

International Accounting Standards Committee Foundation

**Due Process Handbook
for the International Financial Reporting
Interpretations Committee (IFRIC)**

Approved by the Trustees January 2007

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paragraphs

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DUE PROCESS HANDBOOK

International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee

Introduction

- 1 The International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) assists the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) in improving financial reporting through timely identification, discussion and resolution of financial reporting issues within the framework of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs). The IFRIC was established in March 2002 by the Trustees of the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) Foundation, when it replaced the previous interpretations committee, the Standing Interpretations Committee.
- 2 This Handbook was published in draft for public comment in May 2006. It is based on the existing framework of the due process laid out in the Constitution of the IASC Foundation (see Appendix A) and the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Interpretations* issued by the IASB. It reflects the public consultation conducted in 2005 and 2006, and supersedes the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Interpretations*.
- 3 The Trustees of the IASC Foundation have set up a committee—the Trustees' Procedures Committee—with the task of regularly reviewing and, if necessary, amending the procedures of due process in the light of experience and comments from the IFRIC, the IASB and constituents.
- 4 The Trustees have approved this Handbook following public consultation and public debate by the IFRIC, the IASB and the Trustees.

Responsibilities of the IFRIC and scope of its work

- 5 In the context of its requirements for due process, the IFRIC reviews newly identified financial reporting issues not specifically addressed in IFRSs or issues where unsatisfactory or conflicting interpretations have developed, or seem likely to develop in the absence of authoritative guidance, with a view to reaching a consensus on the appropriate treatment.
- 6 In providing interpretative guidance, the IFRIC applies a principle-based approach founded on the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements*. The IFRIC considers the principles established in relevant IFRSs to develop its interpretative guidance and to determine that the proposed guidance does not conflict with IFRSs. It follows that, in providing interpretative guidance, the IFRIC is not seeking to create an extensive rule-oriented environment. Nor does it act as an urgent issues group.
- 7 The IFRIC does not reach a consensus that changes or conflicts with IFRSs or the *Framework*. If the IFRIC concludes that the requirements of an IFRS differ from the *Framework*, it obtains direction from the IASB before providing guidance. In reaching a consensus, the IFRIC also has due regard for the need for international convergence.

- 8 The IFRIC informs the IASB of any existing or emerging issues that it perceives as indicative of inadequacies in IFRSs or the *Framework*. If the IFRIC believes that an IFRS or the *Framework* should be modified or an additional IFRS should be developed, it refers such conclusions to the IASB for its consideration.
- 9 When the IFRIC reaches a consensus on an issue, it develops an Interpretation (or an Amendment to an Interpretation) to make that consensus publicly available to interested parties on a timely basis and requests the IASB to approve it for issue. IFRIC Interpretations are developed in accordance with a due process of consultation and debate including making draft Interpretations available for public comment.

Membership

- 10 The IFRIC has twelve voting members appointed by the Trustees. The members are selected for their ability to maintain an awareness of current issues as they arise and the technical ability to resolve them. They would normally include accountants in industry and public practice and users of financial statements, with a reasonably broad geographical representation. The lack of a full complement of members does not restrict the IFRIC's ability to meet. The membership shall not include more than one person from the same entity.
- 11 Members of the IFRIC are appointed for fixed renewable terms of three years. The Trustees recognise that continuity of membership is important to the IFRIC's work, and therefore expect to appoint some members for more than one term.
- 12 The IFRIC is chaired by a member of the IASB, the Director of Technical Activities or another senior member of the IASB staff, or another appropriately qualified individual. The Chairman of the IFRIC is appointed by the Trustees. The Chairman has the right to speak on the technical issues being considered but not to vote.
- 13 The IFRIC also includes appointed observers (currently from the International Organization of Securities Commissions and the European Commission) and liaison members of the IASB. Appointed observers and liaison IASB members have the right to attend and speak at IFRIC meetings but not to vote. Similarly, members of the IASB other than those specifically designated for liaison with the IFRIC may attend IFRIC meetings, with the right to speak but not to vote.
- 14 IFRIC members and appointed observers are expected to attend all meetings. Membership is personal; members vote in accordance with their own independent views, not as representatives voting according to the views of the firm, organisation or constituency with which they are associated. If an IFRIC member or appointed observer is unable to attend a meeting, he or she may designate an alternate who will attend in his or her stead. The alternate is nominated in advance in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the Chairman and should be fully briefed by the member in advance of the meeting. Alternates have the right to speak but are not included in determining whether quorum requirements are satisfied and do not have the right to vote.

