

Innovation Lab: Quality Assurance Recommendations

A CONDENSED SUMMARY OF THE OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ETEN INNOVATION LAB, IN LIGHT OF ONGOING RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN BIBLE TRANSLATION.



Recommendation 1: Multimodal Translation Processes Beginning with Orality and Visuality

Effective and impactful Bible translations must be trustworthy and trusted. Importantly, trustworthy and trusted translations begin with a trustworthy translation process. A translation will not be trusted if the translation process is unknown or unclear to the church and community; it is not sufficient to produce a “quality” final product. To produce a trustworthy and trusted translation, the church and community must be involved in the translation process.

For this reason, the Lab recognizes that quality translation processes are an important part of quality translation *products*. **The Lab recommends multimodal processes that include team-based familiarization, internalization and articulation that is spoken or signed.**

The Lab has observed that multimodal translation processes produce better first drafts, use more authentic and natural language and allow earlier and easier access to God’s Word by the church and community. For these reasons, **the Lab recommends multimodal translation processes be the preferred methodology for the remaining Bible translation need.**

The Lab’s recommendation is for multimodal processes from the very beginning. The Lab’s experience has shown that beginning translation with ‘oral and visual processes’ allows the church and community to contribute through all stages of translation. ‘Oral and visual translation processes’ incorporate sound through audio Scripture and commentary; sight through pictures, video and text; and touch through performance, storyboarding and modeling.

Multimodal translation processes allow for deeper and more meaningful engagement in translation by the church and community and, thus, more thorough review and revision, as well as greater ownership and use. Even in highly literate communities, there are important advantages to a multi-modal translation process, including:

- » Multimodal processes lead to better first drafts.
- » Multimodal translation processes tend to use more authentic, natural language, which results in translations that are easier to understand and more appealing.
- » Multimodal translation processes allow communities earlier and easier access to God’s Word.

Importantly, this recommendation speaks only to the translation methodology, not the format of the resulting translation. *Churches in oral communities, for various reasons, frequently opt for both an oral and a textual format for their Bible translations.*

Recommendation 2: Empower the Church for Quality Translation

The global church is empowered for quality Bible translation by processes that are rooted in their experience and expertise. "As the church is called to participate with God in His mission of making Himself known, Bible translation is primarily a ministry of the church. It is, therefore, expected that the church will give leadership to the planning and implementing of Bible translation programs." (ETEN Innovation Lab Charter, 2020)

Empowering the church requires quality assurance processes that enable translation at a pace and scope that support church ministry goals.

The Lab recommends that the church is empowered for quality translation when...

- » The local church is at the center of decision-making, resourcing and quality assessment processes of Bible translation programs in locally relevant ways.
- » The church leads and is involved in every stage of translation, including authentication.
- » The local church knows the variety of expertise that is available through the global church and Bible translation agencies.
- » Tools and resources necessary for translation are freely and readily available.
- » Translated Scripture is in use early.

The global church is blessed to have trained and experienced experts to serve the local church in Bible translation. Examples of such experts include Translation Consultants, Translation Advisors, Linguistic Consultants, Ethnomusicologists and many others.

The church is best served when global church experts focus on growing the church's capacity for

expertise in translation and its ongoing review and revision. When global church experts are invited by the church, their best service is as advisors, trainers, encouragers and mentors throughout translation rather than primarily as end-stage translation checkers.

Recommendation 3: Iterative Quality Assurance by the Church and Community

Bible translation has always been an iterative process. Each successive revision improves upon the quality of the former. It is not uncommon for English translations to offer updates every 20 years. In fact, at least one major English translation has the goal of regularly updating to ensure that it speaks to each new generation.

Quality translation is only possible when the church and community have capacity to correct errors or adapt as the language changes. For this reason, **the Lab recommends that church and community based iterative quality assurance methodologies and progressive publication be implemented in all remaining Bible translation projects.**

This will require additional focus on growing the church's capacity for ongoing review, revision and affirmation of the trustworthiness of translated Scripture. As the church has grown and strengthened around the world, so has its ability to revise translations or undertake new work with less dependence on outsiders.

The illustration below describes one process for church and community based quality assurance. Notice that the final publication stage points back to ongoing evaluation and revision.



Recommendation 4: Meeting the All Access Goals in Church-Based Bible Translation

The [ETEN collective impact alliance](#), including each of its Bible translation and resource partners, are committed to seeing “all people gain access to God’s Word in a language they can clearly understand by 2033.” These “All Access Goals” (AAG) help to prioritize ETEN’s investments and energies on the least reached and least served.

ETEN measures progress toward the AAG on [ProgressBible](#). In the established models of Bible translation, a language’s All Access Goal is marked “Goal Met” when the appropriate portion of Scripture has been translated, checked and approved for publication.

However, in Church Based Bible translation, marking a “Goal Met” is more complex:

- » Quality assurance is iterative and publishing is progressive.
- » The translation process includes use of the translation.
- » The clear milestone in the established models of a translation being consultant-checked and ready for publication cannot be assumed in Church-Based Bible Translation.

In light of this, **the Lab recommends that when all of the following five factors are true for any Church-Based Bible translation project, its All Access Goal may be marked “Goal Met”.** (A more full discussion is available here: [What does “finished” look like in CBBT?](#))

1. The translation produced by the lingual church (the element of the global church that speaks a given language) is “text complete” or “audio complete” or “video complete.”
2. The church is implementing an iterative process that provides for ongoing improvement and revision of their Bible translation.
3. The church is connected with other churches and leaders in a network (or family of churches) that speaks at least one shared Strategic

Language and can help provide support and ongoing training, as needed.

4. The translation is in active use within the lingual church for discipleship and Kingdom impact, together with any other translations understandable by the community.
5. The church is equipped with Biblical and translational resources in languages they understand (as per [ETEN’s Strategic Languages Initiative](#)) and Bible translation technology that is effective for them and that results in Kingdom impact.

This article has been edited and trimmed to fit the printed version of the ETEN Insider. To read the full, original article [click here](#).

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