

International Financial Reporting Standard 6

Exploration for and Evaluation of Mineral Resources

In December 2004 the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) issued IFRS 6 *Exploration for and Evaluation of Mineral Resources*.

Other IFRSs have made minor consequential amendments to IFRS 6. They include IFRS 8 *Operating Segments* (issued November 2006), IFRS 1 *First-time Adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards* (as revised in November 2008) and *Improvements to IFRSs* (issued April 2009).

IFRS 6

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APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF IFRS 6 ISSUED IN DECEMBER 2004

APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF AMENDMENTS TO IFRS 1 AND IFRS 6
ISSUED IN JUNE 2005

BASIS FOR CONCLUSIONS

DISSENTING OPINIONS

International Financial Reporting Standard 6 *Exploration for and Evaluation of Mineral Resources* (IFRS 6) is set out in paragraphs 1–27 and Appendices A and B. All the paragraphs have equal authority. Paragraphs in **bold type** state the main principles. Terms defined in Appendix A are in *italics* the first time they appear in the Standard. Definitions of other terms are given in the Glossary for International Financial Reporting Standards. IFRS 6 should be read in the context of its objective and the Basis for Conclusions, the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Standards* and the *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting*. 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

Reasons for issuing the IFRS

- IN1 The International Accounting Standards Board decided to develop an International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) on exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources because:
- (a) until now there has been no IFRS that specifically addresses the accounting for those activities and they are excluded from the scope of IAS 38 *Intangible Assets*. In addition, ‘mineral rights and mineral resources such as oil, natural gas and similar non-regenerative resources’ are excluded from the scope of IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment*. Consequently, an entity was required to determine its accounting policy for the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources in accordance with paragraphs 10–12 of IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*.
 - (b) there are different views on how exploration and evaluation expenditures should be accounted for in accordance with IFRSs.
 - (c) accounting practices for exploration and evaluation assets under the requirements of other standard-setting bodies are diverse and often differ from practices in other sectors for expenditures that may be considered analogous (eg accounting practices for research and development costs in accordance with IAS 38).
 - (d) exploration and evaluation expenditures are significant to entities engaged in extractive activities.
 - (e) an increasing number of entities incurring exploration and evaluation expenditures present their financial statements in accordance with IFRSs, and many more are expected to do so from 2005.
- IN2 The Board’s predecessor organisation, the International Accounting Standards Committee, established a Steering Committee in 1998 to carry out initial work on accounting and financial reporting by entities engaged in extractive activities. In November 2000 the Steering Committee published an Issues Paper *Extractive Industries*.
- IN3 In July 2001 the Board announced that it would restart the project only when agenda time permitted. Although the Board recognised the importance of accounting for extractive activities generally, it decided in September 2002 that it was not feasible to complete the detailed analysis required for this project, obtain appropriate input from constituents and undertake the Board’s normal due process in time to implement changes before many entities adopted IFRSs in 2005.
- IN4 The Board’s objectives for this phase of its extractive activities project are:

- (a) to make limited improvements to accounting practices for exploration and evaluation expenditures, without requiring major changes that might be reversed when the Board undertakes a comprehensive review of accounting practices used by entities engaged in the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.
- (b) to specify the circumstances in which entities that recognise exploration and evaluation assets should test such assets for impairment in accordance with IAS 36 *Impairment of Assets*.
- (c) to require entities engaged in the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources to disclose information about exploration and evaluation assets, the level at which such assets are assessed for impairment and any impairment losses recognised.

Main features of the IFRS

IN5 The IFRS:

- (a) permits an entity to develop an accounting policy for exploration and evaluation assets without specifically considering the requirements of paragraphs 11 and 12 of IAS 8. Thus, an entity adopting IFRS 6 may continue to use the accounting policies applied immediately before adopting the IFRS. This includes continuing to use recognition and measurement practices that are part of those accounting policies.
- (b) requires entities recognising exploration and evaluation assets to perform an impairment test on those assets when facts and circumstances suggest that the carrying amount of the assets may exceed their recoverable amount.
- (c) varies the recognition of impairment from that in IAS 36 but measures the impairment in accordance with that Standard once the impairment is identified.

