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**Translation services –  
Service requirements  
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Übersetzungs-Dienstleistungen –  
Dienstleistungsanforderungen  
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## National foreword

This standard has been prepared by CEN/TC BT/TF 138 "Translation services" (Secretariat: Spain).

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ICS 03.080.20

English Version

## Translation services - Service requirements

Services de traduction - Exigences requises pour la  
prestation du service

Übersetzungs-Dienstleistungen -  
Dienstleistungsanforderungen

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## Foreword

This document (EN 15038:2006) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/BT/TF 138 “Translation services”, the secretariat of which is held by AENOR.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by November 2006, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by November 2006.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

## Introduction

The purpose of this European standard is to establish and define the requirements for the provision of quality services by translation service providers.

It encompasses the core translation process and all other related aspects involved in providing the service, including quality assurance and traceability.

This standard offers both translation service providers and their clients a description and definition of the entire service. At the same time it is designed to provide translation service providers with a set of procedures and requirements to meet market needs.

Conformity assessment and certification based on this standard are envisaged.

## 1 Scope

This European Standard specifies the requirements for the translation service provider (TSP) with regard to human and technical resources, quality and project management, the contractual framework, and service procedures.

This standard does not apply to interpreting services.

## 2 Terms and Definitions

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

### 2.1

#### **added value services**

services that can be provided by a **TSP** (2.18) in addition to translation services

### 2.2

#### **competence**

demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills

[ISO 9000:2000, definition 3.9.12]

### 2.3

#### **document**

information and its supporting medium

[ISO 9000:2000, definition 3.7.2]

### 2.4

#### **interpreting**

rendering of spoken information in the **source language** (2.12) into the **target language** (2.14) in oral form

### 2.5

#### **locale**

linguistic, cultural, technical and geographical conventions of a target audience

### 2.6

#### **proofreading**

checking of proofs before publishing

### 2.7

#### **register**

set of properties that are characteristic of a particular type of linguistic text or speech

### 2.8

#### **review**

examine a **target text** (2.15) for its suitability for the agreed purpose and respect for the conventions of the domain to which it belongs and recommend corrective measures

### 2.9

#### **reviewer**

person who reviews

**2.10**

**revise**

examine a translation for its suitability for the agreed purpose, compare the **source** (2.13) and **target texts** (2.15), and recommend corrective measures

**2.11**

**reviser**

person who revises

**2.12**

**source language**

language in which the **source text** (2.13) is written

**2.13**

**source text**

text to be translated

**2.14**

**target language**

language into which the **source text** (2.13) is rendered

**2.15**

**target text**

result of the translation process in the **target language** (2.14)

**2.16**

**text type convention**

set of rules of grammar or terminology to be observed for the type of text in question

**2.17**

**translate**

render information in the **source language** (2.12) into the **target language** (2.14) in written form

**2.18**

**translation service provider**

(TSP)

person or organisation supplying translation services

**2.19**

**translator**

person who **translates** (2.17)

## **3 Basic requirements**

### **3.1 General**

Where a TSP chooses to engage a third party to carry out a translation project or any part thereof, the TSP shall retain the responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of this standard are met with respect to that project or any part thereof.

### **3.2 Human resources**

#### **3.2.1 Human resources management**

The TSP shall have a documented procedure in place for selecting people with the requisite skills and qualifications for translation projects.



Translators shall have the professional competences as specified in 3.2.2.

Revisers and reviewers shall have the professional competences as specified in 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 respectively.

### 3.2.2 Professional competences of translators

Translators shall have at least the following competences.

- a) **Translating competence:** Translating competence comprises the ability to translate texts to the required level, i.e. in accordance with 5.4. It includes the ability to assess the problems of text comprehension and text production as well as the ability to render the target text in accordance with the client-TSP agreement (see 4.4) and to justify the results.
- b) **Linguistic and textual competence in the source language and the target language:** Linguistic and textual competence includes the ability to understand the source language and mastery of the target language. Textual competence requires knowledge of text type conventions for as wide a range of standard-language and specialised texts as possible, and includes the ability to apply this knowledge when producing texts.
- c) **Research competence, information acquisition and processing:** Research competence includes the ability to efficiently acquire the additional linguistic and specialised knowledge necessary to understand the source text and to produce the target text. Research competence also requires experience in the use of research tools and the ability to develop suitable strategies for the efficient use of the information sources available.
- d) **Cultural competence:** Cultural competence includes the ability to make use of information on the locale, behavioural standards and value systems that characterise the source and target cultures.
- e) **Technical competence:** Technical competence comprises the abilities and skills required for the professional preparation and production of translations. This includes the ability to operate technical resources as defined in 3.3.

