



ISO 11669 – Translation Projects: Going Back to Basics

By Jane Crossley, ATC ISO Committee

ISO 11669: 2024 – Translation Projects – General Guidance

In November 2024, the EUATC and ISO teamed up once again to host their second webinar on ISO standards, including ISO 11669: 2024 – Translation Projects – General Guidance, summarised by project co-leaders Angelika Vaasa and Ingemar Strandvik.

ISO 11669 was published in 2024, its previous iteration having been published in 2012. The aim of the standard is to provide translation project managers with advice for setting up translation projects. Unlike ISO 17100:2015, a prescriptive standard against which language service companies are certified, ISO 11669 is a guidance standard and provides a framework for best practice.

Why was the standard introduced?

The industry is currently facing uncertainty due to the rapid advancement of technology, which is disrupting standard workflows, business models and impacting on client expectations. The aim of the standard is to cut through the hype and focus on the basics of project management, such as:

- Specifications
- Risk assessment
- Workflow and resources

Specifications

Quality and value for money in a translation project are often determined by whether the client requirements have been met or not. ISO 11669 underlines the importance of defining specifications for a translation project and highlights the need to make client requirements explicit, especially in a workflow with many stages and stakeholders. The more clearly the requirements of a project can be set out, the easier it is to know what needs to be done, what the client's expectations are and how these can be met. Specifications can also be an excellent resource for translators working on the project as it puts them in the picture about what the client's requirements are. When setting up a translation project, content, process and risks should be considered – for each of these parameters, there are guiding questions included in the standard which help to develop the specifications.



Risks, Production method and workflow

ISO 11669 delves into risk, especially important considering that large parts of the translation workflow can be automated and provides tips on things to consider when performing a risk assessment – these include risks associated with the project and what levels of error tolerance are permitted. In doing so, the project manager has the necessary information to select the most appropriate workflow for the project to mitigate risk. The standard also provides various checklists to help the project manager develop ways in which they can manage the project efficiently.

How does ISO 11669 link up with other standards?

Whilst ISO 17100:2015 is the overarching standard for quality assurance and emphasizes the need for specifications, it does not develop methods on how to put these together. Instead, that is up to the language service company to decide for themselves. ISO 11669 provides best practice guidelines and recommendations against which a language service company can compare their own processes and tweak them if necessary. These standards are created and developed by seasoned industry professionals—following their guidance can ensure the success of your translation projects!

Let's build a stronger, more standardised industry together!

Read more about ISO standards development for language services at

<https://atccertification.com/about-iso-standards/>