves the public interest and fits within IESBA's strategic goals.
2. **Key messages are presented up front in concise, accessible summaries:** Each document or presentation opens with a short overview that allows both experts and non-technical readers to understand the essence of the project and expected benefits for the 4 key stakeholders groups.
3. **Proportionality between scope, effort, and expected impact is explicitly assessed:** The project plan calibrates time, resources, and complexity to the importance and risk of the issue, avoiding unnecessary detail or over-engineering.

Mobilization: Enhancing impact through collaboration and partnerships

1. **The project's value proposition is defined and tailored to each key stakeholder group:** Communication materials explain why the project matters and what tangible benefits it brings to regulators, PAOs, firms, and other audiences.
2. **Key partners and networks are identified early and engaged throughout the project:** Partnerships are planned from the outset, with clear expectations and ongoing collaboration rather than one-off interactions.
3. **Results and visibility are tracked through measurable outreach indicators:** The team monitors engagement data — such as participation, citations, social media and media coverage — to understand reach and refine mobilization.

Adoption: Driving consistent uptake and implementation

1. **Priority jurisdictions and stakeholders are mapped and kept updated:** Jurisdictional Profiles identifying where and by whom IESBA standards are

adopted or influenced are kept updated, guiding targeted Communication, engagement and outreach.

2. **Adoption risks and constraints are assessed and mitigated through clear actions:** Barriers such as regulatory gaps or limited capacity are analyzed, with transitional measures or support materials planned in response.
3. **Adoption and implementation toolkits and support materials are available and fit for purpose:** Each project provides practical resources – fact sheets, examples, Q&A, webinars – enabling jurisdictions to adopt and users to apply the standards effectively.

Responsiveness: Ensuring timely, transparent, and evidence-based decisions

1. **Feedback mechanisms are established and communicated, and responses are tracked and publicized for transparency:** Consultations, surveys, or feedback forms are systematically used, and outcomes are documented to show how stakeholders input shaped decisions.
2. **IESBA's rationale and actions are clearly communicated after each consultation:** Public summaries or "What We Heard / What We Changed" templates explain decisions in plain language, reinforcing trust in due process.
3. **Project leaders monitor stakeholder reactions and escalate significant issues:** Designated leads follow reactions across regions and organizations, ensuring that emerging misunderstandings or concerns are promptly addressed.

Targeted Action: Focusing where impact is greatest

1. **Stakeholders and jurisdictions are mapped based on influence and public-interest impact:** Projects identify who has authority, capacity, or influence to drive change, focusing on where it can make the greatest difference.
2. **Prioritization decisions are data-driven, transparent, and documented:** Evidence such as market size, outreach metrics, supports why specific issues or audiences are prioritized.
3. **Emerging issues and adoption data are reviewed annually to adjust outreach priorities:** The team conducts regular yearly reviews of feedback, trends, and adoption progress to ensure IESBA's work remains relevant and forward-looking.

Annex I: SMART Checklists

The following operational conditions help ensure adherence to the guidelines that support each of the 5 pillars of the SMART Framework.

Simplification Checklist:

Each project demonstrates that:

1. Objectives and strategic direction are clearly defined in one opening section, showing how the project contributes to IESBA's mission and public interest.
2. Key messages are presented up front through short summaries or visuals so that both technical and non-technical readers can grasp them immediately.
3. Language is plain, accurate, and audience-appropriate, avoiding unnecessary jargon, acronyms and adapting tone and depth to the communication channel and audience.
4. All technical terms and references are explained or linked to definitions in supporting documents or appendices to ensure accessibility.
5. Content follows a layered structure, moving from general principles to technical details, so it can be reused across presentations, web pages, or reports.
6. Proportionality is explicitly assessed at the start of planning, ensuring that complexity and resources match expected impact and risk level.
7. Shared tools and templates are used consistently to ensure efficiency and visual coherence across outputs.
8. Team roles, feedback loops, and deadlines are clearly planned and communicated to the ones impacted, so everyone knows what is expected, when, and how.
9. Board and staff materials are concise and action-oriented, focusing on decision points and removing repeated background text.
10. Outputs are tested for usability, for example through quick reviews by non-technical readers or stakeholder pilots before publication.

