Planning a new translation project

This guide gives you a checklist of aspects to consider when you plan your Cochrane translation project.

1. Decide what you want to translate

- The focus of our translation projects is to translate Cochrane Reviews. Cochrane Reviews are long documents, and our translation teams usually focus on translating plain language summaries (PLS) for the general public and/or the scientific abstracts. When you decide which section you want to translate you should consider who your primary audience is, and how much capacity you have for translating. For example, in some countries, health professionals usually have good English skills compared to the general public, so there is a greater need to translate PLS than abstracts. Please note that we do not typically translate Titles or Protocols, but only full Reviews.
- In addition, you should plan to translate the navigation and main content pages of cochrane.org, so that people are able to access and navigate published translations in your language.
- You can also translate podcasts and blogshots. Please email Judith for more information and guidance.

2. Priority setting

Due to the amount of published Cochrane Reviews, you will need to decide which to prioritise first and how you will select Reviews for translation on an ongoing basis. We strongly recommend that you focus on newly published and updated Reviews. The research in these Reviews will be more recent, and there is less risk of the Reviews being updated soon after you translated them. We do not translate withdrawn Reviews, and we also discourage the translation of old Reviews that have not been updated for a long time, or that investigate historical interventions that are no longer in use.

When you decide which topics to prioritise, you may want to consider:

- Are there specific areas of health that are of particular relevance to your country?
- Are there Reviews you could translate and disseminate to coincide with any local events or health awareness days?
- Do you have funding, research or project partnerships with organisations such as government institutions, medical or patient associations that could provide input?
- If you work with volunteers, do they have experience or interest in a certain topic? You may want to let them choose Reviews according to their interest and expertise.
- Which Reviews have other communication or translation teams prioritised? Join the #all-comms-help channel on Community Slack to receive updates with information about what topics have been selected centrally for promotion and press activities.
- Which Reviews have had a big impact or are accessed the most on our websites globally, or in your country? We can give you statistics for the most viewed pages if you are interested.

3. Plan your (human) resources

A translation project requires a large amount of time from people who manage the project, translate and edit.

- You will need at least one person who can dedicate time regularly, for example, 1 day a week, to manage the project. Tasks include: managing the workflow, managing and instructing translators and editors, keeping track of what is being translated and the stages of the translation process, publishing translations, and developing and updating a glossary, style guide and other supporting resources.
- You will need at least a small group of translators. Most translation projects rely heavily on volunteers, mostly with a background in health and related fields, or translation.
- You will need several editors. Editors should ideally be experienced Cochrane contributors or trained to be familiar with our content. Editors have two main responsibilities: Firstly, they need to check the accuracy of translations; this is easier if the editor has a health background. Part of this includes checking that the translator has used the glossary correctly, and ensuring the translator has translated the content correctly and fully. Secondly, editors should ensure that the language used in the translation is appropriate for the target audience. For PLS, it should be accessible to people who do not come from a health background. Over time, experienced and reliable volunteer translators could be promoted to editors.
- Try to identify potential sources of funding. It might be easier to get funding when you have already published some translations and can demonstrate that they are being used.

4. Plan your translation workflow

Your workflow should include at least **two** different steps, performed by two different people: Translation and Editing.

- At least one person working on each translation should have knowledge of or expertise in health, the specific topic of the Review and/or systematic review methodology. Ideally, another person would have experience in translation, writing, or content editing. For some languages, this may be just as crucial as involving a content expert.
- The person(s) in charge of managing the project should perform a final sign-off before a translation is published.
- There may be some overlap in tasks performed by managers and editors. For example, making sure all sentences have been translated and glossary adherence may fall under the responsibility of the manager at sign-off.

5. Ensuring quality and consistency

Cochrane Reviews are very specialised texts, and translation is a difficult task. Given the content of our Reviews and the potential impact on the health of humans, it is very important that the translations are accurate, high quality and clear. Don't compromise on quality – it is more important than quantity.

- Plan to develop a bilingual glossary so that technical terms are always translated consistently. When compiling your glossary, you can:
    - Get an idea of useful terms to include from other translation teams.
    - Build on existing resources in your language, for example, from related organisations in your country, or international organisations such as the WHO.
- Plan to develop a style guide with technical and linguistic instructions for your translators. For example, what should the translator do if the medical term does not exist in their language? How should they deal with abbreviations? How to make sure to produce accurate and understandable translations?
- If you do not have any experience with translation, and no one on your team does, you may want to consider involving someone who does, or a professional translator in your language, to give you an introductory training, and/or help you with developing a style guide and glossary.

6. Get set up and trained in using Phrase

We use Phrase, a web-based system, to manage and publish our translations. All teams and translators can get individual user accounts.

- Contact us, so we can help you set up your project and users according to your needs.
- Make a plan to introduce your translators and editors to Phrase, and consider whether you may need to offer training material or sessions in your language.

7. Set project objectives

Once you have decided how to approach your translation activities, it is time to set some short-term and longer-term goals: How many translations per week or per month do you think your team can achieve? What do you want to achieve in year 1?

- Give yourself 2-3 months to get set up and practice, to start developing a glossary and style guide, to translate cochrane.org, to familiarise yourself with Phrase, to train your translators etc.
- If you work with volunteers, take into account how much time they may be able to dedicate and that the frequency and amount of contributions are likely to vary.
- If you have funding to pay translators, calculate how much it pays for.
- Take into account the time you will need to spend on editing, and how many people can edit. The fewer people, the longer the process will take.
- Be realistic – avoid being over-ambitious when setting your goals.

8. Promote your translations and track response

Media, communication, social media accounts and collaboration activities will increase access to your translations. Think about how your translations will reach a wider audience, and measure your success so you can demonstrate the importance of your work and potentially make a case for funding.