



## **International Public Sector Accounting Standard 26 Impairment of Cash-Generating Assets**

### **IPSASB Basis for Conclusions**

International Public Sector Accounting Standards™, Exposure Drafts, Consultation Papers, Recommended Practice Guidelines, and other IPSASB® publications are published by, and copyright of, IFAC®.

The IPSASB and IFAC do not accept responsibility for loss caused to any person who acts or refrains from acting in reliance on the material in this publication, whether such loss is caused by negligence or otherwise.

The IPSASB logo, 'International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board®', 'IPSASB', 'International Public Sector Accounting Standards' 'IPSAS™', 'Recommended Practice Guidelines,' the IFAC logo, 'International Federation of Accountants®', and 'IFAC' are trademarks or registered trademarks and service marks of IFAC.

Copyright © February 2008 by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). All rights reserved. Written permission from IFAC is required to reproduce, store, transmit, or make other similar uses of this document, except as permitted by law. Contact [permissions@ifac.org](mailto:permissions@ifac.org).

Published by:



## Basis for Conclusions

*This Basis for Conclusions accompanies, but is not part of, IPSAS 26.*

### Development of IPSAS 26 based on the IASB's revised version of IAS 36 issued in 2004

#### *Introduction*

- BC1. The IPSASB's IFRS Convergence Program is an important element in the IPSASB's work program. The IPSASB's policy is to converge the accrual basis IPSASs with IFRSs issued by the IASB where appropriate for public sector entities.
- BC2. The IPSASB issued IPSAS 21, *Impairment of Non-Cash-Generating Assets*, in December 2004. IPSAS 21 prescribes the procedures that an entity applies to determine whether a non-cash-generating asset is impaired, and establishes how the impairment is recognized and measured. The majority of assets in the public sector are non-cash-generating, and the recognition and measurement requirements developed resulted in a number of differences in IPSAS 21 from International Accounting Standard, IAS 36, *Impairment of Assets*.

#### *Need for this Standard*

- BC3. IPSAS 21 referred readers to IAS 36 (a) in order to establish whether cash-generating assets have been impaired, and (b) for accounting for the recognition and measurement of any impairment. There are benefits in incorporating requirements and guidance on the impairment of cash-generating assets in an IPSAS, so that public sector entities do not have to refer to IAS 36 when an entity has cash-generating assets. In addition, there are a number of public sector issues related to impairment. These include:
- (a) Whether cash-generating property, plant, and equipment carried in accordance with the revaluation model in IPSAS 17, *Property, Plant, and Equipment* should be within the scope;
  - (b) Distinguishing cash-generating and non-cash-generating assets;
  - (c) The redesignation of cash-generating assets to non-cash-generating assets and vice-versa; and
  - (d) The treatment for impairment purposes of non-cash-generating assets in cash-generating units.

#### *Exclusion of Property, Plant, and Equipment Carried at Revalued Amounts and Intangible Assets that are Regularly Revalued to Fair Value from Scope*

- BC4. The scope of IPSAS 21 excludes non cash-generating property, plant, and equipment carried at revalued amounts in accordance with the revaluation model in IPSAS 17. The Basis for Conclusions in IPSAS 21 states that the IPSASB is of the view that assets carried at revalued amounts in accordance with the revaluation model in IPSAS 17 will be revalued with sufficient regularity to ensure (a) that they are carried at an amount that is not materially different from their fair value at the reporting date, and (b) that any impairment will be taken into account in that valuation. The IPSASB therefore considered whether a similar scope exclusion should be included in this Standard.
- BC5. The IPSASB acknowledged that property, plant, and equipment held on the revaluation model are within the scope of IAS 36, and considered the view that guidance on determining impairment losses for such assets would be appropriate for public sector entities with assets on the revaluation model. The IPSASB noted that in IAS 36, in cases where the fair value of an item of property, plant and equipment is its market value, the maximum amount of an impairment loss is the disposal costs. In the Basis for Conclusions for IPSAS 21, it is stated that "the IPSASB is of the view that, in most cases, these will not be material and, from a practical viewpoint, it is not necessary to measure an asset's recoverable service amount and to recognize an impairment loss for the disposal costs of a non-cash-generating asset." The IPSASB considered that disposal costs are also unlikely to be material for cash-generating assets.
- BC6. For specialized cash-generating assets where fair value has not been derived from market value, IAS 36 requires recoverability to be estimated through the value in use. Because value in use is based on cash flow projection, it might be materially greater or lower than carrying amount. This analysis is also relevant in the public sector. However, it is questionable whether public sector entities hold specialized assets that meet the definition of a cash-generating asset in this Standard.

- BC7. The IPSASB remains of the view that it would be onerous to impose a requirement to test for impairment in addition to the existing requirement in IPSAS 17, i.e., that assets will be revalued with sufficient regularity to ensure that they are carried at an amount that is not materially different from their fair value at the reporting date. Therefore, on balance, the IPSASB concluded that consistency with IPSAS 21 should take precedence over convergence with IAS 36, and that property, plant and equipment carried on the revaluation model in IPSAS 17 should be excluded from the scope of this Standard. Consistent with the approach to property, plant, and equipment, intangible assets that are regularly revalued to fair value are also excluded from the scope.

*Exclusion of Goodwill from Scope*

- BC8. IAS 36 contains extensive requirements and guidance on (a) the impairment of goodwill, (b) the allocation of goodwill to cash-generating units, and (c) testing cash-generating units with goodwill for impairment. The IPSASB considered whether goodwill should be within the scope of this Standard. The IPSASB has not yet issued an IPSAS dealing with entity combinations and considers it likely that a number of public sector-specific issues will arise when combinations of public sector entities take place: in particular, whether an acquirer can always be identified in combinations of public sector entities. The IPSASB concluded that goodwill should not be within the scope of this Standard. In accordance with the hierarchy in IPSAS 3, *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*, users are referred to the requirements of the relevant international or national accounting standards dealing with the impairment of goodwill, the allocation of goodwill to cash-generating units, and the testing for impairment of cash-generating units with goodwill.

*Distinguishing Cash-Generating and Non-Cash-Generating Assets*

- BC9. The IPSASB noted that some assets have both cash-generating and non-cash-generating characteristics. The IPSASB considered whether it should adopt a components-based approach that would identify the cash-generating and non-cash-generating components of assets and subject them to different treatments. The IPSASB rejected such an approach because of cost-benefit considerations. The IPSASB concluded that assets in the public sector are generally non-cash-generating, and that an analysis of their service potential is the preferred basis to determine impairment. This Standard therefore includes a rebuttable presumption at paragraph 18 that assets that are both cash-generating and non-cash-generating should be treated as non-cash-generating assets.

*Indications of Impairment: Market Capitalization*

- BC10. The IPSASB considered whether the indications for impairment of cash-generating assets held by public sector entities – both external sources and internal sources of information – are similar to those in IAS 36. The IPSASB concluded that the indications in IAS 36 are relevant, except for the indication that the carrying amount of the net assets of the entity is more than its market capitalization. The IPSASB is of the view that very few public sector entities that are not GBEs will issue equity instruments traded in deep markets, and that such an indication will therefore only be relevant on the consolidation of GBEs.

*Fair Value less Costs to Sell and Forced Sales*

- BC11. In commentary on the definition of “fair value less costs to sell,” IAS 36 states that “fair value less costs to sell does not reflect a forced sale,” but includes a qualification: “unless management is compelled to sell immediately.” IPSAS 26 does not include this qualification in paragraph 40 because there are very few circumstances in which public sector entities that are not GBEs will be forced to sell immediately in order to remain a going concern.

*Redesignation of Assets*

- BC12. Cash-generating assets can become non-cash-generating assets and vice-versa. The IPSASB considered under what circumstances a redesignation of an asset from cash-generating to non-cash-generating and vice-versa should be permitted. The IPSASB concluded that a redesignation can occur only when there is clear evidence that it is appropriate. The IPSASB also concluded that a redesignation by itself does not trigger an impairment test or the reversal of an impairment loss. Instead, at the subsequent reporting date, an entity should evaluate the appropriate indicators following redesignation to determine if a test is needed. These requirements are stated in paragraph 112.

*Cash-Generating Units*

BC13. As in IAS 36, where it is not possible to determine the recoverable amount for an individual asset, then the recoverable amount for the asset's cash-generating unit (CGU) will be determined. The CGU is the smallest identifiable group of assets (a) that generates cash inflows from continuing use, and (b) that is largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets. The IPSASB concluded that the notion of a CGU is appropriate for cash-generating assets in a public sector context.

*Corporate Assets*

BC14. IAS 36 includes requirements related to corporate assets. Corporate assets are defined in IAS 36 as "assets other than goodwill that contribute to the future cash flows of both the cash-generating unit under review and other cash-generating units"—that is, a corporate asset contributes only to CGUs and not to non-cash-generating activities. The IPSASB considered whether this Standard should include requirements for corporate assets as defined in IAS 36.

BC15. The primary purpose of public sector entities that are not GBEs is not the generation of commercial returns. Therefore, the IPSASB considers that there will be very few occasions in which an asset shared between different activities (such as an administrative building) contributes service potential to CGUs without also contributing service potential to non-cash-generating activities. It was therefore decided that it is not necessary to define, and provide requirements for, corporate assets in this Standard. Paragraph 96 refers entities to the relevant international and national accounting standard dealing with assets that do not generate cash flows independently of other assets and form part of more than one cash-generating unit, but do not contribute service potential to non-cash-generating activities.

*Treatment of Non-Cash-Generating Assets in Cash-Generating Units*

BC16. There are likely to be a number of cases in which public sector entities hold non-cash-generating assets that contribute service potential to CGUs in addition to non-cash-generating activities. The IPSASB considered the approach to the treatment of such non-cash-generating assets in CGUs. In particular, the IPSASB considered whether it is appropriate to include a proportion of the carrying amount of a non-cash-generating asset, following any impairment test under IPSAS 21, in the carrying amount of the CGU when comparing the carrying amount of that CGU with its recoverable amount.

BC17. The IPSASB concluded that a proportion of the carrying amount of such a non-cash-generating asset should be included in the carrying amount of the CGU. That proportion should be determined on a basis pro rata to the service potential that such an asset contributes to the CGU. If the non-cash-generating asset is ignored, the carrying amount of the CGU may be understated and impairment losses not recognized. However, because any impairment of the non-cash-generating asset will have been determined in accordance with IPSAS 21, the non-cash-generating asset will have been written down to its recoverable service amount. Therefore, no further impairment loss relating to the CGU should be applied to the non-cash-generating asset. Any impairment losses are allocated on a pro rata basis, based on carrying values, to the cash-generating assets in the CGU, subject to the limits in paragraph 92. This approach is reflected in paragraph 95.

**Revision of IPSAS 26 as a result of the IASB's Improvements to IFRSs issued in 2008**

BC18. The IPSASB reviewed the revisions to IAS 36 included in the *Improvements to IFRSs* issued by the IASB in May 2008 and generally concurred with the IASB's reasons for revising the standard. The IPSASB concluded that there was no public sector specific reason for not adopting the amendment.