

Meetings: IAASB & IESBA Board Meetings

Meeting Locations: IAASB: New York (USA)
IESBA: Madrid (Spain)

Meeting Dates: IAASB: September 14–17, 2026
IESBA: September 14–18, 2026

Agenda Item 5-B

IAASB and IESBA Strategies and Work Plans (SWPs) – Overview and Initial Views from the Joint SWP Working Group and Staff

Purpose of Paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide:
 - (a) The Joint SWP Working Group and Staff's (JWG&S) high-level overview of the responses to the joint stakeholder survey (joint survey) (see **Agenda 5-A** for the full analysis of the responses); and
 - (b) Initial views from the JWG&S on matters for the IAASB and IESBA to consider in developing their respective Consultation Papers for their 2028–2031 SWPs.
2. During their respective sessions, the IAASB and IESBA (together referred to as the Standard-Setting Boards (SSBs)) will be asked to share views on the questions under “Matter for SSB Consideration” set out in this Agenda Item.

Introduction

Joint Survey

3. The SSBs released the joint survey in January 2026 for public input with a 114-day comment period which closed on May 15, 2026. The SSBs received [108 responses](#) from a diverse range of stakeholder groups and from all geographical regions, including responses from two Monitoring Group (MG) members.
4. In June 2026, Staff provided the SSBs a high-level, initial briefing on the responses received to the joint survey.¹ Since then, SSB Staff have prepared a full analysis of the responses to the joint survey which is presented in **Agenda Item 5-A**.

Materials Presented

5. This paper sets out an overview of the responses to the joint survey and the initial views of the JWG&S based on the feedback, in the following sections:

¹ See **Agenda Item 6** discussed by the [IAASB](#) and [IESBA](#) at their respective June 2026 meetings.

Section	Description
I	<i>SSBs' Strategic Positioning for 2028–2031</i>
II	<i>Key Trends Impacting the SSBs' Environment</i>
III	<i>Areas for Joint Actions in SSBs' Workplans</i>

6. The **Appendix** to this Agenda Item sets out the members and staff of the JWG&S. It also provides information on meetings and outreach activities undertaken since June 2026.

Further Outreach

7. The SSBs will seek input on the development of the SSBs' SWPs from the Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) at the SAC meeting in October 2026, including in relation to the SSBs' projects or work priorities to assist in establishing their appropriateness. The input received through consultation with the SAC will be communicated with the SSBs in December 2026.
8. After September 2026, the SSB Chairs and Staff will continue engaging with stakeholders as part of the SSBs' general outreach program to obtain views and inputs relevant to the SWPs for 2028–2031.

Section I – SSBs' Strategic Positioning for 2028–2031

9. Respondents to the joint survey were asked to provide views on what they believe the SSBs should aspire to achieve during their next strategy period 2028–2031 to best serve the public interest. This is within the context of a rapidly changing global environment while ensuring that the SSBs remain responsive and impactful in their standard-setting and other related work.
10. Respondents across stakeholder groups emphasized the need during the next strategy period for the SSBs to:
- Prioritize **adoption, implementation support and post-implementation reviews (PIRs)** of recently issued standards over undertaking significant new standard-setting activity to allow for a period of stability for changes to be absorbed.
 - Continue to develop **principles-based, proportionate and scalable standards** that are globally operable, able to stand the test of time and supported by practical non-authoritative guidance where appropriate.
 - Maintain **agility through horizon scanning, evidence-based prioritization and timely responses to emerging issues**, particularly given the increased use of emerging technologies.
 - Strengthen early and ongoing coordination between the IAASB, the IESBA and the broader international regulatory and standard-setting ecosystem to **enhance interoperability, consistency of implementation, and global acceptance of their standards**.
 - **Broaden stakeholder engagement and increase due process transparency** around how stakeholder feedback informs strategic priorities and standard-setting decisions.
 - Assess the **effectiveness of the standard-setting process and the evidence on which it**

is based.

