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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ON SUSTAINABILITY ASSURANCE (ISSA) 5000 IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP.

INTRODUCTION

1. Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG) has developed this **International Sustainability Standards Assurance (ISSA), 5000 Implementation Roadmap** (the "Roadmap") to guide the assurance of sustainability-related financial disclosures prepared in accordance with **IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards** issued by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB).

2. This Roadmap reinforces Ghana's commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and investor confidence in sustainability reporting.

3. The IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards, comprising **IFRS S1 General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability – related Financial Information** and **IFRS S2 Climate-related Disclosures**, provide a global baseline for sustainability-related financial disclosures. The Standard focus on governance, strategy, risk management, metrics and targets, with particular emphasis on climate-related information.

4. As Ghana progresses towards the mandatory adoption and implementation of the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards, it is essential that sustainability–related disclosures are comprehensive, reliable and credible.

5. To support this objective, entities are encouraged to obtain independent assurance over on their sustainability reports and disclosures.

6. Sustainability assurance plays an important role in mitigating risks associated with inaccurate, incomplete or misleading reporting. It also enhances reputational integrity, reduces potential liabilities and strengthens stakeholder confidence. Independent assurance further demonstrates transparency and may enable entities to differentiate

themselves in the marketplace and attract socially responsible investors and other stakeholders.

ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

7. To enhance the credibility and reliability of sustainability-related financial disclosures, ICAG requires that sustainability reports prepared in Ghana in accordance with the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards shall be assured by a **Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner(CSAP)** (licensed by ICAG) operating through a **Licensed Sustainability Assurance Firm** , in accordance with the following internationally recognized standards and any additional requirements or directives that may subsequently be issued by the Council of ICAG:

(a) **(i) International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (ISSA) 5000 – General Requirements for Sustainability Assurance Engagements,** issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB), provides a comprehensive framework for conducting sustainability assurance engagements.

(b) ISSA 5000 addresses the entire assurance engagement lifecycle, including acceptance and continuance, planning, risk assessment, obtaining evidence, performing assurance procedures and reporting,

(c) ISSA 5000 applies to sustainability assurance engagements for periods beginning on or after **15 December 2026,** or for information reported as at a specific date on or after **15 December 2026.**

d. ISSA 5000 is reporting-framework neutral and may be applied to broad range of sustainability topics, including environmental, social, economic, and cultural matters.

(e) The Standard also addresses sustainability-related risks and opportunities, governance, processes, strategy, scenario analysis, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) among other matters

(f) ISSA 5000 also supports both **reasonable assurance and limited assurance** engagements and is applicable to assurance practitioners regardless of their professional background, subject to the applicable eligibility, competence, ethical and licensing requirements.

(g) International Ethics Standards for Sustainability Assurance (IESSA)- issued by the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) establishes ethical and independence requirements for sustainability assurance engagements.

(h) The IESSA requirements addresses threats to ethical conduct and independence and independence, including interests, relationships and other circumstances that may compromise objectivity of the sustainability assurance practitioner.

(i) While the requirements represent a significant enhancement for practitioners who have not previously undertaken audit or assurance engagements , they remain broadly consistent with the ethical and independence requirements applicable to financial statement auditors, with additional considerations reflecting the nature and characteristics of sustainability information.

(j) IESSA is designed to be **profession-agnostic and framework-neutral**, making it applicable to practitioners from different professional backgrounds and across different sustainability reporting frameworks.

(k) The Standard recognizes the distinctive characteristics of sustainability assurance engagements, including, broader reporting boundaries, value –chain considerations and group level complexities.

(l) IESSA was developed in coordination with the IAASB, and is intended to operate alongside ISSA 5000. Effective Sustainability assurance also requires firms to maintain robust systems of quality management in accordance with the **International Standard on Quality Management (ISQM) 1**, as applicable.

(m) IESSA becomes effective for sustainability assurance engagements covering periods beginning on or after **15 December 2026,** or for information reported as at a specific date on or after that date. This coincides with the effective date of ISSA 5000.

