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| 15 February 2016 |

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| Reply form for the Discussion Paper on Benchmarks Regulation |
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| Date: 15 February 2016 |

Responding to this paper

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) invites responses to the specific questions listed in Consultation Paper on the European Single Electronic Format (ESEF), published on the ESMA website.

*Instructions*

Please note that, in order to facilitate the analysis of the large number of responses expected, you are requested to use this file to send your response to ESMA so as to allow us to process it properly. Therefore, ESMA will only be able to consider responses which follow the instructions described below:

* use this form and send your responses in Word format (pdf documents will not be considered except for annexes);
* do not remove the tags of type < ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_1> - i.e. the response to one question has to be framed by the 2 tags corresponding to the question; and
* if you do not have a response to a question, do not delete it and leave the text “TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE” between the tags.

Responses are most helpful:

* if they respond to the question stated;
* contain a clear rationale, including on any related costs and benefits; and
* describe any alternatives that ESMA should consider

**Naming protocol**

In order to facilitate the handling of stakeholders responses please save your document using the following format:

ESMA\_DP\_BMR \_NAMEOFCOMPANY\_NAMEOFDOCUMENT.

E.g. if the respondent were XXXX, the name of the reply form would be:

ESMA\_DP\_BMR \_XXXX\_REPLYFORM or

ESMA\_DP\_BMR \_XXXX\_ANNEX1

To help you navigate this document more easily, bookmarks are available in “Navigation Pane” for Word 2010 and in “Document Map” for Word 2007.

***Deadline***

Responses must reach us by 31 March 2016**.**

All contributions should be submitted online at [www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the heading ‘Your input/Consultations’.

***Publication of responses***

All contributions received will be published following the end of the consultation period, unless otherwise requested. **Please clearly indicate by ticking the appropriate checkbox in the website submission form if you do not wish your contribution to be publicly disclosed. A standard confidentiality statement in an email message will not be treated as a request for non-disclosure.** Note also that a confidential response may be requested from us in accordance with ESMA’s rules on access to documents. We may consult you if we receive such a request. Any decision we make is reviewable by ESMA’s Board of Appeal and the European Ombudsman.

***Data protection***

Information on data protection can be found at [www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the headings ‘Legal notice’ and ‘Data protection’.

# Introduction

Please make your introductory comments below, if any:

<ESMA\_COMMENT\_ DP\_BMR\_1>

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The CNMV's Advisory Committee has been set by the Spanish Securities Market Law as the consultative body of the CNMV. This Committee is composed by market participants (members of secondary markets, issuers, retail investors, intermediaries, the collective investment industry, etc) and its opinions are independent from those of the CNMV.

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I. The projected Benchmarks Regulation and the scope of the ESMA Discussion Paper and key dates

In September 2013, the European Commission proposed a draft Benchmarks Regulation (BMR).

In November 2015, the European Parliament and Council agreed on a compromise text of the Benchmarks Regulation, which is currently awaiting a vote by the European Parliament, final approval by the Council, and other formalities before publication of the final agreed text.

While the level 1 benchmark regulation has not yet been approved, the ESMA Discussion Paper seeks to lay the foundations for development of measures that will constitute the level 2 regulations, starting from that compromise text.

Specifically, the discussion paper is divided into 13 sections, which constitute the ESMA's mandate on the Benchmark Regulation:

2 Definitions (Article 3 of the BMR)

3 Oversight function (Article 5a BMR)

4 Input data (Article 7 BMR)

5 Transparency of the methodology (Article 7b BMR)

6 Code of conduct (Article 9 BMR)

7 Governance and control requirements for supervised contributors (Article 11 BMR)

8 Critical benchmarks (Article 13 BMR)

9 Significant benchmarks (Article 14c BMR)

10 Compliance statement for significant and non-significant benchmarks (Articles 14c and 14d BMR)

11 Benchmark statement (Article 15 BMR)

12 Authorisation and registration of an administrator (Article 23 BMR)

13 Recognition and endorsement of third-country administrators and benchmarks (Articles 21a and 21b BMR)

14 Transitional provisions (Article 39 BMR)

The ESMA will examine responses during the second quarter of 2016 and will publish another discussion paper in the second half of 2016.

The Regulation is expected to be published in mid-2016 and to come into force in 2018.

