

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-69755; File No. SR-NASDAQ-2013-070)

June 13, 2013

Self-Regulatory Organizations; The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC; Order Approving a Proposed Rule Change for the Permanent Approval of a Pilot Program to Permit NASDAQ Options Market to Accept Inbound Options Orders from NASDAQ OMX BX, Inc.

I. Introduction

On April 24, 2013, The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC (“Exchange” or “NASDAQ”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”), pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Act”)¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² a proposed rule change requesting permanent approval of the Exchange’s pilot program that permits the NASDAQ Options Market (“NOM”) to accept inbound options orders routed by Nasdaq Options Services LLC (“NOS”) from NASDAQ OMX BX, Inc. (“BX”). The proposed rule change was published for comment in the Federal Register on May 8, 2013.³ The Commission received no comment letters regarding the proposed rule change. This order approves the proposed rule change.

II. Background

NASDAQ Rule 2160(a) prohibits the Exchange or any entity with which it is affiliated from, directly or indirectly, acquiring or maintaining an ownership interest in, or engaging in a business venture with, an Exchange member or an affiliate of an Exchange member in the absence of an effective filing under Section 19(b) of the Act.⁴ NOS is a broker-dealer that is a

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 69499 (May 2, 2013), 78 FR 26820 (“Notice”).

⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b). NASDAQ Rule 2160 also prohibits a NASDAQ member from being or becoming an affiliate of NASDAQ, or an affiliate of an entity affiliated with

member of the Exchange, and currently provides to members of BX optional routing services to other markets.⁵ NOS is owned by NASDAQ OMX Group, Inc. (“NASDAQ OMX”), which also owns three registered securities exchanges – the Exchange, BX, and PHLX.⁶ Thus, NOS is an affiliate of these exchanges.⁷ Absent an effective filing, NASDAQ Rule 2160(a) would prohibit NOS from being a member of the Exchange. The Commission initially approved NOS’s affiliation with NASDAQ in connection with the establishment of NOM,⁸ and NOS performs certain limited activities for the Exchange.⁹

On May 15, 2012, the Exchange filed a proposed rule change for NOM to accept inbound options orders routed by NOS from BX on a one year pilot basis in connection with the establishment of a new options market by BX.¹⁰ On April 24, 2013, the Exchange filed the instant proposal to allow NOM to accept such orders routed inbound by NOS from BX on a

NASDAQ, in the absence of an effective filing under Section 19(b). See NASDAQ Rule 2160(a)(2).

⁵ NOS operates as a facility of BX that provides outbound routing from BX to other market centers, subject to certain conditions. See BX Options Rules, Chapter VI, Sec. 11 (Order Routing). See also Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67256 (June 26, 2012), 77 FR 39277 (July 2, 2012) (SR-BX-2012-030).

⁶ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 58324 (August 7, 2008), 73 FR 46936 (August 12, 2008) (SR-BSE-2008-02; SR-BSE-2008-23; SR-BSE-2008-25; SR-BSECC-2008-01) (order approving NASDAQ OMX’s acquisition of BX); Securities Exchange Act Release No. 58179 (July 17, 2008), 73 FR 42874 (July 23, 2008) (SR-Phlx-2008-31) (order approving NASDAQ OMX’s acquisition of PHLX).

⁷ See id. See also 78 FR at 26820.

⁸ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 57478 (March 12, 2008), 73 FR 14521, 14532-14533 (March 18, 2008) (SR-NASDAQ-2007-004 and SR-NASDAQ-2007-080).

⁹ See, e.g., NASDAQ Options Rule Chapter VI, Section 11(e) (governing order routing on NOM); and Securities Exchange Act Release No. 61668 (March 5, 2010), 75 FR 12323 (March 15, 2010) (SR-NASDAQ-2010-028) (relating to the routing of orders by NOS from NOM to PHLX).

