

# International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs™) 2004

including International Accounting Standards (IASs™) and Interpretations as  
at 31 March 2004

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# **International Accounting Standard 21**

## **The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates**

*This version includes amendments resulting from new and amended IFRSs issued up to 31 March 2004. The section “Changes in this Edition” at the front of this volume provides the application dates of these new and amended IFRSs and also identifies those current IFRSs that are not included in this volume.*

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## IAS 21

International Accounting Standard 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* (IAS 21) is set out in paragraphs 1-62 and the Appendix. All the paragraphs have equal authority but retain the IASC format of the Standard when it was adopted by the IASB. IAS 21 should be read in the context of its objective and the Basis for Conclusions, 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.

## Introduction

IN1. International Accounting Standard 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* (IAS 21) replaces IAS 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* (revised in 1993), and should be applied for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. Earlier application is encouraged. The Standard also replaces the following Interpretations:

- SIC-11 *Foreign Exchange—Capitalisation of Losses Resulting from Severe Currency Devaluations*
- SIC-19 *Reporting Currency—Measurement and Presentation of Financial Statements under IAS 21 and IAS 29*
- SIC-30 *Reporting Currency—Translation from Measurement Currency to Presentation Currency*.

## Reasons for Revising IAS 21

IN2. The International Accounting Standards Board developed this revised IAS 21 as part of its project on Improvements to International Accounting Standards. The project was undertaken in the light of queries and criticisms raised in relation to the Standards by securities regulators, professional accountants and other interested parties. The objectives of the project were to reduce or eliminate alternatives, redundancies and conflicts within the Standards, to deal with some convergence issues and to make other improvements.

IN3. For IAS 21 the Board's main objective was to provide additional guidance on the translation method and on determining the functional and presentation currencies. The Board did not reconsider the fundamental approach to accounting for the effects of changes in foreign exchange rates contained in IAS 21.

## The Main Changes

IN4. The main changes from the previous version of IAS 21 are described below.

### Scope

IN5. The Standard excludes from its scope foreign currency derivatives that are within the scope of IAS 39 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*. Similarly, the material on hedge accounting has been moved to IAS 39.

### Definitions

IN6. The notion of 'reporting currency' has been replaced with two notions:

- functional currency, ie the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates. The term 'functional currency' is used in place of 'measurement currency' (the term used in SIC-19) because it is the more commonly used term, but with essentially the same meaning.
- presentation currency, ie the currency in which financial statements are presented.

**Definitions—Functional Currency**

- IN7. When a reporting entity prepares financial statements, the Standard requires each individual entity included in the reporting entity—whether it is a stand-alone entity, an entity with foreign operations (such as a parent) or a foreign operation (such as a subsidiary or branch)—to determine its functional currency and measure its results and financial position in that currency. The new material on functional currency incorporates some of the guidance previously included in SIC-19 on how to determine a measurement currency. However, the Standard gives greater emphasis than SIC-19 gave to the currency of the economy that determines the pricing of transactions, as opposed to the currency in which transactions are denominated.
- IN8. As a result of these changes and the incorporation of guidance previously in SIC-19:
- an entity (whether a stand-alone entity or a foreign operation) does not have a free choice of functional currency.
  - an entity cannot avoid restatement in accordance with IAS 29 *Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies* by, for example, adopting a stable currency (such as the functional currency of its parent) as its functional currency.
- IN9. The Standard revises the requirements in the previous version of IAS 21 for distinguishing between foreign operations that are integral to the operations of the reporting entity (referred to below as ‘integral foreign operations’) and foreign entities. The requirements are now among the indicators of an entity’s functional currency. As a result:
- there is no distinction between integral foreign operations and foreign entities. Rather, an entity that was previously classified as an integral foreign operation will have the same functional currency as the reporting entity.
  - only one translation method is used for foreign operations—namely that described in the previous version of IAS 21 as applying to foreign entities (see paragraph IN13).
  - the paragraphs dealing with the distinction between an integral foreign operation and a foreign entity and the paragraph specifying the translation method to be used for the former have been deleted.

**Reporting Foreign Currency Transactions in the Functional Currency—Recognition of Exchange Differences**

- IN10. The Standard removes the limited option in the previous version of IAS 21 to capitalise exchange differences resulting from a severe devaluation or depreciation of a currency against which there is no means of hedging. Under the Standard, such exchange differences are now recognised in profit or loss. Consequently, SIC-11, which outlined restricted circumstances in which such exchange differences may be capitalised, has been superseded since capitalisation of such exchange differences is no longer permitted in any circumstances.

**Reporting Foreign Currency Transactions in the Functional Currency—Change in Functional Currency**

IN11. The Standard replaces the previous requirement for accounting for a change in the classification of a foreign operation (which is now redundant) with a requirement that a change in functional currency is accounted for prospectively.

**Use of a Presentation Currency other than the Functional Currency—Translation to the Presentation Currency**

IN12. The Standard permits an entity to present its financial statements in any currency (or currencies). For this purpose, an entity could be a stand-alone entity, a parent preparing consolidated financial statements or a parent, an investor or a venturer preparing separate financial statements in accordance with IAS 27 *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements*.

IN13. An entity is required to translate its results and financial position from its functional currency into a presentation currency (or currencies) using the method required for translating a foreign operation for inclusion in the reporting entity's financial statements. Under this method, assets and liabilities are translated at the closing rate, and income and expenses are translated at the exchange rates at the dates of the transactions (or at the average rate for the period when this is a reasonable approximation).

