



PR 2009/12 - Income tax: ITC Pulpwood Project 2009

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 This document has changed over time. This is a consolidated version of the ruling which was published on *25 March 2009*



Product Ruling

Income tax: ITC Pulpwood Project 2009

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ⓘ This publication provides you with the following level of protection:

This publication (excluding appendixes) is a public ruling for the purposes of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*.

A public ruling is an expression of the Commissioner's opinion about the way in which a relevant provision applies, or would apply, to entities generally or to a class of entities in relation to a particular scheme or a class of schemes.

If you rely on this ruling, the Commissioner must apply the law to you in the way set out in the ruling (unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the ruling is incorrect and disadvantages you, in which case the law may be applied to you in a way that is more favourable for you – provided the Commissioner is not prevented from doing so by a time limit imposed by the law). You will be protected from having to pay any underpaid tax, penalty or interest in respect of the matters covered by this ruling if it turns out that it does not correctly state how the relevant provision applies to you.

No guarantee of commercial success

The Commissioner **does not** sanction or guarantee this product. Further, the Commissioner gives no assurance that the product is commercially viable, that charges are reasonable, appropriate or represent industry norms, or that projected returns will be achieved or are reasonably based.

Potential participants must form their own view about the commercial and financial viability of the product. The Commissioner recommends a financial (or other) adviser be consulted for such information.

This Product Ruling provides certainty for potential participants by confirming that the tax benefits set out in the **Ruling** part of this document are available, **provided that** the scheme is carried out in accordance with the information we have been given, and have described below in the **Scheme** part of this document. If the scheme is not carried out as described, participants lose the protection of this Product Ruling.

Terms of use of this Product Ruling

This Product Ruling has been given on the basis that the entity(s) who applied for the Product Ruling, and their associates, will abide by strict terms of use. Any failure to comply with the terms of use may lead to the withdrawal of this Product Ruling.

What this Ruling is about

1. This Product Ruling sets out the Commissioner's opinion on the way in which the relevant provisions identified in the Ruling section (below) apply to the defined class of entities, who take part in the scheme to which this Ruling relates. In this Product Ruling this scheme is referred to as the 'ITC Pulpwood Project 2009', or simply as 'the Project'.

2. All legislative references in this Ruling are to the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (ITAA 1997) unless otherwise indicated. Where used in this Ruling, the word 'associate' has the meaning given in section 318 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* (ITAA 1936). In this Ruling, terms defined in the Project agreements have been capitalised.

Class of entities

3. This part of the Product Ruling specifies which entities;

- are subject to the taxation obligations; and
- can rely on the taxation benefits;

set out in the Ruling section of this Product Ruling.

4. The members of the class of entities who are subject to those taxation obligations and who can rely on those taxation benefits are referred to in this Product Ruling as 'Investors'.

5. Investors are those entities that:

- meet the definition of 'initial participant' in subsection 394-15(5); and
- are accepted to take part in the scheme specified below on or after the date this Ruling is made.

6. An Investor will have executed the relevant Project Agreements set out in paragraph 40 of this Ruling on or before 30 June 2009 and will hold a 'forestry interest' in the Project.

7. The class of entities who can rely on this Product Ruling does **not** include Investors who:

- are accepted into this Project before the date of this Ruling or after 30 June 2009; or
- participate in the scheme through offers made other than through the Product Disclosure Statement (PDS); or
- enter into finance arrangements with entities associated with the Project other than ITC Finance Pty Ltd or the Preferred Financier and other than under the arrangements specified in paragraphs 78 to 80 of this Product Ruling.

Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993

8. This Product Ruling does not address the provisions of the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993* (SISA 1993). The Tax Office gives no assurance that the product is an appropriate investment for a superannuation fund. The trustees of superannuation funds are advised that no consideration has been given in this Product Ruling as to whether investment in this product may contravene the provisions of SISA 1993.

Qualifications

9. The class of entities defined in this Product Ruling may rely on its contents provided the scheme actually carried out is carried out in accordance with the scheme described in paragraphs 40 to 81 of this Ruling.

10. If the scheme actually carried out is materially different from the scheme that is described in this Product Ruling, then:

- this Product Ruling has no binding effect on the Commissioner because the scheme entered into is not the scheme on which the Commissioner has ruled; and
- this Product Ruling may be withdrawn or modified.

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Date of effect

12. This Product Ruling applies prospectively from 25 March 2009, the date it is published. It, therefore, applies only to the specified class of entities that enter into the scheme from 25 March 2009 to 30 June 2009, being the closing date for entry into the scheme. This Product Ruling provides advice on the availability of tax benefits to the specified class of entities for all income years up to the income year in which the scheme is terminated in accordance with the Constitution.

13. However this Product Ruling only applies to the extent that there is no change in the scheme or in the entity's involvement in the scheme.

Changes in the law

14. Although this Product Ruling deals with the income tax laws enacted at the time it was issued, later amendments may impact on this Product Ruling. Any such changes will take precedence over the application of this Product Ruling and, to that extent, this Product Ruling will have no effect.

15. Entities who are considering participating in the scheme are advised to confirm with their taxation adviser that changes in the law have not affected this Product Ruling since it was issued.

