



## Transform to ESEF?

Browsing the web, one can find statements like: “Because aesthetics and visual design aren’t part of the ESEF requirements, design details are often overlooked in the conversion process of PDF files and the transformation will eliminate all the benefits of a beautifully designed report.”

### Is really ESEF a conversion of nice-looking PDF files?

PDF and HTML are two different technologies and experts could spend enormous amounts of time explaining the pros and cons based on their expertise and preferences.

In summary, it can be said that PDF is just a file format used primarily to be printed, archived, or integrated into a prepress production line. The visualization of the document is frozen and non-adaptable while HTML is web format, which can be created with a simple text editor and adapts to all types of visualization.

In addition, ESEF is about iXBRL which takes the HTML standard that is used to power the world’s web pages and embeds extra “tags” into it. It gives meaning to the figures and statements in a format that can be understood by a computer.

### Preparers and users

Should preparers focus on their financial statements design? Of course, and iXBRL allows preparers to retain full control over the presentation of their report. This includes the use of graphics and photos.

Should they be concerned on how their report will look like if printed: this is what PDF technology has developed for years now, involving the cost of highly paid design agencies?

Or should they be more concerned how their report will be used with modern technology?

End users will never print the PDF files. The printing remains in the hands of the company that publishes the document.

The UK Government has recognized “that people read differently on the web than they do on paper. This means that the best approach when writing for the web is different from writing for print and concluded that it is really important to create content that is clear, concise, structured appropriately and focused on meeting the user need. A PDF document that was created for offline use will not suit the context of the web and is likely to result in a poor user experience.”

In addition, as XBRL International writes: “Working with iXBRL data is not just about exploring reports using a web browser. Valid iXBRL reports can be loaded into any compliant processor, and the data within them can be consumed by analytics engines, loaded into databases for querying, or processed into new reports. All this can be done whilst retaining links back to the information as it was originally reported and presented.

### ESEF is not about conversion of PDF to HTML

Considering that ESEF is just a conversion of nice-looking PDF documents to nice looking HTML documents is reducing ESEF to a change in format. Also considering ESEF as

another regulatory mandate is not taking ESEF for what it is. ESEF is about structuring content: rendering the information more accessible, understandable, and usable for comparisons and analysis.

ESEF is all about the tags that are inside and are not viewed in a printed form. As an example, it is possible, using iXBRL data, to automatically search company's accounts to find disclosures relating to a particular accounting standard.

ESEF is limited today by ESMA to the tagging of primary financial statements but the benefits of combining human-readable and machine-readable information can assist many domains in making the transition away from inefficient manual processes and to the use of artificial intelligence. Other reporting systems require more granular information to be tagged, together with textual information. This opens the field of much wider digitalization of information as, already prepared and tested, all environmental and societal information which is more and more used in the assessment of an enterprise operations.

The future is therefore to produce more accessible, precise and structured web information and it is time to make systems evolve to prepare such information, rather than trying to reproduce and transform old processes that were using paper based technologies.