IN14. The Standard requires comparative amounts to be translated as follows:

- (a) for an entity whose functional currency is not the currency of a hyperinflationary economy:
  - (i) assets and liabilities in each balance sheet presented are translated at the closing rate at the date of that balance sheet (ie last year's comparatives are translated at last year's closing rate).
  - (ii) income and expenses in each income statement presented are translated at exchange rates at the dates of the transactions (ie last year's comparatives are translated at last year's actual or average rate).
- (b) for an entity whose functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, and for which the comparative amounts are translated into the currency of a different hyperinflationary economy, all amounts (eg balance sheet and income statement amounts) are translated at the closing rate of the most recent balance sheet presented (ie last year's comparatives, as adjusted for subsequent changes in the price level, are translated at this year's closing rate).
- (c) for an entity whose functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, and for which the comparative amounts are translated into the currency of a non-hyperinflationary economy, all amounts are those presented in the prior year financial statements (ie not adjusted for subsequent changes in the price level or subsequent changes in exchange rates).

This translation method, like that described in paragraph IN13, applies when translating the financial statements of a foreign operation for inclusion in the financial statements of the reporting entity, and when translating the financial statements of an entity into a different presentation currency.

**Use of a Presentation Currency other than the Functional Currency—Translation of a Foreign Operation**

IN15. The Standard requires goodwill and fair value adjustments to assets and liabilities that arise on the acquisition of a foreign entity to be treated as part of the assets and liabilities of the acquired entity and translated at the closing rate.

**Disclosure**

IN16. The Standard includes most of the disclosure requirements of SIC-30. These apply when a translation method different from that described in paragraphs IN13 and IN14 is used or other supplementary information (such as an extract from the full financial statements) is displayed in a currency other than the functional currency or the presentation currency.

IN17. In addition, entities must disclose when there has been a change in functional currency, and the reasons for the change.

# International Accounting Standard 21

## The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates

### Objective

1. An entity may carry on foreign activities in two ways. It may have transactions in foreign currencies or it may have foreign operations. In addition, an entity may present its financial statements in a foreign currency. The objective of this Standard is to prescribe how to include foreign currency transactions and foreign operations in the financial statements of an entity and how to translate financial statements into a presentation currency.
2. The principal issues are which exchange rate(s) to use and how to report the effects of changes in exchange rates in the financial statements.

### Scope

3. *This Standard shall be applied:*
  - (a) *in accounting for transactions and balances in foreign currencies, except for those derivative transactions and balances that are within the scope of IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement;*
  - (b) *in translating the results and financial position of foreign operations that are included in the financial statements of the entity by consolidation, proportionate consolidation or the equity method; and*
  - (c) *in translating an entity's results and financial position into a presentation currency.*
4. IAS 39 applies to many foreign currency derivatives and, accordingly, these are excluded from the scope of this Standard. However, those foreign currency derivatives that are not within the scope of IAS 39 (eg some foreign currency derivatives that are embedded in other contracts) are within the scope of this Standard. In addition, this Standard applies when an entity translates amounts relating to derivatives from its functional currency to its presentation currency.
5. This Standard does not apply to hedge accounting for foreign currency items, including the hedging of a net investment in a foreign operation. IAS 39 applies to hedge accounting.
6. This Standard applies to the presentation of an entity's financial statements in a foreign currency and sets out requirements for the resulting financial statements to be described as complying with International Financial Reporting Standards. For translations of financial information into a foreign currency that do not meet these requirements, this Standard specifies information to be disclosed.

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\* See also SIC-7 *Introduction of the Euro*.

7. This Standard does not apply to the presentation in a cash flow statement of cash flows arising from transactions in a foreign currency, or to the translation of cash flows of a foreign operation (see IAS 7 *Cash Flow Statements*).

## Definitions

8. *The following terms are used in this Standard with the meanings specified:*

**Closing rate** is the spot exchange rate at the balance sheet date.

**Exchange difference** is the difference resulting from translating a given number of units of one currency into another currency at different exchange rates.

**Exchange rate** is the ratio of exchange for two currencies.

**Fair value** is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

**Foreign currency** is a currency other than the functional currency of the entity.

**Foreign operation** is an entity that is a subsidiary, associate, joint venture or branch of a reporting entity, the activities of which are based or conducted in a country or currency other than those of the reporting entity.

**Functional currency** is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates.

**A group** is a parent and all its subsidiaries.

**Monetary items** are units of currency held and assets and liabilities to be received or paid in a fixed or determinable number of units of currency.

**Net investment in a foreign operation** is the amount of the reporting entity's interest in the net assets of that operation.

**Presentation currency** is the currency in which the financial statements are presented.

**Spot exchange rate** is the exchange rate for immediate delivery.

## Elaboration on the Definitions

### Functional Currency

9. The primary economic environment in which an entity operates is normally the one in which it primarily generates and expends cash. An entity considers the following factors in determining its functional currency:
- (a) the currency:
    - (i) that mainly influences sales prices for goods and services (this will often be the currency in which sales prices for its goods and services are denominated and settled); and
    - (ii) of the country whose competitive forces and regulations mainly determine the sales prices of its goods and services.
  - (b) the currency that mainly influences labour, material and other costs of providing goods or services (this will often be the currency in which such costs are denominated and settled).

10. The following factors may also provide evidence of an entity's functional currency:
  - (a) the currency in which funds from financing activities (ie issuing debt and equity instruments) are generated.
  - (b) the currency in which receipts from operating activities are usually retained.
11. The following additional factors are considered in determining the functional currency of a foreign operation, and whether its functional currency is the same as that of the reporting entity (the reporting entity, in this context, being the entity that has the foreign operation as its subsidiary, branch, associate or joint venture):
  - (a) whether the activities of the foreign operation are carried out as an extension of the reporting entity, rather than being carried out with a significant degree of autonomy. An example of the former is when the foreign operation only sells goods imported from the reporting entity and remits the proceeds to it. An example of the latter is when the operation accumulates cash and other monetary items, incurs expenses, generates income and arranges borrowings, all substantially in its local currency.
  - (b) whether transactions with the reporting entity are a high or a low proportion of the foreign operation's activities.
  - (c) whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation directly affect the cash flows of the reporting entity and are readily available for remittance to it.
  - (d) whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation are sufficient to service existing and normally expected debt obligations without funds being made available by the reporting entity.
12. When the above indicators are mixed and the functional currency is not obvious, management uses its judgement to determine the functional currency that most faithfully represents the economic effects of the underlying transactions, events and conditions. As part of this approach, management gives priority to the primary indicators in paragraph 9 before considering the indicators in paragraphs 10 and 11, which are designed to provide additional supporting evidence to determine an entity's functional currency.
13. An entity's functional currency reflects the underlying transactions, events and conditions that are relevant to it. Accordingly, once determined, the functional currency is not changed unless there is a change in those underlying transactions, events and conditions.
14. If the functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, the entity's financial statements are restated in accordance with IAS 29 *Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies*. An entity cannot avoid restatement in accordance with IAS 29 by, for example, adopting as its functional currency a currency other than the functional currency determined in accordance with this Standard (such as the functional currency of its parent).