This report is a response to the Reply Form supplied by the ESMA in connection with the Discussion Paper.

Of particular interest are the replies to questions Q18 (linked to Q18); Q9 (linked to Q10 and Q11); Q48 (linked to Q49, Q58, Q61 and Q64); Q65 (linked to Q66 and Q67); Q76; Q77; Q90; Q97 (linked to Q98), and Q106 (linked to Q107).

<ESMA\_COMMENT\_ DP\_BMR\_1>

1. Do you agree that an index’s characteristic of being “made available to the public” should be defined in an open manner, possibly reflecting the current channels and modalities of publication of existing benchmarks, in order not to unduly restrict the number of benchmarks in scope?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_1>

The benchmarks should be openly available to the public. It is not essential for this definition to match the channels and forms used to make the current benchmarks available to interested parties; rather, it would appear to be more important that there be a clear and explicit will to make a benchmark available to the public

.<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_1>

1. Do you have any proposals on which aspects of the publication process of an index should be considered in order for it to be deemed as having made the index available to the public, for the purpose of the BMR?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_2>

In line with the reply to Q1, the question should be whether the processes for publication of the index evidence the administrator's willingness to make it available to the public

.<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_2>

1. Do you agree with ESMA’s proposal to align the administering the arrangements for determining a benchmark with the IOSCO principle on the overall responsibility of the administrator? Which other characteristics/activities would you regard as covered by Article 3(1) point 3(a)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_3>

We agree with the IOSCO principle.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_3>

1. Do you agree with ESMA’s proposal for a definition of issuance of a financial instrument? Are there additional aspects that this definition should cover?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_4>

The proposed definition for “issuance of a financial instrument” is adequate, since it does cover all the different categories of financial instrument included in its definition.

However, not strictly linked to the definition of "issuance of a financial instrument ", but rather to the definition of "use of a benchmark", it needs to be clarified whether Pension Funds when acting as users of a benchmark, are within the scope of this Regulation.

For instance, Recital (8) states that the scope of this Regulation should be as broad as necessary to create a preventive regulatory framework (…). However, neither the object established in Art.1, or the definition for “use of a benchmark” (Art.3.1.5) covers, in any of the actions mentioned, the use of a benchmark by pension funds. Pension funds do not have the nature of financial instruments or Investment Funds as defined under BMR (art.3.1.16), which only includes explicitly UCITS or AIF.

Furthermore, among the obligations arising from the use of a benchmarks, the Regulation states that:

• Supervised entities may only use registered benchmarks (Article 19.1)

• Supervised entities must have written plans setting out the actions that they would take in the event that a benchmark materially changes or ceases to be provided (Article 17.2.)

Regarding "supervised entities", BMR foresees, among others: Investment Funds UCITS (Article 3.14.e), AIF Managers (3.14.f) and Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provisions as defined in Article 6(a) of Directive 2003/41/EC (Article 3.14.fa) .

And so, the combination of all these provisions raises some issues of legal consistency:

a) First of all, if the use of a benchmark by Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provisions must be considered subject to this Regulation.

b) If so, whether or not, other Pension Funds would also be subject to this regulation (e.g. other institutions authorized and supervised operating at national level, provided that they are recognized under national law and their primary purpose is to provide retirement benefits, in line with the provisions of Article 2(10) of EMIR Regulation).

Therefore, we would see merit if ESMA could specify whether or not Individual and Occupational Pension Funds could be considered as users of benchmarks under this Regulation.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_4>

1. Do you think that the business activities of market operators and CCPs in connection with possible creation of financial instruments for trading could fall under the specification of “issuance of a financial instrument which references an index or a combination of indices”? If not, which element of the “use of benchmark” definition could cover these business activities?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_5>

Actions by securities market infrastructures that may fall under or be related to the issuance of financial instruments are those that may be performed by organised markets in derivative products and their central counterparties.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_5>

1. Do you agree with the proposed list of appropriate governance arrangements for the oversight function? Would you propose any additional structure or changes to the proposed structures?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_6>

The BMR contains a very broad definition of monitoring indexes function, including some aspects that may not fully match the standard monitoring activities, so that it could be a variety of entities affected by this oversight and they may be called to participate in some aspects.