¹⁰ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67027 (May 18, 2012), 77 FR 31057 (May 24, 2012) (SR-NASDAQ-2012-061).

permanent basis subject to certain limitations and conditions.¹¹

III. Discussion and Commission Findings

After careful review, the Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to a national securities exchange.¹² Specifically, the Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b)(1) of the Act,¹³ which requires, among other things, that a national securities exchange be so organized and have the capacity to carry out the purposes of the Act, and to comply and enforce compliance by its members and persons associated with its members, with the provisions of the Act, the rules and regulation thereunder, and the rules of the Exchange. Further, the Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,¹⁴ which requires, among other things, that the rules of a national securities exchange be designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices; to promote just and equitable principles of trade; to foster cooperation and coordination with persons engaged in regulating, clearing, settling, and processing information with respect to, and facilitating transactions in securities; 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. Section 6(b)(5) also requires that the rules of an exchange not be designed to permit unfair discrimination among customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

Recognizing that the Commission has previously expressed concern regarding the potential for conflicts of interest in instances where a member firm is affiliated with an exchange

¹¹ See Notice, 78 FR 26820.

¹² In approving this proposed rule change, the Commission has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition and capital formation. 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

¹³ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(1).

¹⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

to which it is routing orders, the Exchange proposed the following limitations and conditions to NOS's affiliation with the Exchange to permit the Exchange to accept inbound options orders that NOS routes in its capacity as a facility of BX on a pilot basis.¹⁵ The Exchange has proposed to permit NASDAQ to accept inbound orders that NOS routes in its capacity as a facility of BX on a permanent basis, subject to the same limitations and conditions of this pilot:¹⁶

- First, the Exchange and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”) will maintain a Regulatory Contract, as well as an agreement pursuant to Rule 17d-2 under the Act (“17d-2 Agreement”).¹⁷ Pursuant to the Regulatory Contract and the 17d-2 Agreement, FINRA will be allocated regulatory responsibilities to review NOS's compliance with certain NASDAQ rules.¹⁸ Pursuant to the Regulatory Contract, however, the Exchange retains ultimate responsibility for enforcing its rules with respect to NOS.
- Second, FINRA will monitor NOS for compliance with NASDAQ's trading rules, and will collect and maintain certain related information.¹⁹
- Third, FINRA will provide a report to the Exchange's chief regulatory officer (“CRO”), on a quarterly basis, that: (i) quantifies all alerts (of which the Exchange or FINRA is

¹⁵ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 67295 (June 28, 2012), 77 FR 39758 (July 5, 2012) (SR-NASDAQ-2012-061).

¹⁶ See Notice, 78 FR at 26820-26821.

¹⁷ 17 CFR 240.17d-2.

¹⁸ NOS is also subject to independent oversight by FINRA, its designated examining authority, for compliance with financial responsibility requirements.

¹⁹ Pursuant to the Regulatory Contract, both FINRA and the Exchange will collect and maintain all alerts, complaints, investigations and enforcement actions in which NOS (in its capacity as a facility of BX routing orders to NOM) is identified as a participant that has potentially violated applicable Commission or Exchange rules. The Exchange and FINRA will retain these records in an easily accessible manner in order to facilitate any potential review conducted by the Commission's Office of Compliance Inspections and Examinations. See Notice, 78 FR at 26820 n.12.

aware) that identify NOS as a participant that has potentially violated Commission or Exchange rules, and (ii) lists all investigations that identify NOS as a participant that has potentially violated Commission or NASDAQ rules.

- Fourth, the Exchange has in place NASDAQ Rule 2160(c), which requires NASDAQ OMX, as the holding company owning both the Exchange and NOS, to establish and maintain procedures and internal controls reasonably designed to ensure that NOS does not develop or implement changes to its system, based on non-public information obtained regarding planned changes to the Exchange's systems as a result of its affiliation with the Exchange, until such information is available generally to similarly situated Exchange members, in connection with the provision of inbound order routing to the Exchange.

