Hong Kong Accounting Standard 8

Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

Hong Kong Institute of
Certified Public Accountants
香港會計師公會

COPYRIGHT

CONTENTS

Hong Kong Accounting Standard 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* (HKAS 8) is set out in paragraphs 1-56 and the Appendix. All the paragraphs have equal authority. HKAS 8 should be read in the context of its objective and the Basis for Conclusions, the *Preface to Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards* and the *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting*.

Introduction

IN1 Hong Kong Accounting Standard 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* (HKAS 8) should be applied for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. Earlier application is encouraged.

Reasons for issuing HKAS 8

IN2 The objectives of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) issuing HKAS 8 were to reduce or eliminate alternatives, redundancies and conflicts within the Standards, to deal with some convergence issues and to make other improvements.

IN3 For HKAS 8, the HKICPA's main objectives were:

(a) to remove the allowed alternative to retrospective application of voluntary changes in accounting policies and retrospective restatement to correct prior period errors;

(b) to eliminate the concept of a fundamental error;

(c) to articulate the hierarchy of guidance to which management refers, whose applicability it considers when selecting accounting policies in the absence of Standards and Interpretations that specifically apply; and

(d) to define material omissions or misstatements, and describe how to apply the concept of materiality when applying accounting policies and correcting errors.

IN4 [Not used]

The main features

IN5 The main features of HKAS 8 are described below.

Selection of accounting policies

IN6 The requirements for the selection and application of accounting policies in SSAP 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* have been transferred to the Standard. The Standard updates the previous hierarchy of guidance to which management refers and whose applicability it considers when selecting accounting policies in the absence of Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards (HKFRSs) that specifically apply.

Materiality

IN7 The Standard defines material omissions or misstatements. It stipulates that:

(a) the accounting policies in HKFRSs need not be applied when the effect of applying them is immaterial. This complements the statement in HKAS 1 that disclosures required by HKFRSs need not be made if the information is immaterial.

(b) financial statements do not comply with HKFRSs if they contain material errors.

(c) material prior period errors are to be corrected retrospectively in the first set of financial statements authorised for issue after their discovery.

Voluntary changes in accounting policies and corrections of prior period errors

IN8 The Standard requires retrospective application of voluntary changes in accounting policies and retrospective restatement to correct prior period errors. It removes the allowed alternative in SSAP 2:

(a) to include in profit or loss for the current period the adjustment resulting from changing an accounting policy or the amount of a correction of a prior period error; and

(b) to present unchanged comparative information from financial statements of prior periods.

IN9 As a result of the removal of the allowed alternative, comparative information for prior periods is presented as if new accounting policies had always been applied and prior period errors had never occurred.

Impracticability

IN10 The Standard retains the 'impracticability' criterion for exemption from changing comparative information when changes in accounting policies are applied retrospectively and prior period errors are corrected. The Standard now includes a definition of 'impracticable' and guidance on its interpretation.

IN11 The Standard also states that when it is impracticable to determine the cumulative effect, at the beginning of the current period, of:

(a) applying a new accounting policy to all prior periods, or

(b) an error on all prior periods,

the entity changes the comparative information as if the new accounting policy had been applied, or the error had been corrected, prospectively from the earliest date practicable.

Fundamental errors

IN12 The Standard eliminates the concept of a fundamental error and thus the distinction between fundamental errors and other material errors. The Standard defines prior period errors.

Disclosures

IN13 The Standard now requires, rather than encourages, disclosure of an impending change in accounting policy when an entity has yet to implement a new HKFRS that has been issued but not yet come into effect. In addition, it requires disclosure of known or reasonably estimable information relevant to assessing the possible impact that application of the new HKFRS will have on the entity's financial statements in the period of initial application.

IN14 The Standard requires more detailed disclosure of the amounts of adjustments resulting from changing accounting policies or correcting prior period errors. It requires those disclosures to be made for each financial statement line item affected and, if HKAS 33 *Earnings per Share* applies to the entity, for basic and diluted earnings per share.

Others

IN15 The presentation requirements for profit or loss for the period have been transferred to HKAS 1.

IN16 The Standard requires that:

(a) an entity selects and applies its accounting policies consistently for similar transactions, other events and conditions, unless a HKFRS specifically requires or permits categorisation of items for which different policies may be appropriate; and

(b) if a HKFRS requires or permits such categorisation, an appropriate accounting policy is selected and applied consistently to each category.

IN17 The Standard includes a definition of a change in accounting estimate.

IN18 The Standard includes exceptions from including the effects of changes in accounting estimates prospectively in profit or loss. It states that to the extent that a change in an accounting estimate gives rise to changes in assets or liabilities, or relates to an item of equity, it is recognised by adjusting the carrying amount of the related asset, liability or equity item in the period of the change.

Hong Kong Accounting Standard 8
Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

Objective

1 The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the criteria for selecting and changing accounting policies, together with the accounting treatment and disclosure of changes in accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and corrections of errors. The Standard is intended to enhance the relevance and reliability of an entity's financial statements, and the comparability of those financial statements over time and with the financial statements of other entities.

2 Disclosure requirements for accounting policies, except those for changes in accounting policies, are set out in HKAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements*.

Scope

3 This Standard shall be applied in selecting and applying accounting policies, and accounting for changes in accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and corrections of prior period errors.

4. The tax effects of corrections of prior period errors and of retrospective adjustments made to apply changes in accounting policies are accounted for and disclosed in accordance with HKAS 12 *Income Taxes*.

Definitions

5 The following terms are used in this Standard with the meanings specified:

Accounting policies **are the specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an entity in preparing and presenting financial statements.**

Accounting estimates **are monetary amounts in financial statements that are subject to measurement uncertainty.**

Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards (HKFRSs) **are Standards and Interpretations issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA). They comprise:**

(a) Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards;

(b) Hong Kong Accounting Standards; and

(c) Interpretations.

Material **is defined in paragraph 7 of HKAS 1 and is used in this Standard with the same meaning.**

Prior period errors **are omissions from, and misstatements in, the entity's financial statements for one or more prior periods arising from a failure to use, or misuse of, reliable information that:**

(a) was available when financial statements for those periods were authorised for issue; and

(b) could reasonably be expected to have been obtained and taken into account in the preparation and presentation of those financial statements.

Such errors include the effects of mathematical mistakes, mistakes in applying accounting policies, oversights or misinterpretations of facts, and fraud.

Retrospective application **is applying a new accounting policy to transactions, other events and conditions as if that policy had always been applied.**

Retrospective restatement **is correcting the recognition, measurement and disclosure of amounts of elements of financial statements as if a prior period error had never occurred.**

Impracticable **Applying a requirement is impracticable when the entity cannot apply it after making every reasonable effort to do so. For a particular prior period, it is impracticable to apply a change in an accounting policy retrospectively or to make a retrospective restatement to correct an error if:**

(a) the effects of the retrospective application or retrospective restatement are not determinable;

(b) the retrospective application or retrospective restatement requires assumptions about what management's intent would have been in that period; or

(c) the retrospective application or retrospective restatement requires significant estimates of amounts and it is impossible to distinguish objectively information about those estimates that:

(i) provides evidence of circumstances that existed on the date(s) as at which those amounts are to be recognised, measured or disclosed; and

(ii) would have been available when the financial statements for that prior period were authorised for issue from other information.

Prospective application **of a change in accounting policy and of recognising the effect of a change in an accounting estimate, respectively, are:**

(a) applying the new accounting policy to transactions, other events and conditions occurring after the date as at which the policy is changed; and

(b) recognising the effect of the change in the accounting estimate in the current and future periods affected by the change.

6 [Deleted]

Accounting policies

Selection and application of accounting policies

7 When a HKFRS specifically applies to a transaction, other event or condition, the accounting policy or policies applied to that item shall be determined by applying the HKFRS.

8 HKFRSs set out accounting policies that the HKICPA has concluded result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about the transactions, other events and conditions to which they apply. Those policies need not be applied when the effect of applying them is immaterial. However, it is inappropriate to make, or leave uncorrected, immaterial departures from HKFRSs to achieve a particular presentation of an entity's financial position, financial performance or cash flows.

