

SIC Interpretation 32**Intangible Assets—Web Site Costs**

This version includes amendments resulting from IFRSs issued up to 31 December 2008.

SIC-32 *Intangible Assets—Web Site Costs* was developed by the Standing Interpretations Committee and issued in March 2002.

Since then, SIC-32 has been amended by the following IFRSs:

- IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment* (as revised in December 2003)
- IFRS 3 *Business Combinations* (issued March 2004)
- IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (as revised in September 2007).^{*}

^{*} effective date 1 January 2009

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SIC Interpretation 32 *Intangible Assets—Web Site Costs* (SIC-32) is set out in paragraphs 7–10. SIC-32 is accompanied by a Basis for Conclusions and an appendix illustrating the application of the Interpretation. The scope and authority of Interpretations are set out in paragraphs 2 and 7–17 of the *Preface to International Financial Reporting Standards*.

SIC Interpretation 32

Intangible Assets—Web Site Costs

References

- IAS 1 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (as revised in 2007)
- IAS 2 *Inventories* (as revised in 2003)
- IAS 11 *Construction Contracts*
- IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment* (as revised in 2003)
- IAS 17 *Leases* (as revised in 2003)
- IAS 36 *Impairment of Assets* (as revised in 2004)
- IAS 38 *Intangible Assets* (as revised in 2004)
- IFRS 3 *Business Combinations*

Issue

- 1 An entity may incur internal expenditure on the development and operation of its own web site for internal or external access. A web site designed for external access may be used for various purposes such as to promote and advertise an entity's own products and services, provide electronic services, and sell products and services. A web site designed for internal access may be used to store company policies and customer details, and search relevant information.
- 2 The stages of a web site's development can be described as follows:
 - (a) Planning – includes undertaking feasibility studies, defining objectives and specifications, evaluating alternatives and selecting preferences.
 - (b) Application and Infrastructure Development – includes obtaining a domain name, purchasing and developing hardware and operating software, installing developed applications and stress testing.
 - (c) Graphical Design Development – includes designing the appearance of web pages.
 - (d) Content Development – includes creating, purchasing, preparing and uploading information, either textual or graphical in nature, on the web site before the completion of the web site's development. This information may either be stored in separate databases that are integrated into (or accessed from) the web site or coded directly into the web pages.
- 3 Once development of a web site has been completed, the Operating stage begins. During this stage, an entity maintains and enhances the applications, infrastructure, graphical design and content of the web site.
- 4 When accounting for internal expenditure on the development and operation of an entity's own web site for internal or external access, the issues are:

- (a) whether the web site is an internally generated intangible asset that is subject to the requirements of IAS 38; and
 - (b) the appropriate accounting treatment of such expenditure.
- 5 This Interpretation does not apply to expenditure on purchasing, developing, and operating hardware (eg web servers, staging servers, production servers and Internet connections) of a web site. Such expenditure is accounted for under IAS 16. Additionally, when an entity incurs expenditure on an Internet service provider hosting the entity's web site, the expenditure is recognised as an expense under IAS 1.88 and the *Framework* when the services are received.
- 6 IAS 38 does not apply to intangible assets held by an entity for sale in the ordinary course of business (see IAS 2 and IAS 11) or leases that fall within the scope of IAS 17. Accordingly, this Interpretation does not apply to expenditure on the development or operation of a web site (or web site software) for sale to another entity. When a web site is leased under an operating lease, the lessor applies this Interpretation. When a web site is leased under a finance lease, the lessee applies this Interpretation after initial recognition of the leased asset.

