Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation

Amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38
Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation

(Amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38)
CLARIFICATION OF ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION

CONTENTS

APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF CLARIFICATION OF ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION (AMENDMENTS TO IAS 16 AND IAS 38) ISSUED IN MAY 2014 4

AMENDMENTS TO IAS 16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT 5

AMENDMENTS TO THE BASIS FOR CONCLUSIONS ON IAS 16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT 7

AMENDMENTS TO IAS 38 INTANGIBLE ASSETS 9

AMENDMENTS TO THE BASIS FOR CONCLUSIONS ON IAS 38 INTANGIBLE ASSETS 12

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE BASIS FOR CONCLUSIONS ON IFRIC 12 SERVICE CONCESSION ARRANGEMENTS 15

DISSENTING OPINION 16
Approval by the Board of Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (Amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38) issued in May 2014

Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation was approved for issue by fifteen of the sixteen members of the International Accounting Standards Board. Ms Tokar dissented. Her dissenting opinion is set out after the Basis for Conclusions.

Hans Hoogervorst Chairman
Ian Mackintosh Vice-Chairman
Stephen Cooper
Philippe Danjou
Martin Edelmann
Jan Engström
Patrick Finnegan
Amaro Luiz de Oliveira Gomes
Gary Kabureck
Suzanne Lloyd
Patricia McConnell
Takatsugu Ochi
Darrel Scott
Chungwoo Suh
Mary Tokar
Wei-Guo Zhang
Amendments to
IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment

Paragraph 56 is amended and paragraphs 62A and 81I are added. Paragraphs 60–62 are not amended but are included here for ease of reference. New text is underlined.

Depreciable amount and depreciation period

56 The future economic benefits embodied in an asset are consumed by an entity principally through its use. However, other factors, such as technical or commercial obsolescence and wear and tear while an asset remains idle, often result in the diminution of the economic benefits that might have been obtained from the asset. Consequently, all the following factors are considered in determining the useful life of an asset:

(a) ...

(c) technical or commercial obsolescence arising from changes or improvements in production, or from a change in the market demand for the product or service output of the asset. Expected future reductions in the selling price of an item that was produced using an asset could indicate the expectation of technical or commercial obsolescence of the asset, which, in turn, might reflect a reduction of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset.

Depreciation method

60 The depreciation method used shall reflect the pattern in which the asset’s future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the entity.

61 The depreciation method applied to an asset shall be reviewed at least at each financial year-end and, if there has been a significant change in the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset, the method shall be changed to reflect the changed pattern. Such a change shall be accounted for as a change in an accounting estimate in accordance with IAS 8.

62 A variety of depreciation methods can be used to allocate the depreciable amount of an asset on a systematic basis over its useful life. These methods include the straight-line method, the diminishing balance method and the units of production method. Straight-line depreciation results in a constant charge over the useful life if the asset’s residual value does not change. The diminishing balance method results in a decreasing charge over the useful life. The units of production method results in a charge based on the expected use or output. The entity selects the method that most closely reflects the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset.
That method is applied consistently from period to period unless there is a change in the expected pattern of consumption of those future economic benefits.

62A  A depreciation method that is based on revenue that is generated by an activity that includes the use of an asset is not appropriate. The revenue generated by an activity that includes the use of an asset generally reflects factors other than the consumption of the economic benefits of the asset. For example, revenue is affected by other inputs and processes, selling activities and changes in sales volumes and prices. The price component of revenue may be affected by inflation, which has no bearing upon the way in which an asset is consumed.

Effective date

81I  Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (Amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38), issued in May 2014, amended paragraph 56 and added paragraph 62A. An entity shall apply those amendments prospectively for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2016. Earlier application is permitted. If an entity applies those amendments for an earlier period it shall disclose that fact.
Amendments to the Basis for Conclusions on IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment

Paragraphs BC33A–BC33G and their related heading are added. New text is underlined.

