



2nd IPSASB Research Forum – Hosted by the CIGAR Workshop 2020

Call for Papers

Deadline extended to 31 December 2019

The International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) held its first Research Forum on 17 September 2019 in Naples, Italy. More than 80 participants, from academia and standard-setting bodies discussed linkages between academia and the standard-setting process and current and committed projects on the IPSASB's work program. One of the key points identified was the scope for academia to provide research input to potential IPSASB projects. Such research input could be an important factor in IPSASB's decisions on whether to propose projects for inclusion in the mid-period work program consultation planned for the first half of 2021.

In order to achieve this:

1. IPSASB will be offering grants for the development of papers in selected areas of interest.
2. Future IPSASB Research Fora will be held in conjunction with an existing research conference in order to allow more researchers to attend at little or no extra cost.

IPSASB is offering grants of USD 1,500 for research under each of the following topics ([Appendix A](#) provides further information on each topic):

- The Presentation of Financial Statements in the Public Sector;
- Differential Reporting (Financial Reporting for Small and Medium Sized Public Sector Entities);
- Discount Rates in the Public Sector: Rationale for their Use and Determination; and
- Disclosures of Tax Expenditures.

The grants will be awarded by an academic advisory committee comprising representatives from IPSASB and the academic community, based on abstracts submitted by **31 December 2019**. Abstracts should be one-page summaries of the planned approach to the topic selected by the scholar (or group of scholars). Decisions on the award of grants will be taken by 15 January 2020. Scholars who wish to submit a paper without receiving a grant are obviously free to do so. The deadline for submission of draft accepted papers is 10 May 2020.

IPSASB plans to collaborate with the Comparative International Governmental Accounting Research (CIGAR) Network, an established global network of public sector accounting scholars involved in comparative research on future Research Fora. Accordingly, in 2020, the IPSASB Research Forum will be held on the morning of 17 June 2020, being hosted by the CIGAR Workshop, in Oslo-Drammen, Norway.

The grant recipients, as well as other scholars, will present the first drafts of their full papers at the 2020 Research Forum, in order to receive feedback from fellow academics, IPSASB members and staff. Grant recipients are then expected to finalize their paper by 8 September 2020 and to present it in the week of 15 September 2020 at the IPSASB Board Meeting in Paris, France.

Final papers are invited to be published in *Public Money & Management*, after undergoing a formal peer review process, involving one reviewer from CIGAR and one from IPSASB.

Submission process and registration

Abstracts should be submitted by **31 December 2019** to Vanessa Mello (VanessaMello@ifac.org), for Gwenda Jensen, Principal (IPSASB), with full papers submitted by 10 May 2020, to the same address (VanessaMello@ifac.org).

Participants in the IPSASB Research Forum are expected to follow the registration procedure for the CIGAR Workshop.

Appendix A – Research Topics

Presentation of Financial Statements in the Public Sector

This project would assess the rationale for fuller alignment with IAS 1, *Presentation of Financial Statements*, in particular the notion of other comprehensive income in a public sector context. It would also assess the scope for further modifications to the format of the financial statements, including whether there is scope to increase alignment with Government Financial Statistics.

Differential Reporting: Financial Reporting for Small and Medium Sized Public Sector Entities

This project would assess the feasibility of development of a less complex set of requirements for small and medium sized public sector entities, with generally simple transactions, for which full IPSAS requirements are too onerous. The lack of differential reporting options may be increasing the cost of adopting IPSAS and therefore creating a barrier to adoption and implementation. Differential reporting may help in alleviating capacity issues. However, the public sector context needs to be assessed, because even small and medium sized entities need to be accountable for their use of public funds. The role of regulators and jurisdiction-specific factors are factors that the research needs to consider.

Discount Rates in the Public Sector: Rationale for their Use and Determination

Since the global financial crisis, the topic of discount rates applied in the measurement of certain assets and liabilities with long settlement dates has been a concern for constituents because of the low and negative interest rate environments around the world. Some argue that the increased impact of liabilities on public sector financial performance and financial position in a low/negative interest rate environment may result in estimates which do not appropriately recognize the time value of money. This might lead to suboptimal decision making. The project would therefore consider the conceptual basis for existing requirements for discounting across the suite of IPSAS and the consistency of those existing requirements.

Disclosures of Tax Expenditures

IPSAS 23, *Revenue from Non-exchange Transactions (Taxes and Transfers)*, sets out different requirements for tax expenses (benefits paid through the tax system, for example paying a taxpayer's health insurance) and tax expenditures (use of the tax system to encourage or discourage behaviors, for example allowing homeowners to deduct mortgage interest from gross income to reduce taxable income). IPSAS 23 requires tax expenses to be presented gross in the financial statements, while revenue is presented net of tax expenditures. The treatment of tax expenditures raises a public interest concern because of the potential lack of transparency in tax concessions, which impairs the accountability of governments.