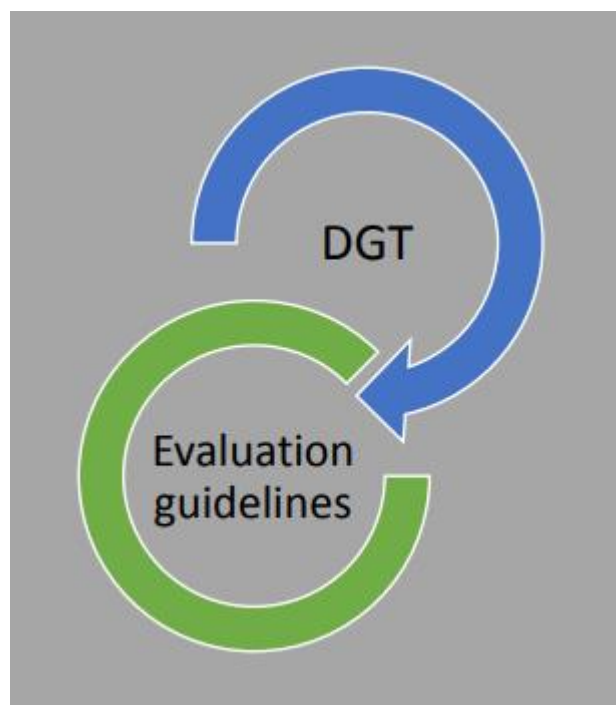


Translation quality evaluation

Info pack for external contractors



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1 GENERAL

This info pack is intended for DGT’s external contractors providing translation services. It contains the key information about the translation quality evaluation system used by DG Translation (DGT). Its purpose is to help you understand how DGT will evaluate the translations (assignments) you deliver. It will, among others, explain the feedback you will receive, hoping that this information will help you and DGT work together to ensure high quality of the translations.

2 QUALITY EVALUATION OF TRANSLATIONS OUTSOURCED TO EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS

2.1 What do we evaluate?

DGT evaluates assignments. An assignment can include a single document (“single-document assignment”) or several documents (“multi-document assignment”). In both cases, one quality rating is given to the whole assignment.

Assignments which are cancelled by the requester while under translation, will not be evaluated. In case of so-called ongoing versions (where subsequent versions of an assignment arrive during translation of the initial text), only the latest version including all modifications will be evaluated and the results of the evaluation are propagated to all previous versions.

2.2 How do we evaluate?

Our evaluators examine a random sample of text from each of the outsourced assignments, covering all documents in the assignment. They verify the sample’s compliance with the quality requirements⁽¹⁾. Every detected error (incompliance) is corrected and annotated with an error code. Here is how different error types correspond to the quality requirements:

Quality requirement	Error type and code
The content of the source text must be accurately rendered in the target text without unjustified omissions or additions;	Accuracy / ACCY
References to and explicit or implicit quotes from published documents must be checked and quoted correctly;	Style job-specific / STJOB
Correct terminology must be used consistently throughout the text in line with the relevant domain, reference documents and appropriate naming conventions;	Terminology / TERM
Linguistic norms for the target language must be followed consistently, in particular as regards grammar, punctuation and spelling;	Linguistic norm / LNORM
Institutional and document-specific style requirements must be met, for example those set out in relevant style guides and document templates, specific instructions	Style job-specific / STJOB

(1) As laid down in section 5. QUALITY REQUIREMENTS of TRAD23 Tender specifications or section 4.1 QUALITY REQUIREMENTS of the Tender specifications for the negotiated procedures, as relevant.

from the authorising department, etc.;	
General style requirements must be met, for example the text must be fluent, idiomatic, coherent and tailored to the target audience;	Style general / STGEN
Design and presentation requirements must be met, for example text and paragraph formatting, physical layout, integration of graphical elements and Mark-up (tags); and any other technical requirements for particular settings and segmentation;	Design / DSGN
The formatting of the source text must be replicated (including codes and tags if applicable), unless a different format is specified in the order form;	Design DSGN

For more information about the error typology, see Annex 1. Where relevant, evaluators can add comments to the error codes.

Once the evaluation is completed, a quality rating for the evaluation is generated based on the errors identified in the sample and annotated with error codes.

2.3 How is the quality rating calculated?

The evaluation produces a quality rating: a percentage value between 0% and 100%, where 100% means full compliance with the quality requirements. The lower the quality rating, the less compliant the translation.

