SNOMED Clinical Terms

National Release Centre of Ireland

Governance Group Strategy for 2018

December 2017

Document Management

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Glossary of terms and abbreviations

The following terms and abbreviations are used throughout this document:

Term	What it stands for
NRC	National Release Centre for SNOMED CT.
SNOMED CT	Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine – Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT) is the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical healthcare terminology in the world.
SNOMED International	SNOMED International owns and distributes the SNOMED CT clinical terminology around the world.
TOR	Terms of reference

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About this document

Purpose

This document outlines the strategy of the Governance Board of the SNOMED Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT) National Release Centre of Ireland.

Audience

All those with an interest in the governance and management of the SNOMED CT National Release Centre of Ireland and of SNOMED CT products and services in Ireland.

Scope

This document is intended to describe the objectives and goals that form the strategy of the Governance Board of the SNOMED CT National Release Centre of Ireland.

Out of Scope

This document does not cover the resourcing or financing of the centre.

1 Background

SNOMED CT is a terminological resource that can be implemented in software applications to represent clinically relevant information reliably and reproducibly, thereby providing a standardised way to represent clinical information, improving our ability to code, retrieve, and analyse clinical data.

SNOMED CT the most comprehensive clinical terminology available internationally. It is organised in 19 hierarchies such as diseases, symptoms, procedures. It consists of concepts, descriptions and relationships. The most recent release contained:

- 293,000 concepts
- 765,000 descriptions
- 830,000 relationships.

As such, it aims to define all of the concepts within medicine. Since 2012, the following documents have recommended SNOMED CT as the clinical terminology that should be used in EHRs:

- 2012 – WHO eHealth Strategy
- 2013 – Overview of Healthcare interoperability standards published by HIQA
- 2013 – Guidance document on terminology & classification systems standards published by HIQA
- 2013 – eHealth Strategy Ireland published by the Department of Health
- 2014 – HIQA recommends SNOMED CT.
- 2015 – HSE Knowledge & Information Plan
- 2016 – SNOMED CT license was purchased.

In September 2017, the governance group for SNOMED was set up and the Terms of Reference (ToR) were written, in collaboration between HIQA and the HSE. The ToR and this strategy documents were written for Year 1, to be reviewed after this time. The governance group comprises a number of key stakeholders including, representatives from HIQA, DOH, HSE, Academia, CCIO and clinical care programmes.

2   Goals and Objectives

This section describes the goals and objectives that form the SNOMED CT National Release Centre Governance Group strategy for 2018:

- 2.1 Policies and procedures
- 2.2 Tooling
- 2.3 Education
- 2.4 Stakeholder Engagement
- 2.5 Projects and implementations
- 2.6 Governance

2.1   Policies and procedures

Develop policies and procedures to support the licensing, release, and management SNOMED CT content.

Under the terms of use of the national SNOMED CT license,which Ireland procured in November 2016, the National Release Centre (NRC) must establish policies and processes to receive and distribute the SNOMED CT software release, to license users, and to manage requests for content changes in the International Edition. The National Release Centre may also wish to develop policies and procedures to support Affiliates in identifying their requirements and developing additional SNOMED CT content. Therefore, as part of the policies and procedures objective, the NRC should consider the development of the following policies:

- **Licensing policy** This policy should outline the processes by which the NRC will retrieve and manage Affiliate licenses for use of SNOMED CT in Ireland and may include processes for use of the SNOMED International automated capability. The policy should also include a provision to report annually to SNOMED International about licensing.

- **Software release policy** This policy should describe the processes by which the NRC will receive the SNOMED International Edition software release and make the release available to licensed Affiliates nationally. The policy may also describe processes for managing SNOMED International software releases using the automation and tooling that SNOMED International provides. The policy will also include compliance between vendors and the most up to date version of SNOMED International, which will inform procurement documentation for the HSE.

- **Change request policy** This policy should describe the processes by which the NRC will facilitate feedback from users, collating and communicating requests for changes to the content in the SNOMED International Edition, in line with the NRC's role as the national point of contact for SNOMED CT in Ireland.

- **Content development support policy** This policy should cover the processes by which the NCR will support Affiliates as they identify their SNOMED CT requirements and, where applicable, as they develop new SNOMED CT content. The policy should also clearly define the commitments and responsibilities of all parties concerned.

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Where relevant, the policy would refer to the change request policy for adding the new content to the SNOMED International Edition.

Activities

The NRC and Governance group will develop the following policy documents and supporting procedural documents during the next year:

- Licencing policy
- Software release policy
- Change request policy
- Content development support policy

2.2 Tooling

Procure ICT tools to support the implementation of policies and procedures

An NRC will be required to have access to tooling in order to customise or extend the SNOMED CT International Edition, in order to deliver on the requirements of an NRC with regards to distribution, change requests, development and customisation, tools for searching, browsing and file creation. The overall objective is that the NRC would be independent in creating content and adding content to the International edition. If the NRC and governance group decide that an Irish extension is required, the tooling would allow for this.