9 HKFRSs are accompanied by guidance to assist entities in applying their requirements. All such guidance states whether it is an integral part of HKFRSs. Guidance that is an integral part of HKFRSs is mandatory. Guidance that is not an integral part of HKFRSs does not contain requirements for financial statements.

10 In the absence of a HKFRS that specifically applies to a transaction, other event or condition, management shall use its judgement in developing and applying an accounting policy that results in information that is:

(a) relevant to the economic decision-making needs of users; and

(b) reliable, in that the financial statements:

(i) represent faithfully the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the entity;

(ii) reflect the economic substance of transactions, other events and conditions, and not merely the legal form;

(iii) are neutral, ie free from bias;

(iv) are prudent; and

(v) are complete in all material respects.

11 In making the judgement described in paragraph 10, management shall refer to, and consider the applicability of, the following sources in descending order:

(a) the requirements in HKFRSs dealing with similar and related issues; and

(b) the definitions, recognition criteria and measurement concepts for assets, liabilities, income and expenses in the *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (Conceptual Framework)*[1]**.**

12 In making the judgement described in paragraph 10, management may also consider the most recent pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies that use a similar conceptual framework to develop accounting standards, other accounting literature[2] and accepted industry practices, to the extent that these do not conflict with the sources in paragraph 11.

1 Paragraph 54G explains how this requirement is amended for regulatory account balances.

2 In the context of Hong Kong, other accounting literature includes Accounting Guidelines and Accounting Bulletins.

Consistency of accounting policies

13 **An entity shall select and apply its accounting policies consistently for similar transactions, other events and conditions, unless a HKFRS specifically requires or permits categorisation of items for which different policies may be appropriate. If a HKFRS requires or permits such categorisation, an appropriate accounting policy shall be selected and applied consistently to each category.**

Changes in accounting policies

14 **An entity shall change an accounting policy only if the change:**

(a) is required by a HKFRS; or

(b) results in the financial statements providing reliable and more relevant information about the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the entity's financial position, financial performance or cash flows.

15 Users of financial statements need to be able to compare the financial statements of an entity over time to identify trends in its financial position, financial performance and cash flows. Therefore, the same accounting policies are applied within each period and from one period to the next unless a change in accounting policy meets one of the criteria in paragraph 14.

16 **The following are not changes in accounting policies:**

(a) the application of an accounting policy for transactions, other events or conditions that differ in substance from those previously occurring; and

(b) the application of a new accounting policy for transactions, other events or conditions that did not occur previously or were immaterial.

17 **The initial application of a policy to revalue assets in accordance with HKAS 16** *Property, Plant and Equipment* **or HKAS 38** *Intangible Assets* **is a change in an accounting policy to be dealt with as a revaluation in accordance with HKAS 16 or HKAS 38, rather than in accordance with this Standard.**

18 Paragraphs 19-31 do not apply to the change in accounting policy described in paragraph 17.

Applying changes in accounting policies

19 **Subject to paragraph 23:**

(a) an entity shall account for a change in accounting policy resulting from the initial application of a HKFRS in accordance with the specific transitional provisions, if any, in that HKFRS; and

(b) when an entity changes an accounting policy upon initial application of a HKFRS that does not include specific transitional provisions applying to that change, or changes an accounting policy voluntarily, it shall apply the change retrospectively.

20 For the purpose of this Standard, early application of a HKFRS is not a voluntary change in accounting policy.

21 In the absence of a HKFRS that specifically applies to a transaction, other event or condition, management may, in accordance with paragraph 12, apply an accounting policy from the most recent pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies that use a similar conceptual framework to develop accounting standards. If, following an amendment of such a pronouncement, the entity chooses to change an accounting policy, that change is accounted for and disclosed as a voluntary change in accounting policy.

Retrospective application

22 Subject to paragraph 23, when a change in accounting policy is applied retrospectively in accordance with paragraph 19(a) or (b), the entity shall adjust the opening balance of each affected component of equity for the earliest prior period presented and the other comparative amounts disclosed for each prior period presented as if the new accounting policy had always been applied.

Limitations on retrospective application

23 When retrospective application is required by paragraph 19(a) or (b), a change in accounting policy shall be applied retrospectively except to the extent that it is impracticable to determine either the period-specific effects or the cumulative effect of the change.

24 When it is impracticable to determine the period-specific effects of changing an accounting policy on comparative information for one or more prior periods presented, the entity shall apply the new accounting policy to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities as at the beginning of the earliest period for which retrospective application is practicable, which may be the current period, and shall make a corresponding adjustment to the opening balance of each affected component of equity for that period.

25 When it is impracticable to determine the cumulative effect, at the beginning of the current period, of applying a new accounting policy to all prior periods, the entity shall adjust the comparative information to apply the new accounting policy prospectively from the earliest date practicable.

26 When an entity applies a new accounting policy retrospectively, it applies the new accounting policy to comparative information for prior periods as far back as is practicable. Retrospective application to a prior period is not practicable unless it is practicable to determine the cumulative effect on the amounts in both the opening and closing statements of financial position for that period. The amount of the resulting adjustment relating to periods before those presented in the financial statements is made to the opening balance of each affected component of equity of the earliest prior period presented. Usually the adjustment is made to retained earnings. However, the adjustment may be made to another component of equity (for example, to comply with a HKFRS). Any other information about prior periods, such as historical summaries of financial data, is also adjusted as far back as is practicable.

27 When it is impracticable for an entity to apply a new accounting policy retrospectively, because it cannot determine the cumulative effect of applying the policy to all prior periods, the entity, in accordance with paragraph 25, applies the new policy prospectively from the start of the earliest period practicable. It therefore disregards the portion of the cumulative adjustment to assets, liabilities and equity arising before that date. Changing an accounting policy is permitted even if it is impracticable to apply the policy prospectively for any prior period. Paragraphs 50-53 provide guidance on when it is impracticable to apply a new accounting policy to one or more prior periods.

Disclosure

28 **When initial application of a HKFRS has an effect on the current period or any prior period, would have such an effect except that it is impracticable to determine the amount of the adjustment, or might have an effect on future periods, an entity shall disclose:**

(a) the title of the HKFRS;

(b) when applicable, that the change in accounting policy is made in accordance with its transitional provisions;

(c) the nature of the change in accounting policy;

(d) when applicable, a description of the transitional provisions;

(e) when applicable, the transitional provisions that might have an effect on future periods;

(f) for the current period and each prior period presented, to the extent practicable, the amount of the adjustment:

(i) for each financial statement line item affected; and

(ii) if HKAS 33 *Earnings per Share* **applies to the entity, for basic and diluted earnings per share;**

(g) the amount of the adjustment relating to periods before those presented, to the extent practicable; and

(h) if retrospective application required by paragraph 19(a) or (b) is impracticable for a particular prior period, or for periods before those presented, the circumstances that led to the existence of that condition and a description of how and from when the change in accounting policy has been applied.

Financial statements of subsequent periods need not repeat these disclosures.

29 **When a voluntary change in accounting policy has an effect on the current period or any prior period, would have an effect on that period except that it is impracticable to determine the amount of the adjustment, or might have an effect on future periods, an entity shall disclose:**

(a) the nature of the change in accounting policy;

(b) the reasons why applying the new accounting policy provides reliable and more relevant information;

(c) for the current period and each prior period presented, to the extent practicable, the amount of the adjustment:

(i) for each financial statement line item affected; and

(ii) if HKAS 33 applies to the entity, for basic and diluted earnings per share;

(d) the amount of the adjustment relating to periods before those presented, to the extent practicable; and

(e) if retrospective application is impracticable for a particular prior period,

or for periods before those presented, the circumstances that led to the existence of that condition and a description of how and from when the change in accounting policy has been applied.

Financial statements of subsequent periods need not repeat these disclosures.

