



**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF ACCOUNTANTS**

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Agenda Item

4

DATE: April 29, 2009
MEMO TO: IPSASB
FROM: Paul Sutcliffe
SUBJECT: Review of the Cash Basis IPSAS

OBJECTIVE OF THIS SESSION

To receive a progress report on the activities of the Task Force for the Review of International Public Sector Accounting Standard, “Financial Reporting Under The Cash Basis of Accounting” (the Cash Basis IPSAS).

AGENDA MATERIAL

Agenda Papers

- 4.1 Report on Task Force meeting - February 2009
- 4.2 Invitation to Participate in the review – English version
- 4.3 Project Questionnaire – English version

ACTION REQUIRED

Members are requested to note this report on the activities of the Task Force for the Review of the Cash Basis IPSAS and provide input as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

At its last meeting in February 2009, the IPSASB noted that:

- The Project Brief for the review of the Cash Basis IPSAS had been updated since its initial approval in November 2007 to reflect the passage of time and a number of decisions made by the IPSASB which directly impacted the project. Members reviewed and approved the updated Project Brief; and
- The Task Force to lead the data collection and analysis stages of the project had been established. Members discussed and approved the approach proposed by the Task Force and provided input on jurisdictions, organizations and individuals that were likely to be within the project “population” base.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

Task Force meeting #1

The Task Force held its first meeting following the IPSASB meeting in February 2009.

In addition to Task Force members and staff, representatives of CIPFA, INTOSAI, IMF, World Bank, Indian GASAB and South African Treasury attended the meeting as observers and participated fully in discussions. The observers noted their support for the review and offered their assistance to distribute project questionnaires and related

material through their contact networks and, where possible, to facilitate follow-up discussions.

Task Force members and other participants at the meeting discussed and provided input on a range of relevant issues including:

- The development of the brief project questionnaire and supporting explanatory material that represents the first stage of the Task Force data gathering process;
- The development of the second stage of the project – the “follow-up” discussions with relevant government officials and other parties on an individual basis, or in “round-table” forums in a number of regions. Input was provided on (a) likely opportunities and locations for undertaking roundtable discussions in the second half of 2009, (b) interview/discussion structure, (c) a checklist of issues on which input is to be sought, and (d) the form and content of documentation that is to be prepared to support those who will undertake the interviews/round table discussions; and
- Whether the Cash Basis IPSAS should require disclosure of particular information about financial instruments – Task Force members and other participants expressed concern that inclusion of such requirements would present an additional impediment to adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS.

A more detailed record of the Task Force meeting is attached at Agenda item 4.1.

Project Questionnaire and Project Development

The questionnaire and related material to support the first stage of the project has been prepared and approved by the Task Force. The “Invitation to Participate” in the review and project “Questionnaire” are attached as agenda items 4.2 and 4.3. They have been translated into French and Spanish (please advise staff if you wish to receive copies), and staff understand a translation into Russian is in progress. The text of an introductory letter/email that may be used to support distribution of the questionnaire by Task Force members has also been prepared and translated into French and Spanish.

A media release has been prepared and is being finalized and translated into French and Spanish. Once finalized it will be issued and posted on the IPSASB webpage together with a link to the questionnaire and related material – it is anticipated this will have occurred by May 1.

At the last IPSASB meeting in Paris, members reviewed and provided input on potential recipients of the questionnaire. Task Force members have also provided additional input on potential recipients. The list of potential recipients has been updated as directed by IPSASB and Task Force members. The invitation to participate and the questionnaire are being forwarded to those on the revised list. In some cases, Task Force Members and other participants at the February 2009 Task Force meeting will distribute the material to additional recipients directly through their contact networks – those that do this have been requested to provide staff with information about their distribution activities so that a central list of recipients can be compiled and duplication avoided (or minimized). Staff will provide an update on distribution activities at the forthcoming IPSASB meeting.

Since the Task Force meeting in February, members and staff have met with or otherwise contacted relevant organizations in (or with contacts in) developing economies in Africa, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East, Latin America and South and East Asia to lay the foundation for distribution of the initial questionnaire and the follow-up discussions.

