

New Zealand Equivalent to International Accounting Standard 20

Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance (NZ IAS 20)

Issued November 2004 and incorporates amendments up to November 2007.

This Standard was issued by the Financial Reporting Standards Board of the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants* and approved by the Accounting Standards Review Board in November 2004 under the Financial Reporting Act 1993.

The following New Zealand Interpretation relates to NZ IAS 20:

- New Zealand Equivalent to SIC-10 *Government Assistance – No Specific Relation to Operating Activities*.

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NZ IAS 20

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New Zealand Equivalent to International Accounting Standard 20 *Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance* (NZ IAS 20) is set out in paragraphs 1-42. NZ IAS 20 is based on International Accounting Standard 20 *Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance* (IAS 20) (reformatted 1994) issued by the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) and adopted by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). All the paragraphs have equal authority but retain the IASC format of the Standard when it was adopted by the IASB. NZ IAS 20 should be read in the context of the New Zealand *Preface* and the New Zealand Equivalent to the IASB *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements* (NZ Framework). NZ 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.

Any additional material is shown with grey shading. The paragraphs are denoted with “NZ” and identify the types of entities to which the paragraphs apply.

This Standard uses the terminology adopted in International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) to describe the financial statements and other elements. NZ IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (as revised in 2007) paragraph 5 explains that entities other than profit-oriented entities seeking to apply the Standard may need to amend the descriptions used for particular line items in the financial statements and for the financial statements themselves. For example, profit/loss may be referred to as surplus/deficit and capital or share capital may be referred to as equity.

HISTORY OF AMENDMENTS

Table of Pronouncements – NZ IAS 20 *Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance*

This table lists the pronouncements establishing and amending NZ IAS 20. The table is based on amendments approved as at 30 November 2007.

Pronouncements	Date approved (ASRB approval)	Early operative date	Effective date (annual reporting periods... on or after ...)
NZ IAS 20 <i>Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance</i>	Nov 2004 (Approval 13)	1 Jan 2005	1 Jan 2007
<i>Framework for Differential Reporting for Entities Applying the New Zealand Equivalents to IFRSs Financial Reporting Standards Reporting Regime (Framework for Differential Reporting)</i>	(Jun 2005) (Approval 62)	1 Jan 2005	1 Jan 2007
NZ IAS 1 <i>Presentation of Financial Statements</i> (revised 2007)	Nov 2007 (Approval 94)	Early application permitted	1 Jan 2009

Table of Amended Paragraphs in NZ IAS 20		
Paragraph affected	How affected	By ... [date]
Rubric	Amended	NZ IAS 1 [Nov 2007]
Introduction	Amended	<i>Framework for Differential Reporting</i> [Jun 2005]
Various	Terminology changed	NZ IAS 1 [Nov 2007]
Paragraph 29A	Inserted	NZ IAS 1 [Nov 2007]
Paragraph 42	Inserted	NZ IAS 1 [Nov 2007]

Introduction to NZ IAS 20

The Standard prescribes the accounting for, and disclosure of, government grants and the disclosure of other forms of government assistance.

In adopting IAS 20 for application as NZ IAS 20 the following changes have been made:

- (a) application of the Standard by public benefit entities is limited to the disclosure requirements in paragraph 39; and
- (b) additional disclosures are required if an entity has applied certain options permitted in the Standard (paragraph NZ 39.1).

Profit-oriented entities that comply with NZ IAS 20 will simultaneously be in compliance with IAS 20.

Public benefit entities using paragraph NZ 1.1 will not comply with the requirements of IAS 20.

Application of NZ IAS 20 by public benefit entities has been restricted for the following reasons:

- (a) government grants are a fundamental component of the financial statements of many public benefit entities. The treatment of government grants is likely to have a material impact on the financial statements of public benefit entities; and
- (b) application of the measurement and recognition requirements in the Standard could result in the assets and equity of public benefit entities being materially understated, particularly in the case of capital grants.

Differential Reporting

Qualifying entities must comply with all the provisions in NZ IAS 20.

