Using the IFRS Taxonomy

A regulator's guide

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The IASB is the independent standard-setting body of the IFRS Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation promoting the adoption of IFRSs. For more information visit www.ifrs.org

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Introduction

1. The aim of this guide is to help regulators and other organisations using, or thinking of using, the IFRS Taxonomy™[1] within an electronic filing system. This document does not assume knowledge of IFRS or XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) but it may help to have read introductory materials on both these subjects.

2. This guide includes:

   (a) A brief introduction to the IFRS Taxonomy

   (b) Options for the use of the IFRS Taxonomy in a filing system

   (c) Best practice recommendations

3. This guide does not include a detailed technical documentation or information for preparers.

4. This document forms part of a set of documentation aimed at supporting the use and adoption of the IFRS Taxonomy around the world by regulators, preparers, investors and any other organisations.

Getting started

Which filing systems should use the IFRS Taxonomy?

5. The IFRS Taxonomy is intended for use in electronic filing systems requiring or allowing the mark-up of IFRS financial information. These filing systems may exist for a range of purposes including securities regulation, company registration, financial services regulation and taxation.

6. The most common use is in systems requiring that IFRS financial statements are filed with a regulatory authority however the IFRS Taxonomy can also be used in systems only requiring a summary of IFRS financial figures to be filed or a form (or other report) containing IFRS based figures as one of many contributing sources of information.

[1] The IFRS Taxonomy is a trade mark of the IFRS Foundation

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7. The main purpose for the use of the IFRS Taxonomy in all these different types of systems is the clear and consistent electronic identification of information reported under IFRS.

Deciding how to use the IFRS Taxonomy

8. Before reading the following sections introducing the different ways to incorporate the IFRS Taxonomy in a filing system it may be worth having thought about some of the following questions:

- What is the information to be used for?
    - Publication, private use or both
    - Later analysis of information provided or for disclosure only
    - If analysis is expected – what kind of analysis
        - Validation of calculations
        - Cross statement comparisons
        - Cross company or industry comparisons
- Who will be using the information?
    - The filing system owner
    - Investors (via freely published statements, paid for services, data feeds)
    - Preparers themselves
    - Data aggregators
- What information is being collected?
    - IFRS statements
        - All information reported or particular statements/notes
        - Face statements vs notes
        - Summary information extracted from statements
    - Local information requirements
    - Areas of corporate reporting other than those provided under IFRSs
    - Entity specific information
- How often will the information update or change?
- What supporting documentation or languages are needed to meet your specific local needs?

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9. The answers to these questions will help later decisions on which parts of the IFRS Taxonomy are most appropriate to use.

Entity specific information

10. The most common use for the IFRS Taxonomy is with the electronic filing of IFRS financial statements. IFRS financial statements are principles based and as a result may contain a number of entity specific reported disclosures. The IFRS Taxonomy does not aim to cover all possible entity specific items and as such it may not be possible for the whole of an IFRS financial statement to be mapped to the IFRS Taxonomy.

11. The IFRS Taxonomy is supplied with the capacity for entity-specific extensions. Future releases of the IFRS Taxonomy may include specific features to better facilitate the tagging and semantic understanding of entity-specific extensions. This is currently being reviewed by the IFRS Taxonomy team.

The IFRS Taxonomy documentation

12. The IFRS Taxonomy is supported by a range of documentation aimed at allowing users to review and understand its content without having to read the XBRL files directly.

13. For more information on the full range of documentation see the *IFRS Taxonomy Introductory Guide.* Documentation or publications which may be of particular interest when looking at how to use the IFRS Taxonomy when setting up a filing system include:

    (a) The IFRS Taxonomy introductory guide (pending)

    (b) The IFRS Taxonomy paper on handling entity specific items (assuming we write one)

    (c) The *Guide to Understanding the IFRS Taxonomy Update*

    (d) IFRS Taxonomy updates

    (e) The versioned IFRS Taxonomy Illustrated

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IFRS Taxonomy updates and release

14. The IFRS Taxonomy is updated in line with the release of new Standards with taxonomy updates occurring throughout the year. Additionally updates may be released as a result of common practice projects or technology updates. Each year an annual compilation of all updates is also produced. For full details on how IFRS Taxonomy release are timed and produced please see the IFRS due process documentation.

