ADB

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ADB Translation Guidelines (2019)

Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
AIP	–	Access to Information Policy
CPS	–	country partnership strategy
DMC	–	developing member country
DOC	–	Department of Communications
PDS	–	project data sheet
TA	–	technical assistance

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 2017 to 2018, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Department of Communications (DOC), reassessed the bank's *Update on the ADB Translation Framework* (2012) to ensure the framework's relevance and responsiveness to the needs of ADB and its stakeholders.

In reviewing the updated framework, DOC took into account the views of internal stakeholders involved in translation-related work, and those of external stakeholders during the consultations for the ADB *Access to Information Policy* (AIP). The assessment found that the key principles underlying the framework remain valid.

The *Translation Guidelines 2019* reiterate the principles underlying translation at ADB and provide general guidance on conducting translation work. The key principles underlying the guidelines support commitments made under the AIP, as well as those under the Safeguard Policy Statement, particularly in communicating with project-affected people.

For consistent implementation of translation practices, ADB adheres to the following principles

(i)   English is the ADB working language;

(ii)   Commitment to communication;

(iii)   Translation for developing member countries;

(iv)   A strategic, pragmatic, and flexible approach;

(v)   Involvement of borrower/client in translations;

(vi)   Appropriate format and dissemination; and

(vii) High-quality of translations.

ADB routinely translates the country partnership strategy in countries where English is not widely spoken, the project data sheet, and—based on need—other project and safeguard information.

Aside from these mandatory translations, other documents and information are often translated to encourage understanding, support, and participation in ADB operations. The type and extent of the translation depend on the need and the context.

A clear process has been established to ensure that translation activities are carried out in a timely manner; the quality of translated work is upheld; and the translated document is disseminated appropriately.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.	The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) first *Translation Framework* was formulated in 2007. In December 2012, ADB approved the *Update on the ADB Translation Framework,* which included guiding principles for translation at ADB, a list of mandatory documents or information for translation and those for possible translation, criteria for determining the need for translation, the implementation process, resource implications, and a comparison of practices at other international finance institutions.

2.	From 2017 to 2018, the ADB Department of Communications (DOC), reviewed the ADB translation practices to ensure that the 2012 translation principles are still relevant and responsive to the needs of ADB and its stakeholders.

3.	The review considered ADB's recent experience in implementing the framework. The review assessed relevant information and considered the views of internal stakeholders involved in translation-related work, as well as external stakeholders. The assessment found that the key principles underlying the framework remain valid.

4.	The *Translation Guidelines 2019* reiterate the principles for translation at ADB and provide general guidance on conducting translation work.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.	ADB recognizes that translation is an important tool to help raise awareness about ADB and its operations, share knowledge, and aid stakeholder engagement.

6.	The principles underlying these guidelines support the commitments made in the ADB *Access to Information Policy* (AIP) *2018*[1] to share information with stakeholders in a clear, timely and appropriate manner. They also support commitments in the AIP and the *Safeguard Policy Statement 2009*[2] to provide information to project-affected people and other stakeholders in a time, form, and language that allows them to provide meaningful inputs into ADB operations.

7.	The *Translation Guidelines 2019* are based on the following principles:

(i)	**English is the ADB working language.** The English language version of all ADB documents is the ADB official version.[3]

(ii)	**Commitment to communication.** Making documents and information available in language(s) other than English allows for better understanding of ADB's work among stakeholders. It also facilitates stakeholder consultation and participation, leading to increased two-way sharing of information and ideas about ADB's policies, strategies, or projects. It aids in the effective sharing of knowledge.

(iii)	**Translation for developing member countries.** ADB translates documents and information from English into languages of ADB's developing member countries (DMCs) (Appendix 2).

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[1] ADB. 2018. Access to Information Policy. Manila.
[2] ADB. 2009. *Safeguard Policy Statement*. Manila.
[3] All translated documents should contain a disclaimer. See Appendix 1

(iv) **Strategic, pragmatic, and flexible approach.** Translation of all ADB documents and information is not possible given resource and time constraints. ADB's approach to translation is thus strategic, pragmatic, and flexible rather than routine. The decision to translate a document or information lies with the owner of the document, except for documents that are required to be translated under other ADB policies. Given their knowledge of the local context, resident missions or offices are consulted about the in-country demand for translation.

(v) **Involvement of borrower or client in translations.** ADB works closely with borrowers and clients to ensure appropriate decisions are made regarding which project-specific documents or information to translate, when to translate, and into what language(s). Borrower-owned documents are not routinely translated by ADB.