Note to promoters and advisers

16. Product Rulings were introduced for the purpose of providing certainty about tax consequences for entities in schemes such as this. In keeping with that intention, the Tax Office suggests that promoters and advisers ensure that investors are fully informed of any legislative changes after the Product Ruling is issued.

Goods and Services Tax

17. All amounts and percentages referred to in this Product Ruling exclude the Goods and Services Tax (GST), unless otherwise specified. The transactions in respect of this scheme may, where appropriate, have GST implications. Those GST implications are outside the scope of this Product Ruling.

Ruling

Structure of the Project

18. The ITC Pulpwood Project 2009 is a 'forestry managed investment scheme' as defined in subsection 394-15(1). Its purpose is the establishment and tending of various pulpwood species, predominantly Tasmanian Blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), for felling in Australia.

19. Subject to the stated qualifications, this part of the Product Ruling sets out in detail the taxation obligations and benefits for an 'initial participant'¹ in the defined class of entities (see paragraphs 4 to 7 of this Ruling), who is accepted to participate in the 'forestry managed investment scheme' described at paragraphs 40 to 81 of this Ruling, on or after 25 March 2009 and on or before 30 June 2009.

¹ See subsection 394-15(5).

20. An entity that takes part in the Project as a 'subsequent participant'² is not covered by this Product Ruling but may request a private ruling on their participation in the Project. A 'subsequent participant' is an entity that does not meet the definition of 'initial participant' in subsection 394-15(5).

Carrying on a business

21. An Investor (as described in paragraphs 5 to 7 of this Ruling) in the Project is not considered to be carrying on a business of primary production.

The '70% DFE rule' and the establishment of the trees

Section 394-35 and subsection 394-10(4)

22. The taxation obligations and benefits set out below have been determined using the information provided to the Commissioner by the Responsible Entity of the Project. The Responsible Entity is the 'forestry manager' as defined in Division 394. On the basis of the information provided by the Responsible Entity, the Commissioner has decided that on 30 June 2009 it will be reasonable to expect that the '70% DFE rule'³ will be satisfied. The Tax Office may undertake review activities during the term of the Project to verify the information relied on for the purposes of the '70% DFE rule'.

23. The Product Ruling will only apply if the Responsible Entity establishes all of the trees that were intended to be established under the Project within 18 months of the end of the income year in which the first 'participant' in the Project is accepted.⁴ For this Project the trees must be established by 31 December 2010.

24. In the context of this Project, the trees will be established when they are planted on the land acquired for the purposes of the Project at the average rate of 800 trees per hectare (paragraph 3.9 of the PDS). The Responsible Entity is required by section 394-10 of Schedule 1 of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* (TAA) to notify the Tax Office if the trees are not established by 31 December 2010.

² See section 394-30.

³ The '70% DFE rule' is set out in section 394-35.

⁴ See subsection 394-10(4).

Allowable deductions**Sections 8-5, 394-10 and 394-20**

25. An Investor in the Project can claim deductions for the amounts shown in the Table below (on a **per 'forestry interest'** basis) that are paid to the Responsible Entity (sections 8-5 and 394-10).

Fee	Amount	Income Year(s) deductible
Application Fee	\$4,500	2009
Deferred Management fee	30% of Net Product Sales Proceeds	Any year in which this amount is paid See Note (i)
Harvest Services fees	An amount equal to the Harvest Services Costs	Any year in which this amount is paid See Note (i)
After Harvest Services fee	An amount equal to the After-harvest Services Costs	Any year in which this amount is paid See Note (i)

Note:

- (i) Investors will be notified by the Responsible Entity of the amount and the years in which these costs are paid but harvest is expected to occur in the 2020 income year.

26. The deductibility of these amounts remains subject to a requirement that a CGT event⁵ does not happen in relation to the Investor's 'forestry interest' before 1 July 2013 (see paragraphs 28 to 30 of this Ruling).

27. The amounts are deductible in the income year in which they are paid, or are paid on behalf of the Investor (subsection 394-10(2) and section 394-20). Where an Investor does not fully pay an amount, or it is not fully paid on their behalf in an income year, it is deductible only to the extent to which it has been paid. Any unpaid amount is then deductible in the income year or income years in which it is actually paid.

'CGT event' within 4 years for Investors who are 'initial participants'**Subsections 394-10(5) and 395-10(6) of the ITAA 1997 and section 170 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936**

28. A deduction for the Application Fee is not allowable where a 'CGT event' happens in relation to the 'forestry interest' of an Investor before 1 July 2013 (subsection 394-10(5)).

⁵ Defined in section 995-1.

29. Where a deduction for this amount has already been claimed by an Investor, the Commissioner may amend their assessment at any time within two years of the 'CGT event' happening (subsection 394-10(6)). The Commissioner's power to amend in these circumstances applies despite section 170 of the ITAA 1936.

30. Investors whose deductions are disallowed because of subsection 394-10(5) are still required to include in assessable income the market value of the 'forestry interest' at the time of the 'CGT event' or the decrease in the market value of the 'forestry interest' as a result of the 'CGT event'.

Insurance premiums and interest on loans to finance the 'forestry interest' of an Investor

Section 8-1

31. Insurance premiums incurred by an Investor to insure their trees will be deductible under section 8-1. The deduction is allowable in the year in which the insurance premium is incurred. The Responsible Entity will advise the Investor each year of the amount of the insurance.

