

## CHAPTER 15. THE CAPITAL ACCOUNT

### A. Introduction

15.1 The capital account shows capital transfers receivable and payable between residents and nonresidents, and the acquisition and disposal of nonproduced, nonfinancial items.

15.2 Capital transfers are transfers in which the ownership of an asset (other than cash or inventories) changes from one party to another; or which obliges one or both parties to acquire or dispose of an asset (other than cash or inventories); or where a liability is forgiven by the creditor. A capital transfer results in a commensurate change in the stocks of assets of one or both parties to the transaction without affecting the saving of either party.

15.3 Nonproduced nonfinancial assets include intangible assets covering contracts, leases, licenses and marketing assets; and natural resources (generally land). The capital transfers include debt forgiveness and assumption, extraordinary claims associated with nonlife insurance, and investment grants. The capital transfers are usually irregular in nature, can be large (particularly in the case of capital transfers) and are usually limited in sector (to government, insurance, and charitable organizations), or industry (mining, forestry, fishing, communications, etc.).

### B. Gross Acquisitions and Disposals of Nonproduced Nonfinancial Assets

#### Intangible Assets

##### *Marketing Assets*

15.4 Marketing assets include items such as brand names, mastheads, trademarks, logos, and internet domain names. When marketing assets are sold separately from the entity that owns them, they are treated as the net acquisition / disposal of a nonproduced, nonfinancial item; when they are sold as part of the sale of an enterprise, they are included in the valuation of the enterprise.

15.5 Franchising agreements can provide an entity with the right to use or license to use the marketing assets of the franchisor. Franchising agreements are included in trade in services as a charge for the use of intellectual property, n.i.e. Reporters in business surveys of trade in services may not understand the distinction between the purchase of marketing assets and the license to use them under a franchise agreement and may misreport them. As a consequence, model survey form 6 in Appendix 8 includes questions on the purchase or sale of marketing assets to try to ensure accurate reporting of franchising, and to provide a data source for the purchase or sale of marketing assets. An ITRS may also identify situations where transactions in marketing assets have taken place in isolation from the enterprise that owned them.

15.6 It is relatively unusual for transactions in marketing assets to take place separately from the underlying enterprise, as such, any occasion where these transactions are identified should be subject to further scrutiny by the balance of payments compiler.

### ***Contracts, Leases, and Licenses***

15.7 Contracts, leases, and licenses include marketable operating leases, permissions to use natural resources that are not recorded as outright ownership of those resources, permissions to undertake certain activities (including some government permits), and entitlements to purchase a good or a service on an exclusive basis.

15.8 One example of a marketable operating lease is a type of time-share arrangement that involves a transferable right to use. Table 15.1 describes the treatment of alternative time-share arrangements.

15.9 For time-share arrangements, there will usually be a body corporate that manages the accommodation complex and provides services (for example, scheduling of use, organizing waiting lists, and facilitating transactions). This entity may be able to be included in a business survey in the host economy that covers trade in services (as services will be provided in association with the management of the complex) and transactions in nonproduced, nonfinancial assets.

15.10 Contracts, leases, and licenses also include licenses for mineral exploration and extraction, forestry licenses, fishing licenses, water rights, airspace licenses, spectrum licenses, and emissions rights, and permits, if they are marketable. If the assets are sold by a government to a business enterprise, then a notional DIENT often is created. If the criterions for recognizing a DIENT are not met, then the license payments are treated as a rent and included in primary income. Information on marketable licenses may be sourced from the government authorities that issue the licenses in the host economy. The compiler in the economy of the license-holder can use a business survey that covers trade in services and transactions in nonproduced, nonfinancial assets as there will usually be services provided associated with the license. Businesses holding the licenses will generally be limited to specific industries – particularly mining exploration, fishing, forestry, telecommunication, manufacturing, and electricity generation.

**Table 15.1. Treatment of Alternative Time-Share Arrangements<sup>1</sup>**

Type of Arrangement	Classification of Asset	Up-front Payment	Periodic Flow	Transaction in Asset if the Right is Resold
Deeded ownership	Ownership of land and buildings	Direct investment in notional unit in economy where time-share is located	Accommodation services in travel (imputed based on equivalent market prices) and investment income (income on direct investment equity)	Equity of the time-share holder (direct investment)
Right to use	Transferable right to use	Prepayment of accommodation (trade credit and advances)	Accommodation services in travel	Extinguishment of trade credit and advances + Nonproduced nonfinancial asset (capital account) (equal to difference between selling price and value of prepaid accommodation services)
Membership system	Non-transferable right to use (not an economic asset)	Prepayment of accommodation (trade credit and advances)	Accommodation services in travel	Trade credit and advances

## Land

15.11 International transactions in land and other natural resources do not usually arise because notional resident units are generally identified as the owners of these immovable assets. As a result, purchases and sales of these assets are generally resident-to-resident transactions.

