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| 6 July 2017 |

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| Response form for the Consultation Paper on EU Growth prospectus  |
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| Date: 6 July 2017 |

Responding to this paper

ESMA invites responses to the questions set out throughout this Consultation Paper. Responses are most helpful if they:

* respond to the question stated;
* contain a clear rationale; and
* describe any alternatives ESMA should consider.

ESMA will consider all responses received by 28 September 2017.

Instructions

In order to facilitate analysis of responses to the Consultation Paper, respondents are requested to follow the below steps when preparing and submitting their response:

* Insert your responses to the questions in the Consultation Paper in the form “Response form\_Consultation Paper on EU Growth prospectus”, available on ESMA’s website alongside the present Consultation Paper ([www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) 🡪 ‘Your input – Open consultations’ 🡪 ‘Consultation on technical advice under the new Prospectus Regulation’).
* Please do not remove tags of the type <ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_1>. Your response to each question has to be framed by the two tags corresponding to the question.
* If you do not wish to respond to a given question, please do not delete it but simply leave the text “TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE” between the tags.
* When you have drafted your response, name your response form according to the following convention: ESMA\_EUG\_nameofrespondent\_RESPONSEFORM. For example, for a respondent named ABCD, the response form would be entitled ESMA\_EUG\_ABCD\_RESPONSEFORM.
* Upload the form containing your responses, in Word format, to ESMA’s website ([www.esma.europa.eu](http://www.esma.europa.eu) under the heading ‘Your input – Open consultations’ 🡪 ‘Consultation on technical advice under the new Prospectus Regulation’).

Publication of responses

All contributions received will be published following the close of the consultation, unless you request otherwise. Please clearly indicate by ticking the appropriate checkbox on the website submission page 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. 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 not to disclose the response 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 heading ‘Data protection’.

Who should read this Consultation Paper

This Consultation Paper may be of particular interest to investors, issuers, including issuers already admitted to trading on a regulated market or on a multilateral trading facility, offerors or persons asking for admission to trading on a regulated market as well as to any market participant who is affected by the new Prospectus Regulation.

# General information about respondent

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of the company / organisation | BDO LLP |
| Activity | Audit/Legal/Individual |
| Are you representing an association? |[ ]
| Country/Region | UK |

# Introduction

Please make your introductory comments below, if any:

<ESMA\_COMMENT\_ EUG\_1>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_COMMENT\_ EUG\_1>

1. : Do you consider that specific sections should be inserted or removed from the registration document and / or the securities note of the EU Growth prospectus proposed in Article A? If so, please identify them and explain your reasoning, especially in terms of the costs and benefits implied.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_1>

*We think the requirement for KPIs should be removed.  We know of many companies who do not use KPIs for measuring their liquidity, indebtedness and/or profitability.  The use of KPIs should be optional, not mandated, as there may be better ways of summarising the issuer’s liquidity, indebtedness and profitability than by using KPIs – for example the financial statements may show this very clearly.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_1>

1. : Do you agree with the proposal to allow issuers to define the order of the information items within each section? Please elaborate on your response and provide examples. Can you please provide input on the potential trade-off between benefits for issuers coming from increased flexibility as opposed to further comparability for investors coming from increased standardisation?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_2>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_2>

1. : Given the location of risk factors in Annexes IV and V of the Prospectus Regulation, do you consider that this information is appropriately placed in the EU growth prospectus? If not please explain and provide alternative suggestions.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_3>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_3>

1. : Do you agree with the proposal that the cover note to the EU Growth prospectus should be limited to 3 pages? If not, please specify which would be an appropriate length limit for the cover note? Could you please explain your reasoning, especially in terms of the costs and benefits implied?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_4>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_4>

1. : Do you agree that the presentation of the disclosure items in para 81 is fit for purpose for SMEs? If not, please elaborate and provide your suggestions for alternative ways of presenting the disclosure items.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_5>