In the same vein, the BMR supports different ways of structuring and managing the oversight function of these indexes, so it is not necessary to use standard formulas as to integrate, in any case, contributors in organs typical exercise oversight functions, especially because those formulas uniforms may compromise the independence of such bodies. Consequently, and in relation to standard activities of the monitoring function, in addition to precautionary measures such as abstaining from those contributors in relation to matters affecting them, which referred to in paragraph 52 and Q18 of the Discussion Paper, they should be considered other formulas and procedures for contributors benchmarks criteria and forward their views to the bodies exercising oversight role and that the latter can request the opinion of the contributors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_6>

1. Do you believe these proposals sufficiently address the needs of all types of benchmarks and administrators? If not, what characteristics do such benchmarks have that would need to be addressed in the proposals?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_7>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_7>

1. To the extent that you provide benchmarks, do you have in place a pre-existing committee, introduced through other EU legislation, or otherwise, which could satisfy the requirements of an oversight function under Article 5a? Please describe the structure of the committee and the reasons for establishing it.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_8>

Not applicable

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_8>

1. Do you agree that an administrator could establish one oversight function for all the benchmarks it provides? Do you think it is appropriate for an administrator to have multiple oversight functions where it provides benchmarks that have different methodologies, users or seek to measure very different markets or economic realities?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_9>

Administrators of more than one benchmark may only apply a single definition of the oversight function for such indices if there are no significant differences between the benchmarks in question. Where there are significant differences between the various benchmarks that they administer, they should have distinct oversight functions adapted to each benchmark's characteristics.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_9>

1. If an administrator provides more than one critical benchmark, do you support the approach of one oversight function exercising oversight over all the critical benchmarks? Do you think it is necessary for an oversight function to have sub-functions, to account for the different needs of different types of benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_10>

See response to Q9.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_10>

1. Where an administrator provides critical benchmarks and significant or non-significant benchmarks, do you think it should establish different oversight functions depending on the nature, scale and complexity of the critical benchmarks versus the significant or non-significant benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_11>

See response to Q9.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_11>

1. In which cases would you agree that contributors should be prevented from participating in oversight committees?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_12>

See response to Q6.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_12>

1. Do you foresee additional costs to your business or, if you are not an administrator, to the business of others resulting from the establishment of multiple oversight functions in connection with the different businesses performed and/or the different nature, scale and type of benchmarks provided? Please describe the nature, and where possible provide estimates, of these costs.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_13>

No

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_13>

1. Do you agree that, in all cases, an oversight function should not be responsible for overseeing the business decisions of the management body?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_14>

We agree, because the purpose of the oversight function is to review and cross-check the benchmark management criteria, but not the commercial and business decisions of the indices' administrators. However, it may occasionally be difficult to delimit these two fields.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_14>

1. Do you support the proposed positioning of the oversight function of an administrator? If not, please explain your reasons why this positioning may not be appropriate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_15>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_15>

1. Do you have any additional comments with regard to the procedures for the oversight function as well as the composition and positioning of the oversight function within an administrator’s organisation?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_16>

No

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_16>

1. Do you agree with the proposed list of elements of procedures required for all oversight functions? Should different procedures be employed for different types of benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_17>

We agree with the list of elements to be considered in defining benchmark oversight procedures. Some elements (e.g. criteria for selecting members of oversight bodies, or general criteria for exercising the oversight function) will clearly differ greatly depending on the nature of the index in question.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_17>

1. Do you agree with the proposed treatment of conflicts of interest arising from the composition of an oversight function? Have you identified any additional conflicts which ESMA should consider in drafting the RTS?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_18>

See response to Q6.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_18>

1. Do you agree with the list of records to be kept by the administrator for input data verification? If not, please specify which information is superfluous / which additional information is needed and why.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_19>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_19>

1. Do you agree that, for the information to be transmitted to the administrator in view of ensuring the verifiability of input data, weekly transmission is sufficient? Would you instead consider it appropriate to leave the frequency of transmission to be defined by the administrator (i.e. in the code of conduct)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_20>

Given the diversity of benchmarks, it is clearly preferable for the frequency of transmission to be defined by the benchmark administrator, that it be public, and that it be explained in detail with a justification, and documented.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_20>

1. Do you agree with the concept of appropriateness as elaborated in this section?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_21>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_21>

1. Do you see any other checks an administrator could use to verify the appropriateness of input data?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_22>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_22>