15. All IFRS Taxonomy updates and annual releases contain a full set of IFRS Taxonomy files and can be used within a filing system. The updates during the year are not scheduled for specific dates as they are dependent on the IFRS work plan. The annual IFRS Taxonomy is released at the beginning of each year before the end of March.

16. A regulator must keep the version of the IFRS Taxonomy used within a filing system up to date so that they are in line with the latest published IFRSs. Older versions of the taxonomy will not have updates to the common practice items and will not contain the elements required to support new standards and amendments available for early adoption. Where required multiple versions of the IFRS Taxonomy can be used within a system at the same time to allow preparers and users time to move to newer versions as required.

The IFRS Taxonomy in XBRL

Introduction

17. The IFRS Taxonomy in XBRL is for use with filing systems making use of XBRL as their filing communication format. XBRL is a flexible and extensible standard so the following sections look at ways the IFRS Taxonomy can be used within a filing system and how these may be influenced by the requirements of the system.

18. For more information on how to use and work with XBRL please see the XBRL International Website (http://www.xbrl.org)

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Overall architecture

19. The IFRS Taxonomy in XBRL is divided into sets of individual files and folders generally called a file architecture. This architecture allows the information defined in the XBRL taxonomy to be divided into modules and categories making management of the taxonomy easier and allowing users to make use of the IFRS Taxonomy components most relevant to them.

20. The IFRS Taxonomy consists of the following types of files and resources:

Element schemas

21. XBRL uses a number of XML based standards to provide the syntax for defining a taxonomy. One of these standards is XML Schema[2]. This standard is used for the files providing the core element definitions for taxonomy items.

Entry points

22. An entry point is a mechanism for specifying a particular set or subset of taxonomy files. For example in the IFRS Taxonomy there is an entry point specifying the files required to use the IFRS Taxonomy for SME reporting only. The entry points allow the taxonomy to be navigated with different sets of information for different user purposes. They may also be used directly by preparers when creating XBRL reports where no local regulator extension of the taxonomy has been created and the level of customization expected from preparers is low.

Linkbases

23. The linkbases are a mechanism used by XBRL to provide relationship information about the concepts defined in a taxonomy. The XBRL linkbases fall into two categories:

    (a) Relationships between taxonomy items

        (i) Presentation relationships – used by the IFRS Taxonomy primarily for taxonomy navigation

[2] http://www.w3.org/XML/Schema.html

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(ii) Definition relationships – this linkbase is also used to define the tables used in the taxonomy. This is the only feature of this linkbase used in IFRS Taxonomy.

(iii) Calculation relationship – the IFRS Taxonomy uses this linkbase to provide general summation relationships.

(b) Relationships between taxonomy items and a resource

(i) Labels. The IFRS Taxonomy provides concept labels in English. For some concepts, labels for alternative uses exist such as to express labels for values at the beginning of the reporting period or at the end of the reporting period. The IFRS Taxonomy in particular makes use of the type of label provided for additional documentation to provide the documentation labels (sometimes called definitions).

(ii) References to the IFRS Standards. References are classified into three groups – Disclosure, Example and Common Practice. For more information on how this classification works please see the *IFRS Taxonomy technical guide*.

Namespaces

24. Namespaces are a mechanism used by XBRL to group and identify defined elements and other features of taxonomies and filings. A Namespace usually has an associated prefix to use a shorter term for referring to the namespace. All IFRS Taxonomy items and files use namespaces clearly based on the IFRS.org domain[3] and associate these namespaces with IFRS prefixes (ifrs-full etc.).

25. For more information on Namespaces and how they work please see the XBRL specifications and the XML specifications they are based on.

The following diagram gives an overview of the IFRS Taxonomy components and the major files.

[3] A namespace is not required to be a functional website URL but the majority of those in use in XBRL use the URL as a convenient format