Consensus

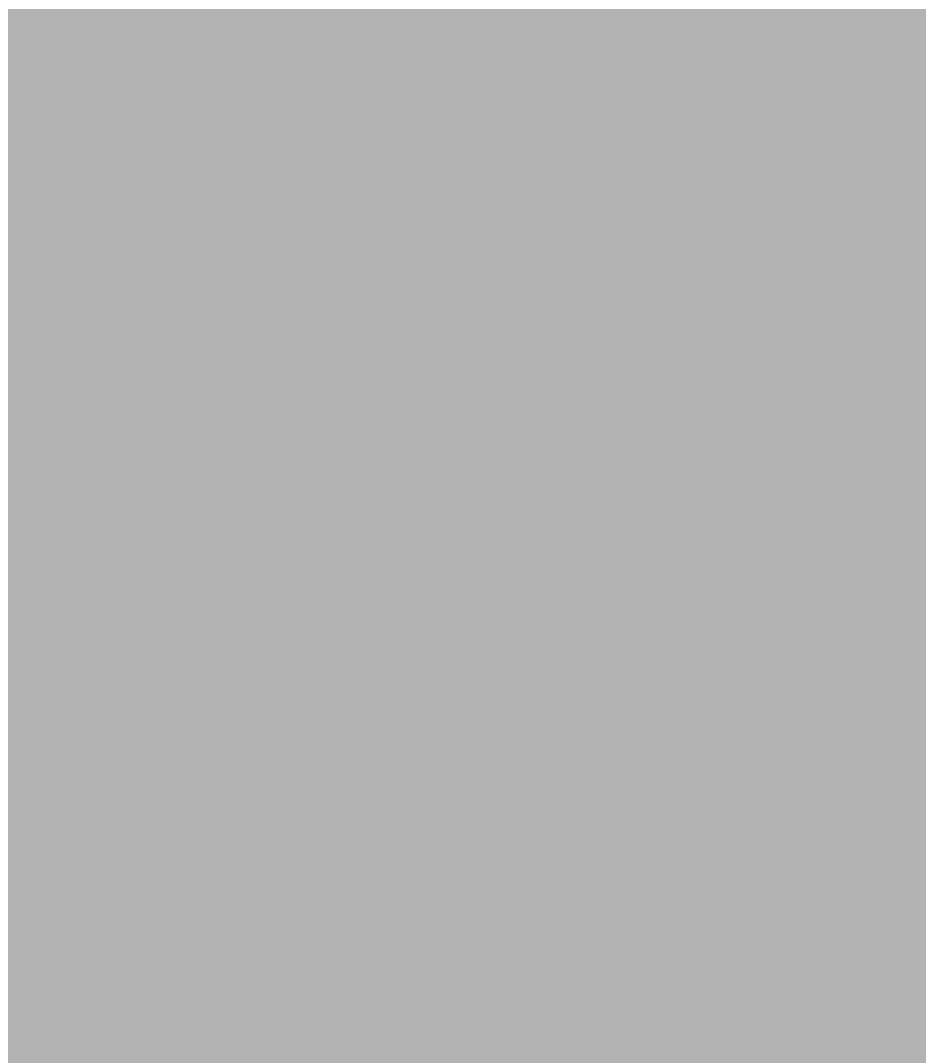
- 7 An entity's own web site that arises from development and is for internal or external access is an internally generated intangible asset that is subject to the requirements of IAS 38.
- 8 A web site arising from development shall be recognised as an intangible asset if, and only if, in addition to complying with the general requirements described in IAS 38.21 for recognition and initial measurement, an entity can satisfy the requirements in IAS 38.57. In particular, an entity may be able to satisfy the requirement to demonstrate how its web site will generate probable future economic benefits in accordance with IAS 38.57(d) when, for example, the web site is capable of generating revenues, including direct revenues from enabling orders to be placed. An entity is not able to demonstrate how a web site developed solely or primarily for promoting and advertising its own products and services will generate probable future economic benefits, and consequently all expenditure on developing such a web site shall be recognised as an expense when incurred.
- 9 Any internal expenditure on the development and operation of an entity's own web site shall be accounted for in accordance with IAS 38. The nature of each activity for which expenditure is incurred (eg training employees and maintaining the web site) and the web site's stage of development or post-development shall be evaluated to determine the appropriate accounting treatment (additional guidance is provided in the Appendix to this Interpretation). For example:
 - (a) the Planning stage is similar in nature to the research phase in IAS 38.54–.56. Expenditure incurred in this stage shall be recognised as an expense when it is incurred.
 - (b) the Application and Infrastructure Development stage, the Graphical Design stage and the Content Development stage, to the extent that

content is developed for purposes other than to advertise and promote an entity's own products and services, are similar in nature to the development phase in IAS 38.57–64. Expenditure incurred in these stages shall be included in the cost of a web site recognised as an intangible asset in accordance with paragraph 8 of this Interpretation when the expenditure can be directly attributed and is necessary to creating, producing or preparing the web site for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management. For example, expenditure on purchasing or creating content (other than content that advertises and promotes an entity's own products and services) specifically for a web site, or expenditure to enable use of the content (eg a fee for acquiring a licence to reproduce) on the web site, shall be included in the cost of development when this condition is met. However, in accordance with IAS 38.71, expenditure on an intangible item that was initially recognised as an expense in previous financial statements shall not be recognised as part of the cost of an intangible asset at a later date (eg if the costs of a copyright have been fully amortised, and the content is subsequently provided on a web site).