15.12 International transactions in land arise when foreign governments or international organizations purchase or enter into long-term (financial) leases of land for purposes of establishing or extending their enclaves, diplomatic missions, or military bases. Transactions are also recorded when control of land changes by mutual agreement or decision of international court, or when an economic territory is split and compensation is paid for the land. Uncompensated splits of economic territories and unilateral annexation of territory by a country are not capital account transactions; the change in territory is treated as a volume change in the other changes in assets and liabilities account.

<sup>1</sup> This table differs in presentation (not in substance) from Table 10.3 in *BPM6* in regard to the capital account entry when a “right to use” is resold by showing the capital account transactions in the final column.

15.13 The assets and liabilities of any institutional units that are resident in the territory that is sold / purchased are accounted for in the reconciliation of the international investment position through the other changes in volume account. Only the value of the land is recorded in the capital account; any buildings, structures or other improvements on the land are recorded as purchases of construction services. If it is not feasible to split the values of land and structures, the classification in the balance of payments should be according to which value is deemed to be higher: if the land is more valuable, the transaction will be recorded in capital account, and if the value of structures is deemed to be higher, the transaction will be recorded under construction services.

15.14 Information on international transactions in land (both credits and debits) usually can be sourced from government records. To draw a distinction between the value of land and buildings, the compiler could use data collected through the land register as additional source.

### **C. Capital Transfers**

15.15 The compiler needs to distinguish between capital transfers (the entry in the balance of payments as an offset to an unrequited transfer of a capital item) and current transfers (all other transfers, recorded in the secondary income account). It is possible that some cash transactions may be regarded as capital by one party to the transaction and as current by the other party. A large economy that regularly makes investment grants in cash to a number of smaller economies may regard the outlays as current, even though they may be specifically intended to finance the acquisition of assets. So that a donor and a recipient do not treat the same transaction differently, a transfer should be classified as capital for both parties even if it involves the acquisition or disposal of an asset, or assets, by only one of the parties. When there is doubt about whether a transfer should be treated as current or capital, it should be treated as a current transfer.

### **Debt Forgiveness, Debt Assumption, and Activation of One-off Guarantee**

#### ***Debt Forgiveness***

15.16 Debt forgiveness is the process of cancelling a debt with the agreement of both parties. It differs from the write-off or cancellation of a debt, which is the recognition of the creditor that a debt can no longer be collected and treated as a volume change. Bankruptcy of the debtor may also extinguish a debt position; if the debt is unrecoverable, it is also treated as a volume change.

15.17 Governments or international organizations (IO) are usually the creditor in cases of debt forgiveness (other governments may be the debtor), but forgiveness is not restricted to government/IO-to-government positions. The extinguishment of debt between two commercial entities including between enterprises in a direct investment relationship is more often a case of debt cancellation or debt write-off, and are recorded as other volume changes.

15.18 Information on debt forgiveness may be available from government authorities in the economy of the creditor. In the economy of the debtor, the debtor should already be included

in business surveys of external financial assets and liabilities and the forgiveness can be identified through this vehicle.

### ***Debt Assumption and Activation of One-off Guarantees***

15.19 Debt assumption occurs when one party takes on the liability of another party. The debt assumption may be the result of the activation of a guarantee or without a guarantee being in place. In cases where debt assumption takes place, the debt-assuming party is usually a government (the government of the economy in which the original debtor is located) or an enterprise in a direct investment relationship with the original debtor (noting that enterprises in the same economy can be in a direct investment relationship).

