



Fact Sheet 2: Using translating services for written materials

This guide is for use by service providers when engaging a translating service to translate written materials into other languages.

This may involve developing resources for a specific client or group, or making English resources available in multiple languages.

Preparing the material for translation

When preparing material for translation, you should:

- consider your key messages or information to give to the target group
- identify the literacy levels of the clients you are targeting and tailor the message accordingly. Are the client group literate in their first language? Is written text the best mode of communication? Would the message be better received if presented using pictures or in video format?
- consider how to present the information as clearly as possible:
 - don't use lengthy or complex text
 - avoid using jargon and slang
 - consider maps and diagrams
 - explain unfamiliar concepts
 - spell out acronyms
 - be aware of tone and type of language used to present sensitive issues.
- identify the appropriate medium for translation information e.g. fact sheets, brochures, website content, video, CDs or DVDs
- be aware of copyright laws and liabilities and seek written approval for use and translation of material. For information regarding copyright matters, visit the [Copyright Council of Australia](#).
- assess whether the material is sensitive or unfamiliar to the target audience - you may wish to consult with community members
- be aware of cultural sensitivities and the reaction from your audience, how will the information be handled or perceived in the client's culture?

Identifying languages for translation

Some or all of the following questions may help to identify appropriate languages for translation:

- **Who is your target audience?**

This may reflect the South Australian population, your particular client group, or groups you are not currently reaching.

- **What language/s do they speak, and what level of English proficiency?**

The largest groups may already have good English proficiency and may not need a translated resource. To meet the biggest need, translate materials into the most common languages spoken by your target group in which there are low levels of English proficiency.

- **What else do you know about your target audience?**

Characteristics such as birthplace, time in Australia, age, gender, visa type or religion, may be helpful to identify service and information needs and, in turn, identify languages for translation.

Please refer to the Fact sheet 3: Language list by country and place for a list of countries and their most commonly used languages.

Booking a translating service

To book a translator, contact a preferred interpreting and translating service and ask to book a National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) credentialed translator.

Please refer to your organisation's interpreting and translation policy for details of preferred providers or contact Human Resources within your agency.

It is important to provide the translator with any material that will assist an accurate translation, such as background material or a glossary of terms.

You will also need to negotiate the terms of translation, including:

- which parts of the material are to be translated, e.g. text, layout, graphics and tables
- any software or other requirements
- final format e.g. electronics/soft copy, hard copy, CD, video
- delivery address and method, e.g. post or email
- time frame, including turnaround time for any corrections or amendments
- inclusions and exclusions in the cost such as: word count, turnaround time, administration fees, cancellation fees, correction fees, proofreading and editing fees.

Final translated product

To assist with an accurate final translation, you should:

- ensure that the final copy is proofread by a translator - check for misspellings, that the source document layout matches the final product including fonts, consistent headers and footers, correctly-spelt names and page numbers
- translate the document back into English for quality assurance purposes, and/or field test the document with relevant organisations
- consider asking a bilingual community member to read through the document in both languages to check for accurate literal and cultural translation, noting that there may be an associated fee
- ensure that each version of the document can be identified by a version number and that changes are clearly marked on each version for the translator
- reference the document title and name of the translated language in English, to help service providers and staff identify it for distribution and information purposes.

Supporting resources

This document is part of a series of resources available to other South Australian Government agencies when developing their interpreting and translating policies.

South Australian Interpreting and Translating Policy for Migrant and Non-Verbal (Sign) Languages

Fact sheets

Fact sheet 1: Using interpreting services – a guide for service providers

Fact sheet 2: Using translating services for written materials

Fact sheet 3: Language list by country and place

Fact sheet 4: How to decide whether to use an interpreting service

Fact sheet 5: Can family and friends provide interpreting services?

Fact sheet 6: Role of bilingual staff in your organisation

Fact sheet 7: Using interpreting services: conflict of interest

Fact sheet 8: Interpreting services: your rights and responsibilities

You can access all of the interpreting and translating resources on the [Department of the Premier and Cabinet website](#).

For more information:

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