



International Federation of Translators
Strategic Plan

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PROFESSION



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This Strategic Plan outlines how FIT will fulfil both its mission to be the global voice of its member associations and its vision of a united, sustainable, recognised profession to fulfil the expanding global need for translation.

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INTRODUCTION

The projects to achieve our mission are united under our three overarching strategic priorities, namely **VISIBILITY, COMMUNITY & PROGRESS**

FIT’s founding vision, as enshrined in Articles 4 and 5 of the bylaws, (see Appendix 1) outlines our role ‘to amplify the voice of translators in the international arena, enhance their status in society and uphold their material and moral interests’. This is the work we prioritise under **VISIBILITY**. Article 4 also entreaties us to strive to establish cooperation among organisations, exchange information and best practice, support emerging associations and promote harmonisation of professional standards, and these objectives are categorised under our priority of **COMMUNITY**; while stimulation and support of education, training and research, along with the issues of technology and the digital future, align under **PROGRESS**. Together these three areas of priority will help us move towards a sustainable profession.

What do we mean by sustainable? In our mind, a sustainable profession:

- i understands issues of best practice and professionalism and the need for evidence-based practice
- ii creates growth and development pathways for new and seasoned professionals alike
- iii responds adeptly to a changing future, addressing the influence of technology and evolving work patterns

Why do we need to focus on sustainability?

Concern about the future of the profession, and the changing role translators, interpreters and terminologists, will play in it, creates uncertainty in the minds of many. On many occasions this uncertainty is met with curiosity and adaptability, just two of the skills future practitioners will need in abundance. The post-COVID future, if it indeed arrives, with its new needs, new business models, and new paradigms will mean practitioners need to be both technically and psychologically prepared.

The plan considers the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats considered relevant for our future. It takes into account FIT’s current level of resourcing, and recognises both the financial and human resources FIT has at its disposal, however it is envisaged that future planning will need to reassess the balance. Indeed the COVID-19 crisis will impact both financial and other resources, and a detailed update of the income/expenditure forecast against reality will be required.

While the COVID crisis has driven FIT and its member organisations towards more and more virtual activities thus freeing funds reserved for venues and travel, it has also meant a significant drop in the need of some translations and particularly traditional interpreting services and this demand may never return to previous levels, so individuals and member organisations and thus the whole FIT may have to face whole new economic constraints.

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INTRODUCTION

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In the meantime, the skills, experience and commitment of our members are valuable assets that allow us to do much with comparatively little. This being the case, alignment of aims and implementation are paramount. It is hoped that this plan will create a united vision and direction, and our members will see themselves as part of the higher strategy, as active agents of the change we all wish to make for the good of the profession. The global Corona Virus pandemic has shown the benefits of community and FIT members' strong commitment to share and support each other. Together we are stronger.

FIT represents the interests of its constituents everywhere, enhancing the status of our professions, safeguarding conditions, rights and freedoms, and integrating education, research and practice to ensure development and longevity. This plan also aims to ensure FIT is actively connected with all sectors of industry, to the benefit of all.

The plan is supported by the Implementation and Work Plans document, which outlines implementation, details KPIs, and guides the aims and work of each committee to be convened.



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WHAT IS FIT?

FIT is a federation of associations, with membership consisting of over 85 professional associations of all types of interpreters, translators, and terminologists working in areas as diverse as literary, scientific and technical spheres, the public service, court and legal settings, conference interpreting, media and diplomatic fields and academia. FIT has Regular, Observer and Associate member categories.

Working together, associations benefit from both local and international activities coordinated by a federation with global presence and established connections. Activities at an international level provide benefits that would be difficult for a national association to achieve on its own.