The quality rating is calculated as follows: each sample is given a pool of credit points that is relative to its size (the bigger the sample, the more points). Each error type in the error typology has a penalty score assigned to it. The scoring formula will deduct the penalty scores of all errors annotated in the sample from the initial pool of credit points given to that sample. The final quality rating represents the ratio of credit points remaining at the end of evaluation to the initial pool of credit points given to the sample. Its value represents the assignment's degree of compliance with the quality requirements.

Quality rating	Definition
100%	An assignment that fully complies with the quality requirements and is usable as it stands on delivery, ready for publication without further formatting, revision, review or correction by DGT.
20-99%	An assignment that partly complies with the quality requirements but has shortcomings with regard to one or more of the requirements and therefore needs intervention by DGT.
Below 20%	An assignment that fails to comply with the quality requirements to such an extent that a price reduction is applied.

2.4 Reference materials and instructions

As contractors, you will often receive pertinent reference materials, such as translation memories ⁽²⁾, relevant reference documents, termbases and/or specific instructions from DGT. It is important that these materials are properly shared with the translators who do the job. Failure to follow the instructions or to apply reference documents, when implicitly or explicitly asked to do so, will be regarded as incompliance with the quality requirements during evaluation.

Note that in the case of translation memories that you receive from DGT and use in translation, you are expected to correct errors in the segments originating from those memories, including 100% matches. The same applies to segments originating from neural machine translation.

2.5 Validation

Every evaluation is checked by a second person, a validator, who verifies that error codes and severity levels are adequately and consistently applied.

2.6 Feedback

You will receive feedback for every delivered and evaluated assignment. The purpose of the feedback is to explain any quality issues detected. Feedback should also help you improve your quality over time.

The feedback will include the following elements:

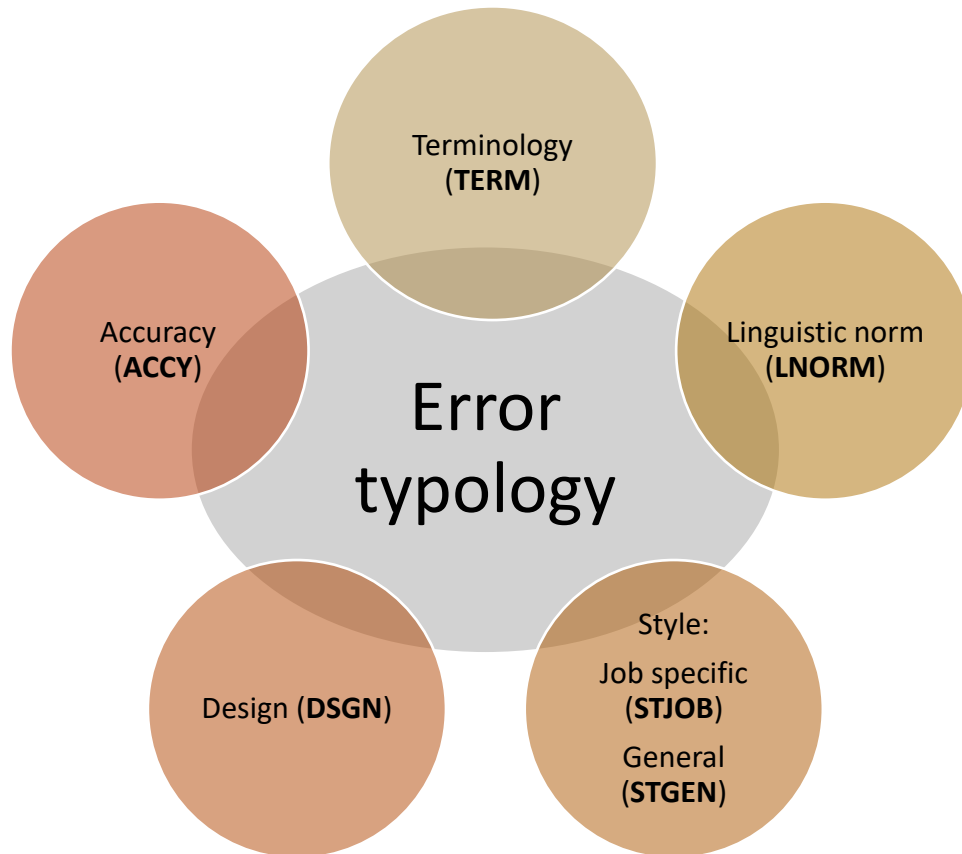
- ✓ assignment identification;
- ✓ quality rating;
- ✓ corrections with error codes providing information about the type and severity of identified errors;
- ✓ individual comments that evaluators can add, where appropriate, to each annotated correction;
- ✓ general qualitative comment or advice/guidance referring to future jobs (optional).

