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Translation projects — General guidance

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National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO 11669:2024. It supersedes PD ISO/TS 11669:2012, which is withdrawn.

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

This first edition cancels and replaces ISO/TS 11669:2012, which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— there is an increased focus on the requester's and translation service provider's shared responsibility in developing translation project specifications;

— a description has been added of the key role that risk assessment plays, together with the initial needs analysis, in setting up the translation project;

— the informative annexes have been updated.

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.

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Introduction

The translation industry is changing rapidly and globalization is driving increased demand for translation. Technological innovation has stepped up to provide solutions designed to meet these needs, including making use of artificial intelligence and machine translation. Anyone who needs translation services has many options to choose from. To obtain translation output that meets requirements, those who need translation services should have a basic understanding of what a translation project involves. They should also know how efficient communication with a translation service provider (TSP) can help to ensure a successful translation project.

Efficient communication entails that requirements are explicitly defined and agreed-upon as translation project specifications. Successful translation projects are a result of:

— developing and following these translation project specifications,

— involving people with the appropriate competences and qualifications, and

— assuring smooth communication flows throughout the projects.

This document is primarily intended for persons who request translation services, but it can be useful for all stakeholders in a translation project, such as TSPs and end users.

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Translation projects — General guidance

1 Scope

This document gives general guidance on all stages of a translation project. Its main purpose is to ensure efficiency and quality by enhancing communication among the parties involved in the translation project.

This document provides a framework for developing translation project specifications that are the basis for requesting, setting up, managing and evaluating translation projects. It also includes guidance on needs analysis, risk assessment and workflows, but it does not provide procedures for evaluating the quality of translation output.

This document is primarily intended for those who request translation services. However, it can also be relevant for the translation service providers and the end users of the translation output.

It is applicable to all sectors, including the commercial and government sectors, and non-profit organizations.

It does not apply to interpreting services.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 20539:2023, *Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 20539 and the following apply.

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

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

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

3.1 General concepts

3.1.1
source language content
content to be translated

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.1.5, modified — “or interpreted” has been removed in the definition.]

3.1.2
target language content
content translated from a source language

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.1.6, modified — “or interpreted” has been removed in the definition.]

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3.1.3
translation service
production and delivery of *target language content* (3.1.2) according to *translation project specifications* (3.2.5)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.3.4, modified — "specifications issued by a client" has been replaced by "translation project specifications" in the definition.]

3.1.4
revision
bilingual editing
bilingual examination of *target language content* (3.1.2) against *source language content* (3.1.1) for its suitability for the agreed purpose

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.2.6, modified — "bilingual editing" has been added as an admitted term. Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.1.5
review
monolingual editing
monolingual examination of *target language content* (3.1.2) for its suitability for the agreed purpose

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:2015, 2.2.7, modified — "monolingual editing" has been added as an admitted term. Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.1.6
proofreading
examination of the final *target language content* (3.1.2) and application of corrections before submission to the client

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.3.12, modified — "proofread" has been replaced by "proofreading" as the term. "examine" has been replaced by "examination of" and "apply" has been replaced by "application of" in the definition.]

3.1.7
evaluation of translation output
evaluation
bilingual examination of *target language content* (3.1.2) against *source language content* (3.1.1) while classifying any errors with respect to translation evaluation specifications and for the purpose of reaching a *quality* (3.2.2) rating

[SOURCE: ISO 5060:2024, 3.1.4, modified — Note 1 to entry has been removed.]

3.1.8
post-editing
checking and correcting of *machine translation* (3.4.2) output

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.5.1.13, modified — "editing and correcting" has been replaced by "checking and correcting of" in the definition.]

3.2 Concepts related to translation projects

3.2.1
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.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.6.4, modified — Notes 2 to 6 to entry have been removed.]

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3.2.2
quality
degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils *requirements* (3.2.1)

Note 1 to entry: The term "quality" can be used with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent.

Note 2 to entry: "Inherent", as opposed to "assigned", means existing in the object.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.6.2]

3.2.3
translation project
coordinated and controlled activities, with start and finish dates, set up to deliver a *translation service* (3.1.3)

3.2.4
translation project parameter
translation parameter
attribute of a *translation project* (3.2.3)

3.2.5
translation project specification
defined and agreed upon *requirement* (3.2.1) that is related to a *translation project parameter* (3.2.4) and that is used for producing translation output

3.2.6
quality check
examination of *target language content* (3.1.2) to determine its conformance to *translation project specifications* (3.2.5)

Note 1 to entry: In-process quality checks, such as *revision* (3.1.4), *review* (3.1.5) or *proofreading* (3.1.6), take place during the execution (production) stage of a *translation project* (3.2.3).

