

SA 265

COMMUNICATING DEFICIENCIES IN INTERNAL CONTROL TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

(Effective for all audits relating to accounting periods beginning on or after April 1, 2010)

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Material Modifications to ISA 265, "Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management"

Standard on Auditing (SA) 265, "Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management" should be read in the context of the "Preface to the Standards on Quality Control, Auditing, Review, Other Assurance and Related Services¹", which sets out the authority of SAs and proposed SA 200 (Revised), "Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the Conduct of an Audit in Accordance with Standards on Auditing"².

¹. Published in the July, 2007 issue of the Journal.

² Presently, SA 200, "Basic Principles Governing an Audit" and SA 200A, "Objective and Scope of an Audit of Financial Statements" correspond to International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 200

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Introduction

Scope of this SA

1. This Standard on Auditing (SA) deals with the auditor's responsibility to communicate appropriately to those charged with governance and management deficiencies in internal control³ that the auditor has identified in an audit of financial statements. This SA does not impose additional responsibilities on the auditor regarding obtaining an understanding of internal control and designing and performing tests of controls over and above the requirements of SA 315 and SA 330⁴. SA 260 (Revised)⁵ establishes further requirements and provides guidance regarding the auditor's responsibility to communicate with those charged with governance in relation to the audit.

2. The auditor is required to obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit when identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement⁶. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. The auditor may identify deficiencies in internal control not only during this risk assessment process but also at any other stage of the audit. This SA specifies which identified deficiencies the auditor is required to communicate to those charged with governance and management.

3. Nothing in this SA precludes the auditor from communicating to those charged with governance and management other internal control matters that the auditor has identified during the audit.

Effective Date

4. This SA is effective for audits of financial statements for periods beginning on or after April 1, 2010.

(Revised and Redrafted). Both the SAs are currently being revised in the light of the ISA 200 (Revised and Redrafted). Post revision, the principles covered by SA 200 (AAS 1) and SA 200A (AAS 2) will be merged into one Standard, i.e., SA 200.

³ SA 315, "Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement Through Understanding the Entity and Its Environment", paragraphs 4 and 12.

⁴ SA 330, "The Auditor's Responses to Assessed Risks".

⁵ SA 260 (Revised), "Communication with Those Charged with Governance".

⁶ SA 315, paragraph 12. Paragraphs A56-A61 provide guidance on controls relevant to the audit.

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Objective

5. The objective of the auditor is to communicate appropriately to those charged with governance and management deficiencies in internal control that the auditor has identified during the audit and that, in the auditor's professional judgment, are of sufficient importance to merit their respective attentions.

Definitions

6. For purposes of the SAs, the following terms have the meanings attributed below:

- (a) Deficiency in internal control – This exists when:
 - (i) A control is designed, implemented or operated in such a way that it is unable to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements in the financial statements on a timely basis; or
 - (ii) A control necessary to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements in the financial statements on a timely basis is missing.
- (b) Significant deficiency in internal control – A deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control that, in the auditor's professional judgment, is of sufficient importance to merit the attention of those charged with governance. (Ref: Para. A5)

Requirements

7. The auditor shall determine whether, on the basis of the audit work performed, the auditor has identified one or more deficiencies in internal control. (Ref: Para. A1-A4)

8. If the auditor has identified one or more deficiencies in internal control, the auditor shall determine, on the basis of the audit work performed, whether, individually or in combination, they constitute significant deficiencies. (Ref: Para. A5-A11)

9. The auditor shall communicate in writing significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit to those charged with governance on a timely basis. (Ref: Para. A12- A18, A27)

10. The auditor shall also communicate to management at an appropriate level of responsibility on a timely basis: (Ref: Para. A19, A27)

- (a) In writing, significant deficiencies in internal control that the auditor has communicated or intends to communicate to those charged with governance, unless it would be inappropriate to communicate directly to management in the circumstances; and (Ref: Para. A14, A20-A21)

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(b) Other deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit that have not been communicated to management by other parties and that, in the auditor's professional judgment, are of sufficient importance to merit management's attention. (Ref: Para. A22- A26)

11. The auditor shall include in the written communication of significant deficiencies in internal control:

(a) A description of the deficiencies and an explanation of their potential effects; and (Ref: Para. A28)

(b) Sufficient information to enable those charged with governance and management to understand the context of the communication. In particular, the auditor shall explain that: (Ref: Para. A29-A30)

(i) The purpose of the audit was for the auditor to express an opinion on the financial statements;

(ii) The audit included consideration of internal control relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control; and

(iii) The matters being reported are limited to those deficiencies that the auditor has identified during the audit and that the auditor has concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to those charged with governance.