32. An Investor in the Project can claim deductions for interest incurred on a loan to fund their investment in the Project (paragraph 8-1(1)(a)). This Product Ruling only applies to loans between an Investor and either ITC Finance Pty Ltd or the Preferred Financier. Investors who borrow from other financiers may apply for a private ruling on the deductibility of loan interest or may self assess the deductibility of the interest.

Borrowing costs

Section 25-25

33. Investors will incur fees when they fund their investment in the Project. The loan application fee payable to ITC Finance Pty Ltd will be up to the greater of \$250 or 0.25% of the loan amount (except for the one year interest free loan, where a borrowing fee of up to \$250 applies). The establishment fee payable to the Preferred Financier is the greater of \$250 and 0.25% of the Principal Amount.

34. These amounts are borrowing expenses and are deductible under section 25-25. Where the loan application fee is \$100 or less, the whole of the borrowing expense is deductible in the year in which it is incurred. Where the amount is more than \$100, the deduction for the borrowing expense is spread over the period of the loan or 5 years, whichever is shorter, on a straight line basis from the date the loan begins.

35. The deductibility or otherwise of borrowing costs arising from loan agreements entered into with financiers other than ITC Finance Pty Ltd and the Preferred Financier is outside the scope of this Product Ruling.

Assessable income, 'CGT events' and the 'forestry interests' of Investors who are 'initial participants'

Sections 6-10 and 394-25

36. Where a 'CGT event' (other than a 'CGT event' in respect of a thinning)⁶ happens to a 'forestry interest' held by a Investor in this Project, the market value of the 'forestry interest', or the decrease in the market value of the 'forestry interest', is included in the assessable income of the Investor (sections 6-10 and 394-25).

37. The relevant amount is included in the Investor's assessable income in the income year in which the 'CGT event' happens (subsection 394-25(2)).

38. 'CGT events' for these purposes include those relating to:

- a **clear-fell harvest of all or part of the trees** grown under the Project;
- the **sale, or any other disposal** of all or part of the 'forestry interest' held by the Investor; or
- any other 'CGT event' that results in a reduction of the market value of the 'forestry interest' held by the Investor.

Non commercial losses, prepayment provisions and anti-avoidance provisions

Division 35 of the ITAA 1997 and sections 82KZM, 82KZME, 82KZMF and 82KL and Part IVA of the ITAA 1936

39. Where an Investor is accepted to participate in the Project set out at paragraphs 40 to 81 of this Ruling, the following legislative provisions have application as indicated:

- losses arising from participation in the Project are not within the scope of Division 35 of the ITAA 1997;
- interest paid by an Investor to either ITC Finance Pty Ltd or the Preferred Financier does not fall within the scope of sections 82KZM, 82KZME and 82KZMF of the ITAA 1936;
- section 82KL of the ITAA 1936 does not apply to deny the deductions otherwise allowable; and

⁶ A thinning of the trees includes a selective harvest of immature trees to facilitate better outcomes at harvest. A thinning differs from a clear fell of a percentage of mature trees which may occur over two or more income years.

- the relevant provisions in Part IVA of the ITAA 1936 will not be applied to cancel a tax benefit obtained under a tax law dealt with in this Product Ruling.

Scheme

40. The scheme that is the subject of this Product Ruling is specified below. This scheme incorporates the following:

- Application for a Product Ruling as constituted by documents provided on 19 December 2008 and additional correspondence, including emails received on 6 January 2009, 4 March 2009 and 10 March 2009;
- Draft **Product Disclosure Statement** and Application Form for the ITC Pulpwood Project 2009, received on 6 January 2009;
- Draft **Constitution** for the ITC Pulpwood Project 2009 (including the Management Agreement) between ITC Project Management Limited and each Investor, received on 19 December 2008;
- Draft Compliance Plan for the ITC Pulpwood Project 2009, received on 19 December 2008;
- Draft **Tree Farm Loan Application** (including the **Tree Farm Loan Deed**) for loans from ITC Finance Pty Ltd, received on 10 March 2009;
- Draft **Loan Application** and **Loan Agreement** with the Preferred Financier, received on 4 March 2009;
- Draft Origination Deed between ITC Limited (the Originator) and the Preferred Financier (the Lender), received on 19 December 2008;
- Draft Forestry Management Agreement for ITC Pulpwood Project 2009, between ITC Project Management Limited and ITC Limited, received on 19 December 2008;
- Draft Lease between the Lessor and ITC Project Management Limited received on 19 December 2008;
- Independent Forester's Report, received on 19 December 2008.

Note: certain information has been provided on a commercial-in-confidence basis and will not be disclosed or released under Freedom of Information legislation.

41. All Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) requirements are, or will be, complied with for the term of the agreements.

