



THE WORLD BANK  
TRANSLATION STYLE GUIDE  
SPANISH EDITION



© 2004 The International Bank for Reconstruction  
and Development / The World Bank  
Translation Services  
1818 H Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20433

Version 1.0, printed June 2004

Printed in the United States of America

Readers are welcome to reproduce portions of this work. Please credit  
The World Bank, Translation Services. Suggestions for additions or  
improvements to this guide are welcome ([translation-vm@worldbank.org](mailto:translation-vm@worldbank.org)).

# World Bank Translation Style Guide

Version 1.0

ENGLISH  
FRENCH  
ARABIC  
▶ SPANISH  
RUSSIAN

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Preface.....                                | 1  |
| General Guidelines.....                     | 3  |
| Introduction.....                           | 3  |
| Sample/Standard World Bank Text.....        | 4  |
| Capitalization.....                         | 9  |
| General Guidelines .....                    | 9  |
| Geographic Names .....                      | 9  |
| Institutional Names .....                   | 10 |
| Project Names.....                          | 11 |
| Punctuation, Headings, Titles .....         | 13 |
| Punctuation.....                            | 13 |
| Headings, Titles.....                       | 15 |
| Acronyms, Abbreviations, Compounds .....    | 17 |
| Acronyms and Abbreviations .....            | 17 |
| Compound Words .....                        | 18 |
| Numbers, Measurements .....                 | 21 |
| General Guidelines .....                    | 21 |
| Dates .....                                 | 21 |
| Time .....                                  | 22 |
| Ranges of Numbers, Dates, Pages .....       | 22 |
| Ordinal Numbers .....                       | 22 |
| Commas, Decimals .....                      | 23 |
| Units of Measurement .....                  | 23 |
| Currency.....                               | 24 |
| Names .....                                 | 25 |
| Official Names of the World Bank Group..... | 25 |
| World Regions, Country Names.....           | 25 |
| Other Official Names.....                   | 27 |



## Preface

As a preface to this Translation Style Guide, it is useful and appropriate to highlight the following quote from *The World Bank Publications Style Guide*, a comprehensive editorial manual on which the present guide draws much of its overall structure and English content:

For an international institution like the Bank, the best style is one that is simple, logical, and clear. The author should assume that not all readers will be native speakers of English and that many of them will be outside the Bank. Any translations are more likely to be accurate if the original text is well written.

As far back as May 1952, a similar message was conveyed in another style guide of sorts: a 20-page transcript of a talk given to staff by a former World Bank Vice-President, Sir William Iliff, under the title “Gobbledygook” – defined by the speaker as “an unpleasing, polysyllabic, often meaningless jumble; a written language that sets itself up to pass for English.”

In his talk, Sir Iliff emphasized a dozen ways to counter gobbledygook at the World Bank. In a postscript later added to the transcript in response to feedback from one of his listeners, he expounded on the same intricate link between clear English and accurate translation. This is what he wrote:

Mr. Antony Balazy has pointed this out to me: my talk complained that Gobbledygook was often unintelligible to the English-speaking reader; but I did not mention that almost impossible task that faces a translator who is asked to translate Gobbledygook into French or German or Spanish.

“Plain English,” he says, “makes the job of the translator easy.”

This is worth remembering, because much of our Bank literature, composed in English, has to be translated into other languages.

Yet, for all its importance and integral place in the communication process, translation at the World Bank has never followed a comprehensive set of guidelines similar to those defined for editorial content. The present Translation Style Guide is meant to fill this gap.

Because it is geared not just to World Bank translators (both staff and contractors) but also to anyone who handles translation in one way or another (language assistants, reviewers, requesters, project or task managers, etc.), this guide is more than a linguistic guidebook. It actually consists of a series of language-specific manuals that share a common structure and use English for their core content of guidelines and explanations, providing additional rules, if necessary, as well as concrete examples in the respective languages.

Through this bilingual concept, the translation business unit of the World Bank, which developed the Translation Style Guide in collaboration with various partners and stakeholders, hopes to reach a wide-ranging, diversified audience, with one major objective in mind: to enhance consistency in the way this institution communicates in English and in other languages.



## General Guidelines

### Introduction

#### **Style Issues in Spanish Translation**

A translation is not just a *transcription* from one language into another. It needs to render not only the meaning of words and sentences but also the context and, more subtly, what is sometimes described in stylistic manuals as the *register* of the source text—its level and style of language.

If the original text is simple and concrete, the translator can generally “stay close” to it. With speeches or official correspondence, however, style is more of the essence, so the translation, while striving to convey the correct meaning, must not be so close to the original as to read in an unnatural, awkward way. Indeed, a good translation reads as if the text had originally been written in the target language.

#### **Translation of World Bank Documents: Some Pointers**

Bearing in mind that the various Spanish-speaking countries have their own linguistic customs and preferences, the aim in translating World Bank documents is to use “neutral” Spanish in terms of style, syntax and vocabulary (also avoiding anglicisms)—in short, a language acceptable to the widest possible Spanish-speaking audience.

Since English has a strong influence in native Spanish speakers, one should constantly be aware of this fact and avoid any resulting interference in the translation (from syntax to grammatical structures, to idiomatic expressions, to false cognates, to terminology, to the use of acronyms, and so on).

Most documents translated by the World Bank are technical in nature and thus require careful and thorough research. In addition to conceptual and factual accuracy, correct use of grammar and specialized terminology, consistency, and attention to detail and nuance are considered to be the hallmarks of a sound translation.

In general, World Bank documents cover a fairly wide variety of such topics as finance, health, education, and poverty reduction. For translators who wish to familiarize themselves with typical Bank documents, a good starting point would be the Bank’s English website ([www.worldbank.org/](http://www.worldbank.org/)).

On that site, they will find at a glance information about the World Bank, how it is organized and what it does, as well as links to Bank documents and reports or news and events. In particular, documents pertaining to the Annual and Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (in English and Spanish) will serve as a good source of reference for issues that are high on the Bank’s agenda.

