



Certification Scheme, Terms, and conditions

Translation Service Provider according to the ISO Standards of your choice

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The ISO Senior Lead Auditor

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1 Scope

This certification scheme specifies the procedure to certify the services of translation/localization/interpretation service providers according to the specific International Standards of the translation field.

Applicants may choose to seek certification according to the single specific ISO International Standard only or according to the combination of different standards.

Certification shall meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065³.

2 Application

2.1 The applicant shall file an application using the form provided by the certification body.

2.2 The applicant shall appoint a contact person for the certification process.

2.3 The application shall specify the desired scope of certification in terms of business sites to be covered.

2.4 Together with the application the applicant shall provide documentation on the services to be certified. This documentation shall contain the following:

- the general features of the applicant, including their name and the address(es) of its physical location(s) where services are provided,
- description of the structure of the applicant, including company profile, any specializations, etc.,
- description of the processes related to the specific standard implemented by the applicant,
- average number (related to the past 12 months) of employees working in the relevant sites,
- average number of translators (in-house and free-lance, related to the past 12 months).

3 Initial and recertification audit

3.1 Remote audits

The normal case is to conduct the audit on-site. The lead auditor can decide to conduct the audit remotely based on the circumstances.

Initial and recertification audits may be conducted by remote techniques. In that case the following prerequisites are met by the service provider:

- a) fast and reliable Internet access.
- b) permission and technical feasibility to use software (in the role of a client) allowing for remote access to IT systems of the service provider⁴ in order to check all records and documents relevant to the certification criteria in accordance with annex A.

Note: Software will be provided by the auditor.

- c) usage of webcam and headsets.
- d) virtual access to facilities and premises (e.g., server room, back-up system, etc.) of the service provider via web cam.

¹ ISO 17100:2015-05-01 Translation Services -- Requirements for translation services

² ISO 18587:2017-04-15 Translation services -- Post-editing of machine translation output -- Requirements

³ ISO/IEC 17065:2012-09 Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

⁴ E.g., GoToMeeting by Citrix[®] (www.citrix.com), Zoom or any other suitable platform.

In case that these prerequisites are not met, the audit shall be conducted by means of an on-site visit. The final decision which format will be applied shall be taken by the certification body, and/or the Lead Auditor.

1.1 Multi-site audits

In case that a service provider operates more than one site which are to be covered by the scope of the certificate, in order to keep the efforts of auditing at a reasonable level, it is permissible to select a sample amongst the sites covered by the certification process under the following conditions:

- a) there is a centralized quality management and process control function which covers all sites operated by the applicant. The site which provides this central quality management and control function shall be audited in any case.
- b) the technical prerequisites are met for remote auditing other sites of the service provider.

The certification body shall specify the number and location of the sites to be audited within the scope of the certification.

The specifications of clause 3.1 apply.

1.2 Conduction of the audit

3.3.1 The initial and recertification audit shall audit all requirements specified in the specific standard (if applicable). Independently of the format of the audit (on-site or remote) the audit shall comprise of the following elements:

The audit shall comprise of interviews with the following persons/functions of the service provider:

- a) CEO / head of the service provider.
- b) Translators, interpreters, revisers, reviewers, proofreaders, post-editors, freelancers / vendors (if not available on-site than via teleconference).
- c) project managers.
- d) interviews with other staff in charge of tasks relevant to the certification criteria (e.g., Human Resource, Quality Management, IT etc.).

The audit shall comprise of at least the following checks:

- a) review of records and documentation of the procedures of the service provider,
- b) review of records and documentation of translation, interpretation, localization jobs conducted by the service provider,
- c) review of records and documentation of translators, interpreters, project managers, posteditors database and selection procedure for the team members,
- d) examination of the technical resources in use with regard to their availability and suitability for the projects carried out,
- e) examination of project management, project management tools, translation management system, CAT tools, TMs, etc.

3.3.2 At the end of the audit, the Lead Auditor will analyze all information and audit evidence gathered during the audit to review the audit findings and specify the audit conclusions.

3.3.3 During the closing meeting with the responsible management of the service provider, the Lead Auditor will present the audit conclusions and will specify further steps to be taken.

3.4 Audit findings

In case that deviations from the requirements of the standard be found, appropriate corrective actions will be specified by the Lead Auditor. Deviations shall be classified as follows.

3.4.1 *Minor deviation*

Any nonconformity which does not adversely affect performance of the service will be classified as minor deviation.

Minor deviations may be corrected either until the end of the audit, and/or within a period of max. 8 weeks through appropriate corrective actions. The completion of such corrective actions shall be documented by the applicant and will be assessed by the auditor.