PHASING OF MANDATORY ASSURANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS

ICAG has adopted a **three-phased approach** to implementation of mandatory sustainability assurance in Ghana intended to provide entities, practitioners, assurance firms and other stakeholders with adequate time to develop the necessary capacity, systems, processes and expertise required to undertake high-quality sustainability assurance engagements as follows:

Sustainability Assurance Reporting Phase	Accounting period beginning on or after	Entities In Scope	Minimum Mandatory Assurance Requirement		
			Limited Assurance on sustainability related disclosures (excluding disclosures of scope 3 greenhouse emissions, climate resilience assessments / scenario analysis, transition plans)	**Reasonable Assurance with limited Scope 3 emissions**	**Reasonable Assurance on all sustainability related disclosures**
Phase 1 - Voluntary Adopters	1 January 2024	All organizations	1 January 2028	1 January 2029 to 31 December 2030	1 January 2031
Phase 2 - Mandatory Adoption	1 January 2027	Significant Public Interest Entities (SPIEs)[1]	1 January 2028	1 January 2029 to 31 December 2030	1 January 2031
	1 January 2028	Other Mandatory Adopters (OMAs)[2]	1 January 2029	1 January 2030 to 31 December 2031	1 January 2032
Phase 3 - Government Organizations	1 January 2028	Government organizations	Review and alignment with IPSASB sustainability standards	I January 2029 to 31 December 2030	I January 2031

[1] For the purposes of this roadmap, Significant Public Interest Entities (SPIEs) comprise, listed entities on any recognized exchange in Ghana; non-listed entities that are regulated (specifically banks and insurance companies, corporate trustees and registered pension schemes); public limited companies; and private companies that are holding companies of public or regulated entities. It also includes oil and gas upstream exploration; development and production companies issued with petroleum agreements; mining exploration and production companies; oil and gas refineries; automobile production companies; cement manufacturing companies; and power generation companies other than those generating power through renewable sources

[2] Other Mandatory Adopters (OMAs) comprise, all other companies incorporated under the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992) except those classified in this road map as (a) SPIEs; (b) Government Organizations (excluding Specified Entities in Act 990 under IFRS).

Any entity not falling within the categories outlined above, but intending to prepare sustainability reports in accordance with the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards on or after 1 January 2028, and explicitly references such standards in its sustainability report included in its annual report, will be required to obtain assurance from a "**Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner"** (licensed by ICAG, in accordance with the following phased approach:

- **First year of reporting**: No mandatory assurance will be required.
- **Second year of reporting:** Mandatory limited assurance on sustainability-related disclosures (excluding disclosures of scope 3 greenhouse emissions, climate resilience assessments / scenario analysis, transition plans)
- **Third year of reporting**: Mandatory reasonable assurance with limited Scope 3 emissions
- **Fourth year of reporting**: Mandatory reasonable assurance on all sustainability-related disclosures

Please note that this roadmap does not preclude any entity from voluntarily obtaining assurance from a Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner (licensed by ICAG) on sustainability reports prepared in accordance with the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards prior to the mandatory implementation dates specified herein.

CERTIFICATION OF SUSTAINABILITY ASSURANCE PRACTITIONERS

To facilitate the effective implementation of sustainability assurance in Ghana and to promote confidence in sustainability related financial disclosures, individuals seeking to undertake sustainability assurance engagements shall be required to demonstrate competence in sustainability assurance. Such competence may be evidenced through a sustainability assurance certification issued or recognized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG). Individuals who satisfy the requirements prescribed by ICAG and hold a recognized sustainability assurance certification may be designated as **"Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioners (CSAP)".** The designation shall serve as evidence that the holder has demonstrated competence in sustainability assurance in accordance with the requirements established by ICAG.

The certification programme shall adopt a profession-agnostic approach, allowing both audit and non-audit professionals to obtain certification, and audit and non-audit firms to obtain licensing, provided they meet the criteria established by ICAG. This approach aligns with international best practices, including guidance from the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO). It also recognizes that a diverse range of skills and expertise is essential for conducting effective assurance of sustainability-related financial disclosures, given the breadth of information to be assured.

To ensure integrity of the certification process, the Quality Assurance Monitoring Department of ICAG shall incorporate in its existing mandate, a robust oversight mechanism to ensure that Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioners and Licensed Sustainability Assurance Firms adhere to the applicable requirements prescribed by ICAG, including establishment and maintenance of appropriate quality management systems.

In addition, ICAG shall maintain and regularly publish a register of **Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioners and Licensed Sustainability Assurance Firms in good standing**, including their certification and license numbers, as applicable. The criteria for maintaining good standing as a certified practitioner or licensed firm shall be prescribed by ICAG and adhered to at all time.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSING SUSTAINABILITY ASSURANCE FIRMS

To qualify for a license to provide sustainability assurance services a firm shall satisfy, at the minimum, the following requirements:

a. The firm shall be duly registered and authorized to provide professional assurance services in Ghana.
b. The firm shall have at least one (1) partner, director, or principal who holds a valid designation as a **Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner (CSAP)** issued or recognized by ICAG and who shall be responsible for the firm's sustainability assurance engagements.
c. The firm shall establish, implement, and maintain a system of quality management in accordance with ISQM 1 and, where applicable, shall perform Engagement Quality Reviews in accordance with **International Standard on Quality Management (ISQM) 2.**
d. The firm shall demonstrate that it possesses sufficient competence, capabilities, and resources to undertake sustainability assurance engagements, including access to specialists in relevant disciplines such as climate science, environmental management, engineering, social impact assessment, governance, information systems, and other relevant subject matter areas where necessary.