#### **Note: Document Formatting**

As a general rule, and unless instructed otherwise, translators of World Bank documents are expected to respect and replicate the format of the source text. One simple way to do so is to overwrite the

contents of the original file (making sure to rename it in order to identify the newly saved file as the translated version).

In addition to ensuring a consistent appearance between the original document and the translation, overwriting of the source text also helps to minimize such common translation errors as the accidental omission of parts of text (for example, a sentence in the middle of a paragraph). This is not to say that translators are not free to alter the flow of sentences within a paragraph if and as warranted by stylistic considerations – for instance, by combining two sentences into one (a common practice when translating from English especially). But even in such cases, the overall content and sequence of full paragraphs must be respected, again for the sake of consistency between original and translated documents.

## **Sample/Standard World Bank Text**

### **World Bank Mission Statement**

This is the text of the World Bank Mission Statement in Spanish:

#### **La misión del Banco Mundial**

#### **Nuestro sueño es un mundo sin pobreza**

#### **Nuestra misión**

Combatir la pobreza con entusiasmo y profesionalismo para obtener resultados duraderos.

Ayudar a la gente a ayudarse a sí misma y al medio ambiente que la rodea, suministrando recursos, entregando conocimientos, creando capacidad y forjando asociaciones en los sectores público y privado.

Ser una institución excelente, capaz de atraer, entusiasmar y cultivar a un personal dedicado, con aptitudes excepcionales, que sepa escuchar y aprender.

#### **Nuestros principios**

Ser una institución centrada en los clientes, que trabaja en asociación, responsable de obtener resultados de calidad, dedicada a la integridad financiera y a la eficacia en función de los costos, inspirada e innovadora.

#### **Nuestros valores**

Honestidad personal, integridad, consagración al trabajo en equipo; con espíritu abierto y confianza dar participación a otros y respetar las diferencias, fomentar la asunción de riesgos y la responsabilidad, disfrutar de nuestro trabajo y de nuestras familias.

### **Bank Publications**

These are samples of standard clauses on copyright pages of many publications of the World Bank Group such as the *Overview of the World Development Report* (in Spanish, *Informe sobre el desarrollo mundial. Panorama general*):

Este documento es la versión resumida del *Informe sobre el desarrollo mundial, 2004*, publicado por Mundi-Prensa Libros, S.A., para el Banco Mundial. El Informe es un estudio realizado por el personal del Banco Mundial, y las opiniones, interpretaciones y conclusiones expresadas en él no son necesariamente reflejo de la opinión del Directorio Ejecutivo de la institución ni de los países representados por éste.

El Banco Mundial no garantiza la exactitud de los datos que figuran en esta publicación ni acepta responsabilidad alguna por las consecuencias que su uso pudiera tener.

#### **Derechos y autorizaciones**



El material contenido en esta publicación está registrado como propiedad intelectual. Su reproducción o transmisión total o parcial sin la debida autorización puede constituir una violación de la ley vigente. El Banco Mundial alienta la difusión de sus publicaciones y, normalmente, autorizará su reproducción sin demora.

Las fronteras, los colores, denominaciones y demás información incluidos en cualesquiera de los mapas que figuran en este volumen no suponen juicio alguno por parte del Banco Mundial acerca de la situación jurídica de ningún territorio, ni el respaldo o la aceptación de esas fronteras.


Las opiniones, interpretaciones y conclusiones expresadas en la presente publicación son las de los autores y no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de los miembros del Directorio Ejecutivo del Banco Mundial ni de los países representados por éste. El Banco Mundial no garantiza la exactitud de los datos que figuran en esta publicación.

El Informe es un estudio realizado por el personal del Banco Mundial, y las opiniones, interpretaciones y conclusiones expresadas en él no son necesariamente reflejo de la opinión del Directorio Ejecutivo de la institución ni de los países representados por éste. El Banco Mundial no garantiza la exactitud de los datos que figuran en esta publicación ni acepta responsabilidad alguna por las consecuencias que su uso pudiera tener.

**Bank Press Releases**

This is an example of the formatting and header content of a standard press release with embargo in Spanish:

**EMBARGO: No deberá transmitirse en boletines informativos, publicarse en la World Wide Web ni darse a conocer por ningún otro medio hasta las 10.00 h, hora de verano de la costa este de los EE.UU. del 19 DE ABRIL DE 2004.**



## Banco Mundial

---

Comunicado de prensa No.  
2004/284/LAC

**Enlaces:**  
 Christopher Neal (202) 473-7229  
[Cneal1@worldbank.org](mailto:Cneal1@worldbank.org)  
 Alejandra Viveros (202) 473-4306  
[Aviveros@worldbank.org](mailto:Aviveros@worldbank.org)  
 TV/Radio: Cynthia Case (202) 473-2243  
[Ccase@worldbank.org](mailto:Ccase@worldbank.org)

**VUELVE EL CRECIMIENTO A AMÉRICA LATINA  
Y EL CARIBE**

*La región crecerá un 3,8% en 2004, gracias al aumento de las exportaciones  
y la recuperación de Brasil y México*

**Ciudad de Washington, 19 de abril de 2004. [...]**

**Letters, Correspondence**

In Spanish correspondence, there are certain formulas of courtesy, depending on the person or entity to whom the letter is addressed:

When the letter is addressed to a head of state or minister of a member country, the title of the addressee and the greeting should read as follows (the names used in these examples are fictitious):

■ **Excelentísimo Señor**  
**Juan Pérez**  
**Ministro de Economía**

■ **Excelentísimo Señor**  
**Juan Pérez**  
**Presidente de Panamá**

**Estimado Señor Ministro:**

...

**Estimado Señor Presidente:**

...