Mobilization Checklist

Each project ensures that:

1. The issue and proposed solution are articulated clearly in every outreach material, using short, evidence-based arguments.
2. The value proposition is customized for each audience (PAOs, regulators, firms, academics, etc.) and supported by relevant examples or data answering “what’s in it for each of them”.
3. Partnerships were considered, exploring key networks and allies early, outlining roles, expectations, and opportunities for co-ownership of activities.
4. Partners are visibly recognized and kept engaged through co-branded materials, shared events, or follow-up acknowledgments.
5. Communication materials are adaptable for local contexts, including editable slides, templates, and translated materials when possible.
6. Mobilization activities include qualitative and quantitative performance indicators and objectives, such as number of events, citations, or joint statements achieved.
7. Results and visibility are tracked and registered through analytics (attendance, mentions, reposts, downloads) and reported back to the team.
8. Empowerment resources are made available when possible, enabling partners to use or adapt IESBA materials independently.
9. Lessons from outreach and partnerships are captured and circulated, feeding into future engagement planning.

Adoption Checklist

Each adoption effort demonstrates that:

1. Priority jurisdictions and stakeholder groups are decided based on influence, readiness, and relevance, and the jurisdictional profiles are kept updated over time.
2. The project’s value and expected benefits are clearly articulated in the public-interest rationale and summarized in communication materials.
3. Adoption risks and constraints are assessed (legal, capacity, resource) and, when possible, addressed through transitional guidance or complementary actions.
4. A standard “A&I toolkit” is prepared with examples, scenarios, FAQs, and explanations tailored to the audience.

5. Communication materials highlight the benefits of adoption (trust, comparability, risk mitigation) instead of focusing on compliance language.
6. Implementation aids are tailored to different user types, such as regulators, PAOs, firms, and educators.
7. Reliable data from IFAC, PAOs, or other partners informs prioritization and outreach priorities.
8. Project is considered and supported by the annual communication and stakeholder's engagement plan
9. Adoption progress is periodically reviewed with IFAC and PAO, promoting alignment of monitoring and reporting.
10. Early success stories and case studies are shared to encourage further uptake and recognize good practice.

Responsiveness Checklist

Each project demonstrates that:

1. The main drivers of the project are explicitly stated (e.g., regulatory change, emerging risk, stakeholder demand) and cited in all project documents.
2. Stakeholders are informed throughout the process about objectives, status, outreach plans and next steps using accessible summaries, briefings.
3. Formal feedback mechanisms are established, such as consultation forms, post-event surveys, or targeted follow-up discussions and clearly communicated to stakeholders.
4. All feedback is analyzed and summarized to show patterns, areas of agreement, and divergent views. That information can be shared.
5. IESBA's rationale and actions are clearly explained, showing how comments shaped the outcome or why alternatives were not adopted.
6. Project leaders monitor stakeholder reactions, escalate significant issues, and coordinate responses with leadership.
7. Key messages are checked for consistency across Board minutes, exposure drafts, web posts, and presentations to avoid contradictions.
8. Key consultation outcomes are communicated visibly, for example in "What We Heard / What We Changed" summaries.

9. Lessons from consultations and outreach are registered, reviewed after each major project, and shared internally to inform continuous improvement.

Targeted Action Checklist

Each project ensures that:

1. Stakeholders and jurisdictions are systematically mapped using criteria such as influence, readiness, and potential public-interest impact informing prioritization proposals.
2. Prioritization proposals are transparent and documented, linking resource allocation to ethical significance and stakeholder reach.
3. Quantitative and qualitative data are used to guide timing, focus, and outreach.
4. Engagement plans differentiate approaches for each group (e.g., regulators vs. preparers vs. PAOs) to ensure relevance.
5. Resources are deployed proportionally, focusing more effort where risk or potential impact is highest.
6. Information from outreach activities is registered, analyzed for trends, and feed back into planning cycles.
7. Emerging issues and adoption data are reviewed annually to adjust outreach priorities.
8. Cross-project insights are consolidated to identify systemic patterns and inform IESBA's work plan.