

MYLegalTrans: Certified Translation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1. Procedure

- 1.1 All documents not in English or Malay must be translated into **English** or **Malay**.
- 1.2 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) accepts the following translation stamps:
 - (i) Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia (**ITBM**);
 - (ii) Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka (**DBP**);
 - (iii) Malaysian Translators Association (**MTA**); or
 - (iv) Endorsement by the respective **Embassy/ High Commission** in Malaysia¹.
- 1.3 Some embassies/ High Commissions, e.g. the High Commission of India in Kuala Lumpur, only endorse translations stamped by a High Court Interpreter².
- 1.4 MYLegalTrans' team is certified by:
 - (i) ITBM;
 - (ii) MTA;
 - (iii) DBP;
 - (iv) Kuala Lumpur High Court; and
 - (v) Sarawak High Court.

MTA/ DBP stamp is recommended as it is the most affordable and efficient.

¹ Immigration Department of Malaysia. *ESD Online Guidebook, Version 4, 2023*, pp. 36, 60.
[https://esd.imi.gov.my/portal/pdf/ESD_Online_Guidebook_V4_2023\(2024-1\).pdf](https://esd.imi.gov.my/portal/pdf/ESD_Online_Guidebook_V4_2023(2024-1).pdf).

² High Commission of India in Kuala Lumpur. *OCI Checklist*. <https://hcikl.gov.in/Exlinks?id=155>.

2. FAQs

2.1 ***What does Certified Translation mean? How is it different from non-certified translation?***

In Malaysia, Certified Translation is provided by one of the following Malaysian statutory organisations:

(i) ITBM, formerly known as the Malaysian National Institute of Translation (ITNM), established based on the approval of a cabinet meeting in 1992 following a memorandum from the Minister of Education.³ As a limited company, its share capital is wholly owned by the Ministry of Finance and its administration is managed by the Ministry of Education.⁴

(ii) DBP, established based on the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Act 1959. Its administration is managed by the Ministry of Education.⁵

(iii) MTA, a voluntary professional body established under the auspices of DBP, and is the sole member of the Federation of International Translators (FIT),⁶ an international organisation which has consultative status with UNESCO.⁷

(iv) High Court Interpreters, governed by the Practising Certificates Unit and supervised by the High Court of Malaya.⁸

A translation is considered certified when it is registered with ITBM, DBP, MTA or the High Court. A certified translation is authoritative in a court of law, can be used by other government agencies, e.g. police (PDRM), immigration (JIM), drug control authority (NPRA), etc., and are accepted by most embassies or High Commissions in Malaysia.

³ OIC Today. (n.d.). *An interview with Sakri Bin Abdullah: Chief Executive Officer of ITBM.*
<https://www.oictoday.biz/interview-details.php?id=517/an-interview-with-sakri-bin-abdullah-sakri-bin-abdullah>.

⁴ Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia. (n.d.). *Organisational structure.*
<https://www.itbm.com.my/en/organisasi>.

⁵ Section 4, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Act 1959 (Revised in 1978).
<https://lamanweb.dbp.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Akta-213-Akta-Dewan-Bahasa-dan-Pustaka-Di-semak-1973.pdf>

⁶ International Federation of Translators. (n.d.). *Members directory: Malaysia.*
<https://en.fit-ift.org/members-directory/?country=MY>.

⁷ UNESCO Archives. (n.d.). *International Federation of Translators.*
<https://atom.archives.unesco.org/international-federation-of-translators>.

⁸ Kuala Lumpur Court Complex. (n.d.). *Practising certificates unit.*
<https://kl.kehakiman.gov.my/en/practicing-certificates-unit>

2.2 *Why does Certified Translation take so long even for documents with just a few words?*

For MoFA, before certification, the translation goes through the following processes:

(i) Text extraction

The translation process begins with text extraction and formatting by a DTP specialist, with inquiries about untranslatable or unclear text.

(ii) Translation

Translations are handled by native translators who are subject matter specialists with at least three years of experience.

(iii) First Review

The first review is conducted by nationally certified translators.

(iv) DTP & Formatting

DTP and formatting ensures the translated document mirrors the original.

(v) Final Review & Certificate of Translation

A final review is done by certified translators, with an ITBM/DBP/MTA stamp applied. The translation is then recorded by the stamping organisation.

2.3 *Can I submit a softcopy or photocopy of the Certified Translation to MoFA?*

No. MoFA only accepts Certified Translation with the **original** ITBM/DBP/MTA stamp.