The greeting “Dear Governor” in a letter addressed to multiple Governors of the World Bank should read:

■ **Señor Gobernador/Señora Gobernadora:**

When the letter is addressed to member countries of the World Bank, the greeting “Dear Member” should read:

■ **De mi consideración:**

In all cases, the closing should read:

■ **Le saluda atentamente,**

Following is an excerpt from a standard official letter in Spanish to a Governor of the World Bank, showing the letterhead, address block, formal greeting and signature (the names of individuals in this example are fictitious):

**The World Bank**

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

1818 H Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20433  
U.S.A.

(202) 477-1234  
Cable Address: INTBAFRAD  
Cable Address: INDEVAS

25 de abril de 2004

Excelentísimo Señor  
Juan Pérez  
Ministro de Hacienda y Crédito Público  
Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público  
Managua  
NICARAGUA

Estimado Señor Ministro:

...

Le saluda atentamente,  
John Smith  
Director a cargo de las operaciones en Nicaragua  
Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe

**Note:** The abbreviation for “Excelentísimo Señor” (Excmo. Sr.) can be used in the body of the letter.

**Bank Documents**

In the context of the Disclosure Policy, World Bank documents translated into Spanish carry the following disclaimer notice:

El presente documento es una traducción al español del documento original en inglés, titulado [\[TITLE\]](#), de fecha [\[DATE\]](#). La traducción se ofrece como servicio a las partes interesadas. En caso de discrepancia entre el texto del documento original en inglés y esta traducción, prevalecerá el original en inglés.



## Capitalization

### General Guidelines

Spanish rules of capitalization differ from those applicable in English. Most of the capitalization and other spelling rules contained in this style guide follow the norms defined by the publication of the Real Academia Española (RAE) entitled, *Ortografía de la lengua española. Edición revisada por las Academias de la Lengua Española* (1999). Also, grammar and spelling rules, including for capitalization, can be found on the RAE website ([www.rae.es/](http://www.rae.es/)) under “Diccionario de dudas.”

### Geographic Names

#### Countries, Other Political Divisions

For an official World Bank list of country names in English, click on [this link](#). For official country names in other languages, the best source is the United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database – UNTERM ([unterm.un.org/](http://unterm.un.org/)), which contains 70,000 entries (country names and other terminological data) in the six official languages of the UN System.

As a general rule, lowercase common nouns unless they are part of the proper name. Nouns referring to country nationals and related adjectives should be lowercased. For example:

- Estado de México (México) – *but* estado de Chiapas (México), estado de Uttar Pradesh (India)
- Ciudad de Guatemala – *but* ciudad de San Salvador, ciudad de Moscú
- Las autoridades panameñas, los argentinos, el gobierno ecuatoriano

**Note:** The word **Estado** is capitalized whenever reference is made to a country’s government authority. For example:

- Estados miembros del Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento
- Estado federal
- jefe de Estado, golpe de Estado, materia de Estado

#### Regions, Geographic Features

Capitalize all geographical proper names that refer to a *definite* region and parts of the world or regions of a continent denoting political or geographical divisions. Some geographical names require the use of an article which should be lowercased (e.g., *los Alpes*) unless it is part of the name (e.g., *El Salvador*). Lowercase nouns and adjectives derived from those terms, and adjectives modifying names of regions. For example:

- los Balcanes, la región de los Balcanes, las economías de los Balcanes – *but* los países balcánicos
- la Amazonia – *but* la cuenca amazónica
- desierto del Sahara – *but* desierto sahariano

Capitalize points of the compass when included in the official name of a region, or when designating a region; lowercase them in other cases. Also lowercase all adjectival forms designating those points. For example:

- el Polo Norte – *but* el norte de Argentina

- **América del Sur, Cono Sur** – *but* **el sur del continente**
- **Lejano Oriente** – *but* **Europa oriental**

Lowercase terms that designate areas but are not geographic in nature. Finally, in geographic names made up of common names (such as *ciudad, río, océano*) in apposition with proper nouns, always lowercase the common name unless it is part of the whole name. For example:

- **zona del franco CFA**
- **océano Atlántico, río Amazonas, la cordillera de los Andes** – *but* **Sierra Nevada**

## **Institutional Names**

### **Government Departments, Agencies**

In official documents, capitalize names relating to a specific, *unique* government or governmental department or agency in full form. Lowercase similar names when used as *generic* terms. For example:

- **el Gobierno del Reino Unido** – *but* **el gobierno electo francés, el actual gobierno de Honduras, los gobiernos latinoamericanos, los gobiernos de los Estados miembros**
- **Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, Ministerio de Educación** – *but* **las oficinas ministeriales, dicho ministerio**

### **World Bank Position Titles, Organizational Units, Meetings**

Here are some examples of capitalization specific to the World Bank:

- **el Presidente del Banco Mundial** – *but* **James D. Wolfensohn, presidente del Banco Mundial, el presidente Wolfensohn**
- **la Junta de Gobernadores, el Consejo de Gobernadores, la Junta de Directores, los Directores Ejecutivos, el Directorio Ejecutivo**
- **la sede del Banco Mundial, las oficinas regionales** – *but* **Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe**
- **Director Gerente, Vicepresidente** – *but* **Shengman Zheng, director gerente del Banco Mundial**
- **Departamento de Infraestructura de la CFI** – *but* **el departamento a cargo de las operaciones crediticias**
- **la región de Asia oriental** – *but* **la Oficina Regional de Asia Oriental y el Pacífico**
- **las Reuniones Anuales, la segunda Asamblea del FMAM**

### **Titles of Publications, Documents**

Capitalize important words in titles of Bank publications and official documents, as well as loan or credit agreements. For example:

- **El Convenio Constitutivo del Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento, el Convenio**
- **El Reglamento de la Asociación Internacional de Fomento**
- **Informe Anual 2003 del Banco Mundial**
- **Convenio de Préstamo entre la República de Guatemala y el Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento** – *but* **la negociación de un convenio de préstamo**

Capitalize only first word and proper names of titles of general types of documents, such as project completion reports (this rule applies also to all subheads in both publications and all types of documents). For example:

- Informe de terminación del segundo proyecto del Fondo Social de Emergencia – *but* informe de terminación de un proyecto
- Las condiciones para la inversión y el Grupo del Banco Mundial
- Función del Grupo del Banco Mundial en la reducción de la pobreza