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Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance (NZ IAS 20)

SCOPE

- 1 This Standard shall be applied in accounting for, and in the disclosure of, government grants and in the disclosure of other forms of government assistance.**

Public Benefit Entities

NZ 1.1 Public benefit entities shall not apply the recognition, measurement and presentation requirements set out in paragraphs 7 to 33 of this Standard. Public benefit entities shall apply the disclosure requirements in paragraph 39.

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

DEFINITIONS

- 3 The following terms are used in this Standard with the meanings specified:**

***Government* refers to government, government agencies and similar bodies whether local, national or international.**

***Government assistance* is action by government designed to provide an economic benefit specific to an entity or range of entities qualifying under certain criteria. Government assistance for the purpose of this Standard does not include benefits provided only indirectly through action affecting general**

trading conditions, such as the provision of infrastructure in development areas or the imposition of trading constraints on competitors.

Government grants are assistance by government in the form of transfers of resources to an entity in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the operating activities of the entity. They exclude those forms of government assistance which cannot reasonably have a value placed upon them and transactions with government which cannot be distinguished from the normal trading transactions of the entity.*

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

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

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

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

Public Benefit Entities

NZ 3.1 The following term is used in this Standard with the meaning specified:

Public benefit entities are reporting entities whose primary objective is to provide goods or services for community or social benefit and where any equity has been provided with a view to supporting that primary objective rather than for a financial return to equity holders.

- 4 Government assistance takes many forms varying both in the nature of the assistance given and in the conditions which are usually attached to it. The purpose of the assistance may be to encourage an entity to embark on a course of action which it would not normally have taken if the assistance was not provided.
- 5 The receipt of government assistance by an entity may be significant for the preparation of the financial statements for two reasons. Firstly, if resources have been transferred, an appropriate method of accounting for the transfer must be found. Secondly, it is desirable to give an indication of the extent to which the entity has benefited from such assistance during the reporting period. This

*See also NZ SIC-10 *Government Assistance – No Specific Relation to Operating Activities*.

facilitates comparison of an entity's financial statements with those of prior periods and with those of other entities.

- 6 Government grants are sometimes called by other names such as subsidies, subventions, or premiums.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

- 7 Government grants, including non-monetary grants at fair value, shall not be recognised until there is reasonable assurance that:**

- (a) the entity will comply with the conditions attaching to them; and**
(b) the grants will be received.

- 8 A government grant is not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the entity will comply with the conditions attaching to it, and that the grant will be received. Receipt of a grant does not of itself provide conclusive evidence that the conditions attaching to the grant have been or will be fulfilled.

- 9 The manner in which a grant is received does not affect the accounting method to be adopted in regard to the grant. Thus a grant is accounted for in the same manner whether it is received in cash or as a reduction of a liability to the government.

- 10 A forgivable loan from government is treated as a government grant when there is reasonable assurance that the entity will meet the terms for forgiveness of the loan.

- 11 Once a government grant is recognised, any related contingent liability or contingent asset is treated in accordance with NZ IAS 37 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

- 12 Government grants shall be recognised as income over the periods necessary to match them with the related costs which they are intended to compensate, on a systematic basis. They shall not be credited directly to shareholders' interests.**

- 13 Two broad approaches may be found to the accounting treatment of government grants: the capital approach, under which a grant is credited directly to shareholders' interests, and the income approach, under which a grant is taken to income over one or more periods.

- 14 Those in support of the capital approach argue as follows:

- (a) government grants are a financing device and shall be dealt with as such in the statement of financial position rather than be passed through profit or loss to offset the items of expense which they finance. Since no repayment is expected, they shall be credited directly to shareholders' interests; and

