



International Public Sector Accounting Standard 28
Financial Instruments: Presentation
IPSASB Basis for Conclusions – as per 2017 IPSASB Handbook

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Basis for Conclusions

This Basis for Conclusions accompanies, but is not part of, IPSAS 29.

Introduction

- BC1. This Basis for Conclusions summarizes the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board's (IPSASB) considerations in reaching the conclusions in IPSAS 28, *Financial Instruments: Presentation*. As this Standard is primarily drawn from IAS 32, *Financial Instruments: Presentation* issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), the Basis for Conclusions outlines only those areas where the IPSAS 28 departs from the main requirements of IAS 32.
- BC2. This project on financial instruments is a key part of the IPSASB's convergence program, which aims to converge IPSASs with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs). The IPSASB acknowledges that there are other aspects of financial instruments, in so far as they relate to the public sector, which are not addressed in IAS 32. These may be addressed by future projects of the IPSASB. In particular, the IPSASB acknowledges that future projects may be required to address:
- Certain transactions undertaken by central banks; and
 - Receivables and payables that arise from arrangements that are, in substance, similar to, and have the same economic effect as, financial instruments, but are not contractual in nature.
- BC3. In developing this Standard, the IPSASB agreed to retain the existing text of IAS 32, making changes to ensure consistency with the terminology and presentational requirements of other IPSASs, and deal with any public sector specific issues through additional Application Guidance.
- BC4. In September 2007, the IASB issued amendments to IAS 1, *Presentation of Financial Statements* which introduced "comprehensive income" into the presentation of financial statements. As the IPSASB has not yet considered comprehensive income, along with some of the other amendments to IAS 1, those amendments have not been included in IPSAS 28.

Scope

Insurance and Financial Guarantee Contracts

- BC5. IAS 32 excludes all insurance contracts from the scope of IAS 32, except for financial guarantee contracts where the issuer applies IAS 39, *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement* in recognizing and measuring such contracts. The scope of IPSAS 28 also excludes all insurance contracts, except that:
- Financial guarantee contracts are to be treated as financial instruments unless an entity elects to treat such contracts as insurance contracts in accordance with the relevant international or national accounting standard dealing with insurance contracts; and
 - Contracts that are insurance contracts but involve the transfer of financial risk may be treated as financial instruments in accordance with IPSAS 28, IPSAS 29 and IPSAS 30.

Treating Financial Guarantees as Financial Instruments

- BC6. Under IAS 32, financial guarantee contracts should be treated as financial instruments, unless an issuer elects to apply IFRS 4 to those contracts. Unlike in the private sector, many financial guarantee contracts are issued in the public sector by way of a non-exchange transaction, i.e., at no or nominal consideration. So as to enhance the comparability of financial statements and, given the significance of financial guarantee contracts issued by way of non-exchange transactions in the public sector, the IPSASB had proposed that such guarantees should be treated as financial instruments and entities should not be permitted to treat them as insurance contracts.
- BC7. In response to this proposal, some respondents agreed that the treatment of financial guarantee contracts issued through non-exchange transactions as financial instruments, rather than as insurance contracts, is appropriate because the business models for exchange and non-exchange insurance contracts are different. Others argued that entities should be allowed to treat such guarantees as insurance contracts or financial instruments using an election similar to that in IFRS 4.
- BC8. The IPSASB concluded that the same approach should be applied to financial guarantee contracts, regardless of whether they are issued through exchange or non-exchange transactions, because the

underlying liability that should be recognized in an entity's financial statements does not differ. The IPSASB agreed that entities should be permitted a choice of treating financial guarantee contracts, either as insurance contracts or financial instruments, subject to certain conditions.

BC9. In evaluating the circumstances under which an entity may elect to treat financial guarantee contracts as insurance contracts, the IPSASB considered the requirements of IFRS 4. The election to treat financial guarantee contracts as financial instruments or insurance contracts under IFRS 4 is available only to those entities that previously explicitly asserted that they deem such contracts to be insurance contracts. The IPSASB, however, recognized that not all entities that have adopted accrual accounting apply IFRS 4. It acknowledged that it should also consider scenarios where, for example, entities applied accrual accounting but did not recognize assets and liabilities relating to insurance contracts, as well as entities that previously did not apply accrual accounting. Consequently, the IPSASB agreed that the existing requirements in IFRS 4 were too onerous and would need to be modified in the context of this Standard.