The above competences should be acquired through one or more of the following:

- formal higher education in translation (recognised degree);
- equivalent qualification in any other subject plus a minimum of two years of documented experience in translating;
- at least five years of documented professional experience in translating.

### 3.2.3 Professional competences of revisers

Revisers shall have the competences as defined in 3.2.2, and should have translating experience in the domain under consideration.

### 3.2.4 Professional competences of reviewers

Reviewers shall be domain specialists in the target language.

### 3.2.5 Continuing professional development

The TSP shall ensure that the professional competences required by 3.2.2 are maintained and updated.

## 3.3 Technical resources

The TSP shall ensure the availability of the following:

- a) Requisite equipment for the proper execution of the translation projects as well as for safe and confidential handling, storage, retrieval, archiving and disposal of documents and data.
- b) Requisite communications equipment as well as hardware and software.
- c) Access to relevant information sources and media.

### **3.4 Quality management system**

The TSP shall have a documented quality management system in place that is commensurate with the size and organisational structure of the TSP. The quality management system shall include at least the following.

- a) Statement of the quality management system objectives.
- b) Process for monitoring the quality of delivered translation services and where necessary providing after delivery correction and taking corrective action.
- c) Process for handling all information and material received from the client (see 4.5).

### **3.5 Project management**

Each translation project shall be supervised by a project manager (see 5.2) who shall be responsible for carrying out the project in accordance with the TSP's procedures and the client-TSP agreement (see 4.4).

## **4 Client-TSP relationship**

### **4.1 General**

The TSP shall have documented procedures in place for handling and analysing enquiries, determining project feasibility, preparing quotations, entering into an agreement with the client, invoicing and recording payment.

### **4.2 Enquiry and feasibility**

The TSP shall analyse the client's enquiry with regard to the service requirements. The TSP shall determine whether all the required human and technical resources are available.

### **4.3 Quotation**

Unless otherwise agreed with the client, the TSP shall submit a quotation to the client indicating at least price and delivery details.

### **4.4 Client-TSP agreement**

For the provision of the service, the TSP shall have an agreement with the client. The commercial terms and service specifications under that agreement shall be recorded. The agreement can also cover the following points:

- copyright;
- liability;
- confidentiality;
- settlement of disputes;

— quality assurance.

Any and all subsequent deviations from the original agreement shall be agreed by all parties and documented.

#### **4.5 Handling of project-related client information**

The TSP shall endeavour to obtain supplementary information and clarification of ambiguities in the source text by contacting the client.

All information and material received from the client shall be handled in accordance with the provisions contained in the TSP's quality management system (see 3.4).

#### **4.6 Project conclusion**

The TSP shall have documented procedures in place for final verification, archiving, traceability, follow up and the assessment of client satisfaction.

### **5 Procedures in translation services**

#### **5.1 General**

The TSP shall ensure compliance with the client-TSP agreement from the moment it is confirmed to the end of the minimum archiving period as stated in the TSP's project documentation.

#### **5.2 Managing translation projects**

The TSP shall have documented procedures in place for handling translation projects, contact with the client during the translation process, and quality assurance to check the correctness and completeness of the service provided as well as compliance with the client-TSP agreement (see 4.4).

Project management shall include:

- monitoring and supervising the preparation process;
- assigning translators for the project;
- assigning revisers and, if applicable, reviewers;
- issuing instructions to all parties involved in the project;
- enabling and monitoring consistency in translation;
- monitoring and supervising the process timetable;
- ensuring contact is maintained with all parties involved in the process, including the client;
- giving clearance for delivery.