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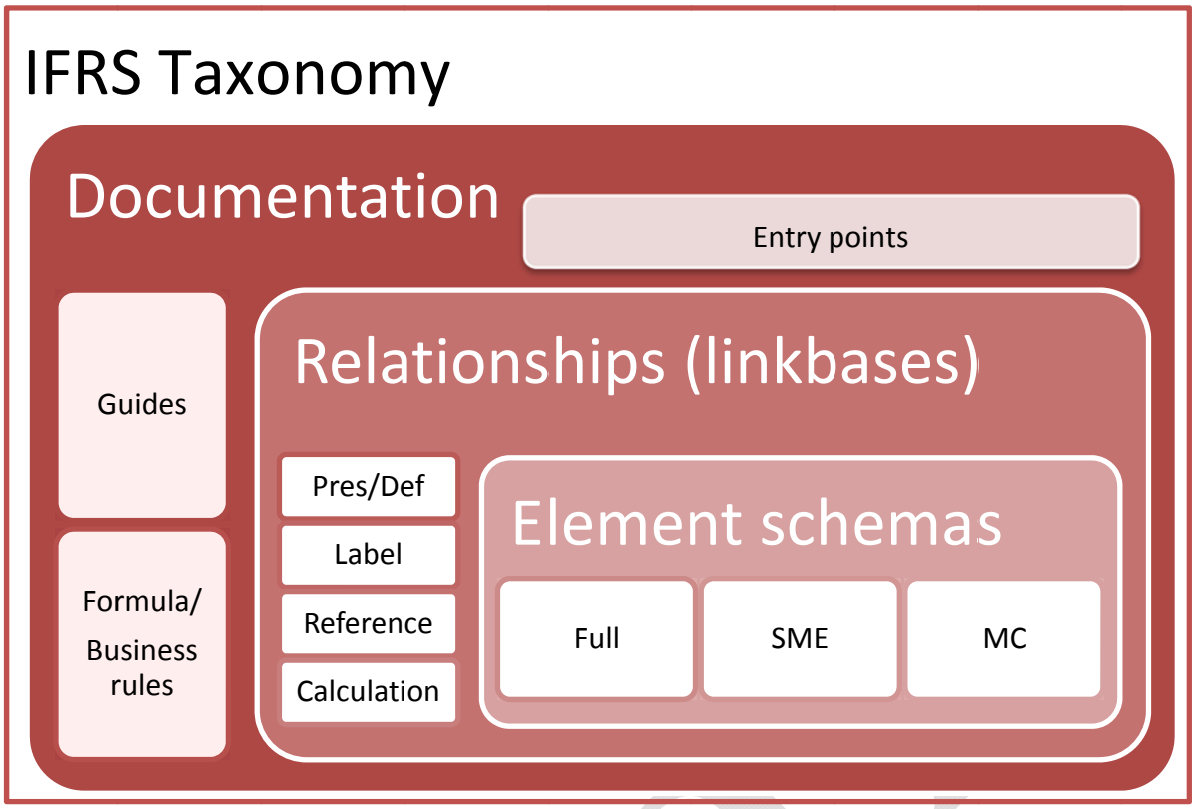


Detailed architecture

26. For more detailed information on the IFRS Taxonomy XBRL architecture please see the *IFRS Taxonomy Technical Guide*.

Using the IFRS Taxonomy

27. The IFRS Taxonomy can be included within an XBRL filing system in a number of ways. The following are the most common and generally recommended mechanisms for making use of the IFRS Taxonomy.

28. It is possible for the types detailed below to be combined – so for example the IFRS Taxonomy may be used with extension for local concepts but also alongside taxonomies provided for items common with other systems.

29. In XBRL technical terms most changes to a base taxonomy also require additional files even if no new concepts are created and thus are also referred to as extensions. For the purposes of this document however extension types are split into two categories:

(a) **Extension** – An extension of the IFRS Taxonomy is when additional reporting concepts are added

(b) **Customization** – A customization is when no new taxonomy elements are added to the IFRS Taxonomy but changes are made to allow the addition of files to adapt the IFSR Taxonomy for local use. For example the addition of labels in other languages or alternative presentation views of the taxonomy more familiar to local preparers.

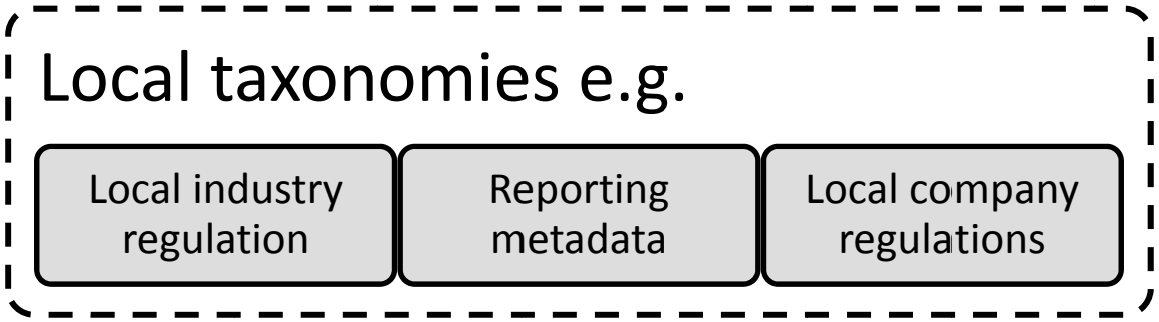
30. The diagrams accompanying the following sections illustrate which components of the IFRS Taxonomy are most likely to be those used. These are highlighted in red. Components coloured in grey or black would be replaced where necessary by local taxonomy components or not used. These diagrams are not prescriptive; some uses include a choice of components and materials.