BC10. The IPSASB therefore agreed that entities that previously:

- (a) Applied insurance accounting and adopted an accounting policy that treated financial guarantee contracts as insurance contracts, could continue to treat those guarantees as insurance contracts or as financial instruments; and
- (b) Did not apply insurance accounting would be allowed a choice of treating financial guarantee contracts either as insurance contracts or financial instruments when they adopt this Standard.

In both instances, the election is irrevocable.

BC11. The IPSASB considered whether entities should be allowed to elect to treat financial guarantees as insurance contracts on a contract-by-contract basis or, whether entities should be required to make a general accounting policy choice. It was agreed that the choice should be made on an individual contract basis to allow entities within an economic entity to treat financial guarantees as insurance contracts or financial instruments, based on the nature of their businesses.

BC12. The IPSASB agreed, as a precondition for allowing entities to treat financial guarantees as insurance contracts, that the accounting practices applied by entities for insurance contracts should meet certain requirements. The IPSASB agreed that if entities elected to treat financial guarantee contracts as insurance contracts, that they must apply either IFRS 4 or a national accounting standard that requires insurance liabilities to be measured at a minimum value. That minimum value is determined as if the insurance liabilities were within the scope of IPSAS 19, *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets* using the current estimates of cash flows arising from an entity's insurance contracts and of any related cash flows.

Option to Treat Insurance Contracts that Transfer Financial Risk as Financial Instruments

BC13. IPSAS 15 allowed entities to account for contracts that are insurance contracts that result in the transfer of financial risk, as financial instruments. In the absence of an IPSAS on insurance contracts, the IPSASB concluded that it should allow, but not require, entities to apply IPSAS 28 to such contracts.

Identifying Contractual Financial Guarantees

BC14. Financial instruments in IPSAS 28 are defined as: "...any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity." As arrangements in the public sector may arise through statutory powers, the IPSASB developed additional application guidance to identify when financial guarantees are contractual. The IPSASB concluded that, to be within the scope of IPSAS 28, financial guarantees should have the key features of a contractual arrangement. The IPSASB also concluded that an entity should distinguish the right to issue guarantees, which is often conferred on an entity through statutory or similar means, and the actual issuing of the guarantee in favour of a third party, irrespective of whether that party is explicitly or implicitly identified. A statutory right to issue guarantees, of itself, is not within the scope of this Standard.

Definitions

Contractual Arrangements

BC15. The IPSASB noted that, in certain jurisdictions, public sector entities are precluded from entering into formal contracts, but do enter into arrangements that have the substance of contracts. These arrangements

may be known by another term, e.g., a “government order.” To assist entities in identifying contracts, which either have the substance or legal form of a contract, the IPSASB considered it appropriate to issue additional Application Guidance explaining the factors an entity should consider in assessing whether an arrangement is contractual or non-contractual.

- BC16. Consideration was given as to whether the term “binding arrangement” should be used to describe the arrangements highlighted in paragraph BC15. The term “binding arrangement” has not been defined, but has been used in IPSASs to describe arrangements that are binding on the parties, but do not take the form of a documented contract, such as an arrangement between two government departments that do not have the power to contract. The IPSASB concluded that the term “binding arrangements,” as used in IPSASs, embraces a wider set of arrangements than those identified in paragraph BC15 and therefore concluded that it should not be used in this IPSAS.

