

INVITATION TO COMMENT ON EFRAG'S ASSESSMENTS ON IFRS 9 *Financial Instruments*

Comments should be sent to commentletters@efrag.org by 30 June 2015

EFRAG has been asked by the European Commission to provide it with advice and supporting material on IFRS 9 *Financial Instruments* ('IFRS 9' or 'the Standard'). In order to do that, EFRAG has been carrying out an assessment of IFRS 9 against the technical criteria for endorsement set out in Regulation (EC) No 1606/2002 and has also been assessing impact of IFRS 9 on the European public good.

A summary of IFRS 9 is set out in Appendix 1 to the draft endorsement advice letter.

Before finalising its assessments, EFRAG would welcome your views on the issues set out below and any other matters that you wish to raise. Please note that all responses received will be placed on the public record, unless the respondent requests confidentiality. In the interest of transparency EFRAG will wish to discuss the responses it receives in a public meeting, so we would prefer to be able to publish all the responses received.

EFRAG initial assessments summarised in this questionnaire will be amended to reflect EFRAG's decisions in Appendices 2 and 3 of the draft endorsement advice.

Your details

1 Please provide the following details about yourself:

- (a) Your name or, if you are responding on behalf of an organisation or company, its name:

KPMG International Standards Group

- (b) Are you a:

Preparer User Other (please specify)

Member of the KPMG International network which operates as a network of member firms offering audit, tax and advisory services.

- (c) Please provide a short description of your activity:

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KPMG member firms can be found in 155 countries. Collectively they employ more than 162,000 people across a range of disciplines.

- (d) Country where you are located:

United Kingdom

- (e) Contact details including e-mail address:

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Please note that where an answer to a question below indicates agreement with EFRAG’s initial assessment, this represents agreement with the conclusion of the initial assessment as summarised in the respective question and should not be taken to represent agreement with all the detailed points and reasoning included within the Appendices.

EFRAG’s initial assessment with respect to the technical criteria for endorsement

- 2 EFRAG’s initial assessment of IFRS 9 is that it meets the technical criteria for endorsement. In other words, it is not contrary to the principle of true and fair view and it meets meet the criteria of understandability, relevance, reliability and comparability and leads to prudent accounting. EFRAG’s reasoning is set out in Appendix 2, paragraphs 2 to 197 of the draft endorsement advice.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- 3 EFRAG’s initial assessment of IFRS 9 is that it leads to prudent accounting. EFRAG’s reasoning is set out in Appendix 2 paragraphs 185 to 191 of the draft endorsement advice.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

Note: Our response is based on the definition of prudent accounting in paragraph 185 of Appendix 2 (i.e. as “caution in conditions of uncertainty” rather than applying a bias towards conservatism in such circumstances).

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- (b) Are there any issues relating to prudence that are not mentioned in Appendix 2 that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

- (c) Are there any other issues that are not mentioned in Appendix 2 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

The European public good

- 4 In its assessment of the impact of IFRS 9 on the European public good, EFRAG has considered a number of issues that are addressed in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice.

IFRS 9 compared to IAS 39

- 5 EFRAG’s initial assessment of IFRS 9, and particularly with respect to the impairment and hedging requirements, is that it is an improvement over IAS 39 and will lead to higher quality financial reporting. The assessment is reflected in paragraphs 3 to 52 of Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- (b) Are there any issues relating to IFRS 9 compared to IAS 39 that are not mentioned in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9 when comparing to IAS 39? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

The lack of convergence with US GAAP

- 6 EFRAG’s initial assessment is that IFRS 9 will lead to higher quality financial reporting when compared to current US GAAP and proposed changes to impairment requirements. The assessment is reflected in paragraphs 53 to 74 of Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- (b) Are there any issues related to the impact of the lack of convergence that are not mentioned in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9 when comparing with US GAAP? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

Impact on investor and issuer behaviour

- 7 EFRAG’s analysis in this area is based on our understanding of both changes in IFRS 9 and current practices of financial institutions and is not a full impact assessment. In its analysis EFRAG has tried to identify potential negative effects only, to contribute to identifying whether there would be any impediment to IFRS 9 being conducive to the European public good. The assessment is reflected in paragraphs 75 to 99 of Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- (b) Are there any issues related to the impact of IFRS 9 on investor and issuer behaviour that are not mentioned in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

Inter-relationship of IFRS 9 with the future insurance contracts standard

- 8 EFRAG has initially concluded that the mismatch in timing of the future insurance contracts standard and IFRS 9 will create disruptions in the financial reporting of insurance activities which may not be beneficial to investors and other primary users (see Appendix 3, paragraphs 100 to 110 of the draft endorsement advice). Hence EFRAG proposes to advise the European Commission to ask the IASB to defer the effective date of IFRS 9 for insurers and align it with the effective date of the future insurance contracts standard.
- 9 In reaching this preliminary position, EFRAG has relied on quantitative assessments prepared by the European insurance industry and released shortly before EFRAG concluded on its tentative advice to the European Commission. EFRAG intends to deepen its understanding of the effect on the reporting by insurance businesses by implementing IFRS 9 in advance of the forthcoming IFRS 4. EFRAG invites all quantitative evidence that can supplement the impact assessment received from the European insurance industry, including evidence gathered by those who oppose the deferral.

- (a) Do you agree with this assessment and the subsequent advice to the European Commission?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

Yes, we agree that the mismatch in timing of the future insurance contracts standard and IFRS 9 will create disruption in the financial reporting of insurance activities. This may cause problems for both users (as explained in paragraph 105(a)) and preparers (as explained in paragraphs 105(b) and (c)). Subject to the points mentioned below, we also agree with EFRAG’s proposal to advise the European Commission to ask the IASB to defer the effective date

of IFRS 9 for insurance businesses and align it with the effective date of the future insurance contracts standard or to look for alternative workable solutions. We believe that deferring the effective date of IFRS 9 for insurance businesses to align it with the effective date of the future insurance contracts standard would only be appropriate if the latter is issued in the near future and with an effective date that is not long after that of IFRS 9 (1 January 2018), such that the deferral would not persist for a protracted period. In addition, any deferral should be limited to substantial insurance businesses/operations (as opposed to all operations of all entities that issue some contracts that may happen to fall within the scope of the insurance contracts standard) and therefore should be conditional on the development of clearly-stated and operational criteria for distinguishing insurance from other operations and for determining the scope and application of such a deferral.

- (b) Do you think that EFRAG should recommend the EC to grant to insurance businesses a deferred mandatory date of application for the endorsed IFRS 9 if the IASB were not to defer the effective date of IFRS 9?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

As set out under (a) and subject to the conditions stated, we support EFRAG in proposing that the European Commission ask the IASB to defer the effective date of IFRS 9 for insurance businesses globally or to look for alternative workable solutions.

At this point in time, it is not clear whether and how the IASB would respond to this request. For example, problems in meeting the conditions stated above that had not previously been foreseen may arise.

Also, before making any recommendation to the European Commission to defer application in contradiction of the IASB’s effective date, EFRAG would need to consider possible unfavourable consequences of deferring the effective date of IFRS 9 only in the EU, such as a lack of international comparability and the operational challenges for multinational insurance groups.

We therefore consider that it is premature to answer this question at this stage.

However, we believe that any deferral of the effective date for insurance businesses should not prohibit any entity from being able to apply IFRS 9 in accordance with the effective date set by the IASB.

- (c) Are there any issues related to the inter-relationship of IFRS 9 with the future insurance contracts standard that are not mentioned in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9 when assessing the inter-relationship between IFRS 9 and the future insurance contracts standard? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

Appendix 3 does not discuss the ability of an insurer to attempt to reduce accounting mismatches arising on adoption of IFRS 9 by applying shadow accounting or making (other) voluntary changes of accounting policy for insurance contracts under existing IFRS 4. Shadow accounting is capable of reducing accounting mismatches only for participating business and may have limits where negative temporary differences arise between IFRS values and

those relevant for policyholder participation, because recognition of the deferred policyholder assets that the entity expects to be able to recover by reducing amounts to be paid to policyholders may not be allowed in some jurisdictions.

Moreover, we believe that the IASB should consider the costs and impacts for preparers and users of the financial statements of adoption of changes in accounting policy by insurers under existing IFRS 4 in the case where the period between the mandatory effective dates of IFRS 9 and the future insurance contracts is relatively short. At the extreme, this may approximate to requiring early adoption of the future insurance contracts standard. Conversely, to the extent that such changes do not align with the future insurance contracts standard, this implies that they will be short-lived and that there will be further accounting changes for insurance contracts on adoption of the future insurance contracts standard.

European carve-out

- 10 EFRAG has initially concluded that the endorsement of IFRS 9 would not affect the ability of entities to rely on the European carve-out (see Appendix 3, paragraphs 111 to 117 of the draft endorsement advice).

(a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

Consistent with paragraph 117 of Appendix 3, we believe that EFRAG or the European Commission should consult with a legal expert to assess whether an update of the European carve-out is necessary.

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- (b) Are there any issues related to the European carve-out that are not mentioned in Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice that you believe EFRAG should take into account in its technical evaluation of IFRS 9 when assessing the EU carve out? If there are, what are those issues and why do you believe they are relevant to the evaluation?

Costs and benefits of IFRS 9

- 11 EFRAG is assessing the costs that are likely to arise for preparers and for users on implementation of IFRS 9 in the EU, both in year one and in subsequent years. Some

initial work has been carried out, and the responses to this Invitation to Comment will be used to complete the assessment.

- 12 The results of the initial assessment of costs are set out in paragraphs 120 to 155 of Appendix 3 of the draft endorsement advice. To summarise, EFRAG’s initial assessment is that overall, IFRS 9 is likely to result in significant costs for preparers related to implementation of and ongoing costs of complying with the standard. However, IFRS 9 is not likely to result in significant costs for users after the transition. At transition costs will be incurred in understanding the new financial reporting.

(a) Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not and (if possible) explain broadly what you believe the costs involved will be.

- (b) In addition, EFRAG is assessing the benefits that are likely to be derived from the application of IFRS 9. The results of the initial assessment of benefits are set out in paragraphs 156 to 170 of Appendix 3. To summarise, EFRAG’s initial assessment is that overall, users and preparers are both likely to benefit from IFRS 9, as the information resulting from it will be relevant and transparent and therefore will enhance the analysis of users.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not agree with this assessment, please provide your arguments and indicate how this should affect EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

- 13 EFRAG’s initial assessment is that the benefits to be derived from implementing IFRS 9 in the EU as described in paragraph 12 (b) above are likely to outweigh the costs involved as described in paragraph 12 (a) above.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not agree with this assessment, please provide your arguments and indicate how this should affect EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

Overall assessment with respect to the European public good

- 14 EFRAG has initially concluded that endorsement of IFRS 9 would be conducive to the European public good (see Appendix 3, paragraphs 174 to 176 of the draft endorsement advice).

Do you agree with the assessment of these factors?

Yes No

If you do not agree, please explain your reasons.

Other issues for consideration

Request to provide quantitative data on a confidential basis

- 15 EFRAG continues its search for quantitative data in the fields of impairment and the inter-relationship between IFRS 9 and the future insurance contracts standard. EFRAG calls upon constituents who have quantitative data available in these fields, to provide it to EFRAG on a confidential basis during the consultation period of the draft endorsement advice. Data provided will be used in finalising the endorsement advice but will not be made public.

The collection of these data is subject to EFRAG’s field-work policy which is available on the EFRAG website.

Should endorsement be halted until quantitative data are available?

- 16 Based on the results of our questionnaire follow up to the field-tests, it can take up to 2017 to have quantitative impacts of the implementation of IFRS 9 available. It has been argued by some that the quantitative impacts of IFRS 9 should be known before endorsement of the standard is decided upon. EFRAG does not agree with this view and believes that the improvements brought to financial reporting by IFRS 9 should not be withheld from European companies for a period that long.

Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.

Should early application of IFRS 9 be prohibited?

- 17 It has been argued by some that early application of IFRS 9 should not be allowed for specific regulated industries. EFRAG does not agree with this and is of the opinion that entities should be able to apply IFRS 9 early (see Appendix 2, paragraphs 192 to 195 of the draft endorsement advice).

Do you agree with this assessment?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain why you do not agree and what you believe the implications of this should be for EFRAG’s endorsement advice.