Lost in Translation?

**Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
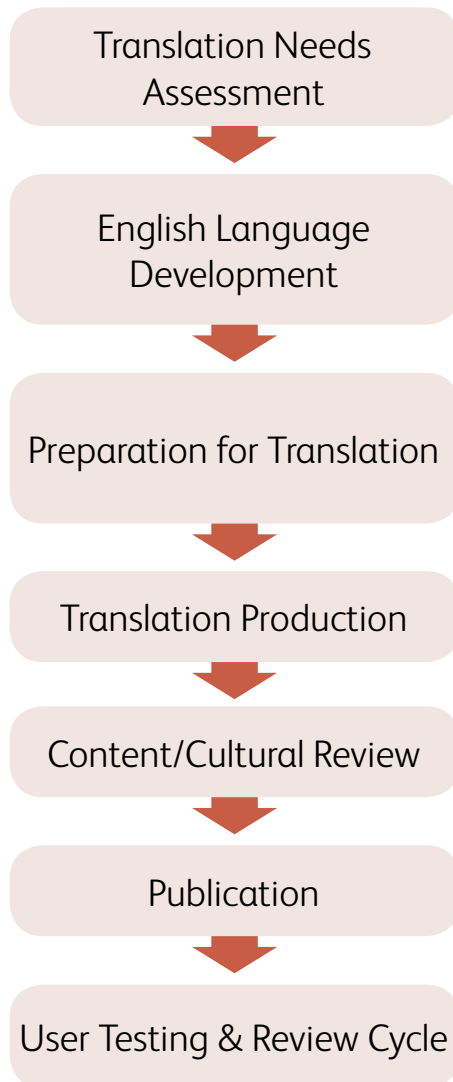Health Service Executive**

Good Practice Guide for HSE Staff in Planning, Managing and Assuring Quality Translations of Health Related Material into Other Languages

It is important to ensure that everyone can access health services, regardless of their level of ability to speak English. Provision of accessible translated material is necessary to assist them to access health services.

Clinical considerations of risk and safety may require translation of information.

Effective, business focused translation of health related material is a cost effective means of managing expenditure appropriately and of avoiding unnecessary duplication of resources. This is particularly important in the current financial climate, where achievement of value for money savings forms a critical element of any health related activity.

Stages of Translation Flowchart

- Translation Needs Assessment
- English Language Development
- Preparation for Translation
- Translation Production
- Content/Cultural Review
- Publication
- User Testing & Review Cycle

Flowchart developed by Alison Harnett

"Irish Standard I.S. EN 15038: Translation Services" defines requirements for provision of quality translation services. All Translation Service Providers and Translators contracted to the HSE must be certified to this standard.

Examples of Translated Information that are useful in the HSE:

- Basic information on health services and means of accessing these
- Generic information on illnesses and chronic conditions
- Specific information related to prevention and care in certain unexpected situations e.g. pandemics
- Detail on medication, dosage, treatment, procedures which an individual patient may need
- Administrative information e.g. Personal information, admission forms
- Consent forms where a patient may require a specific procedure, treatment or surgical intervention.

What Constitutes "good" Translated Material?

It must be:

- Clear – convey the meaning of the original English text without any ambiguity
- Easy to read – and in an accessible format
- Accurate – Free from grammatical or spelling errors
- Culturally appropriate to the target community

Details to be considered when producing translated material:

- Ownership of the resource
- Date of publication
- Name of translation service provider or individual responsible for translation
- Any logos required to be inserted in the document
- Title headings and subheadings should be in the translated language first, with the English version of the title following in a smaller font
- The name of the language should be printed on the front page in English, together with the translated language
- The original English text should appear beside the translated text.
- Pages should be numbered
- Information about any supporting materials e.g. DVDs
- Contact details for ordering copies
- Anticipated date for update/ review of contents

Make sure the English text is correct before handing it to the Translator!

Planning for Translation

- Is there a demand for translated material in this topic?
- Is there available translated material in this area that can be used or adapted?
- Is written material the most appropriate way to reach target groups or would other formats be more effective?
- What languages are needed for translation (target language)?
- Do you have a rationale for choosing these languages?
- Are there any variants in the language e.g. do you require material to be translated into Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese Chinese?
- What is the purpose of translation – Is it for general information or will it contain detailed specialised health or legal information?
- Does the style of the text reflect the purpose of the translation – Is it formal, informal, "legalese"?
- Is your English text (source language) clear and accurate?
- Do you have a budget for this project?

Preparation

Selecting a Translator/Translation Service Provider

- Does the Translator have a professional qualification?
- Is the Translator a member of a Professional body?
- Has the Translator/Translation Service Provider been certified to a professional Code of Conduct/and the European Standard EN15038:2006?
- Is the Translation Service Provider certified to the Quality Management System Standard ISO 9001:2008?
- Are the Translator and the Reviser familiar with the subject field of the material to be translated?
- If the material to be translated is very complex or specialised e.g. pharmacological quantities, are the Translator and Reviser competent to manage this?

Specifications of Work

- Have you discussed the overall requirements, nature of work etc. with the Translator/Translation Service Provider?
- Have you agreed all aspects of the project with the Translator/ Translation Service Provider? e.g.
  » Scope of work required
  » Target languages
  » Terminology – Is an inhouse term base available to assist the Translator?
  » Style and Corporate Identity – Has the HSE Translation Styleguide been made available to the Translator/Translation Service Provider?
  » Volume/size of project – Will the text include graphics, pictorial images, symbols or other imported material?

Technical Points

- Does the Translation Service Provider or Translator have access to necessary technical resources to manage the project?
- Timeframe for completion/Deadline for Handover of completed work
- Is there a documented process for translation, revision, proof reading, and 3rd party or client review etc?
- Delivery of completed translations – In what format is this delivered (e.g. DOC, XLS, INX, HTML, print-ready PDF etc.)?
- How will this be delivered e.g. electronically, disc etc?

- Has the Translator/Translation Service Provider signed a Non Disclosure Agreement?
- Has the Translator/Translation Service Provider documented procedures to safeguard confidentiality and meet data protection requirements? Do these procedures address the issue of patient data protection rights and confidentiality in the context of the use of Machine Translation engines?
- Ownership of material/Copyright Issues
- Have you signed a contract according to HSE procurement guidelines?
- In what format is this to be delivered?

Price/Cost

- How are costs agreed?
- What does the quote include?
- Are additional costs incurred for changes after the initial handoff of source files, implementation of client review feedback, layout check etc?
- How will payment be phased and made?

Production

Contact/Liaison

- Who does the Translator/Translation Service Provider contact for any clarifications – Does he/she have contact details of the relevant person?
- Do you have the Translator's/Translation Service Provider's contact details and have you agreed on ongoing liaison?

Final Proofing/Sign off on Project

- Has the Translator/Translation Service Provider signed off on the final copy?
- Have you made arrangements for uploading onto a website/ printing etc?
- Has the Translator/Translation Service Provider checked the document once it has been uploaded?

Postscripts

Payment

- Have you checked and signed off all invoices for processing and payment?
- Have you checked that payments have been made and received?

Storage of Translated Material

- Have you stored the electronic material safely and accessibly?
- Have you made back up documents?
- Are your colleagues aware of the location of stored copies?

Follow up and Evaluation

- Have you circulated information in respect of the translated material to relevant parties?
- Have you forwarded a copy of the translated material to socialinclusion@hse.ie?
- Have you made arrangements for inviting comments and feedback?
- Have you any arrangements for review/adaptation of the material within a certain time frame?

Useful Resources