



IHTSDO Policy on Support for Member Country Translation

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Approvals

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Future Review Timetable

Review date	Responsible owner	Comments

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The IHTSDO sees the development of translations as key to driving the adoption of SNOMED CT globally with the consequent improvement in interoperability and healthcare delivery within and between Member countries.

For some countries the need for translation may be a barrier to adopting SNOMED CT and becoming a Member of the IHTSDO.

US English is the official language of the IHTSDO as described in the Articles of Association. As of April 2019, there are 39 country members of the IHTSDO, many of whom do not use English as the primary language in the delivery of healthcare.

Other than the English language primary release format of SNOMED CT, only a Spanish translation is managed within the IHTSDO, a consequence of the terms of transfer of the intellectual property of SNOMED CT when the IHTSDO was formed.

There are a number of other translations of SNOMED CT which are managed within Member countries. These have been created according to the particular Member requirements and may or may not be available outside that Member country.

The membership of the IHTSDO continues to grow, with many more non-native English speaking countries joining. It is therefore anticipated that the desire for translations will only increase.

It is essential that the IHTSDO clearly set out its responsibilities in respect to any anticipated translations so that Members and potential Members understand what is and what is not included in their membership.

1.2 Purpose

This document attempts to set out clearly the nature and extent of support available from the IHTSDO for the development of translations of SNOMED CT from English into other languages, as well as the expectations and obligations on those Members undertaking translations.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all Members of the IHTSDO and all translations other than the IHTSDO managed Spanish translation.

Special provisions will apply to those translations that are already in progress in Member countries.

This policy is intended to supplement those related provisions in the Articles of Association and not replace them. Of particular relevance are the regulations around the ownership of intellectual property of derivations of SNOMED CT.

The policy includes information on the practical considerations and on a financial provision designed to stimulate translation development.

The policy does not concern itself with the technical considerations and methodology of translation development.

1.4 Audience

This policy is intended for all those with an interest in SNOMED CT translation development, including IHTSDO staff, and current and prospective IHTSDO Members.

2 Translation Policy

2.1 Assumptions

- The IHTSDO will not assume managerial responsibility for any translations other than the existing Spanish translation.
- The intellectual property of any derivative work belongs to the IHTSDO.
- The intellectual property of any translated work belongs to the IHTSDO and is to be shared with all Members.
- The IHTSDO encourages effective collaboration between Members and will assist in making national translations available to all Members. Collaborative translation developments are also encouraged and may reduce costs.
- There is no expectation that the whole of SNOMED CT should be translated. However there should be at a minimum a core set that is translated for adoption purposes in non-English speaking member countries.

2.2 IHTSDO Guidance

With the generous assistance of Charter Members of the IHTSDO, documentation has been produced which should assist those attempting translations to do so effectively and to learn from the successes of those that have already set out on this task.

The documentation can be found on the IHTSDO website and includes the following:

[Guidelines for Translation of SNOMED CT](#)

This updated version of the Guidelines for the Translation of SNOMED CT describes important issues relevant to the translation of SNOMED CT, formulates recommendations, and establishes guidelines. The general guidelines may be used as a template to develop national guidelines. In addition to linguistic and terminological guidelines, the document includes general recommendations about the steps involved in a translation workflow process and information about source documents or references that must be made available to those involved in the translation process.

[Guidelines for the Management of Translations of SNOMED CT](#)

This document is a companion guideline for use with the "Guidelines for the Translation of SNOMED CT" and offers recommendations on management of a translation project. The purpose is to help new Members undertaking translations to avoid mistakes and enable them to build on existing experiences.

[Developing a Methodology and Toolkit for Evaluating SNOMED CT Translation Quality](#)

This document describes the use of the IHTSDO methodology and toolkit for evaluating SNOMED CT translation quality and has been developed to conform to the IHTSDO Quality Assurance Framework. The document also includes the actual toolkit and therefore is useful for any Members looking for Translation Support materials.

[IHTSDO Quality Assurance Framework](#)

The IHTSDO Quality Assurance Framework, with its supporting IHTSDO Quality Assurance Toolkit, was developed by the IHTSDO Quality Assurance Committee and is now for use in supporting the development and reporting of Quality Metrics across all areas of IHTSDO activity, including organisational processes and support, data products (terminology reference data, mappings, translations, subsets), documentation, and IHTSDO-responsible services and tooling provisions.

Other resources are available, mostly concerning the practical experiences of those who have undertaken translation development.

2.3 Financial assistance from the IHTSDO

In recognition of the significant cost of translating SNOMED CT, the IHTSDO wishes to incentivize new and existing Members to consider the opportunities to translate some or all of the content.

This will be done by arranging, subject to certain conditions, reimbursement of:

1. **100%** of the reasonable Member cost of the translation of not more than 5,000 concepts, which will be considered the "core" or starter set, into a chosen main language;
2. **One** implementation document of choice; and
3. Once developed, the course materials for **one** SNOMED CT course, as chosen by the Member.

The total amount of reimbursement will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The payment will be made no later than three years after initiation of the translation development. In the event that one Member Country has already translated the items outlined above and another member country wishes to further translate these works into the same language but with a different language dialect, IHTSDO will only reimburse 100% of the difference in cost of this dialect translation and, for clarity, not the full amount to retranslate all materials. An agreement will be drawn up between the IHTSDO and the Member so that the conditions are clear and explicit. An example agreement can be found in Appendix A.

Should these conditions fail to be met, some or all of the reimbursement may be withdrawn.

The agreement will need to cover such issues as the language to be translated, the scope of the content to be translated, an execution plan, an overview of the methodology to be used, and the quality assurance plan per Section 2.2 in this document, with an indicative costing. The agreement would also include the proposed plans for updating the translation as and when the international English edition is updated.

Upon request, the provisions of this policy may equally be applied to existing Members who have either completed or are part way through translating SNOMED CT if it applies to further core code or document translation.

2.4 Obligations of the Member

It should be recognized that SNOMED CT is a dynamic product and that translation is not a one-off exercise. Once the initial development phase is complete there will be a need to establish an ongoing service to ensure the translation is kept up to date.

In order to receive the reimbursement, the Member will need to provide evidence that the IHTSDO guidance has been followed and that all development has been assessed against the IHTSDO Quality Assurance Framework.

The Member will make the translation available to the IHTSDO and other Members on an ongoing basis.

If for any reason the translation development is discontinued, then the partial efforts will be made available to the IHTSDO in case any other Member, at the time or in the future, wishes to continue the translation.