

## § 301.7701-2

## 26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-07 Edition)

determine whether a business entity is domestic or foreign.

(e) *State*. For purposes of this section and § 301.7701-2, the term *State* includes the District of Columbia.

(f) *Effective date*. The rules of this section are effective as of January 1, 1997.

[T.D. 8697, 61 FR 66588, Dec. 18, 1996, as amended by T.D. 9153, 69 FR 49810, Aug. 12, 2004; T.D. 9246, 71 FR 4816, Jan. 30, 2006]

### § 301.7701-2 Business entities; definitions.

(a) *Business entities*. For purposes of this section and § 301.7701-3, a *business entity* is any entity recognized for federal tax purposes (including an entity with a single owner that may be disregarded as an entity separate from its owner under § 301.7701-3) that is not properly classified as a trust under § 301.7701-4 or otherwise subject to special treatment under the Internal Revenue Code. A business entity with two or more members is classified for federal tax purposes as either a corporation or a partnership. A business entity with only one owner is classified as a corporation or is disregarded; if the entity is disregarded, its activities are treated in the same manner as a sole proprietorship, branch, or division of the owner.

(b) *Corporations*. For federal tax purposes, the term *corporation* means—

(1) A business entity organized under a Federal or State statute, or under a statute of a federally recognized Indian tribe, if the statute describes or refers to the entity as incorporated or as a corporation, body corporate, or body politic;

(2) An association (as determined under § 301.7701-3);

(3) A business entity organized under a State statute, if the statute describes or refers to the entity as a joint-stock company or joint-stock association;

(4) An insurance company;

(5) A State-chartered business entity conducting banking activities, if any of its deposits are insured under the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, as amended, 12 U.S.C. 1811 *et seq.*, or a similar federal statute;

(6) A business entity wholly owned by a State or any political subdivision thereof, or a business entity wholly

owned by a foreign government or any other entity described in § 1.892-2T;

(7) A business entity that is taxable as a corporation under a provision of the Internal Revenue Code other than section 7701(a)(3); and

(8) *Certain foreign entities*—(i) *In general*. Except as provided in paragraphs (b)(8)(ii) and (d) of this section, the following business entities formed in the following jurisdictions:

American Samoa, Corporation  
Argentina, Sociedad Anonima  
Australia, Public Limited Company  
Austria, Aktiengesellschaft  
Barbados, Limited Company  
Belgium, Societe Anonyme  
Belize, Public Limited Company  
Bolivia, Sociedad Anonima  
Brazil, Sociedade Anonima  
Canada, Corporation and Company  
Chile, Sociedad Anonima  
People's Republic of China, Gufen Youxian Gongsi  
Republic of China (Taiwan), Ku-fen Yu-hsien Kung-szu  
Colombia, Sociedad Anonima  
Costa Rica, Sociedad Anonima  
Cyprus, Public Limited Company  
Czech Republic, Akciova Spolecnost  
Denmark, Aktieselskab  
Ecuador, Sociedad Anonima or Compania Anonima  
Egypt, Sharikat Al-Mossahamah  
El Salvador, Sociedad Anonima  
Estonia, Aktsiaselts  
European Economic Area/European Union, Societas Europaea  
Finland, Julkinen Osakeyhtio/Publikt Aktiebolag  
France, Societe Anonyme  
Germany, Aktiengesellschaft  
Greece, Anonymos Etairia  
Guam, Corporation  
Guatemala, Sociedad Anonima  
Guyana, Public Limited Company  
Honduras, Sociedad Anonima  
Hong Kong, Public Limited Company  
Hungary, Reszvenytarsasag  
Iceland, Hlutfelag  
India, Public Limited Company  
Indonesia, Perseroan Terbuka  
Ireland, Public Limited Company  
Israel, Public Limited Company  
Italy, Societa per Azioni  
Jamaica, Public Limited Company  
Japan, Kabushiki Kaisha  
Kazakhstan, Ashyk Aktционерlik Kogham  
Republic of Korea, Chusik Hoesa  
Latvia, Akciju Sabiedriba  
Liberia, Corporation  
Liechtenstein, Aktiengesellschaft  
Lithuania, Akcine Bendroves  
Luxembourg, Societe Anonyme  
Malaysia, Berhad

Malta, Public Limited Company  
 Mexico, Sociedad Anonima  
 Morocco, Societe Anonyme  
 Netherlands, Naamloze Vennootschap  
 New Zealand, Limited Company  
 Nicaragua, Compania Anonima  
 Nigeria, Public Limited Company  
 Northern Mariana Islands, Corporation  
 Norway, Allment Aksjeselskap  
 Pakistan, Public Limited Company  
 Panama, Sociedad Anonima  
 Paraguay, Sociedad Anonima  
 Peru, Sociedad Anonima  
 Philippines, Stock Corporation  
 Poland, Spolka Akcyjna  
 Portugal, Sociedade Anonima  
 Puerto Rico, Corporation  
 Romania, Societe pe Actiuni  
 Russia, Otkrytoye Aktsionernoy  
 Obshchestvo  
 Saudi Arabia, Sharikat Al-Mossahamah  
 Singapore, Public Limited Company  
 Slovak Republic, Akciova Spolocnost  
 Slovenia, Delniska Druzba  
 South Africa, Public Limited Company  
 Spain, Sociedad Anonima  
 Surinam, Naamloze Vennootschap  
 Sweden, Publika Aktiebolag  
 Switzerland, Aktiengesellschaft  
 Thailand, Borisat Chamkad (Mahachon)  
 Trinidad and Tobago, Limited Company  
 Tunisia, Societe Anonyme  
 Turkey, Anonim Sirket  
 Ukraine, Aktsionerne Tovaristvo Vidkritogo  
 Tipu  
 United Kingdom, Public Limited Company  
 United States Virgin Islands, Corporation  
 Uruguay, Sociedad Anonima  
 Venezuela, Sociedad Anonima or Compania  
 Anonima

(ii) *Clarification of list of corporations in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section—(A) Exceptions in certain cases.* The following entities will not be treated as corporations under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section:

(1) With regard to Canada, a Nova Scotia Unlimited Liability Company (or any other company or corporation all of whose owners have unlimited liability pursuant to federal or provincial law).

(2) With regard to India, a company deemed to be a public limited company solely by operation of section 43A(1) (relating to corporate ownership of the company), section 43A(1A) (relating to annual average turnover), or section 43A(1B) (relating to ownership interests in other companies) of the Companies Act, 1956 (or any combination of these), provided that the organizational documents of such deemed pub-

lic limited company continue to meet the requirements of section 3(1)(iii) of the Companies Act, 1956.

(3) With regard to Malaysia, a Sendirian Berhad.

(B) *Inclusions in certain cases.* With regard to Mexico, the term Sociedad Anonima includes a Sociedad Anonima that chooses to apply the variable capital provision of Mexican corporate law (Sociedad Anonima de Capital Variable).

(iii) *Public companies.* For purposes of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section, with regard to Cyprus, Hong Kong, and Jamaica, the term Public Limited Company includes any Limited Company that is not defined as a private company under the corporate laws of those jurisdictions. In all other cases, where the term Public Limited Company is not defined, that term shall include any Limited Company defined as a public company under the corporate laws of the relevant jurisdiction.

(iv) *Limited companies.* For purposes of this paragraph (b)(8), any reference to a Limited Company includes, as the case may be, companies limited by shares and companies limited by guarantee.

(v) *Multilingual countries.* Different linguistic renderings of the name of an entity listed in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section shall be disregarded. For example, an entity formed under the laws of Switzerland as a Societe Anonyme will be a corporation and treated in the same manner as an Aktiengesellschaft.

(b)(9) *Business entities with multiple charters.* (i) An entity created or organized under the laws of more than one jurisdiction if the rules of this section would treat it as a corporation with reference to any one of the jurisdictions in which it is created or organized. Such an entity may elect its classification under §301.7701-3, subject to the limitations of those provisions, only if it is created or organized in each jurisdiction in a manner that meets the definition of an eligible entity in §301.7701-3(a). The determination of a business entity's corporate or non-corporate classification is made independently from the determination of whether the entity is domestic or foreign. See §301.7701-5 for the rules that

determine whether a business entity is domestic or foreign.

(i) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the rule of this paragraph (b)(9):

*Example 1.* (i) *Facts.* X is an entity with a single owner organized under the laws of Country A as an entity that is listed in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section. Under the rules of this section, such an entity is a corporation for Federal tax purposes and under § 301.7701-3(a) is unable to elect its classification. Several years after its formation, X files a certificate of domestication in State B as a limited liability company (LLC). Under the laws of State B, X is considered to be created or organized in State B as an LLC upon the filing of the certificate of domestication and is therefore subject to the laws of State B. Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, an LLC with a single owner organized only in State B is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner for Federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as an association). Neither Country A nor State B law requires X to terminate its charter in Country A as a result of the domestication, and in fact X does not terminate its Country A charter. Consequently, X is now organized in more than one jurisdiction.

(ii) *Result.* X remains organized under the laws of Country A as an entity that is listed in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section, and as such, it is an entity that is treated as a corporation under the rules of this section. Therefore, X is a corporation for Federal tax purposes because the rules of this section would treat X as a corporation with reference to one of the jurisdictions in which it is created or organized. Because X is organized in Country A in a manner that does not meet the definition of an eligible entity in § 301.7701-3(a), it is unable to elect its classification.

*Example 2.* (i) *Facts.* Y is an entity that is incorporated under the laws of State A and has two shareholders. Under the rules of this section, an entity incorporated under the laws of State A is a corporation for Federal tax purposes and under § 301.7701-3(a) is unable to elect its classification. Several years after its formation, Y files a certificate of continuance in Country B as an unlimited company. Under the laws of Country B, upon filing a certificate of continuance, Y is treated as organized in Country B. Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, an unlimited company organized only in Country B that has more than one owner is treated as a partnership for Federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as an association). Neither State A nor Country B law requires Y to terminate its charter in State A as a result of the continuance, and in fact Y does not terminate its State A charter. Con-

sequently, Y is now organized in more than one jurisdiction.

(ii) *Result.* Y remains organized in State A as a corporation, an entity that is treated as a corporation under the rules of this section. Therefore, Y is a corporation for Federal tax purposes because the rules of this section would treat Y as a corporation with reference to one of the jurisdictions in which it is created or organized. Because Y is organized in State A in a manner that does not meet the definition of an eligible entity in § 301.7701-3(a), it is unable to elect its classification.

*Example 3.* (i) *Facts.* Z is an entity that has more than one owner and that is recognized under the laws of Country A as an unlimited company organized in Country A. Z is organized in Country A in a manner that meets the definition of an eligible entity in § 301.7701-3(a). Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, an unlimited company organized only in Country A with more than one owner is treated as a partnership for Federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as an association). At the time Z was formed, it was also organized as a private limited company under the laws of Country B. Z is organized in Country B in a manner that meets the definition of an eligible entity in § 301.7701-3(a). Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, a private limited company organized only in Country B is treated as a corporation for Federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as a partnership). Thus, Z is organized in more than one jurisdiction. Z has not made any entity classification elections under § 301.7701-3.

(ii) *Result.* Z is organized in Country B as a private limited company, an entity that is treated (absent an election to the contrary) as a corporation under the rules of this section. However, because Z is organized in each jurisdiction in a manner that meets the definition of an eligible entity in § 301.7701-3(a), it may elect its classification under § 301.7701-3, subject to the limitations of those provisions.

*Example 4.* (i) *Facts.* P is an entity with more than one owner organized in Country A as a general partnership. Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, an eligible entity with more than one owner in Country A is treated as a partnership for federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as an association). P files a certificate of continuance in Country B as an unlimited company. Under the rules of this section and § 301.7701-3, an unlimited company in Country B with more than one owner is treated as a partnership for federal tax purposes (absent an election to be treated as an association). P is not required under either the laws of Country A or Country B to terminate the general partnership in Country A, and in fact P does not terminate its Country A partnership. P is

now organized in more than one jurisdiction. P has not made any entity classification elections under § 301.7701-3.

(i) *Result.* P's organization in both Country A and Country B would result in P being classified as a partnership. Therefore, since the rules of this section would not treat P as a corporation with reference to any jurisdiction in which it is created or organized, it is not a corporation for federal tax purposes.

(c) *Other business entities.* For federal tax purposes—

(1) The term *partnership* means a business entity that is not a corporation under paragraph (b) of this section and that has at least two members.

(2) *Wholly owned entities*—(i) *In general.* A business entity that has a single owner and is not a corporation under paragraph (b) of this section is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner.

(ii) *Special rule for certain business entities.* If the single owner of a business entity is a bank (as defined in section 581, or, in the case of a foreign bank, as defined in section 585(a)(2)(B) without regard to the second sentence thereof), then the special rules applicable to banks under the Internal Revenue Code will continue to apply to the single owner as if the wholly owned entity were a separate entity. For this purpose, the special rules applicable to banks under the Internal Revenue Code do not include the rules under sections 864(c), 882(c), and 884.

(iii) *Tax liabilities of certain disregarded entities*—(A) *In general.* An entity that is otherwise disregarded as separate from its owner is treated as an entity separate from its owner for purposes of:

(1) Federal tax liabilities of the entity with respect to any taxable period for which the entity was not disregarded.

(2) Federal tax liabilities of any other entity for which the entity is liable.

(3) Refunds or credits of Federal tax.

(B) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the application of paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(A) of this section:

*Example 1.* In 2001, X, a domestic corporation that reports its taxes on a calendar year basis, merges into Z, a domestic LLC wholly owned by Y that is disregarded as an entity separate from Y, in a state law merger. X was not a member of a consolidated group at

any time during its taxable year ending in December 2000. Under the applicable state law, Z is the successor to X and is liable for all of X's debts. In 2004, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) seeks to extend the period of limitations on assessment for X's 2000 taxable year. Because Z is the successor to X and is liable for X's 2000 taxes that remain unpaid, Z is the proper party to sign the consent to extend the period of limitations.

*Example 2.* The facts are the same as in *Example 1*, except that in 2002, the IRS determines that X miscalculated and underreported its income tax liability for 2000. Because Z is the successor to X and is liable for X's 2000 taxes that remain unpaid, the deficiency may be assessed against Z and, in the event that Z fails to pay the liability after notice and demand, a general tax lien will arise against all of Z's property and rights to property.

(d) *Special rule for certain foreign business entities*—(1) *In general.* Except as provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section, a foreign business entity described in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section will not be treated as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section if—

(i) The entity was in existence on May 8, 1996;

(ii) The entity's classification was relevant (as defined in § 301.7701-3(d)) on May 8, 1996;

(iii) No person (including the entity) for whom the entity's classification was relevant on May 8, 1996, treats the entity as a corporation for purposes of filing such person's federal income tax returns, information returns, and withholding documents for the taxable year including May 8, 1996;

(iv) Any change in the entity's claimed classification within the sixty months prior to May 8, 1996, occurred solely as a result of a change in the organizational documents of the entity, and the entity and all members of the entity recognized the federal tax consequences of any change in the entity's classification within the sixty months prior to May 8, 1996;

(v) A reasonable basis (within the meaning of section 6662) existed on May 8, 1996, for treating the entity as other than a corporation; and

(vi) Neither the entity nor any member was notified in writing on or before May 8, 1996, that the classification of the entity was under examination (in which case the entity's classification

will be determined in the examination).

(2) *Binding contract rule.* If a foreign business entity described in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section is formed after May 8, 1996, pursuant to a written binding contract (including an accepted bid to develop a project) in effect on May 8, 1996, and all times thereafter, in which the parties agreed to engage (directly or indirectly) in an active and substantial business operation in the jurisdiction in which the entity is formed, paragraph (d)(1) of this section will be applied to that entity by substituting the date of the entity's formation for May 8, 1996.

(3) *Termination of grandfather status—*  
(i) *In general.* An entity that is not treated as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section by reason of paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section will be treated permanently as a corporation under paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section from the earliest of:

(A) The effective date of an election to be treated as an association under § 301.7701-3;

(B) A termination of the partnership under section 708(b)(1)(B) (regarding sale or exchange of 50 percent or more of the total interest in an entity's capital or profits within a twelve month period);

(C) A division of the partnership under section 708(b)(2)(B); or

(D) The date any person or persons, who were not owners of the entity as of November 29, 1999, own in the aggregate a 50 percent or greater interest in the entity.

(ii) *Special rule for certain entities.* For purposes of paragraph (d)(2) of this section, paragraph (d)(3)(i)(B) of this section shall not apply if the sale or exchange of interests in the entity is to a related person (within the meaning of sections 267(b) and 707(b)) and occurs no later than twelve months after the date of the formation of the entity.

(e) *Effective date.* (1) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph (e), the rules of this section apply as of January 1, 1997, except that paragraph (b)(6) of this section applies on or after January 14, 2002, to a business entity wholly owned by a foreign government regardless of any prior entity classification, and paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section

applies to taxable years beginning after January 12, 2001. The reference to the Finnish, Maltese, and Norwegian entities in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section is applicable on November 29, 1999. The reference to the Trinidadian entity in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section applies to entities formed on or after November 29, 1999. Any Maltese or Norwegian entity that becomes an eligible entity as a result of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section in effect on November 29, 1999, may elect by February 14, 2000, to be classified for Federal tax purposes as an entity other than a corporation retroactive to any period from and including January 1, 1997. Any Finnish entity that becomes an eligible entity as a result of paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section in effect on November 29, 1999, may elect by February 14, 2000, to be classified for Federal tax purposes as an entity other than a corporation retroactive to any period from and including September 1, 1997. However, paragraph (d)(3)(i)(D) of this section applies on or after October 22, 2003.

(2) Paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section applies on or after April 1, 2004.

(3)(i) *General rule.* Except as provided in paragraph (e)(3)(ii) of this section, the rules of paragraph (b)(9) of this section apply as of August 12, 2004, to all business entities existing on or after that date.

(ii) *Transition rule.* For business entities created or organized under the laws of more than one jurisdiction as of August 12, 2004, the rules of paragraph (b)(9) of this section apply as of May 1, 2006. These entities, however, may rely on the rules of paragraph (b)(9) of this section as of August 12, 2004.

(4) The reference to the Estonian, Latvian, Liechtenstein, Lithuanian, and Slovenian entities in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section applies to such entities formed on or after October 7, 2004, and to any such entity formed before such date from the date any person or persons, who were not owners of the entity as of October 7, 2004, own in the aggregate a 50 percent or greater interest in the entity. The reference to the European Economic Area/European Union entity in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of

this section applies to such entities formed on or after October 8, 2004.

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**§ 301.7701-3 Classification of certain business entities.**

(a) *In general.* A business entity that is not classified as a corporation under § 301.7701-2(b) (1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8) (an *eligible entity*) can elect its classification for federal tax purposes as provided in this section. An eligible entity with at least two members can elect to be classified as either an association (and thus a corporation under § 301.7701-2(b)(2)) or a partnership, and an eligible entity with a single owner can elect to be classified as an association or to be disregarded as an entity separate from its owner. Paragraph (b) of this section provides a default classification for an eligible entity that does not make an election. Thus, elections are necessary only when an eligible entity chooses to be classified initially as other than the default classification or when an eligible entity chooses to change its classification. An entity whose classification is determined under the default classification retains that classification (regardless of any changes in the members' liability that occurs at any time during the time that the entity's classification is relevant as defined in paragraph (d) of this section) until the entity makes an election to change that classification under paragraph (c)(1) of this section. Paragraph (c) of this section provides rules for making express elections. Paragraph (d) of this section provides special rules for foreign eligible entities. Paragraph (e) of this section provides special rules for classifying entities resulting from partnership terminations and divisions under section 708(b). Paragraph (f) of this section sets forth the effective date of this section and a special rule relating to prior periods.

(b) *Classification of eligible entities that do not file an election—(1) Domestic eligible entities.* Except as provided in para-

graph (b)(3) of this section, unless the entity elects otherwise, a domestic eligible entity is—

(i) A partnership if it has two or more members; or

(ii) Disregarded as an entity separate from its owner if it has a single owner.

(2) *Foreign eligible entities—(i) In general.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, unless the entity elects otherwise, a foreign eligible entity is—

(A) A partnership if it has two or more members and at least one member does not have limited liability;

(B) An association if all members have limited liability; or

(C) Disregarded as an entity separate from its owner if it has a single owner that does not have limited liability.

(ii) *Definition of limited liability.* For purposes of paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, a member of a foreign eligible entity has limited liability if the member has no personal liability for the debts of or claims against the entity by reason of being a member. This determination is based solely on the statute or law pursuant to which the entity is organized, except that if the underlying statute or law allows the entity to specify in its organizational documents whether the members will have limited liability, the organizational documents may also be relevant. For purposes of this section, a member has personal liability if the creditors of the entity may seek satisfaction of all or any portion of the debts or claims against the entity from the member as such. A member has personal liability for purposes of this paragraph even if the member makes an agreement under which another person (whether or not a member of the entity) assumes such liability or agrees to indemnify that member for any such liability.

(3) *Existing eligible entities—(i) In general.* Unless the entity elects otherwise, an eligible entity in existence prior to the effective date of this section will have the same classification that the entity claimed under §§ 301.7701-1 through 301.7701-3 as in effect on the date prior to the effective date of this section; except that if an eligible entity with a single owner claimed to be a partnership under those regulations,