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OUR MISSION

To be the global voice of associations of translators, terminologists and interpreters around the world

OUR VISION

A united, sustainable, recognised profession to fulfil the expanding global need for translation

OUR VALUES

The values underpinning FIT processes, actions and interactions are:

Visibility: professionalism, fairness, accountability and transparency

Community: commitment to community and collaboration in a spirit of diversity and respect

Progress: sustainability in all its senses; human, professional and ecological

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VISIBILITY

FIT recognises the need to elevate cohesion and status through increased international presence, physical and digital visibility and therefore, status and influence.

In the current global and industry climate, in the short-term at least, visibility will be almost exclusively virtual. This will not impact our ability to maintain presence. Ironically, it will cut down expenditure and increase our reach, saving time used for travel. It is true, the results are not as effective as face-to-face, but for the immediate future, virtual presence is a safe and efficient substitute, and can open up new opportunities as well.

1 Promote FIT and maintain a credible professional profile at corporate, public, national and international level and throughout media.

- a) Campaign for recognition of our professional status
 - i) Increase representation at industry events (funded from the visibility budget)
 - ii) Produce press releases on representation and events
 - iii) Create Position Papers

b) Consolidate platforms for digital and social presence.

- i) Website: Produce a professional, branded, highly functional, interactive FIT website with up-to-date information, as hub of FIT interactions and information
- ii) Social Media: Maintain current presence and activity on social media platforms

Indicators:

- FIT presence at all relevant industry events with a calendar produced by FIT Council each year in conjunction with budget preparation and published on website
- A press release for each event/presentation
- A new website with updated content
- Continued increase in website traffic and content with users finding it easy to use and informative
- Weekly social media posts on all platforms and sustained increase in likes/shares/followers



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VISIBILITY

FIT recognises the need to elevate cohesion and status through increased international presence physical and digital visibility and therefore, status and influence.



2 Continue to support FIT publications and respective Committees.

While their readership and functions may differ, and indeed overlap, promotion and regular publication of both Babel and Translatio are crucial to FIT history and in building the FIT brand.

- i) Continued publication of Babel FIT's scholarly academic journal
- ii) Continued publication of Translatio quarterly newsletter

Indicators:

- Babel readership, downloads and impact ratings continue to stay strong or to grow
- Downloads of Translatio continue to increase
- Content contributions to Translatio continue at current levels or increase

3 Build relationships with external stakeholders.

- i) Maintain relationships with current partners (listed in plan)
- ii) Identify and explore opportunities with new potential partners
- iii) Continue campaigns in collaboration with stakeholders (Open Letters, Conflict Zone Resolution, etc.)

Indicators:

- One FIT officer attending all partner events
- New agreements and MOUs developed
- Open letters on all relevant issues that arise

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COMMUNITY

FIT recognises the need to consolidate a cohesive community through internal networks and collaboration and strives to build a community of informed members who will promote best practices in the profession, reinforce community networks and connect members.

1 Foster a collaborative global community of language professionals that knows, understands and actively promotes FIT.

- i) Promote and support Regional Centre (RC) initiatives and events
- ii) Connect our members and reinforce and grow industry-wide and regional networks
- iii) Keep members informed of our plans
- iv) Hold a Presidents' Forum between Statutory congresses for collaboration and discussion of important issues

Indicators:

- Increase in FIT support for/participation in RC and international events



2 Celebrate International Translation Day (ITD). Continued celebration of this day each 30 September should be an important date on the FIT annual calendar.

- i) Promote celebration of ITD each year with FIT members, partners and the UN
- ii) Seek increased media coverage and global promotion

Indicators:

- Increase in number of organised ITD celebration events promoted through FIT
- Increased coverage and visibility of ITD in media

3 Showcase FIT Congress and FIT Prizes. A FIT World Congress explores relevant industry themes, offers practical advice and learning and develops international networks among FIT members and partners.

- i) Support congress hosts and ensure a successful, highly professional event
- ii) Support FIT awards event, celebrating excellence, outstanding achievement and contributions of FIT members

Indicators:

- A successful Congress held every 3 years with attendance numbers remaining strong
- Increase in number of papers submitted by 5% each Congress

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COMMUNITY

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4 Support other international events under the FIT umbrella.