3.4.2 *Major deviation*

Any nonconformity, which may result in failure or reduce the usability of the service for the intended purpose or which puts clients at risk shall be classified as major deviation.

This type of deviation requires a partial or complete repetition of the audit.

3.4.3 *Recommendations/Observations*

The auditor may also give recommendations regarding quality aspects of the service provision and opportunities for improvement related to the operations of the service provider. Such recommendations are documented in the audit report but have no effect on the issue of the certificate in accordance with clause 4.

3.5 Audit report for certification

The information provided by the Lead Auditor to the Certification Body for the certification decision will include, as a minimum:

- the audit report,
- comments on the nonconformities and, where applicable, the correction and corrective actions taken by the client,
- a recommendation whether or not to grant certification, together with any conditions or observations.

4 Issuing the certificate

4.1 Based on the audit conclusions and the recommendation of the Lead Auditor in the Audit Report, the Certification Body will decide on the issue of the certificate.

4.2 The certificate is valid for a period of 3 years subject that the conditions to maintain the certificate are met by the certificate holder on a 1-year cycle.

5 Surveillance activities

5.1 In order to maintain the certificate, surveillance audits shall be carried out on a 1-year cycle. The date of surveillance audits following initial certification (or recertification) shall not be more than 12 months resp. 24 months from the date of the issue of the certificate.

5.2 The purpose of the surveillance audits(s) is for the certification body to maintain confidence that the certified service provider continues to fulfil the requirements of the specific standard between certification, and recertification audits. The surveillance audit(s) program shall include, at least the following items:

- a) recruitment of team members and sample checking of competence,

- b) sample checking of jobs,
- c) a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified and recommendations given during the previous audit,
- d) review of any changes introduced by the service provider affecting the compliance with the criteria of this certification scheme, and
- e) use of marks and/or any other reference to certification.
- f) any further subjects the Lead Auditor considers as necessary

5.3 For surveillance audits remote auditing may be applied. The conduction of remote audits for surveillance purposes is permissible given the conditions in accordance with clause 3.1 are met. Finally it is the decision of the acting Lead Auditor if conducting a remote audit or a site-visit.

5.4 Remote audits shall not be permissible in case the preceding audit has resulted in issues which require an audit on-site (also, to be specified by the Lead Auditor).

6 Recertification

In order to extend the validity of the certificate, a recertification audit in accordance with clause 3 shall be conducted.

7 Requirements for auditors

7.1 Audits shall be carried out by at least one Lead Auditor.

7.2 A Lead Auditor shall be a formally trained auditor who has in-depth knowledge of the specific standard.

7.3 Meeting the requirements of ISO 19011:2018

8 Changes of normative documents

8.1 Changes of the underlying normative documents on which the certification is based on will be communicated by the certification body to certificate holders immediately.

8.2 The certificate holder will be granted a period of 12 months to adapt its services according to the changes in the normative document(s). Evidence of compliance with the new requirements shall be provided as part of a surveillance audit. Upon successful proof, the certificate will be re-issued with a new reference to the changed normative documents.

9 Amendments to the scope of certificates

9.1 Should the certificate holder wish to extend the scope of his certificate in relation to further organizational units or company sites, the applicant must request this in writing to the certification body. The certification body will specify the necessary steps (examination of documents and / or supplementary audits) for the expansion of the scope.

9.2 Should the certificate holder wish to reduce the scope of his certificate in relation to the certified organizational units, the applicant shall inform the certification body in writing. The certification body will reduce the scope of the certificate accordingly. From this point, the organization must not make any statements in relation to those organizational units which have been removed from the scope of the certificate. The verification of the relevant obligations of the certificate holder will be part of the following surveillance audit.

9.3 Changes of certificates related to formal specifications of the certificate holder (such as changes in the company name or address) must be notified in writing of the certification body. The certification body will issue an amended certificate without technical examination.

10 Withdrawal of certificates

10.1 The certificate becomes invalid immediately after termination of the contract by the certificate holder or withdrawal by the certification body.

10.2 The certificate is withdrawn by the certification body when:

- the conditions for issuing the certificate are no longer met,
- the client refuses to accept the necessary surveillance activities in a timely manner,
- the client does not meet the requirements of corrective actions requested,
- the client refuses to accept audits to check on corrective actions if required by the certification body,
- the conformity mark is used by the certificate holder in an abusive manner,
- the client does not meet the requirements of the General Terms and Conditions of the certification body.

If the certificate is withdrawn, the certification body informs the certificate holder thereof in writing.