Contractual Non-Exchange Revenue Transactions

- BC17. IPSAS 23, *Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions (Taxes and Transfers)* prescribes the initial recognition, initial measurement and disclosure of assets and liabilities arising out of non-exchange revenue transactions. The IPSASB considered the interaction between this Standard and IPSAS 23.
- BC18. In considering whether assets and liabilities that arise from non-exchange revenue transactions are financial assets and financial liabilities, the IPSASB identified that the following basic requirements should be fulfilled:
- The arrangement is contractual in nature; and
 - The arrangement gives rise to a contractual right or obligation to receive or deliver cash or another financial asset, or exchange financial assets under favorable or unfavorable conditions.
- BC19. The IPSASB concluded that assets arising from non-exchange revenue transactions could meet these requirements. In particular, it noted that the nature of arrangements with donors may be contractual in nature, and may be settled by transferring cash or another financial asset from the donor to the recipient. In these instances, assets arising from non-exchange revenue transactions are financial assets.
- BC20. The IPSASB agreed that, for financial assets arising from non-exchange transactions, an entity should apply the requirements of IPSAS 23 in conjunction with IPSAS 28. In particular, an entity considers the principles in IPSAS 28 in considering whether an inflow of resources from a non-exchange revenue transaction results in a liability or a transaction that evidences a residual interest in the net assets of the entity, i.e., an equity instrument.
- BC21. The IPSASB considered whether liabilities arising from non-exchange revenue transactions are financial liabilities. Liabilities are recognized in IPSAS 23 when an entity receives an inflow of resources that is subject to specific conditions. Conditions on a transfer of resources are imposed on an entity by a transferor and require that the resources are used in a certain way, often to provide goods and services to third parties, or are returned to the transferor. This gives rise to an obligation to perform in terms of the agreement. At initial recognition, an entity recognizes the resources as an asset and, where they are subject to conditions, recognizes a corresponding liability.
- BC22. The IPSASB considered whether the liability initially recognized is in the nature of a financial liability or another liability, e.g., a provision. The IPSASB agreed that, at the time the asset is recognized, the liability is not usually a financial liability as the entity’s obligation is to fulfil the terms and conditions of the arrangement by utilizing the resources as intended, usually by providing goods and services to third parties over a period of time. If after initial recognition, the entity cannot fulfil the terms of the arrangement and is required to return the resources to the transferor, an entity would assess at this stage whether the liability is a financial liability considering the requirements set out in paragraph BC18 and the definitions of a financial instrument and a financial liability. In rare circumstances, a financial liability may arise from conditions imposed on a transfer of resources as part of a non-exchange revenue transaction. The IPSASB may consider such a scenario as part of a future project.
- BC23. The IPSASB also noted that other liabilities may arise from non-exchange revenue transactions after initial recognition. For example, an entity may receive resources under an arrangement that requires the resources to be returned only after the occurrence or non-occurrence of a future event. An entity assesses whether other liabilities arising from non-exchange revenue transactions are financial liabilities by

considering whether the requirements in paragraph BC18 have been fulfilled and the definitions of a financial instrument and a financial liability have been met.

Other

Interpretations Developed by the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee

- BC24. The IPSASB considered whether International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee Interpretation (IFRIC) 2, *Members' Shares in Co-operative Entities and Similar Instruments* and International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee Interpretation (IFRIC) 11, *IFRS 2—Group and Treasury Share Transactions* were relevant for the types of instruments entered into by governments and entities in the public sector.
- BC25. When this Standard was issued, the IPSASB considered that IFRIC 11 is not relevant for the types of instruments entered into in the public sector as it deals with share-based payment transactions. While share-based payments may be common in [Government Business Enterprises (GBE's)] (the term in square brackets is no longer used following the issue of *The Applicability of IPSASs* in April 2016), they do not occur frequently in entities that are not GBE's. As a result, the IPSASB has not included any principles from IFRIC 11 in IPSAS 28.
- BC26. IFRIC 2 provides guidance on the application of IAS 32 to members' shares in co-operative entities and similar instruments. There is a strong link between IAS 32 and IFRIC 2 in relation to puttable financial instruments and obligations arising on liquidation. As the text of IAS 32 that deals with puttable financial instruments and obligations arising on liquidation has been retained in IPSAS 28, IFRIC 2 provides additional guidance to users of IPSAS 28 in applying those principles to members' interests in co-operative entities. Therefore, the principles and examples from IFRIC 2 have been included in IPSAS 28 as an authoritative appendix.

Revision of IPSAS 28 as a result of IASB's *Improvements to IFRSs* issued in May 2012

- BC27. The IPSASB reviewed the revisions to IAS 32 included in the *Improvements to IFRSs* issued by the IASB in May 2012 and generally concurred that there was no public sector specific reason for not adopting the amendments.

Revision of IPSAS 28 as a result of the IPSASB's *The Applicability of IPSASs*, issued in April 2016

- BC28. The IPSASB issued *The Applicability of IPSASs* in April 2016. This pronouncement amends references in all IPSASs as follows:
- (a) Removes the standard paragraphs about the applicability of IPSASs to "public sector entities other than GBEs" from the scope section of each Standard;
 - (b) Replaces the term "GBE" with the term "commercial public sector entities", where appropriate; and
 - (c) Amends paragraph 10 of the *Preface to International Public Sector Accounting Standards* by providing a positive description of public sector entities for which IPSASs are designed.

The reasons for these changes are set out in the Basis for Conclusions to IPSAS 1.