A Guide for Freelance Translators

General Procedures and Requirements

20/5/2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About this guide

This guide is meant as a tool to improve cooperation with freelancers who work on our translations - be it translators, reviewers, editors, journalists or copywriters – and thus ensure a fruitful long-term relationship between all those concerned.

While you really don't need to memorise its contents, do keep this guide handy for reference purposes!

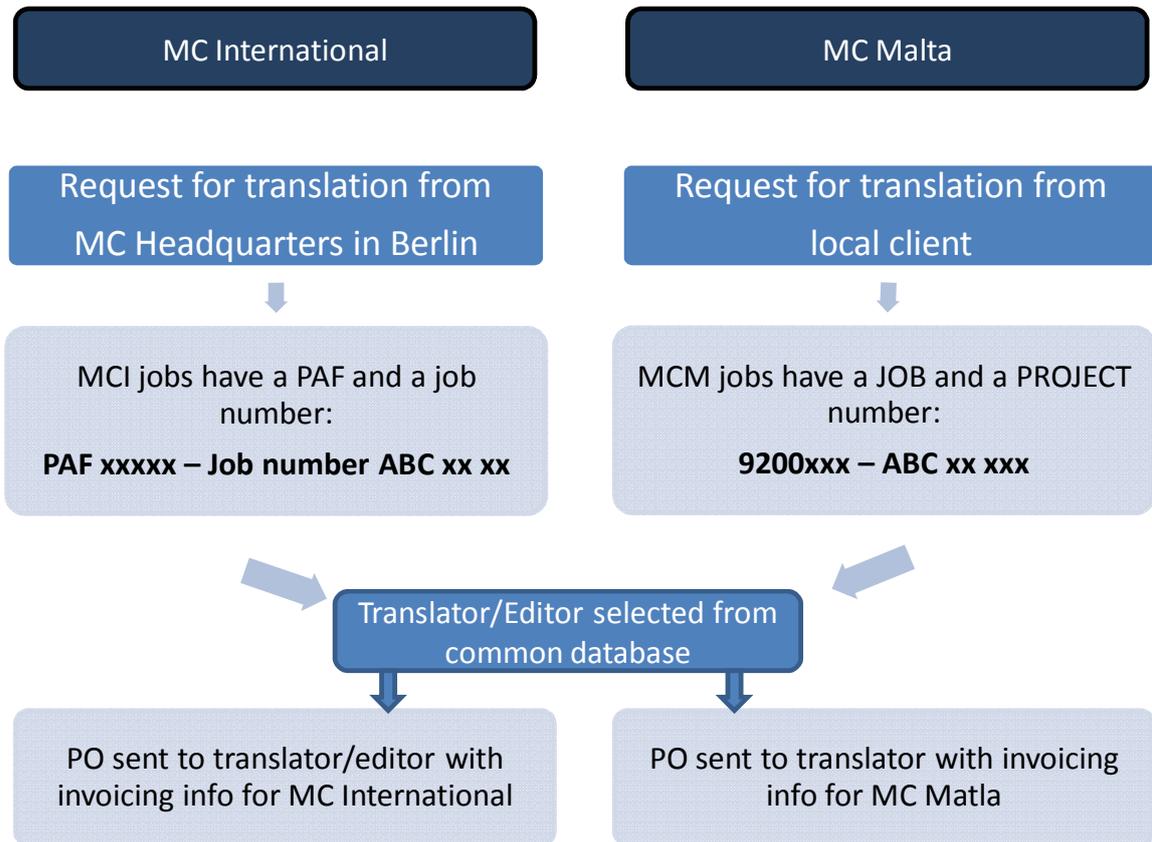We naturally welcome your comments and feedback.

1.2. About us

MEDIA CONSULTA (MC) is a leading independent international PR and advertising agency in Europe. With 56 branches we are present in all 27 EU member states, the EU candidate countries and the global key business centres, with the parent company based in Germany.

MC Malta forms part of the MC network and is a subsidiary of the MC International Holding in Berlin.

Our key areas of expertise are Advertising, Media Planning, Integrated Communications, Public Relations, Corporate Publishing, Entertainment Marketing, Event Marketing, pan-European Multimedia Solutions.