1. Would you consider it useful that the administrator maintains records of the analyses performed to evaluate the appropriateness of input data?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_23>

Yes, because this would contribute to the benchmark's reliability and enhance trust.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_23>

1. Do you see other possible measures to ensure verifiability of input data?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_24>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_24>

1. Do you agree with the identification of the concepts and underpinning activities of evaluation, validation and verifiability, as used in this section?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_25>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_25>

1. Do you agree that all staff involved in input data submission should undergo training, but that such training should be more elaborate / should be repeated more frequently where it concerns front office staff contributing to benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_26>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_26>

1. Do you agree to the three lines of defence-principle as an ideal type of internal oversight architecture?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_27>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_27>

1. Do you identify other elements that could improve oversight at contributor level?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_28>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_28>

1. Do you agree with the list of elements contained in a conflict of interest policy? If not, please state which elements should be added / which elements you consider superfluous and why.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_29>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_29>

1. Do you agree that where expert judgement is relied on and/or discretion is used additional appropriate measures to ensure verifiability of input data should be imposed? If not, please specify examples and reasons why you disagree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_30>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_30>

1. Do you agree to the list of criteria that can justify differentiation? If not, please specify why you disagree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_31>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_31>

1. Do you agree to the list of elements that are amenable to proportional implementation? If not, please specify why you disagree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_32>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_32>

1. Do you agree to the list of elements that are not amenable to proportional implementation? If not, please specify why you disagree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_33>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_33>

1. Do you consider the proposed list of key elements sufficiently granular “*to allow users to understand how a benchmark is provided and to assess its representativeness, its relevance to particular users and its appropriateness as a reference for financial instruments and contracts*”?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_34>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_34>

1. Beyond the list of key elements, could you identify other elements of benchmark methodology that should be disclosed? If yes, please explain the reason why these elements should be disclosed.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_35>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_35>

1. Do you agree that the proposed key elements must be disclosed *to the public* (linked to Article 3, para 1, subpara 1, point (a))? If not, please specify why not.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_36>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_36>

1. Do you agree with ESMA’s proposal about the information to be made public concerning the internal review of the methodology? Please suggest any other information you consider useful to disclose on the topic.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_37>

The information proposed in the discussion paper is adequate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_37>

1. Do you agree with the above proposals to specify the information to be provided to benchmark users and, more in general, stakeholders regarding material changes in benchmark methodology?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_38>

The proposed information is adequate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_38>

1. Do you agree, in particular, on the opportunity that also the replies received in response to the consultation are made available to the public, where allowed by respondents?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_39>

The proposal to divulge the responses received in the context of a benchmark change, provided that the authors consent, is balanced.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_39>

1. Do you agree that the publication requirements for key elements of methodology apply regardless of benchmark type? If not, please state which type of benchmark would be exempt / which elements of methodology would be exempt and why.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_40>

The proposal is appropriate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_40>

1. Do you agree that the publication requirements for the internal review of methodology apply regardless of benchmark type? If not, please state which information regarding the internal review could be differentiated and according to which characteristic of the benchmark or of its input data or of its methodology.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_41>

The proposal to disclose the internal review of methodology is appropriate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_41>

1. Do you agree that, in the requirements regarding the procedure for material change, the proportionality built into the Level 1 text covers all needs for proportional application?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_42>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_42>

1. Do you agree that a benchmark administrator could have a standard code for all types of benchmarks? If not, should there be separate codes depending on whether a benchmark is critical, significant or non-significant? Please take into account your answer to this question when responding to all subsequent questions.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_43>

We agree with the proposal that there be a standard code of conduct for all benchmark types although the implications and the management and application of the provisions will evidently differ as a function of the nature, characteristics and user universe of the benchmark in question.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_43>

1. Do you believe that an administrator should be mandated to tailor a code of conduct, depending on the market or economic reality it seeks to measure and/or the methodology applied for the determination of the benchmark? Please explain your answer using examples of different categories or sectors of benchmarks, where applicable.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_44>

Yes, because it is not that each benchmark requires a different structure or type of code of conduct to that of its administrator; rather, the application of the same code of conduct scheme will have different inspirations depending on the market or economic reality to which the benchmark refers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_44>

1. Do you agree with the above requirements for a contributor’s contribution process? Is there anything else that should be included?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_45>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_45>

