

Using a Translator

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Questions you need to ask yourself when undertaking a translation

- 1 Into what variant language is the translation to be made?
e.g. Castillian Spanish, Mexican, Spanish . . .
- 2 What is the purpose of the translation?
e.g. information, publication, use in court, training . . .
- 3 What is the target readership of the translation?
e.g. literacy, specialist . . .
- 4 What is the intended quality level for the translation?
e.g. draft, revision, third party revised . . .
- 5 Does the style of terminology used in the translation have to conform to any specific requirements?
e.g. consistency with ISO document, house style, pharmacopoeia . . .
- 6 Can any reference/background material be provided?
e.g. prior correspondence, reports, glossaries, specifications . . .
- 7 Who is the contact for queries?
Keep records of the contact person details: name, e.mail, telephone . . .
- 8 Is the layout of the translation to comply with any particular requirements?
e.g. facsimile of the original, page for page . . .
- 9 Are tables and graphical matter to be incorporated with the text?
e.g. figures, diagrams, equations, flow charts . . .
- 10 Which particular word processing software requires the translation?
e.g. MSWord, Macintosh, QuarkXpress . . .
- 11 In which format is the translation to be provided?
e.g. paper, diskette, electronic file . . .
- 12 When is the translation to be delivered?
Don't forget there is always a deadline for the submission of translations.
- 13 How is the translation to be delivered?
e.g. fax, modem, internet . . .
- 14 Where is the translation to be delivered?
e.g. client's address, intermediary, both, internet address . . .
- 15 Is any non-standard form of delivery required?
e.g. courier, express post, recorded/special delivery . . .

16 Before delivering: has the translation been properly checked?
e.g. correct terminology, spell-check, structure and syntax . . .

17 Does the target text read like a piece of original text in that language?

18 Is the source text, reference material, to be returned?

19 Does the translation have to be certified?
e.g. official documents. An ITI official translator can certify documents. If not, you have to go to a notary public, solicitor or registrar.

20 On what basis will the translation be charged?
e.g. target text length, source text length, time, lump sum . . .

21 What rate will be applied?
Some publications like the ITI Rates & Salaries survey will give you all the details about charges taking into account all the below specifications.

22 Will there be an additional charge for urgency?
e.g. unsociable hours, weekend working (see step 20).

23 Will there be an additional charge for complex layout?
e.g. multiple font changes, complex tables . . .

24 Will there be an additional charge for unusual difficulties?
e.g. poorly legible text, contact with foreign informants . . .

25 Will there be an additional charge for special presentations?
e.g. bromides.

26 Will there be an additional charge for research?
e.g. pertinent legislation, specialist terminology, prior documentation.

27 Will there be an additional charge for attendance?
e.g. for certifying a translation, travel to a collection point . . .

28 Will any other additional services be required?
e.g. post-editing, proof-reading . . .

29 Will VAT apply to these changes?
Refer to step 20.

30 How is payment to be made?
e.g. single payment, advance instalments . . .

31 When is payment to be made?
e.g. on delivery, 30 days.

32 What method of payment is to be used?
e.g. bank transfer, cheque, eurocheque, banker's draft . . .

33 Does foreign payment convey any charge?

e.g. foreign cheques, bank transfers . . .

34 Is copyright to be retained or transferred?

e.g. by assignment, licence . . .

35 To whom and under what conditions?

See ITI Model Terms for Business.

36 Is the subject matter of the translation under confidentiality restrictions?

Refer to the previous step.

37 Is there any source of possible consequential liability of which the translator should be aware?

e.g. printing of documentation . . .

38 Is there any likelihood of a possible liability, which might exceed the normal level of insurance cover?

39 What compensation should be agreed when a job is cancelled after work has begun?

See step 35.