11. Because the themes from the feedback outlined above are overarching and cross-cutting in nature, the JWG&S are of the view that the SSBs should address these points when developing their Consultation Papers for the next strategy period. Stakeholders consistently referenced these themes across multiple sections of the survey, indicating that they are not confined to a single trend or issue but instead influence a broad range of strategic considerations for the SSBs.
12. The JWG&S also noted that some themes intersect with matters currently being considered as part of the broader governance reforms, including the ongoing evolution of the SSBs' due process and other operational matters. This includes areas such as the consideration of the benefits and impacts of proposals and other elements intended to strengthen the effectiveness and responsiveness of the SSBs' standard-setting process. As a result, these themes may not necessarily translate into stand-alone work plan initiatives but instead will continue to be addressed through the broader governance or general improvement reforms.
13. The JWG&S discussed the call for the SSBs' standards to remain principles-based, proportionate, scalable and able to stand the test of time. They noted that this theme raises several strategic questions that may have relevance, including:
 - What constitutes an effective, best-in-class principles-based standard-setting approach?
 - What is the framework for the Boards to prioritize matters or topics and inform their decisions about further action? In particular, if standard setting is indicated, what are the elements of a principles-based standard-setting approach?
14. The JWG&S noted that a coordinated consideration of these questions could help promote greater alignment across the SSBs' standard-setting approaches and support the development of standards that are robust, adaptable in an increasingly dynamic environment, coherent and interoperable.

Matter for SSB Consideration

1. IAASB and IESBA members are asked to share their reflections and views on the JWG&S's overview and takeaways relevant to the SSBs' Strategic Positioning for 2028–2031 discussed in **Section I** above.

Section II – Key Trends Impacting the SSBs' Environment

15. In the joint survey, the SSBs included 13 trends grouped into four (4) overarching pre-identified environmental trends and asked respondents to rate the extent to which they believe each trend will increase or decrease in importance for the SSBs for their next strategy period. In addition, respondents were also asked to provide input on other potential environmental trends or related areas or matters that the SSBs should consider while developing their next SWPs. Respondents were asked to rank what they believe are the top five most important trends for the SSBs to consider for their next strategy period.
16. The table below provides an overview of the responses with respect to environmental trends. This overview is not intended to be all inclusive. Rather it summarizes the key takeaways of the JWG&S, including selected matters suggested by respondents for the SSBs' consideration, from the detailed analysis of the feedback presented in **Agenda Item 5-A**:

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
A. Digital Transformation		
A.1	Increasing Use of Emerging Technologies	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Broad agreement among all stakeholder groups that this trend is a Highly Relevant strategic priority for the SSBs, with certain respondents assessing the significance of this trend as likely greater for the IAASB than for the IESBA in the next strategy period. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Standards must remain principles-based, scalable, proportional and relevant to accommodate a technologically evolving environment. • <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Calls for evaluating whether existing requirements remain fit-for-purpose and for non-authoritative material about the application of existing principles in standards to technology-related matters, with a specific focus on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI). • <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Calls for monitoring ethical and independence implications of emerging technologies, and guidance and educational materials to support the implementation of recently revised, principles-based provisions in the Code related to technology as well as conducting a PIR of these provisions. • <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, seen as a cross-cutting issue that has audit, assurance and ethical implications, with a strong call for coordinated responses and joint engagement with expert groups.
A.2	Digital Assets and Institutionalization of Digital Assets	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> The trend is characterized by differing levels of adoption, market maturity and regulatory acceptance. While the institutionalization of digital assets will continue to evolve, it was not seen broadly as a globally prevalent topic. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Monitor developments. In addition, consider the development of non-authoritative material to clarify the existing principles-based standards where implementation challenges are identified, and engage with JSS, accounting standard setters and others. • <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Consider the development of guidance or leverage credible guidance developed by others. • <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Monitor developments as digital assets become more widely institutionalized; consider the development of guidance for targeted matters where clarifications with respect to the application of the provisions of the Code are necessary. • <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, seen as a cross-cutting issue that has audit, assurance and ethical implications.

