

IFRS 2 Share-based Payment (May 2006)

Share plans with cash alternatives at the discretion of employees: grant date and vesting periods

The IFRIC considered an employee share plan in which employees were provided a choice to have cash at one date or shares at a later date. At the date the transactions were entered into, the parties involved understood the terms and conditions of the plans including the formula that would be used to determine the amount of cash to be paid to each individual employee (or the number of shares to be delivered to each individual employee) but the exact amount of cash or number of shares would only be known at a future date. The IFRIC was asked to confirm the grant date and vesting period for such share plans.

The IFRIC noted that IFRS 2 defines grant date as the date when there is a shared understanding of the terms and conditions. Moreover, IFRS 2 does not require grant date to be the date when the exact amount of cash to be paid (or the exact number of shares to be delivered) is known to the parties involved. The IFRIC further noted that share-based payment transactions with cash alternatives at the discretion of the counterparty are addressed in paragraphs 34 - 40 of IFRS 2. Paragraph 35 of IFRS 2 states that, if an entity has granted the counterparty the right to choose whether a share-based payment transaction is settled in cash or by issuing equity instruments, the entity has granted a compound financial instrument, which includes a debt component (i.e. the counterparty's right to demand cash payment) and an equity component (i.e. the counterparty's right to demand settlement in equity instruments). Paragraph 38 of IFRS 2 states that the entity shall account separately for goods or services received or acquired in respect of each component of the compound financial instrument. The IFRIC, therefore, believed that the vesting period of the equity component and that of the debt component should be determined separately and the vesting period of each component may be different. The IFRIC believed that, since 'grant date' is defined in IFRS 2 and the requirements set out in paragraphs 34 - 40 of IFRS 2 are clear, the issues are not expected to create significant divergence in practice. The IFRIC, therefore, decided that the issues should not be taken onto the agenda.