Application and Other Explanatory Material

Determination of Whether Deficiencies in Internal Control Have Been Identified (Ref: Para. 7)

A1. In determining whether the auditor has identified one or more deficiencies in internal control, the auditor may discuss the relevant facts and circumstances of the auditor's findings with the appropriate level of management. This discussion provides an opportunity for the auditor to alert management on a timely basis to the existence of deficiencies of which management may not have been previously aware. The level of management with whom it is appropriate to discuss the findings is one that is familiar with the internal control area concerned and that has the authority to take remedial action on any identified deficiencies in internal control. In some circumstances, it may not be appropriate for the auditor to discuss the auditor's findings directly with management, for example, if the findings appear to call management's integrity or competence into question (see

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paragraph A20).

A2. In discussing the facts and circumstances of the auditor's findings with management, the auditor may obtain other relevant information for further consideration, such as:

- Management's understanding of the actual or suspected causes of the deficiencies.
- Exceptions arising from the deficiencies that management may have noted, for example, misstatements that were not prevented by the relevant information technology (IT) controls.
- A preliminary indication from management of its response to the findings.

Considerations Specific to Smaller Entities

A3. While the concepts underlying control activities in smaller entities are likely to be similar to those in larger entities, the formality with which they operate will vary. Further, smaller entities may find that certain types of control activities are not necessary because of controls applied by management. For example, management's sole authority for granting credit to customers and approving significant purchases can provide effective control over important account balances and transactions, lessening or removing the need for more detailed control activities.

A4. Also, smaller entities often have fewer employees which may limit the extent to which segregation of duties is practicable. However, in a small owner-managed entity, the owner-manager may be able to exercise more effective oversight than in a larger entity. This higher level of management oversight needs to be balanced against the greater potential for management override of controls.

Significant Deficiencies in Internal Control (Ref: Para. 6(b), 8)

A5. The significance of a deficiency or a combination of deficiencies in internal control depends not only on whether a misstatement has actually occurred, but also on the likelihood that a misstatement could occur and the potential magnitude of the misstatement. Significant deficiencies may therefore exist even though the auditor has not identified misstatements during the audit.

A6. Examples of matters that the auditor may consider in determining whether a deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control constitutes a significant deficiency include:

- The likelihood of the deficiencies leading to material misstatements in the

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financial statements in the future.

- The susceptibility to loss or fraud of the related asset or liability.
- The subjectivity and complexity of determining estimated amounts, such as fair value accounting estimates.
- The financial statement amounts exposed to the deficiencies.
- The volume of activity that has occurred or could occur in the account balance or class of transactions exposed to the deficiency or deficiencies.
- The importance of the controls to the financial reporting process; for example:
 - General monitoring controls (such as oversight of management).
 - Controls over the prevention and detection of fraud.
 - Controls over the selection and application of significant accounting policies.
 - Controls over significant transactions with related parties.
 - Controls over significant transactions outside the entity's normal course of business.
 - Controls over the period-end financial reporting process (such as controls over non-recurring journal entries).
- The cause and frequency of the exceptions detected as a result of the deficiencies in the controls.
- The interaction of the deficiency with other deficiencies in internal control.

A7. Indicators of significant deficiencies in internal control include, for example:

- Evidence of ineffective aspects of the control environment, such as:
 - Indications that significant transactions in which management is financially interested are not being appropriately scrutinised by those charged with governance.
 - Identification of management fraud, whether or not material, that was not prevented by the entity's internal control.
 - Management's failure to implement appropriate remedial action on significant deficiencies previously communicated.
- Absence of a risk assessment process within the entity where such a

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process would ordinarily be expected to have been established.

- Evidence of an ineffective entity risk assessment process, such as management's failure to identify a risk of material misstatement that the auditor would expect the entity's risk assessment process to have identified.
- Evidence of an ineffective response to identified significant risks (e.g., absence of controls over such a risk).
- Misstatements detected by the auditor's procedures that were not prevented, or detected and corrected, by the entity's internal control.
- Disclosure of a material misstatement due to error or fraud as prior period items in the current year's Statement of Profit and Loss⁷.
- Evidence of management's inability to oversee the preparation of the financial statements.

A8. Controls may be designed to operate individually or in combination to effectively prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements⁸. For example, controls over accounts receivable may consist of both automated and manual controls designed to operate together to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements in the account balance. A deficiency in internal control on its own may not be sufficiently important to constitute a significant deficiency. However, a combination of deficiencies affecting the same account balance or disclosure, relevant assertion, or component of internal control may increase the risks of misstatement to such an extent as to give rise to a significant deficiency.