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Objective

- 1 The objective of this IFRS is to specify the financial reporting for the *exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources*.
- 2 In particular, the IFRS requires:
 - (a) limited improvements to existing accounting practices for *exploration and evaluation expenditures*.
 - (b) entities that recognise *exploration and evaluation assets* to assess such assets for impairment in accordance with this IFRS and measure any impairment in accordance with IAS 36 *Impairment of Assets*.
 - (c) disclosures that identify and explain the amounts in the entity's financial statements arising from the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources and help users of those financial statements understand the amount, timing and certainty of future cash flows from any exploration and evaluation assets recognised.

Scope

- 3 An entity shall apply the IFRS to exploration and evaluation expenditures that it incurs.
- 4 The IFRS does not address other aspects of accounting by entities engaged in the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.
- 5 An entity shall not apply the IFRS to expenditures incurred:
 - (a) before the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources, such as expenditures incurred before the entity has obtained the legal rights to explore a specific area.
 - (b) after the technical feasibility and commercial viability of extracting a mineral resource are demonstrable.

Recognition of exploration and evaluation assets

Temporary exemption from IAS 8 paragraphs 11 and 12

- 6 When developing its accounting policies, an entity recognising exploration and evaluation assets shall apply paragraph 10 of IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*.
- 7 Paragraphs 11 and 12 of IAS 8 specify sources of authoritative requirements and guidance that management is required to consider in developing an accounting policy for an item if no IFRS applies specifically to that item. Subject to

paragraphs 9 and 10 below, this IFRS exempts an entity from applying those paragraphs to its accounting policies for the recognition and measurement of exploration and evaluation assets.

Measurement of exploration and evaluation assets

Measurement at recognition

- 8 Exploration and evaluation assets shall be measured at cost.**

Elements of cost of exploration and evaluation assets

- 9** An entity shall determine an accounting policy specifying which expenditures are recognised as exploration and evaluation assets and apply the policy consistently. In making this determination, an entity considers the degree to which the expenditure can be associated with finding specific mineral resources. The following are examples of expenditures that might be included in the initial measurement of exploration and evaluation assets (the list is not exhaustive):

- (a) acquisition of rights to explore;
- (b) topographical, geological, geochemical and geophysical studies;
- (c) exploratory drilling;
- (d) trenching;
- (e) sampling; and
- (f) activities in relation to evaluating the technical feasibility and commercial viability of extracting a mineral resource.

- 10** Expenditures related to the development of mineral resources shall not be recognised as exploration and evaluation assets. The *Framework*¹ and IAS 38 *Intangible Assets* provide guidance on the recognition of assets arising from development.

- 11** In accordance with IAS 37 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets* an entity recognises any obligations for removal and restoration that are incurred during a particular period as a consequence of having undertaken the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.

Measurement after recognition

- 12** After recognition, an entity shall apply either the cost model or the revaluation model to the exploration and evaluation assets. If the revaluation model is applied (either the model in IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment* or the model in IAS 38) it shall be consistent with the classification of the assets (see paragraph 15).

¹ The reference to the *Framework* is to IASC's *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements*, adopted by the IASB in 2001. In September 2010 the IASB replaced the *Framework* with the *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting*.

Changes in accounting policies

- 13 **An entity may change its accounting policies for exploration and evaluation expenditures if the change makes the financial statements more relevant to the economic decision-making needs of users and no less reliable, or more reliable and no less relevant to those needs. An entity shall judge relevance and reliability using the criteria in IAS 8.**
- 14 To justify changing its accounting policies for exploration and evaluation expenditures, an entity shall demonstrate that the change brings its financial statements closer to meeting the criteria in IAS 8, but the change need not achieve full compliance with those criteria.

Presentation

Classification of exploration and evaluation assets

- 15 An entity shall classify exploration and evaluation assets as tangible or intangible according to the nature of the assets acquired and apply the classification consistently.
- 16 Some exploration and evaluation assets are treated as intangible (eg drilling rights), whereas others are tangible (eg vehicles and drilling rigs). To the extent that a tangible asset is consumed in developing an intangible asset, the amount reflecting that consumption is part of the cost of the intangible asset. However, using a tangible asset to develop an intangible asset does not change a tangible asset into an intangible asset.

