



IHTSDO Technical Committee

Terms of Reference



IHTSDO TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Approved: February 2008

Terms of Reference

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 9.6.2:

The Technical Committee will be responsible for and shall advise the Management Board on the specification and monitoring of the technical framework and tools for the development and maintenance of SNOMED CT and its related standards and the Association's other Terminology Products and framework for doing business

Purpose

The Technical Committee supports the mission of the IHTSDO by advising on all issues related to the technical framework and technology platform required for the development, maintenance and implementation of SNOMED CT and its related standards.

The Committee will maintain a focus on pragmatic solutions to meet current IHTSDO and Member needs and will work to ensure that technology does not become a barrier to the IHTSDO achieving its goals.

Scope

The Technical Committee supports the work plan of the IHTSDO. Therefore its activities will reflect the current priorities and objectives identified in that plan. The scope of work of the committee includes:

- Advice on Architecture
- Advice on Technology Platforms, which includes technologies to support:
 - IHTSDO communication with members and infrastructure to allow world wide collaboration
 - Terminology development, maintenance, release, licensing and distribution
 - Implementation and deployment of SNOMED CT, potentially including a reference implementation and associated tools
 - Mapping and translations
 - Content submission and issue tracking
 - Collaborative working and distributed modelling
- Review of documentation on associated processes in order to advise on options for technology to support process improvements
- Technical implementation guidance and advice on education approaches and requirements (eg education in how best to use SNOMED at a user interface level)
- Technical specification of SNOMED standards that relate to implementation and tools design including:
 - Interchange format
 - Release format
- Technical stakeholders relationships (which includes both relationship management and technical interface guideline and education) with the following groups:
 - Vendors



- Members Operational Liaison Forum (MOLF)
- Open Health Tools
- Other standards bodies, particularly those involved in developing technical IT standards
- Advice on synchronization issues
 - International synchronization (translations etc.)
 - Synchronization at a National level (with multiple namespaces)

Responsibilities

- Advisory role to assist the Board in terms of prioritization of IHTSDO activities related to the Committee's scope, and reviewing project outputs as required
- Provide advice and assurance that the IHTSDO Technical specifications and technology platform are fit for purpose and meet Member needs.
- Advise on technology strategy and architecture, including assistance in developing key principles.
- Advise on implementation of both technology platform and the terminology itself (ie. SNOMED CT), including consideration of compliance and conformance issues.
- Create roadmap of technology platform and priorities for tooling development which addresses the associated transition issues and provides realistic time frames.
- Review feedback and advise on technical specifications to ensure they are suitable for implementation prior to final endorsement as IHTSDO Standards.
- Advise other Committees, Project Groups and Special Interest Groups on Technical issues
- Identify and manage potential overlaps with the work of other Committees. In particular, there is potential for overlap with the Research and Innovation Committee who may also be asked to deliberate on complex or longer term technical issues. As a broad guide, it is intended that the Technical Committee will address the issue of 'how to do it now' and the R&I Committee will consider 'how to do it better in the future'. In all cases, responsibility for Technical Specifications will transfer to the Technical Committee at the time they are ready for Trial Use.
- Establish and maintain effective communications with internal (IHTSDO) and external stakeholders relevant to Technical Committee scope, including vendors and other relevant Standards Organisations
- Contribute to other aspects of the IHTSDO's mission and work plan as appropriate.

Principles

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 1.3.1:

The Association will seek to govern itself and conduct all of its activities in accordance with principles of openness, fairness, transparency and accountability to its Members.

The IHTSDO is based on openness. Openness implies transparency, communication and accountability. Transparency cannot exist with a purely one-way communication – and it requires dialogue and participation to be involved in a democratic process.

The intention should basically be to be open in both the planning process and the execution of the meetings. The experts around the world are only few, and all the persons with knowledge are needed and should feel invited to flow into the committees and working groups.



