



THE WORLD BANK
TRANSLATION STYLE GUIDE

English EDITION

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1. CAPITALIZATION

Headings

All words in headings should be capitalized with the exception of prepositions, articles, and coordinating conjunctions, as indicated in the World Bank Translation Style Guide.

Professions

Generally speaking, professions should not be capitalized. (Example: “She is a brilliant engineer.”)

It is, however, more common and acceptable to say: “the President of the World Bank instead of “the president of the World Bank.”

Enumerations:

The format used in the following example is recommended:

“The meeting covering the following points:

- Governance and development challenges;
- The Government of Brazil’s progress with the education plan; and
- Environmental concerns and climate change.”

As demonstrated above, it is better to start each item listed with a capital letter simply because the points stand out more, to place a semicolon after each point, and to end with a period.

However, with vertical lists containing one item, the format appearing in the following example should be used:

“The explorers were in search of the following precious metals:

Gold

Silver

Diamonds”

Caveat: Bear in mind that the way punctuation lists are handled is sometimes a matter of editorial preference; in short, the writer must use his/her best judgment and sound knowledge of English.

Government

When referring to a specific government, the word should be capitalized. Otherwise lower case should be used. One would therefore say: “The Government of Angola,” but “it is true that governments should accord citizens the right to free speech.”

2. WORD ORDER WHEN PROVIDING AN UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF A FOREIGN INSTITUTION (I.E. WHERE NO STANDARD OR OFFICIAL TRANSLATION EXISTS)

The use of both the foreign institution’s name and the English equivalent should be reserved for national or little-known institutions. There are many ways of handling this situation in the translation process. The format below should be followed:

“Directorate General of Taxes [*Direction Générale d’Impôts DGI*]”

3. QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks should enclose all other punctuation marks. Example: John announced to the audience: “The state of world affairs is alarming!”

4. CURRENCIES AND COUNTRY NAMES

Follow the World Bank Translation Style Guide.

5. FONTS

Times New Roman 11 or 12 is acceptable. When submitting shared translations, please ensure that the font used is consistent throughout the assembled document before submitting it for revision. When Times New Roman 11 is used in the body of the text, footnotes should be in Times New Roman 9; when Times New Roman 12 is used, footnotes should be in Times New Roman 10.

Tip: When working with tables, reducing the font size is an easy way to ensure that all the information fits. This also improves the general appearance of the table.

6. ABBREVIATIONS: ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS (*Adapted from the IMF Style Guide*)

Unofficial abbreviations

If there is no official English abbreviation, use the source language abbreviation. Do not invent English abbreviations.

E.g.: Central Reserve Bank of Peru [*Banco Central de Reserva del Perú* BCRP]

First use of abbreviations

If the name appears throughout a document, write it out in full the first time with the acronym in parentheses immediately following, and use the abbreviation thereafter.

E.g.:

Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF)
Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)
Bank for International Settlements (BIS)

Definite article *the* before acronyms

Omit the definite article before acronyms (abbreviations pronounced as a word, e.g. UNICEF, MERCOSUR). An exception to this is “the GATT.”

Use the definite article before initialisms (abbreviations pronounced one letter at a time, e.g. the EU, the UN, the EBRD, the SDR).

Abbreviations used as adjectives

Avoid possessive forms where possible: OAS programs, not the OAS’s programs.

Plural abbreviations

Add a lowercase “s” without an apostrophe to abbreviations: SDRs, SMEs, NPISHs.

Add an apostrophe and an “s” to abbreviations with periods: M.A.’s and Ph.D.’s

7. BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND FOOTNOTES

- Do not translate the titles of works listed in bibliographies unless you can find an official English translation.
- In footnotes or annexes, dates and indications such as *see*, *compare*, and *for example* should, of course, be translated into English.
- Sentence punctuation should precede footnote reference numbers inserted in the text. Example: *The government cited a 1994 report on farming.*⁴
- Do not convert footnotes into endnotes.
- Footnotes should be numbered exactly as they are in the source text.
- Do not include Translator’s Notes in the footnotes. Add a notation in the body of the text, enclosed in square brackets: [Tr. Note: xxxx]