No regulator extension or customisation

Description

31. The IFRS Taxonomy can be used in a filing system with no regulator extension or customisation at all. This does not mean that a regulator cannot provide additional tags or filing items only that they are not provided as an extension of the IFRS Taxonomy file structure.

32. Optionally additional XBRL taxonomies can be provided or permitted for use by a regulator alongside the IFRS Taxonomy in order to allow any additional local information or other requirements to be included using the same reports. Similarly associated material may be collected using related electronic filing standards such as XML.



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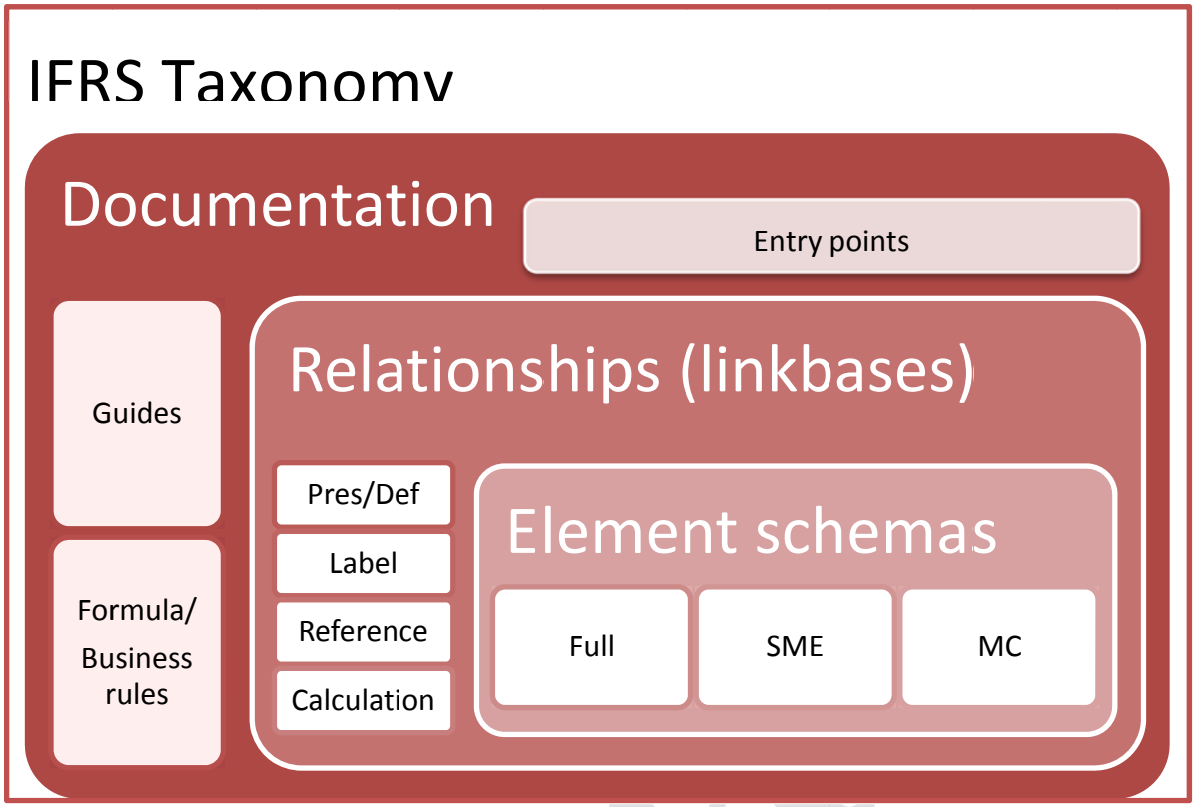

Preparer use

33. A preparer in a filing system of this nature is usually required to refer directly to any of the taxonomies they use when creating their report.

