In brief

A look at current financial reporting issues

9 December 2016

Foreign currency transactions and advance consideration

Issue

In November 2016, the IFRS Interpretations Committee (IC) issued an Interpretation on how to determine the date of the transaction when applying the standard on foreign currency transactions, IAS 21. The Interpretation applies where an entity either pays or receives consideration in advance for foreign currency-denominated contracts.

The date of the transaction determines the exchange rate to be used on initial recognition of the related asset, expense or income. The issue arises because IAS 21 requires an entity to use the exchange rate at the 'date of the transaction', which is defined as the date when the transaction first qualifies for recognition. The question therefore is whether the date of the transaction is the date when the asset, expense or income is initially recognised, or the earlier date on which the advance consideration is paid or received, resulting in recognition of a prepayment or deferred income.

The Interpretation provides guidance for when a single payment/receipt is made, as well as for situations where multiple payments/receipts are made. The guidance aims to reduce diversity in practice.

Key provisions

Single payment/receipt

The Interpretation states that the date of the transaction, for the purpose of determining the exchange rate to use on initial recognition of the related item, should be the date on which an entity initially recognises the non-monetary asset or liability arising from the advance consideration.

Example – Single upfront payment

Supplier enters into a contract with a customer on 1 January 20x1 and receives the full consideration of CU50 on this date. The goods are delivered and revenue is recognised on 31 March 20x1.

The Interpretation requires that:

- Supplier will recognise a non-monetary contract liability, translating CU50 at the exchange rate on 1 January 20x1.
- Supplier will recognise revenue at 31 March 20x1 (that is, the date on which the goods are transferred to the customer). Supplier will derecognise the non-monetary contract liability. Revenue will be recognised at the same amount in functional currency, using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction, which is 1 January 20x1. In this case, the amount of revenue is the same as the amount of the non-monetary contract liability derecognised.

Multiple receipts/payments

The Interpretation states that, if there are multiple payments or receipts in advance of recognising the related item, the entity should determine the date of the transaction for each payment or receipt.

The illustrative examples accompanying the Interpretation provide guidance on multiple receipts/payments when:

- revenue is recognised at a single point in time;
- services are purchased over a period of time; and
- revenue is recognised at multiple points in time.

Example – Revenue recognised at a single point in time with multiple payments

Supplier enters into a contract with a customer on 1 January 20x1 to deliver goods in exchange for total consideration of CU50 and receives an upfront payment of CU20 on this date. The goods are delivered and revenue is recognised on 31 March 20x1. CU30 is received on 1 April 20x1 in full and final settlement of the purchase consideration.

The Interpretation requires that:

- Supplier will recognise a non-monetary contract liability, translating CU20 at the exchange rate on 1 January 20x1.
- Supplier will recognise revenue at 31 March 20x1 (that is, the date on which it transfers the goods to the customer).
- On 31 March 20x1, Supplier will:
  - derecognise the non-monetary contract liability of CU20 and recognise CU20 of revenue using the same exchange rate (that is, the exchange rate at 1 January 20x1); and
  - recognise revenue and a receivable for the remaining CU30, using the exchange rate on 31 March 20x1.
- The receivable of CU30 is a monetary item, so it should be translated using the closing rate until the receivable is settled.

Impact

This Interpretation will impact all entities that enter into foreign currency transactions for which consideration is paid or received in advance. The most significant impact is expected for entities that enter into long-term cross-border/foreign currency contracts, with significant upfront payments. Such arrangements are common in the construction industry and will impact both the supplier and their customers (for example, shipping and airlines).

Effective date and transition

The amendment is effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018. Earlier application is permitted. Entities can choose to apply the Interpretation:

- retrospectively for each period presented;
- prospectively to items in scope that are initially recognised on or after the beginning of the reporting period in which the Interpretation is first applied; or
- prospectively from the beginning of a prior reporting period presented as comparative information.