30 When an entity has not applied a new HKFRS that has been issued but is not yet effective, the entity shall disclose:

(a) this fact; and

(b) known or reasonably estimable information relevant to assessing the possible impact that application of the new HKFRS will have on the entity's financial statements in the period of initial application.

31 In complying with paragraph 30, an entity considers disclosing:

(a) the title of the new HKFRS;

(b) the nature of the impending change or changes in accounting policy;

(c) the date by which application of the HKFRS is required;

(d) the date as at which it plans to apply the HKFRS initially; and

(e) either:

(i) a discussion of the impact that initial application of the HKFRS is expected to have on the entity's financial statements; or

(ii) if that impact is not known or reasonably estimable, a statement to that effect.

Accounting estimates

32 An accounting policy may require items in financial statements to be measured in a way that involves measurement uncertainty—that is, the accounting policy may require such items to be measured at monetary amounts that cannot be observed directly and must instead be estimated. In such a case, an entity develops an accounting estimate to achieve the objective set out by the accounting policy. Developing accounting estimates involves the use of judgements or assumptions based on the latest available, reliable information. Examples of accounting estimates include:

(a) a loss allowance for expected credit losses, applying HKFRS 9 *Financial Instruments*;

(b) the net realisable value of an item of inventory, applying HKAS 2 *Inventories*;

(c) the fair value of an asset or liability, applying HKFRS 13 *Fair Value Measurement*;

(d) the depreciation expense for an item of property, plant and equipment, applying HKAS 16; and

(e) a provision for warranty obligations, applying HKAS 37 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

32A An entity uses measurement techniques and inputs to develop an accounting estimate. Measurement techniques include estimation techniques (for example, techniques used to measure a loss allowance for expected credit losses applying HKFRS 9) and valuation techniques (for example, techniques used to measure the fair value of an asset or liability applying HKFRS 13).

32B The term 'estimate' in HKFRSs sometimes refers to an estimate that is not an accounting estimate as defined in this Standard. For example, it sometimes refers to an input used in developing accounting estimates.

33 The use of reasonable estimates is an essential part of the preparation of financial statements and does not undermine their reliability.

Changes in accounting estimates

34 An entity may need to change an accounting estimate if changes occur in the circumstances on which the accounting estimate was based or as a result of new information, new developments or more experience. By its nature, a change in an accounting estimate does not relate to prior periods and is not the correction of an error.

34A The effects on an accounting estimate of a change in an input or a change in a measurement technique are changes in accounting estimates unless they result from the correction of prior period errors.

35 A change in the measurement basis applied is a change in an accounting policy, and is not a change in an accounting estimate. When it is difficult to distinguish a change in an accounting policy from a change in an accounting estimate, the change is treated as a change in an accounting estimate.

Applying changes in accounting estimates

36 The effect of a change in an accounting estimate, other than a change to which paragraph 37 applies, shall be recognised prospectively by including it in profit or loss in:

(a) the period of the change, if the change affects that period only; or

(b) the period of the change and future periods, if the change affects both.

37 To the extent that a change in an accounting estimate gives rise to changes in assets and liabilities, or relates to an item of equity, it shall be recognised by adjusting the carrying amount of the related asset, liability or equity item in the period of the change.

38 Prospective recognition of the effect of a change in an accounting estimate means that the change is applied to transactions, other events and conditions from the date of that change. A change in an accounting estimate may affect only the current period's profit or loss, or the profit or loss of both the current period and future periods. For example, a change in a loss allowance for expected credit losses affects only the current period's profit or loss and therefore is recognised in the current period. However, a change in the estimated useful life of, or the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in, a depreciable asset affects depreciation expense for the current period and for each future period during the asset's remaining useful life. In both cases, the effect of the change relating to the current period is recognised as income or expense in the current period. The effect, if any, on future periods is recognised as income or expense in those future periods.

Disclosure

39 An entity shall disclose the nature and amount of a change in an accounting estimate that has an effect in the current period or is expected to have an effect in future periods, except for the disclosure of the effect on future periods when it is impracticable to estimate that effect.

40 If the amount of the effect in future periods is not disclosed because estimating it is impracticable, an entity shall disclose that fact.

Errors

41 Errors can arise in respect of the recognition, measurement, presentation or disclosure of elements of financial statements. Financial statements do not comply with HKFRSs if they contain either material errors or immaterial errors made intentionally to achieve a particular presentation of an entity's financial position, financial performance or cash flows. Potential current period errors discovered in that period are corrected before the financial statements are authorised for issue. However, material errors are sometimes not discovered until a subsequent period, and these prior period errors are corrected in the comparative information presented in the financial statements for that subsequent period (see paragraphs 42-47).

42 Subject to paragraph 43, an entity shall correct material prior period errors retrospectively in the first set of financial statements authorised for issue after their discovery by:

(a) restating the comparative amounts for the prior period(s) presented in which the error occurred; or

(b) if the error occurred before the earliest prior period presented, restating the opening balances of assets, liabilities and equity for the earliest prior period presented.

Limitations on retrospective restatement

43 A prior period error shall be corrected by retrospective restatement except to the extent that it is impracticable to determine either the period-specific effects or the cumulative effect of the error.

44 **When it is impracticable to determine the period-specific effects of an error on comparative information for one or more prior periods presented, the entity shall restate the opening balances of assets, liabilities and equity for the earliest period for which retrospective restatement is practicable (which may be the current period).**

45 **When it is impracticable to determine the cumulative effect, at the beginning of the current period, of an error on all prior periods, the entity shall restate the comparative information to correct the error prospectively from the earliest date practicable.**

46 The correction of a prior period error is excluded from profit or loss for the period in which the error is discovered. Any information presented about prior periods, including any historical summaries of financial data, is restated as far back as is practicable.

47 When it is impracticable to determine the amount of an error (eg a mistake in applying an accounting policy) for all prior periods, the entity, in accordance with paragraph 45, restates the comparative information prospectively from the earliest date practicable. It therefore disregards the portion of the cumulative restatement of assets, liabilities and equity arising before that date. Paragraphs 50-53 provide guidance on when it is impracticable to correct an error for one or more prior periods.

48 Corrections of errors are distinguished from changes in accounting estimates. Accounting estimates by their nature are approximations that may need changing as additional information becomes known. For example, the gain or loss recognised on the outcome of a contingency is not the correction of an error.

Disclosure of prior period errors

49 **In applying paragraph 42, an entity shall disclose the following:**

(a) the nature of the prior period error;

(b) for each prior period presented, to the extent practicable, the amount of the correction:

(i) for each financial statement line item affected; and

(ii) if HKAS 33 applies to the entity, for basic and diluted earnings per share;

(c) the amount of the correction at the beginning of the earliest prior period presented; and

(d) if retrospective restatement is impracticable for a particular prior period, the circumstances that led to the existence of that condition and a description of how and from when the error has been corrected.

Financial statements of subsequent periods need not repeat these disclosures.

Impracticability in respect of retrospective application and retrospective restatement

50 In some circumstances, it is impracticable to adjust comparative information for one or more prior periods to achieve comparability with the current period. For example, data may not have been collected in the prior period(s) in a way that allows either retrospective application of a new accounting policy (including, for the purpose of paragraphs 51-53, its prospective application to prior periods) or retrospective restatement to correct a prior period error, and it may be impracticable to recreate the information.

51 It is frequently necessary to make estimates in applying an accounting policy to elements of financial statements recognised or disclosed in respect of transactions, other events or conditions. Estimation is inherently subjective, and estimates may be developed after the reporting period. Developing estimates is potentially more difficult when retrospectively applying an accounting policy or making a retrospective restatement to correct a prior period error, because of the longer period of time that might have passed since the affected transaction, other event or condition occurred. However, the objective of estimates related to prior periods remains the same as for estimates made in the current period, namely, for the estimate to reflect the circumstances that existed when the transaction, other event or condition occurred.