⁽²⁾ .tmx files containing normative memories, Euramis exports and machine translation.

Annex 1: Error typology and severity levels

I. What error type?

DGT's error typology groups error types into 5 error dimensions and uses 6 error codes.



ACCURACY (ACCY)	Accuracy errors address the correspondence of content between the source and the target text. Accuracy errors inappropriately change the intended meaning of the source text ⁽³⁾ .
MISTRANSLATION	<p>The target content does not accurately reflect the source content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it distorts the meaning, e.g. missing negation, “less” translated as “more”, over- and under-translation; • numbers and dates do not correspond to the source text; • names, places, or other “named entities” do not match, e.g. “Slovakia” has been translated as “Slovenia”; • it introduces ambiguity that is not present in the source text; • it produces interference (overly literal word-for-word translations) or a paraphrase that distorts the meaning.
OMISSION	<p>The target text omits, in an unjustifiable manner, content that is present in the source text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part of the meaningful content (a word, group of words, paragraph, phrase, line, table, figure, etc.) is not present in the translation.
ADDITION	<p>The target text inserts, in an unjustifiable manner, content that is not present in the source text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an addition that introduces superfluous “clarifying” text.
UNTRANSLATED	<p>Content that should have been translated has been left untranslated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part of the source text (a word, group of words, paragraph, phrase, line, table, figure, etc.) is left in the source language; • text in a graphic/image has been left untranslated.

TERMINOLOGY (TERM)	<p>Terminology errors occur when the translation does not adhere to the accepted use of terms within a domain or is not in accordance with a term base or a reference document provided to the contractor. Here is how we define a term: a lexical unit comprising one or more words that corresponds to a concept in a particular subject field or application area. Terms are used for expert communication and in that sense are different from purely linguistic and/or stylistic expressions.</p> <p>For the purpose of this error typology, the definition of terms also includes the following items regulated in style guides, term</p>
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⁽³⁾ Note that the examples of errors in the table below and all the subsequent tables are meant for illustrative purposes and are not an exhaustive list.

	<p>bases or EU law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names of agencies/bodies/courts/offices/authorities; • chemical, biological, etc. nomenclatures, e.g. names of plants, fish, chemical compounds, etc.; • some proper names: names of products; • names of action plans, initiatives, schemes and programmes; • names of joint undertakings; • acronyms and abbreviations of the above. <p>The following are not classified as terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • titles of legal acts; • titles of articles or sections in legal acts; • expressions, phrases or sentences from templates, even when present in IATE; • general-language words and phrases that do not have a specialised meaning.
	<p>A term is translated with a term other than the one expected within the domain or otherwise specified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to use appropriate domain- or organisation-specific terminology, e.g. EU terminology available in IATE or in a termbase provided by DGT; • failure to adhere to the terminology of reference documents or to defined terms from the basic legal acts; • use of a term contrary to general domain expectations: “direct deduction” instead of “direct debit” in a financial text; • inconsistent use of terminology within the text: the source text refers to “raw materials”, which is translated as “matières premières”, “matières brutes” and “matériaux bruts” in the French target text.

LINGUISTIC (LNORM)	NORM Linguistic norm errors relate to the linguistic “well-formedness” of the text and can be assessed without regard to whether the text is a translation or not. These errors concern formal aspects of language, such as grammar, punctuation or spelling, for which formalised and established norms exist.
GRAMMAR	<p>Grammatical errors, other than spelling and orthography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorrect use of a function word (e.g. a preposition, auxiliary verb, article, determiner): the text reads “Check the part number as given in the screen” instead of “...on the screen”;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wrong verb tense, mood or aspect: a French translation reads “Il est important que tu fais tes devoirs.” instead of “Il est important que tu fasses tes devoirs.” (subjunctive); incorrect word order: a German text reads “Er hat gelesen die Regelung” instead of “Er hat die Regelung gelesen”; incorrect declension of nouns, pronouns or adjectives: a text reads “das Buch der Autor” instead of “das Buch des Autors”; lack of agreement between two or more words with respect to case, number, person, or other grammatical features: a text reads “The voters was waiting for the exit polls”; incorrect syntax.
PUNCTUATION	<p>Incorrect punctuation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to observe punctuation rules (e.g. regarding commas, semicolons, quotation marks, colons, etc.).
SPELLING	<p>Errors related to the spelling of words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> typographical errors; capitalisation errors; incorrect use of diacritics: the Hungarian word “bőven” (using “o” with a double acute (“)) is spelled as “böven”, using a tilde (~), which is not found in Hungarian.