Participation in Meetings

According to the principles mentioned above, the standing committees should operate as follows:

1. Committees should be open to non-members who should be known as observers.
2. Approval to attend or invitation of observers should be brought through the Chair of Committee, so that suitable logistical arrangements can be made – if at all possible.
3. Observer contributions are at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.
4. Observers cannot vote and should respect the need for the Committee to reach conclusion in the discussions.
5. Seating arrangements at physical meetings are at the discretion of the Chair of Committee. The Chair will ensure that all the Committee members will have full access to facilities to undertake their duties.
6. Attendance policies will be established by the Management Board.¹

Membership

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 9.5.3

The Technical Committee will comprise the following members selected as follows:

- (a) the Management Board shall appoint one Director to be member of the Technical Committee as its Chair, and if reasonably possible such Director will possess an appropriate and relevant background to the functions of the Technical Committee;*
- (b) the Chief Terminologist and Chief Technical Architect;*
- (c) a representative of Affiliates in accordance with clause 9.11;*
- (d) at least one and no more than three members for and on behalf of, but not necessarily resident in, each of the Geographical Constituencies. These members will be nominated and elected in the same manner that Directors are elected to the Management Board pursuant to clause 9.1.5, subject to the exception that Members shall be free to nominate up to three candidates and vacant seats will be filled from these candidates according to the votes each received.*

NOTE: Members do not represent Geographical Constituencies; they bring their individual expertise to the work of the Committee.

A full list of current members of the Technical Committee can be found on the IHTSDO Website
<http://www.ihtsdo.org/about-us/standing-committees/>

Ways of working

Face to face meetings will be held at least two times a year. Monthly conference calls will be scheduled so that business may be addressed more rapidly if required.

Members will respond in a timely manner to requests from the Chair for input to decisions that are required between meetings.

¹ The General Assembly has agreed as follows "Beginning in 2009, if a member has been absent from at least 50 % of meetings held during the year, the Technical Committee Chair would typically contact the member to discuss the situation. Except in extenuating circumstances, he/she would then recommend to the Management Board that the member in question be deemed to have resigned and would notify the member of this recommendation." In such cases of persistent non-attendance, the General Assembly has the option at the next Committee elections to elect an individual to fill the vacancy caused by this resignation.



The IHTSDO principles of openness and collaboration will underpin the Committee's working methods, with the support of technical / communications infrastructure for the sharing and management of documents and for consultation with others.

In keeping with IHTSDO policy, members will declare potential or actual conflicts of interests with Committee agenda items and these will be managed by the Chair.

The Committee will uphold the Articles of Association and conform to the IHTSDO Regulations, Policies and Procedures where they apply to the Committee activities.

The Meeting Minutes from each Committee will be published on the IHTSDO web site and notified to and/or posted on the Collaborative Space.

The Committee will periodically review these Terms of Reference and will revise them as necessary and appropriate. This will ensure that Committee responsibilities accurately reflect the IHTSDO work plan, and the activities, interests and contributions from Members and the community of interest.

The Chair will take responsibility for taking the Committee's recommendations to the Management Board and providing members with feedback on the outcomes of their contribution.

The Chair will work with Chairs of the other Committees to ensure co-ordination across Committees, Project and Interest Groups and effective joint working when appropriate.

During face to face meetings, parallel sessions cannot be avoided. The Committee is keen to promote joint meetings with other Committees, particularly on areas of joint interest.

Skills Matrix

A desirable skills matrix has been developed for each of the IHTSDO Committees. Each skills matrix indicates the approximate minimum percentage of Committee members who will have a certain skill set. These are intended to provide guidelines to the General Assembly and Affiliate Forum when nominating or voting, but are not strict requirements. The General Assembly has approved the following skills matrix for the Technical Committee:

SNOMED CT Design	33%	Software design and development	83%
SNOMED CT Implementation	33%	Software release/ configuration	
SNOMED CT Tooling	25%	Systems Architecture	33%
Other Terminology Design	25%	Systems Integration	
Data Modelling/ Information Architect		National and International Standards Development	50%
System Implementation – which includes terminology component	83%	Currently responsible for technical aspects of distributing/ managing SNOMED	17%
Software production for market		Currently responsible for technical aspects of a system which uses SNOMED as core terminology	25%