*We think the requirement for KPIs should be removed.  We know of many companies who do not use KPIs for measuring their liquidity, indebtedness and/or profitability.  The use of KPIs should be optional, not mandated, as there may be better ways of summarising the issuer’s liquidity, indebtedness and profitability than by using KPIs – for example the financial statements may show this very clearly.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_5>

1. : Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a single registration document that is applicable in the case of equity and non-equity issuances? If not please provide your reasoning and alternative approach.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_6>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_6>

1. : Do you agree with the requirement to include in the EU Growth prospectus any published profit forecasts in the case of both equity and non-equity issuances without an obligation for a report by independent accountants or auditors? If not please elaborate on your reasoning. Please also provide an estimate of the additional costs involved in including a report by independent accountants or auditors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_7>

*In terms of the deletion of the obligation to include an accountant’s or auditor’s report, we think this will bring no benefit and overall be detrimental to investors, since, in the UK at least, companies and their advisers will still want a private (addressed only to the company and potentially its financial adviser) diligence report on any profit forecast to be prepared by an accountant or auditor, and this is what almost all of the costs of reporting on a profit forecast relate to – the extra cost of the public opinion is small.  So there will be only a small cost saving, and investors will lack the assurance from having a public opinion.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_7>

1. : Do you consider that the requirement to provide information on the issuer’s borrowing requirements and funding structure under disclosure item 2.1.1 of the EU Growth registration document should be provided by non-equity issuers too? If yes, please elaborate on your reasoning.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_8>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_8>

1. : Do you think that the information required in relation to major shareholders is fit for purpose? In case you identify specific information items that should be included or removed please list them and provide examples,. Please also provide an estimate of elaborating on the materiality of the cost to provide such information items.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_9>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_9>

1. : Do you agree that issuers should be able to include in the EU Growth prospectus financial statements which are prepared under national accounting standards? If not please state your reasoning. Please also provide an estimate of the additional costs involved in preparing financial statements under IFRS.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_10>

*Whilst we think that this is acceptable, we note that national accounting standards vary significantly, so this will significantly reduce the comparability of some quite large listed companies (given companies with a market capitalisation of up to €500m can issue an EU Growth prospectus), which seems contrary to the objectives of a capital markets union.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_10>

1. : Do you consider that there are other additions or deletions that would improve the utility of the EU Growth registration document? If yes, please specify.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_11>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_11>

1. : Do you consider that the disclosure items in the EU Growth registration document are clear enough to be understood by issuers? If not, please provide your views on whether any of the items would require additional guidance to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_12>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_12>

1. : Please indicate if further reduction or simplification of the disclosure requirements of the EU Growth registration document could significantly impact on the cost of drawing up a prospectus. If applicable, please include examples and an estimate of the cost alleviation to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_13>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_13>

1. : Do you think that the presentation of the disclosure items in para 97 is fit for purpose for SMEs? If not, please elaborate and provide your suggestions for alternative ways of presenting the information items.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_14>

*Annex V of the Prospectus Regulation states that "Working capital statement and statement of capitalisation and indebtedness (only for equity securities issued by companies with a market capitalisation above EUR 200,000,000)". It is unclear whether the language in brackets (which limits the requirement to larger SMEs) only applies to the need for a statement of capitalisation and indebtedness, or also applies to working capital. Because ESMA has taken the view that this also relates to working capital, it means that there is no requirement for a working capital statement in an EU Growth Prospectus where a company has a market capitalisation of €200m or less. Performing diligence on such statements often results in identification of the need for the company to obtain additional working capital or to come up with detailed plans to mitigate a working capital issue.  Although there is a cost implication attached to diligence on working capital, our experience as accountants performing diligence on such statements is that it is the smaller companies who often have working capital issues.  Removing this requirement for smaller companies will result in a lot less focus by the company and its advisers on this important area, which could in turn result in a lot less protection of investors’ monies in the short term.  Our view would be that this is one of the most valuable statements for investors – particularly in smaller companies – and therefore we think it should be retained.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_14>

1. : Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a single securities note that is applicable in the case of equity and non-equity issuances? If not please provide your reasoning and alternative approach.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_15>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_15>