- 15 A member's continued membership will be reconsidered by the Trustees if the member is absent from two successive meetings of the IFRIC or is absent from three meetings of the IFRIC held during a period of one year. The member's appointment will be terminated unless reasonable grounds for the absence and an assurance of future attendance are provided.
- 16 The quorum and voting requirements are detailed in paragraphs 28 and 29.

Due process

- 17 The IFRIC due process comprises seven stages.

Stage 1: Identification of issues

- 18 The primary responsibility for identifying issues to be considered by the IFRIC is that of its members and appointed observers. Preparers, auditors and others with an interest in financial reporting are encouraged to refer issues to the IFRIC when they believe that divergent practices have emerged regarding the accounting for particular transactions or circumstances or when there is doubt about the appropriate accounting treatment and it is important that a standard treatment is established.
- 19 An issue may be put forward by any individual or organisation. A template for submission is available on the IASB Website (see Appendix B). A submission can be made either by email to ifric@iasb.org or by post to the IASB address for the attention of the IFRIC Co-ordinator. A submission should contain both a detailed description of the issue (including a description of alternative solutions referring to the relevant IASB pronouncements) and an evaluation of the issue using the criteria for agenda items set out in paragraph 24.
- 20 The source of a suggested agenda item is not revealed to the IFRIC or to others.
- 21 A consensus of the IFRIC has general applicability. The IFRIC does not resolve issues that are specific to the circumstances of a particular entity.
- 22 The IASB staff assess the issue and prepare an analysis concerning the scope of the issue and whether it meets the agenda criteria. The staff may seek input from members of the IASB and the IFRIC and other knowledgeable parties in undertaking this work.

Stage 2: Setting the agenda

- 23 The IFRIC decides after debate in a public meeting whether to add an issue to its agenda.
- 24 The IFRIC assesses proposed agenda items against the following criteria. An issue does not have to satisfy all the criteria to qualify for the agenda.
 - (a) The issue is widespread and has practical relevance.
 - (b) The issue indicates that there are significantly divergent interpretations (either emerging or already existing in practice). The IFRIC will not add an item to its agenda if IFRSs are clear, with the result that divergent interpretations are not expected in practice.

- (c) Financial reporting would be improved through elimination of the diverse reporting methods.
 - (d) The issue can be resolved efficiently within the confines of existing IFRSs and the *Framework*, and the demands of the interpretation process. The issue should be sufficiently narrow in scope to be capable of interpretation, but not so narrow that it is not cost-effective for the IFRIC and its constituents to undertake the due process associated with an Interpretation.
 - (e) It is probable that the IFRIC will be able to reach a consensus on the issue on a timely basis.
 - (f) If the issue relates to a current or planned IASB project, there is a pressing need to provide guidance sooner than would be expected from the IASB's activities. The IFRIC will not add an item to its agenda if an IASB project is expected to resolve the issue in a shorter period than the IFRIC requires to complete its due process.
- 25 A consultative period applies to issues that are not added to the agenda. The draft reason for not adding an item to the agenda is published in *IFRIC Update* and electronically on the IASB Website with a comment period of not less than 30 days. The comments received are placed on the public record, unless confidentiality is specifically requested by the commentator (supported by good reason such as commercial confidence), and form part of the deliberation that takes place at the next available IFRIC meeting. At that meeting the IFRIC decides whether to add the issue to its agenda.
- 26 A simple majority of IFRIC members present at the meeting can agree to add any issue to the IFRIC agenda. The reasons for not adding an item to the IFRIC agenda are posted on the IASB Website as a historical record of decisions taken. That record is not updated as standards are amended and does not form part of IFRSs.
- 27 To ensure that the IFRIC considers only issues on which timely guidance can be provided, over the course of a project the IFRIC reassesses from time to time whether the issues can be appropriately addressed within the mandate. If an issue has been considered at three meetings and there is still no consensus in prospect for either a draft or final Interpretation, the IFRIC considers whether it should be removed from the agenda. The IFRIC may extend consideration of the issue for an additional period, normally not more than one or two meetings. If the IFRIC has concluded that it will not be able to reach a consensus, it will discontinue work on the issue, inform the IASB and publish the fact that work has been discontinued. The IFRIC may recommend that the matter be taken up by the IASB.

Stage 3: IFRIC meetings and voting

- 28 The IFRIC meets in public and follows procedures similar to the IASB's general policy for its Board meetings. At such meetings the IFRIC debates both matters that are on its agenda and items proposed to be added to its agenda. IFRIC members and appointed observers are expected to attend meetings in person.

However, meetings may be held using teleconference or any other communication facilities that permit simultaneous communication among all members and appointed observers and allow public observers to hear all participants.