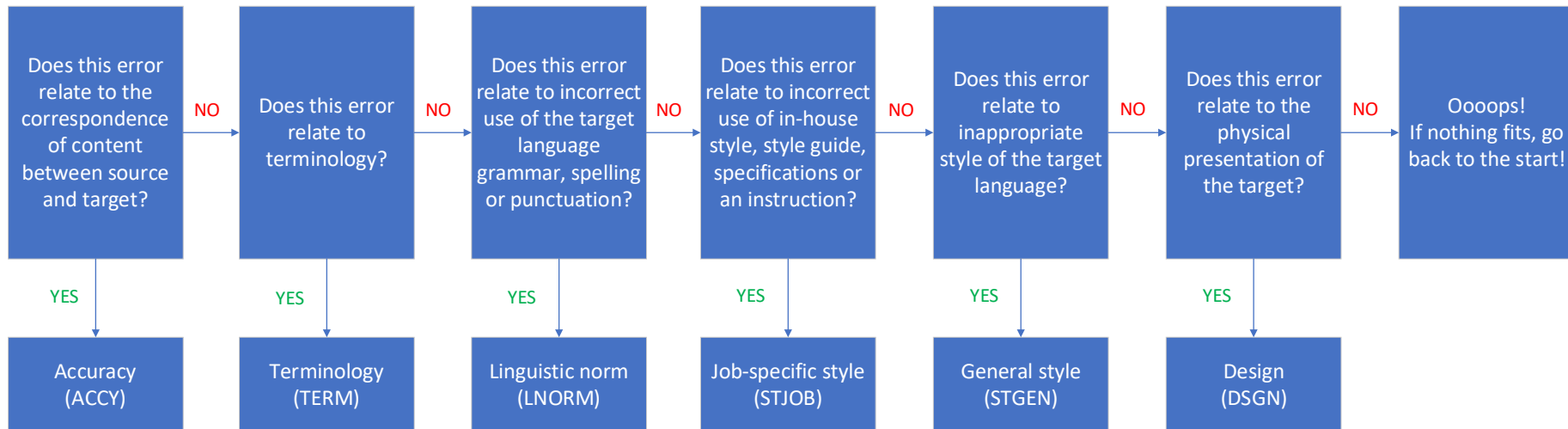
STYLE (STJOB and STGEN)	<p>Style errors relate to formulations that may be grammatically and linguistically correct but are still inappropriate because they deviate from organisational style guides or job-specific instructions or exhibit inappropriate general style (tone, register, stylistic appropriateness).</p>
JOB-SPECIFIC (STJOB)	<p>Failure to apply institutional or job-specific style guides, instructions, specifications or reference material:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to correctly reproduce a quotation or reference, e.g. retranslation of an existing title or provision; failure to use the institution's templates, e.g. incorrect use of the wording from thematic templates or LegisWrite; failure to use normative memory (where relevant); failure to follow the instruction not to translate a certain element of the source text; failure to use inter-institutional guides, i.e. the inter-institutional style guide, OLP Handbook, etc.; failure to apply a specified external reference, i.e. UN convention, basic regulation or Combined Nomenclature; failure to apply supplied language-specific guidelines;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to apply job-specific instructions (e.g. to refrain from using the word “please”).
GENERAL (STGEN)	<p>Stylistic inconsistency, awkward style, non-idiomatic use of target language or inappropriate register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unidiomatic tautology; • clumsiness: a text is written with many embedded clauses and an excessively wordy style. While the meaning can be understood, the text is very awkward and difficult to read; • Gallicisms, Anglicisms, etc.; • wrong register or level of formality: a formal letter uses contractions, colloquialisms or expressions characteristic of spoken rather than written language; or a brochure for secondary school students is translated using very formal language; • inappropriate discourse for the specific subject: use of anachronistic or culturally inappropriate expressions; the style is unsuitable for publication or professional use, e.g. at odds with text-type conventions; • wrong mode of discourse: written text versus transcribed speech; • non-idiomatic, albeit grammatically correct, expressions: the following text appears in an English translation of a German letter: “We thanked him with heart” where “with heart” is an understandable but non-idiomatic rendering, and better translation would be “warmly” or “sincerely”; • use of wrong collocations; • inconsistent style: one part of a text is translated in a light and “terse” style while other sections are translated in a wordier style; two equally correct grammatical or punctuation conventions are used interchangeably; • the same phrase/sentence is used repeatedly on purpose throughout the source text but is translated inconsistently within the target text; • unnatural word order, i.e. the organisation of the information in the phrase is not clear.