34. For example they would refer directly to the appropriate IFRS Taxonomy as specified by the owner of the filing system and directly to a local taxonomy for reporting metadata (report dates, type of report) and maybe also a local taxonomy for local company regulations (such as for instance director's report, legal statements etc.)

Features

35. Using the IFRS Taxonomy directly in this fashion is particularly suitable for a system where:

- The owner of the filing system does not wish to include additional reporting elements within the context of the IFRS Taxonomy. For example there is no requirement for additional elements or there is no need for additional elements to have relationships with IFRS Taxonomy elements.

- Local reporting elements are likely to be updated on a different schedule to the IFRS reporting elements, for example the system might require preparers to use the latest annual IFRS Taxonomy each year to reflect new Standards but the local reporting elements might require updating much less frequently.
- Preparers are expected to provide some information around entity specific elements not defined by the IFRS Taxonomy (for example create extension items and taxonomy or provide simple links to IFRS Taxonomy items) *or* information on the entity specific elements of a report is not required[4].

No regulator extension but customisation

Description

36. This option is very similar to that of no extension described above. The regulator does not provide additional concepts as an extension to the IFRS Taxonomy but additional relationships, resources or documentation may be added.

37. Example customisations are:

    (a) translations of the IFRS Taxonomy labels provided in local languages. These can be used with the rest of the IFRS Taxonomy by making use of functionality provided by some software or by creating a local language entry point for the IFRS Taxonomy.

    (b) The addition of references to local resources and references for IFRS filings

    (c) entry points providing access to a subset of files and/or including access to additional translations and materials

Preparer use

38. A preparer in a filing system of this nature may be required to refer to taxonomies they use via customised entry points or if the customised material is for documentation only then the filing may still point directly to the taxonomies used.

[4] Please note that staff have started a t a review of the XBRL mechanisms for extending taxonomies in particular for preparers so that they can provide entity specific information in a meaningful way to users of electronic IFRS financial statements.

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Features

39. A customised IFRS Taxonomy would most suitable for systems as described above for an IFRS Taxonomy with no regulator extension.

40. In particular however where the filing system owner would like to provide a customised view or views of the taxonomy for preparers more relevant to their local environment.

Use IFRS Taxonomy elements only

Description

41. The core elements of the IFRS Taxonomy are defined in individual schema files that can be used as the basis for an extending XBRL Taxonomy. This extending taxonomy can then provide all the relationship information customised for the local reporting environment or system.

42. In this case all aspects of the local taxonomy such as documentation and relationships would be created depending on the requirements of the filing system. As well as local relationships and documentation, local elements can be included as one or more element schemas and placed in context with appropriate IFRS Taxonomy elements. Alternative labels, for example to provide a translation or to use local practice terms would also be provided in this type of extension as it assumes no need for the IFRS English language labels.

43. When creating an extension taxonomy in this fashion it is only necessary to import the required IFRS elements schema – for example a system with no SME reporting may not import the schema containing elements for use with IFRS for SMEs.

