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| IHTSDO Expert Engagement Plan |
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Approvals

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Future Review Timetable

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# Introduction

## Background

The International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) is an international not-for-profit organization which owns, maintains and distributes SNOMED CT and related products. SNOMED Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT) is the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical healthcare terminology in the world.

SNOMED CT contributes to the improvement of patient care by underpinning the development of Electronic Health Records that record clinical information in ways that enable meaning-based retrieval. This provides effective access to information required for decision support and consistent reporting and analysis. Patients benefit from the use of SNOMED CT because it improves the recording of EHR information and facilitates better communication, leading to improvements in the quality of care.

The Strategic Directions of the IHTSDO sets out a priority related to clinical engagement -

*Strengthen responsiveness and clinical governance of SNOMED CT*. To date the focus of clinical engagement has been through a small number of clinical Special Interest Groups; this was reviewed in 2013 and a proposal agreed to establish a *Healthcare Professionals Coordination* *Group* with the following Terms of Reference:

To provide a forum:

* to oversee healthcare professional stakeholder input into IHTSDO business, identifying gaps and shaping processes to ensure appropriate / proportionate engagement
* where the agendas of the professional SIGs are shared and confirmed, and cross cutting issues are managed
* to coordinate professional feedback into IHTSDO priorities
* to develop any 'generic' communications about IHTSDO, SNOMED CT and its derivatives for use by health professional organizations
* to advise IHTSDO on existing and emerging harmonization/collaboration agreements with professional bodies on an international basis
* to which Member countries can address specific professional requirements of IHTSDO Products
* to promote the development of existing and new professional SIGs, enabling shared learning to support SIG productivity
* to create guidelines for when a new working group or Professional Special Interest Group should be created
* to create effective teams to deliver projects for work plan items that do not have an existing SIG or where work cuts across a number of professional SIGs
* to increase interchange and collaboration amongst the professional SIGs and to coordinate activities in support of the IHTSDO clinical work plan items.

## Purpose

At this time, a number of clinical areas wish to work with IHTSDO, recognizing the current national drivers to the use of SNOMED CT and the power of being able to work internationally in order to have information that can truly be shared. Clinicians are starting to see the need to work between international standards such as WHO classifications, and understand how they can make good use of such products to capture the care of individuals, to analyze care over time and also deliver information for the different billing/costing models.

The purpose of this Clinical Engagement Plan is to outline the key components for engagement with international groups of clinicians in order to advice and contribute to the development of IHTSDO products and services and their implementation. Engagement is at different levels and therefore requires different levels of formalization – e.g. individual clinicians employed to undertake specific work on SNOMED CT through to collaboration agreements with international professional bodies to deliver specific joint activities that benefit the international community.

## Scope

This strategic plan focuses on the International release of SNOMED CT and related products, their development, maintenance and implementation and IHTSDO services that support deployment/implementation of such products. Engagement will be at the international professional level and not with national professional clinical bodies unless there is an agreed business requirement through a Member country.

It should be recognized that clinical engagement is an evolving are for the IHTSDO and any approach needs to ensure that it does not step in to the realms of the work of Member countries – though there have been several instances in the last few years where Member countries have escalated clinical requirements for content development to the IHTSDO because there is a clear requirement for collaborative work on the international release of SNOMED CT.

Elements of the plan, such as communications, education and implementation, will need to coordinate with work to support other stakeholder groups including IHTSDO Members, vendors and health informatics specialists.

Note: in referring to ‘clinicians’ this includes all healthcare professional groups who have direct involvement in the care of patients.

## Audience

This document is prepared as part of a wider approach to customer and stakeholder engagement and will therefore be referenced internally. It will be reviewed and agreed with the Healthcare Professionals Coordination Group and be referenced for all current and planned activities with international clinical groups.

This plan will be made available via the IHTSDO website for any related stakeholders to access, and so that clinicians can see how the IHTSDO plans to work with them and support their needs in the development of products and services.

# Aims of the clinical engagement plan

This plan sets out to create and maintain:

1. A culture where clinicians view collaboration with IHTSDO as a necessary, valuable and worthwhile endeavor
2. A respectful partnership between IHTSDO, the clinical community and key stakeholders
3. A sustainable framework for engagement
4. An efficient, transparent and cost-effective approach to clinical engagement
5. Continuous improvement of ways of engagement

The IHTSDO will therefore work to support an environment to:

* Allow international clinical groups to contribute to the continuous improvement of IHTSDO products and services based on current knowledge and usage
* Share best practice and common approaches
* Share experience
* Promote clinical leadership related to SNOMED CT and related products
* Share benefits
* Provide coordinated communication.

These aims must fit with the strategic plans of the IHTSDO as it focuses on becoming a true products and services organization which is aligned with the mainstream of healthcare.

# Framework of clinical engagement

This section sets out the key components which contribute to clinical engagement within the IHTSDO:

## Information

This provides clinicians with balanced and objective information about IHTSDO products and services, maintained and updated based on usage

## Consultation

This is where the IHTSDO sets out to obtain clinician feedback on related analysis, alternatives and decisions that are being made in relation to specific IHTSDO products and services

## Involvement

Here the IHTSDO will work directly with clinical groups, on either a uni-disciplinary or a multi-disciplinary basis, focusing on specific IHTSDO products and services

## Collaborate

Here the IHTSDO will ‘partner’ in each aspect of the particular process and decisions, including the development of alternatives and identification of preferred solutions. This may particularly apply with product development and interoperability with external products and standards.

## Empower

There may be instances where final-decision making is in the hands of specific clinical groups, e.g. where clinical knowledge is required for product development

# Benefits of clinical engagement

The following are seen as key benefits for the IHTSDO to engage with international clinical individuals and groups:

* Informing decision making processes
* Improving quality, and thus clinical usability, of IHTSDO products and services, based on knowledge and expertise
* Clinical acceptability
* Feedback on information and advice produced by the IHTSDO
* Champion implementation of SNOMED CT and related products and services
* Promote collaboration between international healthcare professional groups that improve IHTSDO products and services

Note – over early 2014, as part of wider benefits realization work, a key list of benefits to clinicians will be drawn up and communicated.

# Building on current clinical engagement

As already mentioned in the background section of the Introduction, until mid-2013 there was selective engagement with specific clinical groups through the Special Interest Group (SIG) mechanism. With the agreement of the Management Board, the Healthcare Professionals Coordination Group was established (HCPCG), to which the clinical professional SIGs are accountable, thus ensuring a common approach to engagement – previously SIGs had reported to various Standing Committees.

It is envisaged that the HCPCG will provide a vehicle for engaging with clinical groups who start to work with IHTSDO on specific work items and collaboration activities. The HCPCG, which is made up of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the professional SIGs, will review and advice the IHTSDO on relevant aspects of engagement and provide a forum which clinical groups can join – rather than setting up SIGs for every specialty.

# Specific areas of activity

This needs populating but will describe what the item is and actions to be taken

## Content development

## Content review

## Clinically focused Implementation advice

## Tooling to support review

## Clinically focused education materials

## Clinically focused communications

1. First Appendix
	1. First sub-heading if required

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