1. Do you agree that the details of the code of conduct to be specified by ESMA may still allow administrators to tailor the details of their codes of conduct with respect to the specific benchmarks provided?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_46>

Yes, in line with the responses to Q43 and Q44.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_46>

1. Do you agree that such information should be required from contributors under the code of conduct? Should any additional information be requested?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_47>

We agree with the terms of the proposal.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_47>

1. Are their ways in which contributors may manage possible conflicts of interest at the level of the submitters? Should those conflicts, where managed, be disclosed to the administrator?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_48>

It is up to the contributors to manage and resolve any conflicts of interest arising for their employees and other natural persons from which they receive input data (submitters). Therefore, the contributors' internal rules and procedures must contain the appropriate provisions, ensuring that the requirements set out in the code of conduct of the corresponding benchmark's administrator are complied with, as set out in section 177 of the Discussion Paper, but benchmark administrators should not have to develop procedures relating to conflicts of interest that affect their employees and those of their contributors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_48>

1. Do you foresee any obstacles to the administrator’s ability to evaluate the authorisation of any submitters to contribute input data on behalf of a contributor?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_49>

In line with the response to Q48, the oversight obligation and consequent liabilities with respect to the submitters used by the contributors lie with the latter, and those obligations and responsibilities should not be transferred to the administrator of the corresponding benchmark.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_49>

1. Do you agree that a contributor’s contribution process should foresee clear rules for the exclusion of data sources? Should any other information be supplied to administrators to allow them to ensure contributors have provided all relevant input data?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_50>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_50>

1. Do you think that the listed procedures for submitting input data are comprehensive? If not, what is missing?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_51>

We consider it to be adequate and sufficient.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_51>

1. Do you agree that rules are necessary to provide consistency of contributors’ behaviour over the time? Should this be set out in the code of conduct or in the benchmark methodology, or both?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_52>

Consistency of contributors' behaviour is one of the objectives to be pursued by the benchmark's code of conduct.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_52>

1. Should policies, in addition to those set out in the methodology, be in place at the level of the contributors, regarding the use of discretion in providing input data?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_53>

Those set out in the discussion paper would appear to be sufficient.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_53>

1. Do you agree with the list of checks for validation purposes? What other methods could be included?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_54>

The checks for validating input data that are listed in the discussion paper are adequate. It is up to each contributor to detail those checks to ensure that they achieve the levels set out in the corresponding benchmark's code of conduct.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_54>

1. Do you agree with the minimum information requirement for record keeping? If not would you propose additional/alternative information?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_55>

We agree with the requirements for record-keeping with regard to the information supplied by contributors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_55>

1. Do you support the recording of the use of expert judgement and of discretion? Should administrators require the same records for all types of benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_56>

We agree that expert judgement should be subject to record-keeping. The details of the record-keeping will depend on the frequency and scope with which they are used in the benchmark.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_56>

1. Do you agree that an administrator could require contributors to have in place a documented escalation process to report suspicious transactions?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_57>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_57>

1. Do you agree with the list of policies, procedures and controls that would allow the identification and management of conflicts of interest? Should other requirements be included?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_58>

The list of examples contained in the Discussion Paper is adequate. It is up to each benchmark's code of conduct to establish the levels of assurance to be achieved by contributors with respect to preventing and dealing with conflicts of interest, whereas the details as to the specific means, procedures and checks to be used should depend on each contributor.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_58>

1. Do you have any additional comments with regard to the contents of a code of conduct in accordance with Article 9(2)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_59>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_59>

1. Do you agree with the above list of requirements? Do you think that those requirements are appropriate for all benchmarks? If not what do you think should be the criteria we should use?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_60>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_60>

1. Do you agree that information regarding breaches to the BMR or to Code of Conduct should also be made available to the Benchmark Administrator?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_61>

Yes, on the understanding that, subject to the appropriate structure of liabilities, internal relations between contributors and their submitters should be managed by the former, without prejudice to actions by the supervisors (section 177 of the Discussion Paper).