15.20 The transactions that are recorded when debt is assumed depend on whether the debt-assuming party has a claim on the original debtor; in all cases, the claim of the creditor on the debt-assuming party is created through a financial account entry. In cases described below three parties involved in the transactions (creditor, original debtor, and debt-assumer) are residents of different economies:

- (a) If the debt-assuming party does not acquire a claim on the (original) debtor because the original debtor no longer exists (for example, the original debtor has been liquidated), a capital transfer from the debt-assuming party to the creditor is recorded as the corresponding entry to the creation of the liability. The original debt of the debtor is written off in the accounts of both the original debtor and the creditor (other changes in financial assets and liabilities account).
- (b) If the debt-assuming party does not acquire a claim on the (original) debtor because the debt assumer seeks to give a benefit to the debtor (as is sometimes the case when governments assume debts) or the debt-assuming party assumes a claim that is lower in value than the value of the debt, then unless the guarantor is in a direct investment relationship with the original debtor (see (c)), a capital transfer from the debt-assuming party to the original debtor is recorded. The claim on the original debtor by the creditor is extinguished (financial account entry).
- (c) In other cases, the debt-assuming party acquires a claim on the original debtor as a result of the assumption of the debt (financial account entry) and a debt liability to the creditor. Such a claim may be on the original debtor as a debt claim or as an increase in the guarantor's equity in the original debtor (for example, assumption of the debt owed by a subsidiary will improve the balance sheet of the subsidiary and, hence, the direct investor's equity in the subsidiary). In this case, the claim on the original debtor by the creditor is extinguished (financial account entry).

15.21 Table 15.2 identifies the balance of payments transactions and other changes in financial assets and liabilities that should be recorded in each case. For the purposes of the table, an enterprise in country A assumes the debt of an enterprise in country B that is owed to an enterprise in country C. Where two of the enterprises are in the same economy, the transactions shown in the table between those two enterprises are not recorded in the balance of payments accounts, as they are resident-to-resident transactions, but they could affect international investment positions, as when external liabilities change institutional sector due

to debt assumption by a government. The table shows the entries in the accounts from the perspective of the compiler in each of the three countries.

15.22 Information on debt assumption should be available from government records in the cases where governments assume debt. Where a direct investor assumes the debt, this information may be available through a business survey of external financial assets and liabilities. Similarly, information from the original debtor (when it continues to exist) and from the creditor can be collected in the same survey.

**Table 15.2. Treatment of Debt Assumption**

<b>(A assumes debt of B owed to C)</b>						
Case	Balance of Payments of Country A (Debt Assumer is Resident)		Balance of Payments of Country B (Original Debtor is Resident)		Balance of Payments of Country C (Creditor is Resident)	
<b>Original debtor ceases to exist (case a)</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Other change in financial assets and liabilities account (IIP)</b>  Debt liability (C) [decrease]		<b>Credit</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>
	Capital account – capital transfer – other capital transfers (C)	Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [increase]			Capital account – capital transfer – other capital transfers (A)	<b>Other change in financial assets and liabilities account (IIP)</b>  Debt claim (B) [decrease]
<b>Original debtor exists, no claim from debt assumer on original debtor (case b)</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>	
	Capital account – capital transfer (B)	Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [increase]	Capital account – capital transfer (A)	Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [decrease]	Appropriate financial account debt entry (A) [increase] Appropriate financial account debt entry (B) [decrease]	
<b>Original debtor exists, reduced claim from debt assumer on original debtor (case b)</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>
	Capital account – capital transfer <sup>1</sup> (B)	Appropriate financial account entry <sup>2</sup> (B) [increase]	Appropriate financial account debt entry <sup>3</sup> (C) [increase]	Capital account – capital transfer <sup>1</sup> (A)	Appropriate financial account entry <sup>2</sup> (A) [increase] Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [decrease]	Appropriate financial account debt entry <sup>3</sup> (A) [increase] Appropriate financial account debt entry (B) [decrease]
Case	Balance of Payments of Country A (Debt Assumer is Resident)		Balance of Payments of Country B (Original Debtor is Resident)		Balance of Payments of Country C (Creditor is Resident)	
<b>Original debtor exists, full claim of debt assumer on original debtor (e.g., increase in direct investment equity) (case c)</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>  Appropriate financial account entry (A) [increase] Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [decrease]		<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>	
	Appropriate financial account entry (B) [increase]	Appropriate financial account debt entry (C) [increase]			Appropriate financial account debt entry (A) [increase] Appropriate financial account debt entry (B) [decrease]	

<sup>1</sup>Equal to difference between the incurred liability to creditor and acquired claim on original debtor.

<sup>2</sup>Equal to the value of claim on original debtor acquired by A.

<sup>3</sup>Equal to the value of the liability to C acquired by A.