**Depreciation: depreciation method**

**BC33A** The IASB decided to amend IAS 16 to address the concerns regarding the use of a revenue-based method for depreciating an asset. The IASB’s decision was in response to a request to clarify the meaning of the term ‘consumption of the expected future economic benefits embodied in the asset’ when determining the appropriate amortisation method for intangible assets of service concession arrangements (SCA) that are within the scope of IFRIC 12 Service Concession Arrangements. The issue raised is related to the application of paragraphs 97–98 of IAS 38 Intangible Assets although the IASB decided to address the issue broadly, rather than limit it only to intangible assets arising in an SCA.

**BC33B** The IASB observed that a revenue-based depreciation method is one that allocates an asset’s depreciable amount based on revenues generated in an accounting period as a proportion of the total revenues expected to be generated over the asset’s useful economic life. The total revenue amount is affected by the interaction between units (ie quantity) and price and takes into account any expected changes in price.

**BC33C** The IASB observed that paragraph 60 of IAS 16 states that the depreciation method used shall reflect the pattern in which the asset’s future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the entity. The IASB noted that even though revenue could sometimes be considered to be a measurement of the output generated by the asset, revenue does not, as a matter of principle, reflect the way in which an item of property, plant and equipment is used or consumed. The IASB observed that the price component of revenue may be affected by inflation and noted that inflation has no bearing upon the way in which an asset is consumed.

**BC33D** On the basis of the guidance in IAS 16, the IASB proposed to clarify in the Exposure Draft Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (Proposed amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38) (the ‘ED’) that a method of depreciation that is based on revenue generated from an activity that includes the use of an asset is not appropriate, because it reflects a pattern of economic benefits being generated from operating the business (of which the asset is part) rather than the economic benefits being consumed through the use of the asset.

**BC33E** During its redeliberations of the ED the IASB decided to reaffirm its conclusion that the use of a revenue-based method is not appropriate, because the principle in paragraph 60 of IAS 16 is that the “depreciation method shall reflect the pattern in which the asset’s future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the entity”. A method that is based on revenue generated from an activity that includes the use of an asset would be, in contrast, a method based
on the generation of future economic benefits from the use of the asset. As a result of the feedback received on the ED, the IASB also decided not to retain the comments that it had included in the Basis for Conclusions on the ED on the limited circumstances in which a revenue-based method gives the same result as a units of production method. Many respondents to the ED found these comments contradictory to the guidance proposed in the Standard.

In the ED the IASB proposed to provide guidance to clarify the role of obsolescence in the application of the diminishing balance method. In response to the comments received about the proposed guidance the IASB decided to change the focus of this guidance. The IASB decided to explain that expected future reductions in the selling price of an item could indicate the expectation of technical or commercial obsolescence of the asset, which, in turn, might reflect a reduction of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset. The IASB noted that the expectation of technical or commercial obsolescence is relevant for estimating both the pattern of consumption of future economic benefits and the useful life of an asset. The IASB noted that the diminishing balance method is an accepted depreciation methodology in paragraph 62 of IAS 16, which is capable of reflecting an accelerated consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset.

Some respondents to the ED suggested that the IASB should define the notion of ‘consumption of economic benefits’ and provide guidance in this respect. During its redeliberations the IASB decided against doing so, noting that explaining the notion of consumption of economic benefits would require a broader project.
Amendments to IAS 38 Intangible Assets

Paragraph 92 is amended. In paragraph 98, the phrase ‘unit of production method’ has been amended to ‘units of production method’. Paragraphs 98A–98C and 130J are added. Paragraph 97 is not amended but is included here for ease of reference. Deleted text is struck through and new text is underlined.

Useful life

92 Given the history of rapid changes in technology, computer software and many other intangible assets are susceptible to technological obsolescence. Therefore, it is likely will often be the case that their useful life is short. Expected future reductions in the selling price of an item that was produced using an intangible asset could indicate the expectation of technological or commercial obsolescence of the asset, which, in turn, might reflect a reduction of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset.