A9. Law or regulation in some jurisdictions may establish a requirement (particularly for audits of listed entities) for the auditor to communicate to those charged with governance or to other relevant parties (such as regulators) one or more specific types of deficiency in internal control that the auditor has identified during the audit. Where law or regulation has established specific terms and definitions for these types of deficiency and requires the auditor to use these terms and definitions for the purpose of the communication, the auditor uses such terms and definitions when communicating in accordance with the legal or regulatory requirement.

A10. Where the jurisdiction has established specific terms for the types of deficiency in internal control to be communicated but has not defined such terms,

⁷ Accounting Standard (AS) 5, "Net Profit or Loss for the Period, Prior Period Items and Changes in Accounting Policies" requires that prior period items should be separately disclosed in the Statement of Profit and Loss in a manner that their impact on the current profit or loss can be perceived.

⁸ SA 315, paragraph A62.

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it may be necessary for the auditor to use judgment to determine the matters to be communicated further to the legal or regulatory requirement. In doing so, the auditor may consider it appropriate to have regard to the requirements and guidance in this SA. For example, if the purpose of the legal or regulatory requirement is to bring to the attention of those charged with governance certain internal control matters of which they should be aware, it may be appropriate to regard such matters as being generally equivalent to the significant deficiencies required by this SA to be communicated to those charged with governance.

A11. The requirements of this SA remain applicable notwithstanding that law or regulation may require the auditor to use specific terms or definitions.

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Communication of Significant Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance (Ref: Para. 9)

A12. Communicating significant deficiencies in writing to those charged with governance reflects the importance of these matters, and assists those charged with governance in fulfilling their oversight responsibilities. SA 260 (Revised) establishes relevant considerations regarding communication with those charged with governance when all of them are involved in managing the entity.⁹

A13. In determining when to issue the written communication, the auditor may consider whether receipt of such communication would be an important factor in enabling those charged with governance to discharge their oversight responsibilities. In addition, in case of listed entities, those charged with governance may need to receive the auditor's written communication before the date of approval of the financial statements in order to discharge specific responsibilities in relation to internal control for regulatory or other purposes. For other entities, the auditor may issue the written communication at a later date. Nevertheless, in the latter case, as the auditor's written communication of significant deficiencies forms part of the final audit file, the written communication is subject to the overriding requirement¹⁰ for the auditor to complete the assembly of the final audit file on a timely basis. SA 230 (Revised) states that an appropriate time limit within which to complete the assembly of the final audit file is ordinarily not more than 60 days after the date of the auditor's report¹¹.

A14. Regardless of the timing of the written communication of significant deficiencies, the auditor may communicate these orally in the first instance to management and, when appropriate, to those charged with governance to assist

⁹ SA 260 (Revised), paragraph 9.

¹⁰ SA 230 (Revised), "Audit Documentation", paragraph 14.

¹¹ SA 230 (Revised), paragraph A21.

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them in taking timely remedial action to minimize the risks of material misstatement. Doing so, however, does not relieve the auditor of the responsibility to communicate the significant deficiencies in writing, as this SA requires.

A15. The level of detail at which to communicate significant deficiencies is a matter of the auditor's professional judgment in the circumstances. Factors that the auditor may consider in determining an appropriate level of detail for the communication include, for example:

- The nature of the entity. For instance, the communication required for a public interest entity may be different from that for a non-public interest entity.
- The size and complexity of the entity. For instance, the communication required for a complex entity may be different from that for an entity operating a simple business.
- The nature of significant deficiencies that the auditor has identified.
- The entity's governance composition. For instance, more detail may be needed if those charged with governance include members who do not have significant experience in the entity's industry or in the affected areas.
- Legal or regulatory requirements regarding the communication of specific types of deficiency in internal control.

A16. Management and those charged with governance may already be aware of significant deficiencies that the auditor has identified during the audit and may have chosen not to remedy them because of cost or other considerations. The responsibility for evaluating the costs and benefits of implementing remedial action rests with management and those charged with governance. Accordingly, the requirement in paragraph 9 applies regardless of cost or other considerations that management and those charged with governance may consider relevant in determining whether to remedy such deficiencies.

A17. The fact that the auditor communicated a significant deficiency to those charged with governance and management in a previous audit does not eliminate the need for the auditor to repeat the communication if remedial action has not yet been taken. If a previously communicated significant deficiency remains, the current year's communication may repeat the description from the previous communication, or simply reference the previous communication. The auditor may ask management or, where appropriate, those charged with governance, why the significant deficiency has not yet been remedied. A failure to act, in the absence of a rational explanation, may in itself represent a significant deficiency.

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Considerations Specific to Smaller Entities

A18. In the case of audits of smaller entities, the auditor may communicate in a less structured manner with those charged with governance than in the case of larger entities.