### **Net Investment in a Foreign Operation**

15. An entity may have a monetary item that is receivable from or payable to a foreign operation. An item for which settlement is neither planned nor likely to occur in the foreseeable future is, in substance, a part of the entity's net investment in that foreign operation, and is accounted for in accordance with paragraphs 32 and 33. Such monetary items may include long-term receivables or loans. They do not include trade receivables or trade payables.

### **Monetary Items**

16. The essential feature of a monetary item is a right to receive (or an obligation to deliver) a fixed or determinable number of units of currency. Examples include: pensions and other employee benefits to be paid in cash; provisions that are to be settled in cash; and cash dividends that are recognised as a liability. Similarly, a contract to receive (or deliver) a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments or a variable amount of assets in which the fair value to be received (or delivered) equals a fixed or determinable number of units of currency is a monetary item. Conversely, the essential feature of a non-monetary item is the absence of a right to receive (or an obligation to deliver) a fixed or determinable number of units of currency. Examples include: amounts prepaid for goods and services (eg prepaid rent); goodwill; intangible assets; inventories; property, plant and equipment; and provisions that are to be settled by the delivery of a non-monetary asset.

## **Summary of the Approach Required by this Standard**

17. In preparing financial statements, each entity—whether a stand-alone entity, an entity with foreign operations (such as a parent) or a foreign operation (such as a subsidiary or branch)—determines its functional currency in accordance with paragraphs 9-14. The entity translates foreign currency items into its functional currency and reports the effects of such translation in accordance with paragraphs 20-37 and 50.
18. Many reporting entities comprise a number of individual entities (eg a group is made up of a parent and one or more subsidiaries). Various types of entities, whether members of a group or otherwise, may have investments in associates or joint ventures. They may also have branches. It is necessary for the results and financial position of each individual entity included in the reporting entity to be translated into the currency in which the reporting entity presents its financial statements. This Standard permits the presentation currency of a reporting entity to be any currency (or currencies). The results and financial position of any individual entity within the reporting entity whose functional currency differs from the presentation currency are translated in accordance with paragraphs 38-50.

19. This Standard also permits a stand-alone entity preparing financial statements or an entity preparing separate financial statements in accordance with IAS 27 *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements* to present its financial statements in any currency (or currencies). If the entity's presentation currency differs from its functional currency, its results and financial position are also translated into the presentation currency in accordance with paragraphs 38-50.

## Reporting Foreign Currency Transactions in the Functional Currency

### Initial Recognition

20. A foreign currency transaction is a transaction that is denominated or requires settlement in a foreign currency, including transactions arising when an entity:
- buys or sells goods or services whose price is denominated in a foreign currency;
  - borrowes or lends funds when the amounts payable or receivable are denominated in a foreign currency; or
  - otherwise acquires or disposes of assets, or incurs or settles liabilities, denominated in a foreign currency.
21. *A foreign currency transaction shall be recorded, on initial recognition in the functional currency, by applying to the foreign currency amount the spot exchange rate between the functional currency and the foreign currency at the date of the transaction.*
22. The date of a transaction is the date on which the transaction first qualifies for recognition in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards. For practical reasons, a rate that approximates the actual rate at the date of the transaction is often used, for example, an average rate for a week or a month might be used for all transactions in each foreign currency occurring during that period. However, if exchange rates fluctuate significantly, the use of the average rate for a period is inappropriate.

### Reporting at Subsequent Balance Sheet Dates

23. *At each balance sheet date:*
- foreign currency monetary items shall be translated using the closing rate;*
  - non-monetary items that are measured in terms of historical cost in a foreign currency shall be translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction; and*
  - non-monetary items that are measured at fair value in a foreign currency shall be translated using the exchange rates at the date when the fair value was determined.*

24. The carrying amount of an item is determined in conjunction with other relevant Standards. For example, property, plant and equipment may be measured in terms of fair value or historical cost in accordance with IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment*. Whether the carrying amount is determined on the basis of historical cost or on the basis of fair value, if the amount is determined in a foreign currency it is then translated into the functional currency in accordance with this Standard.
25. The carrying amount of some items is determined by comparing two or more amounts. For example, the carrying amount of inventories is the lower of cost and net realisable value in accordance with IAS 2 *Inventories*. Similarly, in accordance with IAS 36 *Impairment of Assets*, the carrying amount of an asset for which there is an indication of impairment is the lower of its carrying amount before considering possible impairment losses and its recoverable amount. When such an asset is non-monetary and is measured in a foreign currency, the carrying amount is determined by comparing:
- (a) the cost or carrying amount, as appropriate, translated at the exchange rate at the date when that amount was determined (ie the rate at the date of the transaction for an item measured in terms of historical cost); and
  - (b) the net realisable value or recoverable amount, as appropriate, translated at the exchange rate at the date when that value was determined (eg the closing rate at the balance sheet date).
- The effect of this comparison may be that an impairment loss is recognised in the functional currency but would not be recognised in the foreign currency, or vice versa.
26. When several exchange rates are available, the rate used is that at which the future cash flows represented by the transaction or balance could have been settled if those cash flows had occurred at the measurement date. If exchangeability between two currencies is temporarily lacking, the rate used is the first subsequent rate at which exchanges could be made.