Amortisation period and amortisation method

97 The depreciable amount of an intangible asset with a finite useful life shall be allocated on a systematic basis over its useful life. Amortisation shall begin when the asset is available for use, ie when it is in the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management. Amortisation shall cease at the earlier of the date that the asset is classified as held for sale (or included in a disposal group that is classified as held for sale) in accordance with IFRS 5 and the date that the asset is derecognised. The amortisation method used shall reflect the pattern in which the asset’s future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the entity. If that pattern cannot be determined reliably, the straight-line method shall be used. The amortisation charge for each period shall be recognised in profit or loss unless this or another Standard permits or requires it to be included in the carrying amount of another asset.

98 A variety of amortisation methods can be used to allocate the depreciable amount of an asset on a systematic basis over its useful life. These methods include the straight-line method, the diminishing balance method and the units of production method. The method used is selected on the basis of the expected pattern of consumption of the expected future economic benefits embodied in the asset and is applied consistently from period to period, unless there is a change in the expected pattern of consumption of those future economic benefits.

98A There is a rebuttable presumption that an amortisation method that is based on the revenue generated by an activity that includes the use of an intangible asset is inappropriate. The revenue generated by an activity that includes the use of
an intangible asset typically reflects factors that are not directly linked to the consumption of the economic benefits embodied in the intangible asset. For example, revenue is affected by other inputs and processes, selling activities and changes in sales volumes and prices. The price component of revenue may be affected by inflation, which has no bearing upon the way in which an asset is consumed. This presumption can be overcome only in the limited circumstances:

(a) in which the intangible asset is expressed as a measure of revenue, as described in paragraph 98C; or

(b) when it can be demonstrated that revenue and the consumption of the economic benefits of the intangible asset are highly correlated.

98B In choosing an appropriate amortisation method in accordance with paragraph 98, an entity could determine the predominant limiting factor that is inherent in the intangible asset. For example, the contract that sets out the entity’s rights over its use of an intangible asset might specify the entity’s use of the intangible asset as a predetermined number of years (ie time), as a number of units produced or as a fixed total amount of revenue to be generated. Identification of such a predominant limiting factor could serve as the starting point for the identification of the appropriate basis of amortisation, but another basis may be applied if it more closely reflects the expected pattern of consumption of economic benefits.

98C In the circumstance in which the predominant limiting factor that is inherent in an intangible asset is the achievement of a revenue threshold, the revenue to be generated can be an appropriate basis for amortisation. For example, an entity could acquire a concession to explore and extract gold from a gold mine. The expiry of the contract might be based on a fixed amount of total revenue to be generated from the extraction (for example, a contract may allow the extraction of gold from the mine until total cumulative revenue from the sale of gold reaches CU2 billion) and not be based on time or on the amount of gold extracted. In another example, the right to operate a toll road could be based on a fixed total amount of revenue to be generated from cumulative tolls charged (for example, a contract could allow operation of the toll road until the cumulative amount of tolls generated from operating the road reaches CU100 million). In the case in which revenue has been established as the predominant limiting factor in the contract for the use of the intangible asset, the revenue that is to be generated might be an appropriate basis for amortising the intangible asset, provided that the contract specifies a fixed total amount of revenue to be generated on which amortisation is to be determined.

Transitional provisions and effective date

...
prospectively for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2016. Earlier application is permitted. If an entity applies those amendments for an earlier period it shall disclose that fact.
Amendments to the Basis for Conclusions on IAS 38 Intangible Assets

In paragraph BC72A the phrase ‘unit of production method’ has been amended to ‘units of production method’. New text is underlined.

Intangible assets with finite useful lives (paragraph 98)\textsuperscript{13}

BC72A The last sentence of paragraph 98 previously stated, ‘There is rarely, if ever, persuasive evidence to support an amortisation method for intangible assets with finite useful lives that results in a lower amount of accumulated amortisation than under the straight-line method.’ In practice, this wording was perceived as preventing an entity from using the units of production method to amortise assets if it resulted in a lower amount of accumulated amortisation than the straight-line method. However, using the straight-line method could be inconsistent with the general requirement of paragraph 38 that the amortisation method should reflect the expected pattern of consumption of the expected future economic benefits embodied in an intangible asset. Consequently, the Board decided to delete the last sentence of paragraph 98.