Communication of Deficiencies in Internal Control to Management (Ref: Para. 10)

A19. Ordinarily, the appropriate level of management is the one that has responsibility and authority to evaluate the deficiencies in internal control and to take the necessary remedial action. For significant deficiencies, the appropriate level is likely to be the chief executive officer or chief financial officer (or equivalent) as these matters are also required to be communicated to those charged with governance. For other deficiencies in internal control, the appropriate level may be operational management with more direct involvement in the control areas affected and with the authority to take appropriate remedial action.

Communication of Significant Deficiencies in Internal Control to Management (Ref: Para. 10(a))

A20. Certain identified significant deficiencies in internal control may call into question the integrity or competence of management. For example, there may be evidence of fraud or intentional non-compliance with laws and regulations by management, or management may exhibit an inability to oversee the preparation of adequate financial statements that may raise doubt about management's competence. Accordingly, it may not be appropriate to communicate such deficiencies directly to management.

A21. SA 250 (Revised) establishes requirements and provides guidance on the reporting of identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, including when those charged with governance are themselves involved in such non-compliance¹². SA 240 (Revised) establishes requirements and provides guidance regarding communication to those charged with governance when the auditor has identified fraud or suspected fraud involving management¹³.

¹² SA 250 (Revised), "Consideration of Laws and Regulations in an Audit of Financial Statements," paragraphs 22-28.

¹³ SA 240 (Revised), "The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements," paragraph 41.

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Communication of Other Deficiencies in Internal Control to Management (Ref: Para. 10(b))

A22. During the audit, the auditor may identify other deficiencies in internal control that are not significant deficiencies but that may be of sufficient importance to merit management's attention. The determination as to which other deficiencies in internal control merit management's attention is a matter of professional judgment in the circumstances, taking into account the likelihood and potential magnitude of misstatements that may arise in the financial statements as a result of those deficiencies.

A23. The communication of other deficiencies in internal control that merit management's attention need not be in writing but may be oral. Where the auditor has discussed the facts and circumstances of the auditor's findings with management, the auditor may consider an oral communication of the other deficiencies to have been made to management at the time of these discussions. Accordingly, a formal communication need not be made subsequently.

A24. If the auditor has communicated deficiencies in internal control other than significant deficiencies to management in a prior period and management has chosen not to remedy them for cost or other reasons, the auditor need not repeat the communication in the current period. The auditor is also not required to repeat information about such deficiencies if it has been previously communicated to management by other parties, such as internal auditors or regulators. It may, however, be appropriate for the auditor to re-communicate these other deficiencies if there has been a change of management, or if new information has come to the auditor's attention that alters the prior understanding of the auditor and management regarding the deficiencies. Nevertheless, the failure of management to remedy other deficiencies in internal control that were previously communicated may become a significant deficiency requiring communication with those charged with governance. Whether this is the case depends on the auditor's judgment in the circumstances.

A25. In some circumstances, those charged with governance may wish to be made aware of the details of other deficiencies in internal control the auditor has communicated to management, or be briefly informed of the nature of the other deficiencies. Alternatively, the auditor may consider it appropriate to inform those charged with governance of the communication of the other deficiencies to management. In either case, the auditor may report orally or in writing to those charged with governance as appropriate.

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A26. SA 260 (Revised) establishes relevant considerations regarding communication with those charged with governance when all of them are involved in managing the entity¹⁴.

A27. In the case of certain entities, such as, Central/State governments and related government entities (for example, agencies, boards, commissions), the auditors may have additional responsibilities to communicate deficiencies in internal control that the auditor has identified during the audit, in ways, at a level of detail and to parties not envisaged in this SA. For example, significant deficiencies may have to be communicated to the legislature or other governing body. Law, regulation or other authority may also mandate that the auditors report deficiencies in internal control, irrespective of the significance of the potential effects of those deficiencies. Further, legislation may require the auditors to report on broader internal control-related matters than the deficiencies in internal control required to be communicated by this SA, for example, controls related to compliance with legislative authorities, regulations, or provisions of contracts or grant agreements.

Content of Written Communication of Significant Deficiencies in Internal Control (Ref: Para. 11)

A28. In explaining the potential effects of the significant deficiencies, the auditor need not quantify those effects. The significant deficiencies may be grouped together for reporting purposes where it is appropriate to do so. The auditor may also include in the written communication suggestions for remedial action on the deficiencies, management's actual or proposed responses, and a statement as to whether or not the auditor has undertaken any steps to verify whether management's responses have been implemented.

A29. The auditor may consider it appropriate to include the following information as additional context for the communication:

- An indication that if the auditor had performed more extensive procedures on internal control, the auditor might have identified more deficiencies to be reported, or concluded that some of the reported deficiencies need not, in fact, have been reported.
- An indication that such communication has been provided for the purposes of those charged with governance, and that it may not be suitable for other purposes.