10.3 After withdrawal of a certificate any reference to the invalid certificate is not permitted.

Annex A Certification criteria

(refers to ISO17100 & ISO18587 as examples, in case of other standards the specific original text of the standard applies)

ISO 17100 Clause 2 "Terminology"

A.2.1 The translation service provider (TSP) consistently uses the terminology in accordance with ISO 17100 in its internal processes and throughout its communication with clients.

ISO 17100 Clause 3 "Resources"

ISO 17100 Clause 3.1 "Human resources"

A.3.1 The TSP has a documented process in place to ensure that the people selected to perform translation/post editing tasks have the required competences and qualifications.

A.3.2 The TSP obtains documented evidence that the translator/post editors can meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a) a recognized graduate qualification in translation from an institution of higher education;
- b) a recognized graduate qualification in any other field from an institution of higher education plus two years of full-time professional experience in translating.
- c) five years of full-time professional experience in translating.

A.3.3 The TSP keeps records of the evidence upon which the professional competences of translators, post-editors, revisers, reviewers, and other professionals have been demonstrated.

A.3.4 Where the TSP chooses to engage a third party to perform a translation service or any part thereof, the TSP retains full responsibility for ensuring that all the requirements of ISO 17100 are met.

A.3.5 The TSP ensures that revisers have all the translator competences and translation and/or revision experience in the domain under consideration.

A.3.6 The TSP ensures that reviewers are domain specialists and have a relevant qualification in this domain from an institution of higher learning and/or experience in this domain.

A.3.7 The TSP ensures that translation project managers have the appropriate documented competence.

A.3.8 The TSP has a process in place to document that the competences of their translators, post editors, revisers, reviewers, project managers are maintained by continuing practice and regularly updated by training or other means.

A.3.9 The TSP keeps records of how competences are maintained and updated.

ISO 18587 Clause 5.3 "Professionalism"

AB.3.10 Post-editors shall apply a professional approach towards the post-editing task and have:

- a) a general knowledge of MT technology and a basic understanding of common errors that an MT system makes.
- b) a general knowledge of computer-aided translation tools.
- c) the knowledge and ability to establish whether editing MT output makes sense, in terms of time and effort estimation.
- d) the ability to follow the instructions received and the ability to focus on specific issues and make specific corrections as given.

ISO 17100 Clause 3.2 "Technical and technological resources"

A.3.11 The TSP has the following infrastructure in place:

- a) technical equipment required for the completion of translation projects and for the safe and confidential handling, storage, retrieval, archiving, and disposal of all relevant data and documents;
- b) communications equipment;
- c) information resources and media;
- d) translation technology tools, translation management systems, terminology management systems, and other systems for managing translation-related language resources.

ISO 17100 Clause 4 "Pre-production processes and activities"

A.4.1 The TSP has processes in place for

- a) handling and analysing enquiries,
- b) determining project feasibility,
- c) preparing quotations, and
- d) entering into agreements with clients.

A.4.2 The TSP submits a quotation to the client indicating at least price and delivery details.

A.4.3 The TSP finalizes an agreement with the client and retains a record of that agreement. The agreement includes or refers to the commercial terms and the project specifications.

A.4.4 The TSP endeavours to obtain additional information required with regards to difficulties in the source language content and other project specifications by contacting the client for instructions and passing that information on to all relevant parties involved in the project.

A.4.5 The TSP has a process in place for the security of information and for the safe keeping and, where appropriate, safe return or destruction of all material (documents and data) received from the client.

A.4.6 After receiving the source language content for translation, the TSP checks that it conforms to the client-TSP agreement and project specifications.

A.4.7 The TSP records each accepted translation project and maintains a register for the duration of the project, as well as a project archive. The register makes it possible to identify and track the translation project and to determine its status.

A.4.8 The TSP assigns to each translation project any internal and/or external resources necessary to ensure compliance with the client-TSP agreement and project specifications. All assignments are documented.

A.4.9 The TSP ensures that the technical resources required at all stages of the project are used by all relevant parties involved in the process, including subcontractors.

A.4.10 The TSP has a process in place to ensure that information concerning linguistic specifications in relation to the translation project is documented and communicated as appropriate.

A.4.11 The TSP ensures that the source language content is analysed to ensure efficient and effective performance of the translation project.

ISO 18587 Clause 4.2 "Pre-production processes"

AB.4.12 The TSP shall have a process in place to determine, in consultation with the client when necessary, whether the source language content is suitable for MT and subsequent post-editing or not since combined MT/post-editing efficiency depends on the MT system, language combination, domain and style of the source language content.

AB.4.13 The TSP shall ensure that requirements for the post-editing project are identified, documented and accessible to the post-editor. The TSP shall also ensure that the relevant specifications (e.g. quality level, target audience, etc.) are communicated with appropriate examples to the post-editor and are observed.