Potential round table opportunities are also currently being actively pursued by a number of Task Force members. It is anticipated that follow-up discussions will occur over the period June – September 2009. Results will then be compiled and a report prepared for IPSASB review in early 2010.

Staff would welcome any additional input from members on project development – in particular, assistance on distribution of the questionnaire and/or identification of opportunities for follow-up round table or other discussions with relevant parties in the second half of 2009 would be most welcome.

Task Force Membership

Please note that Mr. Hong-Sang Jung, the ADB controller and ADB observer on the IPSASB, will represent the ADB on the Task Force. However, given the stage of development of the project, Kathleen Moktan is still identified as the ADB Task Force Member in materials relating to the Project Questionnaire. The Task Force membership list will be updated following distribution of the questionnaire.

TASK FORCE ON REVIEW OF THE CASH BASIS IPSAS
MEETING NOTES – Meeting #1: Paris, 27 February 2009

Attendance

Task Force Members	In Attendance
Erna Swart - (Chair)	Yes
Andreas Bergmann	Yes
Simon Bradbury	Yes
Sara Fyson	Yes
Kathleen Moktan	Apology
Irene Lombe Ng'andwe	Apology
Ron Points	Apology
Ronaldo J. Rotter	Yes, by Conference call
<i>Staff</i>	
Paul Sutcliffe	Yes

The following guests joined Task Force members after the first (closed) session for discussion of agenda items:

Roberto Tarallo - World Bank, Regional Financial Manager-Latin America and the Caribbean

Lindy Bodewig - Director: Accounting Services, Office of the Accountant General, National Treasury, South Africa

Abdul Khan – Fiscal Affairs Division, IMF

Bob Dacey - INTOSAI

Rakesh Jain – Director-General, Government Accounting Standards Board of India

Harry Wilkinson – Consultant for Review of IPSASB

Gordon Ferrier - Deputy International Director - CIPFA (afternoon)

John Stanford IPSASB Deputy Technical Director (afternoon)

1. Opening Remarks, Project Objectives and Process – Closed Session

The Task Force Chair welcomed all Task Force members and thanked Sara Fyson and Claire Condon for arranging the meeting facilities. Members introduced themselves and noted their particular interest in the project and the areas in which they could support project development.

The Chair noted that Ron Points was an additional apology for this meeting, but had provided comments on each of the agenda items. Those comments were tabled and noted by participants.

Members agreed the agenda and objectives for this meeting as outlined in meeting papers, and noted that whether a second physical meeting of the Task Force would be held would be determined in the future on an “as needed” basis.

Members received a report on the IPSASB discussion of the project at its recent meeting (23-26 February, 2009), noting that the IPSASB had confirmed:

- The project objectives and focus as identified in the Project Brief – that is, to identify:

- Major technical issues that public sector entities in developing economies have encountered, or may be anticipated to encounter, in implementing the Cash Basis IPSAS, and to determine whether the IPSAS should be modified in light of these difficulties or further guidance provided by the IPSASB;
- Whether additional reporting requirements should be added to the IPSAS; and
- Whether any encouraged disclosures in Part 2 of the IPSAS should be included as mandatory requirements in Part 1 of the IPSAS;
- The project is not intended to be a survey of accounting practices in different jurisdictions, though any such input should be acknowledged and recorded;
- The role of the Task Force is to lead the data collection and analysis stages of the project and report to the IPSASB;
- The approach and timetable proposed by the Task Force is appropriate - but may be subject to change based on project development experience; and
- It is appropriate that the “population” the Task Force engages with include not only jurisdictions which have adopted or intend to adopt the Cash Basis IPSAS, but also other jurisdictions and relevant PFM experts and others who have familiarity with the Cash Basis IPSAS and can provide input to the project.

The Task Force noted the objectives and focus of the project as identified in the Project Brief. It was agreed that input to the project provided by OECD member countries classified as developed economies would also inform the Task Force’s deliberations.