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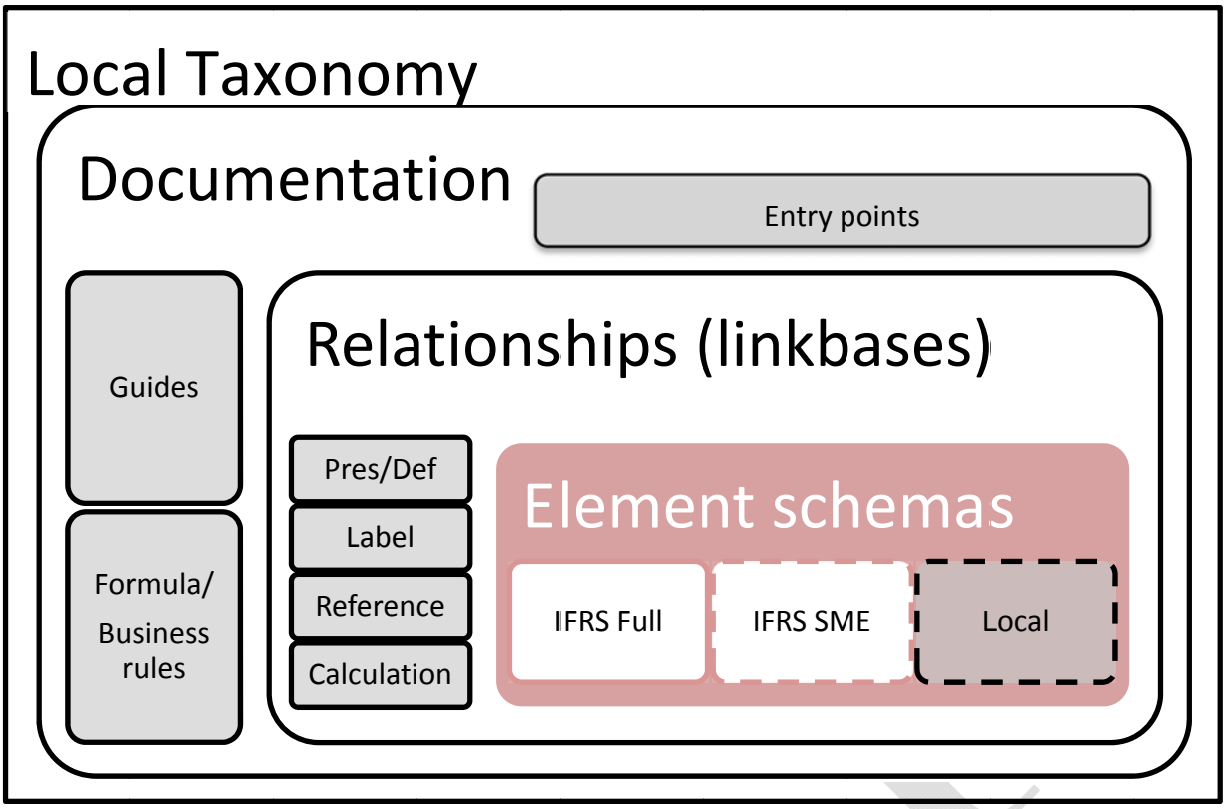

Preparer use

44. A preparer would usually refer only to the local extension taxonomy or other specified entry point. Any IFRS Taxonomy elements from the imported IFRS schemas would then be available. When a regulator does not require the whole IFRS financial statements to be tagged, there may be a rule in the filing system restricting the IFRS Taxonomy items for use to those available in the presentation linkbase. This makes navigation of the taxonomy easier for preparers as only the subset of items applicable to the information to be tagged is presented.

Features

45. Using the IFRS Taxonomy in this fashion is particularly suitable for a system where:

- the filing system owner would like to provide some more specific elements for use in reporting where entity specific extensions within a jurisdiction can be anticipated to some extent.
- there is a requirement to add items to represent local regulations or reporting items.
- there is a requirement to place local and IFRS elements in context together – for example if the local elements include additional information or a larger number of elements for very flexible areas of reporting. These local elements are given

relationships such as presentation and calculation to clearly indicate which IFRS Taxonomy items they are related to.

- Where the filing system owner would like to provide a customised presentation views or views of the taxonomy for preparers more relevant to their local environment
- Where the filing system owner would like to provide some more specific elements for use in reporting where entity specific extensions are more predicable for a jurisdiction.

Use IFRS Taxonomy elements plus supplementary information

Description

46. This option is similar to the extension making use of the IFRS element schemas only but other IFRS Taxonomy resources might also be retained in order to preserve more of the documentation and relationship information provided with the IFRS Taxonomy.

47. The most commonly retained information for these purposes are the IFRS Taxonomy labels, the references and the documentation.

48. A system owner may wish to make use of the IFRS presentation and definition linkbases in the case where a significant proportion of the IFRS Taxonomy presentation remains the same. It is recommended however that the XBRL mechanisms for overriding or replacing sections of linkbase are used with caution or not used at all.