- (c) expenditure incurred in the Content Development stage, to the extent that content is developed to advertise and promote an entity's own products and services (eg digital photographs of products), shall be recognised as an expense when incurred in accordance with IAS 38.69(c). For example, when accounting for expenditure on professional services for taking digital photographs of an entity's own products and for enhancing their display, expenditure shall be recognised as an expense as the professional services are received during the process, not when the digital photographs are displayed on the web site.
- (d) the Operating stage begins once development of a web site is complete. Expenditure incurred in this stage shall be recognised as an expense when it is incurred unless it meets the recognition criteria in IAS 38.18.

- 10 A web site that is recognised as an intangible asset under paragraph 8 of this Interpretation shall be measured after initial recognition by applying the requirements of IAS 38.72–87. The best estimate of a web site's useful life should be short.





Date of consensus

May 2001

* ~~IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment* as revised by the IASB in 2003 requires all subsequent costs to be covered by its general recognition principle and eliminated the requirement to reference the originally assessed standard of performance. IAS 38 was amended as a consequence of the change to IAS 16 and the paragraphs specifically referred to were eliminated. This paragraph has been struck through to avoid any confusion.~~

† The new text was added by IFRS 3 *Business Combinations* in 2004.

Effective date

This Interpretation becomes effective on 25 March 2002. The effects of adopting this Interpretation shall be accounted for using the transition requirements in the version of IAS 38 that was issued in 1998. Therefore, when a web site does not meet the criteria for recognition as an intangible asset, but was previously recognised as an asset, the item shall be derecognised at the date when this Interpretation becomes effective. When a web site exists and the expenditure to develop it meets the criteria for recognition as an intangible asset, but was not previously recognised as an asset, the intangible asset shall not be recognised at the date when this Interpretation becomes effective. When a web site exists and the expenditure to develop it meets the criteria for recognition as an intangible asset, was previously recognised as an asset and initially measured at cost, the amount initially recognised is deemed to have been properly determined.

IAS 1 (as revised in 2007) amended the terminology used throughout IFRSs. In addition it amended paragraph 5. An entity shall apply those amendments for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. If an entity applies IAS 1 (revised 2007) for an earlier period, the amendments shall be applied for that earlier period.

Appendix to SIC-32

This appendix accompanies, but is not part of, SIC-32. The purpose of the appendix is to illustrate examples of expenditure that occur during each of the stages described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of SIC-32 and illustrate application of SIC-32 to assist in clarifying its meaning. It is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist of expenditure that might be incurred.

Example application of SIC-32

Stage/nature of expenditure	Accounting treatment
Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertaking feasibility studies defining hardware and software specifications evaluating alternative products and suppliers selecting preferences 	Recognise as an expense when incurred in accordance with IAS 38.54
Application and infrastructure development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> purchasing or developing hardware 	Apply the requirements of IAS 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> obtaining a domain name developing operating software (eg operating system and server software) developing code for the application installing developed applications on the web server stress testing 	Recognise as an expense when incurred, unless the expenditure can be directly attributed to preparing the web site to operate in the manner intended by management, and the web site meets the recognition criteria in IAS 38.21 and IAS 38.57 ^(a)
Graphical design development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> designing the appearance (eg layout and colour) of web pages 	Recognise as an expense when incurred, unless the expenditure can be directly attributed to preparing the web site to operate in the manner intended by management, and the web site meets the recognition criteria in IAS 38.21 and IAS 38.57 ^(a)

continued...

...continued Stage/nature of expenditure	Accounting treatment
Content development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creating, purchasing, preparing (eg creating links and identifying tags), and uploading information, either textual or graphical in nature, on the web site before the completion of the web site's development. Examples of content include information about an entity, products or services offered for sale, and topics that subscribers access 	Recognise as an expense when incurred in accordance with IAS 38.69(c) to the extent that content is developed to advertise and promote an entity's own products and services (eg digital photographs of products). Otherwise, recognise as an expense when incurred, unless the expenditure can be directly attributed to preparing the web site to operate in the manner intended by management, and the web site meets the recognition criteria in IAS 38.21 and IAS 38.57 ^(a)
Operating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> updating graphics and revising content adding new functions, features and content registering the web site with search engines backing up data reviewing security access analysing usage of the web site 	Assess whether it meets the definition of an intangible asset and the recognition criteria set out in IAS 38.18, in which case the expenditure is recognised in the carrying amount of the web site asset
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selling, administrative and other general overhead expenditure unless it can be directly attributed to preparing the web site for use to operate in the manner intended by management clearly identified inefficiencies and initial operating losses incurred before the web site achieves planned performance [eg false start testing] training employees to operate the web site 	Recognise as an expense when incurred in accordance with IAS 38.65–.70
^(a) All expenditure on developing a web site solely or primarily for promoting and advertising an entity's own products and services is recognised as an expense when incurred in accordance with IAS 38.68.	