

1. Introduction

Background

When a country joins SNOMED International it gains a number of rights and obligations related to SNOMED International products, including SNOMED Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT). All Member countries

¹ also play a key role within the governance and advisory bodies of SNOMED International. Therefore, joining SNOMED International brings with it a need to learn how SNOMED International works, the roles of SNOMED International Members and practical ways to maximize the benefits of membership.

An important first step is to designate an organization as a National Release Center (NRC) to fulfill the operational requirements of membership, including managing the national distribution of SNOMED CT. This guide is a high-level introductory document for National Release Centers.

Objective

The objective of the "SNOMED International National Release Center Guide" (NRC Guide) is to offer a practical and useful starting point for Member countries. It provides guidance on NRC responsibilities and the relationships between NRCs, SNOMED International, and implementers and users within a Member country.

This document is also intended to provide guidance on how NRCs can support an effective and efficient introduction of SNOMED CT in their countries. However, it does not provide a general introduction to SNOMED CT. Readers interested in learning more about SNOMED International's terminology should refer instead to the SNOMED CT Starter Guide.

The SNOMED CT Starter Guide can be found here: <http://snomed.org/starterguide>

Target Audience

The target audience of the NRC Guide is those people responsible for establishing, managing and working within a National Release Center. While primarily designed for new Members, this guide also provides a useful reference for NRC staff in existing Member countries.

Readers of this guide should already have an understanding of what a Member is and what an Affiliate is. SNOMED International Glossary can be used to clarify specific words and phrases used.

The SNOMED CT Glossary can be found here: <http://snomed.org/glossary>

¹ This document uses the term "Member country" as this is considered easier to understand than the more formal term "Member territory." In most cases Members are countries or states recognized by the United Nations, but in exceptional circumstances entities that are not strictly "countries" may be permitted to join SNOMED International as Members.