

### 3 Purpose

SNOMED CT is a multilingual clinical terminology that covers a broad scope of clinical concepts to an appropriate level of detail for international use. In addition, it provides an [extension](#) mechanism that allows SNOMED CT to be customized to address terminology needs that are not met by the [International Edition](#). This mechanism enables new [concepts](#), [relationships](#), [descriptions](#) and [reference sets](#) to be added to support national or local needs.

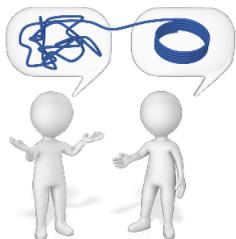
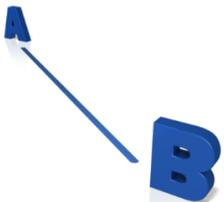
However, not every new terminology requirement requires a [SNOMED CT extension](#) to be created. Potential extension producers should be aware of situations in which it is beneficial to create an extension, and situations where alternatives may be preferable. The following table provides a summary.

| Create an extension when ...  | An extension is not required when ...  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New national or local content is required to meet usage requirements; or</li> <li>• The content of the extension needs to be shared with other organizations; or</li> <li>• The standard file format and versioning mechanism of the <a href="#">release format 2</a> is needed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new national or local content is required; and</li> <li>• The content of the extension does not need to be shared with other organizations; and</li> <li>• Non-standard formats are sufficient to support local requirements.</li> </ul> |

When a SNOMED CT extension is required, the extension may serve a range of purposes. Successful extension producers must clearly understand the requirements and purpose of their extension, before deciding which types of SNOMED CT artifacts should be included.

**Table 3-1** below shows some typical purposes for a SNOMED CT extensions. For each purpose, the table includes some common use case examples and a list of SNOMED CT artifacts that should be included. For more information about each of these purposes, please click on the corresponding diagram.

**Table 3-1: Purposes and use cases for extensions**

| Purpose   | Use Case Examples  | Included Artifacts  |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Translate SNOMED CT</b></p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding terms used in a local language or dialect</li> <li>• Adding terms used by a specific user group, such as patient friendly terms</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• Language reference sets</li> <li>• Concepts (metadata only)</li> <li>• Relationships (metadata only)</li> </ul>            |
| <p><b>Manage content gaps</b></p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding components that are missing in the <a href="#">International Edition</a></li> <li>• Adding concepts that are only relevant to a local context</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts</li> <li>• Descriptions</li> <li>• Relationships</li> <li>• Language reference sets</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Maps between SNOMED CT and other code systems</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps between local codes and SNOMED CT</li> <li>• Maps between statistical classification systems and SNOMED CT</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map reference sets</li> <li>• Concepts (metadata only)</li> <li>• Descriptions (metadata only)</li> <li>• Relationships (metadata only)</li> </ul> |

**Configuration of the terminology for specific use cases**



- Specifying groups of components for reporting and analytics
- Linking components to clinical knowledge resources

- Reference sets
- Concepts (metadata only)
- Descriptions (metadata only)
- Relationships (metadata only)