#### **5.3 Preparation**

Preparation shall cover administrative, technical and linguistic aspects appropriate to the specific requirements of each translation project.

After receiving the source text for translation, the TSP shall check that it complies with the client-TSP agreement (see 4.4). In case of non-compliance the TSP shall contact the client for clarification.

### **5.3.1 Administrative aspects**

#### **5.3.1.1 Project registration**

The TSP shall record each accepted translation project and maintain a log throughout the duration of the project.

The record shall make it possible to identify and trace the project and to determine its status at all times (see Annex A).

#### **5.3.1.2 Project assignment**

The TSP shall assign projects to the appropriate internal and/or external resources in order to ensure that the specifications described in the client-TSP agreement (see 4.4) are met. All assignments shall be documented.

### **5.3.2 Technical aspects**

#### **5.3.2.1 Technical resources**

The TSP shall make sure that the technical resources required for the specific project are available.

#### **5.3.2.2 Pre-translation processing**

The TSP shall carry out any necessary technical and pre-translation processing tasks in order to prepare the documents for translation.

Pre-translation processing can include technical aspects such as those included in Annex B.

### **5.3.3 Linguistic aspects**

The TSP shall make sure that information concerning any specific linguistic requirements in relation to the translation project is recorded. Such information can include requirements of compliance with a client style guide, adaptation of the translation to the agreed target group, purpose and/or final use, use of appropriate terminology, and updating of glossaries.

#### **5.3.3.1 Source text analysis**

The TSP shall ensure that the source text is analysed to anticipate possible translation problems (see Annex C).

#### **5.3.3.2 Terminology work**

Where no specific terminology is available for the project, the TSP and the client can agree on terminology work to be carried out as an added value service (see Annex E) before the translation is executed.

#### **5.3.3.3 Style guide**

In the event that the client does not provide a style guide, the TSP shall use a proprietary or other appropriate style guide which can include elements from Annex D.

## 5.4 Translation process

### 5.4.1 Translation

The translator shall transfer the meaning in the source language into the target language in order to produce a text that is in accordance with the rules of the linguistic system of the target language and that meets the instructions received in the project assignment (see 5.3.1.2).

Throughout this process, the translator shall pay attention to the following:

- a) Terminology: compliance with specific domain and client terminology, or any other terminology provided, as well as terminology consistency throughout the whole translation.
- b) Grammar: syntax, spelling, punctuation, orthotypography, diacritical marks.
- c) Lexis: lexical cohesion and phraseology.
- d) Style: compliance with the proprietary or client style guide, including register and language variants.
- e) Locale: local conventions and regional standards.
- f) Formatting (see Annex D).
- g) Target group and purpose of the translation.

### 5.4.2 Checking

On completion of the initial translation, the translator shall check his/her own work. This process shall include checking that the meaning has been conveyed, that there are no omissions or errors and that the defined service specifications have been met. The translator shall make any necessary amendments.

### 5.4.3 Revision

The TSP shall ensure that the translation is revised.

The reviser (see 3.2.3) shall be a person other than the translator and have the appropriate competence in the source and target languages. The reviser shall examine the translation for its suitability for purpose. This shall include, as required by the project, comparison of the source and target texts for terminology consistency, register and style.

Taking the reviser's recommendations into account, the TSP shall take steps to ensure that any necessary corrective measures are implemented.

NOTE Corrective measures can include retranslation.

### 5.4.4 Review

If the service specifications include a review, the TSP shall ensure that the translation is reviewed. The reviewer (see 3.2.4) shall carry out a monolingual review to assess the suitability of the translation for the agreed purpose and recommend corrective measures.

NOTE The review can be accomplished by assessing the translation for register and respect for the conventions of the domain in question.

Taking the reviewer's recommendations into account, the TSP shall take steps to ensure that any necessary corrective measures are implemented.

**5.4.5 Proofreading**

If the service specifications include proofreading, the TSP shall ensure that the text is proofread.

**5.4.6 Final verification**

The TSP shall verify that the service provided meets the service specifications.

**6 Added value services**

If a TSP offers any added value services, it should make every effort to apply the same level of quality to those services as to the services covered by this standard.