## Project Names

Capitalize only the first word and proper names within the project and loan names when they are part of lists or tables, but do not capitalize the first word when it is mentioned in the middle of the text. Do not use italics or boldface for names of projects in text. Here is a short sample list of typical project names (for a complete, multilingual listing of World Bank Fiscal Year 03 projects, follow [this link](#)):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ■ Emergency Economic Rehabilitation Loan                                  | ■ Préstamo para rehabilitación económica de emergencia  |
| ■ Global Development Network Learning and Innovation Loan                 | ■ Préstamo para el aprendizaje y la innovación en el marco de la Red Mundial para el Desarrollo                               |
| ■ Legal and Judicial Reform Investment Credit                             | ■ Crédito para inversión en apoyo de la reforma jurídica y judicial   |
| ■ Local Government Unit Urban Water and Sanitation Adaptable Program Loan | ■ Préstamo adaptable para programas destinado al abastecimiento de agua y saneamiento urbanos para unidades de gobierno local |
| ■ Poverty Reduction Support Credit  | ■ Crédito de apoyo a la lucha contra la pobreza   |
| ■ Programmatic Structural Adjustment Credit (IDA Reflow)                  | ■ Crédito programático para ajuste estructural. Reembolsos de créditos de la AIF  |
| ■ Second Economic Rehabilitation and Recovery Credit                      | ■ Segundo crédito para la rehabilitación y la recuperación económicas   |
| ■ Second Programmatic Financial Sector Adjustment Loan                    | ■ Segundo préstamo programático para fines de ajuste del sector financiero  |
| ■ Structural Adjustment Loan  | ■ Préstamo para ajuste estructural  |

🔗 See also [Acronyms](#), [Names](#)





## Punctuation, Headings, Titles

### Punctuation

Punctuation rules in Spanish differ from those in English. The publication *Ortografía de la lengua española. Edición revisada por las Academias de la Lengua Española* (1999) and the Real Academia Española (RAE) website ([www.rae.es/](http://www.rae.es/)) provide detailed information in this regard. This section gives some examples of punctuation issues commonly raised in Spanish translations of World Bank documents.

#### Comma, Semicolon

In Spanish, a comma is used to separate the different elements of a given sentence. However, if the elements themselves have their own punctuation, a semicolon should be used. If the enumeration is complete, a conjunction (*e, o, u, y, ni*) – not a comma – should precede the last element. For example:

- **Aguas Argentinas colaboró con el gobierno local, una comunidad de ingreso bajo y una ONG para crear una nueva forma de organización.**
- **Las alianzas experimentales propuestas por el FMAM permitirían a los países en desarrollo abordar, a nivel de los programas, el cofinanciamiento desde un comienzo; ampliar las prácticas de ordenación de la tierra tradicionales y viables, así como las prácticas innovadoras y eficaces en función de los costos; consolidar condiciones propicias a la ordenación sostenible de la tierra, y facilitar la repetición de los proyectos y programas en otros lugares.**

A semicolon is used to separate the elements in a list or a series of subparagraphs. When the last element is preceded by a conjunction, a comma or a semicolon can be used; however, a comma is preferred in World Bank documents or publications in Spanish. See this example:

- **Desde el punto de vista de las tribus, los principales problemas han sido:**
  - **Falta de control local y programas federales que son inflexibles y fragmentados;**
  - **Falta de pertinencia cultural y, muchas veces, verdadera ruptura cultural y social, y**
  - **Una mentalidad “perdedora” que impregna gran parte de las actividades de la reserva y produce corrupción, alcoholismo, abuso doméstico, abuso infantil, etcétera.**

#### Dash, Hyphen

As in English, hyphens (*guiones*) are used in Spanish for ranges of figures, dates or page numbers, and years (*including* fiscal years).

“Em” dashes (*rayas*) are used to enclose clarifications or to indicate a sudden break in thought or to add emphasis (in this case, commas and parentheses can also be adequately used instead). Unlike in English, however, the opening dash should always be preceded by a space and the closing dash followed also by a space. Also, an “em” dash should never be left alone at the end of a line. For example:

- **En términos generales, la estrategia de asistencia del Banco en 1990-02 fue acorde con las necesidades.**

- La relación del Banco Mundial con las Naciones Unidas – una asociación de importancia fundamental – se afianzó el año pasado.

### Slash

In Spanish, a slash (*barra*) is an auxiliary sign that has a prepositional value in different expressions such as *60 km/h (60 kilómetros por hora)*. It is also used to separate elements in dates (in this case, periods or hyphens can also be used instead), numeric expressions, etc. In these cases, there are no spaces before or after the slash. For example:

- 85 meses/hombre (85 m/h), 90 kilómetros/hora (90 k/h)
- 25/10/2003 (25 de octubre de 2003), 3/2/2004 (3 de febrero de 2004)
- 3/4 (tres cuartos)

### Quotation Marks, Parenthesis, Brackets

Closing quotation marks, parentheses, brackets or dashes always precede commas, periods, colons and semicolons, even when text between the signs are independent sentences. For example:

- Los resultados del estudio se evalúan en el “Informe anual sobre el desempeño de la cartera”.
- (Véase el Recuadro 5.1).
- “El crecimiento de la región ha sido lento, debido en parte al desigual desempeño de los distintos países”, ha declarado...
- Se puso en marcha un programa intensivo de recolección de semillas – realizado con la colaboración de los beduinos locales –, cuyo objetivo es...

Unlike in English, only closing parentheses are used next to letters or numbers setting off items in a list or in subparagraphs. For example:

- Esta información comprende: i) el nombre del auditor; ii) los nombres, calificaciones y experiencia de los funcionarios superiores y administradores; iii) el número aproximado de profesionales empleados...
- Se dan algunos ejemplos de los elementos que se abarcarán:
  - a) Terrenos, edificios, maquinaria y equipo;
  - b) Inventarios;
  - c) Inversiones, y
  - d) Cobertura de seguros.