## Recognition of Exchange Differences

27. As noted in paragraph 3, IAS 39 applies to hedge accounting for foreign currency items. The application of hedge accounting requires an entity to account for some exchange differences differently from the treatment of exchange differences required by this Standard. For example, IAS 39 requires that exchange differences on monetary items that qualify as hedging instruments in a cash flow hedge are reported initially in equity to the extent that the hedge is effective.
28. *Exchange differences arising on the settlement of monetary items or on translating monetary items at rates different from those at which they were translated on initial recognition during the period or in previous financial statements shall be recognised in profit or loss in the period in which they arise, except as described in paragraph 32.*

29. When monetary items arise from a foreign currency transaction and there is a change in the exchange rate between the transaction date and the date of settlement, an exchange difference results. When the transaction is settled within the same accounting period as that in which it occurred, all the exchange difference is recognised in that period. However, when the transaction is settled in a subsequent accounting period, the exchange difference recognised in each period up to the date of settlement is determined by the change in exchange rates during each period.
30. ***When a gain or loss on a non-monetary item is recognised directly in equity, any exchange component of that gain or loss shall be recognised directly in equity. Conversely, when a gain or loss on a non-monetary item is recognised in profit or loss, any exchange component of that gain or loss shall be recognised in profit or loss.***
31. Other Standards require some gains and losses to be recognised directly in equity. For example, IAS 16 requires some gains and losses arising on a revaluation of property, plant and equipment to be recognised directly in equity. When such an asset is measured in a foreign currency, paragraph 23(c) of this Standard requires the revalued amount to be translated using the rate at the date the value is determined, resulting in an exchange difference that is also recognised in equity.
32. ***Exchange differences arising on a monetary item that forms part of a reporting entity's net investment in a foreign operation (see paragraph 15) shall be recognised in profit or loss in the separate financial statements of the reporting entity or the individual financial statements of the foreign operation, as appropriate. In the financial statements that include the foreign operation and the reporting entity (eg consolidated financial statements when the foreign operation is a subsidiary), such exchange differences shall be recognised initially in a separate component of equity and recognised in profit or loss on disposal of the net investment in accordance with paragraph 48.***
33. When a monetary item forms part of a reporting entity's net investment in a foreign operation and is denominated in the functional currency of the reporting entity, an exchange difference arises in the foreign operation's individual financial statements in accordance with paragraph 28. Similarly, if such an item is denominated in the functional currency of the foreign operation, an exchange difference arises in the reporting entity's separate financial statements in accordance with paragraph 28. Such exchange differences are reclassified to the separate component of equity in the financial statements that include the foreign operation and the reporting entity (ie financial statements in which the foreign operation is consolidated, proportionately consolidated or accounted for using the equity method). However, a monetary item that forms part of the reporting entity's net investment in a foreign operation may be denominated in a currency other than the functional currency of either the reporting entity or the foreign operation. The exchange differences that arise on translating the monetary item into the functional currencies of the reporting entity and the foreign operation are not reclassified to the separate component of equity in the financial statements that include the foreign operation and the reporting entity (ie they remain recognised in profit or loss).

34. When an entity keeps its books and records in a currency other than its functional currency, at the time the entity prepares its financial statements all amounts are translated into the functional currency in accordance with paragraphs 20-26. This produces the same amounts in the functional currency as would have occurred had the items been recorded initially in the functional currency. For example, monetary items are translated into the functional currency using the closing rate, and non-monetary items that are measured on a historical cost basis are translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction that resulted in their recognition.

### **Change in Functional Currency**

35. *When there is a change in an entity's functional currency, the entity shall apply the translation procedures applicable to the new functional currency prospectively from the date of the change.*
36. As noted in paragraph 13, the functional currency of an entity reflects the underlying transactions, events and conditions that are relevant to the entity. Accordingly, once the functional currency is determined, it can be changed only if there is a change to those underlying transactions, events and conditions. For example, a change in the currency that mainly influences the sales prices of goods and services may lead to a change in an entity's functional currency.
37. The effect of a change in functional currency is accounted for prospectively. In other words, an entity translates all items into the new functional currency using the exchange rate at the date of the change. The resulting translated amounts for non-monetary items are treated as their historical cost. Exchange differences arising from the translation of a foreign operation previously classified in equity in accordance with paragraphs 32 and 39(c) are not recognised in profit or loss until the disposal of the operation.

### **Use of a Presentation Currency other than the Functional Currency**

#### **Translation to the Presentation Currency**

38. An entity may present its financial statements in any currency (or currencies). If the presentation currency differs from the entity's functional currency, it translates its results and financial position into the presentation currency. For example, when a group contains individual entities with different functional currencies, the results and financial position of each entity are expressed in a common currency so that consolidated financial statements may be presented.
39. *The results and financial position of an entity whose functional currency is not the currency of a hyperinflationary economy shall be translated into a different presentation currency using the following procedures:*
- (a) *assets and liabilities for each balance sheet presented (ie including comparatives) shall be translated at the closing rate at the date of that balance sheet;*

- (b) income and expenses for each income statement (ie including comparatives) shall be translated at exchange rates at the dates of the transactions; and*
- (c) all resulting exchange differences shall be recognised as a separate component of equity.*

40. For practical reasons, a rate that approximates the exchange rates at the dates of the transactions, for example an average rate for the period, is often used to translate income and expense items. However, if exchange rates fluctuate significantly, the use of the average rate for a period is inappropriate.

41. The exchange differences referred to in paragraph 39(c) result from:

- (a) translating income and expenses at the exchange rates at the dates of the transactions and assets and liabilities at the closing rate. Such exchange differences arise both on income and expense items recognised in profit or loss and on those recognised directly in equity.
- (b) translating the opening net assets at a closing rate that differs from the previous closing rate.

