

International Accounting Standard 20**Accounting for Government Grants and
Disclosure of Government Assistance**

This version includes amendments resulting from IFRSs issued up to 31 December 2008.

IAS 20 *Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance* was issued by the International Accounting Standards Committee in April 1983, and reformatted in 1994.

Limited amendments to IAS 20 were made by IAS 10 (issued May 1999) and IAS 41 (issued January 2001).

In April 2001 the International Accounting Standards Board resolved that all Standards and Interpretations issued under previous Constitutions continued to be applicable unless and until they were amended or withdrawn.

Since then IAS 20 has been amended by the following IFRSs:

- IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* (issued December 2003)
- IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (as revised in September 2007)*
- *Improvements to IFRSs* (issued May 2008).*

The following Interpretations refer to IAS 20:

- SIC-10 *Government Assistance—No Specific Relation to Operating Activities* (issued July 1998)
- IFRIC 12 *Service Concession Arrangements* (issued November 2006 and subsequently amended).

* effective date 1 January 2009

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International Accounting Standard 20 *Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance* (IAS 20) is set out in paragraphs 1–43. All the paragraphs have equal authority but retain the IASC format of the Standard when it was adopted by the IASB. IAS 20 should be read in the context of the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Standards* and the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements*. IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* provides a basis for selecting and applying accounting policies in the absence of explicit guidance.

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International Accounting Standard 20

Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance*

Scope

- 1 This Standard shall be applied in accounting for, and in the disclosure of, government grants and in the disclosure of other forms of government assistance.**
- 2** This Standard does not deal with:
- (a) the special problems arising in accounting for government grants in financial statements reflecting the effects of changing prices or in supplementary information of a similar nature.
 - (b) government assistance that is provided for an entity in the form of benefits that are available in determining taxable profit or tax loss, or are determined or limited on the basis of income tax liability. Examples of such benefits are income tax holidays, investment tax credits, accelerated depreciation allowances and reduced income tax rates.
 - (c) government participation in the ownership of the entity.
 - (d) government grants covered by IAS 41 *Agriculture*.

Definitions

- 3 The following terms are used in this Standard with the meanings specified:**
- Government* refers to government, government agencies and similar bodies whether local, national or international.**
- Government assistance* is action by government designed to provide an economic benefit specific to an entity or range of entities qualifying under certain criteria. Government assistance for the purpose of this Standard does not include benefits provided only indirectly through action affecting general trading conditions, such as the provision of infrastructure in development areas or the imposition of trading constraints on competitors.**
- Government grants* are assistance by government in the form of transfers of resources to an entity in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the operating activities of the entity. They exclude those forms of government assistance which cannot reasonably have a value placed upon them and transactions with government which cannot be distinguished from the normal trading transactions of the entity.[†]**

* As part of *Improvements to IFRSs* issued in May 2008 the Board amended terminology used in this Standard to be consistent with other IFRSs as follows: (a) 'taxable income' was amended to 'taxable profit or tax loss', (b) 'recognised as income/expense' was amended to 'recognised in profit or loss', (c) 'credited directly to shareholders' interests/equity' was amended to 'recognised outside profit or loss', and (d) 'revision to an accounting estimate' was amended to 'change in accounting estimate'.

† See also SIC-10 *Government Assistance—No Specific Relation to Operating Activities*.

Grants related to assets are government grants whose primary condition is that an entity qualifying for them should purchase, construct or otherwise acquire long-term assets. Subsidiary conditions may also be attached restricting the type or location of the assets or the periods during which they are to be acquired or held.

Grants related to income are government grants other than those related to assets.

Forgivable loans are loans which the lender undertakes to waive repayment of under certain prescribed conditions.

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between a knowledgeable, willing buyer and a knowledgeable, willing seller in an arm's length transaction.

- 4 Government assistance takes many forms varying both in the nature of the assistance given and in the conditions which are usually attached to it. The purpose of the assistance may be to encourage an entity to embark on a course of action which it would not normally have taken if the assistance was not provided.
- 5 The receipt of government assistance by an entity may be significant for the preparation of the financial statements for two reasons. Firstly, if resources have been transferred, an appropriate method of accounting for the transfer must be found. Secondly, it is desirable to give an indication of the extent to which the entity has benefited from such assistance during the reporting period. This facilitates comparison of an entity's financial statements with those of prior periods and with those of other entities.
- 6 Government grants are sometimes called by other names such as subsidies, subventions, or premiums.

Government grants

- 7 **Government grants, including non-monetary grants at fair value, shall not be recognised until there is reasonable assurance that:**
 - (a) **the entity will comply with the conditions attaching to them; and**
 - (b) **the grants will be received.**
- 8 A government grant is not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the entity will comply with the conditions attaching to it, and that the grant will be received. Receipt of a grant does not of itself provide conclusive evidence that the conditions attaching to the grant have been or will be fulfilled.
- 9 The manner in which a grant is received does not affect the accounting method to be adopted in regard to the grant. Thus a grant is accounted for in the same manner whether it is received in cash or as a reduction of a liability to the government.
- 10 A forgivable loan from government is treated as a government grant when there is reasonable assurance that the entity will meet the terms for forgiveness of the loan.

