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**A Process for Reviewing Translations of Data Collection
Instruments and Related Materials**

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A Process for Reviewing Translations of Data Collection Instruments and Related Materials

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I. Introduction

The Census Bureau Translation Guideline¹ specifies a review process for translation of data collection instruments and supporting materials. It recommends that a committee review approach² be adopted in the review process, and that the committee consist of subject-matter specialists, program managers, and survey methodologists with knowledge of questionnaire design and pretesting, as well as translators, translation reviewers, and translation adjudicators. The translation guideline also recommends pretesting of translations of data collection instruments and supporting materials in the target language.

The purpose of this document is to provide specific steps for the review process referenced in the Census Bureau Translation Guideline. This document outlines a step-by-step process for reviewing two categories of translated materials. The first category includes translations that have not undergone pretesting.³ The second category includes translations that have undergone pretesting following the Census Bureau's Pretesting Standard.⁴

II. Steps in the Translation Review Process

Initial Step: An independent Translation Review Committee is established. This committee will perform several important functions. First, it will review all feedback and cognitive research results (if appropriate). Second, it will perform an independent review of the translated and pretested documents (if pretesting is conducted) in order to validate the translation. And third, it will, as a team, make the final decision on whether comments and translations will be accepted, rejected, or modified.

This committee should consist of program managers or sponsors, subject-matter experts, survey methodologists (from the Statistical Research Division, SRD), and independent language experts. That is, individuals with knowledge of the target language(s) who are not associated with the conduct of neither the initial translation nor with the pretesting of the translated document (if pretesting is performed). These individuals typically have expertise in the conduct of surveys. The role of the independent language expert is to conduct an independent review of the translations produced by the current Census Bureau translation contractor and to review

¹ See Y. Pan and M. de la Puente *Census Bureau Guideline for Translation of Data Collection Instruments and Supporting Materials: Documentation on how the Guideline was developed*. Statistical Research Division Research Report Series (Survey Methodology #2005-06) <http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/rsm2005-06.pdf>.

² The committee approach is described in the Census Bureau Translation Guideline, as well as in the research literature J. [Harkness et al. (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Survey Methods*, NY: Wiley, 2003]

³ It is acknowledged that, due to budget or time constraints, it may not be feasible to pretest translations of all documents in all non-English languages.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). "Census Bureau Standard: Pretesting Questionnaires and Related Materials for Surveys and Censuses."

comments from all sources, including cognitive interview research results, if such testing takes place. The function of the independent language expert is to provide professional consultation for the Census Bureau Translation Review Committee to make informed decisions for resolving discrepancies between the translator, the reviewer, and the cognitive tester. In order to maintain full independence from the original translation and pretesting (if pretesting is performed), these language experts may be brought into the process through the Census Bureau's R&D Contract.

The Translation Review Committee will be co-chaired by an SRD researcher and the program manager and/or sponsor. The committee will review consolidated comments from all sources, as well as research results from cognitive interviews, if such interviews are conducted.

II (A): Steps in the Review Process for Translations that *Have Not Been* Pretested

Step #1: Translated materials are received from the Census Bureau's Translation Contractor or from Census Bureau translators.

Step #2: Program areas or the Field Division will send translated materials for review to Regional Offices (RO), and/or Advisory Committees (AC), and/or Census Information Centers (CIC). Written comments from ROs, ACs, CICs, and other appropriate parties will be sent to the program areas. Program areas will take the lead in consolidating all comments into one document for review by the Census Bureau Translation Review Committee.

Step #3: The Translation Review Committee reviews comments and makes the decision for translation revision.

Step #4: Results from the Translation Review Committee are sent to the Census Bureau translation contractor who performed the original translation so that the contractor can revise the translation.

Step #5: The Translation Review Committee documents decisions for change, including what recommendations are accepted and what changes are made in the final translation.

Step #6: Should there be any disagreements between the Translation Review Committee and the Census Bureau Translation Contractor, the committee will hold meetings with the translator to resolve any standing issues. The Translation Review Committee as a team will make the final decision on which comments and translations to accept, reject, or modify. If a consensus cannot be reached, the adjudicator will make definitive decisions about the final wording and final content of the translated materials. The adjudication function can be performed by a single individual, typically the project manager, or by more than one individual. To avoid a conflict of interest, the translator, the reviewer, or the language expert should not serve in the role of adjudicator.

[NOTE: If cognitive testing is to be conducted, then the process continues with Step #7, otherwise, the review process is concluded after Step #6.]

II (B): Steps in the Review Process for Translations that *Have Been* Pretested

[NOTE: After Steps #1 through #5 above are complete, the following additional steps are followed.]

Step #7: Pretesting is conducted by the Statistical Research Division in collaboration with a survey methodology firm (if SRD needs assistance) from the Census Bureau's R&D Contract.⁵ If the assistance of a contractor is needed, the contractor should be from a firm with expertise in survey methodology and with expertise and experience in pretesting non-English language survey materials.

Step #8: The Census Bureau Translation Review Committee reviews findings from cognitive testing and makes the final decision for translation revision.

Step #9: Results from the Translation Review Committee are sent to the Census Bureau translation contractor who performed the original translation to make the second round of revision.

Step #10: If there are any disagreements between the original translator and the recommendations for revisions coming out of cognitive testing and consensus cannot be achieved by the Translation Review Committee, the adjudicator will make definitive decisions about the final wording and final content of the translated materials. The adjudication function can be performed by a single individual, typically the project manager, or by more than one individual. To avoid a conflict of interest, the translator, the reviewer, or the language expert should not serve in the role of adjudicator.

⁵ This research contract is managed by SRD and is recompeted every five years.