Paragraphs BC72B–BC72M and their related headings are added. New text is underlined.

Amortisation method (paragraphs 97–98C)

BC72B The IASB decided to amend IAS 38 to address concerns regarding the use of a revenue-based method for amortising an intangible asset. The IASB’s decision was in response to a request to clarify the meaning of the term ‘consumption of the expected future economic benefits embodied in the asset’ when determining the appropriate amortisation method for intangible assets of service concession arrangements (SCA) that are within the scope of IFRIC 12 Service Concession Arrangements. The issue raised is related to the application of paragraphs 97–98 of IAS 38, although the IASB decided to address the issue broadly, rather than limit it only to intangible assets arising in an SCA.

BC72C A revenue-based amortisation method is one that allocates an asset’s amortisable amount based on revenues generated in an accounting period as a proportion of the total revenues expected to be generated over the asset’s useful economic life. The total revenue amount is affected by the interaction between units (ie quantity) and price and takes into account any expected changes in price. The IASB observed that the price component of revenue may be affected by inflation and noted that inflation has no bearing upon the way in which the asset is consumed.

BC72D The IASB observed that paragraph 97 of IAS 38 states that the amortisation method used shall reflect the pattern in which the intangible asset’s future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the entity.

BC72E On the basis of the guidance in IAS 38 the IASB proposed to clarify in the Exposure Draft Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (Proposed amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38) (the ‘ED’) that a method of
amortisation that is based on revenue generated from an activity that includes the use of an asset is not appropriate, because it reflects a pattern of economic benefits being generated from operating the business (of which the asset is part) rather than the economic benefits being consumed through the use of the asset.

BC72F During its redeliberations of the ED the IASB decided to include a rebuttable presumption that revenue is generally presumed to be an inappropriate basis for measuring the consumption of the economic benefits embodied in the intangible asset. The IASB also considered the question of whether there could be circumstances in which revenue could be used to reflect the pattern in which the future economic benefits of the intangible asset are expected to be consumed.

BC72G In finalising the proposed amendments to IAS 38, the IASB decided to make clear in the Standard that the presumption precluding the use of revenue as a basis for amortisation could be overcome in two circumstances. One of those circumstances is when it can be demonstrated that revenue is highly correlated with the consumption of the economic benefits embodied in an intangible asset. The IASB also noted that another circumstance in which revenue could be used is when the right embodied by an intangible asset is expressed as a total amount of revenue to be generated (rather than time, for example), in such a way that the generation of revenue is the measurement used to determine when the right expires. The IASB noted that, in this case, the pattern of consumption of future economic benefits that is embodied in the intangible asset is defined by reference to the total revenue earned as a proportion of the contractual maximum and, consequently, the amount of revenue generated contractually reflects the consumption of the benefits that are embodied in the asset.

BC72H The IASB also analysed situations in which an intangible asset is used in multiple activities to provide multiple revenue streams. Some respondents commented that the application of a units of production method did not seem practicable, because the units of production were not homogeneous. For example, the producer of a motion picture will typically use the intellectual property embodied in the film to generate cash flows through exhibiting the film in theatres, licensing the rights to characters to manufacturers of toys and other goods, selling DVDs or digital copies of the film and licensing broadcast rights to television broadcasters. Some respondents thought that the best way to amortise the cost of the intellectual property embodied in the film was to use a revenue-based method, because revenue was considered a common denominator to reflect a suitable proxy of the pattern of consumption of all the benefits received from the multiple activities in which the intellectual property could be used.