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
A.3	Financial Crimes Enabled by Technology	<i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Broad agreement among all stakeholder groups that this trend is a relevant strategic priority for the SSBs, with certain respondents assessing the significance of this trend as likely greater for the IAASB than for the IESBA in the next strategy period. <i>Both SSBs:</i> Should focus on supporting the application of existing principles in the standards, and on developing scalable and proportional requirements or guidance. <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Complete ongoing projects that address audit evidence, including addressing authenticity of information; monitoring adoption and implementation to understand early implementation issues with the recently issued fraud standard; and considering targeted guidance to support the application of existing standards. <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Complete ongoing PIR of NOCLAR^{®2} provisions of the Code to inform further actions. In addition, monitor how AI-enabled fraud and financial crime may evolve. <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, seen as a cross-cutting issue that has audit, assurance and ethical implications.
B. Changes in the Geopolitical and Regulatory Landscape		
B.1 & B.2	Regulatory Changes & Risk of Fragmentation	<i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Respondents found regulatory changes and risks of fragmentation to be interrelated trends, with broad agreement that regulatory fragmentation, rather than regulatory change itself, should represent one of the more relevant strategic challenges for the SSBs in the next strategy period. <i>Both SSBs:</i> Should focus on supporting implementation and monitoring adoption, committing to principles-based, proportionate and scalable standards, and enhanced collaboration and coordination processes between the SSBs. <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Monitor adoption, reassess maintenance approach and develop strategy for evolution of the ISA for LCEs.³ Also, undertake PIRs of ISA 315 (Revised 2019)⁴ and ISA 600 (Revised),⁵

² Non-Compliance with Laws and Regulations

³ The International Standard on Auditing for Audits of Financial Statements of Less Complex Entities

⁴ ISA 315 (Revised 2019), *Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*

⁵ ISA 600 (Revised), *Special Considerations—Audits of Group Financial Statements (Including the Work of Component Auditors)*

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
		consider initiatives to promote adoption of ISSA 5000,⁶ and update ISAE 3000 (Revised)⁷ / ISAE 3402.⁸ • <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Maintain a globally applicable ethical framework that can operate effectively across diverse regulatory environments, and a strategic focus on reinforcing confidence in the Code's resilience and global applicability; identify opportunities to simplify the Code. • <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, pursue strong coordination between the SSBs and with other international and jurisdictional standard setters and regulators to promote interoperability and coherence.
B.3	Call for Greater Agility in Standard Setting	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Broad agreement among all stakeholder groups that this trend is a relevant strategic priority for the SSBs, with caution that agility should not translate into reactive standard setting or come at the expense of effective and transparent due process. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Should focus on developing processes for more agile responses, such as issuing non-authoritative guidance instead of defaulting to standard setting. Also, both SSBs should consider rapid response approaches, an annual improvements program, a mix of response mechanisms depending on the circumstances, undertaking PIRs earlier, and embedding scalability and proportionality in agile responses. • <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, process improvements and enhancement initiatives should be streamlined between the SSBs to the extent possible.
B.4	Greater Diversity of Voices Sought	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Ensuring greater diversity of voices seen as an underlying requirement of a global standard-setting system rather than a trend that is increasing or decreasing in importance. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> There is a need to increase the transparency of how respondents' input is weighted in the SSBs' decision making and improving processes related to reporting back to stakeholders.

⁶ International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (ISSA) 5000, *General Requirements for Sustainability Assurance*

⁷ International Standard on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3000 (Revised), *Assurance Engagements Other Than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information*

⁸ ISAE 3402, *Assurance Reports on Controls at a Service Organization*

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
C. Evolving Expectations Concerning Sustainability Information		
C.1 & C.2	Continuing Demand for Sustainability Reporting and Assurance & Regulatory and Geopolitical Changes	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Broad agreement across stakeholder groups that supporting consistent, principles-based, proportionate and scalable sustainability assurance and ethics standards that are globally operable remains an important strategic priority for the SSBs. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Focus on supporting adoption and implementation rather than new standard-setting activities. In addition, undertake advocacy with a broad range of stakeholders to help reduce jurisdictional fragmentation. • <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Prioritize advocacy, and provide implementation support, including non-authoritative materials. • <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Support implementation and identify areas where guidance or narrow-scope amendments and simplifications may be necessary. • <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, seen as a cross-cutting issue that has audit, assurance and ethical implications; support for undertaking joint or parallel PIRs of ISSA 5000 and the IESSA⁹ and an assessment of their interoperability.
D. Evolving Structure and Business Models of Accounting Firms		
D.1	Alternative Ownership Structures	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> Broad recognition among stakeholder groups that the evolving firm structures and business models could have implications for audit quality, independence and firm culture and governance. This trend was also seen as a relevant strategic priority for the SSBs, with certain respondents assessing the significance of this trend as likely greater for the IESBA than for the IAASB in the next strategy period. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Should monitor developments, test whether existing IAASB Quality Management Standards¹⁰ and the Code remain sufficiently resilient as business models evolve. In addition, use non-authoritative materials as a response in the near term and undertake targeted (narrow scope) amendments only when a clear, evidenced gap is identified.