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- (b) it is inappropriate to recognise government grants in profit or loss, since they are not earned but represent an incentive provided by government without related costs.
- 15 Arguments in support of the income approach are as follows:
- (a) since government grants are receipts from a source other than shareholders, they shall not be credited directly to shareholders' interests but shall be recognised as income in appropriate periods;
 - (b) government grants are rarely gratuitous. The entity earns them through compliance with their conditions and meeting the envisaged obligations. They shall therefore be recognised as income and matched with the associated costs which the grant is intended to compensate; and
 - (c) as income and other taxes are charges against income, it is logical to deal also with government grants, which are an extension of fiscal policies, in profit or loss.
- 16 It is fundamental to the income approach that government grants be recognised as income on a systematic and rational basis over the periods necessary to match them with the related costs. Income recognition of government grants on a receipts basis is not in accordance with the accrual accounting assumption (see NZ IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements*) and would only be acceptable if no basis existed for allocating a grant to periods other than the one in which it was received.
- 17 In most cases the periods over which an entity recognises the costs or expenses related to a government grant are readily ascertainable and thus grants in recognition of specific expenses are recognised as income in the same period as the relevant expense. Similarly, grants related to depreciable assets are usually recognised as income over the periods and in the proportions in which depreciation on those assets is charged.
- 18 Grants related to non-depreciable assets may also require the fulfilment of certain obligations and would then be recognised as income over the periods which bear the cost of meeting the obligations. As an example, a grant of land may be conditional upon the erection of a building on the site and it may be appropriate to recognise it as income over the life of the building.
- 19 Grants are sometimes received as part of a package of financial or fiscal aids to which a number of conditions are attached. In such cases, care is needed in identifying the conditions giving rise to costs and expenses which determine the periods over which the grant will be earned. It may be appropriate to allocate part of a grant on one basis and part on another.
- 20 A government grant that becomes receivable as compensation for expenses or losses already incurred or for the purpose of giving immediate financial**

support to the entity with no future related costs shall be recognised as income of the period in which it becomes receivable.

- 21 In some circumstances, a government grant may be awarded for the purpose of giving immediate financial support to an entity rather than as an incentive to undertake specific expenditures. Such grants may be confined to an individual entity and may not be available to a whole class of beneficiaries. These circumstances may warrant recognising a grant as income in the period in which the entity qualifies to receive it, with disclosure to ensure that its effect is clearly understood.
- 22 A government grant may become receivable by an entity as compensation for expenses or losses incurred in a previous period. Such a grant is recognised as income of the period in which it becomes receivable, with disclosure to ensure that its effect is clearly understood.

Non-monetary Government Grants

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

Presentation of Grants Related to Assets

- 24 **Government grants related to assets, including non-monetary grants at fair value, shall be presented in the statement of financial position either by setting up the grant as deferred income or by deducting the grant in arriving at the carrying amount of the asset.**
- 25 Two methods of presentation in financial statements of grants (or the appropriate portions of grants) related to assets are regarded as acceptable alternatives.
- 26 One method sets up the grant as deferred income which is recognised as income on a systematic and rational basis over the useful life of the asset.
- 27 The other method deducts the grant in arriving at the carrying amount of the asset. The grant is recognised as income over the life of a depreciable asset by way of a reduced depreciation charge.
- 28 The purchase of assets and the receipt of related grants can cause major movements in the cash flow of an entity. For this reason and in order to show the gross investment in assets, such movements are often disclosed as separate items in the statement of cash flows regardless of whether or not the grant is deducted from the related asset for presentation purposes in the statement of financial position.

Presentation of Grants Related to Income

- 29 Grants related to income are sometimes presented as a credit in the statement of comprehensive income, either separately or under a general heading such as “Other income”; alternatively, they are deducted in reporting the related expense.
- 29A If an entity presents the components of profit or loss in a separate income statement as described in paragraph 81 of NZ IAS 1 (as revised in 2007), it presents grants related to income as required in paragraph 29 in that separate statement.
- 30 Supporters of the first method claim that it is inappropriate to net income and expense items and that separation of the grant from the expense facilitates comparison with other expenses not affected by a grant. For the second method it is argued that the expenses might well not have been incurred by the entity if the grant had not been available and presentation of the expense without offsetting the grant may therefore be misleading.
- 31 Both methods are regarded as acceptable for the presentation of grants related to income. Disclosure of the grant may be necessary for a proper understanding of the financial statements. Disclosure of the effect of the grants on any item of income or expense which is required to be separately disclosed is usually appropriate.