52 Therefore, retrospectively applying a new accounting policy or correcting a prior period error requires distinguishing information that

(a) provides evidence of circumstances that existed on the date(s) as at which the transaction, other event or condition occurred, and

(b) would have been available when the financial statements for that prior period were authorised for issue

from other information. For some types of estimates (eg a fair value measurement that uses significant unobservable inputs), it is impracticable to distinguish these types of information. When retrospective application or retrospective restatement would require making a significant estimate for which it is impossible to distinguish these two types of information, it is impracticable to apply the new accounting policy or correct the prior period error retrospectively.

53 Hindsight should not be used when applying a new accounting policy to, or correcting amounts for, a prior period, either in making assumptions about what management's intentions would have been in a prior period or estimating the amounts recognised, measured or disclosed in a prior period. For example, when an entity corrects a prior period error in calculating its liability for employees' accumulated sick leave in accordance with HKAS 19 *Employee Benefits*, it disregards information about an unusually severe influenza season during the next period that became available after the financial statements for the prior period were authorised for issue. The fact that significant estimates are frequently required when amending comparative information presented for prior periods does not prevent reliable adjustment or correction of the comparative information.

Effective date and transition

54 An entity shall apply this Standard for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. Earlier application is encouraged. If an entity applies this Standard for a period beginning before 1 January 2005, it shall disclose that fact.

54a If an entity decides to apply this Standard for an earlier period, it is not required to apply all the HKASs with the same effective date for that same period. However, it is required to apply the amendments set out in the appendix on amendments to other pronouncements for that earlier period.

54A [Deleted]

54B [Deleted]

54C HKFRS 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, issued in June 2011, amended paragraph 52. An entity shall apply that amendment when it applies HKFRS 13.

54D [Deleted]

54E HKFRS 9 *Financial Instruments*, as issued in September 2014, amended paragraph 53 and deleted paragraphs 54A, 54B and 54D. An entity shall apply those amendments when it applies HKFRS 9.

54F Amendments *to References to the Conceptual Framework in HKFRS Standards*, issued in 2018, amended paragraphs 6 and 11(b). An entity shall apply those amendments for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2020. Earlier application is permitted if at the same time an entity also applies all other amendments made by *Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in HKFRS Standards*. An entity shall apply the amendments to paragraphs 6 and 11(b) retrospectively in accordance with this Standard. However, if an entity determines that retrospective application would be impracticable or would involve undue cost or effort, it shall apply the amendments to paragraphs 6 and 11(b) by reference to paragraphs 23–28 of this Standard. If retrospective application of any amendment in *Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in HKFRS Standards* would involve undue cost or effort, an entity shall, in applying paragraphs 23–28 of this Standard, read any reference except in the last sentence of paragraph 27 to ‘is impracticable’ as ‘involves undue cost or effort’ and any reference to ‘practicable’ as ‘possible without undue cost or effort’.

54G If an entity does not apply HKFRS 14 *Regulatory Deferral Accounts*, the entity shall, in applying paragraph 11(b) to regulatory account balances, continue to refer to, and consider the applicability of, the definitions, recognition criteria, and measurement concepts in the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements*[3] instead of those in the *Conceptual Framework*. A regulatory account balance is the balance of any expense (or income) account that is not recognised as an asset or a liability in accordance with other applicable HKFRS Standards but is included, or is expected to be included, by the rate regulator in establishing the rate(s) that can be charged to customers. A rate regulator is an authorised body that is empowered by statute or regulation to establish the rate or a range of rates that bind an entity. The rate regulator may be a third-party body or a related party of the entity, including the entity’s own governing board, if that body is required by statute or regulation to set rates both in the interest of the customers and to ensure the overall financial viability of the entity.

[3] The reference is to the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements.*

54H *Definition of Material* (Amendments to HKAS 1 and HKAS 8), issued in January 2019, amended paragraph 7 of HKAS 1 and paragraph 5 of HKAS 8, and deleted paragraph 6 of HKAS 8. An entity shall apply those amendments prospectively for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2020. Earlier application is permitted. If an entity applies those amendments for an earlier period, it shall disclose that fact.

54I *Definition of Accounting Estimates*, issued in April 2021, amended paragraphs 5, 32, 34, 38 and 48 and added paragraphs 32A, 32B and 34A. An entity shall apply these amendments for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. Earlier application is permitted. An entity shall apply the amendments to changes in accounting estimates and changes in accounting policies that occur on or after the beginning of the first annual reporting period in which it applies the amendments.

Withdrawal of other pronouncements

55 This Standard supersedes SSAP 2 *Net Profit or Loss for the Period, Fundamental Errors and Changes in Accounting Policies*, revised in 2001.

56 [Not used]

Appendix

Amendments to other pronouncements

The amendments in this appendix shall be applied for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005. If an entity applies this Standard for an earlier period, these amendments shall be applied for that earlier period.

* * *

The amendments contained in this appendix when this Standard was issued have been incorporated into the relevant Standards.

Basis for Conclusions on IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*

This Basis for Conclusions accompanies, but is not part of, IAS 8.

HKAS 8 is based on IAS 8, *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*. In approving HKAS 8, the Council of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants considered and agreed with the IASB's basis for conclusions on IAS 8 (as revised 2003). Accordingly, there are no significant differences between HKAS 8 and IAS 8. The IASB's basis for conclusions is reproduced below for reference. The paragraph numbers of IAS 8 referred to below generally correspond with those in HKAS 8.

Introduction

BC1 This Basis for Conclusions summarises the International Accounting Standards Board's considerations in reaching its conclusions on revising IAS 8 *Net Profit or Loss for the Period, Fundamental Errors and Changes in Accounting Policies* in 2003 and on subsequent amendments. Individual Board members gave greater weight to some factors than to others.

BC2 In July 2001 the Board announced that, as part of its initial agenda of technical projects, it would undertake a project to improve a number of Standards, including IAS 8. The project was undertaken in the light of queries and criticisms raised in relation to the Standards by securities regulators, professional accountants and other interested parties. The objectives of the Improvements project were to reduce or eliminate alternatives, redundancies and conflicts within Standards, to deal with some convergence issues and to make other improvements. In May 2002 the Board published its proposals in an Exposure Draft of *Improvements to International Accounting Standards*, with a comment deadline of 16 September 2002. The Board received over 160 comment letters on the Exposure Draft.

BC3 The Standard includes extensive changes to the previous version of IAS 8. The Board's intention was not to reconsider all of the previous Standard's requirements for selecting and applying accounting policies, and accounting for changes in accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and corrections of errors. Accordingly, this Basis for Conclusions does not discuss requirements in IAS 8 that the Board did not reconsider.

Removing allowed alternative treatments

BC4 The previous version of IAS 8 included allowed alternative treatments of voluntary changes in accounting policies (paragraphs 54-57) and corrections of fundamental errors (paragraphs 38-40). Under those allowed alternatives:

(a) the adjustment resulting from retrospective application of a change in an accounting policy was included in profit or loss for the current period; and

(b) the amount of the correction of a fundamental error was included in profit or loss for the current period.

BC5 In both circumstances, comparative information was presented as it was presented in the financial statements of prior periods.

BC6 The Board identified the removal of optional treatments for changes in accounting policies and corrections of errors as an important improvement to the previous version of IAS 8. The Standard removes the allowed alternative treatments and requires changes in accounting policies and corrections of prior period errors to be accounted for retrospectively.

BC7 The Board concluded that retrospective application made by amending the comparative information presented for prior periods is preferable to the previously allowed alternative treatments because, under the now required method of retrospective application:

(a) profit or loss for the period of the change does not include the effects of changes in accounting policies or errors relating to prior periods.

(b) information presented about prior periods is prepared on the same basis as information about the current period, and is therefore comparable. This information possesses a qualitative characteristic identified in the *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements (Framework)*[1], and provides the most useful information for trend analysis of income and expenses.

(c) prior period errors are not repeated in comparative information presented for prior periods.

BC8 Some respondents to the Exposure Draft argued that the previously allowed alternative treatments are preferable because:

(a) correcting prior period errors by restating prior period information involves an unjustifiable use of hindsight;

(b) recognising the effects of changes in accounting policies and corrections of errors in current period profit or loss makes them more prominent to users of financial statements; and

(c) each amount credited or debited to retained earnings as a result of an entity's activities has been recognised in profit or loss in some period.

BC9 The Board concluded that restating prior period information to correct a prior period error does not involve an unjustifiable use of hindsight because prior period errors are defined in terms of a failure to use, or misuse of, reliable information that was available when the prior period financial statements were authorised for issue and could reasonably be expected to have been obtained and taken into account in the preparation and presentation of those financial statements.

BC10 The Board also concluded that the disclosures about changes in accounting policies and corrections of prior period errors in paragraphs 28, 29 and 49 of the Standard should ensure that their effects are sufficiently prominent to users of financial statements.

BC11 The Board further concluded that it is less important for each amount credited or debited to retained earnings as a result of an entity's activities to be recognised in profit or loss in some period than for the profit or loss for each period presented to represent faithfully the effects of transactions and other events occurring in that period.

[1] References to the *Framework* in this Basis for Conclusions are to the IASC's *Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements,* adopted by the Board in 2001 and in effect when the Standard was revised.

Eliminating the distinction between fundamental errors and other material prior period errors

BC12 The Standard eliminates the distinction between fundamental errors and other material prior period errors. As a result, all material prior period errors are accounted for in the same way as a fundamental error was accounted for under the retrospective treatment in the previous version of IAS 8. The Board concluded that the definition of 'fundamental errors' in the previous version was difficult to interpret consistently because the main feature of the definition—that the error causes the financial statements of one or more prior periods no longer to be considered to have been reliable—was also a feature of all material prior period errors.

Applying a Standard or an Interpretation that specifically applies to an item

BC13 The Exposure Draft proposed that when a Standard or an Interpretation applies to an item in the financial statements, the accounting policy (or policies) applied to that item is (are) determined by considering the following in descending order:

(a) the Standard (including any Appendices that form part of the Standard);

(b) the Interpretation;

(c) Appendices to the Standard that do not form a part of the Standard; and

(d) Implementation Guidance issued in respect of the Standard.

BC14 The Board decided not to set out a hierarchy of requirements for these circumstances. The Standard requires only applicable IFRSs to be applied. In addition, it does not mention Appendices.

BC15 The Board decided not to rank Standards above Interpretations because the definition of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) includes Interpretations, which are equal in status to Standards. The rubric to each Standard clarifies what material constitutes the requirements of an IFRS and what is Implementation Guidance[2]. The term 'Appendix' is retained only for material that is part of an IFRS.

Pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies

BC16 The Exposure Draft proposed that in the absence of a Standard or an Interpretation specifically applying to an item, management should develop and apply an accounting policy by considering, among other guidance, pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies that use a similar conceptual framework to develop accounting standards. Respondents to the Exposure Draft commented that this could *require* entities to consider the pronouncements of various other standard-setting bodies when IASB guidance does not exist. Some commentators argued that, for example, it could require consideration of all components of US GAAP on some topics. After considering these comments, the Board decided that the Standard should indicate that considering such pronouncements is voluntary (see paragraph 12 of the Standard).

2 In 2007 the Board was advised that paragraphs 7 and 9 may appear to conflict, and may be misinterpreted to require mandatory consideration of Implementation Guidance. The Board amended paragraphs 7, 9 and 11 by *Improvements to IFRSs* issued in May 2008 to state that only guidance that is identified as an integral part of IFRSs is mandatory.

BC17 As proposed in the Exposure Draft, the Standard states that pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies are used only if they do not conflict with:

(a) the requirements and guidance in IFRSs dealing with similar and related issues; and

(b) the definitions, recognition criteria and measurement concepts for assets, liabilities, income and expenses in the *Framework*[3].

BC18 The Standard refers to the most recent pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies because if pronouncements are withdrawn or superseded, the relevant standard-setting body no longer thinks they include the best accounting policies to apply.

BC19 Comments received indicated that it was unclear from the Exposure Draft whether a change in accounting policy following a change in a pronouncement of another standard-setting body should be accounted for under the transitional provisions in that pronouncement. As noted above, the Standard does not mandate using pronouncements of other standard-setting bodies in any circumstances. Accordingly, the Board decided to clarify that such a change in accounting policy is accounted for and disclosed as a voluntary change in accounting policy (see paragraph 21 of the Standard). Thus, an entity is precluded from applying transitional provisions specified by the other standard-setting body if they are inconsistent with the treatment of voluntary changes in accounting policies specified by the Standard.

Materiality

BC20 The Standard states that accounting policies specified by IFRSs need not be applied when the effect of applying them is immaterial. It also states that financial statements do not comply with IFRSs if they contain material errors, and that material prior period errors are to be corrected in the first set of financial statements authorised for issue after their discovery. The Standard includes a definition of material omissions or misstatements, which is based on the description of materiality in IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (as issued in 1997) and in the *Framework*.

BC21 The former *Preface to Statements of International Accounting Standards* stated that International Accounting Standards were not intended to apply to immaterial items. There is no equivalent statement in the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Standards*[4]. The Board received comments that the absence of such a statement from the *Preface* could be interpreted as requiring an entity to apply accounting policies (including measurement requirements) specified by IFRSs to immaterial items. However, the Board decided that the application of the concept of materiality should be in Standards rather than in the *Preface*.

BC21A As a consequence of the *Definition of Material* (Amendments to IAS 1 and IAS 8), issued in October 2018, the definition of material and the accompanying explanatory paragraphs have been replaced with a reference to the definition of material and explanatory paragraphs in IAS 1.[5] The Board made this change to avoid the duplication of the definition of material in the Standards.

BC22 The application of the concept of materiality is set out in two Standards. IAS 1 (as revised in 2007) continues to specify its application to disclosures. IAS 8 specifies the application of materiality in applying accounting policies and correcting errors (including errors in measuring items).

---

[3] In 2018 the Board issued a revised *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting* (*Conceptual Framework*). The Board also issued *Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in IFRS Standards*. That document replaced the reference to the *Framework* in paragraph 11(b) of IAS 8 with a reference to the *Conceptual Framework*, except in the case of some regulatory account balances, as explained in paragraphs 54G of IAS 8 and BC38–BC40.

[4] *Preface to International Financial Reporting Standards* renamed *Preface to IFRS Standards*, December 2018.

[5] Refer to paragraphs BC13A-BC13T of the Basis for Conclusions on IAS 1.

Criterion for exemption from requirements

BC23 The previous version of IAS 8 included an impracticability criterion for exemption from retrospective application of voluntary changes in accounting policies and retrospective restatement for fundamental errors, and from making related disclosures, when the allowed alternative treatment of those items was not applied. The Exposure Draft proposed instead an exemption from retrospective application and retrospective restatement when it gives rise to undue cost or effort.

BC24 In the light of comments received on the Exposure Draft, the Board decided that an exemption based on management's assessment of undue cost or effort is too subjective to be applied consistently by different entities. Moreover, the Board decided that balancing costs and benefits is a task for the Board when it sets accounting requirements rather than for entities when they apply those requirements. Therefore, the Board decided to retain the impracticability criterion for exemption in the previous version of IAS 8. This affects the exemptions in paragraphs 23-25, 39 and 43-45 of the Standard. Impracticability is the only basis on which specific exemptions are provided in IFRSs from applying particular requirements when the effect of applying them is material.[6]

Definition of 'impracticable'

BC25 The Board decided to clarify the meaning of 'impracticable' in relation to retrospective application of a change in accounting policy and retrospective restatement to correct a prior period error.

BC26 Some commentators suggested that retrospective application of a change in accounting policy and retrospective restatement to correct a prior period error are impracticable for a particular prior period whenever significant estimates are required as of a date in that period. However, the Board decided to specify a narrower definition of impracticable because the fact that significant estimates are frequently required when amending comparative information presented for prior periods does not prevent reliable adjustment or correction of the comparative information. Thus, the Board decided that an inability to distinguish objectively information that both provides evidence of circumstances that existed on the date(s) as at which those amounts are to be recognised, measured or disclosed and would have been available when the financial statements for that prior period were authorised for issue from other information is the factor that prevents reliable adjustment or correction of comparative information for prior periods (see part (c) of the definition of 'impracticable' and paragraphs 51 and 52 of the Standard).

BC27 The Standard specifies that hindsight should not be used when applying a new accounting policy to, or correcting amounts for, a prior period, either in making assumptions about what management's intentions would have been in a prior period or estimating the amounts in a prior period. This is because management's intentions in a prior period cannot be objectively established in a later period, and using information that would have been unavailable when the financial statements for the prior period(s) affected were authorised for issue is inconsistent with the definitions of retrospective application and retrospective restatement.

---

6 In 2006 the IASB issued IFRS 8 *Operating Segments*. As explained in paragraphs BC46 and BC47 of the Basis for Conclusions on IFRS 8, that IFRS includes an exemption from some requirements if the necessary information is not available and the cost to develop it would be excessive.

Applying the impracticability exemption

BC28 The Standard specifies that when it is impracticable to determine the cumulative effect of applying a new accounting policy to all prior periods, or the cumulative effect of an error on all prior periods, the entity changes the comparative information as if the new accounting policy had been applied, or the error had been corrected, prospectively from the earliest date practicable (see paragraphs 25 and 45 of the Standard). This is similar to paragraph 52 of the previous version of IAS 8, but it is no longer restricted to changes in accounting policies. The Board decided to include such provisions in the Standard because it agrees with comments received that it is preferable to require prospective application from the start of the earliest period practicable than to permit a change in accounting policy only when the entity can determine the cumulative effect of the change for all prior periods at the beginning of the current period.

BC29 Consistently with the Exposure Draft's proposals, the Standard provides an impracticability exemption from retrospective application of changes in accounting policies, including retrospective application of changes made in accordance with the transitional provisions in an IFRS. The previous version of IAS 8 specified the impracticability exemption for retrospective application of only *voluntary* changes in accounting policies. Thus, the applicability of the exemption to changes made in accordance with the transitional provisions in an IFRS depended on the text of that IFRS. The Board extended the applicability of the exemption because it decided that the need for the exemption applies equally to all changes in accounting policies applied retrospectively.

Disclosures about impending application of newly issued IFRSs

BC30 The Standard requires an entity to provide disclosures when it has not yet applied a new IFRS that has been issued but is not yet effective. The entity is required to disclose that it has not yet applied the IFRS, and known or reasonably estimable information relevant to assessing the possible impact that initial application of the new IFRS will have on the entity's financial statements in the period of initial application (paragraph 30). The Standard also includes guidance on specific disclosures the entity should consider when applying this requirement (paragraph 31).

BC31 Paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Standard differ from the proposals in the Exposure Draft in the following respects:

(a) they specify that an entity needs to disclose information only if it is known or reasonably estimable. This clarification responds to comments on the Exposure Draft that the proposed disclosures would sometimes be impracticable.

(b) whereas the Exposure Draft proposed to mandate the disclosures now in paragraph 31, the Standard sets out these disclosures as items an entity should consider disclosing to meet the general requirement in paragraph 30. This amendment focuses the requirement on the objective of the disclosure, and, in response to comments on the Exposure Draft that the proposed disclosures were more onerous than the disclosures in US GAAP, clarifies that the Board's intention was to converge with US requirements, rather than to be more onerous.

Recognising the effects of changes in accounting estimates

BC32 The Exposure Draft proposed to retain without exception the requirement in the previous version of IAS 8 that the effect of a change in accounting estimate is *recognised in profit or loss* in:

(a) the period of the change, if the change affects that period only; or

(b) the period of the change and future periods, if the change affects both.

BC33 Some respondents to the Exposure Draft disagreed with requiring the effects of all changes in accounting estimates to be recognised in profit or loss. They argued that this is inappropriate to the extent that a change in an accounting estimate gives rise to changes in assets and liabilities, because the entity's equity does not change as a result. These commentators also argued that it is inappropriate to preclude recognising the effects of changes in accounting estimates directly in equity when that is required or permitted by a Standard or an Interpretation. The Board concurs, and decided to provide an exception to the requirement described in paragraph BC32 for these circumstances.

Amended references to the *Conceptual Framework*

BC34 Following the issue of the revised *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting* in 2018 (2018 *Conceptual Framework*), the Board issued *Amendments to References to Conceptual Framework in IFRS Standards*. In IAS 8, that document amended paragraphs 6 and 11(b).

BC35 Paragraph 6 of IAS 8 quoted the description of users of financial statements from the *Framework*. To retain the requirements of this paragraph, the Board decided to embed that description of users in the Standard itself instead of updating the reference and the related quotation.

BC36 *Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in IFRS Standards* replaced the reference in paragraph 11(b) to the *Framework* with a reference to the 2018 *Conceptual Framework*. Following this replacement, if management developed accounting policies in accordance with paragraph 11(b), management will need to review whether those policies are still consistent with the 2018 *Conceptual Framework*.

BC37 The Board analysed the effects on preparers of financial statements of replacing the reference to the *Framework* in paragraph 11(b) of IAS 8 and discussed the results of the analysis at the November 2016 Board meeting (see November 2016 AP10G *Effects of the proposed changes to the Conceptual Framework on preparers*). The analysis suggested that the scope of any changes to preparers' accounting policies is likely to be limited because:

(a) most preparers of financial statements do not develop accounting policies by reference to the *Framework* because most transactions are:

(i) covered by IFRS Standards;

(ii) accounted for by applying accounting policies developed using other sources referred to in paragraphs 11–12 of IAS 8; or

(iii) exempt from the requirement to apply paragraph 11 of IAS 8; for example, IFRS 6 *Exploration for and Evaluation of Mineral Resources* exempts entities from applying paragraph 11 of IAS 8 to the recognition and measurement of exploration and evaluation assets; and

(b) in most of the few remaining areas, application of the revised concepts in the 2018 *Conceptual Framework* would be expected to result in similar accounting outcomes to application of the concepts in the *Framework*.

Application by rate-regulated entities

BC38 While assessing possible effects of updating the reference to the *Framework* in IAS 8, the Board identified a potential disadvantage for entities that conduct rate-regulated activities and develop their accounting policies for regulatory account balances by reference to the *Framework* rather than by applying IFRS 14 *Regulatory Deferral Accounts*. If the reference to the *Framework* had been updated, such entities might have needed to revise those accounting policies twice within a short period of time—first, when the 2018 *Conceptual Framework* comes into effect; and, later, when a new IFRS Standard on rate-regulated activities is issued. In the absence of specific guidance, there might have been uncertainty about what would be acceptable if the 2018 *Conceptual Framework* was applied. Establishing what would be acceptable might have been costly and the outcome might have been diversity in practice and a loss of trend information for users.

BC39 To prevent unhelpful and unnecessary disruption for users of the financial statements of entities that conduct rate-regulated activities and for the entities themselves, the Board provided a temporary exception: paragraph 54G prohibits entities from applying the 2018 *Conceptual Framework* to accounting policies relating to regulatory account balances. Instead, entities are required to continue to apply the *Framework* when developing or revising those accounting policies. Once the Board issues a new IFRS Standard on rate-regulated activities, that prohibition is likely to become unnecessary.

BC40 The Board based the definition of 'a regulatory account balance' on the definition of 'a regulatory deferral account balance' in IFRS 14, with one difference: the definition of a regulatory account balance does not mention qualifying for deferral. The reference to deferral in IFRS 14 reflects the fact that IFRS 14 permits continued recognition of some regulatory deferral account balances that an entity previously recognised as assets or liabilities immediately before it adopted IFRS Standards for the first time. In contrast, paragraph 54G of IAS 8 applies only when an entity is not applying IFRS 14 but is instead developing an accounting policy after considering paragraph 11 of IAS 8. Paragraph 54G applies regardless of whether that accounting policy results in recognition of any assets or liabilities, and regardless of whether such recognition could be viewed as deferral.

Transition relief

BC41 The Board concluded that the retrospective application of revised accounting policies in accordance with IAS 8 would provide the most useful information to users of financial statements. However, in order to keep disruption for users and preparers of financial statements to a minimum, the Board decided not to require retrospective application of any amendment in *Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in IFRS Standards* if doing so would either be impracticable or involve undue cost or effort.

Definition of Accounting Estimates (2021 amendments)

Background

BC42 The IFRS Interpretations Committee informed the Board of difficulties entities faced in distinguishing changes in accounting policies from changes in accounting estimates. The Board understood that such difficulties arose because the previous definition of a change in accounting estimate in IAS 8 was not sufficiently clear.

BC43 In February 2021, the Board issued *Definition of Accounting Estimates*, which amended IAS 8. The amendments introduced the definition of accounting estimates in paragraph 5 and included other amendments to IAS 8 to help entities distinguish changes in accounting estimates from changes in accounting policies.

Definition of accounting estimates

BC44 Before the 2021 amendments, IAS 8 included definitions of 'accounting policies' and 'change in accounting estimate'. The combination of a definition of one item (accounting policies) with a definition of changes in another item (change in accounting estimate) obscured the distinction between accounting policies and accounting estimates. To make that distinction clearer, the Board replaced the definition of a change in accounting estimate with a definition of accounting estimates. The main matters the Board considered in developing the definition and related requirements included:

(a) *the relationship between accounting policies and accounting estimates*—the amendments clarify the relationship between accounting policies and accounting estimates by specifying that an entity develops an accounting estimate to achieve the objective set out by an accounting policy. The Board's view was that this clarification would help entities distinguish changes in accounting estimates from changes in accounting policies.

(b) *judgements and assumptions*—when it exposed a draft of the 2021 amendments for comment, the Board proposed defining accounting estimates as judgements and assumptions used in applying accounting policies when an item cannot be measured with precision. However, the Board agreed with feedback suggesting it would be more helpful to specify that accounting estimates are the output of measurement techniques that require an entity to use judgements or assumptions and that the judgements or assumptions are not accounting estimates themselves. This approach also avoids confusion about whether other judgements and assumptions an entity makes in preparing its financial statements are accounting estimates.

(c) *measurement uncertainty*—the Board introduced the term 'measurement uncertainty' in the definition. The Board concluded that using this term would make the definition clearer and be consistent with the 2018 *Conceptual Framework.*[7]

[7] Measurement uncertainty is defined in the Appendix to the 2018 *Conceptual Framework* as the 'uncertainty that arises when monetary amounts in financial reports cannot be observed directly and must instead be estimated'.

(d) *monetary amounts*—the definition refers to monetary amounts for consistency with the definition of measurement uncertainty.[8] The Board considered whether the definition should also refer to non-monetary amounts (for example, the useful life of depreciable assets). However, the Board observed that entities use non-monetary amounts as inputs to estimate monetary amounts in the financial statements—for example, an entity uses the useful life of an asset (a non-monetary amount) as an input in estimating the depreciation expense for that asset (a monetary amount). Because the effects of changes in inputs used to develop an accounting estimate are changes in accounting estimates (see paragraph BC46), the Board concluded that it was unnecessary to also include non-monetary amounts in the definition of accounting estimates.

(e) *scope*—the Board considered whether the definition should also capture estimates used in applying accounting policies for matters other than measuring items in financial statements (for example, estimates used in determining whether to recognise an item in the financial statements). The previous definition of a change in accounting estimate referred to 'adjustments to the carrying amount' of an asset or liability and, therefore, captured only changes in the measurement of items recognised in financial statements. The Board concluded that the amendments should not change the scope of IAS 8 and, accordingly, limited the definition to capture only monetary amounts that are subject to measurement uncertainty.

Changes in accounting estimates

BC45 The previous definition of a change in accounting estimate specified that changes in accounting estimates result from new information or new developments and, accordingly, are not corrections of errors. The Board concluded that it would be helpful to retain this aspect of the previous definition and specify that a change in accounting estimate may result from new information or new developments and is not the correction of an error.

BC46 The Board also concluded that, if accounting estimates are outputs of measurement techniques, it follows that changes in the inputs used, or in the measurement techniques applied to determine those outputs, result in a change in the related accounting estimate and are not the result of a change in accounting policy.

BC47 In the light of its observations summarised in paragraphs BC45–BC46, the Board specified that:

(a) a change in accounting estimate may result from new information or new developments and is not the correction of an error; and

(b) the effects of a change in an input or in a measurement technique used to develop an accounting estimate are changes in accounting estimates unless they result from the correction of prior period errors.

BC48 Feedback on the draft amendments expressed a concern that measurement techniques might meet the definition of accounting policies—for example, a valuation technique is a measurement technique but could also be seen as a practice and, therefore, meet the definition of an accounting policy. Accordingly, there is a risk that the effects of a change in a measurement technique could be seen as both a change in accounting estimate and a change in accounting policy. To avoid this risk, the Board specified in paragraph 34A that the effects of a change in measurement technique are changes in accounting estimates unless they result from the correction of prior period errors.

8 The term 'monetary amount' does not have the same meaning as the term 'monetary item' as defined in IAS 21 *The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates*.

BC49 The Board also specified that measurement techniques an entity uses to develop accounting estimates include estimation techniques and valuation techniques. Specifying this avoids ambiguity about whether the effect of a change in an estimation technique or a valuation technique is a change in accounting estimate. The terms 'estimation techniques' and 'valuation techniques' appear in IFRS Standards—for example, IFRS 7 *Financial Instruments: Disclosures* uses the term 'estimation techniques' and IFRS 13 *Fair Value Measurement* uses the term 'valuation techniques'.

BC50 The Board observed that the term 'estimate' in IFRS Standards sometimes refers not only to accounting estimates, but also to other estimates. For example, it sometimes refers to inputs used in developing accounting estimates. As discussed in paragraph BC47(b), the Board specified that the effects on an accounting estimate of a change in an input are changes in accounting estimates. Therefore, the Board concluded it was unnecessary to also amend references to the term 'estimate' when that term refers to an input used in developing accounting estimates.

Definition of 'accounting policies'

Clarifying the definition

BC51 When it exposed the draft amendments for comment, the Board also proposed to clarify the definition of accounting policies by removing the terms 'conventions' and 'rules', and referring to 'measurement bases' instead of 'bases'. The Board expected that those changes would not change the scope of the definition. However, feedback suggested those proposed changes:

(a) might not improve the definition, because the remaining terms in the definition would remain undefined and could be open to diverse interpretations; and

(b) might unintentionally narrow the scope of the definition.

BC52 After considering this feedback, the Board concluded that it would not be feasible to define the remaining terms in the definition of accounting policies within a narrow-scope project, and that the proposed changes to the definition could have unintended consequences. Because the amendments clarify what a change in accounting estimate is, the Board concluded that changing the definition of accounting policies was unnecessary to achieve the objective of the amendments and accordingly did not change that definition.

Selecting inventory cost formulas

BC53 When it exposed the draft amendments for comment, the Board proposed clarifying that, for ordinarily interchangeable inventories, selecting a cost formula (that is, first-in, first-out (FIFO) or weighted average cost) in applying IAS 2 *Inventories* constitutes selecting an accounting policy. However, some respondents to the draft amendments said selecting a cost formula could also be viewed as making an accounting estimate. The Board observed that paragraph 36(a) of IAS 2 already states that selecting a cost formula constitutes selecting an accounting policy. The Board did not revisit this conclusion in the light of the 2021 amendments because it observed that entities rarely change the cost formula used to measure inventories and, accordingly, there would be little benefit in the Board's doing so.

Illustrative Examples

Deletion of Example 3

BC54 The Board was informed that Example 3 from *Guidance on implementing IAS 8* could cause confusion because of the way it illustrated the accounting for particular changes in the accounting for property, plant and equipment. The Board concluded that addressing this matter would require a substantial rewrite of the example, for little or no benefit. Therefore, the Board deleted Example 3.

Addition of Examples 4–5

BC55 The draft amendments included no examples illustrating the application of the amendments. Respondents to the draft amendments and feedback from subsequent outreach suggested that providing illustrative examples would help entities understand and apply the amendments. In response to this feedback, the Board added two illustrative examples (Examples 4–5). The examples are simple and their aim is limited to helping stakeholders understand how to apply the definition of accounting estimates, rather than aiming to address specific application questions.

Effect analysis

BC56 The Board concluded that the expected benefits of the 2021 amendments outweigh the costs. In particular, the 2021 amendments made the requirements in IAS 8 clearer, and feedback on the draft proposals suggested that the amendments would help entities distinguish changes in accounting policies from changes in accounting estimates.

BC57 Nonetheless, the 2021 amendments might not solve all application questions identified by stakeholders. For example, they may not clarify in all situations whether a change results from:

(a) a change in an underlying measurement objective (which would be a change in accounting policy); or

(b) a change of the measurement technique applied to achieve the same underlying measurement objective (which would be a change in accounting estimate).

BC58 However, the Board concluded that when any uncertainty remains, it could be helpful for an entity to consider the requirement in paragraph 35. That requirement states that when it is difficult to distinguish a change in an accounting policy from a change in an accounting estimate, the entity treats the change as a change in an accounting estimate.

Transition

BC59 The Board concluded that requiring an entity to apply prospectively the 2021 amendments appropriately balances expected benefits and costs. In particular, the Board assessed that the benefits of requiring an entity to apply the amendments to changes that occurred in a prior period would be minimal. Such changes would generally be non-recurring and restatement of comparative information would often not provide more useful trend information for users of financial statements.

Guidance on Implementing IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*

This guidance accompanies, but is not part of, IAS 8.

Example 1 – Retrospective restatement of errors

1.1 During 20X2, Beta Co discovered that some products that had been sold during 20X1 were incorrectly included in inventory at 31 December 20X1 at CU6,500.[1]

1.2 Beta's accounting records for 20X2 show sales of CU104,000, cost of goods sold of CU86,500 (including CU6,500 for the error in opening inventory), and income taxes of CU5,250.

1.3 In 20X1, Beta reported:

	CU
Sales	73,500
Cost of goods sold	(53,500)
Profit before income taxes	20,000
Income taxes	(6,000)
Profit	14,000

1.4 20X1 opening retained earnings was CU20,000 and closing retained earnings was CU34,000.

1.5 Beta's income tax rate was 30 per cent for 20X2 and 20X1. It had no other income or expenses.

1.6 Beta had CU5,000 of share capital throughout, and no other components of equity except for retained earnings. Its shares are not publicly traded and it does not disclose earnings per share.

Beta Co
Extract from the statement of comprehensive income

	20X2 CU	(restated) 20X1 CU
Sales	104,000	73,500
Cost of goods sold	(80,000)	(60,000)
Profit before income taxes	24,000	13,500
Income taxes	(7,200)	(4,050)
Profit	16,800	9,450

continued...

[1] In these examples, monetary amounts are denominated in 'currency units' (CU).

continued…

Beta Co
Statement of changes in equity

	Share capital CU	Retained earnings CU	Total CU
Balance at 31 December 20X0	5,000	20,000	25,000
Profit for the year ended 31 December 20X1 as restated		9,450	9,450
Balance at 31 December 20X1	5,000	29,450	34,450
Profit for the year ended 31 December 20X2		16,800	16,800
Balance at 31 December 20X2	5,000	46,250	51,250

Extracts from the notes

1. Some products that had been sold in 20X1 were incorrectly included in inventory at 31 December 20X1 at CU6,500. The financial statements of 20X1 have been restated to correct this error. The effect of the restatement on those financial statements is summarised below. There is no effect in 20X2.

	Effect on 20X1 CU
(Increase) in cost of goods sold	(6,500)
Decrease in income tax expense	1,950
(Decrease) in profit	(4,550)
(Decrease) in inventory	(6,500)
Decrease in income tax payable	1,950
(Decrease) in equity	(4,550)

Example 2 – Change in accounting policy with retrospective application

[Deleted]

Example 3 - Prospective application of a change in accounting policy when retrospective application is not practicable

[Deleted]

Example 4 – Applying the definition of accounting estimates—Fair value of an investment property

Fact pattern

4.1 Entity A owns an investment property that it accounts for by applying the fair value model in IAS 40 *Investment Property.* Since it acquired the investment property, Entity A has been measuring the investment property's fair value using a valuation technique consistent with the income approach described in IFRS 13 *Fair Value Measurement.*

4.2 However, because of changes in market conditions since the previous reporting period, Entity A changes the valuation technique it uses to a valuation technique consistent with the market approach described in IFRS 13. Entity A has concluded that the resulting measurement is more representative of the investment property's fair value in the circumstances existing at the end of the current reporting period and, therefore, that IFRS 13 permits such a change. Entity A has also concluded that the change in the valuation technique is not a correction of a prior period error.

Applying the definition of accounting estimates

4.3 The fair value of the investment property is an accounting estimate because:

(a) the fair value of the investment property is a monetary amount in the financial statements that is subject to measurement uncertainty. Fair value reflects the price that would be received or paid in a hypothetical sale or purchase transaction between market participants—accordingly, it cannot be observed directly and must instead be estimated.

(b) the fair value of the investment property is an output of a measurement technique (a valuation technique) used in applying the accounting policy (fair value model).

(c) in developing its estimate of the fair value of the investment property, Entity A uses judgements and assumptions, for example, in:

(i) selecting the measurement technique—selecting the valuation technique that is appropriate in the circumstances; and

(ii) applying the measurement technique—developing the inputs that market participants would use in applying the valuation technique, such as information generated by market transactions involving comparable assets.

4.4 In this fact pattern, the change in the valuation technique is a change in the measurement technique applied to estimate the fair value of the investment property. The effect of this change is a change in an accounting estimate because the accounting policy—to measure the investment property at fair value—has not changed.

Example 5 – Applying the definition of accounting estimates—Fair value of a cash-settled share-based payment liability

Fact pattern

5.1 On 1 January 20X0, Entity A grants 100 share appreciation rights (SARs) to each of its employees, provided the employee remains in the entity's employment for the next three years. The SARs entitle the employees to a future cash payment based on the increase in the entity's share price over the three-year vesting period starting on 1 January 20X0.

5.2 Applying IFRS 2 *Share-based Payment,* Entity A accounts for the grant of the SARs as cash-settled share-based payment transactions—in doing so it recognises a liability for the SARs and measures that liability at its fair value (as defined by IFRS 2). Entity A applies the Black–Scholes–Merton formula (an option pricing model) to measure the fair value of the liability for the SARs at 1 January 20X0 and at the end of the reporting period.

5.3 At 31 December 20X1, because of changes in market conditions since the end of the previous reporting period, Entity A changes its estimate of the expected volatility of the share price—an input to the option pricing model—in estimating the fair value of the liability for the SARs at that date. Entity A has concluded that the change in that input is not a correction of a prior period error.

Applying the definition of accounting estimates

5.4 The fair value of the liability is an accounting estimate because:

(a) the fair value of the liability is a monetary amount in the financial statements that is subject to measurement uncertainty. That fair value is the amount for which the liability could be settled in a hypothetical transaction—accordingly, it cannot be observed directly and must instead be estimated.

(b) the fair value of the liability is an output of a measurement technique (option pricing model) used in applying the accounting policy (measuring a liability for a cash-settled share-based payment at fair value).

(c) to estimate the fair value of the liability, Entity A uses judgements and assumptions, for example, in:

(i) selecting the measurement technique—selecting the option pricing model; and

(ii) applying the measurement technique—developing the inputs that market participants would use in applying that option pricing model, such as the expected volatility of the share price and dividends expected on the shares.

5.5 In this fact pattern, the change in the expected volatility of the share price is a change in an input used to measure the fair value of the liability for the SARs at 31 December 20X1. The effect of this change is a change in accounting estimate because the accounting policy—to measure the liability at fair value—has not changed.