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Knowledge management systems — Requirements

Systèmes de management des connaissances — Exigences

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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Foreword

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 260, *Human resource management*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

0.1 Purpose

The purpose of this ISO management system standard for knowledge management is to support organizations to develop a management system that effectively promotes and enables value-creation through knowledge.

Knowledge management is a discipline focused on ways that organizations create and use knowledge. Knowledge management has no single accepted definition and no global standards predate this management system standard. There are many well-known barriers to successful knowledge management which still need to be overcome, many confusions with other disciplines such as information management, and many common misconceptions about how to do knowledge management, for example the view that simply buying a technology system will be enough for knowledge management to add value.

Each organization will craft a knowledge management approach, with respect to its own business and operational environment, reflecting their specific needs and desired outcomes

The intent of this document is to set sound knowledge management principles and requirements

a) as guidance for organizations that aim to be competent in optimizing the value of organizational knowledge;

b) as a basis for auditing, certifying, evaluating and recognizing such competent organizations by internal and external recognized auditing bodies.

0.2 The importance of knowledge management

a) The aim of work is to produce valuable results. Valuable results are derived from applied knowledge. Organizational knowledge is becoming a key differentiator for effectiveness, increased collaboration and competition.

b) Knowledge work is increasingly important in many societies and organizations. Many economies aspire to become knowledge economies, where knowledge is the main source of wealth. In this context, knowledge becomes a core asset for organizations. Knowledge is especially important in many areas: it allows effective decisions to be made, supports the efficiency of processes and contributes to their enhancement, creates resilience and adaptability, creates competitive advantage and may even become a product in its own right.

c) An increased access to knowledge will create opportunities for the professional development of people in the organization through learning, practices and exchanges.

d) Organizations can no longer rely on the spontaneous diffusion of knowledge to keep up with the pace of change. Instead knowledge must be deliberately created, consolidated, applied, and reused faster than the rate of change.

e) Geographically dispersed and decentralized organizations, conducting the same processes and delivering the same services in multiple locations, can gain tremendous advantage through sharing practices, expertise and learning across organizational boundaries.

f) Workforce attrition and turnover in today's society has implications for knowledge management. In many organizations, critical knowledge is often siloed and/or retained by experts, at the risk of being lost when the organization changes or these experts leave.

g) Effective knowledge management supports collaboration between different organisations to achieve shared objectives.

Knowledge is an intangible organizational asset that needs to be managed like any other asset. It needs to be developed, consolidated, retained, shared, adapted and applied so that workers can make effective decisions and take aligned actions, solving problems based on the experience of the past and

new insights into the future. Knowledge management is a holistic approach to improving learning and effectiveness through optimization of the use of knowledge, in order to create value for the organization. Knowledge management supports existing process and development strategies. As such, it needs to be integrated with other organizational functions.

0.3 Guiding principles

a) Nature of knowledge: knowledge is intangible and complex; it is created by people.

b) Value: knowledge is a key source of value for organizations to meet their objectives. The determinable value of knowledge is in its impact on organizational purpose, vision, objectives, policies, processes and performance. Knowledge management is a means of unlocking the potential value of knowledge.

c) Focus: knowledge management serves the organizational objectives, strategies and needs.

d) Adaptive: there is no one knowledge management solution that fits all organizations within all contexts. Organizations may develop their own approach to the scope of knowledge and knowledge management and how to implement these efforts, based on the needs and context.

e) Shared understanding: people create their own knowledge by their own understanding of the input they receive. For shared understanding, knowledge management should include interactions between people, using content, processes and technologies where appropriate.

f) Environment: knowledge is not managed directly; knowledge management focuses on managing the working environment, thus nurturing the knowledge lifecycle.

g) Culture: culture is critical to the effectiveness of knowledge management.

h) Iterative: knowledge management should be phased, incorporating learning and feedback cycles.

0.4 Range of knowledge management

Knowledge management varies between different organizations.

Annex A explains the range, viewing the various states of knowledge as a continuum.

Annex B explains knowledge management areas of interest, comparing it with adjacent disciplines.

0.5 Summary

This document defines the requirements for knowledge management systems in organizations, promising successful implementation of knowledge management. This document, however, maintains flexibility within the context of the requirements that enables conformity for every type of organization and alignment with all characteristics and needs.

Knowledge management systems — Requirements

1 Scope

This document sets requirements and provides guidelines for establishing, implementing, maintaining, reviewing and improving an effective management system for knowledge management in organizations. All the requirements of this document are applicable to any organization, regardless of its type or size, or the products and services it provides.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
organization
person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its *objectives* (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

3.2
interested party (preferred term)
stakeholder (admitted term)
person or *organization* (3.1) that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

Note 1 to entry: Everyone is potentially an interested party in knowledge management. Specific knowledge management initiatives will involve specific interested parties. For example, workers, top management, managers of projects/departments/work streams, external customers and clients, investors, partners and suppliers.

3.3
requirement
need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory

Note 1 to entry: "Generally implied" means that it is custom or common practice for the organization and interested parties that the need or expectation under consideration is implied.

Note 2 to entry: A specified requirement is one that is stated, for example in *documented information* (3.11).