Repayment of Government Grants

- 32 **A government grant that becomes repayable shall be accounted for as a revision to an accounting estimate (see NZ IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors). Repayment of a grant related to income shall be applied first against any unamortised deferred credit set up in respect of the grant. To the extent that the repayment exceeds any such deferred credit, or where no deferred credit exists, the repayment shall be recognised immediately as an expense. Repayment of a grant related to an asset shall be recorded by increasing the carrying amount of the asset or reducing the deferred income balance by the amount repayable. The cumulative additional depreciation that would have been recognised to date as an expense in the absence of the grant shall be recognised immediately as an expense.**
- 33 Circumstances giving rise to repayment of a grant related to an asset may require consideration to be given to the possible impairment of the new carrying amount of the asset.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

- 34 Excluded from the definition of government grants in paragraph 3 are certain forms of government assistance which cannot reasonably have a value placed upon them and transactions with government which cannot be distinguished from the normal trading transactions of the entity.
- 35 Examples of assistance that cannot reasonably have a value placed upon them are free technical or marketing advice and the provision of guarantees. An example of assistance that cannot be distinguished from the normal trading transactions of the entity is a government procurement policy that is responsible for a portion of the entity's sales. The existence of the benefit might be unquestioned but any attempt to segregate the trading activities from government assistance could well be arbitrary.
- 36 The significance of the benefit in the above examples may be such that disclosure of the nature, extent and duration of the assistance is necessary in order that the financial statements may not be misleading.
- 37 Loans at nil or low interest rates are a form of government assistance, but the benefit is not quantified by the imputation of interest.
- 38 In this Standard, government assistance does not include the provision of infrastructure by improvement to the general transport and communication network and the supply of improved facilities such as irrigation or water reticulation which is available on an ongoing indeterminate basis for the benefit of an entire local community.

DISCLOSURE

39 The following matters shall be disclosed:

- (a) the accounting policy adopted for government grants, including the methods of presentation adopted in the financial statements;**
- (b) the nature and extent of government grants recognised in the financial statements and an indication of other forms of government assistance from which the entity has directly benefited; and**
- (c) unfulfilled conditions and other contingencies attaching to government assistance that has been recognised.**

Profit-Oriented Entities

NZ 39.1 To comply with the disclosures required by paragraph 39:

- (a) where, in accordance with the option permitted by paragraph 23, a government grant takes the form of a transfer of a non-monetary asset and an entity has recorded both an asset and a grant at a nominal amount, an entity shall disclose, in the period in which it was received, the fair value of the grant received;
- (b) where, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 24, an entity has presented a government grant related to assets in the statement of financial position either by setting up the grant as deferred income or by deducting the grant in arriving at the carrying amount of the asset, an entity shall disclose:
 - (i) the fair value of the grant received at the time of receipt;
 - (ii) the amount recognised as deferred income or deducted from the carrying amount of the asset at the time of receipt;
 - (iii) the number of years over which the deferred income is recognised as income or the estimated useful life of the related asset; and
- (c) where, in accordance with the option permitted by paragraph 29, an entity has deducted a grant related to income in reporting the related expense, an entity shall disclose the fair value of the grant received.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

40 [Paragraph 40 is not reproduced. The transitional provisions in IAS 20 are not relevant to the adoption of this Standard.]

EFFECTIVE DATE

- 41 This Standard becomes operative for an entity's financial statements that cover annual accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2007. Early adoption of this Standard is permitted only when an entity complies with NZ IFRS 1 *First-time Adoption of New Zealand Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards* for an annual accounting period beginning on or after 1 January 2005.
- 42 NZ IAS 1 (as revised in 2007) amended the terminology used throughout new Zealand equivalents to IFRSs. In addition, it added paragraph 29A. An entity shall apply those amendments for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. If an entity applies NZ IAS 1 (revised 2007) for an earlier period, the amendments shall be applied for that earlier period.