For an informative list of such services, see Annex E. This list is non-exhaustive.

## Annex A (informative)

### Project registration details

Registration details can include:

- unique project identifier;
- client's name and contact person;
- client's purchase order and any ancillary agreement, including confidentiality agreement;
- TSP project team;
- commercial terms;
- date(s) of receipt of source text and any related material;
- delivery details, including volume, deadlines and delivery formats;
- source and target language(s);
- name and description of material to be translated;
- purpose and use of the translation;
- existing client or in-house terminology or other reference material to be used;
- client or TSP style guide(s);
- modifications during the course of the project;
- reference to client-TSP agreement details;
- other information with a significant impact on the project;
- client feedback;
- corrective measures taken;
- project status sheet.

## **Annex B** (informative)

### **Technical pre-translation processing**

Technical pre-translation processing can include:

- preparation of document and/or segmentation of text for Computer Assisted Translation (CAT);
- format and font conversion;
- document alignment for CAT;
- Style sheets to be applied or created;
- Document Type Definition (DTD) files (XML, SGML) to be obtained or created;
- obtaining necessary fonts;
- suitability of the controlled language selected;
- collection and preparation of reference material (specific terminology, client's terminology, technical training material, Internet links, etc.) in order to improve qualitative compliance with the service specifications.



## Annex C (informative)

### Source text analysis

Source text analysis can include the following.

- a) Extra-textual and intra-textual factors (text type):
  - translation brief or client's specifications;
  - context and co-text.
- b) Macrostructure (intended audience of source and target texts):
  - topic;
  - genre and register;
  - text function and text type;
  - agreed text type convention;
  - superstructure (rhetorical patterns and moves);
  - non-verbal elements (illustrations, graphics, etc.).
- c) Microstructure (level of speech):
  - pragmatics (presuppositions, implicatures and shared knowledge);
  - grammar and syntax (grammatical cohesion, coherence, connectivity);
  - lexis and semantics (lexical cohesion, terminology and phraseology);
  - suprasegmentals (tone, rhyme and rhythm, alliteration, assonance, prosody, etc.).

## Annex D (informative)

### Style guide

A style guide can include instructions or choices as regards:

- punctuation: spaces, full stops, commas, semi-colons, colons, dashes, brackets, parentheses, question marks, exclamation marks, quotation marks, apostrophes and accents, UNICODE/ASCII codes;
- spelling: capitalisation, conventions, personal names and titles, geographical names, company and product names, brands, scientific names, numbers (fractions, ranges, Roman numerals, dates, time) and units of measure, mathematical and scientific symbols, abbreviations and acronyms, loans (foreign words and phrases), word division and compound words, hyphenation guidelines, transliteration and romanisation systems;
- formatting, type style and fonts: round, bold, italic, underlining, font choices, general symbols (e.g. ©, ®, &, %, tm, #);
- miscellaneous: lists and tables, paper size, gender-neutral language, verb tenses, footnotes, bibliographies, citations, diagrams, graphics and illustrations, translation of tags and attributes;
- adaptations: cultural words and references, forms of address, standing details (price, offers, postal address, electronic address, fax and telephone numbers, etc.), currency and metric conversions, graphic elements, other cultural items;
- in the case of software localisation, names of keyboard keys, morphosyntactic conventions for user interface components: menus, dialogue boxes and error messages
- terminological choices, controlled languages, inappropriate wording, language-specific and client preferences;
- common errors to be avoided (e.g. false friends, cognates, language interference, register mismatches, etc.).

## Annex E (informative)

### Non-exhaustive list of added value services

- Legalisation, notarisation, etc., according to national requirements;
- adaptation;
- rewriting;
- updating;
- localisation;
- internationalisation;
- globalisation;
- terminology data base creation and termbase management;
- transcription;
- transliteration;
- DTP, graphic and web design, camera-ready artwork;
- technical writing;
- language and culture consultancy;
- terminology concordance;
- translation memory alignment;
- alignment of bilingual parallel texts;
- pre- and post-editing;
- subtitling;
- voice-over;
- review and/or revision of translations from third parties;
- back-translation.

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