These exchange differences are not recognised in profit or loss because the changes in exchange rates have little or no direct effect on the present and future cash flows from operations. When the exchange differences relate to a foreign operation that is consolidated but not wholly-owned, accumulated exchange differences arising from translation and attributable to minority interests are allocated to, and recognised as part of, minority interest in the consolidated balance sheet.

42. *The results and financial position of an entity whose functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy shall be translated into a different presentation currency using the following procedures:*

- (a) all amounts (ie assets, liabilities, equity items, income and expenses, including comparatives) shall be translated at the closing rate at the date of the most recent balance sheet, except that*
- (b) when amounts are translated into the currency of a non-hyperinflationary economy, comparative amounts shall be those that were presented as current year amounts in the relevant prior year financial statements (ie not adjusted for subsequent changes in the price level or subsequent changes in exchange rates).*

43. *When an entity's functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, the entity shall restate its financial statements in accordance with IAS 29 Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies before applying the translation method set out in paragraph 42, except for comparative amounts that are translated into a currency of a non-hyperinflationary economy (see paragraph 42(b)). When the economy ceases to be hyperinflationary and the entity no longer restates its financial statements in accordance with IAS 29, it shall use as the historical costs for translation into the presentation currency the amounts restated to the price level at the date the entity ceased restating its financial statements.*

## Translation of a Foreign Operation

44. Paragraphs 45-47, in addition to paragraphs 38-43, apply when the results and financial position of a foreign operation are translated into a presentation currency so that the foreign operation can be included in the financial statements of the reporting entity by consolidation, proportionate consolidation or the equity method.
45. The incorporation of the results and financial position of a foreign operation with those of the reporting entity follows normal consolidation procedures, such as the elimination of intragroup balances and intragroup transactions of a subsidiary (see IAS 27 *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements* and IAS 31 *Interests in Joint Ventures*). However, an intragroup monetary asset (or liability), whether short-term or long-term, cannot be eliminated against the corresponding intragroup liability (or asset) without showing the results of currency fluctuations in the consolidated financial statements. This is because the monetary item represents a commitment to convert one currency into another and exposes the reporting entity to a gain or loss through currency fluctuations. Accordingly, in the consolidated financial statements of the reporting entity, such an exchange difference continues to be recognised in profit or loss or, if it arises from the circumstances described in paragraph 32, it is classified as equity until the disposal of the foreign operation.
46. When the financial statements of a foreign operation are as of a date different from that of the reporting entity, the foreign operation often prepares additional statements as of the same date as the reporting entity's financial statements. When this is not done, IAS 27 allows the use of a different reporting date provided that the difference is no greater than three months and adjustments are made for the effects of any significant transactions or other events that occur between the different dates. In such a case, the assets and liabilities of the foreign operation are translated at the exchange rate at the balance sheet date of the foreign operation. Adjustments are made for significant changes in exchange rates up to the balance sheet date of the reporting entity in accordance with IAS 27. The same approach is used in applying the equity method to associates and joint ventures and in applying proportionate consolidation to joint ventures in accordance with IAS 28 *Investments in Associates* and IAS 31.
47. *Any goodwill arising on the acquisition of a foreign operation and any fair value adjustments to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities arising on the acquisition of that foreign operation shall be treated as assets and liabilities of the foreign operation. Thus they shall be expressed in the functional currency of the foreign operation and shall be translated at the closing rate in accordance with paragraphs 39 and 42.*

## Disposal of a Foreign Operation

48. *On the disposal of a foreign operation, the cumulative amount of the exchange differences deferred in the separate component of equity relating to that foreign operation shall be recognised in profit or loss when the gain or loss on disposal is recognised.*

49. An entity may dispose of its interest in a foreign operation through sale, liquidation, repayment of share capital or abandonment of all, or part of, that entity. The payment of a dividend is part of a disposal only when it constitutes a return of the investment, for example when the dividend is paid out of pre-acquisition profits. In the case of a partial disposal, only the proportionate share of the related accumulated exchange difference is included in the gain or loss. A write-down of the carrying amount of a foreign operation does not constitute a partial disposal. Accordingly, no part of the deferred foreign exchange gain or loss is recognised in profit or loss at the time of a write-down.

## **Tax Effects of All Exchange Differences**

50. Gains and losses on foreign currency transactions and exchange differences arising on translating the results and financial position of an entity (including a foreign operation) into a different currency may have tax effects. IAS 12 *Income Taxes* applies to these tax effects.

## **Disclosure**

51. *In paragraphs 53 and 55-57 references to 'functional currency' apply, in the case of a group, to the functional currency of the parent.*
52. *An entity shall disclose:*
- (a) *the amount of exchange differences recognised in profit or loss except for those arising on financial instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss in accordance with IAS 39; and*
  - (b) *net exchange differences classified in a separate component of equity, and a reconciliation of the amount of such exchange differences at the beginning and end of the period.*
53. *When the presentation currency is different from the functional currency, that fact shall be stated, together with disclosure of the functional currency and the reason for using a different presentation currency.*
54. *When there is a change in the functional currency of either the reporting entity or a significant foreign operation, that fact and the reason for the change in functional currency shall be disclosed.*
55. *When an entity presents its financial statements in a currency that is different from its functional currency, it shall describe the financial statements as complying with International Financial Reporting Standards only if they comply with all the requirements of each applicable Standard and each applicable Interpretation of those Standards including the translation method set out in paragraphs 39 and 42.*

56. An entity sometimes presents its financial statements or other financial information in a currency that is not its functional currency without meeting the requirements of paragraph 55. For example, an entity may convert into another currency only selected items from its financial statements. Or, an entity whose functional currency is not the currency of a hyperinflationary economy may convert the financial statements into another currency by translating all items at the most recent closing rate. Such conversions are not in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the disclosures set out in paragraph 57 are required.
57. ***When an entity displays its financial statements or other financial information in a currency that is different from either its functional currency or its presentation currency and the requirements of paragraph 55 are not met, it shall:***
- (a) *clearly identify the information as supplementary information to distinguish it from the information that complies with International Financial Reporting Standards;*
  - (b) *disclose the currency in which the supplementary information is displayed; and*
  - (c) *disclose the entity's functional currency and the method of translation used to determine the supplementary information.*