1. : Do you consider that the disclosure items in the EU Growth securities note are clear enough to be understood by issuers? If not, please provide your views on whether any of the items would require additional guidance to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_16>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_16>

1. : Do you consider that there are any other additions or deletions that would improve the utility of the EU Growth securities note? If yes, please specify and provide examples. In addition, please consider whether the categorisation of disclosure items for non-equity securities is fit for purpose. If not, please specify and provide your suggestions.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_17>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_17>

1. : Please provide an estimate of the benefit in terms of reduced costs that the production of a single securities note implies.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_18>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_18>

1. : Please indicate if further reduction or simplification of the disclosure requirements of the securities note of the EU Growth prospectus could significantly impact on the cost of drawing up a prospectus. If applicable, please include examples and an estimate of the cost alleviation to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_19>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_19>

1. : Do you think that the presentation of the disclosure items in para 112 is fit for purpose for SMEs? If not, please elaborate and provide your suggestions for alternative ways of presenting the information items.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_20>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_20>

1. : Given the reduced content of the summary of the EU Growth prospectus do you agree with the proposal to limit its length to a maximum of six A4 pages? If not please specify and provide your suggestions.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_21>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_21>

1. : Do you agree that the number of risk factors could be reduced to ten instead of 15? Do you think that in some cases it would be beneficial to allow the disclosure of 15 risk factors? If yes, please elaborate and provide examples. Please also provide a broad estimate of any benefits (e.g. in terms of reduced compliance costs) associated with the disclosure of a lower number of risk factors.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_22>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_22>

1. : Do you agree that SMEs are less likely to have their securities underwritten? If not, should there be specific disclosure on underwriting in the summary as set out in Article 7(8)(c)(ii) of the Prospectus Regulation?

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_23>

*They are perhaps less likely to be fully underwritten, but many may have their credit risk underwritten.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_23>

1. : Do you agree with the content of the key financial information that is set out in the summary of the EU Growth prospectus? If not, please elaborate and provide examples.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_24>

*No, you should not be prescriptive of the line items which should be included, since different measures are important for different industries.  By specifying certain measures there is the danger that issuers will default to just producing those, without thinking about what might be appropriate for their particular industry.  For example, revenue and revenue growth may be of little relevance to an early stage natural resource developer.  Furthermore, because use of local GAAP is permitted, by specifying certain line items issuers will need to spend time trying to identify appropriate equivalent line items in their local GAAP, rather than thinking about what might be appropriate measures.*

*In relation to KPIs in particular, we think the requirement for KPIs should be removed.  We know of many companies who do not use KPIs for measuring their liquidity, indebtedness and/or profitability.  The use of KPIs should be optional, not mandated, as there may be better ways of summarising the issuer’s liquidity, indebtedness and profitability than by using KPIs – for example the financial statements may show this very clearly.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_24>

1. : Do you think condensed pro forma financial information should be disclosed in the summary of the EU Growth prospectus? Please state your views and explain. In addition, please provide an estimate of the additional costs associated with the disclosure of pro forma financial information in the summary compared to the additional benefit for investors from such disclosure.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_25>

*Yes, if pro forma information is given in the body of the EU Growth prospectus, it should also be summarised in the summary.  Costs of summarising would be minimal.*

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_25>

1. : Do you consider that there are any other additions or deletions that would improve the utility of the EU Growth registration document? If yes, please specify and provide examples.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_26>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_26>

1. : Do you consider that the disclosure items in the specific summary of the EU Growth prospectus are clear enough to be understood by issuers? If not, please provide your views on whether any of the items would require additional guidance to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_27>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_27>

1. : Please indicate if further reduction or simplification of the disclosure requirements of the summary of the EU Growth prospectus could significantly impact on the cost of drawing up a prospectus. If applicable, please include examples and an estimate of the cost alleviation to issuers.

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_28>

TYPE YOUR TEXT HERE

<ESMA\_QUESTION\_EUG\_28>