AB.4.14 The TSP shall ensure that the source language content and the text to be post-edited are available in appropriate format for use by the post-editor.

AB.4.15 The TSP shall ensure that the post-editor has access to all reference material and any resources for post-editing as negotiated with the client.

AB.4.16 The TSP shall ensure that output to be post-edited includes indications/marks to correctly distinguish between MT output and output from other translation sources (e.g. TM output).

ISO 17100 Clause 5 "Production process"

A.5.1 Each translation project is coordinated by a project manager who is responsible for meeting the requirements for all aspects of the production process.

A.5.2 Project management includes the following:

- a) identifying the key requirements and translation project specifications during the pre-production process and following the procedures and specifications throughout its production;
- b) supervising and monitoring the translation project preparation process;
- c) assigning a competent translator or translators to the translation project;
- d) assigning a competent reviser or revisers;
- e) disseminating information, issuing instructions related to the assignment;
- f) monitoring to ensure compliance with agreed upon schedule and deadlines;
- g) communicating any changes of the project specifications, if applicable;
- h) monitoring constant conformity to the client-TSP agreement, project specifications;
- i) ensuring translation and other queries are answered;
- j) managing and handling of feedback;
- k) verifying that the translation service specifications have been complied with before approving the translation and giving clearance for its delivery to the client;
- l) delivering of the service.

A.5.3 The TSP ensures that translator translates in accordance with the purpose of the translation project, including the linguistic conventions of the target language and relevant project specifications.

A.5.4 The TSP ensures that the translator checks the target language content.

A.5.5 The TSP ensures that the target language content is revised. The following criteria apply:

- a) the service provider has the necessary human resources available (i.e. translators) to revise translations and
- b) the revision of translation projects takes place as default case if no specific agreement with clients exists and

- c) revision may only be omitted if explicitly requested by the client, provided it is part of the client/TSP agreement.

A.5.6 The TSP has a process in place for final verification of the project against specifications by the PM before delivery to the client. If the final verification indicates any defects in meeting specifications, the TSP makes corrections and takes corrective action as appropriate.

ISO 18587 Clause 4.3 "Production processes"

A.5.7 The TSP shall ensure that post-editors always meet the following objectives in the post-editing process:

- a) comprehensibility of the post-edited MT output;
- b) correspondence of source language content and target language content;
- c) compliance with post-editing requirements and specifications defined by the TSP.

A.5.8 The TSP shall ensure that the following requirements are met:

- a) terminological/lexical consistency, as well as compliance with domain terminology;
- b) use of standard syntax, spelling, punctuation, diacritics, special symbols and abbreviations and other orthographical conventions of the target language;
- c) compliance with any applicable standards;
- d) correct formatting;
- e) suitability for the target audience and for the purpose of the target language content;
- f) compliance with client–TSP agreements.

A.5.9 The TSP shall ensure that the following tasks are performed by the post-editor:

- a) reading the MT output and evaluating whether a reformulation of the target language content is necessary;
- b) using the source language content as reference in order to understand and, if necessary, correct the target language content;
- c) producing target language content either from existing elements in the MT output or providing a new translation.

ISO 17100 Clause 6 "Post-production processes"

A.6.1 The TSP has processes in place for

- a) handling client feedback,
- b) for assessment of client satisfaction,
- c) and for making appropriate corrections and/or taking corrective action.

A.6.2 The TSP has a process in place to ensure full project archiving for an appropriate period and to meet all legal and/or contractual obligations regarding the preservation or deletion of records and data protection.

ISO 18587 Clause 4.4 "Post-production processes"

AB.6.3 The TSP shall have a process in place for verification of the final product against specifications before the release of the post-editing output for delivery to the client.

AB.6.4 The TSP shall have a process in place to obtain feedback from post-editors on the performance of the MT system which can, when appropriate, provide input towards the improvement of the MT system used and process followed.

ISO 18587 Clause 6 Requirements of full post-editing

AB.7.1 On this level of post-editing, the output shall be accurate, comprehensible and stylistically adequate, with correct syntax, grammar and punctuation. On this level of post-editing, post-editors shall focus on:

- a) ensuring that no information has been added or omitted;
- b) editing any inappropriate content;
- c) restructuring sentences in the case of incorrect or unclear meaning;
- d) producing grammatically, syntactically and semantically correct target language content;
- e) adhering to client and/or domain terminology;
- f) applying spelling, punctuation and hyphenation rules;
- g) ensuring that the style appropriate for the text type is used and that stylistic guidelines provided by the client are observed;
- h) applying formatting rules.