

Opening Remarks by SMS at Official Launch of SG Translate Together Web Portal on 27 June 2022

Uplifting our translation standards with the community through technology

Members of the National Translation Committee and the Language Resource Panels,
Our partners,
Friends of SG Translate Together,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. A very good morning to all. Thank you for joining us for the launch of the SG Translate Together Web Portal, or SGTT in short.

Importance of translation

2. Translation bridges communication gaps between people from different language-speaking groups. This is especially important in our multi-racial and multi-lingual society, where it serves to strengthen mutual understanding and preserve the harmonious relationship between our communities.

3. Translation is a priority for the Government. The formation of the National Translation Committee in 2014, together with the Resource Panels for Chinese, Malay and Tamil underscores this commitment. I greatly appreciate the strong support from fellow members over the years. Several of them are here today. Thank you very much.

4. More recently, we saw the importance of translation during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a pressing need for information such as guidelines on safe management measures and advisories on vaccination to be quickly shared with everyone in Singapore, especially our seniors. We had to translate these guidelines and advisories into our Mother Tongues, accurately and in a way that Singaporeans could understand. This required an understanding of the local cultural context and nuances in the use of the language.

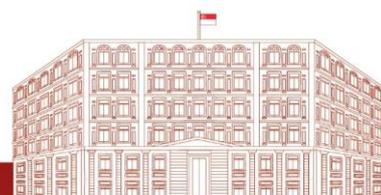
5. Technology played a vital role in this effort. The machine translation engine, SG Translate that was co-developed by MCI and A*STAR's Institute for Infocomm Research, produced the drafts which were then reviewed by our translators. This reduced the time taken to translate materials such as Gov.sg WhatsApp messages, enabling us to disseminate information in a timely manner.

6. SGTT, the web portal that we are launching today is powered by this SG Translate engine and we are opening this tool for the public's use.

Supporting Translation

7. SGTT which is developed in collaboration with GovTech, is a platform where everyone can get involved, whether you are a professional translator seeking to verify official translated terms, or an enthusiast keen to contribute your translations or just someone looking for assistance with translation.

8. Users can use SGTT to generate bi-directional translations in our four official languages, English, Tamil, Malay and Chinese. Tapping into the Government's repositories of translated terms, SGTT can produce localised translations that are contextualised for our Singapore audience.



9. It is designed to translate uniquely Singaporean terms such as “CDC Vouchers”, “Community Centres” and “Central Provident Fund or CPF” into Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. Users who just need the translated term can go directly to the “Resources” tab on SGTT to access the official glossaries.

10. However, other users may need further assistance with translation. This is where the SG Translate engine comes in handy. It will be able to intelligently generate translations according to the context.

11. For example, you may be trying to explain the new tranche of CDC vouchers to your grandparents or elderly neighbours. Under the “Translate” tab on SGTT, you can input your explanation such as “*You can use your CDC vouchers at hawker centres*” and generate a translated version in your preferred language.

12. With that, you have your explanation on CDC vouchers which your family members or neighbours can understand more easily. It is truly a tool made-in-Singapore for Singaporeans.

Supporting the community of Citizen Translators

13. Beyond enabling more accurate translations, SGTT aims to build a community of passionate individuals who are interested in language and translation. We believe that raising translation and language standards cannot be solely undertaken by the Government. It requires the community’s participation.

14. As part of this effort, we have called for volunteers to join us as “Citizen Translators” since last year. This initiative is a first-of-its-kind in Singapore which aims to harness the enthusiasm, experience and expertise of these Citizen Translators to crowdsource feedback on Government communication materials.

15. They also act as extra pairs of eyes and hands in the community to spot, surface and correct translation issues that sometimes occur in our daily lives such as in posters at lift lobbies, advertisements at bus stops and banners in our neighbourhoods.

16. Users who have registered to become Citizen Translators can hone their skills by taking up translation tasks put up by government agencies or submitting post-edited translations through the portal. These tasks can be accessed through the “Translation Tasks” tab on SGTT. For example, they helped provide useful inputs on the translations for the TraceTogether mobile app.

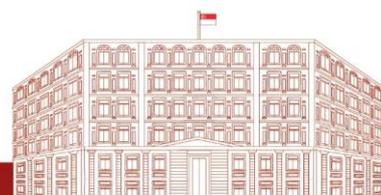
17. Citizen Translators who have tried out SGTT have shared with us that they enjoyed using this collaborative web portal. They were able to receive feedback from others on the translations they submitted and improve their translation skills as part of this process.

18. This is a virtuous cycle. The submissions from our Citizen Translators go into training the SG Translate engine to improve its accuracy. The more training the engine undergoes, the better the translation it produces for everyone.

19. I am grateful to our Citizen Translators for their contributions and look forward to continuing this partnership.

Friends of SGTT

20. I would also like to thank another group of individuals today. They are the pilot users who contributed their time and energy to help us test out the beta version of SGTT.



21. They include translation practitioners and enthusiasts. Many of them became our 'Friends of SGTT'. Having participated in the beta phase of the web portal, they had first-hand experience on how the use of technology encourages greater participation in this journey to raise translation standards.

22. One of them is Ms Low Meow Siang, who is here with us today. She told us that the SGTT web portal is well-organised and the translation-related resources available in the portal were useful for readers and translators. I would like to say a big Thank You to the other 'Friends of SGTT' for your contributions and support!

23. We are continuing to improve the web portal and its user experience. For example, we have enhanced the user interface for mobile phone users and introduced a function for users to give feedback specifically on the performance of the SG Translate engine. We welcome suggestions from the public on how we can further improve the SGTT web portal.

Citizen Translators contributing to the vibrancy of SGTT

24. Allow me to say a few words in Chinese and Malay.

作为一个多元文化和语言的国家，我们都知道翻译在促进各族群间的沟通扮演重要的角色。多年来，政府通过各种措施，致力于提升我国的整体翻译水平。然而，要做好这个工作，不能单靠政府。我们非常感谢许多国人，包括全国翻译委员会成员和共创新译之友，的强力支持。接下来，我们将继续借助科技，以加强我国的翻译水平。共创新译的推出，就是其中的一个例子。我们希望大家能够多多使用这个一站式翻译网站，在这里，你可以用新译达翻译机器，也可以完成网站上的翻译任务，和我们一起提高本地翻译水平。我相信，只要大家一起努力，我们一定能够为翻译创造一个更良好的生态系统。

25. Sama ada anda orang awam atau penterjemah professional, portal SGTT ini akan membawa manfaat kepada anda. Kami akan terus bekerjasama dengan anda semua untuk meningkatkan taraf penterjemahan di Singapura.

Conclusion

26. In conclusion, I encourage everyone to try out SGTT. Do share your feedback on SGTT and look out for our upcoming community forum.

27. Through working with the community, we believe we can enhance translation efforts and standards in Singapore together.

28. I hope you enjoy your time with us today and I look forward to meeting our 'Friends of SGTT'.

29. You can now turn your attention to the screen for a video demonstration on the functionalities of the SGTT web portal.

30. Thank you.