42. The documents highlighted (in bold font) are those that an Investor may enter into. For the purposes of describing the scheme to which this Product Ruling applies, there are no other agreements, whether formal or informal, and whether or not legally enforceable, which an Investor, or any associate of an Investor, will be a party to, which are a part of the scheme. The effect of these agreements is summarised as follows:

Overview

43. The main features of the ITC Pulpwood Project 2009 are as follows:

Location	The plantations will be established primarily in Western Australia, near ports of Albany and Esperance, and/or in the Green Triangle region of Victoria/South Australia near the port of Portland.
Species of trees to be planted under the scheme	A mix of suitable pulpwood species, predominantly Tasmanian Blue gum (<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>)
Term of the Project	Approximately 10 years from planting
Date all trees are due to be planted on scheme land	31 December 2010
Number of trees per hectare	Average of 800 trees per hectare
Number of hectares offered for cultivation	Approximately 1,400
Size of each 'forestry interest' (Plantation Unit)	Approximately 1 hectare
Minimum allocation of 'forestry interests' per Investor	One Plantation Unit
Minimum subscription	Nil
Initial cost	\$4,500
Other costs	Deferred Management fee – 30% of Net Product Sale Proceeds Harvest Services fee After-Harvest Services fee Optional insurance

44. The Project will be a registered managed investment scheme under the *Corporations Act 2001*. ITC Project Management Limited has been issued with an Australian Financial Service Licence Number 247019 and will be the Responsible Entity for the Project.

45. The Project will involve establishing, tending, felling and harvesting Tasmanian Blue gum (or other suitable pulpwood species).

46. An offer to participate in the Project will be made through a PDS. The offer under the PDS is for 1,400 Plantation Units, which corresponds to approximately 1,400 hectares. ITC Project Management Limited can accept subscriptions in excess of this level, subject to suitable land being sourced. There is no minimum subscription for the Project.

47. An entity that participates in the Project as an Investor will do so by acquiring a 'forestry interest' in the Project, which will consist of a minimum of 1 Plantation Unit, on or before 30 June 2009.

48. Applicants enter the Project by lodging a valid application form contained in the PDS, which is accepted by the Responsible Entity by entering the Investor's application details in the register of investors.

49. For the purposes of this Product Ruling, Investors who are accepted to participate in the Project on or before 30 June 2009 become bound by the Constitution as Investors in the 2009 Project.

50. As of the date of this Product Ruling, the Responsible Entity has secured some land that may be available for this Project, though it has not been formally committed to the Project at this stage. The Responsible Entity is in the process of sourcing further land for the Project.

51. Land used for the Project must meet the requirements set out in the Independent Forester's report.

52. The species to be planted for each Plantation Unit are set out in the PDS and Constitution will be predominantly Tasmanian Blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) but may include other species suitable for pulpwood.

53. The final Clearfall Harvest of the Trees will take place approximately 10 years after planting.

Constitution

54. The Constitution establishes the Project and operates as a deed binding on all Investors and ITC Project Management Limited. The Constitution sets out the terms and conditions under which ITC Project Management Limited agrees to act as Responsible Entity and thereby manage the Project. Upon acceptance into the Project, Investors are bound by the Constitution by virtue of their participation in the Project.

55. Upon receipt of application monies and the completed and signed Application Form, the Responsible Entity must pay those monies into the Applications Bank Account, as per clause 17. Once the Application Form is accepted by the Responsible Entity and the Applicant's details are entered on the Register, the Applicant is deemed to become an Investor.

56. Once the Responsible Entity has accepted the Application and notified in writing the Applicant as the Investor of such acceptance, the application money may be transferred and applied against the fees due to the Responsible Entity (clause 17.7).

57. The Responsible Entity will use reasonable endeavours to procure the right to use Sufficient Land for the purposes of the Project (clause 11.2).

58. Under clause 13 of the Constitution, the Investors appoint the Responsible Entity with effect from the Commencement Date to perform the Services during the Term of the Project. The Services are as follows:

- Establishment Services within the Establishment Period;
- Management Services from the Commencement Date until the Termination Date;
- Harvest Services; and
- After Harvest Services.

59. The Responsible Entity may appoint any entity or entities to carry out the whole or any part of the above services.

60. The Responsible Entity may arrange for a reputable insurer to offer an insurance policy to Investors for the Investor's Insurable Interest to be insured against loss from fire, storm and any other insurable risks that may be offered by the insurer. Participation by an Investor in any such insurance policy will be voluntary (clause 21.2).

61. In summary, the Constitution also sets out (among other things) provisions relating to:

- the Responsible Entity's powers (clause 5);
- procedures for handling complaints (clause 6);
- winding up of the Project (clause 7);
- fees payable to the Responsible Entity (clause 8);
- management of the plantation (clause 13);
- transfer and transmission of Plantation Units (clause 18);
- register of Investors (clause 19); and
- register of land (clause 20).

Compliance Plan

62. As required by the *Corporations Act 2001*, the Responsible Entity has prepared a Compliance Plan for the Project. The purpose of the Compliance Plan is to ensure that the Responsible Entity manages the Project in accordance with its obligations and responsibilities contained in the Constitution and that the interests of Investors are protected.

Lease

63. The Responsible Entity (as Lessee) will enter into Leases with various Lessors for the Term of the Project.

64. Under the Lease, the Responsible Entity is permitted to use the land for the undertaking of a tree farming business, including preparing the land as required, constructing such improvements as it sees fit, planting, cultivating, irrigating or fertilizing the land, and harvesting the trees in such a manner and at such a time as it sees fit.

Forestry Management Agreement

65. Under the Forestry Management Agreement between the Responsible Entity and ITC Limited, the Responsible Entity will appoint ITC Limited as Forestry Manager to perform the Plantation Management Services consisting of all services related to organising administering and supervising the establishment and tending the Plantations, Harvest Services and After Harvest Services.