## **Nonlife Insurance Claims**

15.23 Nonlife insurance premiums and claims are generally treated as current transfers within the secondary income account in the balance of payments. When a catastrophic event occurs that gives rise to extraordinary claims beyond normal business processes, some part of the claims may be treated as capital transfers. Catastrophic events include earthquakes, tsunami, floods, cyclones, hurricanes, hail storms, bushfires, etc., except where these events can be considered periodic and expected within the normal course of nonlife insurance business.

15.24 It may be difficult for the parties to identify these events consistently, so, as a simplifying convention, all cross-border nonlife insurance claims are classified as current transfers unless it is necessary to record a capital transfer to be consistent with the national accounts. Coordination with the compilers of the national accounts is necessary to ensure consistent treatment within the macroeconomic accounts.

15.25 Catastrophic events that cause extraordinary claims on domestic insurers will generate similar claims on reinsurers. Where the reinsurer is a nonresident, these claims would be treated as capital transfers to the same extent as the original claims on the insurers.

15.26 Extraordinary claims that are treated as capital transfers should be excluded from the calculation of insurance services. Similarly, the extraordinary losses associated with these claims should be excluded from the calculation of profit (loss) of insurers that are DIETs. Any loss that remains after exclusion of the extraordinary losses should be treated as a normal loss from current operations.

15.27 Where catastrophic events have occurred, the events may have had a significant impact on the policy holders themselves and the infrastructure to support usual surveying practices may have broken down, making it difficult to collect data. This could result in timing and coverage issues, and the compiler may need to make careful estimates until more accurate data become available.

15.28 Part A of Appendix 2 provides a more detailed discussion of the compilation of data about the insurance industry.

## **Investment Grants**

15.29 Investment grants consist of capital transfers in cash or in kind made by governments, international organizations to other institutional units to finance all or part of the costs of their acquiring fixed assets. The recipient of an investment grant is often a governmental unit. Investment grants can include also technical assistance (e.g., consulting) related to the investment project. Technical assistance that is tied to or is part of capital projects is classified as capital transfers (*BPM6*, paragraph 12.50) .

15.30 As all flows are to be expressed in monetary terms, the monetary values of in kind transactions need to be indirectly measured or otherwise estimated.

15.31 If an investment project continues over a long period of time, an investment grant in cash may be paid in installments. Payments of installments continue to be classified as capital transfers even though they may be recorded in a succession of accounting periods.

15.32 If the donor and recipient are both private enterprises in a direct investment relationship, the grant is not considered a capital transfer. The grant is considered an injection of direct investment equity capital when the direct investor is the donor and a DIENT is the recipient; and a distribution of profits or a withdrawal of equity when the donor is a DIENT and the recipient is the direct investor.

15.33 The following example shows the balance of payments entries for the investment grants. From the government entity, the compiler of economy B was able to obtain the information on the grants (in cash and in kind) received from abroad during the accounting year:

- (a) a cash grant was transferred to the government for the construction of a road: 155
- (b) the government of economy A built during the year a school in economy B and provided it as a donation to economy B. The school was built using donor's labor and materials. The total cost of the project was 70, of which:
  - estimated cost of the construction materials (imported from economy C): 30
  - salaries paid to constructors: 25
  - architectural and engineering services: 15

15.34 The following entries should be recorded in the balance of payments of economy B for the accounting year:

	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Debit</b>
<b>Current account</b>		
Goods and services		
Goods		
General merchandise		30
Services		
Construction		25
Other business services		
Technical, trade-related, and other business services		15
<b>Capital account</b>		
Capital transfers		
General government		
Other capital transfers	155+70	
<b>Financial account</b>	<b>Net acquisition of financial assets</b>	<b>Net incurrence of liabilities</b>
Other investment		
Currency and deposits		
General government	155	

15.35 Information on donors can be sourced from official records when the donor is the government. Model form 16 in Appendix 8 provides examples of the information that could be requested from these organizations on investment grants. Information on recipients can usually be sourced from official records.

### **Capital Taxes**

15.36 Capital taxes consist of taxes levied at irregular or infrequent intervals on the values of the assets or net worth of institutional units, or on the values of assets transferred between institutional units as a result of legacies, gifts, or other capital transfers. That is, capital taxes consist of levies on capital items and taxes on capital transfers.

15.37 Recurrent taxes on income and wealth as well as taxes on financial and capital transactions are classified as current transfers in the secondary income account.

15.38 Information on capital taxes should be available from the revenue authorities in the economies where the taxes are levied. The compiler in the economy of the payers of capital taxes may benefit from partner country data in compiling capital tax debits.