## **Effective Date and Transition**

58. ***An entity shall apply this Standard for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. Earlier application is encouraged. If an entity applies this Standard for a period beginning before 1 January 2005, it shall disclose that fact.***
59. ***An entity shall apply paragraph 47 prospectively to all acquisitions occurring after the beginning of the financial reporting period in which this Standard is first applied. Retrospective application of paragraph 47 to earlier acquisitions is permitted. For an acquisition of a foreign operation treated prospectively but which occurred before the date on which this Standard is first applied, the entity shall not restate prior years and accordingly may, when appropriate, treat goodwill and fair value adjustments arising on that acquisition as assets and liabilities of the entity rather than as assets and liabilities of the foreign operation. Therefore, those goodwill and fair value adjustments either are already expressed in the entity's functional currency or are non-monetary foreign currency items, which are reported using the exchange rate at the date of the acquisition.***
60. ***All other changes resulting from the application of this Standard shall be accounted for in accordance with the requirements of IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors.***

## **Withdrawal of Other Pronouncements**

61. This Standard supersedes IAS 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* (revised in 1993).

62. This Standard supersedes the following Interpretations:
- (a) SIC-11 *Foreign Exchange—Capitalisation of Losses Resulting from Severe Currency Devaluations*;
  - (b) SIC-19 *Reporting Currency—Measurement and Presentation of Financial Statements under IAS 21 and IAS 29*; and
  - (c) SIC-30 *Reporting Currency—Translation from Measurement Currency to Presentation Currency*.

## **Appendix**

### **Amendments to Other Pronouncements**

*The amendments in this appendix shall be applied for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. If an entity applies this Standard for an earlier period, these amendments shall be applied for that earlier period.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*The amendments contained in this appendix when this Standard was issued in 2003 have been incorporated into the relevant pronouncements published in this volume.*

## Approval of IAS 21 by the Board

International Accounting Standard 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* was approved for issue by the fourteen members of the International Accounting Standards Board.

Sir David Tweedie

Chairman

Thomas E Jones

Vice-Chairman

Mary E Barth

Hans-Georg Bruns

Anthony T Cope

Robert P Garnett

Gilbert G elard

James J Leisenring

Warren J McGregor

Patricia L O'Malley

Harry K Schmid

John T Smith

Geoffrey Whittington

Tatsumi Yamada

## Basis for Conclusions

*This Basis for Conclusions accompanies, but is not part of, IAS 21.*

### Introduction

- BC1. This Basis for Conclusions summarises the International Accounting Standards Board's considerations in reaching its conclusions on revising IAS 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates* in 2003. Individual Board members gave greater weight to some factors than to others.
- BC2. In July 2001 the Board announced that, as part of its initial agenda of technical projects, it would undertake a project to improve a number of Standards, including IAS 21. The project was undertaken in the light of queries and criticisms raised in relation to the Standards by securities regulators, professional accountants and other interested parties. The objectives of the Improvements project were to reduce or eliminate alternatives, redundancies and conflicts within Standards, to deal with some convergence issues and to make other improvements. In May 2002 the Board published its proposals in an Exposure Draft of *Improvements to International Accounting Standards*, with a comment deadline of 16 September 2002. The Board received over 160 comment letters on the Exposure Draft.
- BC3. Because the Board's intention was not to reconsider the fundamental approach to accounting for the effects of changes in foreign exchange rates established by IAS 21, this Basis for Conclusions does not discuss requirements in IAS 21 that the Board has not reconsidered.

### Functional Currency

- BC4. The term 'reporting currency' was previously defined as "the currency used in presenting the financial statements". This definition comprises two separate notions (which were identified in SIC-19 *Reporting Currency—Measurement and Presentation of Financial Statements under IAS 21 and IAS 29*):
- the measurement currency (the currency in which the entity measures the items in the financial statements); and
  - the presentation currency (the currency in which the entity presents its financial statements).
- The Board decided to revise the previous version of IAS 21 to incorporate the SIC-19 approach of separating these two notions. The Board also noted that the term 'functional currency' is more commonly used than 'measurement currency' and decided to adopt the more common term.
- BC5. The Board noted a concern that the guidance in SIC-19 on determining a measurement currency could permit entities to choose one of several currencies, or to select an inappropriate currency. In particular, some believed that SIC-19 placed too much emphasis on the currency in which transactions are denominated and too little emphasis on the underlying economy that determines the pricing of

those transactions. To meet these concerns, the Board defined functional currency as “the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates”. The Board also provided guidance on how to determine the functional currency (see paragraphs 9-14 of the Standard). This guidance draws heavily on SIC-19 and equivalent guidance in US and other national standards, but also reflects the Board’s decision that some factors merit greater emphasis than others.

- BC6. The Board also discussed whether a foreign operation that is integral to the reporting entity (as described in the previous version of IAS 21) could have a functional currency that is different from that of its ‘parent’.\* The Board decided that the functional currencies will always be the same, because it would be contradictory for an integral foreign operation that “carries on business as if it were an extension of the reporting enterprise’s operations”† to operate in a primary economic environment different from its parent.
- BC7. It follows that it is not necessary to translate the results and financial position of an integral foreign operation when incorporating them into the financial statements of the parent—they will already be measured in the parent’s functional currency. Furthermore, it is not necessary to distinguish between an integral foreign operation and a foreign entity. When a foreign operation’s functional currency is different from that of its parent, it is a foreign entity, and the translation method in paragraphs 38-49 of the Standard applies.
- BC8. The Board also decided that the principles in the previous version of IAS 21 for distinguishing an integral foreign operation from a foreign entity are relevant in determining an operation’s functional currency. Hence it incorporated these principles into the Standard in that context.
- BC9. The Board agreed that the indicators in paragraph 9 are the primary indicators for determining the functional currency and that paragraphs 10 and 11 are secondary. This is because the indicators in paragraphs 10 and 11 are not linked to the primary economic environment in which the entity operates but provide additional supporting evidence to determine an entity’s functional currency.