Members also agreed the voting processes as identified in the meeting papers and that, in the absence of any particular reasons for confidentiality (which would be assessed on an item by item basis):

- Task Force Agenda papers may be distributed to interested parties;
- Interested parties would be welcome to attend and participate in Task Force meetings, but guests may need to be limited to one person from each organization;
- Meeting notes would be brief – recording only major decisions/issues rather than background discussion.

2. Opening Remarks, Project Objectives and Process – Guests

Following the initial session, guests joined the Task Force at various times during the remainder of the meeting and participated fully in discussion. On arrival, each guest introduced themselves and outlined their interest in, and expectations for, the project. Guests noted their preparedness to support the project, including assistance in distribution of the brief project questionnaire and facilitation of follow-up interviews/discussion.

3. Cash Basis IPSAS adopters and others whose views should be sought

It was noted that while many countries may adopt a form of cash (or near cash) basis for financial reporting, few jurisdictions are likely to be fully compliant with the Cash Basis IPSAS. Consequently, distribution of the project questionnaire should encompass a broad range of developing economies that adopted a cash or near cash basis of accounting – and not be limited to only those jurisdictions which had adopted or expressed an intention to adopt the Cash Basis IPSAS.

Members and guests reviewed the list of jurisdictions of cash basis adopters drawn from recent surveys undertaken by the IPSASB and the IFAC compliance group, the survey of practices of OECD member countries prepared for the OECD/IPSASB accrual symposium, a survey of financial reporting practices of the 10 ESAAG countries, and World Bank Reports on Public Sector Gap Analysis. Revisions to the list were identified and the need to strengthen coverage in the Middle East and Northern Africa was noted. Additional sources of input were also identified, including results of an additional OECD survey and potential input from the 6 World Bank Regional FM Managers. Members and guests agreed to forward to staff contact details for additional jurisdictions and individuals that should be included within the project population.

Members and guests noted that they would explore opportunities to support distribution of the project questionnaire through their own networks, whether formally or informally. It was also noted that INTOSAI was about to undertake a survey of accounting practices in its member countries and it may be possible to distribute the project questionnaire to recipients of the survey as needed to strengthen coverage across all regions.

4. Implementation Issues

It was agreed that the data gathering work of the Task Force should be directed at providing a clearer picture of the reasons for not adopting the Cash Basis IPSAS and, to that end, a broad interpretation of “technical issues” may be necessary.

Issues that could usefully be tested in the project questionnaire and/or follow up interviews were identified as including the following, whether:

- Current consolidation requirements were appropriate from both a policy and practicality perspective. Potential loss of information in consolidated financial reports (and importance of additional segment disclosures) were noted – particularly as governments increase their control/ownership of major financial institutions.
- Disclosures relating to external assistance were sufficient to satisfy donor and other user needs;
- The requirements to disclose information about third party settlements were (a) well understood and (b) appropriate for inclusion in a cash basis IPSAS;
- The structure of the IPSAS, which was lengthy and included extensive encouraged requirements was appropriate;
- The definitions of “cash” and “control of cash” were appropriate;
- Guidance on timing for completion of the financial report was reasonable, particularly when information to compile the accounts was frequently not available on a timely basis. Members noted that the interview stage of this project could usefully explore jurisdictional experience on this matters;
- Additional disclosures should be required for entities operating in hyper-inflationary economies.
- Differences between budget and financial reporting practices presented an impediment to adoption of the IPSAS. Similarly, whether differences between statistical and financial reporting requirements contributed to difficulties in adoption;
- Additional disclosures of commitments (and definitions thereof), liabilities and contingent liabilities should be required by the IPSAS;

- A chart of accounts should be developed for inclusion in, or to support adoption of, the IPSAS; and
- Capacity constraints, rather than specific technical concerns, were the major obstacles to adoption of the IPSAS and whether the IPSASB had a role, at least at the strategic level, in supporting action to overcome such constraints.