⁹ International Ethics Standards for Substantiality Assurance (including International Independence Standards)

¹⁰ The quality management standards include: ISQM 1, *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements*, ISQM 2, *Engagement Quality Reviews* and ISA 220 (Revised), *Quality Management for an Audit of Financial Statements*

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
		<i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Monitor and assess implications through the anticipated PIR of the Quality Management Standards. <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Build further actions in relation to this trend within ongoing workstreams on Firm Culture and Governance and Private Equity Investments. In addition, evaluate whether the Code continues to address threats arising from alternative ownership structures. <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, seen as a cross-cutting issue that has audit, assurance and ethical implications. Calls for a coordinated approach between the SSBs on information gathering, subsequent actions, engagement with regulators and other standard setters and joint guidance.
D.2	Increased Involvement of Non-Professional Accountants in the Accounting and Auditing Profession	<i>Strategic Relevance:</i> There is a need to ensure that the Code and the IAASB standards (i.e., ISQM 1 and ISA 620¹¹) are clearly understood and operable in multidisciplinary environments, which is an important consideration for the SSBs. <i>Both SSBs:</i> Support for testing the resilience of IAASB standards and the Code, using non-authoritative material first. In addition, reserve targeted, narrow-scope amendments to cases where a clear, evidenced gap is identified. <i>Matters for IAASB:</i> Evaluate whether existing standards are sufficiently robust to be consistently applied to multidisciplinary environments and consider the development of guidance. <i>Matters for IESBA:</i> Mixed views on whether the Code's obligations should be extended beyond professional accountants to better support a firm-wide ethical culture. <i>Joint SSB Actions:</i> Yes, continue coordinating to avoid unnecessary complexity or duplication in potential responses.
D.3	Challenges to Attracting and Retaining Talent	<i>Strategic Relevance:</i> While the trend is highly relevant to the profession, the majority view was that the SSBs' relevant contribution to attracting and retaining talent is indirect. <i>Both SSBs:</i> The SSBs can best support challenges to attracting and retaining talent by maintaining clear, principles-based, implementable standards that do not create unnecessary complexity or compliance burden that may exacerbate talent pressures.

¹¹ ISA 620, *Using the Work of an Auditor's Expert*

Ref.	Environmental Trends	Key Messages from the Feedback
D.4	Non-Assurance Service (NAS) Line	• <i>Strategic Relevance:</i> While a majority of respondents rated the growth of the NAS line as increasing in importance, a notable number of respondents from jurisdictional standard setters, large firms and professional accountancy organizations believe that the trend should not be considered of strategic relevance for the SSBs in the next strategy period. These respondents considered that the existing NAS and Fees provisions of the Code provide a robust foundation for identifying and assessing threats from NAS. • <i>Both SSBs:</i> Monitor developments to ensure the SSBs' standards remain clear and effective. In addition, prioritize the PIRs of the NAS and Fees provisions of the Code before undertaking further standard-setting action.
O. Additional Trends and Other Matters		
• Certain respondents also prioritized additional trends and other matters. In their top 5 ranking of the trends, the “Additional trends” as a theme were the second most frequently ranked topic after emerging technologies (see A.1 above). • However, approximately 27% of the additional trends and other matters included were dissimilar standalone topics of a one-off nature. • Of the remaining additional trends and other matters, when organized into similar overarching themes, the top five include themes around: ○ AI and digital transformation (e.g., highlighting certain nuances around the trends related to digital transformation); ○ Adoption and implementation support (e.g., highlighting that adoption and implementation should be an elevated theme of focus for the SSBs in the next strategy period); ○ Complexity, overregulation and prescriptiveness of standards (e.g., highlighting the growing length, prescriptiveness and complexity of the SSBs' recently issued standards, and emphasizing the need for a continued focus on scalability and proportionality as a standard-setting priority to enable effective adoption and implementation, including for small and medium practices (SMPs)); ○ Effectiveness of the standard-setting process (e.g., highlighting the need to focus on principles-based standard setting, embedding proportionality and scalability considerations in projects, emphasis on PIR evidence-gathering, and discipline around project prioritization); and ○ Private equity and alternative ownership structures (e.g., highlighting certain nuances around the trends relating to the evolving structures and business models of accounting firms).		