(vi) **Appropriate format and dissemination.** ADB decides into which language(s) and/or dialect(s) to translate documents or information, based on the purpose of the translation and the audience needs. Translated information is presented in a suitable format[4] and disseminated in a manner,[5] time, and place most conducive to information sharing.

(vii) **High-quality translations.** ADB endeavors to produce high-quality translations that accurately reflect the meaning of the English version.

III. GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

A. Documents or Information to be Translated

8. On a mandatory basis,[6] ADB translates the following:

(i) country partnership strategies (CPS),

(ii) project data sheets,

(iii) safeguard information, as needed, and

(iv) project information, as needed.

9. **Country partnership strategies.** The CPS outlines ADB's medium-term development strategy and operational program as agreed with its DMCs. In countries where English is not widely spoken, ADB translates the CPS into the relevant national language(s) and posts the translated version on ADB.org within 90 calendar days of the CPS endorsement by ADB's Board of Directors.

10. **Project data sheets.** In countries where English is not widely spoken, ADB translates and posts on ADB.org project data sheets (PDS) for all loans, grants, and transaction technical assistance (TRTA). For sovereign projects, translations are posted within 6 months of the

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[4] Examples include frequently asked questions, leaflets, multimedia materials, cartoons, or oral.
[5] Examples include through online media through social media, emails, audiovisual, or in printed form.
[6] OM section L3/OP *Access to Information Policy*.

approval of the project concept papers, and again within 6 months of the approval of the loan or grant. For nonsovereign loans and grants, the PDS is translated and posted on ADB.org within 6 months of the initial PDS web posting. PDSs for nonsovereign TRTA are translated and posted within 6 months of the TA approval.

11.   **Safeguard information.** ADB borrowers and/or clients share with their stakeholders—notably people affected by ADB-supported projects—relevant information on social and environment safeguard issues. Documents and/or information are shared in a manner, time, place, and language that best suit the audience.

12.   **Project information.** ADB translates project documents and information to share information with stakeholders, notably project-affected people. Documents and information about ADB projects are translated and shared in a manner, time, place and language that best suit the audience.

B.   Awareness-Raising Documents and Information

13.   Translation of ADB documents, information, and curated materials increases public awareness about ADB operations in ADB DMCs. ADB may translate such materials, including:

- (i)   **Information on ADB**. Such materials describe ADB as an organization, provide information on ADB activities, and show its relationship with member countries. Materials may include country fact sheets, news releases, or corporate reports such as the ADB annual report.

- (ii)   **Policies, strategies, and guidelines**. Translation of policies, strategies, and guidelines helps stakeholders, including borrowers and clients, executing and implementing agencies, academe, and members of civil society to better understand and engage with ADB.

- (iii)   **Information intended for the web and social media**. ADB translates impact stories, news items, social media posts, and other materials for posting on the ADB website and on ADB's HQ- and resident mission-driven social media channels.

C.   Other Types of Documents and Information for Translation

14.   Other types of materials may be considered for translation depending on the purpose and demand for the documents or information, the resources for translation, and the intended audience. These include the following:

- (i.)   **Information for stakeholder consultations**. For stakeholder consultation to be meaningful, documents or information may need to be translated and shared before discussions take place. The translated materials may be best provided in different forms such as summaries, Question and Answer, brochures, or multimedia to enhance engagement.

- (ii.)   **Information for project communications strategies.** Translated materials may be useful to support project outcomes as part of a project communications strategy. The information may be best provided in different forms, times, channels, and places to facilitate stakeholder understanding.

(iii.) **Flagship and knowledge products.** To support ADB's commitment to share its knowledge across the Asia and Pacific region,[7] ADB may translate knowledge products or portions of the products. For publications, such as the *Asian Development Outlook* or *Key Indicators*, ADB may grant permissions to use ADB's copyrighted material, translate, print, and distribute the publication in the local market under certain terms and conditions. This approach ensures that publications are translated into language(s) for which there is demand.

15. **Borrower-owned documents are not translated by ADB.** Borrowers and clients provide project documents to ADB in English. ADB generally does not translate the documents of borrowers or clients. If the borrower or client has prepared a version in a national language, ADB may make it and its English version available to the public via ADB's website. The borrower or client may also share the translated documents on a relevant website or elsewhere.