- i) Asia Pacific Translation and Interpreting Forum (APTIF)
- ii) International Legal Translation Forum (ILTF)
- iii) Keep members informed of our plans
- iv) International-level events hosted by or involving FIT Regional Centres

Indicators:

- Increased collaboration in calendar of Regional Centre events and initiatives
- APTIF and ILTF events held on schedule with steady or increasing participation



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PROGRESS

To promote a sustainable and harmonised profession, FIT believes it is important to support practice and training of future practitioners and skill-building pathways.

FIT also aims to assist all practitioners to be current on latest technologies and trends and advocate on their behalf where development of technologies they use are concerned.

1 Drive professionalism through training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

- i) Support training and skill-building pathways to develop future potential and ensure sustainability
- ii) Build partnerships with universities and increase interface with academia
- iii) Support associations in their endeavours where practical, sharing information about CPD

Indicators:

- Continued active participation in university forums and associations such as CIUTI every year

2 Use the FIT Zoom platform to develop future potential and build capacity within member associations.

- i) Plan a series of CPD webinars on a variety of professional skills training and development
- ii) Plan a series of webinars to assist associations in capacity building of its volunteer base

Indicators:

- Programme of webinars around professional development and association capacity building, starting at bi-monthly intervals



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PROGRESS

To promote a sustainable and harmonised profession, FIT believes it is important to support practice and training of future practitioners and skill-building pathways.



3 Build membership through outreach programme to non-members, building FIT profile in areas with limited exposure to FIT.

- i) Develop outreach programme to contact potential members and support association building in regions with lower participation
- ii) Ensure member retention and satisfaction

Indicators:

- FIT membership continues to remain steady or grow with new member associations
- New members reached through initiatives supported under the Development Fund

4 Build a Futures Task Force of informed members to inform on Machine Translation and its integration with TMs, PEMT, CAT tool development, remote interpreting platforms and

solutions, voice recognition and other relevant software, translation quality measurement, localisation, cloud and crowd technologies, project management and workflow technologies to:

- i) Participate in discussions around T&I related technology development, research and user opinion
- ii) Consult experts and attend forums
- iii) Share information and educate on changes in industry trends and technology

Indicators:

- Continued participation in JIAMCATT annual meeting and other technology-related industry events
- Articles to share technology-related information in each edition of Translatio, on website each month (shared through social media)

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THE TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING LANDSCAPE

To the three major global phenomena profoundly impacting the commercial landscape and our profession, namely

- advances in technology, 'big data' and digitalisation
- changing demographics and skillsets
- new political, media and social paradigms in a global marketplace

it is necessary to add a fourth:

- the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full effects of the pandemic are not yet apparent, but initial observations suggest it will

- skew work volumes away from some sectors such as travel and tourism, towards health and online sectors;
- affect economic prospects of individuals and therefore FIT member associations;
- move work for interpreters to remote
- change industry work flow and increase the presence of technology.

Now more than ever before, the future of the profession will require adaptability to new work models and on-going learning, increasing integration of technology, and greater interdisciplinary and multimodal interface.

Changes in work paradigms, integration of technologies and systems, changing attitudes and expectations of clients and the general public, have all created a state of rapid change.

The annual global language services market has doubled over the last 10 years, to reach nearly USD50bn and the demand is met by a sliding-scale mix of human and machine translation.