17. The JWG&S considered the analysis of the environmental trends (both the pre-identified trends and the additional trends) through an approach which predominately relied on the narrative comments provided by respondents. This is because certain respondents noted differences in the way they applied the quantitative rankings of the survey, as well as because the narrative responses themselves included important context and insights to clarify respondents' views on the trends.
18. In addition, the JWG&S also considered a deeper, more granular analysis undertaken by SSB Staff of respondents' top-5 ranked pre-identified trends. The analysis compared the top 5 rankings separately by:
 - Respondents providing views of an organization or in an official capacity (therefore representing a significant number of members or constituencies within their networks) (i.e., organizational views) vs. those providing views in an individual capacity (i.e., individual views).
 - Stakeholder groups.
 - Global regions.
19. The purpose of this deeper analysis was to identify any notable convergence or divergence in stakeholder perspectives across these categories and to provide further context for interpreting the feedback on the trends. This helped assess the extent to which views were consistent across respondent groups or reflected specific stakeholder or regional priorities to inform the interpretation of the feedback and the development of the SSBs' strategic priorities.
20. Paragraphs 21–24 below set out important takeaways of the JWG&S for consideration by the SSBs in developing their Consultation Papers for the next strategy period:
21. **The increasing use of emerging technologies emerges as the leading priority cited by respondents.** There is a strong consensus from the joint survey that the trend “A1–Increasing Use of Emerging Technologies” is expected to be a defining strategic priority over the next strategy period, supported by the narrative responses across stakeholder groups. Also, the trend ranked first in priority across organizational and individual respondents, all geographical regions, and all stakeholder groups except the “Other” category. Notably, the top 5 ranking for the trend outperformed all other pre-identified and additional trends by a significant margin. In addition, from the analysis of the top 5 most important additional trends identified by respondents, trends clustering in the theme “AI and digital transformation” were ranked as highest priority across half of the stakeholder group categories, including users and firms. Collectively, the feedback indicates broad stakeholder consensus that emerging technological advancement, particularly the rapid evolution of AI and digital capabilities, will be a key factor shaping the future relevance and effectiveness of audit-, assurance- and ethics-related activities.
22. **Although there is support for certain trends as strategically relevant to the SSBs, beyond trend A.1, there are divergent views among stakeholder groups and geographical regions regarding their prioritization.** There is also clear support from the narrative responses to the survey that the trends “B2–Risk of Fragmentation,” “B3–Call for Greater Agility in Standard Setting,” “A3–Financial Crimes Enabled by Technology” and “D1–Alternative Ownership Structures” remain relevant considerations that will impact the SSBs' priorities in the next strategy period. However, unlike the trend “A1–Increasing Use of Emerging Technologies,” the deeper analysis revealed less consistency in the prioritization of these trends across stakeholder groups and geographical regions. For example, MG respondents, regulators and respondents from North America ranked “D1–

Alternative Ownership Structures” as the second-highest priority trend. In contrast, when the responses of all survey participants who responded to this question are considered collectively, “D1–Alternative Ownership Structures” ranked fifth overall. The JWG&S views these differences as indicative of the varying perspectives, priorities and operating environments represented across stakeholder groups and geographical regions. While these trends may not command the same level of broad-based consensus as technology-related developments, the feedback suggests they remain important considerations that could have heightened strategic relevance for specific stakeholder constituencies and jurisdictions.