66. The Forestry Manager must perform the Plantation Management Services in accordance with Good Forestry Practice and in accordance with the Plantation Management Plan.

67. In consideration for the performance of its duties under the Forestry Management Agreement, the Forestry Manager is entitled to the fees and costs set out in clause 6 and the Schedule of the Forestry Management Agreement.

Harvesting and sale and entitlement to Net Sale Proceeds

68. Under the terms of the Constitution, the Responsible Entity must provide to the Investor the Harvest Services in accordance with Good Forestry Practice and when the Trees are ready to be removed for production of the Product (clause 13.5).

69. The Responsible Entity will use reasonable endeavours to arrange the sale of the Product and to enter into sale agreements as agent for the Investors pursuant to which the Product will be sold and the Product Sale Proceeds will be paid to the Responsible Entity (clause 13.7 of the Constitution).

70. The Constitution sets out provisions relating to the Investor's entitlement to harvest proceeds at clause 15.

71. The Responsible Entity must pay the Product Sale Proceeds and Other Plantation Income into the Proceeds Bank Account (clause 15.1 of the Constitution).

72. The Responsible Entity will pay all monies required to be paid by the Investor under the Constitution out of the Product Sale Proceeds including the Harvest Services fee, the Deferred Management fee and the After Harvest Services fee and pay the Forestry Income to the Investor within a reasonable time.

73. The Forestry Income is the Investor's Proportional Interest of the Net Product Sales Proceeds.

Fees

74. Under the terms of the Constitution an Investor will make payments as described below on a per 'Plantation Unit' basis:

- **Application Fee** of \$4,500 payable on application for the Establishment Services during the Establishment Period;
- **Deferred Management fee** of 30% of Net Product Sales Proceeds;
- **Harvest Services fee** equal to the Harvest Services Costs; and
- **After Harvest Services fee** equal to the After Harvest Services Costs.

Finance

75. To finance all or part of the cost of their 'Plantation Unit', an Investor can enter into a finance arrangement with ITC Finance Pty Ltd, borrow from the Preferred Financier or, alternatively, borrow from an independent lender external to the Project.

76. Only the finance arrangements set out below are covered by this Product Ruling. An Investor cannot rely on this Product Ruling if they enter into a finance arrangement with ITC Finance Pty Ltd or with the Preferred Financier that materially differs from that set out in the documentation provided with the application for this Product Ruling. An Investor who enters into a finance arrangement with an independent lender external to the Project, other than the Preferred Financier, may request a private ruling on the deductibility or otherwise of interest incurred under finance arrangements not covered by this Product Ruling.

77. An Investor cannot rely on any part of this Product Ruling if the Application Fee is not paid in full on or before 30 June 2009 by the Investor or, on the Investor's behalf, by a lending institution.

Finance offered by ITC Finance Pty Ltd

78. Subject to the terms and conditions of the relevant Loan Deed/Agreement, an Investor can finance the cost of the Application Fee by borrowing that amount from ITC Finance Pty Ltd as follows:

- one Year Interest Free Loan repayable in 12 equal monthly instalments commencing in July 2009; or
- long-term loan of a 3, 5 or 8 year period with repayment of the principal plus interest by monthly (direct debit) payments commencing in July 2009; and
- for the One Year Interest Free Loan, a borrowing fee of up to \$250 will be payable; or
- for the long-term loan, a loan application fee of up to the greater of \$250 or 0.25% of the loan amount is payable, which will be added to the total amount borrowed.

Finance offered by the Preferred Financier

79. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, an Investor can finance the cost of the Application Fee by borrowing that amount from the Preferred Financier under the following arrangements:

- long-term loan of a 3, 5 or 8 year period with repayment of the principal plus interest by monthly (direct debit) payments commencing in July 2009; or
- 8 year loan with monthly payment of interest only for 2 years commencing in July 2009 followed by monthly repayment of principal and interest for 6 years; and
- an establishment fee of the greater of \$250 or 0.25% of the Principal Amount and stamp duty are applicable to all loans. These amounts will be added to the total amount borrowed.

80. The loans from ITC Finance Pty Ltd and the Preferred Financier are made on a full recourse commercial basis and normal debt recovery procedures, including legal action, will be taken in the case of defaulting borrowers. The loans will be secured by a charge over the Investor's interest(s) in the Project.

81. This Product Ruling does not apply if a Investor enters into an agreement that includes or has any of the following features:

- there are split loan features of a type referred to in Taxation Ruling TR 98/22;
- there are indemnity arrangements or other collateral agreements in relation to the loan designed to limit the borrower's risk;

- 'additional benefits' will be granted to the borrowers for the purpose of section 82KL of the ITAA 1936, or the funding arrangements transform the Project into a 'scheme' to which Part IVA of the ITAA 1936 may apply;
- the loan terms are of a non-arm's length nature;
- repayments of the principal and interest are linked to the derivation of income from the Project;
- the funds borrowed, or any part of them, will not be available for the conduct of the Project but will be transferred (by any mechanism) back to the lender or any associate;
- lenders do not have the capacity under the loan agreement, or a genuine intention, to take legal action against defaulting borrowers; or
- entities associated with the Project other than ITC Finance Pty Ltd or the Preferred Financier are involved or become involved, in the provision of finance for the Project.