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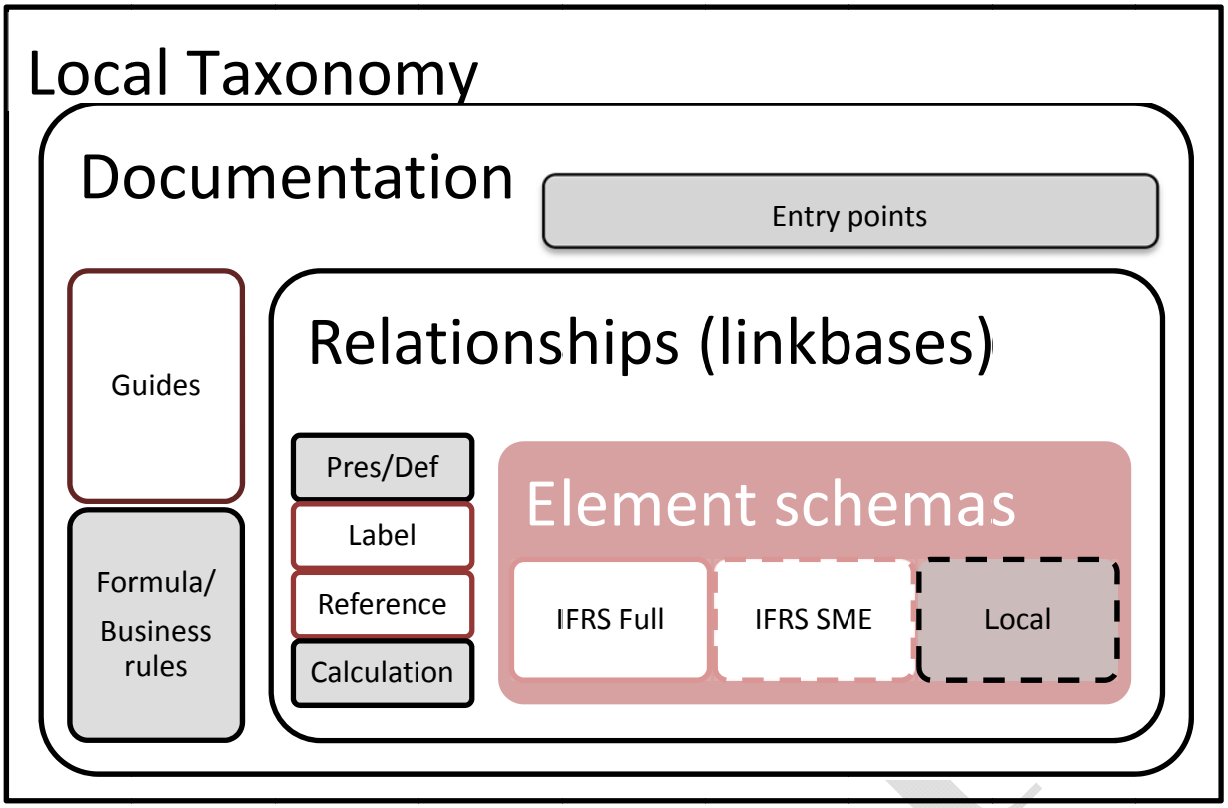

Preparer use

49. A preparer would usually refer only to the local extension taxonomy or other specified entry point. Any IFRS Taxonomy elements from the imported IFRS schemas would then be available. When a regulator does not require the whole IFRS financial statements to be tagged, there may be a rule in the filing system restricting the IFRS Taxonomy items for use to those available in the presentation linkbase. This makes navigation of the taxonomy easier for preparers as only the subset of items applicable to the information to be tagged is presented.

Features

50. Using the IFRS Taxonomy in this fashion is particularly suitable for a system where:

- There is a requirement to place local and IFRS elements in context together – for example if the local elements include additional information or a larger number of elements for very flexible areas of reporting. These local elements are given relationships such as presentation and calculation to clearly indicate which IFRS Taxonomy items they are related to.
- Where the filing system owner would like to provide a customised view or views of the taxonomy for preparers more relevant to their local environment but would like to

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retain information provided within the IFRS Taxonomy linkbases or other documentation.

- Where the filing system owner would like to provide some more specific elements for use in reporting where entity specific extensions could reduce in number or are more predicable for some jurisdictions.

Extension style and architecture – best practice

51. It is possible for taxonomies created in XBRL to have quite different characteristics and for very similar items in a financial report to be represented using different XBRL features. As a result in order to promote the consistent use of the IFRS Taxonomy regulators using the IFRS taxonomy should consider how they integrate their customisations, extensions or additional taxonomies with the IFRS Taxonomy.

52. A number of these architectural decisions may require some knowledge of the XBRL standard and more information on exactly how these features work can be found in the *IFRS Taxonomy Technical Guide* and on the XBRL International website.

Using IFRS Taxonomy elements

53. A regulator must make use of IFRS Taxonomy elements where possible rather than creating extension items duplicating the meaning of existing items. As such we would expect a local regulator extension to use as much of the IFRS Taxonomy as possible given what is applicable to their filing system. It also assumes that regulators regularly update their taxonomy.