A30. Law or regulation may require the auditor or management to furnish a copy of the auditor's written communication on significant deficiencies to appropriate

¹⁴ SA 260 (Revised), paragraph 9.

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regulatory authorities. Where this is the case, the auditor's written communication may identify such regulatory authorities.

Material Modifications to ISA 265, "Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management"

Deletions

- 1 Paragraph A7 of ISA 265 provides the examples of the indicators of significant deficiencies in internal control which may include restatement of previously issued financial statements to reflect the correction of a material misstatement due to error or fraud. Since in India Accounting Standard (AS) 5, "Net Profit or Loss for the Period, Prior Period Items and Changes in Accounting Policies" requires that prior period items should be separately disclosed in the Statement of Profit and Loss in a manner that their impact on the current profit or loss can be perceived, the restatement of the prior period financial statements does not exist in the Indian scenario. Hence, to align with the requirements of AS 5, the requirement of restatement of prior period items has been replaced with the requirement to disclose the prior period items in the current year's Statement of Profit & Loss.
2. Paragraph A27 of ISA 265 deals with the additional responsibilities of the public sector auditors to communicate/report deficiencies in internal control to the legislature or governing body. Since as mentioned in the "Preface to the Standards on Quality Control, Auditing, Review, Other Assurance and Related Services", the Standards issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, apply equally to all entities, irrespective of their form, nature and size, a specific reference to applicability of the Standard to public sector entities has been deleted.

Further, it is also possible that such additional responsibilities may also be imposed on the auditor in case of non public sector entities pursuant to a requirement under the statute or regulation under which they operate. Accordingly, the spirit of erstwhile A22, highlighting the fact, has been retained though a specific reference to public sector entities has been deleted.

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Limited Revision Consequential to issuance of Standard on Auditing (SA) 265, “Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management”

The amendments to the following Standards on Auditing (SAs) have been shown in track change mode.

SA 240 (Revised), “The Auditor’s Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements”

A1. Fraud, whether fraudulent financial reporting or misappropriation of assets, involves incentive or pressure to commit fraud, a perceived opportunity to do so and some rationalization of the act. For example:

- ...
- A perceived opportunity to commit fraud may exist when an individual believes internal control can be overridden, for example, because the individual is in a position of trust or has knowledge of specific weaknesses deficiencies in internal control.
- ...

Considerations Specific to Smaller Entities

A27. In the case of a small entity, some or all of these considerations may be inapplicable or less relevant. For example, a smaller entity may not have a written code of conduct but, instead, may have developed a culture that emphasizes the importance of integrity and ethical behavior through oral communication and by management example. Domination of management by a single individual in a small entity does not generally, in and of itself, indicate a failure by management to display and communicate an appropriate attitude regarding internal control and the financial reporting process. In some entities, the need for management authorization can compensate for otherwise weak deficient controls and reduce the risk of employee fraud. However, domination of management by a single individual can be a potential weakness deficiency in internal control since there is an opportunity for management override of controls.

Other Matters Related to Fraud (Ref: Para. 42)

A63. Other matters related to fraud to be discussed with those charged with governance of the entity may include, for example:

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- ...
- A failure by management to appropriately address identified material weaknesses significant deficiencies in internal control, or to appropriately respond to an identified fraud.
- ...

Appendix 1 – Risk Factors Relating to Misstatements Arising from Fraudulent Financial Reporting

Opportunities

...

Internal control components are deficient as a result of the following:

- ...
- Accounting and information systems that are not effective, including situations involving significant deficiencies material weaknesses in internal control.

Attitudes/Rationalizations

- ...
- Management failing to correct remedy known significant deficiencies material weaknesses in internal control on a timely basis.
- ...

Risk Factors Arising from Misstatements Arising from Misappropriation of Assets

Risk factors that relate to misstatements arising from misappropriation of assets are also classified according to the three conditions generally present when fraud exists: incentives/pressures, opportunities, and attitudes/rationalization. Some of the risk factors related to misstatements arising from fraudulent financial reporting also may be present when misstatements arising from misappropriation of assets occur. For example, ineffective monitoring of management and weaknesses other deficiencies in internal control that is not effective may be present when misstatements due to either fraudulent financial reporting or misappropriation of assets exist. The following are examples of risk factors related to misstatements arising from misappropriation of assets.

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Attitudes/Rationalizations

- ...
- Disregard for internal control over misappropriation of assets by overriding existing controls or by failing to correct take appropriate remedial action on known deficiencies in internal control deficiencies.
- ...