DESIGN (DSGN)	<p>Design errors relate to the presentation of the translation product, such as text or paragraph formatting, layout, proper integration of a graphical element, and mark-up. This dimension does not include typographical or stylistic errors. Design errors can be identified either in documents in isolation (e.g. a second-level heading is formatted as a first-level heading) or in the relationship between source and target text (e.g. headings are formatted differently between source and target).</p>
	<p>There is a problem relating to design aspects (vs. linguistic aspects):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • errors related to the formatting of graphics and tables (e.g. they are positioned incorrectly);

- the font chosen is incorrect or inappropriate;
- errors related to “mark-up” (codes used to represent structure or formatting of text, also known as “tags”);
- colours are used incorrectly (e.g. headings should be blue but are green instead);
- footnotes or endnotes are placed inappropriately or use incorrect in-text symbols;
- headers or footers are formatted incorrectly;
- text margins are incorrect;
- page breaks appear in inappropriate locations;
- a hyperlink has been corrupted in the translation process, e.g. it has been translated and produces an error message;
- a hyperlink has not been localised as necessary, e.g. it refers the reader to the source language site instead of the target language site;
- the layout of the text does not correspond to the source.

Error type decision tree



II. What severity level?

A minor error:

- a) does not seriously affect the usability, understandability, or reliability of the content (even if correction is still needed).

A major error:

- a) seriously affects the usability, understandability or reliability of a document or its key parts or aspects, or
- b) has serious consequences outside DGT (legal, financial, political, or reputational damage), or
- c) has serious consequences for DGT (apart from reputational damage, it requires extensive efforts: thorough revision or several corrections/interventions throughout the document).

Error severity decision tree



Below are the ‘decision tree’ questions with additional examples ⁽⁴⁾.

	Ask yourself:	Examples
Usability, understandability or reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the error change the scope of application of the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistranslated date of application in a legal document. • Omitted or added names of countries or entities to which a legal provision applies. • Mistranslated reference to the basic act of a draft legal act.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the error seriously alter the information conveyed in the text or its key elements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing negation that completely distorts the point. • Wrong country name in an infringement package. • Wrong key or defined term that affects the usability of the document. • Mistranslated figures/units of measurement in a technical Annex. • Wrong deadline for Member States to submit notifications. • Wrong date/time in an invitation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the error seriously affect the intended purpose/usability of the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal language used broadly in a booklet for children. • Wrong name/address in a letter/email (the message will never arrive). • Key link(s) in the text not working (the text describes a new website and the link taking the reader to that website does not work). • Entire sentence or paragraph containing a key message left untranslated.
Serious consequences outside DGT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the error make the EU/its administrators look incompetent or otherwise tarnish their image? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious grammar mistakes making EU administrators look incompetent. • Typos or mistranslations creating offensive/ridiculous text that could expose the EU/its administrators to mockery. • Blatant error on the cover page of high-profile communication materials.

⁽⁴⁾ Note that the examples of errors below are meant for illustrative purposes and are not an exhaustive list.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the error compromise a message the EU wants to give in its policies or communication? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistranslations that could undermine the 'voice' of the EU on potentially contentious issues. Unclear language in a sensitive point leading to possible distortions of meaning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could the error lead to litigation or serious political/financial consequences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistranslated amount to be paid in a legal provision. Wrong deadline for submission of tenders. Mistranslated figures/units of measurement in a technical Annex.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a risk of proliferation of the mistake in other documents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An error in the title of a legal act. Wrong defined term, especially when a concept is introduced for the first time. Significant errors in documents with a long shelf-life (e.g. Political Guidelines of the new President of the Commission).
Serious consequences for DGT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was a mistake in the sample repeated many times in the sample or outside of it, requiring corrections in the whole text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrong terminology requiring replacing a term and adapting language throughout the document. Wrong style/register requiring revision of the whole document. Layout issues requiring interventions throughout the whole document, e.g. multiple charts pasted in the document require formatting adjustment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the error reveal gross negligence/disrespect for contractual obligations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous obvious mistakes suggesting lack of revision. Apparent use of unrevised machine translation in parts of the sample. Entire paragraph left untranslated, even if it does not convey a key message.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were key instructions/conventions/a template not followed in various parts of the sample? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to use the template or the normative memories provided, requiring revision/correction of the whole document or a large part of it. Failure to use style guides as instructed, requiring corrections in the whole document or a large part of it. Failure to consult the relevant reference documents, requiring verification/revision of terminology/quotations in the whole document or a large part of it.