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TRUE AND FAIR VIEW PRESENTATION AND DISCLOSURE OF NON-CURRENT INTANGIBLE ASSETS: IAS38

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Abstract

The ‘true and fair view’ concept is one of two competing but not mutually exclusive legal standards for financial reporting quality that have been subject to debate on their meaning, use and importance. The other is ‘present fairly in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles’ (GAAP). Non-current intangible assets are capitalized rather than expensed, meaning that the company allocates the cost of the asset over the number of years for which the asset will be in use, instead of allocating the entire cost to the accounting year in which the asset was purchased. The present paper focuses on initial and subsequent measurement of intangible non-current assets, de-recognition and treatment of impairment losses and amortization in the financial statements of the reporting entity for making economic decision making to the investors. IAS 38 will enable users of financial statements to understand the extent of an entity’s investment in such assets and the movements therein.

Keywords: Accounting Regulation, Intangibles Non-Current Asset, Value Relevance, Financial Statements, Financial Reporting, Internally Generated Intangible Non-current Asset

References

- [1] The terms ‘practices’ and ‘principles’ although they have different literal meanings, have both been used as part of the term ‘generally accepted accounting principles’ (GAAP). To avoid confusion the word ‘principles’ will be used. For a full discussion of the history of the term and its relationship to present ‘fairly’ see Zeff (1995) and McEnroe & Martens (1998).
- [2] For a comprehensive discussion of the history of ‘true and fair view’ see Chastney (1975).
- [3] Much of the literature has concentrated on the ‘audit expectation gap’. However the ‘gap’ also exists in other areas of accounting and financial reporting. For further information see Anderson, Lowe, Jordan & Reckers (1993); Epstein & Geiger (1994); Chenok (1994); Guy & Sullivan (1988); Hronsky (1998); Klein, (1994); and Porter (1993).
- [4] Hendiadys: the expression of an idea by two words connected with ‘and’, instead of one word modifying the other (Thompson, 1995, p.632).
- [5] See IASC (1996) and IASC (1998).
- [6] The IASC Framework identifies users as 1. Present and potential investors, 2. employees, 3. Lenders, 4. Suppliers and other trade creditors, 5. Governments and their agencies, and 6. The public (Cairns, 1988).
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