

BINDING GENERAL RULING (INCOME TAX): NO. 20 (Issue 2)

DATE: 20 January 2016

**ACT: INCOME TAX ACT NO. 58 OF 1962
TRANSFER DUTY ACT NO. 40 OF 1949**

**SECTION: SECTIONS 10(1)(cN), 10(1)(cO), 10(1)(cQ), 30B AND 30C, AND
PARAGRAPH 63A AND 63B OF THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME
TAX ACT;
SECTION 9(1)(c) OF THE TRANSFER DUTY ACT**

SUBJECT: INTERPRETATION OF THE TERM “SUBSTANTIALLY THE WHOLE”

Preamble

For the purposes of this BGR –

- “**association**” means any “entity” as defined in section 30B(1) which has been approved by the Commissioner under section 30B(2);
- “**BGR**” means a binding general ruling issued under section 89 of the Tax Administration Act No. 28 of 2011;
- “**PBO**” means a “public benefit organisation” as defined in section 30(1) which has been approved by the Commissioner under section 30(3);
- “**recreational club**” means a “recreational club” as defined in section 30A(1) which has been approved by the Commissioner under section 30A(2);
- “**SBFE**” means a “small business funding entity” as defined in section 1(1) which has been approved by the Commissioner under section 30C(1);
- “**Schedule**” means a schedule to the Act;
- “**section**” means a section of the Act;
- “**the Act**” means the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962;
- “**Transfer Duty Act**” means the Transfer Duty Act No. 40 of 1949; and
- any other word or expression bears the meaning ascribed to it in the Act.

1. Purpose

This BGR provides clarity on the interpretation of the term “substantially the whole” as referred to in –

- section 10(1)(cN)(ii)(aa)(B) (see **3.1**);
- section 10(1)(cO)(ii)(bb) (see **3.1**);
- section 10(1)(cQ)(ii)(aa)(B) (see **3.1**);
- section 30B(2)(b)(iv), (vi) and (ix) (see **3.2**);
- section 30C(1)(d)(v) and (viii) (see **3.3**);

- paragraph 63A(b) of the Eighth Schedule (see 3.4.1);
- paragraph 63B(1)(b) of the Eighth Schedule (see 3.4.2); and
- section 9(1)(c) of the Transfer Duty Act (see 3.5).

2. Background

The term “substantially the whole” was introduced in the revised tax system for PBOs in 2000¹ in order to achieve a more supportive fiscal environment and to give effect to the proposals and recommendations by the Katz Commission set out in the Ninth Interim Report.² In considering comparative international law with regard to trading activities conducted by non-profit organisations (NPOs) the Report stated that it was significant that –

“the United States’ federal tax law exempts profits derived from a business which is ‘substantially related’ to a NPOs tax-exempt purposes. Substantially related in this context means that the conduct of the business activity must have a significant causal relationship to the achievement of a tax-exempt purpose. Thus, for the conduct of a trade or business from which a particular amount of gross income is derived to be exempt from taxation, the production or distribution of the goods or the performance of the services from which the gross income is derived must contribute importantly to the accomplishment of the organisations’ exempt purposes.”

The Report stated further that –

“United Kingdom Revenue Practice is to accept ancillary trades provided they are ‘small in absolute terms and the turnover of that part of the trade is less than 10 per cent of the turnover of the whole trade’ ”.

The term “substantially the whole” has also been introduced into legislation dealing with –

- the exemption from normal tax of a recreational club;
- the exemption from normal tax of an SBFE;
- the requirements for approval as an association;
- the requirements for approval as an SBFE;
- capital gains tax affecting PBOs and SBFEs; and
- transfer duty affecting PBOs and institutions, boards or bodies contemplated in section 10(1)(cA)(i).

¹ Section 35(1) of the Taxation Laws Amendment Act No. 30 of 2000.

² M M Katz *et al* “Trading Activities” and “Specific Proposals” (1999) *Ninth Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Certain Aspects of the Tax Structure of South Africa* at 9 and 18.

