

IAS 12 *Income Taxes* (May 2009)

Classification of tonnage taxes

The IFRIC received a request for guidance on whether a tax based on tonnage capacity can be considered an income tax in accordance with IAS 12. The IFRIC noted that the term ‘tonnage tax’ is applied to a variety of tax regimes. In some jurisdictions, shipping companies are permitted to choose to be taxed on the basis of tonnage transported, tonnage capacity or a notional profit instead of the standard corporate income tax regulations. In some jurisdictions, this choice is irrevocable.

The IFRIC has previously noted that IAS 12 applies to income taxes, which are defined as taxes that are based on taxable profit, and that the term ‘taxable profit’ implies a notion of a net rather than a gross amount. Taxes either on tonnage transported or tonnage capacity are based on gross rather than net amounts. Taxes on a notional income derived from tonnage capacity are not based on the entity’s actual income and expenses. Consequently, the IFRIC noted that such taxes would not be considered income taxes in accordance with IAS 12 and would not be presented as part of tax expense in the statement of comprehensive income. However, the IFRIC also noted that, in accordance with paragraph 85 of IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements*, an entity subject to tonnage tax would present additional subtotals in that statement if that presentation is relevant to an understanding of its financial performance. Given the requirements of IAS 12, the IFRIC decided not to add the issue to its agenda.