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_61>

1. Do you think that the external audit covering benchmark activities, where available, should also be made available, on request, to the Benchmark Administrator?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_62>

Yes, since that will make it possible to perform the necessary oversight of contributors' input to the benchmarks they manage.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_62>

1. Do you agree with the proposed criteria for the specific elements of systems and controls as listed in Article 11(2)(a) to (c)? If not, what should be alternative criteria to substantiate these elements?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_63>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_63>

1. Do you agree that the submitters should not be remunerated for the level of their contribution but could be remunerated for the quality of input and their ability to manage the conflicts of interest instead?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_64>

This is a matter of the internal relations between submitters and the contributors for which they work.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_64>

1. What would be a reasonable delay for signing-off on the contribution? What are the reasons that would justify a delay in the sign off?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_65>

It is hard to posit a general rule for what could be considered a reasonable delay, since that will depend on the contributor and on its contribution to the benchmark in question. In any event, such delays in sign-off of the data supplied by submitters should be very exceptional.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_65>

1. Is the mentioned delay an element that may be established by the administrator in line with the applicable methodology and in consideration of the underlying, of the type of input data and of supervised contributors?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_66>

It is up to benchmark administrators to establish the criteria for deciding what is a reasonable delay, considering that such a delay would be very exceptional.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_66>

1. In case of a contribution made through an automated process what should be the adequate level of seniority for signing-off?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_67>

In automated processes for filing contributions, sign-off should be assigned to high-level persons at the entity in question.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_67>

1. Do you agree with the above policies? Are there any other policies that should be in place at contributor’s level when expert judgement is used?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_68>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_68>

1. Do you agree with this approach? If so, what do you think are the main distinctions – amid the identified detailed measures that a supervised contributor will be required to put in place - that it is possible to introduce to cater for the different types, characteristics of benchmarks and of supervised contributors?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_69>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_69>

1. Do you foresee additional costs to your business or, if you are not a supervised contributor, to the business of others resulting from the implementation of any of the listed requirements? Please describe the nature, and where possible provide estimates, of these costs.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_70>

The diversity and breadth of requirements contained in BMR make it difficult to know whether compliance will lead to additional costs for contributors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_70>

1. Could the approach proposed, i.e. the use of the field total issued nominal amount in the context of MiFIR / MAR reference data, be used for the assessment of the “nominal amount” under BMR Article 13(1)(i) for bonds, other forms of securitised debt and money-market instruments? If not, please suggest alternative approaches

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_71>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_71>

1. Are you aware of any shares in companies, other securities equivalent to shares in companies, partnerships or other entities, depositary receipts in respect of shares, emission allowances for which a benchmark is used as a reference?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_72>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_72>

1. Do you have any suggestion for defining the assessment of the nominal amount of these financial instruments when they refer to a benchmark?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_73>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_73>

1. Do you agree with ESMA proposal in relation to the value of units in collective investment undertakings? If not, please explain why

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_74>

Double accounting of units in collective investment undertakings should be avoided; the proposal in the Discussion Paper is reasonable in this regard.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_74>

1. Do you agree with the approach of using the notional amount, as used and defined in the EMIR reporting regime, for the assessment of notional amount of derivatives under BMR Article 13(1)(i)? If not, please suggest alternative approaches.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_75>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_75>

1. Which are your views on the two options proposed to assess the net asset value of investment funds? Should you have a preference for an alternative option, please provide details and explain the reasons for your preference.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_76>

The rule should be as simple as possible and cover all collective investment undertakings; accordingly, the second option proposed in the Discussion Paper appears to be preferable: the latest available net asset value.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_76>

1. Which are your views on the two approaches proposed to assess the nominal amount of financial instruments other than derivatives, the notional amount of derivatives and the net asset value of an investment fund referencing a benchmark within a combination of benchmarks? Please provide details and explain the reasons for your preference. Do you think there are other possible approaches? If yes, please explain.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_77>

In the case of critical benchmarks, the first approach set out in the Discussion Paper would be preferable: focus on the part of the nominal, notional or net value that is actually referenced to the critical benchmark.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_77>

1. Do you agree with the ‘relative impact’ approach, i.e. define one or more value and “ratios” for each of the five areas (markets integrity; or financial stability; or consumers; or the real economy; or the financing of households and corporations) that need to be assessed according to Article 13(1)(c), subparagraph (iii)? If not, please elaborate on other options that you consider more suitable.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_78>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_78>

1. What kind of other objective grounds could be used to assess the potential impact of the discontinuity or unreliability of the benchmark besides the ones mentioned above (e.g. GDP, consumer credit agreement etc.)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_79>