It is essential that translation professionals develop the skills to work with technology, and rather than 'believe the hype' predicting technology will displace them, retain a professional sense of the importance of their work.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

- Limited financial resources
- Limited human resources and dependence on volunteers
- Part-time Secretariat



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SWOT ANALYSIS

Internal (Strengths & Weaknesses) / Organization vs. External (Opportunities & Threats) / Industry

STRENGTHS

- Strong position as the only global association of all translators, interpreters and terminologists
- Institutional history and knowledge
- Existing, established networks and connections
- Ability to draw on wide skillset of members
- Geographical spread of members ensures global intelligence and knowledge base
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Early adoption of remote collaborative work platform and zoom account for meetings and CPD

WEAKNESSES

- Reliance on dues for income
- Limited human resources and dependence on volunteers
- Geographical distance between members and events
- Widely varying needs of membership
- Failure to adapt and respond quickly to events and/or change
- Move towards local focus over global
- Disruptions during transition between mandates
 - Loss of too many Council members (historical knowledge)
 - Changes in direction, policies, and projects

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SWOT ANALYSIS

Internal (Strengths & Weaknesses) / Organization vs. External (Opportunities & Threats) / Industry

OPPORTUNITIES

- Huge market growth in need for translation services
- Flexible, highly-educated workforce able to up-skill
- At 'cutting-edge' of technology revolution with repetitive work automated
- Increase in ease of collaboration
- In the new multimodal environment translators may benefit from professional association with other knowledge-intensive and computer-based professions
- The untapped potential of cross-industry partnerships with other organisations

THREATS

- Variable global economic conditions
- Freelance workforce model with increasing reliance on remote teams with disparity of power among players
- Failure to adapt to/embrace benefit of technology
- Lack of information exchange
- Widely varying conditions between geographical areas and languages
- English or other language used as a lingua franca in place of translation
- View on professional translation skewed by machine translation

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RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

This Strategic Plan requires the following committees.

- i Babel
- ii Translatio
- iii External Partnerships
- iv Communications
- v Solidarity Fund
- vi Event and Awards Management
- vii ISO Standards
- viii Human Rights
- ix Association Development and Engagement
- x Audiovisual
- xi Education and Professional Development
- xii Legal Translation and Interpreting
- xiii Literary Translation and Copyright
- xiv Procedural
- xv Research
- xvi Futures
- xvii Translation Quality Evaluation

It is envisaged that all these Committees will strive to further include the work of terminologists in their work plans as a core focus of FIT.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

General Management

- Clear and comprehensive governance policies and procedures
- Change-management between mandates
- Continue to develop communication & collaboration
- Build a comprehensive media and promotional strategy that embraces digital and social media
- Develop detailed risk management plan (for internal & external risks)

Operations Management

Operations will continue to be managed by the Secretary General and the Secretariat.

Financial Management

Explore avenues for future financial opportunities and growth.

Implementation

Implementation strategy and Key Performance Indicators are outlined in the Implementation and Work Plans document, available to committees and on request

Regional Centre plans will be developed in conjunction with Regional Centre Chairs, with input from the 17 committees.



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SUMMING UP - LANDSCAPE, SWOT ANALYSIS,
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CONCLUSION

In the opinion of FIT Council, it is advantageous for FIT to concentrate on the areas of strategic priority, ensuring progress towards a sustainable future for the profession.

FIT should continue to focus on promoting its core events and publications and on sustaining its community and international profile to create and present one coherent voice, celebrating diversity and complexity within our professions. All activities are equally important. This does not preclude future councils from adding other activities as they see fit.

This plan will need consistent timely review, particularly in the case of any new crisis event.



URGENT PRIORITIES EXTRACTED FROM THIS PLAN ARE:

- Build an active and interactive website and FIT social media presence
- External Visibility
- Education/CPD
- Continued development of governance with focus on clear, written policies and role descriptions.
- Articulate the value of active participation in FIT to our membership

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 FIT BY LAWS – ARTICLES 4 AND 5

Article 4

FIT shall above all –

- (a) act as the international voice of translators, interpreters and terminologists and make that voice heard in the relevant public and political arenas;
- (b) seek to enhance the professional status of the translators, interpreters and terminologists in society;
- (c) strive to establish links and co-operation with other international organisations, especially in the field of translation, interpreting and terminology;
- (d) encourage the exchange of information and best practices among its member associations;
- (e) promote the harmonisation of professional standards and compliance with best practices across the world;
- (f) stimulate and support education, training and research in translation, interpreting and terminology;
- (g) strengthen the community of translators, interpreters and terminologists internationally by providing assistance for the establishment of associations in countries where they do not yet exist;
- (h) lend its good offices in resolving any disputes involving member organisations;
- (i) uphold the moral and material interests of translators, interpreters and terminologists throughout the world.