Commissioner of Taxation

25 March 2009

Appendix 1 – Explanation

❶ *This Appendix is provided as information to help you understand how the Commissioner's view has been reached. It does not form part of the binding public ruling.*

Structure of the Project

82. In return for payment of the Application Fee and the other fees and expenses, required under the Project Agreements during the term of the Project, Investors will hold a 'forestry interest' in a 'forestry managed investment scheme'. The Project qualifies as a 'forestry managed investment scheme' because its purpose is for 'establishing and tending trees for felling in Australia' (see subsection 394-15(1))

83. Under the Constitution of the Project and the other supporting agreements, the holding of a 'forestry interest' in the Project gives each Investor a right to a share in the proceeds of the harvest of the trees grown on the Project land. That share of proceeds is determined using the number of 'forestry interests' held by an Investor as a proportion of all 'forestry interests' held by 'participants'⁷ in the Project.

Is the Investor carrying on a business?

84. The general indicators used by the Courts in determining whether an entity is carrying on a business are set out in Taxation Ruling TR 97/11 Income tax: am I carrying on a business?

85. More recently, and in relation to a managed investment scheme similar to that which is the subject of this Product Ruling, the Full Federal Court in *Hance v. FC of T; Hannebery v. FC of T* [2008] FCAFC 196; 2008 ATC 20-085 applied these principles to conclude that 'Growers' in that scheme were carrying on a business of producing almonds (at FCAFC 90; ATC 90).

86. Application of these principles to the arrangement set out above leads to the conclusion that an Investor (as described in paragraphs 5 to 7 of this Ruling), in the Project is not considered to be carrying on a business of primary production involving afforestation activities.

Allowable deductions

Sections 8-5, 12-5, 394-10 and 394-20

87. Section 8-5 allows certain specific deductions to be claimed against the assessable income of a taxpayer. The list of specific deductions is shown in a table in section 12-5 and includes payments under a 'forestry managed investment scheme' that meet the requirements of subsection 394-10(1).

⁷ The term 'participant' is defined in subsection 394-15(4).

88. The amounts are allowable deductions in the income year in which they are paid (subsection 394-10(2)).

89. Where an Investor does not fully pay an amount, or the amount is not fully paid on their behalf in an income year (see section 394-20), it is deductible only to the extent to which it has been paid. The unpaid balance is then deductible in the income year or income years in which it is actually paid. This may occur, for example, if all or part of the amount is borrowed and the financier fails to transfer the funds to the account of the 'forestry manager' on or before 30 June in an income year.

The '70% DFE rule'

Paragraph 394-10(1)(c) and section 394-35

90. The threshold test for Investors in the Project to be entitled to deductions under subsection 394-10(1) is the '70% DFE rule' in paragraph 394-10(1)(c). Under that rule, it must be reasonable to expect that on 30 June 2009, the amount of 'direct forestry expenditure'⁸ under the scheme will be no less than 70% of the amount of payments under the scheme.⁹

91. The amount of all 'direct forestry expenditure' is the amount of the net present value of all 'direct forestry expenditure' that the Responsible Entity, as 'forestry manager'¹⁰ of the Project, has paid or will pay under the scheme (subsection 394-35(2)).

92. The 'amount of payments under the scheme' is the amount of the net present value of all amounts (that is, the fees and expenses) that all current and future 'investors' in the scheme have paid or will pay under the scheme (subsection 394-35(3)).

93. Both of the above amounts are determined as at 30 June 2009 taking into account

- the timing requirements in subsections 394-35(4) and (5);
- any amounts that can reasonably be expected to be recouped (subsection 394-35(6));
- the discount rate in subsection 394-35(7); and
- the market value rule in subsection 394-35(8).

94. Applying all of these requirements to the information provided by the Responsible Entity of the Project, the Commissioner has determined that the Project will satisfy the '70% DFE rule' on 30 June 2009.

⁸ See section 394-45.

⁹ See subsection 394-35(1) and section 394-40.

¹⁰ Defined in section 394-15(2).

The other elements for deductibility under subsection 394-10(1)

95. The requirement of paragraph 394-10(1)(d) that Investors in the Project not have day to day control over the operation of the Project (despite having a right to be consulted or give directions) is clear from the Project Agreements as are the alternative element of paragraph (e) relating to the number of Investors in the scheme and the Responsible Entity's role in other managed investment schemes.

96. The final requirement for deductibility requires all the Project trees to be established within 18 months of 30 June 2009 (see paragraph 394-10(1)(f) and subsection 394-10(4)). The planting timeline provided with the application for this Product Ruling by the Responsible Entity indicates that all the trees required to be established under the scheme will be planted on the Project land by 31 December 2010.

97. Accordingly, subject to the qualifications set out below, amounts paid by Investors to the Responsible Entity in relation their 'forestry interests' satisfy all requirements of subsection 394-10(1).

Loss of deductions previously allowed under section 394-10(1)

98. Two situations may lead to a loss of deductions previously allowed to Investors.

99. The first of these situations will occur if the Responsible Entity fails to establish the trees on the Project land within 18 months. Where this occurs the Responsible Entity is required to notify the Commissioner within 3 months after the end of the 18 month period (section 394-10 of Schedule 1 to the TAA).