54. Any IFRS Taxonomy elements associated with regulator extensions should also remain available in the extension taxonomy. This is to allow preparers and other users to see how the new local items relate to the IFRS Taxonomy items. For example if a local taxonomy includes a more detailed breakdown for an element included in the IFRS Taxonomy that breakdown should be associated with the original IFRS Taxonomy where possible (using whichever linkbases the local taxonomy is making use of) rather than wholly replacing the higher level IFRS Taxonomy item. If the additional local items do not have any relationship to any IFRS Taxonomy item then this is not necessary.

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IFRS Taxonomy element labels, documentation and references

55. As noted above some uses of the IFRS Taxonomy continue to use the labels, documentation and/or references provided with the IFRS Taxonomy. If this is the case then a regulator must not edit the values provided in the IFRS Taxonomy. If an alternative or edited value is required then the regulator should provide this as a taxonomy customisation. This customised value can be provided with a higher priority in order to cause software to present it to users as the main label.

Relationships between IFRS Taxonomy elements

56. The IFRS Taxonomy includes a number of linkbases describing the relationships between elements. These relationships can be reused and customised in a similar fashion to that described for labels and other resources above. If the level of customisation required is greater in extent than for a few items or sections then it is recommended to create new linkbases from scratch. The linkbases provided with the IFRS Taxonomy are provided as modular files so if required individual files can be replaced without replacing the whole structure.

57. If a regulator intends to use the linkbases, usually the presentation linkbase, as a way of describing which IFRS Taxonomy items are permitted for use (where some are not) then this must be made clear to all users of the customised or extended taxonomy.

Prohibiting IFRS relationships

58. XBRL also provides a mechanism for prohibiting links between items and between items and resources so that the replaced or prohibited link is no longer displayed by software. Regulators should not use this feature unless the IFRS Taxonomy links or resources being replaced or removed would not be applicable to the local filing mandate. This is used for instance when the tagging mandate only applies to a subset of IFRS financial statements. We would expect in most circumstances that the material provided by the IFRS Taxonomy would still have some use and validity as context and documentation.

Extending tables

59. Within XBRL there are a number of ways of describing information generally reported as multi-dimensional tables. The tables represented in the IFRS Taxonomy

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are modelled using one of these XBRL features – explicit dimensions. Example uses of explicit dimensions in the IFRS Taxonomy include *Classes of property plant and equipment*, *Classes of financial assets* and *Segments.* These require that all values that might be expected in a category be enumerated in the taxonomy – whether this is in the base taxonomy, local regulator taxonomy or a preparer taxonomy. There are a number of these categories in the IFRS Taxonomy where it was deemed that global common practice could not be anticipated and as such a place holder for a category is available but it is expected that individual values are either provided later by a regulator or preparer. Examples where this is the case include *Segments* and *Geographical area.*

60. A regulator should consider these dimensions when deciding on their use of the IFRS Taxonomy. If a dimension exists for a category then a regulator must extend that dimension where possible rather than create new dimensions.

Typed dimensions

61. Another mechanism that XBRL provides for creating reporting tables is Typed dimensions. These do not require that the values are known in advance and these values can be specified as necessary by preparers without requiring an extension taxonomy. These are not used by the IFRS Taxonomy as in general we feel most cases in IFRS financial statements can be reported most accurately by using explicit dimensions and we aim to use a clear subset of the features available in XBRL. A regulator local taxonomy or extension may make use of Typed dimensions but should not do so in such a way that they conflict with or contradict the IFRS Taxonomy.

Tuples

62. Tuples is a further mechanism provided by XBRL for the representation of groupings or tables of information. Tuples create a nested XBRL structure allowing terms to be grouped directly under parents. As with Typed dimensions the IFRS Taxonomy does not use Tuples but there may be circumstances where they are appropriate for use in local taxonomies. A regulator local taxonomy or extension may make use of Tuples but should not do so in such a way that they conflict with or contradict the IFRS Taxonomy.

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Namespaces

63. A regulator must not use the IFRS Taxonomy elements and their supporting links and documentations in such a way that they are no longer associated with the IFRS namespace. They must not (for example) move the defined IFRS Taxonomy element and associated material into the namespace(s) identifying their own taxonomy items.

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