Note 2 to entry: Quality checks for specific aspects of the target language content, such as spelling, terminological consistency and completeness, can be performed with the help of tools.

Note 3 to entry: *Evaluation of translation output* (3.1.7) is a form of quality check that includes measurement and that often takes place after the execution (production) stage of a translation project.

3.2.7
use case
description of a specific situation in which an output or service can potentially be used

3.2.8
service level
performance targets for a service

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17826:2022, 3.49]

3.2.9
risk
effect of uncertainty on objectives

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

Note 2 to entry: Objectives can have different aspects (such as financial, health and safety, reputational and environmental goals) and can apply at different levels (such as strategic, organization-wide, project, product and process).

[SOURCE: ISO 31000:2018, 3.1, modified — Notes 1 – 3 to entry have been removed and replaced with new Notes 1 and 2 to entry.]

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3.2.10
risk assessment
overall process of *risk* (3.2.9) identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.4.1]

3.2.11
risk management
coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to *risk* (3.2.9)

[SOURCE: ISO 31000:2018, 3.2]

3.2.12
risk tolerance
organization's or stakeholder's readiness to bear the *risk* (3.2.9) in order to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: Risk tolerance can be influenced by legal or regulatory *requirements* (3.2.1).

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 73:2009, 3.7.1.3, modified — "after risk treatment" has been deleted from the definition.]

3.3 Concepts related to people involved in translation projects

3.3.1
requester
person or entity making enquiries with the view of commissioning a *translation service* (3.1.3)

Note 1 to entry: The requester usually receives the translation output for their own use or on behalf of the end users.

Note 2 to entry: In situations where the requester proceeds to commission a translation service, they can also be considered as a client from the perspective of the translation service provider that will provide the translation service.

3.3.2
translator
person who renders *source language content* (3.1.1) into *target language content* (3.1.2) in written or other recorded form

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.1.12, modified — "translates" has been replaced by "renders source language content into target language content in written or other recorded form" in the definition.]

3.3.3
language professional
person who has the competences and qualifications to perform tasks in translation and translation-related services

EXAMPLE *Translator* (3.3.2), reviser, post-editor, evaluator.

Note 1 to entry: A language professional can be a translation service provider (TSP).

3.3.4
target audience
person or group of persons for whom *source language content* (3.1.1) or *target language content* (3.1.2) is intended

[SOURCE: ISO 10209:2022, 3.14.42, modified — "person or" has been added at the beginning of the definition. "information for use" has been replaced by "source language content or target language content" and "by the supplier" has been removed.]

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3.4 Concepts related to translation technology

3.4.1
translation memory
TM
digital repository of aligned *source language content* (3.1.1) and *target language content* (3.1.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.5.1.6, modified — "used to store and retrieve previously translated content matched with source language content" has been replaced by "of aligned source language content and target language content".]

3.4.2
machine translation
MT
automated translation of content from one natural language to another using software

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:2023, 3.5.1.8]

3.4.3
unedited machine translation output
UEMT output
raw machine translation output
output of *machine translation* (3.4.2) that has not been *post-edited* (3.1.8)

3.4.4
termbase
terminology database
database comprising a terminological data collection

[SOURCE: ISO 30042:2019, 3.28]

4 Context of translation projects

4.1 General

Translation projects are set up when someone needs to transform content in written form from one language into one or several other languages. For a translation project to produce a result that meets the requester's and the end users' needs and expectations, the stakeholders should agree on translation project specifications based on the relevant requirements. The translation project specifications should be created with reference to translation project parameters and should play a central role at all stages of the translation project.

This document structures the guidance on translation projects according to the following stages of a translation project.

— The initiation stage is a preparation stage where the requester carries out an initial needs analysis and a risk assessment and selects a TSP.

— The planning (or pre-production) stage builds on the result of the analysis conducted during the initiation stage. It includes the preparation of the source language content and the development, finalization and documentation of the translation project specifications.

— The execution (or production) stage involves creating the translation output in conformance with the agreed-upon translation project specifications.

— The closing (or post-production) stage covers the exchange of feedback and, where appropriate, the evaluation of translation output based on the translation project specifications.

In addition, this document gives guidance on two transversal activities that are essential throughout translation projects: risk management and project communication.

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