Reclassification of exploration and evaluation assets

- 17 An exploration and evaluation asset shall no longer be classified as such when the technical feasibility and commercial viability of extracting a mineral resource are demonstrable. Exploration and evaluation assets shall be assessed for impairment, and any impairment loss recognised, before reclassification.

Impairment

Recognition and measurement

- 18 **Exploration and evaluation assets shall be assessed for impairment when facts and circumstances suggest that the carrying amount of an exploration and evaluation asset may exceed its recoverable amount. When facts and circumstances suggest that the carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount, an entity shall measure, present and disclose any resulting impairment loss in accordance with IAS 36, except as provided by paragraph 21 below.**
- 19 For the purposes of exploration and evaluation assets only, paragraph 20 of this IFRS shall be applied rather than paragraphs 8–17 of IAS 36 when identifying an exploration and evaluation asset that may be impaired. Paragraph 20 uses the term ‘assets’ but applies equally to separate exploration and evaluation assets or a cash-generating unit.

20 One or more of the following facts and circumstances indicate that an entity should test exploration and evaluation assets for impairment (the list is not exhaustive):

- (a) the period for which the entity has the right to explore in the specific area has expired during the period or will expire in the near future, and is not expected to be renewed.
- (b) substantive expenditure on further exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources in the specific area is neither budgeted nor planned.
- (c) exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources in the specific area have not led to the discovery of commercially viable quantities of mineral resources and the entity has decided to discontinue such activities in the specific area.
- (d) sufficient data exist to indicate that, although a development in the specific area is likely to proceed, the carrying amount of the exploration and evaluation asset is unlikely to be recovered in full from successful development or by sale.

In any such case, or similar cases, the entity shall perform an impairment test in accordance with IAS 36. Any impairment loss is recognised as an expense in accordance with IAS 36.

Specifying the level at which exploration and evaluation assets are assessed for impairment

21 **An entity shall determine an accounting policy for allocating exploration and evaluation assets to cash-generating units or groups of cash-generating units for the purpose of assessing such assets for impairment. Each cash-generating unit or group of units to which an exploration and evaluation asset is allocated shall not be larger than an operating segment determined in accordance with IFRS 8 Operating Segments.**

22 The level identified by the entity for the purposes of testing exploration and evaluation assets for impairment may comprise one or more cash-generating units.

Disclosure

23 **An entity shall disclose information that identifies and explains the amounts recognised in its financial statements arising from the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.**

24 To comply with paragraph 23, an entity shall disclose:

- (a) its accounting policies for exploration and evaluation expenditures including the recognition of exploration and evaluation assets.
- (b) the amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expense and operating and investing cash flows arising from the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources.

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- 25 An entity shall treat exploration and evaluation assets as a separate class of assets and make the disclosures required by either IAS 16 or IAS 38 consistent with how the assets are classified.

Effective date

- 26 An entity shall apply this IFRS for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2006. Earlier application is encouraged. If an entity applies the IFRS for a period beginning before 1 January 2006, it shall disclose that fact.

Transitional provisions

- 27 If it is impracticable to apply a particular requirement of paragraph 18 to comparative information that relates to annual periods beginning before 1 January 2006, an entity shall disclose that fact. IAS 8 explains the term 'impracticable'.

Appendix A

Defined terms

This appendix is an integral part of the IFRS.

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| exploration and evaluation assets | Exploration and evaluation expenditures recognised as assets in accordance with the entity's accounting policy. |
| exploration and evaluation expenditures | Expenditures incurred by an entity in connection with the exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources before the technical feasibility and commercial viability of extracting a mineral resource are demonstrable. |
| exploration for and evaluation of mineral resources | The search for mineral resources, including minerals, oil, natural gas and similar non-regenerative resources after the entity has obtained legal rights to explore in a specific area, as well as the determination of the technical feasibility and commercial viability of extracting the mineral resource. |

Appendix B

Amendments to other IFRSs

The amendments in this appendix shall be applied for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2006. If an entity applies this IFRS for an earlier period, these amendments shall be applied for that earlier period.

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The amendments contained in this appendix when this IFRS was issued in 2004 have been incorporated into the relevant IFRSs published in this volume.