3.4
management system
set of interrelated or interacting elements of an *organization* (3.1) to establish *policies* (3.7), and *objectives* (3.8) and *processes* (3.12) to achieve those *objectives*

Note 1 to entry: A management system can address a single discipline or several disciplines.

Note 2 to entry: The system elements include the organization's structure, roles and responsibilities, planning and operation.

Note 3 to entry: The scope of a management system can include the whole of the organization, specific and identified functions of the organization, specific and identified sections of the organization, or one or more functions across a group of organizations.

Note 4 to entry: A system can include human and group dynamics and behaviours.

3.5
top management
person or group of people who directs and controls an *organization* (3.1) at the highest level

Note 1 to entry: Top management has the power to delegate authority and provide resources within the *organization*.

Note 2 to entry: If the scope of the *management system* (3.4) covers only part of an organization, then top management refers to those who direct and control that part of the organization.

3.6
effectiveness
extent to which planned activities are realized and planned results achieved

3.7
policy
intentions and direction of an *organization* (3.1), as formally expressed by its *top management* (3.5)

3.8
objective
result to be achieved

Note 1 to entry: An objective can be strategic, tactical, or operational.

Note 2 to entry: Objectives can relate to different disciplines (such as financial, health and safety, and environmental goals) and can apply at different levels [such as strategic, organization-wide, project, product and *process* (3.12)].

Note 3 to entry: An objective can be expressed in other ways, e.g. as an intended outcome, a purpose, an operational criterion, a *knowledge management* (3.26) objective, or by the use of other words with similar meaning (e.g. aim, goal, or target).

Note 4 to entry: In the context of knowledge management systems, knowledge management objectives are set by the organization, consistent with the knowledge management policy, to achieve specific results.

3.9
risk
effect of uncertainty

Note 1 to entry: An effect is a deviation from the expected — positive or negative.

Note 2 to entry: Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, understanding or knowledge of an event, its consequence, or likelihood.

Note 3 to entry: Risk is often characterized by reference to potential events (ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.5.1.3) and consequences (ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.3), or a combination of these.

Note 4 to entry: Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated likelihood (ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.6.1.1) of occurrence.

3.10
competence
ability to apply *knowledge* (3.25) and *skills* (3.30) to achieve intended results

3.11
documented information
information required to be controlled and maintained by an *organization* (3.1) and the medium on which it is contained

Note 1 to entry: Documented information can be in any format and media, and from any source.

Note 2 to entry: Documented information can refer to:

— the *management system* (3.4), including related *processes* (3.12);

— information created in order for the organization to operate (documentation);

— evidence of results achieved (records).

3.12
process
set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs

3.13
performance
measurable result

Note 1 to entry: Performance can relate either to quantitative or qualitative findings.

Note 2 to entry: Performance can relate to the management of activities, *processes* (3.12), products (including services), systems or *organizations* (3.1).

3.14
outsource, verb
make an arrangement where an external *organization* (3.1) performs part of an organization's function or *process* (3.12)

Note 1 to entry: An external organization is outside the scope of the management system (3.4), although the outsourced function or process is within the scope.

3.15
monitoring
determining the status of a system, a *process* (3.12) or an activity

Note 1 to entry: To determine the status, there may be a need to check, supervise or critically observe.

3.16
measurement
process (3.12) to determine a value

3.17
audit
systematic, independent and documented *process* (3.12) for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled

Note 1 to entry: An audit can be an internal audit (first party) or an external audit (second party or third party), and it can be a combined audit (combining two or more disciplines).

Note 2 to entry: An internal audit is conducted by the organization itself, or by an external party on its behalf.

Note 3 to entry: “Audit evidence” and “audit criteria” are defined in ISO 19011.

3.18
conformity
fulfilment of a *requirement* (3.3)

3.19
non-conformity
non-fulfilment of a *requirement* (3.3)

3.20
correction
action to eliminate a detected *nonconformity* (3.19)

3.21
corrective action
action to eliminate the cause of a *nonconformity* (3.19) and to prevent recurrence

3.22
continual improvement
recurring activity to enhance *performance* (3.13)

3.23
collaboration
deliberate approach to working together on an agreed common purpose across boundaries

Note 1 to entry: Boundaries may be functional, organizational or geographic, or between *organizations* (3.1). Collaboration often depends on a healthy *knowledge management culture* (3.27) to facilitate the exchange and co-creation of *knowledge* (3.25) between the parties engaging in collaboration.

3.24
information
meaningful data

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.8.2]

3.25
knowledge
human or organizational asset enabling effective decisions and action in context

Note 1 to entry: Knowledge can be individual, collective or organizational.

Note 2 to entry: There are diverse views on the scope covered within knowledge, based on context and purpose. The definition above is general as to the various perspectives. Examples of knowledge include insights and know-how.

Note 3 to entry: Knowledge is acquired through learning or experience.

3.26
knowledge management
management with regard to knowledge

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 14.1, modified]

Note 1 to entry: It uses a systemic and holistic approach to improve results and learning.

Note 2 to entry: It includes optimizing the identification, creation, analysis, representation, distribution and application of knowledge to create organizational value.

3.27
knowledge management culture
elements of the *organizational culture* (3.29), supportive of the values, behaviours and activities associated with the *knowledge management system* (3.28)