Articles of journals, magazines or newspapers as well as chapters or sections of publications should be set between quotation marks. Also, documents that have not been printed should be quoted between quotation marks. For example:

- El capítulo “Operaciones” del Informe Anual 2002 de la CFI
- Un informe titulado “Modalidades de financiamiento para alcanzar los objetivos de desarrollo del milenio”

### Italics

As in English, italics is used in Spanish for emphasis, for book titles and names of periodicals, and to identify foreign words that have *not* become common in Spanish or have *not yet* been accepted by the RAE, including Latin expressions. For example:

- Para responderles, debemos ocuparnos de las fuerzas fundamentales que configuran nuestro mundo. En muchos aspectos, son fuerzas que han provocado un *desequilibrio*

- el informe titulado *La voz de los pobres. ¿Hay alguien que nos escuche?*, el diario chileno *El Mercurio*, la revista *Washingtonian*
- ... desde los poblados de la India hasta las *favelas* de Rio de Janeiro...
- Se realizaron evaluaciones *ex post* de programas de fortalecimiento de la capacidad, de dos años de duración, en Corea del Sur, Filipinas y Tailandia.

**Note:** Names of foreign companies should not be italicized. For example:

- La inversión de la CFI en Alexandria Automotive Casting (AAC) demuestra el potencial de Egipto como proveedor.

## Accents

In keeping with the spelling rules of the Real Academia de la Lengua, the norm established for Spanish translations at the World Bank mandate the use of accents (*tilde*) on all capital letters, including initial capitals and single-letter abbreviations (e.g., *Miguel Á[ngel]. Gómez*), for the reasons emphasized in the excerpt from those rules reproduced below.

Tomado del sitio web de la RAE ([www.rae.es/](http://www.rae.es/)):

“El empleo de la mayúscula no exige de poner tilde cuando así lo exijan las reglas de acentuación. Deben, por tanto, escribirse con el acento gráfico que les corresponde, independientemente de que se escriban enteramente en mayúsculas o solo con mayúscula inicial, palabras como ÁFRICA o África, MÉXICO o México. Únicamente las siglas, que se escriben enteramente en mayúsculas, no llevan nunca tilde”.

Single-syllable words never carry an accent, except in cases involving diacritical accents (used to distinguish words written the same way but carrying different meanings). For example:

- **de (preposición); dé (del verbo dar)**
- **si (conjunción); sí (adverbio de afirmación)**

## Footnotes

In Spanish, the footnote reference (*llamada de nota a pie de página*) must be placed immediately after the last word to which it refers and before all punctuation marks. For example:

- **Y esta permanencia favorecía la observancia espontánea de las normas, aun cuando no hubiera reglas escritas<sup>1</sup>.**
- **En algunos países en desarrollo, el costo de registro es muy elevado en relación con el PIB per cápita (Gráfico 4a)<sup>2</sup>.**

🔗 See also [Numbers](#)

## Headings, Titles

### General Guidelines

As a general rule, the style of headings and titles (i.e., format, placement, etc.) in the translation should mirror that of the source text, but language-specific capitalization rules should be followed. (See also specific rules below regarding line breaks.)

### **Consistency in Structure and Tone**

Following good editorial practice, the contents of same-level heads (i.e., chapter titles, section heads, etc.) should be consistent in structure and tone. For example, if the head of one section reads *Establecimiento de un clima favorable a las inversiones*, following section heads will say, e.g., *Mejoramiento de los servicios públicos y la gestión de gobierno* (instead of *Mejorar los...*) and *Protección del medio ambiente* (instead of *Proteger el...*). The same rule applies to lists.

### **Line Breaks in Titles, Subheads**

As a general rule, words in titles and subheads should not be hyphenated, and closely related words (e.g., an adjective and the noun it modifies, or a preposition and its object) or one-syllable words such as prepositions, conjunctions and articles should not be separated by a break. Notice the breaks in the following subheads:

- **Expansión de los esfuerzos por mejorar  
la salud de la población del mundo**
- **Selectividad del Banco, compromiso  
y capacidad de los prestatarios**

In titles and subheads centered on multiple lines, it is good practice to use the inverted pyramid style (with each successive line shorter than the one above), *as long as* a logical grouping of words is maintained. For example:

- This break is awkward:

**El sistema de  
fondos de pensiones privados en El Salvador**

- This title reads better:

**El sistema de fondos de pensiones privados  
en El Salvador**

↪ See also [Capitalization](#)

## Acronyms, Abbreviations, Compounds

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

As in English, a distinction is made in Spanish between *siglas* (abbreviations), groups of letters that are pronounced individually, and *acrónimos* (acronyms), groups of letters that form a pronounceable word or a word formed with elements of two or more words. In Spanish, for instance, **BIRF** and **UNICEF** are acronyms, whereas **FMI** and **OEA** are not. In most cases, articles are required in front of abbreviations and acronyms. For example:

- **El UNITAR en consulta con el FMAM, la FAO, y la ONUDI**

### General Guidelines

Use of abbreviations and acronyms is not as common in Spanish as it is in English. Avoid overusing them in Spanish texts. If available, try to use the Spanish abbreviation or acronym instead of the English one.

As a general rule, abbreviations of country names (e.g., **EE.UU.**) or other common ones (such as *pág.*, *etc.*, *p.ej.*) should never be used in text (their use in tables or bibliographies is acceptable). For other types of abbreviations, the same rules as in English apply generally in text: the name or term should be spelled out on its first occurrence, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses, and the abbreviation can be used in later occurrences. For example:

- **Un incremento del producto nacional bruto (PNB) per cápita**

**Notes:** In long documents in which an uncommon abbreviation does not recur for many pages, it may be helpful to redefine it on subsequent use. In publications divided in chapters (the *World Bank Annual Report* and the *World Development Report* are good examples), abbreviations should be defined at the first mention in each chapter.