MC Malta is also the agency's European Competence Centre for Translations, serving both the MC Network and local clients.

The distinction between the MC Network and local clients is very important to us and plays an important role throughout our work processes:

MC International	MC Malta
Request for translation from MC Headquarters in Berlin	Request for translation from local client
MCI jobs have a PAF and a job number: **PAF xxxxx – Job number ABC xx xx**	MCM jobs have a JOB and a PROJECT number: **9200xxx – ABC xx xxx**

Translator/Editor selected from common database

PO sent to translator/editor with invoicing info for MC International	PO sent to translator with invoicing info for MC Matla

2. PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

The purpose of this section is to give our suppliers an overview of the life cycle of a project and of the specific requirements at each stage.

2.1. Enquiry for availability

A project manager of MC Translate will contact you by email (in urgent cases by Skype or telephone) to enquire about your availability for a current or upcoming translation project. You will be given the following information:

- source and target language
- number of source words
- type of translation
- deadline
- source text or sample of source text upon request

Please note that by enquiring about your availability, we will not be entering into any commitment, therefore you are kindly requested not to start translating/proofreading at this stage. You are kindly requested to reply to this email even if you are not available to undertake the task.

2.2. Confirmation

Should you be willing and available to take on the assignment, kindly notify the project manager and await feedback. In urgent cases, the project manager will probably have simultaneously enquired about the availability of a number of translators/proofreaders. You would therefore need to wait for the project manager's go-ahead before commencing work on the job.

2.3. Work order and go-ahead

If a translation/proofreading job is assigned to you, you will be sent the official work order via email. This means that you can commence the translation/proofreading. A typical confirmation notice would include the following information:

- source file/s
- instructions
- number of words

- source language
- target language
- deadline
- job reference number
- price
- invoicing information
- checklist (see section 2.4.)
- reference material (see section 2.5.)
- Q&A form (see section 2.6.)

Proofreaders would also receive:

- the relevant translation/s
- a Proofreader's Rating Sheet (see section 4.2.)

Upon receipt, please check all details and send an email to the project manager, confirming receipt of files, price and deadline.

2.4.   Checklist

As part of many translation projects, you will receive our "Checklist", which is a form that has been filled in by the client with important information on the target audience, the purpose of the text, special requirements regarding terminology and reference material such as websites or related text. The intention of this document is to improve your understanding of the context and purpose of the text and thus improve the quality of the translation.

2.5.   Reference material

If available, reference material will be provided as an attachment to the confirmation email. General background information on ongoing campaigns, as well as approved translations can be downloaded from our FTP server: http://translators.mctranslate.eu/Reference/

2.6.   Q&A

Along with the work order, you will receive a blank Q&A form (Question & Answer form), which will be used for processing your questions or comments, and the project manager's/client's replies, in a standardised and traceable way.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the source text, terminology or translation, please do not insert comments in the translated document or in an email but kindly use the Q&A form.

The Q&A form can also be downloaded from our FTP server:
http://translators.mctranslate.eu/Reference/Queries/QAForm.zip

How to fill in the Q&A form:

Q&A FORM

REF/PAF   ABC 123

Date: 08/08/2008

File Name	Language	Source Sentence	Translator's Comment	Client's Reply/Comment
AC.csv	DE	In progres...	Please explain what this string refers to, i. e. what is in progress? Please also note that there is a typo in the source ("progres" instead of "progress").	Thanks for spotting typo. It should be "progress." The full message reads "In progress... Your action is being performed." This is a general message which, in particular, refers to the registry scan.

REF/PAF: Insert the project reference number

Date: Insert the date of your query

File name: Insert the full file name of the source text including file extension

Language: Insert your target language

Source Sentence: Insert the term, phrase or paragraph of the source text in question

Translator's Comment: Insert your query, using precise descriptions of what you would like the client or the project manager to do. For example: please explain, please clarify, please confirm, please specify etc.

Client's Reply/Comment: the client or project manager will insert the replies to your queries in this column.

Please communicate your queries to the project manager as early as possible.

2.7. Deadline, file naming and delivery

Deadline

Please ensure that you always deliver within the agreed deadline. Should you not be able to do so, kindly notify the project manager <u>as soon as possible</u>. If possible, we will try to extend the deadline. Alternatively the translation/proofreading can be assigned to another supplier in order to meet the agreed deadline with the end client.