It was also agreed that:

- Input should be drawn on whether the Cash Basis IPSAS was responding to users information needs – consequentially input, including responses to the project questionnaire, should be sought from users; and
- Questionnaires and follow-up discussion should be broad enough to allow respondents to identify and discuss a broad range of implementation issues and constraints – and these matters should be noted in the Task Force Report.

5. Review of Project Questionnaire

It was noted that the:

- Hard copy format of the questionnaire should be further developed and used and the response date should be updated and aligned with the cover page;
- Questionnaire should note that recipients may redirect the questionnaire to others in the organization better placed to respond, and that additional mechanisms to respond should be noted, including by phone (if in English);
- Question relating to consolidation should be rephrased to explain more fully the basis for consolidation required by the IPSAS and to allow respondents to outline the activities and entities encompassed by the financial statements in their jurisdiction; and
- Questionnaire would be translated into French and Spanish by the IPSASB. Members also noted that translation into Arabic by relevant professional bodies or other organizations should be supported.

It was agreed that, in addition to preparers and their advisors, the project questionnaire should be made available to Ministers of Finance or their equivalents, users of the general purpose financial reports and, as appropriate, other stakeholders including PFM experts and advisors. The text of separate covering letters are to be prepared to introduce the questionnaire to each of these broad groups of recipients.

6. Follow up Interviews/Discussion – Process and Review of Instrument to support and document discussion

It was agreed that:

- A sample of respondents to the project questionnaire should be invited to participate in follow-up interviews or round table discussions.; and
- Some detailed interviews may be undertaken in parallel with the issue of the questionnaire if the opportunity arose.

The potential to hold interviews/round table discussion in conjunction with regional seminars during the second half of 2009 was explored – in particular:

- The World Bank and IADB participants at the meeting agreed to follow up on the potential to establish a link to major seminars in Latin America that their organizations were sponsoring in the third and fourth quarters of 2009;
- The OECD and CIPFA participants at the meeting agreed to provide input on relevant regional seminars/conferences that their organizations were involved with; and
- Input should be sought from the IFAC-DNC on conferences/seminars that the Task Force should participate in, or link interviews with.

It was agreed that it was useful to develop an interview protocol/structure to support those who will undertake the interviews/round table discussions and to identify a checklist of issues on which input is to be sought. The protocol document would then be used by the interviewer in conjunction with the general project questionnaire – to draw and record more detailed input on the nature and significance of issues identified in responses to the questionnaire.

It was agreed that the draft “protocol/structure” document included in the agenda papers was too closely focused on the IPSAS, and should be restructured to allow for broader input from interviewees. In particular, it should be structured to seek input on the following in the interviewee’s jurisdiction:

- Reporting practices in place - including whether legislation or other authority prescribes a reporting format or content that differs from the Cash Basis IPSAS;
- Familiarity with the Cash Basis IPSAS;
- Major obstacles to adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS;
- Each of the major issues identified in session 4. above; and finally
- Other jurisdictional issues and user information needs that may impact adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS.

A revised draft is to be developed and circulated to Task Force members and guests at this meeting for review.

7. Disclosures about Financial Instruments

It was noted that the Task Force was to make recommendations on whether additional disclosures about financial instruments should be included in the IPSAS, and the nature of those disclosures.

Some Task Force members expressed concern that inclusion of requirements to disclose detailed information about financial instruments would present an additional impediment to adoption of the IPSAS. It was also noted that:

- For many jurisdictions, requirements to disclose information about liabilities and assets more broadly was a greater priority than for disclosures relating to only financial instruments; and
- While the transition to accrual should be encouraged where possible and practical, it may not be appropriate to add additional accrual type disclosures to the cash basis IPSAS.

It was agreed that during the interview stage of the project, the Task Force would seek the views of interviewees on the need for, and nature of, requirements relating to the

disclosure of financial instruments. Such views would then inform the Task Force's consideration of any recommendations it may develop for IPSASB consideration.