The Exchange stated that it has met all the above-listed conditions. By meeting such conditions, the Exchange believes that it has set up mechanisms that protect the independence of the Exchange's regulatory responsibility with respect to NOS, and has demonstrated that NOS cannot use any information advantage it may have because of its affiliation with the Exchange.²⁰ In the past, the Commission has expressed concern that the affiliation of an exchange with one of its members raises potential conflicts of interest, and the potential for unfair competitive advantage.²¹ Although the Commission continues to be concerned about potential unfair

²⁰ See Notice, 78 FR at 26821.

²¹ See, e.g., Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 54170 (July 18, 2006), 71 FR 42149 (July 25, 2006) (SR-NASDAQ-2006-006) (order approving NASDAQ's proposal to adopt NASDAQ Rule 2140, restricting affiliations between NASDAQ and its members); 53382 (February 27, 2006), 71 FR 11251 (March 6, 2006) (SR-NYSE-2005-77) (order approving the combination of the New York Stock Exchange, Inc. and Archipelago Holdings, Inc.); 58673 (September 29, 2008), 73 FR 57707 (October 3, 2008) (SR-Amex-2008-62 and SR-NYSE-2008-60) (order approving the combination of NYSE Euronext and the American Stock Exchange LLC); 59135 (December 22, 2008), 73 FR

competition and conflicts of interest between an exchange's self-regulatory obligations and its commercial interest when the exchange is affiliated with one of its members, for the reasons discussed below, the Commission believes that it is consistent with the Act to permit NOS, in its capacity as a facility of BX, to route orders inbound to NOM on a permanent basis instead of a pilot basis, subject to the limitations and conditions described above.²²

The Exchange has proposed four ongoing conditions applicable to NOS's routing activities, which are enumerated above. The Commission believes that these conditions will mitigate its concerns about potential conflicts of interest and unfair competitive advantage. In particular, the Commission believes that FINRA's oversight of NOS,²³ combined with FINRA's monitoring of NOS's compliance with the Exchange's rules and quarterly reporting to the Exchange, will help to protect the independence of the Exchange's regulatory responsibilities with respect to NOS. The Commission also believes that the Exchange's Rule 2160(c) is

79954 (December 30, 2008) (SR-ISE-2009-85) (order approving the purchase by ISE Holdings of an ownership interest in Direct Edge Holdings LLC); 59281 (January 22, 2009), 74 FR 5014 (January 28, 2009) (SR-NYSE-2008-120) (order approving a joint venture between NYSE and BIDS Holdings L.P.); 58375 (August 18, 2008), 73 FR 49498 (August 21, 2008) (File No. 10-182) (order granting the exchange registration of BATS Exchange, Inc.); 61698 (March 12, 2010), 75 FR 13151 (March 18, 2010) (File Nos. 10-194 and 10-196) (order granting the exchange registration of EDGX Exchange, Inc. and EDGA Exchange, Inc.); and 62716 (August 13, 2010), 75 FR 51295 (August 19, 2010) (File No. 10-198) (order granting the exchange registration of BATS-Y Exchange, Inc.).

²² The Commission notes that these limitations and conditions are consistent with those previously approved by the Commission for other exchanges. See, e.g., Securities Exchange Act Release Nos. 69233 (March 25, 2013), 78 FR 19352 (March 29, 2013) (SR-NASDAQ-2013-028); 69232 (March 25, 2013), 78 FR 19342 (March 29, 2013) (SR-BX-2013-013); 69229 (March 25, 2013), 78 FR 19337 (March 29, 2013) (SR-Phlx-2013-15); 67256 (June 26, 2012) 77 FR 39277 (July 2, 2012) (SR-BX-2012-030); and 64090 (March 17, 2011), 76 FR 16462 (March 23, 2011) (SR-BX-2011-007).

²³ This oversight will be accomplished through the 17d-2 Agreement between FINRA and the Exchange and the Regulatory Contract. See Notice, 78 FR at 26820 n.10 and accompanying text.

designed to ensure that NOS cannot use any information advantage it may have because of its affiliation with the Exchange.

V. Conclusion

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act,²⁴ that the proposed rule change (SR-NASDAQ-2013-070) be, and hereby is, approved.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.²⁵

Elizabeth M. Murphy
Secretary

²⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2).

²⁵ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).