No other parameters which would be preferable to those listed in the Discussion Paper have been identified.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_79>

1. Do you agree with ESMA’s approach to further define the above criteria? Particularly, do you think that ESMA should develop more concrete guidance for the possible rejection of the NCA under Article 14c para 2? Do you believe that NCAs should take into consideration additional elements in their assessment?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_80>

We agree that ESMA should work to detail the criteria as regards the application of, and exceptions to, the precepts of the BMR referred to in article 14.c.2; no criteria other than those set out in that article have been identified.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_80>

1. Do you think that the fields identified for the template are sufficient for the competent authority and the stakeholders to form an opinion on the representativeness, reliability and integrity of a benchmark, notwithstanding the non-application of some material requirements? Could you suggest additional fields?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_81>

We agree with the identified fields and cannot think of any others.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_81>

1. Do you agree with the suggested minimum aspects for defining the market or economic reality measured by the benchmark?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_82>

We agree with the suggested minimum aspects.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_82>

1. Do you think the circumstances under which a benchmark determination may become unreliable can be sufficiently described by the suggested aspects?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_83>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_83>

1. Do you agree with the minimum information on the exercise of discretion to be included in the benchmark statement?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_84>

We agree with the identified minimum information.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_84>

1. Are there any further precise minimum contents for a benchmark statement that should apply to each benchmark beyond those stated in Art. 15(2) points (a) to (g) BMR?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_85>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_85>

1. Do you agree that a concise description of the additional requirements including references, if any, would be sufficient for the information purposes of the benchmark statement for interest rate benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_86>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_86>

1. Do you agree that the statement for commodity benchmarks should be delimited as described? Otherwise, what other information would be essential in your opinion?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_87>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_87>

1. Do you agree with ESMA's approach not to include further material requirements for the content of benchmark statements regarding regulated-data benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_88>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_88>

1. Do you agree with the suggested additional content required for statements regarding critical benchmarks? If not, please precise why and indicate what alternative or additional information you consider appropriate in case a benchmark qualifies as critical.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_89>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_89>

1. Do you agree with the suggested additional requirements for significant benchmarks? Which of the three options proposed you prefer, and why?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_90>

Considering the regulatory exceptions that might apply to significant benchmarks, the declarations in connection with them should include the necessary proportional information. For these reasons of proportionality and sufficiency, we prefer option 2 set out in the Discussion Paper.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_90>

1. Do you agree with the suggested additional requirements for non-significant benchmarks? If not, please explain why and indicate what alternative or additional information you consider appropriate in case a benchmark is non-significant.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_91>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_91>

1. Are there any further contents for a benchmark statement that should apply to the various classes of benchmarks identified in this chapter?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_92>

We have not identified any additional content that would be necessary in the statement on non-significant benchmarks.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_92>

1. Do you agree with the approach outlined above regarding information of a general nature and financial information? Do you see any particular cases, such as certain types of providers, for which these requirements need to be adapted?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_93>

We agree, and cannot identify any cases requiring adaptation. Evidently, the detail and complexity of the information required of each administrator will depend on their nature and the benchmarks they manage.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_93>

1. Do you agree with ESMA’s approach to the above points? Do you believe that any specific cases exist, related either to the type of provider or the type of conflict of interest, that require specific information to be provided in addition to what initially identified by ESMA?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_94>

We agree with the proposed approach. We have not identified cases where additional information might be required based on the type of supplier or on conflicts of interest.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_94>

1. Do you agree with the proposals outlined for the above points? Do you see any areas requiring particular attention or adaptation?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_95>

We agree, and cannot identify any areas requiring special treatment.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_95>

1. Can you suggest other specific situations for which it is important to identify the information elements to be provided in the authorisation application?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_96>

No.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_96>

1. Do you agree with the proposed approach towards registration? How should the information requirements for registration deviate from the requirements for authorisation?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_97>

We agree. Differences between the requirements for authorisation and registration should take account of the nature of the entity subject to each of these procedures and, specifically, the scope of supervision to which entities that elect to register are subject.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_97>

1. Do you believe there are any specific types of supervised entities which would require special treatment within the registration regime? If yes, which ones and why?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_98>

See response to Q97.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_98>

1. Do you have any suggestions on which information should be included in the application for the recognition of a third country administrator?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_99>