16. **Translation into donor-country languages.** ADB may translate documents or information about ADB to build awareness among the public, enhance ADB's profile, and interact with the media. Translation into donor languages should be included in the budget of the respective department or office requiring translations.

17. Examples of materials and documents that could be translated into donor member languages include the ADB profile, selected news releases, selected strategies and policies, and donor member fact sheets.

D. Criteria in Determining Translations

18. The following list of criteria is meant to help decide whether to translate documents or information. The criteria are not prescriptive or restrictive. Decision makers are encouraged to consult with resident missions or offices for input on the local context, which may inform the final decision.

(i) **Nature and purpose of the document.** How does the document fit into ADB's operational priorities? Who are the audiences of this document? Do the intended audiences understand English? Will the document meet its purpose if it is not translated?

(ii) **Characteristics of the target audience.** What is the literacy level of the audience? Is a summary document needed or preferable? Would it be better to provide translated information in another format such as a cartoon, infographic, or multimedia product? What channels would be most effective?

(iii) **Demand for translation.** Have there been requests for the document to be translated? Do enough people need the information contained in the document to merit translation?

(iv) **Life span of document.** Will this document be in effect or relevant long enough to merit translation?

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[7] See Strategy 2030: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/435391/strategy-2030-main-document.pdf

(v) **Length and complexity of document.** How long or complex is the document? Will this length or complexity make it difficult, time-consuming, or expensive to translate? Will this length or complexity make it unlikely for the audience to read the document? Would a summary of the document be preferable for the intended audience?

(vi) **Time required for translation.** How much time would it take to translate the document? Would it be available in a timely manner such that the audience could benefit from and make use of the information?

(vii) **Cost effectiveness.** What is the cost of translating the document? Will it be cost effective? Would using the funds to translate this document limit ADB's ability to fund other translations of future documents that may be more important, impactful, and/or strategic?

E. Dissemination

19. Dissemination of translated documents and information should be strategic. While ADB.org is the main ADB platform hosting translated materials, staff should consider the most effective way of disseminating the translations to ensure they reach their intended audiences.

20. Alternative or additional distribution methods may include through targeted emails, social media, and other online communication tools. Dissemination of translated materials to project-affected people may need to be in printed format posted or distributed in easily accessible locations such as project offices or through project focal points. Staff and ADB's resident missions and offices may also distribute translated documents or information at workshops and seminars, face-to-face consultations, or through ADB's depository libraries and public information centers.

F. Translation Budget

21. As of 1 January 2019, all departments and offices receive a budget allocation for translations not covered by project or technical assistance (TA) funds, based on their annual budget proposals for translation. This budget allocation funds mandatory translations of PDSs and CPSs. It also funds translation of CPS-linked documents, awareness raising materials (e.g., country fact sheets, news releases, information about regional cooperation programs), institutional materials (e.g., policies, strategies, and guidelines), materials intended for ADB.org, selected economic, sector, and thematic works; and other publications.

22. Translations of project or TA-related materials are financed by the project or TA funds. The cost and responsibility of translations of materials prepared as a joint initiative with development partners are shared with those partners.