Appendix 3 – Examples of Circumstances that Indicate the Possibility of Fraud

Problematic or unusual relationships between the auditor and management, including:

- ...
- An unwillingness to address identified deficiencies/weaknesses in internal control on a timely basis.
- ...

SA 260 (Revised), “Communicating with Those Charged with Governance”

3. Recognising the importance of effective two-way communication during an audit of financial statements, this SA provides an overarching framework for the auditor’s communication with those charged with governance, and identifies some specific matters to be communicated with them. Additional matters to be communicated, which complement the requirements of this SA, are identified in other SAs. In addition, Proposed SA 265¹⁵ establishes specific requirements regarding the communication of significant deficiencies in internal control the auditor has identified during the audit to those charged with governance. Further matters, not required by this or other SAs, may be required to be communicated by laws or regulations, by agreement with the entity, or by additional requirements applicable to the engagement. Nothing in this SA precludes the auditor from communicating any other matters to those charged with governance. (Ref: Para. A28-A31)

12. The auditor shall communicate with those charged with governance: (Ref: Para. A20)

¹⁵ SA 265, “Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management”.

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- (a) The auditor's views about significant qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting practices, including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures. When applicable, the auditor shall explain to those charged with governance why the auditor considers a significant accounting practice, that is acceptable under the applicable financial reporting framework, not to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the entity; (Ref: Para. A21)
- (b) Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit; (Ref: Para. A22)
- (c) Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity:
 - (i) Material weaknesses, if any, in the design, implementation or operating effectiveness of internal control that have come to the auditor's attention and have been communicated to management as required by SA 315 or SA 330;
 - (ii).(i) Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed, or subject to correspondence with management; (Ref: Para. A23) and
 - (iii).(ii) Written representations the auditor is requesting; and
- (d) Other matters, if any, arising from the audit that, in the auditor's professional judgment, are significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process. (Ref: Para. A24)

Supplementary Matters (Ref: Para. 3)

A29. The auditor may become aware of supplementary matters that do not necessarily relate to the oversight of the financial reporting process but which are, nevertheless, likely to be significant to the responsibilities of those charged with governance in overseeing the strategic direction of the entity or the entity's obligations related to accountability. Such matters may include, for example, significant deficiencies in issues regarding governance structures or processes, and significant decisions or actions by senior management that lack appropriate authorisation.

Timing of Communications (Ref: Para. 17)

A44. The appropriate timing for communications will vary with the circumstances of the engagement. Relevant circumstances include the

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significance and nature of the matter, and the action expected to be taken by those charged with governance. For example:

- ...
- It may be appropriate to communicate a significant difficulty encountered during the audit as soon as practicable if those charged with governance are able to assist the auditor to overcome the difficulty, or if it is likely to lead to a modified opinion. Similarly, the auditor it may be appropriate to communicate orally to those charged with governance as soon as practicable significant deficiencies material weaknesses in the design, implementation or operating effectiveness of in internal control that the auditor has identified prior to communicating these in writing as required by SA 265¹⁶. have come to the auditor’s attention as soon as practicable.

SA 300 (Revised), “Planning the Audit of Financial Statements”

Appendix – Considerations in Establishing the Overall Audit Strategy

Significant Factors, Preliminary Engagement Activities, and Knowledge Gained on Other Engagements

- Results of previous audits that involved evaluating the operating effectiveness of internal control, including the nature of identified weaknesses deficiencies and action taken to address them.

SA 315 , “Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement Through Understanding the Entity and Its Environment”

4. For purposes of the SAs, the following terms have the meanings attributed below:

- (f) Material Weakness- A weakness in internal control that could have a material effect on the financial statements.

...

14. The auditor shall obtain an understanding of the control environment. As part of obtaining this understanding, the auditor shall evaluate whether:

¹⁶ SA 265, “Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management”, paragraphs 9 and A14.

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- (a) Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, has created and maintained a culture of honesty and ethical behavior; and
- (b) The strengths in the control environment elements collectively provide an appropriate foundation for the other components of internal control, and whether those other components are not undermined by deficiencies in the control environment weaknesses. (Ref: Para. A65-A74)

...

16. If the entity has established such a process (referred to hereafter as the 'entity's risk assessment process'), the auditor shall obtain an understanding of it, and the results thereof. Where the auditor identifies risks of material misstatement that management failed to identify, the auditor shall evaluate whether there was an underlying risk of a kind that the auditor expects would have been identified by the entity's risk assessment process. If there is such a risk, the auditor shall obtain an understanding of why that process failed to identify it, and evaluate whether the process is appropriate to its circumstances or determine if there is a material weakness/significant deficiency in internal control with regard to the entity's risk assessment process.

...

17. If the entity has not established such a process or has an ad hoc process, the auditor shall discuss with management whether business risks relevant to financial reporting objectives have been identified and how they have been addressed. The auditor shall evaluate whether the absence of a documented risk assessment process is appropriate in the circumstances, or determine whether it represents a significant deficiency/material weakness in the entity's internal control. (Ref: Para. A76)

...

22. The auditor shall obtain an understanding of the major activities that the entity uses to monitor internal control over financial reporting, including those related to those control activities relevant to the audit, and how the entity initiates corrective remedial actions to deficiencies in its controls. (Ref: Para. A94-A96)

Material Weakness in Internal Control

31. The auditor shall evaluate whether, on the basis of the audit work

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performed, the auditor has identified a material weakness in the design, implementation or maintenance of internal control. (Ref: Para. A124-A125)

32. The auditor shall communicate material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit on a timely basis to management at an appropriate level of responsibility, and, as required by SA 260 (Revised), "Communication with Those Charged with Governance", with those charged with governance (unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity). (Ref: Para. A126)

...

Information Obtained in Prior Periods (Ref: Para. 9)

A10. The auditor's previous experience with the entity and audit procedures performed in previous audits may provide the auditor with information about such matters as:

- ◆ Past misstatements and whether they were corrected on a timely basis.
- ◆ The nature of the entity and its environment, and the entity's internal control (including deficiencies in internal control).
- ◆ Significant changes that the entity or its operations may have undergone since the prior financial period, which may assist the auditor in gaining a sufficient understanding of the entity to identify and assess risks of material misstatement.

A11. The auditor is required to determine whether information obtained in prior periods remains relevant, if the auditor intends to use that information for the purposes of the current audit. This is because changes in the control environment, for example, may affect the relevance of information obtained in the prior year. To determine whether changes have occurred that may affect the relevance of such information; the auditor may make inquiries and perform other appropriate audit procedures, such as walk-throughs of relevant systems.

...

Nature and Extent of the Understanding of Relevant Controls (Ref: Para. 13)

A62. Evaluating the design of a control involves considering whether the control, individually or in combination with other controls, is capable of effectively preventing, or detecting and correcting, material misstatements. Implementation of a control means that the control exists and that the entity is using it. There is little point in assessing the implementation of a control that is not effective, and so the design of a

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control is considered first. An improperly designed control may represent a material weakness significant deficiency in the entity's internal control.

...

Effect of the control environment on the assessment of the risks of material misstatement

A70. The existence of a satisfactory control environment can be a positive factor when the auditor assesses the risks of material misstatement. However, although it may help reduce the risk of fraud, a satisfactory control environment is not an absolute deterrent to fraud. Conversely, deficiencies/weaknesses in the control environment may undermine the effectiveness of controls, in particular in relation to fraud. For example, management's failure to commit sufficient resources to address IT security risks may adversely affect internal control by allowing improper changes to be made to computer programs or to data, or unauthorized transactions to be processed. As explained in SA 330, the control environment also influences the nature, timing, and extent of the auditor's further procedures.

...

Components of Internal Control—Monitoring of Controls (Ref: Para. 22)

A94. Monitoring of controls is a process to assess the effectiveness of internal control performance over time. It involves assessing the effectiveness of controls on a timely basis and taking necessary corrective remedial actions. Management accomplishes monitoring of controls through ongoing activities, separate evaluations, or a combination of the two. Ongoing monitoring activities are often built into the normal recurring activities of an entity and include regular management and supervisory activities.

...

Considerations specific to smaller entities

A96. Management's monitoring of control is often accomplished by management's or the owner-manager's close involvement in operations. This involvement often will identify significant variances from expectations and inaccuracies in financial data leading to corrective remedial action to the control.

...

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Assessment of Risks of Material Misstatement at the Financial Statement Level (Ref: Para. 24 (a))

A99. Risks at the financial statement level may derive in particular from a weak deficient control environment (although these risks may also relate to other factors, such as, declining economic conditions). For example, deficiencies, weaknesses such as, management's lack of competence may have a more pervasive effect on the financial statements and may require an overall response by the auditor.

...

Understanding Controls Related to Significant Risks (Ref: Para. 28)

A119. In some cases, management may not have appropriately responded to significant risks of material misstatement by implementing controls over these significant risks. Failure by management to implement such controls is an indicator of a This may indicate a significant deficiency material weakness in the entity's internal control.¹⁷

...

Material Weakness in Internal Control (Ref: Para. 31)

A124. The types of material weaknesses in internal control that the auditor may identify when obtaining an understanding of the entity and its internal controls may include:

- Risks of material misstatement that the auditor identifies and which the entity has not controlled, or for which the relevant control is inadequate.
- A weakness in the entity's risk assessment process that the auditor identifies as material, or the absence of a risk assessment process in those cases where it would be appropriate for one to have been established.

A125. Material weaknesses may also be identified in controls that prevent, or detect and correct, error, or those to prevent and detect fraud.

A126. In case of certain audit engagements, there may be additional communication or reporting requirements. For example, internal control weaknesses may have to be reported to the regulator.

Appendix 1 – Internal Control Components

¹⁷ SA 265, "Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management", Paragraph A7.

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Monitoring of Controls

12. Internal auditors or personnel performing similar functions may contribute to the monitoring of an entity's controls through separate evaluations. Ordinarily, they regularly provide information about the functioning of internal control, focusing considerable attention on evaluating the effectiveness of internal control, and communicate information about strengths and weaknesses deficiencies in internal control and recommendations for improving internal control.

Appendix 2 – Conditions and Events that may Indicate Risks of Material Misstatement

- ...
- • Weaknesses Significant Ddeficiencies in internal control, especially those not addressed by management.
- ...

SA 330, "The Auditor's Responses to Assessed Risks"

18. The auditor shall evaluate whether, on the basis of the audit work performed, the auditor has identified a material weakness in the operating effectiveness of controls.

19. The auditor shall communicate material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit on a timely basis to management at an appropriate level of responsibility and, as required by SA 260, "Communication with Those Charged with Governance", with those charged with governance (unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity).

Overall Responses (Ref: Para. 5)

A2. The assessment of the risks of material misstatement at the financial statement level, and thereby the auditor's overall responses, is affected by the auditor's understanding of the control environment. An effective control environment may allow the auditor to have more confidence in internal control and the reliability of audit evidence generated internally within the entity and thus, for example, allow the auditor to conduct some audit procedures at an interim date rather than at the period end. Deficiencies Weaknesses in the control environment, however, have the opposite effect; for example, the auditor may respond to an ineffective control environment by:

- Conducting more audit procedures as of the period end rather than at an interim date.

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- Obtaining more extensive audit evidence from substantive procedures.
- Increasing the number of locations to be included in the audit scope.

Controls that have not changed from previous audits (Ref: Para. 14(b))

A38. In general, the higher the risk of material misstatement, or the greater the reliance on controls, the shorter the time period elapsed, if any, is likely to be. Factors that may decrease the period for retesting a control, or result in not relying on audit evidence obtained in previous audits at all, include the following:

- A weak deficient control environment.
- Weak Deficient monitoring of controls.
- A significant manual element to the relevant controls.
- Personnel changes that significantly affect the application of the control.
- Changing circumstances that indicate the need for changes in the control.
- Weak Deficient general IT-controls.

Evaluating the Operating Effectiveness of Controls (Ref: Para. 16-19)

A40. A material misstatement detected by the auditor's procedures may indicate is a strong indicator of the existence of a material weakness significant deficiency in internal control.

Evaluating the Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Audit Evidence (Ref: Para. 26-28)

A56. An audit of financial statements is a cumulative and iterative process. As the auditor performs planned audit procedures, the audit evidence obtained may cause the auditor to modify the nature, timing or extent of other planned audit procedures. Information may come to the auditor's attention that differs significantly from the information on which the risk assessment was based. For example,

- The extent of misstatements that the auditor detects by performing substantive procedures may alter the auditor's judgment about the risk assessments and may indicate a material weakness significant deficiency in internal control.
- The auditor may become aware of discrepancies in accounting records, or conflicting or missing evidence.
- Analytical procedures performed at the overall review stage of the

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audit may indicate a previously unrecognised risk of material misstatement.

In such circumstances, the auditor may need to re-evaluate the planned audit procedures, based on the revised consideration of assessed risks for all or some of the classes of transactions, account balances, or disclosures and related assertions. SA 315 contains further guidance on revising the auditor's risk assessment.

SA 540 (Revised), "Auditing Accounting Estimates, Including Fair Value Accounting Estimates, and Related Disclosures"

Obtaining an Understanding of How Management Identifies the Need for Accounting Estimates (Ref: Para. 8(b))

A20. During the audit, the auditor may identify transactions, events and conditions that give rise to the need for accounting estimates that management failed to identify. SA 315 provides guidance when the auditor identifies a material weakness deals with circumstances where the auditor identifies risks of material misstatement that management failed to identify, including determining whether there is a significant deficiency in internal control with regard to in the entity's risk assessment processes¹⁸.

SA 550 (Revised), "Related Parties"

The Entity's Controls over Related Party Relationships and Transactions (Ref: Para. 14)

A18. Controls over related party relationships and transactions within some entities may be weak, ineffective deficient or non-existent for a number of reasons, such as:

- ...

¹⁸ SA 315, paragraph 16.

