

Meeting: IESBA
Meeting Location: New York
Meeting Date: March 9-12, 2026

Agenda Item

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IESBA Risks and Opportunities

Objectives of the Agenda Item

1. To consider the results of the annual survey on external risks and opportunities potentially impacting IESBA's strategy, work plan and positioning.
2. To reflect on trends between 2025 and 2026, identify areas of increased intensity, emerging themes, or changing perceptions.
3. To assess strategic implications for IESBA's priorities, messaging, stakeholder engagement and standard-setting approach.

Results from 2025 and 2026 exercise

4. In 2025, IESBA introduced an annual horizon-scanning exercise to assess external risks and opportunities that may impact its strategy and work plan, structured around six PESTEL dimensions (Political; Economic; Social; Technological; Environmental; Legal).
5. The 2025 baseline highlighted regulatory and implementation-related pressures as the most significant risks, notably international backlash against regulation in some major jurisdictions, perceptions of undue compliance burden, and resistance to new requirements in a challenging global environment.
6. At the same time, respondents identified important opportunities in simplifying the use of the IESBA Code, strengthening engagement and partnerships, and positioning the Code as a stable global reference point that promotes consistency and trust.
7. Economic uncertainty and broader societal polarization were rated comparatively lower as immediate risks, and independence and sustainability were viewed as less prominent new opportunities.
8. For 2026, the updated survey reflects the evolving external landscape and the results will be presented at the meeting, with a focus on identifying shifts since the 2025 baseline, emerging themes, and potential implications for IESBA's action and priorities

Action Requested

9. IESBA members are invited to discuss the results of the 2026 survey in light of the 2025 baseline, reflecting on any significant shifts in intensity, emerging themes or evolving trends. In doing so, IESBA members are asked to identify priority external risks that may require closer monitoring or proactive mitigation, and to highlight strategic opportunities that IESBA should deliberately leverage in advancing its mandate.
10. The Board's discussion is also expected to provide guidance on whether any adjustments to messaging, stakeholder engagement or project prioritization may be warranted in response to the evolving external environment.