100. The second situation where a Investor may have deductions disallowed is where a 'CGT event' happens to their 'forestry interest' within 4 years from 30 June of the income year they paid an amount under the scheme, for example, the Application Fee (see subsection 394-10(5)).

101. For the purposes of this provision, the Commissioner is able to amend the assessment of an Investor within 2 years of the relevant 'CGT event' happening. The Commissioner's power to amend in these circumstances applies despite section 170 of the ITAA 1936 (subsection 394-10(6) of the ITAA 1997).

102. Where a 'CGT event' happens to the 'forestry interest' of an Investor within 4 years, the market value of the 'forestry interest' at the time of the 'CGT event' or the decrease in the market value of the 'forestry interest' as a result of the 'CGT event' is still included in the assessable income of the Investor by section 394-25. The amount must be included in assessable income even where an amendment has disallowed or may disallow the deductions previously allowed under section 394-10.

Interest on loans to finance the ‘forestry interest’ of an Investor**Section 8-1**

103. Where an Investor borrows money to fund their investment in the Project the deductibility of the interest incurred on the loan monies falls for consideration under the general deduction provisions of section 8-1. If the interest incurred by the Investor is deductible under the first positive limb in subsection 8-1(1) there is no requirement to consider whether it is also deductible under the second positive limb of that provision. Court decisions show that the same basic test applies to both limbs (see *Ronpibon Tin NL v. Federal Commissioner of Taxation* (1949) 78 CLR 47; (1949) 8 ATD 431, at CLR 56; ATD 435).

104. Under the first positive limb of subsection 8-1(1), the interest incurred by an Investor will be deductible if it is incurred in gaining or producing an Investor’s assessable income and is not excluded by one of the negative limbs in subsection 8-1(2).

The question of whether an outgoing [is] ... incurred in gaining or producing the assessable income is a question of characterisation (*Fletcher & Ors v. Federal Commissioner of Taxation* (1991) 173 CLR 1; 91 ATC 4950; (1991) 22 ATR 613, at CLR 17; ATC 4957; ATR 621).

To the extent that ... outgoings of interest ... can properly be characterised as of a kind referred to in the first limb of [section 8-1] they must draw their character from the use of the borrowed funds (*Fletcher*, at CLR 19; ATC 4958; ATR 623).

[T]he characterisation of interest will generally be ascertained by reference to the objective circumstances of the use to which the borrowed funds are put (*Federal Commissioner of Taxation v. Roberts* (1992) 37 FCR 246; 92 ATC 4380; (1992) 23 ATR 494, at FCR 257; ATC 4388; ATR 504).

105. Investors in the Project use the borrowed funds to acquire a ‘forestry interest’ in a ‘forestry managed investment scheme’. The holding of that ‘forestry interest’ will produce assessable income for an Investor in the form of the proceeds of a full or part disposal of the ‘forestry interest’ or, as a proportionate share of the harvest proceeds. The tests of deductibility of interest under the first limb of subsection 8-1(1) are, therefore, met unless one of the exclusions in subsection 8-1(2) applies.

106. For the purposes of this Project, only the capital exclusion in paragraph 8-1(2)(a) is relevant. The use of borrowed funds to purchase a capital asset, such as a ‘forestry interest’, does not mean that the interest outgoings are on capital account (see *Steele v. Federal Commissioner of Taxation* (1999) 197 CLR 459; (1999) 99 ATC 4242; (1999) 41 ATR 139, at CLR 470; ATC 4249; ATR 148).

Interest [is a] periodic payment for the use, but not the permanent acquisition of a capital item. Therefore, a consideration of the often-cited three matters identified by Dixon J in *Sun Newspapers Ltd v. FC of T* ... assigns interest ... to revenue (*Australian National Hotels Ltd v. Federal Commissioner of Taxation* (1988) 19 FCR 234; 88 ATC 4627; (1988) 19 ATR 1575, at FCR 241; ATC 4633-4634; ATR 1582).

107. Therefore, the capital exclusion in subsection 8-1(2) does not apply to the interest and, subject only to the potential application of the prepayment provisions, a deduction for the interest can be claimed in the year in which it is incurred (Note: the meaning of 'incurred' is explained in Taxation Ruling TR 97/7.)

Prepayment provisions

Sections 82KZL to 82KZMF

108. The prepayment provisions contained in Subdivision H of Division 3 of Part III of the ITAA 1936 affect the timing of deductions for certain prepaid expenditure. These provisions apply to certain expenditure incurred under an agreement in return for the doing of a thing under the agreement that will not be wholly done within the same year of income as the income year in which the expenditure is incurred. For schemes such as this Project, the main operative provisions are sections 82KZMD and 82KZMF of the ITAA 1936.

109. However, subsection 394-10(7) of the ITAA 1997 specifically provides that sections 82KZMD and section 82KZMF of the ITAA 1936 do not affect the timing of amounts deductible under section 394-10 of the ITAA 1997.

