ASF-OPS-007

Language and Translation Policy

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Approved by	Prof. Giorgi Pkhakadze, MD, MPH, PhD President, Accréditation Sans Frontières
Applies to	All ASF accreditation surveys, published standards and governance documents, and all communications between ASF and applicants or accredited organisations
Related documents	ASF-OPS-002 Surveyor Competency Policy · ASF-OPS-006 Eligibility and Scope Policy · ASF-GOV-004 Confidentiality Policy
Supersedes	ASF-OPS-007 V2.0 (2026-11-27)
Next review	December 2031, or earlier on trigger

Version History

Version	Date	Nature of change	Approved by
V0.1	2026-11-05	Initial draft	—
V1.0	2026-11-18	SDC and ADC review	SDC / ADC
V2.0	2026-11-27	Approved and published	Prof. G. Pkhakadze, ASF President
V3.0	2026-12-01	Expanded to full policy; standards translation framework, survey language requirements, interpreter qualifications and obligations, translated document controls, official language hierarchy, and references added	Prof. G. Pkhakadze, ASF President

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1. Purpose

1.1 ASF is an international accreditation organisation operating across multiple countries and language environments. This policy establishes the requirements for the languages in which ASF's standards and governance documents are published, the language in which surveys are conducted, and the conditions under which translations are used in the accreditation process.

1.2 The policy balances two competing considerations: the need for consistency and precision in how standards are interpreted and applied (which favours a single authoritative language), and the practical necessity of operating effectively in the languages of the healthcare facilities and regulators that ASF serves.

2. Official Languages of ASF

2.1 ASF's official languages are French and English. All ASF governance documents (GOV, OPS, QMS series) and accreditation standards are published authoritatively in English. French versions of key governance documents are published as translations and are designated as non-authoritative. Where there is a discrepancy between the English and French versions of any document, the English version prevails.

2.2 ASF may publish authoritative or working translations of its standards into other languages where there is sufficient operational demand and where quality assurance of the translation can be maintained. Currently published translations and their status (authoritative or working) are listed on france-asf.fr.

2.3 For the purposes of ISQua EEA assessment, all materials submitted by ASF to ISQua are in English. ASF is responsible for ensuring that any materials translated for submission accurately reflect the English-language source.

3. Standards Translation

3.1 Where ASF publishes a translation of its accreditation standards into a language other than English, the translation is:

- **(a)** produced by a qualified translator with demonstrable expertise in healthcare, healthcare quality, and accreditation terminology;
- **(b)** reviewed for accuracy and technical precision by at least one subject-matter expert with native or near-native proficiency in the target language and expertise in healthcare quality management;
- **(c)** version-controlled in the same manner as the English source — carrying the same document code, version number, and publication date, with a notation confirming the English source version on which the translation is based;
- **(d)** updated whenever a new major version of the English source is published; minor version updates are reflected in the translation within 6 months of the English publication date.

3.2 Published translations of ASF standards are designated as follows:

- **(a)** 'Authoritative translation' — the translation has been formally reviewed and approved by ASF and may be used as the basis for assessment in the relevant language jurisdiction;

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(b) 'Working translation' — the translation has been produced for practical use but has not undergone full formal review; facilities and surveyors are advised to refer to the English source for any questions of interpretation.

3.3 The translation status of each available language version is clearly marked on the translated document itself and on the france-asf.fr downloads page.

> *Currently available translations of ASF standards are listed on france-asf.fr. Organisations wishing to request a translation into a language not currently available may contact ASF. ASF will consider translation requests where there is sufficient demand and where a qualified translator with the required subject-matter expertise can be identified.*

4. Survey Language

4.1 The survey is conducted in a language in which the Lead Surveyor is proficient and in which the facility's key personnel — including the CEO, Medical Director, Quality Officer, and heads of clinical departments — are able to communicate effectively.

4.2 The preferred survey language is the working language of the facility. Where the Lead Surveyor is not proficient in the facility's working language, ASF arranges for a qualified interpreter to be present for the survey.

4.3 Interpreters used in ASF surveys must:

(a) be a qualified professional interpreter, or a person with demonstrable bilingual proficiency in both the survey language and the facility's working language;

(b) have no professional or personal relationship with the facility being assessed that could affect the impartiality of the interpretation;

(c) complete a Declaration of Impartiality (Annex A of ASF-GOV-003) and a Confidentiality Undertaking (consistent with ASF-GOV-004) before the survey commences;

(d) interpret accurately and completely, without summarising, omitting, or editorialising;

(e) not participate in deliberations or contribute to assessment findings.

4.4 The cost of the interpreter is borne by the applicant or accredited organisation, unless the need for interpretation arises from ASF's operational constraints (such as the unavailability of a surveyor proficient in the facility's language), in which case the cost is borne by ASF.

4.5 Where a document review requires the assessment of patient records, policies, or procedures written in a language not understood by the surveyor, the facility provides a responsible and competent person to translate the relevant document sections for the surveyor's review. Machine translation tools may be used for preliminary orientation but not as the sole basis for any criterion assessment. The surveyor records the translation arrangements in the survey report.

5. Survey Report and Decision Documentation

5.1 The survey report, the accreditation decision notification, and the accreditation certificate are issued in English. Where a facility has requested and ASF has agreed to issue decision documentation in a second language, the English version is the authoritative version; the translated version is provided for practical convenience only.

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5.2 The CAP submitted by the facility may be submitted in the facility's working language, provided the facility also supplies an English translation. ASF reviews both versions but the English translation is the version used for formal assessment. Where the facility's translation appears to differ materially from the original, ASF may request clarification.

6. ISQua EEA Alignment

6.1 This policy supports ISQua EEA Principle 3 (Transparency) insofar as it governs public availability of standards in accessible languages, and Principle 5 (Surveyors) insofar as it addresses surveyor language requirements. The ASF ISQua EEA Crosswalk (ASF-EV-004) maps the provisions of this policy to the applicable EEA criteria.

7. References

[1]	ISQua IAP. Principles for Standards. 6th Ed. ISQua EEA, Dublin, 2023.
[2]	ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 — Conformity Assessment. ISO, Geneva, 2015.
[3]	JCI Accreditation Standards for Hospitals. 7th Ed. JCI, Oak Brook, 2020.
[4]	Accreditation Canada. Qmentum Accreditation Program: Language Policy. Ottawa, 2022.
[5]	HQACI. Language and Translation Policy. ISQua EEA Accredited Document, 2026.
[6]	European Commission. Special Eurobarometer 386: Europeans and their Languages. European Union, Brussels, 2012.

Formal Approval

Name and title	Signature	Date
Prof. Giorgi Pkhakadze, MD, MPH, PhD President, Accréditation Sans Frontières		2026-12-01

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