Close of meeting

The Chair thanked Task Force members and guests for their input, and noted that:

- A meeting report would be prepared and circulated to all Task Force members and guests;
- The questionnaire and follow-up material would be updated as directed and circulated to all for comment; and
- If a subsequent meeting was to occur, all guests at this meeting would be advised.



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Invitation to Participate

Review of the International Public Sector Accounting Standard (IPSAS): “Financial Reporting Under The Cash Basis of Accounting” (the Cash Basis IPSAS)

The International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) is undertaking a review of the International Public Sector Accounting Standard, “Financial Reporting Under The Cash Basis of Accounting” (the Cash Basis IPSAS). The Cash Basis IPSAS was first issued in January 2003 and subsequently updated in 2006 and 2007.

The IPSASB invites you to participate in this review.

The primary objective of the review is to identify the major technical issues that public sector entities in developing economies have encountered, or are anticipated to encounter, in implementing the Standard. The IPSASB will then consider whether the Standard should be modified in light of these difficulties and/or if further guidance on its application should be provided by the IPSASB. The review will also identify whether additional reporting requirements should be added to the Standard.

The IPSASB is particularly interested in drawing on the experience of those who have been involved in, or have advised on, the adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS in developing economies or have otherwise had exposure to the Cash Basis IPSAS and can provide input to this review.

The IPSASB has established a Task Force to lead the review. Information about the members of the Task Force and a brief questionnaire that allows respondents to identify major implementation issues in their jurisdiction are attached – the questionnaire is available in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The questionnaire is intended as an initial reference point to identify broad areas of concern. It does not require an extensive response and need not take a significant amount of time to complete. In some circumstances, a verbal response may be possible – details are attached. Where possible, responses to the questionnaire will be supported by more detailed discussions with a range of users, implementers, technical advisors and others in a number of regions.

Your response to the questionnaire is requested by July 15, 2009. You are also requested to advise whether you are prepared to participate in follow-up discussions in your region. It is anticipated that follow-up discussions will take place during the second half of 2009. (Respondents who express an interest in participating in follow-up discussions will be contacted directly by the Task Force to finalize follow-up arrangements.)

I look forward to your participation in this review.

Erna Swart

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Erna Swart', written in dark ink.

IPSASB Deputy Chair
Chair, Task Force for Review of Cash Basis IPSAS.

For further information please contact IPSASB staff: Paul Sutcliffe
(psutcliffe@ifac.org)

**REVIEW OF THE CASH BASIS IPSAS
“Financial Reporting Under The Cash Basis of Accounting”
Background and Process**

Background – the cash basis of accounting

The IPSASB developed and issued a single comprehensive Cash Basis IPSAS “Financial Reporting Under The Cash Basis of Accounting”, in January 2003. That Standard was subsequently updated in 2006 and 2007 with the inclusion of additional requirements and encouragements relating to the presentation of budget information in financial statements and the disclosure of information about external assistance.

Application of the Cash Basis IPSAS by jurisdictions which adopt the cash basis of accounting for financial reporting will enhance the quality and consistency of financial information provided for accountability and decision making purposes. It will also provide a sound base for the many jurisdictions intending to transition to the accrual basis of accounting for financial reporting by their governments in the longer term.

When the Cash Basis IPSAS was first issued, the IPSASB’s forerunner, the Public Sector Committee (PSC), agreed to undertake a post-implementation review at a suitable time after promulgation of the IPSAS to determine if the requirements of the Standard were appropriate. The IPSASB is honoring that commitment.

Participating in the Review

Respondents are requested to provide input on the matters identified in the attached brief questionnaire. The Task Force also welcomes comment on any additional implementation experiences, and any proposals for improvements, deletions or revisions to the requirements or encouragements in the Cash Basis IPSAS.

The Task Force will consider all responses to the questionnaire. It will also undertake additional follow-up discussions with interested parties where possible - either on an individual basis or in regional round tables. Please indicate in your response whether you are prepared to participate in the follow-up discussions that will take place during the second half of 2009, and provide contact details as appropriate.