110. Accordingly, under the scheme to which this Product Ruling applies, only deductions for interest payable under a loan with either ITC Finance Pty Ltd or the Preferred Financier will potentially fall within the prepayment provisions. However, the conditions applying to the loans to which this Product Ruling applies (see paragraphs 78 to 80 of this Ruling) do not require any prepayment of interest over the term of the loan. Accordingly, the prepayment provisions have no application to Investors who enter into those loans.

111. If an Investor chooses to prepay interest on these loans that Investor may request a private ruling on how the prepayment provisions will affect the timing of their interest deduction.

Borrowing costs

Section 25-25

112. A deduction is allowable for expenditure incurred by an Investor in borrowing money to the extent that the borrowed money is used for the purpose of producing assessable income (subsection 25-25(1)).

113. In this Project the application fee payable to ITC Finance Pty Ltd and the establishment fee payable to the Preferred Financier are incurred to borrow money that is used or is to be used solely for income producing purposes during each income year over the term of the loan.

114. As the borrowing expense is greater than \$100, the deduction for the borrowing expense is spread over the period of the loan or 5 years, whichever is the shorter (subsection 25-25(4)). However, in its discretion, ITC Finance Pty may charge a lesser amount as a loan application fee. If the amount charged is \$100 or less, the fee will be deductible in the year in which it is incurred.

Assessable income, 'CGT events' and the 'forestry interests' of Investors who are 'initial participants'

Sections 6-10, 10-5 and 394-25

115. Section 6-10 includes in assessable income amounts that are not ordinary income. These amounts, called statutory income, are listed in the table in section 10-5 and include amounts that are included in the assessable income of 'initial participants' of a 'forestry managed investment scheme' by subsection 394-25(2).

Subsection 394-25(2)

116. Where a 'CGT event' (other than for a 'CGT event' in respect of a thinning)¹¹ happens to a 'forestry interest' held by an Investor in this Project, subsection 394-25(2) includes an amount in the assessable income of the Investor if:

- the Investor can deduct or has deducted an amount under section 394-10; or
- the Investor would have met the condition immediately above if subsection 394-10(5) had not applied to disallow the deduction(s). Paragraphs 28 to 30 and paragraphs 98 to 102 of this Ruling explain when deductions will be disallowed under subsection 394-10(5).

Market value rule applies to 'CGT events'

117. If, as a result of the 'CGT event' the Investor either:

- no longer holds the 'forestry interest', or
- otherwise – where the Investor continues to hold the 'forestry interest', but there is a decrease in the market value of the 'forestry interest',

then the market value of the 'forestry interest' at the time of the event, or the reduction of the market value of the 'forestry interest' as a result of the event, is included in the assessable income of the Investor in the income year in which the 'CGT event' happens (subsection 394-25(2)). A market value rule applies rather than the amount of money actually received from the 'CGT event' (subsection 394-25(3)). However, the market value and the actual amount of money received may be the same.

¹¹ A thinning under this scheme is not a 'CGT event'.

118. The market value amount included in the assessable income of a Investor is the value of the 'forestry interest' just before the 'CGT event', or where the Investor continues to hold their interest after the event, the amount by which the market value of the 'forestry interest' is reduced as a result of the 'CGT event' (subsection 394-25(2)).

119. Section 394-25 will apply where the 'forestry interest' is sold, is extinguished, or ceases, and will include 'CGT events' such as a full or partial sale of the 'forestry interest' or from a full or partial clear-fell harvest of the trees grown under the Project.

Section 82KL – recouped expenditure

120. The operation of section 82KL of the ITAA 1936 depends, among other things, on the identification of a certain quantum of 'additional benefit(s)'. Insufficient 'additional benefits' will be provided to trigger the application of section 82KL. It will not apply to deny the deduction otherwise allowable under section 8-1 of the ITAA 1997.

Part IVA – general tax avoidance provisions

121. For Part IVA of the ITAA 1936 to apply there must be a 'scheme' (section 177A), a 'tax benefit' (section 177C) and a dominant purpose of entering into the scheme to obtain a tax benefit (section 177D).

122. The ITC Pulpwood Project 2009 will be a 'scheme' and a Investor will obtain a 'tax benefit' from entering into the 'scheme', in the form of tax deductions for the amounts detailed at paragraph 25 of this Ruling that would not have been obtained but for the scheme. However, it is not possible to conclude the scheme will be entered into or carried out with the dominant purpose of obtaining this tax benefit.

123. Investors to whom this Product Ruling applies will derive assessable income from holding or disposing of their 'forestry interest' in the Project. There are no facts that would suggest that Investors have the opportunity of obtaining a tax advantage other than the tax advantages identified in this Product Ruling. There is no non-recourse financing or round robin characteristics, and no indication that the parties are not dealing at arm's length or, if any parties are not dealing at arm's length, that any adverse tax consequences result. Further, having regard to the factors to be considered under paragraph 177D(b) of the ITAA 1936 it cannot be concluded, on the information available, that Investors will enter into the scheme for the dominant purpose of obtaining a tax benefit.

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Previous draft:

Not previously issued as a draft

Related Rulings/Determinations:

TR 97/7, TR 97/11, TR 98/22

Subject references:

- 4 year holding period
- 70 per cent DFE rule
- DFE
- direct forestry expenditure
- forestry interest
- forestry MIS
- interest expenses
- market value substitution rule
- payments under the scheme
- producing assessable income
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- reasonable expectation
- tax avoidance
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