- 29 Nine voting members of the IFRIC present in person or by telecommunications constitute a quorum.
- 30 Each IFRIC voting member has one vote. Members vote in accordance with their own independent views, not as representatives voting according to the views of any firm, organisation or constituency with which they may be associated. Proxy voting is not permitted.
- 31 The Chairman may invite others to attend meetings of the IFRIC as advisers when specialised input is required. A member or an appointed observer may also, with the prior consent of the Chairman, bring to a meeting an adviser who has specialised knowledge of a topic to be discussed. Such invited advisers will have the right to speak.
- 32 The IFRIC may conduct business electronically or by mail between meetings, for example to confirm drafting of a proposed draft or final Interpretation or for the IASB staff to obtain information on a proposed topic so that it can be developed appropriately for public discussion. All technical decisions, however, are made in meetings that are open for public observation.

Stage 4: Development of a draft Interpretation

- 33 The IFRIC reaches its conclusions on the basis of information contained in Issue Summaries that are prepared under the supervision of IASB staff. An Issue Summary describes the issue to be discussed and provides the information necessary for IFRIC members to gain an understanding of the issue and make decisions about it. An Issue Summary is developed for the IFRIC's consideration after a thorough review of the authoritative accounting literature and possible alternatives, including consultation where appropriate with national standard-setters. An Issue Summary may include:
 - (a) a brief description of the transaction or event.
 - (b) the specific issues or questions to be considered by the IFRIC.
 - (c) the relevant concepts from the *Framework*.
 - (d) a description of potential appropriate alternative treatments based on those concepts, with the arguments in favour and against each alternative.
 - (e) a list of the relevant IASB pronouncements as well as those of national standard-setters, identifying any inconsistency between the alternative treatments, the relevant concepts, and the standards.
 - (f) recommendations on the appropriate accounting treatment.
- 34 A draft Interpretation is developed on which the IFRIC votes. Voting takes place at a public meeting. A consensus is achieved when no more than three members have voted against the proposal.

35 An Interpretation includes:

- (a) a summary of the accounting issues identified;
- (b) the consensus reached on the appropriate accounting;
- (c) references to relevant IFRSs, parts of the *Framework* and other pronouncements that have been drawn upon to support the consensus; and
- (d) the effective date and transitional provisions.

The reasons for the consensus are set out in the Basis for Conclusions.

Stage 5: The IASB's role in the release of a draft Interpretation

36 IASB members have access to all IFRIC agenda papers. They are expected to comment on technical matters as the issues are being considered, particularly if they have concerns about alternatives the IFRIC is considering.

37 IASB members are informed when the IFRIC reaches a consensus on a draft Interpretation. The draft Interpretation is released for public comment unless four or more IASB members object within a week of being informed of its completion.

38 If a draft Interpretation is not released because of IASB members' objections, the issue will be considered at the next IASB meeting. On the basis of discussion at the meeting, the IASB will decide whether the draft Interpretation should be published or whether the matter should be referred back to the IFRIC, added to its own agenda or not be the subject of any further action.

Stage 6: Comment period and deliberation

39 Draft Interpretations are made available for public comment for not less than 60 days. All comments received during the comment period are considered by the IFRIC before an Interpretation is finalised. Comment letters are made publicly available unless confidentiality is requested by the commentator (supported by good reason such as commercial confidence). A staff summary and analysis of the comment letters are provided to the IFRIC.

40 If the proposed Interpretation is changed significantly, the IFRIC will consider whether it should be re-exposed. Re-exposure is not required automatically and will depend on the significance of the changes contemplated, whether they were raised in the Basis for Conclusions on the draft Interpretation or in questions posed by the IFRIC, their significance for practice and what might be learned by the IFRIC from re-exposure.

41 The IFRIC votes to confirm the consensus set out in the final Interpretation. A consensus is achieved when no more than three members have voted against the proposal.

Stage 7: The IASB's role in an Interpretation

- 42 When the IFRIC has reached a consensus on an Interpretation, the Interpretation is put to the IASB for ratification, in a public meeting, before being issued. Approval by the IASB requires at least nine IASB members to be in favour. The IASB votes on the Interpretation as submitted by the IFRIC. If an Interpretation is not approved by the IASB, the IASB provides the IFRIC with an analysis of the objections and concerns of those voting against the Interpretation. On the basis of this analysis, the IASB will decide whether the matter should be referred back to the IFRIC, added to its own agenda or not be the subject of any further action.
- 43 Approved Interpretations are issued by the IASB.

