



IFRS Alert

Exposure Draft – Regulatory Assets and Regulatory Liabilities

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Executive Summary

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has now published an Exposure Draft ‘Regulatory Assets and Regulatory Liabilities’ (the ED). The ED proposes to replace IFRS 14 ‘Regulatory Deferral Accounts’ and require entities subject to rate regulation to give investors better information about their financial performance.

The proposed Standard would introduce a requirement for entities to give investors such information by reporting regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities in their statement of financial position, and related regulatory income and regulatory expense in their statement of profit or loss.

The ED is open for comment until 30 June 2021.

Current requirements

Rate regulation is common in some industries like utilities and public transport industries. It determines the amount an entity can charge its customers for goods or services supplied to them and the period when the reporting entity can charge that amount.

In some cases, the period when an entity supplies goods or services can be different from the period when the company can charge customers for those goods or services. Therefore, the supply can be different from the period when the entity recognises revenue in its statement of profit or loss.

When those differences in timing occur, the revenue an entity recognises for a period in its statement of profit or loss and the assets and liabilities it reports in its statement of financial position do not give the correct information of the amount that the rate regulation allows the company to charge for goods or services supplied in that period.

Currently, IFRS 14 does not require entities to disclose any information about those timing differences.

ED Proposals

The proposals will require entities to reflect the total compensation to which they are entitled for the goods or services supplied in a period as part of their reported financial performance for that period. This would be achieved by recognising regulatory assets, regulatory liabilities, regulatory income and regulatory expense.

Supporting the ED is a comprehensive Basis for Conclusions document that includes a dissenting view expressed by one member of the IASB. The IASB has also provided 12 illustrative examples in a separate publication.

The table on the next page summarises the key elements to the ED:



Topic	Detail of the proposals
Objective	To replace IFRS 14 ‘Regulatory Deferral Accounts’ which was an interim standard for rate regulatory activities requiring entities subject to rate regulation to give users of the financial statements better information about their financial performance.
Scope	The Standard would apply to entities subject to rate regulation – ie situations where the rates entities can charge to customers for goods and services it provides are pre-determined.
Recognition	<p>Regulatory assets and liabilities would be recognised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a regulatory asset, and corresponding regulatory income, when an entity has an enforceable present right under the regulatory agreement because it has already supplied goods or services to customers. • a regulatory liability, and corresponding regulatory expense, when an entity has an enforceable present obligation under the regulatory agreement because it has already charged an amount to customers, and hence included that amount in revenue already recognised. <p>As a result, entities would be required to reflect the total allowed compensation for goods or services supplied in the same period in which it supplied those goods or services.</p>
Measurement	<p>Entities would measure regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities by estimating all future cash flows and discounting them to their present value.</p> <p>At the end of each reporting period, entities would update estimates of future cash flows to reflect any changes in their estimated timings or amounts.</p>
Presentation	In the statement of financial position, entities would present regulatory assets and liabilities as separate line items. In the statement of profit or loss, the ED proposes entities present regulatory income minus regulatory expense in a separate line item immediately below revenue.
Disclosure	<p>The ED proposes entities disclose information about regulatory income, regulatory expense, regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities, in the notes to the financial statements. This information, would provide users of financial statements with a basis for understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relationship between revenue and expenses for the reporting period, which would provide insights into the entities’ possible future cash flows, and • regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities at the end of the reporting period, which would give insights into how regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities will affect the amount, timing and uncertainty of the entities’ future cash flows.
Effective date	The ED does not propose an effective date but is likely to be effective up to two years after the new standard is published. The standard would be applied retrospectively with one transitional provision being included and early adoption would be permitted.



Next steps

The ED is open for comment until 30 June 2021.



Our thoughts

We believe this ED is an important step towards consistent accounting for rate regulated entities. IFRS 14 has served a good purpose as the interim standard but does accept several accounting approaches which makes it more difficult for the users of financial statements to analyse and compare results of different entities.

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