23. **Sustainability remains a relevant topic, with respondents calling for a shift in focus to adoption, implementation and advocacy in the next strategy period.** Across stakeholder groups, narrative responses highlighted that demand for sustainability reporting and assurance is expected to remain significant, driven by investor expectations for greater transparency, ongoing regulatory developments, and wider public interest demands for reliable sustainability information. The JWG&S view these factors as collectively reaffirming the continued relevance of this trend for the profession and the SSBs. Also, there is broad support for the SSBs to prioritize support for adoption and implementation of their sustainability standards and monitoring of developments, while maintaining readiness to respond to future public interest needs.
24. **Not all trends raised by stakeholders will be core to the SSBs’ strategies.** The JWG&S discussed that while all the identified trends remain relevant to the accountancy profession and are therefore of interest to the SSBs, the narrative feedback recognizes that the degree to which the SSBs can directly influence outcomes varies across trends. For certain trends, the SSBs’ role is only indirect, given that the primary levers for action lie with other stakeholders in the ecosystem. For example, for the trend “D3–Challenges to Attracting and Retaining Talent,” the feedback consistently highlighted that this is an important issue facing the profession. Respondents noted ongoing concerns regarding workforce shortages, skills gaps, changing employee expectations and the profession’s long-term attractiveness. These challenges remain high priorities for national regulators, professional accountancy organizations, firms, educators and employers across jurisdictions. However, stakeholders generally acknowledged that talent attraction and retention are not principally a global standard-setting issue that can be addressed through direct actions by the SSBs. Therefore, this trend can continue to be monitored as part of the SSBs’ environmental scanning activities, with particular attention to any implications for professional competence, the application of standards, audit or assurance quality and the future capacity of the profession.
25. The JWG&S also took the view that while a range of other matters were raised, these were also matters either addressed by the overarching trends themselves (i.e., matters related to AI and digital transformation and private equity and alternative ownership structures) or are cross-cutting matters addressed by the themes discussed in **Section I** of this paper relating to the SSBs’ strategic positioning for 2028–2031 (i.e., matters related to adoption and implementation support, complexity, overregulation and prescriptiveness of standards, and the effectiveness of the standard-setting process).

Matter for SSB Consideration

2. IAASB and IESBA members are asked to share their reflections and views on the JWG&S’s overview and takeaways relating to the key trends impacting the SSBs’ environment discussed in **Section II** above.

Section III – Areas for Joint Actions in SSBs' Workplans

26. Respondents to the joint survey were asked to suggest areas of common interest and possible joint or parallel work plan topics, including standard-setting initiatives, the development of non-authoritative materials or other activities the two SSBs should consider in developing their 2028–2031 SWPs.
27. The JWG&S observed that there was recognition from respondents that the SSBs have greatly expanded their collaborative efforts, including on the joint survey itself as an initial step to develop their respective SWP Consultation Papers for the next strategy period. At the same time, there was broad agreement among stakeholder groups that the cross-cutting nature of many of the auditing-, assurance- and ethics-related issues addressed by the SSBs potentially calls for a more integrated collaboration across the standard-setting system. Respondents prominently cited the following topics:
- **Technology and AI** (most frequently cited). For example, when developing guidance and other non-authoritative materials, using technology experts, and undertaking outreach and monitoring activities.
 - **Sustainability assurance**. For example, undertaking parallel PIRs, developing joint implementation support materials, and undertaking stakeholder engagement.
 - **Firm governance and alternative ownership structures**. For example, pursuing a closely coordinated SSB response in view of the interconnection with principles of ISQM 1 besides the Code, and in developing joint guidance.
 - **Public Interest Entity (PIE) definition**. For example, pursuing a joint PIR and deliberation of actions, and monitoring and evaluating jurisdictional adoption of the revised PIE provisions to prevent divergence.
 - **Using the work of external experts**. For example, undertaking a joint PIR in view of the interconnectivity between the Code provisions and IAASB standards in relation to the use of the work of external experts.
28. The JWG&S also discussed respondents' viewpoints on how to achieve impactful alignment and enhance the effectiveness of coordinated approaches between the SSBs, including:
- Broad consensus among respondents across stakeholder categories that SSB coordination should be **structural and early-stage** (e.g., built into project scoping, rather than considered at or after the exposure draft stage). In addition, certain respondents called for a formal **"interoperability checkpoint"** at key project stages (proposal, exposure, pre-finalization), covering terminology alignment, timeline coordination, effective date alignment and adoption impact.
 - **Aligning consultations** on related matters was considered important to allow stakeholders to consider the impact of auditing and ethics standards in parallel, and a call to avoid **misalignments** where one board finalized standards before the other had resolved related issues (e.g., external experts, PIE definition and group audits).
 - **Mandate clarity**. Coordinated work should be preceded by clear agreement on the boundaries of each SSB's remit, to avoid duplication and ensure each SSB stays within its proper scope. Viewpoints were also provided that not all topics require both SSBs to act.

