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## Knowledge management systems — Requirements

*Systèmes de management des connaissances — Exigences*

ICS: 03.100.30

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## Introduction

### Purpose of standard

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

Knowledge management (KM) 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 MSS. 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 its own knowledge management solution, reflecting their specific needs and situation.

The intent of this standard is to set sound knowledge management principles

- a) As guidance for organizations that aim to be competent in optimizing the value of organizational knowledge
- b) As basis for evaluating and recognizing such competent organizations by recognized audit bodies

### Knowledge management is important for the following reasons:

- 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.
- Knowledge work is taking an increasingly significant role in many societies. Many economies aspire to become knowledge economies, where the main source of wealth is not manual labour but intellectual labour. In this context, knowledge becomes a core asset for organizations. Knowledge enables them to make effective decisions and take effective action, and may even become a marketable product in its own right.
- An increased access to knowledge will support the development of people in the organization, through giving them easy access to the knowledge of others.
- Organizations can no longer rely on the natural diffusion of knowledge to keep up with the pace of change. Instead knowledge must be deliberately created, applied, and re-used faster than the rate of change. Agility and speed of learning are becoming a source of increased value and competitive advantage.
- Dispersed organizations, conducting the same processes and delivering the same services in multiple locations can gain tremendous advantage through sharing practices and lessons across organizational boundaries.
- The attrition of staff in today's mobile society has implications for knowledge management. In many organizations, critical knowledge is held in the heads of experts, at risk of loss when they leave, while other organizations contain many new employees who may be very smart, but lack the knowledge which experienced employees have built up over time.

Many organizations are therefore beginning to realise that knowledge is an organizational asset that needs to be managed like any other asset (bearing in mind the intangible nature of knowledge); it needs to be developed, retained, shared, adapted and applied so that staff in all locations, and of all ages, can make effective decisions and take aligned actions 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 also needs to be integrated with other organizational functions, in ensuring that staff also contribute to Knowledge Management as the creators, as well as consumers, of knowledge.

## Guiding Principles

- a. **NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE:** Knowledge is intangible and complex. Knowledge primarily originates from human experience and insights.
- 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 organisational purpose, 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:** implementation of Knowledge Management should be phased, incorporating learning and feedback cycles.

## Boundaries of knowledge management

The boundaries of knowledge management vary in different organizations as to the specific business needs, and as to interfacing existing activities held in the organizations.

Appendix A defines the inner boundaries, viewing the various states of knowledge as a continuum.

Appendix B defines the outer boundaries, comparing knowledge management to adjacent disciplines.

The purpose of this standard is to define requirements, that knowledge management systems in organizations must align with, promising successful implementation of knowledge management. The standard, however, maintains flexibility within the context of the requirements, that allows compliance of each organization and alignment with its characteristics and needs.

The standard is based on annex SL (normative)- proposals for management system standards

Appendix 2, on the Israeli standard 25006- November 2011 and on BSIPD7500 series.

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