3. Discussion

3.1 The exemption from normal tax of public benefit organisations, recreational clubs and small business funding entities

The term “substantially the whole” allows a PBO,³ recreational club⁴ and SBFE⁵ to carry on business undertakings or trading activities within certain parameters while at the same time ensuring that the sole or principal object of –

- a PBO remains the carrying on of public benefit activities (PBAs);
- a recreational club remains the provision of social and recreational amenities or facilities for its members; and
- an SBFE remains the provision of funding for small, medium and micro-sized enterprises.

The receipts and accruals derived by any of the aforementioned entities from any business undertaking or trading activity will be exempt from normal tax to the extent that substantially the whole of such undertaking or activity is directed towards the recovery of cost.

3.2 The requirements for approval as an association

Section 30B sets out the conditions and requirements that an “entity” as defined in section 30B(1) must comply with to obtain and retain approval as an association in order for its receipts and accruals to be exempt from normal tax under section 10(1)(d)(iii) or (iv).

The Commissioner must approve an entity for the purposes of section 10(1)(d)(iii) or (iv) if the constitution or written instrument under which it has been established provides, among other things, that –

- substantially the whole of its funds will be used for the sole or principal object for which it has been established;⁶
- substantially the whole of its activities will be directed to the furtherance of its sole or principal object and not for the specific benefit of an individual member or minority group;⁷ and
- substantially the whole of its funding will be derived from its annual or other long-term members or from an appropriation by the government of the Republic in the national, provincial or local sphere.⁸

3.3 The requirements for approval as a small business funding entity

Section 30C sets out the conditions and requirements that an entity must comply with to obtain and retain approval as an SBFE in order for certain of its receipts and accruals to be exempt from normal tax under section 10(1)(cQ).

³ Section 10(1)(cN)(ii)(aa)(B).

⁴ Section 10(1)(cO)(ii)(bb).

⁵ Section 10(1)(cQ)(ii)(aa)(B).

⁶ Section 30B(2)(b)(iv).

⁷ Section 30B(2)(b)(vi).

⁸ Section 30B(2)(b)(ix).

The Commissioner must approve an SBFE for the purposes of section 10(1)(cQ) if the constitution or written instrument under which it has been established provides, among other things, that –

- substantially the whole of its funds will be used for its sole or principal object for which it has been established;⁹ and
- substantially the whole of its activities will be directed to the furtherance of its sole or principal object.¹⁰

3.4 Capital gains tax

3.4.1 Public benefit organisations

A PBO must disregard any capital gain or capital loss determined on the disposal of an asset if substantially the whole of the use of that asset by that PBO on and after valuation date was directed at –¹¹

- a purpose other than carrying on a business undertaking or trading activity; or
- carrying on a business undertaking or trading activity which qualifies for exemption under section 10(1)(cN)(ii)(aa), (bb) or (cc).

3.4.2 Small business funding entities

An SBFE must disregard any capital gain or capital loss determined on the disposal of an asset if substantially the whole of the use of that asset by that SBFE was directed at –¹²

- a purpose other than carrying on a business undertaking or trading activity; or
- carrying on a business undertaking or trading activity which qualifies for exemption under section 10(1)(cQ)(ii)(aa), (bb) or (cc).

3.5 Transfer duty

In order to qualify for exemption from the payment of transfer duty under section 9(1)(c) of the Transfer Duty Act, the whole property, or substantially the whole of the property acquired by a PBO or institution, board or body contemplated in section 10(1)(cA)(i) must be used for purposes of carrying on any PBAs.

If at any time subsequent to the acquisition of property that has qualified for the exemption from transfer duty the whole or substantially the whole of the property is used for a purpose other than for carrying on any PBA, transfer duty will become payable.

4. Ruling

In the strict sense the term “substantially the whole” is regarded by SARS to mean 90% or more. SARS will, however, accept a percentage of not less than 85%.

The percentage must be determined using a method appropriate to the circumstances.

⁹ Section 30C(1)(d)(v).

¹⁰ Section 30C(1)(d)(viii).

¹¹ Paragraph 63A(b) of the Eighth Schedule.

¹² Paragraph 63B(1)(b) of the Eighth Schedule.

This ruling constitutes a BGR under section 89 of the Tax Administration Act No. 28 of 2011.

5. Period for which this ruling is valid

This BGR applies from date of issue until it is withdrawn, amended or the relevant legislation is amended.

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