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G. Translation Process

23. The document owner is responsible for the overall translation process.

24. The standard translation workflow is as follows:
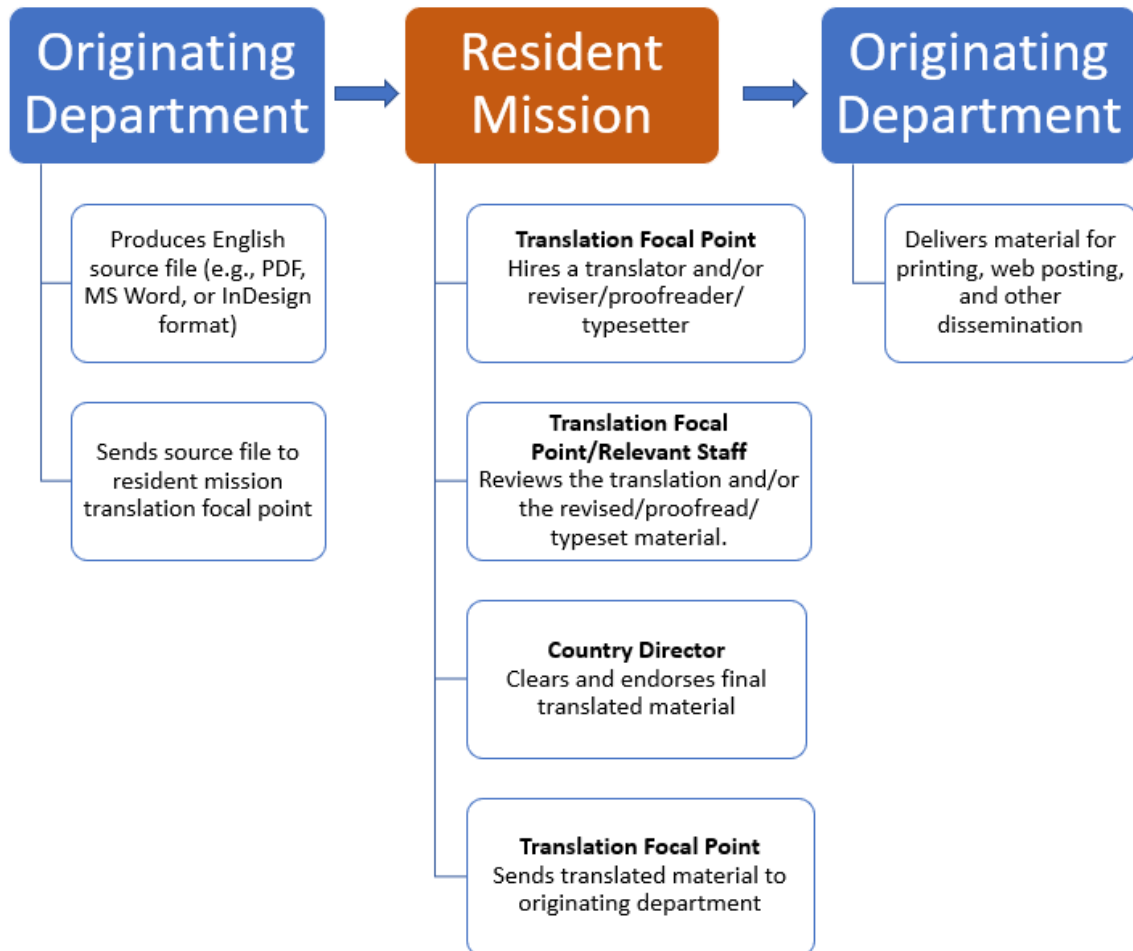
Source: Asian Development Bank

25. For translated publications, originating departments should file a PUBS request to secure an ISBN number for the translated publication that will be different from the ISBN for the English language publication. For ADB publications to be translated and published by an external party, the originating department should arrange, with DOC, for a licensing agreement between ADB and the other party.

ADB DISCLAIMERS FOR TRANSLATED DOCUMENTS

1.   Disclaimer for titles published by ADB

This document has been translated from English in order to reach a wider audience. While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the translation, English is the working language of ADB and the English original of this document is the only official ADB version. Any citations must refer to the English original of this document.

2.   Disclaimer for licensed editions of ADB publications

Published by arrangement with the Asian Development Bank, Manila. The quality of the [LANGUAGE] translation and its coherence with the original text is the sole responsibility of [LICENSEE]. The English original of this work is the only official ADB version.

3.   Disclaimer for policies, strategies, and guidelines

This document is a translation of [TITLE], example [Safeguard Policy Statement], dated [DATE], which has been translated from English in order to reach a wider audience. In case of any discrepancies, the English original of this document is the only official ADB version.

4.   Disclaimer for summaries of ADB documents

This document is a summary in [LANGUAGE] of the original official document in English, [TITLE], and dated [DATE]. This summary has been translated from English in order to reach a wider audience. In case of any discrepancies, the English original of this document is the only official ADB version.

LANGUAGES FOR ADB DEVELOPING MEMBER COUNTRIES

Department	Country	Official and National Languages[a]	Other Spoken Languages
Central and West Asia Department (CWRD)	Afghanistan	Dari (official), Pashto (official)	Other Turkic and minor languages
	Armenia	Armenian (Hayeren)	Russian widely used
	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani (or Azeri)	Russian is widely understood; other languages (several minority ethnic groups have their own languages)
	Georgia	Georgian (official)	Russian, Armenian, Azeri, and other languages Note: Abkhaz is the official language in Abkhazia
	Kazakhstan	Kazakh (state language), Russian (official; used in everyday business, designated the "language of inter-ethnic communication")	n/a
	Kyrgyz Republic	Kyrgyz (official), Russian (official)	In December 2001, the legislature of the Kyrgyz Republic made Russian the official language, equal in status to Kyrgyz
	Pakistan	Urdu (official), English (official and lingua franca of Pakistani elite and most government ministries)	Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiki (a Punjabi variant), Pashto, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, Burushaski, and other languages
	Tajikistan	Tajik (official)	Russian widely used in government and business
	Turkmenistan	Turkmen (official)	Russian, Uzbek, other languages
	Uzbekistan	Uzbek (Turkic tongue)	Russian, Tajik, other languages
East Asia Department (EARD)	People's Republic of China	Putonghua (Mandarin)	Wu (spoken in Shanghai), Yue (Cantonese) and other Chinese dialects like Min, Hakka (Kejia), Gan, and Xiang
	Mongolia	Mongolian	Kazakh[b] Russian

