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By email: [commentletters@ifrs.org](mailto:commentletters@ifrs.org)

Mr. Hans Hoogervorst  
Chairman  
International Accounting Standards Board  
30 Cannon Street  
London EC4M 6XH  
United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Hoogervorst

**IASB Exposure Draft ED/2015/6 Clarifications to IFRS 15**

We refer to the International Accounting Standards Board's Exposure Draft: ED/2015/6 Clarifications to IFRS 15. Our comments on the specific questions raised in the exposure draft are set out in the enclosed annex.

We hope you would find our comments useful. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Emily Ngan of the Secretariat at 2526 6080.

Yours sincerely

Henry Chan  
Secretary

Enc.

*Chairman* The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd  
*Vice Chairmen* Bank of China (Hong Kong) Ltd  
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*Secretary* Henry Chan

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秘書 陳崇禧

## Annex

### Responses of the Hong Kong Association of Banks (“HKAB”) to the International Accounting Standards Board’s Exposure Draft ED/2015/6: Clarifications to IFRS 15

#### **Questions for respondents**

##### **Question 1—Identifying performance obligations**

IFRS 15 requires an entity to assess the goods or services promised in a contract to identify the performance obligations in that contract. An entity is required to identify performance obligations on the basis of promised goods or services that are distinct.

To clarify the application of the concept of ‘distinct’, the IASB is proposing to amend the Illustrative Examples accompanying IFRS 15. In order to achieve the same objective of clarifying when promised goods or services are distinct, the FASB has proposed to clarify the requirements of the new revenue Standard and add illustrations regarding the identification of performance obligations. The FASB’s proposals include amendments relating to promised goods or services that are immaterial in the context of a contract, and an accounting policy election relating to shipping and handling activities that the IASB is not proposing to address. The reasons for the IASB’s decisions are explained in paragraphs BC7–BC25.

Do you agree with the proposed amendments to the Illustrative Examples accompanying IFRS 15 relating to identifying performance obligations? Why or why not? If not, what alternative clarification, if any, would you propose and why?

#### **HKAB Response**

We agree with the IASB’s proposal to further clarify the identification of a distinct promise in accordance with paragraph 27 of IFRS 15. We agree with the IASB’s comments in BC9 emphasizing the need for professional judgement in the application of IFRS.

As a general observation, we believe that amendments to standards which have been issued but are not yet effective should be the exception rather than the rule. We agree with the comments on assessing the need for, and approach to, proposing these amendments as set out in BC3 and BC4

**Question 2—Principal versus agent considerations**

When another party is involved in providing goods or services to a customer, IFRS 15 requires an entity to determine whether it is the principal in the transaction or the agent. To do so, an entity assesses whether it controls the specified goods or services before they are transferred to the customer.

To clarify the application of the control principle, the IASB is proposing to amend paragraphs B34–B38 of IFRS 15, amend Examples 45–48 accompanying IFRS 15 and add Examples 46A and 48A.

The FASB has reached the same decisions as the IASB regarding the application of the control principle when assessing whether an entity is a principal or an agent, and is expected to propose amendments to Topic 606 that are the same as (or similar to) those included in this Exposure Draft in this respect.

The reasons for the Boards' decisions are explained in paragraphs BC26–BC56.

Do you agree with the proposed amendments to IFRS 15 regarding principal versus agent considerations? In particular, do you agree that the proposed amendments to each of the indicators in paragraph B37 are helpful and do not raise new implementation questions? Why or why not? If not, what alternative clarification, if any, would you propose and why?

**HKAB Response**

The clarifications are helpful and illustrate the thought process better than the existing version of IFRS15.

**Question 3—Licensing**

When an entity grants a licence to a customer that is distinct from other promised goods or services, IFRS 15 requires the entity to determine whether the licence transfers to a customer either at a point in time (providing the right to use the entity's intellectual property) or over time (providing the right to access the entity's intellectual property). That determination largely depends on whether the contract requires, or the customer reasonably expects, the entity to undertake activities that significantly affect the intellectual property to which the customer has rights. IFRS 15 also includes requirements relating to sales-based or usage-based royalties promised in exchange for a licence (the royalties constraint).

To clarify when an entity's activities significantly affect the intellectual property to which the customer has rights, the IASB is proposing to add paragraph B59A and delete paragraph B57 of IFRS 15, and amend Examples 54 and 56–61 accompanying IFRS 15. The IASB is also proposing to add paragraphs B63A and B63B to clarify the application of the royalties constraint. The reasons for the IASB's decisions are explained in paragraphs BC57–BC86.

The FASB has proposed more extensive amendments to the licensing guidance and the accompanying Illustrations, including proposing an alternative approach for determining the nature of an entity's promise in granting a licence.

Do you agree with the proposed amendments to IFRS 15 regarding licensing? Why or why not? If not, what alternative clarification, if any, would you propose and why?

**HKAB Response**

**We have no comment on this question.**

**Question 4—Practical expedients on transition**

The IASB is proposing the following two additional practical expedients on transition to IFRS 15:

- (a) to permit an entity to use hindsight in (i) identifying the satisfied and unsatisfied performance obligations in a contract that has been modified before the beginning of the earliest period presented; and (ii) determining the transaction price.
- (b) to permit an entity electing to use the full retrospective method not to apply IFRS 15 retrospectively to completed contracts (as defined in paragraph C2) at the beginning of the earliest period presented.

The reasons for the IASB's decisions are explained in paragraphs BC109–BC115. The FASB is also expected to propose a practical expedient on transition for modified contracts. Do you agree with the proposed amendments to the transition requirements of IFRS 15? Why or why not? If not, what alternative, if any, would you propose and why?

**HKAB Response**

We agree with the two additional practical expedients proposed.

**Question 5—Other topics**

The FASB is expected to propose amendments to the new revenue Standard with respect to collectability, measuring non-cash consideration and the presentation of sales taxes. The IASB decided not to propose amendments to IFRS 15 with respect to those topics. The reasons for the IASB's decisions are explained in paragraphs BC87–BC108.

Do you agree that amendments to IFRS 15 are not required on those topics? Why or why not? If not, what amendment would you propose and why? If you would propose to amend IFRS 15, please provide information to explain why the requirements of IFRS 15 are not clear.

**HKAB Response**

We believe that it is not possible to provide guidance for every eventuality, and any attempt to do so will be unsuccessful. We believe that leaving IFRS 15 open to additional amendments, following the completion of due process for the current proposal, would mean preparers would be faced with a “moving target” which could hamper their implementation work.