In *lists* of acronyms and abbreviations, all important words in proper names should be capitalized; for terms that are not proper names, capitalize the first word of all listed entries. For example:

- **OPEP**      **Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo**
- **PIB**        **Producto interno bruto**

Unlike in English, acronyms and abbreviations are never pluralized in Spanish. The article (*un*, *una*, *la*, *las*, *los*, etc.) will differentiate between singular and plural. For example:

- **Una ONG, las ONG** – *not las ONGs*
- **Un PPME, los PPME** – *not los PPMEs*
- **Las PYME** – *not las PYMEs*

**Common Acronyms and Abbreviations**

Here is a *basic* list of common World Bank acronyms and abbreviations in Spanish:

|       |  |      |   |
|-------|--|------|---|
| AIF   | Asociación Internacional de Fomento                                    | IAED | Informe anual sobre la eficacia en términos de desarrollo |
| AOD   | Asistencia oficial para el desarrollo                                  | IFE  | Informe final de ejecución                                |
| BIRF  | Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento                        | IFI  | Institución financiera internacional                      |
| BMD   | Banco multilateral de desarrollo                                       | MID  | Marco Integral de Desarrollo                              |
| CALP  | Crédito de apoyo a la lucha contra la pobreza                          | OD   | Directriz operacional                                     |
| CFI   | Corporación Financiera Internacional                                   | ODM  | Objetivo de desarrollo del milenio                        |
| CIADI | Centro Internacional de Arreglo de Diferencias Relativas a Inversiones | OMGI | Organismo Multilateral de Garantía de Inversiones         |
| DELP  | Documento de estrategia de lucha contra la pobreza                     | ONG  | Organización no gubernamental                             |
| DEO   | Departamento de Evaluación de Operaciones                              | OP   | Política operacional                                      |
| EAP   | Estrategia de asistencia a los países                                  | PIC  | Centro de Información Pública                             |
| FMAM  | Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial                                   | PPME | País pobre muy endeudado                                  |
| IADC  | Informe anual sobre el desempeño de la cartera                         | PIBD | Países de ingreso bajo en dificultades                    |

**Standard Abbreviations**

When months are abbreviated (i.e., in tables and similar forms of display but, as a general rule, *not* in text), the following rules of style apply in Spanish:

- ene. feb. mar. abr. mayo\* jun. jul. ago. sept. oct. nov. dic.

*\*no abbreviation*

**Specialized Acronyms and Abbreviations**

**World Bank Operational Manual (Manual de Operaciones del Banco Mundial)** – Some standard abbreviations related to the Operational Manual are widely used in World Bank documents and publications. Here is the list in Spanish, with corresponding definitions:

- **OP (políticas operacionales)** son declaraciones breves y específicas derivadas del Convenio Constitutivo del Banco, las condiciones generales y las políticas aprobadas por el Directorio Ejecutivo. En ellas se establecen los parámetros para la realización de las operaciones, se describen las circunstancias en las cuales se admiten excepciones a las normas y se aclara quienes pueden autorizar tales excepciones.
- **BP (normas de procedimiento)** del Banco explican la manera en que el personal aplica las OP; para ello se describen los procedimientos y la documentación necesarios para garantizar la coherencia y la calidad a nivel de toda la institución.
- **GP (prácticas recomendadas)** contienen recomendaciones y orientación sobre la aplicación de las políticas, por ejemplo, los antecedentes del asunto, el contexto sectorial, el marco analítico y ejemplos de prácticas óptimas.

**Compound Words**

**Common Prefixes**

As in English, Spanish compound words (*palabras compuestas*) formed with prefixes or composite elements (e.g., *anti-*, *bio-*, *co-*, *extra-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *socio-*, *sub-*) are spelled closed, with no hyphen. For example:

- **anticonstitucional, antiinflacionario**

- **bioenergía**
- **copresidente**
- **extrapresupuestario**
- **postprimario, postescolar, postsecundario**
- **preinversión, preescolar**
- **socioeconómico**
- **subestimación**

Compound words in which the second element begins with “r” should be written with the diagraph “rr.” For example:

- **antirretrovírico**
- **contrarréplica**

Spanish compound words are considered single words, so the rules pertaining to accents should be followed. See these examples:

- **asimismo (así *plus* mismo)**
- **baloncesto (balón *plus* cesto)**
- **decimoséptimo (décimo *plus* séptimo)**

When compound words are separated by a hyphen, each element maintains the corresponding accent (phonetic and/or written). For example:

- **franco-alemán, ítalo-alemán, méxico-americano**
- **crítico-bibliográfico, social-democrático**





## Numbers, Measurements

### General Guidelines

In World Bank texts in Spanish, numbers **zero** and **one** to **nine** should be written as words; numbers above **nine** should be written as numerals. This style rule also applies when both categories of numbers occur in the same sentence. For example:

- **Otros cuatro centros se afiliaron a la Red mundial de educación sobre el desarrollo**
- **Han comenzado las actividades para establecer otros 10 centros en ocho países de la región**
- **Los escolares de entre cinco y 14 años de edad**

Single-digit numbers should be used as numerals in the case of percentages, amounts of money or currency, or large amounts (this also applies to tables and graphs):

- **5%**
- **US\$10 millones**
- **2.000 millones** (*not dos mil millones, nor 2.000.000.000*)

**Note:** When a number is the first element of a sentence, it should be spelled out. However, it is sometimes advisable (and possible) to edit the sentence so the number does not fall at the beginning. For example:

- **Ciento treinta y tres países miembros colaboraron en...**
- **Cuarenta y dos proyectos ordinarios aprobados por el FMAM...**
- (Instead of) **Veintitrés personas contestaron el cuestionario**  
(Write) **En total, 23 personas contestaron el cuestionario**

### Dates

There are different ways to mention dates in Spanish texts: only words, a combination of numbers and words, and only numbers. The preferred model for *text* in World Bank documents in Spanish is the combination of numbers and words in an ascending order: i.e., day, month, year (e.g., *15 de mayo de 2004*).

In *tables or graphs*, dates can be abbreviated, also in an ascending order, in two different ways: *25 mar. 04* or *25/3/04* (slashes are the preferred separator for dates in World Bank documents). Regardless of the style selected, care should be taken to be consistent throughout the text.

When using numerals, a zero preceding a single-digit day or month should be avoided (correct: *4/9/98*; incorrect: *04/09/98*). Years should never include a period (correct: *2002*; incorrect: *2.002*).