BC72I The IASB acknowledged that determining an appropriate amortisation method for situations in which an intangible asset is used in multiple activities, and generates multiple cash flow streams in different markets, requires judgement. The IASB considered suggestions that an intangible asset should be componentised for amortisation purposes in circumstances in which the asset is used to generate multiple cash flow streams. It observed that separating an asset into different components is not a new practice in business or in IFRS—it is
routinely done for property, plant and equipment and IAS 16 provides guidance in this respect—but refrained from developing guidance in this respect for intangible assets.

The IASB also decided to provide guidance on how an entity could identify an amortisation method in response to some respondents who observed that further guidance was required in the application of paragraph 98 of IAS 38, which is limited to providing a description of the amortisation methods most commonly used. During its deliberations the IASB determined that, when choosing an amortisation method, an entity could determine the predominant limiting factor for the use of the intangible asset. For example, a contract could be limited by a number of years (ie time), a number of units produced or an amount of revenue to be generated. The IASB clarified that identifying such a predominant limiting factor is only a starting point for the identification of the amortisation method and an entity may apply another basis if the entity determines that it more closely reflects the expected pattern of consumption of economic benefits.

In the ED the IASB proposed to provide guidance to clarify the role of obsolescence in the application of the diminishing balance method. In response to the comments received about the proposed guidance, the IASB decided to change the focus of this guidance to explain that expected future reductions in the selling price of an item that was produced using an intangible asset could indicate the expectation of technological or commercial obsolescence of the asset, which, in turn, might reflect a reduction of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset. The IASB noted that the expectation of technical or commercial obsolescence is relevant for estimating both the pattern of consumption of future economic benefits and the useful life of an asset. The IASB noted that the diminishing balance method is an accepted amortisation methodology in paragraph 98 of IAS 38, which is capable of reflecting an accelerated consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset.

Some respondents to the ED suggested that the IASB should define the notion of ‘consumption of economic benefits’ and provide guidance in this respect. During its redeliberations the IASB decided against doing so, noting that explaining the notion of consumption of economic benefits would require a broader project.

Consistency in the use of the phrase ‘units of production’

The IASB decided to make consistent the phrase ‘units of production method’ and has therefore amended the instances of the phrase ‘unit of production method’.
In paragraph BC64, the phrase ‘unit of production method’ has been amended to ‘units of production method’. New text is underlined.

Intangible asset (paragraph 26)

... 

BC64 The IFRIC considered whether it would be appropriate for intangible assets under paragraph 26 to be amortised using an ‘interest’ method of amortisation, i.e. one that takes account of the time value of money in addition to the consumption of the intangible asset, treating the asset more like a monetary than a non-monetary asset. However, the IFRIC concluded that there was nothing unique about these intangible assets that would justify use of a method of depreciation different from that used for other intangible assets. The IFRIC noted that paragraph 98 of IAS 38 provides for a number of amortisation methods for intangible assets with finite useful lives. These methods include the straight-line method, the diminishing balance method and the units of production method. The method used is selected on the basis of the expected pattern of consumption of the expected future economic benefits embodied in the asset and is applied consistently from period to period, unless there is a change in the expected pattern of consumption of those future economic benefits.
Dissenting opinion

Dissent of Mary Tokar from Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (Amendments to IAS 16 and IAS 38) as issued in May 2014

Ms Tokar is dissenting from the publication of this amendment. She does not object to the IASB’s objective of clarifying acceptable methods of depreciation and amortisation, nor to its conclusions to preclude revenue-based depreciation and nor to the introduction of a rebuttable presumption that revenue cannot be used as a basis for amortisation of intangibles. She also agrees that expectations of obsolescence should be considered when determining the useful life of an asset and selecting an amortisation or depreciation method that reflects the pattern of consumption of the asset. However, she is concerned that the amendments will not fully resolve the practice issue that was originally raised with the IFRS Interpretations Committee. She believes that the amendments are not sufficiently clear regarding what evidence is required to overcome the presumption and instead support the use of revenue as the basis for amortisation of an intangible asset. She believes that further guidance should be included to explain when the pattern of consumption of economic benefits is the same as the pattern in which revenue is generated.