- **Use consistent terminology and definitions in the auditing and ethics standards** through a standing maintenance activity, not a one-off project.
 - **Design agile response mechanisms jointly**, such as rapid response or an annual improvements mechanism designed and applied consistently by both SSBs to maintain alignment.
 - **Joint implementation support**, such as joint non-authoritative materials and shared implementation support (including PIRs).
 - **Coordinated approach when engaging** with other stakeholders in the ecosystem, such as regulators, MG members and other standard setters. In addition, the SSBs should continue to focus on and deepen **interoperability** in relation to sustainability assurance, and extend coordination where relevant to other global sustainability standard setters as well.
29. The JWG&S highlighted that there are a range of coordination approaches already being used and that are available. These range from ongoing coordination and collaboration to parallel workstreams, semi-joint projects or fully joint initiatives. In developing their SWPs, the SSBs should consider if there are lessons to be learned from previous collaboration efforts and whether there are ways to further optimize collaboration, while respecting each SSB's mandate.
30. The JWG&S concluded that there should never be a one-size-fits-all approach that the SSBs should deploy in the next strategy period. This is because emerging issues differ in their nature, urgency, complexity and interdependencies, making a flexible and scalable approach to coordination or collaboration more effective than a standardized model. Also, applying fit-for-purpose mechanisms tailored to the circumstances would enable the SSBs to leverage resources more effectively, drawing on complementary expertise, reducing duplication of effort and responding more efficiently to stakeholder needs.

Matter for SSB Consideration:

3. IAASB and IESBA members are asked to share their reflections and views on the JWG&S's overview and takeaways relevant to the areas for joint actions in the SSBs' workplans discussed in **Section III** above.

Appendix

Members of the JWG&S, Meetings and Outreach Activities

Joint SWP Working Group Members

1. The members of the Joint SWP Working Group are:

IAASB	IESBA
Tom Seidenstein, Chair	Gabriela Figueiredo Dias, Chair
Edo Kienhuis, Vice-Chair	Channa Wijesinghe, Vice-Chair
William Edge, Board Member	Christelle Martin, Board Member

SSB Staff

2. The SSB Staff for the project are:

IAASB	IESBA
Willie Botha, Program and Senior Director	Ken Siong, Program and Senior Director
Kalina Shukarova Savovska, Director	Geoff Kwan, Director
Nathalie Baumgaertener Dutang, Senior Manager	Szilvia Sramko, Principal

Meetings and Coordination

3. In July 2026, a coordination meeting was held between the IAASB and IESBA Chairs to discuss matters of an alignment nature relevant to the timeline of the approval of the respective Consultation Papers of each SSB. In addition, since June 2026, there has been close coordination between the IAASB and IESBA Staff teams on several issues of mutual relevance.
4. Members of the Joint SWP Working Group held one virtual meeting in August 2026 to provide initial views based on the analysis of the feedback of the joint survey responses, including with respect to the strategic positioning of the SSBs for 2028–2031, the key environmental trends impacting the SSBs and areas for joint action in the SSBs' work plans.

Outreach Activities

5. In June 2026, SSB Staff presented a high-level briefing on the responses received to the joint survey to members of the IAASB–IESBA User Advisory Group and received their reflections on the overview presented.