Starting in year 2000, the use of an article before the year became common (for example, *25 de agosto del 2000*; *marzo del 2004*). This, while not incorrect, should be avoided. However, if the word *año* is used along with the number of the year, an article should be used (e.g., *20 de noviembre del año 2003*).

In Spanish, the styles for *decades* (*décadas* or *decenios*) are, e.g., *la década de 1990*, *el decenio de 1980-89*, *los años ochenta* (with words, not numbers), but not *los ochentas*, *los 80s*, *década de los 80s*. For the *first day of the month*, number one is used: e.g., *1 de marzo de 2004* (*not 1.º de marzo de 2004*). Unlike in English, centuries are displayed in Spanish as capitalized Roman numerals. For example: *siglo XVIII*, *siglo XXI* (with the word *siglo* always lowercased.)

The preferred style for *fiscal years* is, e.g., *el ejercicio de 2003* (never *el ejercicio 2003*). In abbreviated form (acceptable in tables), the preferred style is, e.g., *Ej. de 2003* (rather than *Ej. 03*). In case of space constraints, *Ej. de 03* could be used, exceptionally.

**Note:** The World Bank Group's fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30, and is identified by the calendar year in which it ends – e.g., fiscal 2004 ends June 30, 2004.

## Time

In Spanish, time can be expressed with words or numbers, depending on the context. In World Bank documents, though, numbers are preferred and the following criteria apply. The 24-hour model (military time) is preferred in text and schedules (**0.00 horas a 24.00 horas**); *hora(s)* is spelled out in text, but abbreviated as *h* (lowercase, no period) in schedules, tables, or embargos; and a period (*not* a colon) should be used to separate hours from minutes. For example:

- (In text) **La sesión comenzará a las 15.30 horas.**
- (In embargo) **No se publique ni transmita hasta las 18.00 h, hora del este...**
- (In schedule) **Inscripción: 14 de abril, de 3.30 a 9.30 h**

## Ranges of Numbers, Dates, Pages

In Spanish as in English, *ranges of numbers* should be expressed with a hyphen or with an appropriate word, but not with a mix of both – i.e., if words like *de ... a* or *entre* are used, a hyphen should never follow. Here are some examples of this and other rules of style for number, date and page ranges:

- **Las inversiones de la CFI pasaron de US\$28 millones a US\$90 millones – but not pasaron de US\$28 millones-US\$90 millones**
- **La región africana no experimentó crecimiento entre 1965 y 1999 – but not entre 1965-99.**
- **De la página 25 a la 35 (in text), páginas 30-45, or págs. 30-45 (in references and bibliographies).**

Regarding amounts above millions or percentages, the word *millones* and the sign % should be used in all cases (see above and following examples):

- **Las tasas de matrícula escolar aumentaron del 75% al 90% – not del 75 al 90%**
- **Los ingresos aumentaron de \$45 millones a \$50 millones – not de \$45 a \$50 millones**

## Ordinal Numbers

As a general rule, in Spanish as in English, ordinal numbers in text should be spelled out. For example:

- **la decimocuarta reposición de los recursos de la AIF**
- **el cuarto trimestre de 2002**
- **el segundo plan quinquenal**

**Note:** When abbreviated, i.e., in titles of conferences or in tables, Spanish ordinal numerals are displayed this way: **1.<sup>o</sup>, 2.<sup>o</sup>, 3.<sup>o</sup>** or **3.<sup>er</sup>**, etc.

## Commas, Decimals

In Spanish, a period is used in numbers to separate groups of three digits, and a comma for decimals (with a zero in front of the decimal point for all numbers less than 1). For example:

- 1.500; 24.675; 7.263.876
- 0,25; 27,75

## Units of Measurement

### General Guidelines

It is recommended practice to *translate* units of measurement contained in the source text, but not to *convert* them (unless specifically required by the text or the translation requester), as doing so raises the risk of conversion errors and may needlessly confuse the reader. To validate this practice further, if need be, one should note that original World Bank reports dealing with countries that use the metric system do specify so as a standard cover-page item and go on to use metric units such as kilometers or metric tons in the English text. (If there is any risk of ambiguity in the translation, a parenthetical statement clarifying the unit of measurement can be added.)

### Units of Measurement in Text

In Spanish *text*, all units of measurement – with the exception of percentages, for which the percent sign (%) is always used – should be spelled out: e.g., *kilómetros*, *kilovatio-hora*, *hectáreas*, *toneladas*, etc. However, measurement symbols are used in tables or graphs, and one should note that these symbols never include a period (e.g., *km*, *kv/h*, *ha*). As in English, it is best practice to repeat the unit for all measurements when ambiguity might result. For example:

- entre 5% y 10%; de 5% en 1986 a 15% en 1989
- US\$10 millones-US\$20 millones

### Percent, Percentage Point

In Spanish as in English, the difference between *percent* (in Spanish, *por ciento* or %) and *percentage point* (*punto porcentual*) is often misunderstood, resulting in serious errors of translation. One simple way to make the distinction is to remember that a difference between two *percentages* is expressed in *percentage points*. For example:

- De una tasa anual de 4% en 1980, la inflación aumentó 1,7 puntos porcentuales, hasta alcanzar el 5,7% en 1990.

### Billion, Trillion

The word *billion* (*billón*) has different meanings in American and British English: in American usage, a **billion is equal to 1,000 million** (in British usage, it is equal to a million million). In Spanish, “billion” should always be translated as **1.000 millones**, as the word *billón* means a million million (same as in British usage). Following from that, *trillion* as used in World Bank text means a million million; accordingly, *one trillion* will be translated in Spanish as *un billón*.

