

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-90257; File No. SR-ISE-2020-33)

October 22, 2020

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq ISE, LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change to Extend a Pilot on the Nasdaq-100 Reduced Value Index

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Act”),¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on October 14, 2020, Nasdaq ISE, LLC (“ISE” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

The Exchange proposes to extend the pilot to permit the listing and trading of options based on 1/5 the value of the Nasdaq-100 Index (“Nasdaq-100”) currently set to expire on November 2, 2020.

The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange’s Website at <https://listingcenter.nasdaq.com/rulebook/ise/rules>, at the principal office of the Exchange, and at the Commission’s Public Reference Room.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, the Exchange included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

ISE filed a proposed rule change to permit the listing and trading of index options on the Nasdaq 100 Reduced Value Index ("NQX") on a twelve month pilot basis.³

NQX options trade independently of and in addition to NDX options, and the NQX options are subject to the same rules that presently govern the trading of index options based on the Nasdaq-100, including sales practice rules, margin requirements, trading rules, and position and exercise limits. Similar to NDX, NQX options are European-style and cash-settled, and have a contract multiplier of 100. The contract specifications for NQX options mirror in all respects those of the NDX options contract listed on the Exchange, except that NQX options are based on 1/5 of the value of the Nasdaq-100, and are P.M.-settled pursuant to Options 4A, Section 12(a)(6).

The Exchange proposes to amend ISE Options 4A, Section 12(a)(6) to extend the current NQX pilot period to May 4, 2021. This pilot was previously extended with the last extension through November 2, 2020.⁴ The Exchange continues to have sufficient capacity to handle additional quotations and message traffic associated with the proposed listing and trading of NQX options. In addition, index options are integrated into the Exchange's existing surveillance system

³ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 82911 (March 20, 2018), 83 FR 12966 (March 26, 2018) (SR-ISE-2017-106) (Approval Order).

⁴ See Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 86071 (June 10, 2019), 84 FR 27822 (June 14, 2019) (SR-ISE-2019-18); 87379 (October 22, 2019), 84 FR 57793 (October 28, 2019) (SR-ISE-2019-27); and 88683 (April 17, 2020), 85 FR 22768 (April 23, 2020) (SR-ISE-2020-18).

architecture and are thus subject to the relevant surveillance processes. The Exchange also continues to have adequate surveillance procedures to monitor trading in NQX options thereby aiding in the maintenance of a fair and orderly market. Additionally, there is continued investor interest in these products and this extension will provide additional time to collect data related to the pilot.

Pilot Report

The Exchange currently makes public on its website the data and analysis previously submitted to the Commission on the Pilot Program and will continue to make public any data or analysis it submits under the Pilot Program in the future. The Exchange will be submitting a rule change to request that the pilot program become permanent. In lieu of submitting any additional annual reports, the Exchange would provide additional information requested by the Commission in connection with the permanency rule change for this pilot program.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,⁵ in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,⁶ in particular, in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general to protect investors and the public interest. By extending the pilot, the Exchange believes it will attract order flow to the Exchange, increase the variety of listed options, and provide a valuable hedge tool to retail and other investors. Specifically, the Exchange believes that the pilot will provide additional trading and hedging opportunities for investors while

⁵ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

⁶ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

providing the Commission with data to monitor for and assess any potential for adverse market effects of allowing P.M.-settlement for NQX options, including on the underlying component stocks.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. NQX options would be available for trading to all market participants and therefore would not impose an undue burden on intra-market competition. The Exchange believes that the proposed rule change will not impose an undue burden on inter-market competition as this rule change will continue to facilitate the listing and trading of a new option product that will enhance competition among market participants, to the benefit of investors and the marketplace. The continued listing of NQX will enhance competition by providing investors with an additional investment vehicle, in a fully-electronic trading environment, through which investors can gain and hedge exposure to the Nasdaq-100. Furthermore, this product could offer a competitive alternative to other existing investment products that seek to allow investors to gain broad market exposure. Finally, it is possible for other exchanges to develop or license the use of a new or different index to compete with the Nasdaq-100 and seek Commission approval to list and trade options on such an index.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others

No written comments were either solicited or received.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

Because the proposed rule change does not: (i) significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (ii) impose any significant burden on competition; and (iii) become

operative for 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act⁷ and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.⁸

A proposed rule change filed pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6) under the Act⁹ normally does not become operative for 30 days after the date of its filing. However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)¹⁰ permits the Commission to designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that investors may continue to trade NQX options listed by the Exchange as part of the pilot program on an uninterrupted basis. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest as it will allow the pilot program to continue uninterrupted, thereby avoiding investor confusion that could result from a temporary interruption in the pilot program. Accordingly, the Commission hereby waives the operative delay and designates the proposed rule change operative upon filing.¹¹

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such

⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁸ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires a self-regulatory organization to give the Commission written notice of its intent to file the proposed rule change, along with a brief description and text of the proposed rule change, at least five business days prior to the date of filing of the proposed rule change, or such shorter time as designated by the Commission. The Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

⁹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

¹¹ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission also has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. If the Commission takes such action, the Commission shall institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule change should be approved or disapproved.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic comments:

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-ISE-2020-33 on the subject line.

Paper comments:

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-ISE-2020-33. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet website (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be

available for website viewing and printing in the Commission’s Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549 on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change. Persons submitting comments are cautioned that we do not redact or edit personal identifying information from comment submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-ISE-2020-33, and should be submitted on or before [insert date 21 days from publication in the Federal Register].

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹²

J. Matthew DeLesDernier
Assistant Secretary

¹² 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).