There are numerous tools that NRCs may need, depending on the extent to which they customize or extend the SNOMED CT International Edition.

The tools necessary for an NRC depend on what services the NRC will deliver and what approach the NRC will take to deliver its services. However, at a minimum, an NRC needs a platform where SNOMED CT can be made available to users – that is, a tool to support distribution to users of the International Edition (received from SNOMED International) and potential National Extensions. Moreover, if the NRC decides to develop National Extensions, including a national translation or national Reference sets, tools are also required to support these tasks, which will thwe sole responsibility of the NRC.

Activities

During the next year the NRC and Governance group will:

- Develop a business case for tooling to support the agreed policies and procedures
- Procure a solution
- Make a decision on development of ref sets/extensions
- Have a specific number of resources trained on how to use the tooling service.

2.3   Education

Provide and support education about SNOMED CT for subject matter experts, stakeholders, and other interested parties.

Supporting and educating stakeholders is a key part of successful adoption. SNOMED International has identified different groups of stakeholders that an NRC is likely to support and the educational support that each group typically requires. The following table identifies these stakeholder groups using their typical tasks and gives examples of each stakeholder group in the Irish context:

	Typical tasks are…	**Examples for Irish NRC are…**
Users	Entry, storage, retrieval, and reuse of clinical information.	…**clinical leads** who - identify clinical coding requirements - consult with the Irish NRC to understand the corresponding SNOMED CT codes
Designers, developers	Design, development, configuration, or deployment of software systems that use SNOMED CT.	…**system architects** who identify their enterprise software requirements and data model
Terminology developers	Development and distribution content and other artefacts such as subsets, maps, and so on.	…**business leads** who: - recognise that SNOMED CT is appropriate to their healthcare setting - champion the resulting project within their organisation.

SNOMED International has also developed a wide range of educational resources for each of these stakeholder groups. These resources include documents and training services, which an NRC can also reuse, translate, and customise them if they intend to provide training directly to users include:

- Documentation library
- Starter tutorials
- Open access eLearning area
- SNOMED Implementation Showcase / SNOMED Expo Presentations
- Member education resources (where other SNOMED International member countries are encouraged to publish their customized learning)
- SNOMED CT Courses

SNOMED CT Foundation Course

This course aims to provide authoritative coverage of a broad range of topics related to SNOMED CT at a relatively basic level. It also enables the growth of more detailed understanding of SNOMED CT by enabling those who complete this course to join more advanced SNOMED CT E-Learning courses in future.

The course consists of three modules each containing six presentations and one assessment. At the end of the course there is an additional final online assessment. On average students complete this course in 3 or 4 months. However, some students have completed the course in a few days of intensive study. Others have taken longer but please the maximum allowed period is set at seven months.

SNOMED CT Implementation Course

This course will build on knowledge gained during the SNOMED CT Foundation course. The objective is to provide an understanding of SNOMED CT that is sufficient for those engaged invarious parts of the implementation process – from the decision to adopt SNOMED CT, through tospecification and procurement and/or design and development of SNOMED CT enabled solutions,to deployment and practical use.

SNOMED CT Content Development Theory course

This course will build on knowledge gained during the SNOMED CT Foundation course. The objective is to provide a theoretical understanding of SNOMED CT content and its

development and maintenance from a content authoring perspective. This course is intended to provide a foundational base upon which further knowledge and skills such as practical content authoring, subset creation, translation; extension management and mapping would be built.

Additionally, SNOMED International facilitates the sharing of members' new resources with other members and organises events such as the SNOMED CT Implementation Showcase, where members present on all aspects of adoption and implementation. This provides all NRCs with a range of ready-to-use education resources.

Depending on its size and scope, an NRC may provide a combination of ready-to-use and customised education resources. In fact, SNOMED International explicitly advises members to 'balance ambition and resources'. It recognises that, rather than providing education directly, a smaller NRC may advise affiliates where they can obtain appropriate guidance rather than educating them directly. An Irish NRC is likely to find itself in such a situation, advising stakeholders of the existing SNOMED International resources and of the relevant consultants who can train their trainers, rather than educating stakeholders directly.
To understand more about the education resources available to an Irish NRC and their typical stakeholder groups, see the Education Brief.

Activities

Rather creating and delivering education to a limited number of stakeholders, the NRC could support a far wider group of stakeholders by undertaking the following actions over the next year:

- Refer the stakeholder groups described to the appropriate online educational resources on the SNOMED International Website – for example, provide support to subject matter experts through international training materials.
- Provide contact information for appropriate SNOMED consultants who can provide classroom training at the stakeholder's expense, to train the stakeholder's trainers.
- Develop localised training materials for use

2.4 Stakeholders

Engage with our stakeholder community.