Renaming the file/s

If you receive only **one file** for translation/proofreading, **please rename** your target file as follows:

MCI projects: PAF number + Language.doc/xls/etc. ⇒ e.g. **PAF 12345 Romanian.doc**
MCM projects: REF number + Language.doc/xls/etc. ⇒ e.g. **9200123 English.doc**

If you have been asked to translate **a number of different files**, you must **retain the name** of the source file in order to be able to identify the respective files. However, please **add the target language** to the file name.
⇒ E.g. source file "banana.doc" becomes "**banana Lithuanian.doc**"

Last check before delivery

Before you deliver to the project manager, please check your work with regards to the following:

1.	**Spelling** – perform the automatic spell check in Word	
2.	**Completeness of the text** – has the entire source text been translated? (Check paragraphs, embedded charts, tables, footnotes, headings and footers etc.)	
3.	**Second reading and revision** – check grammar, punctuation, double spaces, quotation marks (please refer to our Guideline for the use of quotation marks), non-breaking spaces, etc.	
4.	**Use of verified and <u>consistent</u> terminology**	
5.	**Accuracy and format of figures** – are the numbers in the translation the same as those in the original? Please refer to our Format Guidelines	
6.	**Layout** – have numbering, fonts, styles, tables and other embedded objects been preserved?	
7.	**File name** – did you rename the files according to the instructions?	

2.8. The Role of the Project Manager (PM)

We are here to answer your questions, communicate with the client, forward your queries, and troubleshoot any technical difficulties you might encounter (such as with file formats).

Do feel free to contact us about linguistic issues – we might know just the right person to provide advice. We are also happy to provide clarifications on project-specific instructions, or to provide additional background material if required.

Do keep in touch - we believe in team work!

3. TRANSLATION

3.1. Source text

Should you meet with any problems regarding the source text, including poor text quality, please notify the project manager as soon as possible.

If you have difficulties understanding the source text or if you have encountered terms that you are unfamiliar (even after having undertaken thorough research), resist the temptation to guess and proceed with your query through the Q&A Form.

3.2. General style

Media Consulta is a PR and advertising agency and a large part of the text you will be working with as a translator will be of a promotional nature or press material. Many of our campaigns are aimed at informing or raising awareness and are directed at the broadest target audience possible.

Translators are therefore expected to use persuasive, catchy and easy to read language. Writing should be direct, informative, clear and concise, without being excessively formal.

- Do use idiomatic language at all times! Our aim is to produce text that does not sound "translated" but reads as if it was written in the target language.
- Do not translate literally and do not hesitate to merge, separate or shorten sentences if you feel that it would improve readability.

- Try to avoid technical terms unless the documents are specifically targeted to specialists in the field. Always opt for the language and vocabulary of your target audience.
- Do not simply adopt the structure and phrasing of the source text – this could lead to complicated and very awkward structures in the target language.
- If your language allows for a formal and an informal address to the audience (e. g. French "Tu"/"Vous" or German "Du"/"Sie"), please confirm with us which form to use unless it is made clear from the given reference material.

The appropriate linguistic form must also be chosen with regard to the target audience (e. g. the mass market as opposed to stakeholders) and the intended use of the text (brochure, press release, website content etc.). Writing for the web would, for example, imply breaking up long sections of text into smaller units.

Information about target audience, text type and appropriate linguistic forms is usually provided by Media Consulta in our "Checklist" specifically for each project (see section 2.4).

4. PROOFREADING

4.1. Requirements

In this section we define our agency's specific requirements for proofreading assignments. Below we focus on three different types of proofreading. However, there is one rule for all: after proofreading, the text has to be fit for printing or online publication, and therefore must be free of linguistic or formal errors. Please do not send us back any text if you are not absolutely sure that it can be published.

4.2. Proofreading of translations

Translations are texts that have been translated by another person from a source language into a target language.