e. The firm shall establish policies and procedures to ensure compliance with IESSA, including requirements relating to integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, professional behaviour, and independence.
f. The firm shall maintain documented methodologies, tools, and procedures for conducting sustainability assurance engagements in accordance with ISSA 5000 and any guidance issued by ICAG.
g. The firm shall implement appropriate Engagement Quality Review procedures for sustainability assurance engagements for which such reviews are required.
h. The firm shall maintain adequate professional indemnity insurance or such other risk management arrangements as may be prescribed by ICAG from time to time.
i. The firm shall be subject to periodic quality assurance inspections conducted by ICAG and shall provide unrestricted access to engagement documentation, quality management records, and other relevant information when requested.
j. The firm shall ensure that personnel participating in sustainability assurance engagements undertake continuing professional development in sustainability reporting and assurance as prescribed by ICAG.

ICAG may impose additional requirements, restrictions, or conditions as it considers necessary to safeguard the public interest and maintain confidence in sustainability assurance services.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A SUSTAINABILITY ASSURANCE PRACTITIONER

A firm seeking a license to provide sustainability assurance services shall have at least one (1) partner, director, or principal who holds a valid designation as a **Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner (CSAP**).
Accordingly, a person seeking certification as a Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner shall satisfy the following requirements:

a. Be a member in good standing of ICAG or any other professional body recognized by ICAG.
b. Hold a sustainability assurance certification issued by ICAG or recognized by ICAG as meeting the competency requirements for sustainability assurance practice.
c. Demonstrate adequate knowledge of:
    - IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards (IFRS S1 and IFRS S2);
    - International Standard on Sustainability Assurance (ISSA 5000);

- International Ethics Standards for Sustainability Assurance (IESSA);
- International Standard on Quality Management (ISQM 1);
- Relevant sustainability reporting frameworks and regulations; and
- Emerging developments and practices in sustainability reporting and assurance.

d. Meet any practical experience requirements prescribed by ICAG.
e. Undertake continuing professional development in sustainability reporting and assurance as may be required by ICAG from time to time.
f. Comply with the ethical and professional requirements prescribed by ICAG.
g. Maintain good standing with ICAG and any other recognized professional body of which the applicant is a member.
h. Comply with any renewal, registration, or certification requirements prescribed by ICAG from time to time.

ICAG may establish additional certification requirements where necessary to ensure that sustainability assurance practitioners possess the competence, capabilities, and professional judgement required to perform sustainability assurance engagements in accordance with ISSA 5000 and other applicable standards.

PLACEMENT OF ASSURANCE REPORT IN THE ANNUAL REPORT

The assurance report issued by a Licensed Sustainability Assurance Firm shall be positioned **immediately before the sustainability report** to which it relates in the annual report.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSURANCE SIGNING CONVENTION

Where a Licensed Sustainability Assurance Firm is appointed to perform a sustainability assurance engagement, the assurance report shall be signed in the name of the firm.

The name of the **Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner (CSAP)** who led the engagement, together with practitioner's CSAP registration number issued by ICAG, shall be stated beneath the assurance report.

The assurance report shall also include the date of issuance and the firm's registered address.

OTHER REGULATORY SUPPORT

Regulatory bodies such as the **Bank of Ghana, the National Insurance Commission, and the Securities and Exchange Commission** that receive general-purpose financial reports from entities within their respective regulatory mandates should establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that annual reports submitted by regulated entities comply fully with the sustainability reporting and assurance requirements applicable under this Roadmap.

ICAG welcomes comments, views and other stakeholder submissions on this Roadmap as follows:

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ISSUED BY COUNCIL OF ICAG
DATED 17TH AUGUST 2026

ABOUT ICAG

Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG) was established by an Act of Parliament, the Chartered Accountants Act 1963, (Act 170). On the passage of Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana, Act, 2020 (Act 1058) on 29th December 2020, Act 170 was repealed. The object of the Institute is to promote the study of accountancy; to regulate the accountancy profession and practice and to provide for related matters. Section 127 (5) b of the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992), also requires companies to prepare their financial statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana, or any other standards approved or adopted by the Institute. ICAG therefore has the regulatory mandate to approve, adopt, and promote implementation of standards and its members are the only persons recognized under the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992) and other legislations, to audit the financial statements and accounts of institutions and businesses.