Article 5

FIT shall also represent professional translators, interpreters and terminologists at the international level, particularly vis-à-vis international governmental and non-governmental organisations and public opinion, ensure representation at meetings that may concern translators, interpreters and terminologists at any international level, prepare and issue publications, and organise or arrange for the organisation of meetings at which any matters concerning translators, interpreters and terminologists may be discussed.

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APPENDIX 2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

History

Founded in Paris in 1953 by Pierre-François Caillé, FIT is an international federation of translators' associations with member associations in over 50 countries throughout the world.

FIT is a strictly non-political non-governmental organization and enjoys operational status with UNESCO, special consultative status with ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) and maintains close contacts with many other international bodies.

Governance

FIT is incorporated in France and is governed by French Law. The supreme governing body is the Statutory Congress held every three years. It brings together delegations from FIT member associations, elects the Council (which in turn elects an Executive Committee) from nominated representatives from all geographical areas. FIT Council functions as a board of directors to govern FIT until the next Statutory Congress is held.

Financial

FIT annual fees from January 2016:

- 1 Regular members: 3.10 Swiss Francs per capita. (Minimum contribution is 62 Swiss Francs/ maximum annual contribution is limited to 4,500 Swiss Francs).
- 2 Associate members: 435 Swiss Francs
- 3 Observer members: 124 Swiss Francs

FIT has funds secured for projects and on-going commitments such as Solidarity and FIT Awards at Congress. FIT's main income is from membership dues, however it also occasionally receives funding for its contribution towards individual projects or advertising income.

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STAKEHOLDERS

FIT's stakeholders are:

- **Regular Members**
Any professional association of translators, interpreters and terminologists can be a regular member of FIT, as per the By Laws. FIT currently has members from the geographic regions of Africa, North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania.
- **Associate and Observer Members**
Associate Membership is offered to organisations involved in any element of translation, interpreting or terminology, related research and education and supporting the aims of FIT.

Observer Membership is offered to potential candidates for regular membership.
- **FIT Council and Secretariat**
FIT Council comprises 17 council members with 14 elected from nominations by member associations, and 3 co-options by the newly elected Council to ensure appropriate global coverage and necessary expertise. The Council elects from amongst its members an Executive Committee comprising the President, Secretary General, Treasurer and three Vice-Presidents.

FIT Secretariat is employed by the Executive Committee to perform executive secretariat duties.

Council holds an annual physical meeting, in conjunction with member events and celebrations. The aim is for FIT to support its members with local presence to assist with visibility and promotion. It is also a way for members to attend Council meetings and see the workings of FIT. FIT's support for member events has lead to cooperation and joint initiatives.

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PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

AIIC – Association internationale de interprètes de conférences (International Association of Conference Interpreters)

CEATL - Conseil européen des associations de traducteurs littéraires (European Council of Literary Translators Associations)

CIUTI - Conférence internationale permanente d’instituts universitaires de traducteurs et interprètes (International Standing Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters)

Critical Link International

DFKI – German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence (Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz)

EST – European Society for Translation Studies

EU - European Union

EULITA - European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association

John Benjamins Publishers

PEN International

Red T

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR – United Nations High Commission for Refugees

WASLI - World Association of Sign Language Interpreters

WFD - World Federation of the Deaf

WIPO –Word Intellectual Property Organization

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**FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRADUCTEURS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS**

Siège/Registered Office:

REGUS, 57 rue d' Amsterdam, 75008 Paris, France

FIT Secretariat | secretariat@fit-ift.org | www.fit-ift.org | +(33) 1 53321755 | +(33)1 533 21 732