Authority of IFRIC Interpretations

- 44 IFRIC Interpretations set out the consensus that entities are required to apply if their financial statements are described as being prepared in accordance with IFRSs. The authoritative text of a draft Interpretation or an Interpretation is that published by the IASB in the English language.
- 45 IFRIC Interpretations usually apply to periods beginning on or after a specified effective date (usually three months from the date of issue). However, the IFRIC may choose to vary that approach. Transitional provisions that apply on initial application of an IFRIC consensus are specified in the Interpretation. In keeping with IFRSs, the presumption is that IFRIC Interpretations will be applied retrospectively in accordance with IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*. The IFRIC also considers the effect of the transitional provisions on first-time adopters of IFRSs, including the interaction of the transitional provisions with those of IFRS 1 *First-time Adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards*.
- 46 An IFRIC Interpretation is withdrawn when an IFRS or other authoritative document issued by the IASB that overrides or confirms a previously issued IFRIC consensus becomes effective. The IFRIC Interpretations that would be affected by an authoritative IASB document are identified in the exposure draft of that document. The IASB informs the IFRIC when an exposure draft proposes the withdrawal of an IFRIC Interpretation.

Communication

- 47 IFRIC members and appointed observers are encouraged to discuss, in general terms, technical issues being considered by the IFRIC with associates who have an interest and expertise in such matters. Informal consultation of this kind offers members the opportunity to bring a variety of views to bear on the decisions to be made. The IFRIC agenda papers and drafts of proposed Interpretations are not to be distributed to other parties without the consent of the Chairman.
- 48 Information about the deliberations of the IFRIC is made available to the public. The IFRIC meeting agenda is posted on the IASB Website in advance of each meeting. Observer notes are prepared before the IFRIC meeting to allow public observers to follow the debate and discussion during the meeting. About two weeks after the IFRIC meeting the IASB staff post *IFRIC Update* on the IASB Website,

summarising the IFRIC's decisions and recent developments. Shortly afterwards *IFRIC Update* is published in hard copy. The IFRIC publishes on the IASB Website details of items on its agenda, and a record of its decisions in respect of items not taken on to the agenda.

- 49 The IFRIC regularly reports to the IASB on matters relating to its procedures, progress with its agenda and other administrative matters. In addition, the IFRIC reviews its mandate and operating procedures at least every five years. The results of this review are communicated to the IASB for consideration and, after consultation with the Standards Advisory Council, the IASB may make recommendations to the Trustees for change.

Relationship with national standard-setters and national interpretative groups

- 50 The IASB staff maintain liaison with national standard-setters (NSSs) and national interpretative groups (NIGs) to identify interpretative issues that the IFRIC might need to consider. IFRIC members and appointed observers are encouraged to identify issues that may indicate emerging divergence in the interpretation of IFRSs.
- 51 NSSs and NIGs are encouraged to refer interpretative issues to the IFRIC for its consideration. The IFRIC, however, will not give assurance that a local interpretation is either consistent or inconsistent with IFRSs.

Appendix A

The IFRIC's due process: extracts from the Constitution

This appendix, which contains extracts from sections 15, 16, 30–36 and 41 of the Constitution, is not reproduced here.

Appendix B

Template for submission of a potential agenda item request to the IFRIC

Any individual or organisation may put forward suggestions of potential agenda items for consideration by the IFRIC. Anyone doing so is asked to submit a brief proposal, which will be presented to the IFRIC without identifying the submitter. The proposal should include the following:

- 1 **The issue.** A description of the issue including, where relevant, any aspects that should be addressed separately.
- 2 **Current practice.** A brief description of current or emerging accounting practices, outlining the major alternatives, and referring to the relevant IASB pronouncements.
- 3 **Reasons for the IFRIC to address the issue.** The issue should be evaluated using the following criteria:
 - (a) Is the issue widespread and practical?
 - (b) Does the issue involve significantly divergent interpretations (either emerging or already existing in practice)?
 - (c) Would financial reporting be improved through elimination of the diversity?
 - (d) Is the issue sufficiently narrow in scope to be capable of interpretation within the confines of IFRSs and the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements*, but not so narrow that it is inefficient to apply the interpretation process?
 - (e) If the issue relates to a current or planned IASB project, is there a pressing need for guidance sooner than would be expected from the IASB project? (The IFRIC will not add an item to its agenda if an IASB project is expected to resolve the issue in a shorter period than the IFRIC would require to complete its due process.)

A template is set out below (see next page).

IFRIC Due Process Handbook

Please submit the completed template by either email to ifric@iasb.org or post to:

IFRIC Co-ordinator
International Accounting Standards Board
First Floor
30 Cannon Street
London EC4M 6XH
United Kingdom

IFRIC POTENTIAL AGENDA ITEM REQUEST

The issue:

Current practice:

Reasons for the IFRIC to address the issue:

Submitted by

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Telephone:

Email: