

2. Ordering Rule

Under these temporary regulations, the attributes attributable to the debtor member are first subject to reduction. For this purpose, attributes attributable to the debtor member include (1) consolidated attributes attributable to the debtor member, (2) attributes that arose in separate return limitation years of the debtor member, and (3) the basis of property of the debtor member. The amount of a consolidated attribute attributable to the debtor member is determined pursuant to the principles of § 1.1502–21(b). To the extent that the excluded discharge of indebtedness income exceeds the attributes attributable to the debtor member, these temporary regulations require the reduction of consolidated attributes attributable to other members and attributes attributable to members other than the debtor member that arose (or are treated as arising) in a separate return limitation year to the extent that the debtor member is a member of the separate return limitation year subgroup with respect to such attribute.

The availability of tax attributes attributable to other members of a consolidated group to reduce the future income of the debtor member creates the possibility of shifting the location of tax attributes and future tax liability. Preserving the location of tax items within the group is a fundamental policy underlying the consolidated return regulations which is reflected in a number of such regulations. *See, e.g.*, § 1.1502–13 (regarding intercompany transactions); § 1.1502–21 (regarding the use of attributes that arise in separate return limitation years). Location is particularly important when a member leaves the group and no longer shares the attributes attributable to it with, or uses the attributes attributable to, the other members. This sharing of tax attributes can shift the location of items within the group, affecting the amount of consolidated tax attributes that a member takes with it when it leaves the group.

The IRS and Treasury Department did not adopt an alternative consolidated approach that would require the reduction of consolidated attributes attributable to other members prior to the reduction of all of the attributes attributable to the debtor member. Such an approach would not preserve the location of income in the debtor member resulting from the reduction of attributes as effectively as the approach adopted in these temporary regulations. For example, a reduction of the consolidated attributes attributable to each member before the reduction of all

of the attributes attributable to the debtor member could cause a shifting of the tax burden if the debtor member subsequently leaves the group. In that case, the debtor member may take with it a larger portion of the consolidated attributes than it otherwise would, while a portion of the consolidated attributes attributable to other members would be reduced. The larger portion of the consolidated attributes that the debtor member would take with it would be available to offset future income of the debtor member, while the remaining members of the group would bear a higher tax burden as a result of the unavailability of those consolidated attributes.

These temporary regulations achieve the dual objectives of subjecting the entire amount of consolidated attributes to reduction *and* preserving the location of future income that is deferred by first reducing attributes attributable to the debtor member, including consolidated attributes, in the order prescribed in section 108(b) and then reducing the remaining amount of consolidated attributes. This ordering rule reduces the potential to shift the location of attributes within the group.

3. Look-Through Rule

The adopted approach includes a look-through rule that applies if the attribute of the debtor member reduced is the basis of stock of another member of the group. In these cases, corresponding adjustments must be made to the attributes attributable to the lower-tier member. To effect those corresponding adjustments, these temporary regulations treat the lower-tier member as a debtor member that has discharge of indebtedness income that is excluded from gross income in the amount of the stock basis reduction for purposes of the rules relating to the reduction of the attributes attributable to a debtor member. For this purpose, the consolidated attributes attributable to the lower-tier member (determined pursuant to the principles of § 1.1502–21(b)) as well as the lower-tier member's separate attributes (including attributes that arose in separate return limitation years and asset basis) are available for reduction. The look-through rule is consistent with the treatment of a group as a single taxpayer under a number of the consolidated return regulations, including the provisions allowing the consolidated tax attributes attributable to one member of a group to offset income of other members of the group and the investment adjustment rules that adjust the basis of subsidiary stock to reflect the income and absorbed losses of the subsidiary.

C. Corresponding Amendments

Included in these temporary regulations are amendments to certain provisions of the consolidated return regulations that reflect the attribute reduction rules that apply when the debtor is a member of a consolidated group. The following paragraphs describe these amendments.

1. The Investment Adjustment Rules

Under § 1.1502–32(b)(3)(ii)(C), discharge of indebtedness income of a subsidiary that is excluded from gross income is treated as tax-exempt income for purposes of the investment adjustment rules only to the extent it is applied to reduce attributes. For this purpose, a discharge of indebtedness is treated as applied to reduce tax attributes only to the extent the attribute reduction is taken into account as a noncapital, nondeductible expense under § 1.1502–32. The investment adjustment rules of § 1.1502–32 do not apply to affect the basis of the stock of the common parent of a group. Therefore, to the extent that discharge of indebtedness income reduces consolidated attributes that are attributable to the common parent, no positive basis adjustment is made to the stock of the subsidiary. Furthermore, because the reduction of a tax credit is not a noncapital, nondeductible expense, to the extent that the discharge of indebtedness income reduces a tax credit, no positive basis adjustment is made to the stock of the subsidiary.

The IRS and Treasury Department believe that a positive basis adjustment should be made to the basis of the stock of a debtor subsidiary even if the discharge of indebtedness income reduces an attribute that is attributable to the common parent. This position is consistent with the approach of § 1.1502–32 that income of a subsidiary that is offset by net operating losses generated by the common parent results in an increase in the basis of the subsidiary stock. In addition, the IRS and Treasury Department believe that a positive basis adjustment should be made to the basis of the stock of a debtor subsidiary even if the discharge of indebtedness income reduces a credit of any member. Accordingly, these temporary regulations treat as tax-exempt income discharge of indebtedness income that is excluded from gross income to the extent that such excluded income reduces tax attributes, including tax attributes attributable to the common parent and any other attribute the reduction of which is not treated as a noncapital, nondeductible expense, such as a credit.