

Accounting policies

1. Presentation of accounts

The accounts are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ("IASB") and interpretations issued by the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee of the IASB (together "IFRS") as adopted by the European Union ("EU"). The EU has not adopted the complete text of IAS 39 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement'; it has relaxed some of the standard's hedging requirements. The Group has not taken advantage of this relaxation and has adopted IAS 39 as issued by the IASB. The date of transition to IFRS for the Group and the company (The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc) and the date of their opening IFRS balance sheets was 1 January 2004.

The company is incorporated in the UK and registered in Scotland. The accounts are prepared on the historical cost basis except that the following assets and liabilities are stated at their fair value: derivative financial instruments, held-for-trading financial assets and financial liabilities, financial assets and financial liabilities that are designated as at fair value through profit or loss, available-for-sale financial assets and investment property. Recognised financial assets and financial liabilities in fair value hedges are adjusted for changes in fair value in respect of the risk that is hedged.

The company accounts are presented in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

Change of accounting policy

As permitted by IFRS 1, the Group and the company implemented IAS 32 'Financial Instruments: Disclosure and Presentation', IAS 39 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement' and IFRS 4 'Insurance Contracts' with effect from 1 January 2005 without restating the income statement, balance sheet and notes for 2004. The Group adopted the second amendment to IAS 39 'The Fair Value Option' issued by the IASB in June 2005 also from 1 January 2005. The effect of implementing IAS 32, IAS 39 and IFRS 4 on the Group and company balance sheets and shareholders' funds as at 1 January 2005 is set out in Note 46. In preparing the 2004 comparatives, UK GAAP principles then current have been applied to financial instruments. The main differences between UK GAAP and IFRS on financial instruments are summarised in Note 46 on the accounts.

The IASB's amendment to IAS 39, 'Cash Flow Hedge Accounting of Forecast Intragroup Transactions', published in April 2005, amended IAS 39 to permit the foreign currency risk of a highly probable forecast intragroup transaction to qualify as a hedged item in consolidated financial statements. The amendment, effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2006, had no material effect on the financial statements of the Group or the company.

The IASB's amendment to IAS 39, 'Financial Guarantee Contracts', published in August 2005, amended IAS 39 and IFRS 4. The amendment defines a financial guarantee contract and requires such contracts to be recorded initially at fair value and subsequently at higher of the provision determined in accordance with IAS 37 'Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets' and the amount initially recognised less amortisation. The amendment, effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2006, had no material effect on the Group or the company.

In December 2005, the IASB issued an amendment to IAS 21 'The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates' to clarify that a monetary item can form part of the net investment in overseas operations regardless of the currency in which it is denominated and that the net investment in a foreign operation can include a loan from a fellow subsidiary. The amendment, adopted by the EU in May 2006, had no material effect on the Group or the company.

2. Basis of consolidation

The consolidated financial statements incorporate the financial statements of the company and entities (including certain special purpose entities) controlled by the Group (its subsidiaries). Control exists where the Group has the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity; generally conferred by holding a majority of voting rights. On acquisition of a subsidiary, its identifiable assets, liabilities and contingent liabilities are included in the consolidated accounts at their fair value. Any excess of the cost (the fair value of assets given, liabilities incurred or assumed and equity instruments issued by the Group plus any directly attributable costs) of an acquisition over the fair value of the net assets acquired is recognised as goodwill. The interest of minority shareholders is stated at their share of the fair value of the subsidiary's net assets.

The results of subsidiaries acquired are included in the consolidated income statement from the date control passes to the Group. The results of subsidiaries sold are included up until the Group ceases to control them.

All intra-group balances, transactions, income and expenses are eliminated on consolidation. The consolidated accounts are prepared using uniform accounting policies.

3. Revenue recognition

Interest income on financial assets that are classified as loans and receivables, available-for-sale or held-to-maturity and interest expense on financial liabilities other than those at fair value through profit or loss are determined using the effective interest method. The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset or financial liability (or group of financial assets or liabilities) and of allocating the interest income or interest expense over the expected life of the asset or liability. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash flows to the instrument's initial carrying amount. Calculation of the effective interest rate takes into account fees receivable, that are an integral part of the instrument's yield, premiums or discounts on acquisition or issue, early redemption fees and transaction costs. All contractual terms of a financial instrument are considered when estimating future cash flows.