- 10A The benefit of a government loan at a below-market rate of interest is treated as a government grant. The loan shall be recognised and measured in accordance with IAS 39 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*. The benefit of the below-market rate of interest shall be measured as the difference between the initial carrying value of the loan determined in accordance with IAS 39 and the proceeds received. The benefit is accounted for in accordance with this Standard. The entity shall consider the conditions and obligations that have been, or must be, met when identifying the costs for which the benefit of the loan is intended to compensate.
- 11 Once a government grant is recognised, any related contingent liability or contingent asset is treated in accordance with IAS 37 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.
- 12 **Government grants shall be recognised in profit or loss on a systematic basis over the periods in which the entity recognises as expenses the related costs for which the grants are intended to compensate.**
- 13 There are two broad approaches to the accounting for government grants: the capital approach, under which a grant is recognised outside profit or loss, and the income approach, under which a grant is recognised in profit or loss over one or more periods.
- 14 Those in support of the capital approach argue as follows:
- (a) government grants are a financing device and should be dealt with as such in the statement of financial position rather than be recognised in profit or loss to offset the items of expense that they finance. Because no repayment is expected, such grants should be recognised outside profit or loss.
 - (b) it is inappropriate to recognise government grants in profit or loss, because they are not earned but represent an incentive provided by government without related costs.
- 15 Arguments in support of the income approach are as follows:
- (a) because government grants are receipts from a source other than shareholders, they should not be recognised directly in equity but should be recognised in profit or loss in appropriate periods.
 - (b) government grants are rarely gratuitous. The entity earns them through compliance with their conditions and meeting the envisaged obligations. They should therefore be recognised in profit or loss over the periods in which the entity recognises as expenses the related costs for which the grant is intended to compensate.
 - (c) because income and other taxes are expenses, it is logical to deal also with government grants, which are an extension of fiscal policies, in profit or loss.
- 16 It is fundamental to the income approach that government grants should be recognised in profit or loss on a systematic basis over the periods in which the entity recognises as expenses the related costs for which the grant is intended to compensate. Recognition of government grants in profit or loss on a receipts basis is not in accordance with the accrual accounting assumption (see IAS 1

Presentation of Financial Statements) and would be acceptable only if no basis existed for allocating a grant to periods other than the one in which it was received.

- 17 In most cases the periods over which an entity recognises the costs or expenses related to a government grant are readily ascertainable. Thus grants in recognition of specific expenses are recognised in profit or loss in the same period as the relevant expenses. Similarly, grants related to depreciable assets are usually recognised in profit or loss over the periods and in the proportions in which depreciation expense on those assets is recognised.
- 18 Grants related to non-depreciable assets may also require the fulfilment of certain obligations and would then be recognised in profit or loss over the periods that bear the cost of meeting the obligations. As an example, a grant of land may be conditional upon the erection of a building on the site and it may be appropriate to recognise the grant in profit or loss over the life of the building.
- 19 Grants are sometimes received as part of a package of financial or fiscal aids to which a number of conditions are attached. In such cases, care is needed in identifying the conditions giving rise to costs and expenses which determine the periods over which the grant will be earned. It may be appropriate to allocate part of a grant on one basis and part on another.
- 20 **A government grant that becomes receivable as compensation for expenses or losses already incurred or for the purpose of giving immediate financial support to the entity with no future related costs shall be recognised in profit or loss of the period in which it becomes receivable.**
- 21 In some circumstances, a government grant may be awarded for the purpose of giving immediate financial support to an entity rather than as an incentive to undertake specific expenditures. Such grants may be confined to a particular entity and may not be available to a whole class of beneficiaries. These circumstances may warrant recognising a grant in profit or loss of the period in which the entity qualifies to receive it, with disclosure to ensure that its effect is clearly understood.
- 22 A government grant may become receivable by an entity as compensation for expenses or losses incurred in a previous period. Such a grant is recognised in profit or loss of the period in which it becomes receivable, with disclosure to ensure that its effect is clearly understood.

Non-monetary government grants

- 23 A government grant may take the form of a transfer of a non-monetary asset, such as land or other resources, for the use of the entity. In these circumstances it is usual to assess the fair value of the non-monetary asset and to account for both grant and asset at that fair value. An alternative course that is sometimes followed is to record both asset and grant at a nominal amount.

Presentation of grants related to assets

- 24 **Government grants related to assets, including non-monetary grants at fair value, shall be presented in the statement of financial position either by setting up the grant as deferred income or by deducting the grant in arriving at the carrying amount of the asset.**