## Presentation Currency

- BC10. A further issue is whether an entity should be permitted to present its financial statements in a currency (or currencies) other than its functional currency. Some believe it should not. They believe that the functional currency, being the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates, most usefully portrays the economic effect of transactions and events on the entity. For a group that comprises operations with a number of functional currencies, they believe that the consolidated financial statements should be presented in the functional currency that management uses when controlling and monitoring the

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\* The term ‘parent’ is used broadly in this context to mean an entity that has a branch, associate or joint venture, as well as one with a subsidiary.

† IAS 21 (revised 1993), paragraph 24

performance and financial position of the group. They also believe that allowing an entity to present its financial statements in more than one currency may confuse, rather than help, users of those financial statements. Supporters of this view believe that any presentation in a currency other than that described above should be regarded as a ‘convenience translation’ that is outside the scope of IFRSs.

- BC11. Others believe that the choice of presentation currency should be limited, for example, to the functional currency of one of the substantive entities within a group. However, such a restriction might be easily overcome—an entity that wished to present its financial statements in a different currency might establish a substantive, but relatively small operation with that functional currency.
- BC12. Still others believe that, given the rising trend towards globalisation, entities should be permitted to present their financial statements in any currency. They note that most large groups do not have a single functional currency, but rather comprise operations with a number of functional currencies. For such entities, they believe it is not clear which currency should be the presentation currency, or why one currency is preferable to another. They also point out that management may not use a single currency when controlling and monitoring the performance and financial position of such a group. In addition, they note that in some jurisdictions, entities are required to present their financial statements in the local currency, even when this is not the functional currency.\* Hence, if IFRSs required the financial statements to be presented in the functional currency, some entities would have to present two sets of financial statements: financial statements that comply with IFRSs presented in the functional currency and financial statements that comply with local regulations presented in a different currency.
- BC13. The Board was persuaded by the arguments in the previous paragraph. Accordingly, it decided that entities should be permitted to present their financial statements in any currency (or currencies).
- BC14. The Board also clarified that the Standard does not prohibit the entity from providing, as supplementary information, a ‘convenience translation’. Such a ‘convenience translation’ may display financial statements (or selected portions of financial statements) in a currency other than the presentation currency, as a convenience to some users. The ‘convenience translation’ may be prepared using a translation method other than that required by the Standard. These types of ‘convenience translations’ should be clearly identified as supplementary information to distinguish them from information required by IFRSs and translated in accordance with the Standard.

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\* This includes entities operating in another country and, for example, publishing financial statements to comply with a listing requirement of that country.

## Translation Method

- BC15. The Board debated which method should be used to translate financial statements from an entity's functional currency into a different presentation currency.
- BC16. The Board agreed that the translation method should not have the effect of substituting another currency for the functional currency. Put another way, presenting the financial statements in a different currency should not change the way in which the underlying items are measured. Rather, the translation method should merely express the underlying amounts, as measured in the functional currency, in a different currency.
- BC17. Given this, the Board considered two possible translation methods. The first is to translate all amounts (including comparatives) at the most recent closing rate. This method has several advantages: it is simple to apply; it does not generate any new gains and losses; and it does not change ratios such as return on assets. This method is supported by those who believe that the process of merely expressing amounts in a different currency should preserve the relationships among amounts as measured in the functional currency and, as such, should not lead to any new gains or losses.
- BC18. The second method considered by the Board is the one that the previous version of IAS 21 required for translating the financial statements of a foreign operation.\* This method results in the same amounts in the presentation currency regardless of whether the financial statements of a foreign operation are:
- (a) first translated into the functional currency of another group entity (eg the parent) and then into the presentation currency, or
  - (b) translated directly into the presentation currency.
- BC19. This method avoids the need to decide the currency in which to express the financial statements of a multinational group before they are translated into the presentation currency. As noted above, many large groups do not have a single functional currency, but comprise operations with a number of functional currencies. For such entities it is not clear which functional currency should be chosen in which to express amounts before they are translated into the presentation currency, or why one currency is preferable to another. In addition, this method produces the same amounts in the presentation currency for a stand-alone entity as for an identical subsidiary of a parent whose functional currency is the presentation currency.

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\* This is to translate balance sheet items at the closing rate and income and expense items at actual (or average) rates, except for an entity whose functional currency is that of a hyperinflationary economy.

- BC20. The Board decided to require the second method, ie that the financial statements of any entity (whether a stand-alone entity, a parent or an operation within a group) whose functional currency differs from the presentation currency used by the reporting entity are translated using the method set out in paragraphs 38-49 of the Standard.
- BC21. With respect to translation of comparative amounts, the Board adopted the approach required by SIC-30 for:
- (a) an entity whose functional currency is not the currency of the hyperinflationary economy (assets and liabilities in the comparative balance sheet are translated at the closing rate at the date of that balance sheet and income and expenses in the comparative income statement are translated at exchange rates at the dates of the transactions); and
  - (b) an entity whose functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, and for which the comparative amounts are being translated into the currency of a hyperinflationary economy (both balance sheet and income statement items are translated at the closing rate of the most recent balance sheet presented).
- BC22. However, the Board decided not to adopt the SIC-30 approach for the translation of comparatives for an entity whose functional currency is the currency of a hyperinflationary economy, and for which the comparative amounts are being translated into a presentation currency of a non-hyperinflationary economy. The Board noted that in such a case, the SIC-30 approach requires restating the comparative amounts from those shown in last year's financial statements for both the effects of inflation and for changes in exchange rates. If exchange rates fully reflect differing price levels between the two economies to which they relate, the SIC-30 approach will result in the same amounts for the comparatives as were reported as current year amounts in the prior year financial statements. Furthermore, the Board noted that in the prior year, the relevant amounts had been already expressed in the non-hyperinflationary presentation currency, and there was no reason to change them. For these reasons the Board decided to require that all comparative amounts are those presented in the prior year financial statements (ie there is no adjustment for either subsequent changes in the price level or subsequent changes in exchange rates).
- BC23. The Board decided to incorporate into the Standard most of the disclosure requirements of SIC-30 *Reporting Currency—Translation from Measurement Currency to Presentation Currency* that apply when a different translation method is used or other supplementary information, such as an extract from the full financial statements, is displayed in a currency other than the functional currency (see paragraph 57 of the Standard). These disclosures enable users to distinguish information prepared in accordance with IFRSs from information that may be useful to users but is not the subject of IFRSs, and also tell users how the latter information has been prepared.