The proofreader is required to:

a) Correct punctuation, grammar, syntax and spelling errors
b) Make sure that everything has been translated
c) Make sure that the layout of the source document is maintained

d) Check each term that raises a doubt or is unknown in order to make absolutely sure that the correct terminology is used at all times

e) Make sure that the terminology used is consistent and coherent with the given reference material (websites, related text, previous translations etc.)

f) Check if the translator has adhered to all instructions. If not, inform project manager and/or correct the translation

g) Make sure that the style of the translation corresponds to the target audience and the purpose of the text

h) Make sure that the language used is idiomatic at all times and that the text does not read as "translated"

If you find that a text has been translated so poorly that it cannot be fixed by a simple proofreading, please inform the project manager <u>immediately</u>. The translation can then be re-viewed, sent back to the original translator to be redone, or sent to another translator after getting a third opinion.

4.3. Proofreading of non-translated text

Non-translated text is text that has been written in the target language and that requires proofreading to make it fit for publication.

The proofreader is required to:

a) Correct punctuation, grammar, syntax and spelling errors

b) If necessary, improve readability of text

c) <u>Not edit</u> the content

If you find that a text has been written so poorly that it cannot be fixed by simple proofreading, please inform the project manager <u>immediately</u>.

4.4.   Proofreading of copy

Copy is written content for advertisements, slogans, catchphrases etc. which has been liberally translated from a source language into a target language while reflecting the original concept.

Depending on the client's request, the translators are usually required to provide several translation options for one slogan. For each version, they are also asked to provide a "back-translation" into English and a comment in English explaining how the phrase would work in the target language and for the intended target market. This will enable the client to understand what the slogans are communicating and to choose a preferred option.

The proofreader is required to:

a)   Pay attention to detail. Every comma or space counts (just imagine a slogan with a wrongly placed comma or a double space on a billboard)!

b)   Correct punctuation, grammar, syntax and spelling errors

c)   Check back-translations and comments for level of understanding and clarity and, if necessary, amend or make additions. The comments and back-translations will be sent to the end client, and should therefore be written appropriately. Colloquial or sloppy writing, wrong punctuation and spelling errors must be avoided.

d)   If you have your own ideas of how a slogan could be translated, make your additions!

4.5.   Proofreader's Rating Sheet

In order to improve the quality of our translations by getting a better picture of our supplier's skills, we have introduced a process that provides us with feedback on the translator's work. With every proofreading assignment, you will receive a Rating Sheet for your feedback on the quality of the translation.

4.6.   Filling in the Rating Sheet

Job Ref No: Fill in the reference number of the job.

Source/Target Language: Fill in the source and target language of the translation.

Ratings: Rate the translation in the denominated areas on a scale from 1 to 5 by clicking on one of the checkboxes.

Overall Rating: Rate the overall quality of the translation on a scale from 1 to 5 by clicking on one of the checkboxes.

Further comments: In this area you can insert further comments on the translator's work or advice for future improvement.

Since in some cases the rating sheet will be forwarded to the translator, please be kind but honest in your wording, always offering constructive criticism.

We do not judge our translators on the basis of one single feedback - this is a continuous evaluation process in which ratings of different proofreaders on different translation jobs will be taken into consideration. We are aware of the fact that there can be many disagreements between the translator and the proofreader, including personal preferences, style etc.

Our aim is to gradually create a general picture of our translators' abilities over time and by taking into consideration various feedback.

New translators will also find this measure of particular help, since it will indicate any areas for improvement.

5. USEFUL RESOURCES

As much of our work is EU related, we would like to name of few useful resources for translations. Below are a few important sources for information provided by the EU and its bodies.

IATE

Inter-Active Terminology for Europe (IATE) is the inter-institutional terminology database of the European Union, containing approximately 1.4 million entries and available in 23 EU languages.

http://iate.europa.eu/iatediff/SearchByQueryLoad.do?method=load

European Commission Directorate-General for Translation - English Style Guide
A handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style_guides/english/style_guide_en.pdf

EU Interinstitutional style guide

Originally published in 1997 in 11 Community languages and now being extended to 23 languages, it is intended to serve, in all the institutions, as a reference tool for written works.

http://publications.europa.eu/code/

EUR-lex

EUR-Lex provides direct free access to European Union law in all 23 languages.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm

6. CONTACT DETAILS

We hope that you will find the information in this guide helpful.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to a long-lasting business relationship, auguring that it will contribute to our mutual success.

Any comments or questions will be most welcome, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

MC Translate

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