## Currency

In World Bank documents in Spanish, the preferred style is to use the symbols of currencies. In publications such as the *Annual Report*, there is usually a note specifying the currency used throughout the text, which generally is the United States dollar (US\$). In those instances, the letters identifying the country are deleted and only the symbol is used (\$). For example:

- (In *Annual Report*) **Los activos aumentaron \$4.380 millones**
- (In press release) **El alivio de la deuda que otorgará la AIF será de US\$382,6 millones**

**Note:** If abbreviations are used, they precede the amount and are separated from it by a space—e.g., *FCEA 1,2 millones*, *SwF 5 millones*. When the abbreviation is followed by a symbol, there is no space between the symbol and the amount: *US\$1.500 millones*, *Can\$15 millones*.

↪ See also [Acronyms](#), [Punctuation](#)

## Names

### Official Names of the World Bank Group

#### *Institutions*

The World Bank Group consists of five institutions:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ■ the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)       | ■ Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento (BIRF)                         |
| ■ the International Development Association (IDA)                        | ■ Asociación Internacional de Fomento (AIF)                                      |
| ■ the International Finance Corporation (IFC)                            | ■ Corporación Financiera Internacional (CFI)                                     |
| ■ the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)                    | ■ Organismo Multilateral de Garantía de Inversiones (OMGI)                       |
| ■ the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) | ■ Centro Internacional de Arreglo de Diferencias Relativas a Inversiones (CIADI) |

**Note:** The term **World Bank Group** (**Grupo del Banco Mundial**) encompasses all five institutions. The term **World Bank** (**Banco Mundial**) refers specifically to two of the five: **IBRD** and **IDA**.

#### *Affiliates*

The World Bank hosts at its headquarters the secretariats of several closely affiliated organizations:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ■ the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) | ■ Grupo Consultivo sobre Investigaciones Agrícolas Internacionales (CGIAR) |
| ■ the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP)                   | ■ Grupo Consultivo de Ayuda a la Población más Pobre (CGAP)                |
| ■ the Development Gateway   | ■ Portal del Desarrollo  |
| ■ the Global Environment Facility (GEF)                                 | ■ Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (FMAM)                              |

➤ See also [Capitalization](#)

### World Regions, Country Names

#### *Official Regions*

Operationally the World Bank comprises six official (or administrative) regions (note that the Spanish names do not have abbreviations although in internal Bank documents the English ones can be used):

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ■ Africa (AFR) (Sub-Saharan Africa in IFC's organizational structure) | ■ África al sur del Sahara    |
| ■ East Asia and Pacific (EAP)   | ■ Asia oriental y el Pacífico |
| ■ Europe and Central Asia (ECA)                                       | ■ Europa y Asia central       |
| ■ Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)                               | ■ América Latina y el Caribe  |

- Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
- South Asia (SAR)
- Oriente Medio y Norte de África
- Asia meridional

### Other Geographic Areas

These are some standard regions (organized by continent). Note the capitalization difference in Spanish for the Americas, where the points of the compass are proper geographical names:

- Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa
- Central America, Latin America, North America, South America
- South Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, Western Asia
- Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe
- África central, África oriental, África meridional, África occidental
- América Central o Centroamérica, América del Norte o Norteamérica, América del Sur o Sudamérica, América Latina
- Asia centromeridional, Asia sudoriental, Asia sudoccidental, Asia occidental
- Europa central, Europa oriental, Europa septentrional, Europa sudoriental, Europa meridional, Europa occidental

### Country Classifications

The World Bank's main country classification is based on gross national income (GNI) per capita and yields the following categories:

- low-income economies (or low-income countries, LIC)
- middle-income economies (or middle-income countries, MIC), subdivided into lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income economies
- high-income economies
- economías de ingreso bajo (or países de ingreso bajo)
- economías de ingreso mediano (or países de ingreso mediano), subdivided into países de ingreso mediano bajo and países de ingreso mediano alto
- países de ingreso alto

Other standard expressions have been or are still used to differentiate countries and their level of development. These are the principal or more common ones:

- by indebtedness (part of the World Bank's standard classification): **severely indebted countries; moderately indebted countries; less indebted countries**
- also: **heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC); low-income countries under stress (LICUS)**
- **developing countries; high-income developing economies; least developed countries**
- **developed countries** (also referred to as **industrial countries** or as **industrially advanced countries**); **developed market economies**
- *by indebtedness (part of the World Bank's standard classification):* **países gravemente endeudados; países medianamente endeudados**
- *also:* **países pobres muy endeudados (PPME); países de ingreso bajo en dificultades**
- **países en desarrollo** (*note that países en vías de desarrollo is no longer used in Bank documents*); **economías de ingreso alto en desarrollo; países menos desarrollados; economías de mercado menos desarrolladas**
- **países desarrollados** (*also referred to as países industriales or industrializados*); **economías de mercado desarrolladas**

👉 See also [Acronyms](#)

## Official Country Names

For an official World Bank list of country names (in English), click on [this link](#). For official country names in other languages, go to UNTERM ([unterm.un.org/](http://unterm.un.org/)),

**Note:** References to Hong Kong and Taiwan in Spanish must conform to the following style: **Hong Kong (China)**; and **Taiwán (China)**.

## Other Official Names

### International Agreements

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, the World Bank operates to a certain extent in the context of international agreements and conventions, to which much of its documentation regularly makes reference. These are the official names that come up most often:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ■ Millennium Development Goals (MDG)   | ■ Objetivos de desarrollo del milenio (ODM)  |
| ■ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety  | ■ Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica (CDB), <i>and</i> Protocolo de Cartagena sobre Seguridad de la Biotecnología  |
| ■ (Stockholm) Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (CPOP)   | ■ Convenio (de Estocolmo) sobre Contaminantes Orgánicos Persistentes (CCOP)  |
| ■ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)   | ■ Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Derecho del Mar (UNCLOS)  |
| ■ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) (UNCCD) | ■ Convención de las Naciones Unidas de Lucha contra la Desertificación (en los Países Afectados por Sequía Grave o Desertificación, en particular en África) (CLD) |
| ■ Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC)  | ■ Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático (CMNUCC)   |
| ■ Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer                              | ■ Convenio de Viena para la Protección de la Capa de Ozono <i>and</i> Protocolo de Montreal relativo a las sustancias que agotan la capa de ozono                  |

↪ See also [Acronyms](#), [Capitalization](#)