In addition to the information already identified in the Discussion Paper (section 324), it would be necessary to collect information about the administrator's legal status and form, the definition and characteristics of the benchmarks that it manages, and the type and scale of use to which they will be put.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_99>

1. Do you agree with the general approach proposed by ESMA for the presentation of the information required in Article 21a(6) of the BMR?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_100>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_100>

1. For each of the three above mentioned elements, please provide your views on what should be the measures to determine the conditions whether there is an ‘objective reason’ for the endorsement of a third country benchmark.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_101>

For the case of the market or economic reality that the benchmark is intended to measure, it is necessary to consider the difficulty that the market or economic area in question would have in gaining access to the benchmark if the latter were not distributed in a Member State of the European Union and the resulting harm for those economic areas. Likewise, in the case of contributors, it is necessary to consider the greater ease with which they would be able to contribute data to the benchmark if it were distributed in the corresponding European Union Member State.

As regards the availability of input data and the specific requirements for the company supplying the benchmark, the analysis would be similar to the case of contributors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_101>

1. Do you consider that there are any other elements that could be taken into consideration to substantiate the ‘objective reason’ for the provision and endorsement for use in the Union of a third country benchmark or family of benchmarks?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_102>

No such other elements have been identified.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_102>

1. Do you agree that in the situations identified above by ESMA the cessation or the changing of an existing benchmark to conform with the requirements of this Regulation could reasonably result in a force majeure event, frustrate or otherwise breach the terms of any financial contract or financial instrument which references a benchmark? If not, please explain the reasons why.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_103>

Yes.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_103>

1. Which other circumstances could cause the consequences mentioned in Article 39(3) in case existing benchmarks are due to be adapted to the Regulation or to be ceased?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_104>

No other circumstances have been identified.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_104>

1. Do you agree with the proposed definition of “force majeure event”? If not, please explain the reasons and propose an alternative.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_105>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_105>

1. Are the two envisaged options (with respect to the term until which a non-compliant benchmark may be used) adequate: i.e. either (i) fix a time limit until when a non-compliant benchmark may be used or (ii) fix a minimum threshold which will trigger the prohibition to further use a non-compliant benchmark in existing financial instruments/financial contracts?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_106>

The first option is preferable since it delimits a clear field for all affected and interested parties and avoids having to specify an aspect that is broadly open to interpretation, namely, the threshold or level of benchmark usage below which they should be disqualified.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_106>

1. Which thresholds would be appropriate to foresee and how might a time limit be fixed? Please detail the reasons behind any suggestion.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_107>

In accordance with the response to Q106, we do not consider the possibility of setting usage levels or thresholds. The other option (fixing a minimum threshold for non-compliant benchmarks) should apply when there is a detailed list of the benchmarks under the scope of the Regulation.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_107>

1. Is the envisaged identification process of non-compliant benchmarks adequate? Do you have other suggestions?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_108>

We consider it to be adequate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_108>

1. Is the envisaged procedure enabling the competent authority to perform the assessment required by Article 39(3) correct in your view? Please advise what shall be considered in addition.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_109>

We consider it to be appropriate.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_109>

1. Which information it would be opportune to receive by benchmark providers on the one side and benchmark users that are supervised entities on the other side?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_110>

Sections 360 to 362 of the Discussion Paper properly identify the information that it is reasonable to gather about benchmark suppliers and users.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_110>

1. Do you agree that the different users of a benchmark that are supervised entities should liaise directly with the competent authority of the administrator and not with the respective competent authorities (if different)?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_111>

We agree.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_111>

1. Would it be possible for relevant benchmark providers/users that are supervised entities to provide to the competent authority an estimate of the number and value of financial instruments/contracts referencing to a non-compliant benchmark being affected by the cessation/adaptation of such benchmark?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_112>

Yes, as already stated in reply to Q110.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_112>

1. Would it be possible to evaluate how many out of these financial contracts or financial instruments are affected in a manner that the cessation/adaptation of the non-compliant benchmark would result in a force majeure event or frustration of contracts?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_113>

That evaluation is difficult since it requires the application of a very broad concept, i.e. force majeure, as referred to in section 346 and Q105 of the Discussion Paper, to very disparate contracts and instruments.<ESMA\_QUESTION\_DP\_BMR\_113>