Pacific Department (PARD)	Cook Islands	English (official)	Maori
	Fiji	English (official), Fijian (official)	Hindustani
	Kiribati	English (official)	I-Kiribati
	Marshall Islands	Marshallese (official); English (official), widely spoken as a second language	Japanese
	Federated States of Micronesia	English (official and common language)	Trukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Kosrean, Ulithian, Woleaian, Nukuoro, Kapingamarangi
	Nauru	Nauruan (official; a distinct Pacific Island language)	English is widely understood, spoken, and used for most government and commercial purposes
	Palau	Palauan (official in all islands except Sonsoral); Sonsoral (Sonsoralese and English are official), Tobi (Tobi and English are official), and Angaur (Angaur, Japanese, and English are official)	n/a
	Papua New Guinea	Tok Pisin (official) English (official); Hiri Motu (official)	Melanesian Pidgin serves as the lingua franca but over 800 indigenous languages are also spoken in various parts of the country
	Samoa	Samoan (Polynesian), English	n/a
	Solomon Islands	English is official but spoken by only 1%–2% of the population	Melanesian pidgin is the lingua franca in most of the country, 120 indigenous languages
	Timor-Leste	Tetum (official), Portuguese (official)	Indonesian, English; about 16 indigenous languages; Tetum, Galole, Mambae, and Kemak are spoken by significant numbers of people
	Tonga	Tongan, English	n/a
	Tuvalu	Tuvaluan, English	Tuvaluan, Samoan, I-Kiribati (on the island of Nui)

	Vanuatu	English, French, Bislama (Bichelama)	Plus more than 100 local languages
South Asia Department (SARD)	Bangladesh	Bangla (official; also known as Bengali)	English
	Bhutan	Dzongkha (official)	The Bhotes (the principal ethnic majority) speak various Tibetan dialects like Tshanglakha and Khenkha.
	India	Hindi (most spoken and primary tongue), English (the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication) plus 20 official languages (used at the state level): Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Marathi, Meitei, Nepali, Oriya, Eastern Panjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu	The number of individual languages listed for India is 452. Of those, 438 are living languages and 14 have no known speakers.
	Maldives	Maldivian Dhivehi	English spoken by most government officials
	Nepal	Nepali (official and lingua franca of the country)	60 ethnic groups, which speak 70 different dialects and 11 major languages like Tibeto-Burman, Lhotsamkha, Nepal Bhasa, Tamang languages; minorities Bhutanese (Dzongkha), Tibetan languages, possibly Chinese dialects; more than a hundred other languages including Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newari or Nepal Bhasa, Magar, Rai, Awadhi, Limbu are spoken by different groups. Many in government and business also speak English.[b]
	Sri Lanka	Sinhala (official and national language), Tamil (national language)	English is commonly used in government and is spoken competently by about 10% of the population

Southeast Asia Department (SERD)	Cambodia	Khmer (official)	Some French still spoken, English increasingly popular as a second language
	Indonesia	Bahasa Indonesia (official)	English, local dialects, the most widely spoken of which is Javanese
	Lao PDR	Lao (official)	French, English, and various ethnic languages
	Malaysia	Bahasa Malaysia (official)	English, Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai
	Myanmar	Bamar	135 minority ethnic groups have their own languages
	Philippines	Filipino (official; based on Tagalog) and English (official). Filipino is the national language.	8 major dialects: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan
	Thailand	Thai	English (secondary language of the elite), ethnic and regional dialects
	Viet Nam	Vietnamese (official)	English (increasingly favored as a second language), some French, Chinese, and Khmer; mountain area languages (Mon–Khmer and Malayo–Polynesian)

n/a = not applicable
a   Source: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/asian_languages.htm
b   Source: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/