## Capitalisation of Exchange Differences

- BC24. The previous version of IAS 21 allowed a limited choice of accounting for exchange differences that arise “from a severe devaluation or depreciation of a currency against which there is no practical means of hedging and that affects liabilities which cannot be settled and which arise directly on the recent acquisition of an asset”.\* The benchmark treatment was to recognise such exchange differences in profit or loss. The allowed alternative was to recognise them as an asset.
- BC25. The Board noted that the allowed alternative (of recognition as an asset) was not in accordance with the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements* because exchange losses do not meet the definition of an asset. Moreover, recognition of exchange losses as an asset is neither allowed nor required by any liaison standard-setter, so its deletion would improve convergence. Finally, in many cases when the conditions for recognition as an asset are met, the asset would be restated in accordance with IAS 29 *Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies*. Thus, to the extent that an exchange loss reflects hyperinflation, this effect is taken into account by IAS 29. For all of these reasons, the Board removed the allowed alternative treatment and the related SIC Interpretation is superseded.

## Goodwill and Fair Value Adjustments

- BC26. The previous version of IAS 21 allowed a choice of translating goodwill and fair value adjustments to assets and liabilities that arise on the acquisition of a foreign entity at (a) the closing rate or (b) the historical transaction rate.
- BC27. The Board agreed that, conceptually, the correct treatment depends on whether goodwill and fair value adjustments are part of:
- (a) the assets and liabilities of the acquired entity (which would imply translating them at the closing rate); or
  - (b) the assets and liabilities of the parent (which would imply translating them at the historical rate).
- BC28. The Board agreed that fair value adjustments clearly relate to the identifiable assets and liabilities of the acquired entity and should therefore be translated at the closing rate.
- BC29. Goodwill is more complex, partly because it is measured as a residual. In addition, the Board noted that difficult issues can arise when the acquired entity comprises businesses that have different functional currencies (eg if the acquired entity is a multinational group). The Board discussed how to assess any resulting goodwill for impairment and, in particular, whether the goodwill would need to be ‘pushed down’ to the level of each different functional currency or could be accounted for and assessed at a higher level.

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\* IAS 21 (revised 1993), paragraph 21

- BC30. One view is that when the parent acquires a multinational operation comprising businesses with many different functional currencies, any goodwill may be treated as an asset of the parent/acquirer and tested for impairment at a consolidated level. Those who support this view believe that, in economic terms, the goodwill is an asset of the parent because it is part of the acquisition price paid by the parent. Thus, they believe, it would be incorrect to allocate the goodwill to the many acquired businesses and translate it into their various functional currencies. Rather, the goodwill, being treated as an asset of the parent, is not exposed to foreign currency risks, and translation differences associated with it should not be recognised. In addition, they believe that such goodwill should be tested for impairment at a consolidated level. Under this view, allocating or ‘pushing down’ the goodwill to a lower level, such as each different functional currency within the acquired foreign operation, would not serve any purpose.
- BC31. Others take a different view. They believe that the goodwill is part of the parent’s net investment in the acquired entity. In their view, goodwill should be treated no differently from other assets of the acquired entity, in particular intangible assets, because a significant part of the goodwill is likely to comprise intangible assets that do not qualify for separate recognition. They also note that goodwill arises only because of the investment in the foreign entity and has no existence apart from that entity. Lastly, they point out that when the acquired entity comprises a number of businesses with different functional currencies, the cash flows that support the continued recognition of goodwill are generated in those different functional currencies.
- BC32. The Board was persuaded by the reasons set out in the preceding paragraph and decided that goodwill is treated as an asset of the foreign operation and translated at the closing rate. Consequently, goodwill should be allocated to the level of each functional currency of the acquired foreign operation. This means that the level to which goodwill is allocated for foreign currency translation purposes may be different from the level at which the goodwill is tested for impairment. Entities follow the requirements in IAS 36 *Impairment of Assets* to determine the level at which goodwill is tested for impairment.

## Table of Concordance

This table shows how the contents of the superseded version of IAS 21 and the current version of IAS 21 correspond. Paragraphs are treated as corresponding if they broadly address the same matter even though the guidance may differ.

This table also shows how the requirements of SIC Interpretations SIC-19 and SIC-30 have been incorporated into the current version of IAS 21.

Superseded IAS 21 paragraph	Current IAS 21 paragraph	Superseded IAS 21 paragraph	Current IAS 21 paragraph	Superseded IAS 21 paragraph	Current IAS 21 paragraph
Objective	1, 2	23	None	46	None
1	3	24	11	47	None
2	4, 5	25	11	48	59, 60
3	None	26	11	49	58
4	6	27	None	None	9
5	None	28	None	None	10
6	7	29	None	None	12-14
7	8	30	39	None	16-19
8	20	31	40	None	25, 26
9	21	32	41	None	30, 31
10	22	33	47	None	33-38
11	23	34	45	None	42
12	24	35	46	None	44
13	None	36	43	None	51
14	27	37	48	None	55-57
15	28	38	49	None	61, 62
16	29	39	None	SIC-11	None
17	32	40	None	SIC-19	8-14, 43, 56, 57
18	15	41	50	SIC-30	38-43, 51, 56, 57
19	None	42	52		
20	None	43	53, 54		
21	None	44	None		
22	None	45	None		