Please note that while the Task Force may include in its Report to the IPSASB summaries of the major issues identified on a regional basis – the identity and individual jurisdictions of those responding to the questionnaire will not be made public without prior consent.

Participating in the Review – written or verbal responses

Interested parties may participate in the review by completing the attached questionnaire and returning it to Paul Sutcliffe by July 15, 2009 by email: psutcliffe@ifac.org or Fax: +61 (0) 3 96459050).

Alternately, in some cases, interested parties may wish to provide a verbal response directly to a Task Force member or IFAC staff member. While the Task Force would prefer written responses it will attempt to accommodate those who wish to respond verbally – including receiving responses by phone. Those wishing to provide a verbal response should contact Paul Sutcliffe by email or fax to arrange details of response: email psutcliffe@ifac.org or Fax: +61 (0) 3 96459050. Verbal responses should also be made by July 15, 2009.

CASH BASIS IPSAS REVIEW: TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Member		Contact details
Erna <u>Swart</u> - Task Force Chair	IPSASB - Deputy Chair Chief Executive Officer Accounting Standards Board, South Africa	ernas@asb.co.za
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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ACCOUNTANTS (IFAC)

**INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD
(IPSASB)**

Task Force for Review of:

**International Public Sector Accounting Standard
“Financial Reporting Under the Cash Basis of Accounting”
(the Cash Basis IPSAS)**

Questionnaire:

**Implementation Issues, Amendments and Improvements
Issued April 2009**

Responses requested by 15 July 2009

**Written responses should be returned to
Paul Sutcliffe (email: psutcliffe@ifac.org or Fax: + 61 (0)3 96459050).**

Responses may also be made verbally.

Please contact Paul Sutcliffe by email or fax (see above) to arrange for phone response.

1) HAS THE CASH BASIS IPSAS BEEN ADOPTED IN YOUR JURISDICTION

Please identify (by an X in the appropriate box) whether your jurisdiction has adopted, or considered adoption of, the Cash Basis IPSAS for financial reporting by the national, state or local government(s) or their agencies. *(Those not directly involved in implementation, or advising on implementation, are requested to note their interest in the Cash Basis IPSAS – for example: auditor user of financial statements advisor or trainer other)*

	YES
The Cash Basis IPSAS has been fully adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
A modified form of the Cash Basis IPSAS has been adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS was considered, but it was not adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS has not been considered, but a form of cash or modified cash basis accounting is adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the Cash Basis IPSAS has been adopted in your jurisdiction, please identify:

Year of adoption:

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Level(s) of Government that has adopted it (for example: national, state/provincial or local government):

Please outline the major implementation issues faced (or anticipated) in initial adoption or ongoing application of the Cash Basis IPSAS:

If a modified form of the Cash Basis IPSAS has been adopted, please identify the major modifications to the Cash Basis IPSAS:

If adoption of the Cash Basis IPSAS was considered, but it was not adopted – please identify the major reason(s) for its non-adoption:

3) CONSOLIDATION OF CONTROLLED ENTITIES

In broad terms, the Cash basis IPSAS requires a government to prepare consolidated financial statements which encompass the government and the entities which it “controls” – that is, entities whose financial and operating policies the government can govern or direct for achievement of government objectives. The statement of cash receipts and payments prepared by a government will therefore consolidate the cash receipts, cash payments and cash balances of all the entities it controls. Other public sector entities are also required to prepare consolidated financial statements which encompass controlled entities. *(See section 1.6 of the Cash Basis IPSAS for the consolidation requirements.)*

If not already dealt with in your response to questions 1 and 2 above, please identify whether the government’s financial statements consolidate all “controlled” entities as defined in the Cash Basis IPSAS.

	Yes	No
The government’s financial statements consolidates all controlled entities		

Please identify whether this occurs at each level of government (for example, at the national, state/province or local government level):

If the government’s financial statements do not consolidate all controlled entities please explain the reasons for their non-consolidation – for example:

(a) it is not possible to identify all controlled entities:

(b) it is not government policy to prepare government financial statements which consolidate government business entities:

(c) other reasons:

