
BRIEFING PAPER

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR NON-U.S. ACCOUNTING FIRMS

MARCH 9, 2004 PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD

At its public meeting on March 9, 2004, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("Board") will consider whether to adopt an amendment to its existing registration rule that would extend by 90 days (to July 19, 2004) the deadline for registration of foreign public accounting firms.

The Board has previously recognized that certain aspects of the registration, inspection, investigation and adjudication provisions of the Act and the Board's rules raise special concerns for non-U.S. accounting firms. In an effort to address such concerns, the Board has developed a framework under which, with respect to non-U.S. firms, the Board could implement the Act's provisions by relying, to an appropriate degree, on a non-U.S. system. On December 9, 2003, the Board released proposed rules that would implement this framework, as well as an amendment to registration rules to extend the deadline for registration of foreign public accounting firms to July 19, 2004. The Board is still considering the proposed rules regarding the overall cooperative framework.

The rule change, if adopted today, will not take effect unless approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to Section 107(b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

* * *

The PCAOB is a private-sector, non-profit corporation, created by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, to oversee the auditors of public companies in order to protect the interests of investors and further the public interest in the preparation of informative, fair, and independent audit reports.