Working with SNOMED CT and clinical terminology involves many different stakeholders with different objectives and different roles. The NRC will promote successful SNOMED CT adoption by engaging clinicians, vendors, system owners, etc. and supporting awareness of each stakeholder's role in the process of SNOMED CT adoption, implementation and use The NRC will consider how best to engage the various stakeholders. The NRC may choose to establish dedicated forums where users and vendors can be regularly updated on the latest initiatives and developments. Alternatively, newsletters and national conferences can be effective in maintaining communication and engagement with relevant stakeholders. The NRC will also encourage stakeholders to become involved in SNOMED CT in the development or implementation at an international level through involvement in SNOMED International, for example as participants in Advisory Groups, Project Groups or Clinical Reference Groups.

Stakeholders will be selected based on topics which are relevant to a specific user group. If the user can see the point and feel convinced of the potential benefits and the importance of their engagement, they will be more likely to feel encouraged to participate and take responsibility.

Activities

During the next year the NRC and Governance group will:

- Continue to engage with the international community through the attendance at international meetings, encourage the participation of subject matter experts in SNOMED CT working group
- Provide support to vendors through organising workshops for them
- Communication with stakeholder through the eHealth Ireland Website
- Speak at conferences
- Develop and online SNOMED CT community in Ireland and provide a feedback loop following training
- Advise and nominate Subject matter experts (SME) for Advisory groups. Clinical groups, and clinical reference groups.
- Take on national initiatives focusing on subset and content development

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- Find clinical champions who will leverage any success to engage others and tell others about their experience

2.5   Projects and implementations

Engage with projects/implementations to facilitate the rollout of SNOMED CT.

One of the functions of an NRC will be to act as a resource and advisory body for affiliates. It is crucial for the successful national adoption of SNOMED CT that affiliates are able to obtain the required guidance on implementation and customization.

In order to provide the most efficient support to national SNOMED CT users, the NRC will ensure that the available implementation resources are focused on the specific types of SNOMED CT users. The NRC will have insight into the different aspects related to SNOMED CT implementation and use, know about the different types of SNOMED CT users, and understand the role and needs each of these groups of users with respect to SNOMED CT implementation.

More locally, a process map will be developed for various stakeholder groups for example HSE ICT projetcs, GP's.and private healtcare facilities in order to facilitate engagement. There will also be a defined process for continuous support and development of new content. The NRC will also develop a prioritisation matrix for all stakeholders so that there will be clearly defined guidance on the management of demand.

The knowledge required for users and professionals related to clinical data entry differ from the knowledge required for designers and developers. In order to facilitate implementation SNOMED International provide access to an implementation course which can be applied for following the successful completion of the SNOMED International Foundation course

Moreover, users responsible for information management require more cross-disciplinary knowledge than healthcare professionals, being responsible for reconciling user needs, the terminological framework and system setup. Within the different types of SNOMED CT users there are various user roles, and the individuals in those user roles need to learn about SNOMED CT at various levels of detail and with different points of departure. These generic user types are intentionally broad. Individual Members may identify other user categories and subdivisions relevant to national circumstances taking account of different approaches to eHealth strategy and SNOMED CT implementation.

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The NRC will also advice on these groups that stakeholders may wish to become part of one of the following groups:

- **Formal Advisory Groups** There is a formal process to allocate members to the Formal Advisory Groups. Membership is based on expertise and not geography. Members can submit applications but ultimately the allocations on SNOMED International committee makes the final decision.

- **Member focused advisory groups** These are advisory groups specifically targeted at Members, e.g. Content Managers Advisory Group, e-Learning etc. These groups have members allocated by the NRC, and there is a formal process around allocation and renewal.

- **Clinical Reference groups** This is completely open to all individuals based on their interest and expertise. The group make recommendations around use case requirements of content and derivatives, and also advise on specific content issues.

- **Clinical Project Groups** This is a formal group based on an agreed project. Membership is by invitation from SNOMED International based on the requirements of the project group.

Activities

During the next year the NRC and Governance group will:

- Agree prioritization criteria
- Develop a formal process for engagement and support for projects
- Connect projects with relevant national and international colleagues/snomed ct working groups

2.6 Governance

Review our progress against our strategy towards the end of 2018.

The above strategy has been developed to inform the working to the governance groups and has been published in order to increase awareness of the group. We will review our progress towards the end of 2018.

Activities

During the next year, the NRC and Governance Group will:

- Undertake our activities in line with our terms of reference and developed policies and procedures
- Revise our membership and terms of reference at the end of our first year
- Review and report on our progress against the objectives above
- Develop a 3 year strategy for SNOMED CT in Ireland. (Appendix 1)

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Figure 1 - Organization chart of the Irish SNOMED Governance Group