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EVALUATION

of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union

{SWD(2026) 326 final}

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
Purpose and scope of the evaluation.....	2
2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?	4
2.1 Description of the intervention and its objectives	4
2.2 Point(s) of comparison.....	7
3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?.....	8
3.1 Staffing.....	9
3.2 Clients	10
3.3 The reserve.....	12
3.4 Translation demand and related revenue	14
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS	17
4.1. TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE INTERVENTION SUCCESSFUL AND WHY?	17
4.1.1 <i>Effectiveness</i>	17
4.1.2 <i>Efficiency</i>	23
4.1.3 <i>Coherence</i>	27
4.2. HOW DID THE EU INTERVENTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND TO WHOM?	30
4.3. IS THE INTERVENTION STILL RELEVANT?	32
5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?.....	34
5.1. CONCLUSIONS	34
5.2. LESSONS LEARNED	37
ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION	38
ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED	40
ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (BY CRITERION)	52
ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS.....	62
ANNEX V. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT	71
ANNEX VI. EU BODIES WITH AN SLA WITH THE CENTRE.....	144

Glossary¹

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
ABC	Activity Based Costing
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CdT	Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Commission)
DG GROW	Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (Commission)
DG JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (Commission)
DGT	Directorate-General for Translation (Commission)
eCdT	Proprietary workflow management system (CdT)
IAS	Commission Internal Audit Service
IATE	Interactive Terminology for Europe (database)
LSP	Language Service Provider
MB	Management Board
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MT	Machine Translation
SLA	Service-Level Agreement
TQAAP	Translation Quality Assurance Action Plan (CdT)
TQMM	Translation Quality Management Model (CdT)

¹ A list of EU agency acronyms and names is provided in Annex VI.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is determined by the Joint statement of the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission on decentralised agencies and the Common approach of 19 July 2012², which aimed at assessing the ‘coherence, effectiveness, accountability and transparency’ and streamlining the governance, structure, operation, programming and reporting of the decentralised agencies. Point 60 of the Common Approach states ‘Each agency's founding act should provide for a periodic overall evaluation, to be commissioned by the Commission. The first evaluation should take place five years after the agency has started its operational phase. Subsequent evaluations should be conducted every five years and on the occasion of every second evaluation the sunset/review clause should be applied. Evaluations should be conducted in a manner that provides solid grounds for a decision to continue or discontinue the agency's mandate’. The Founding Regulation³ of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (hereafter ‘the Centre’), which was adopted in 1994 (before the adoption of the Common Approach from 2012), does not provide for its evaluation. This is the first evaluation of the Centre commissioned by the Commission. The Centre falls under the remit of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Translation (hereafter ‘DGT’) that acts as its partner DG.

In line with the Commission's better regulation guidelines⁴ the evaluation analyses, to the extent possible, the five criteria effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and added value of the Centre.

The evaluation covers the period 2019-2023, with some insights from 2024 and, where available, from 2025, and is based on input from the clients of the Centre⁵, its contractors⁶ and the members of its Management Board⁷.

² Joint statement of the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission on decentralised agencies and Common approach at https://european-union.europa.eu/document/download/d4199ff4-1e3d-45e6-af7e-90cf1a7b10bc_en?filename=joint_statement_on_decentralised_agencies_en.pdf

³ COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 2965/94 of 28 November 1994 setting up a Translation Centre for bodies of the European Union at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01994R2965-20031001>

⁴ Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox at https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

⁵ Clients of the Centre are all EU institutions, bodies and agencies that have signed a cooperation agreement with the Centre. A full list is available at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/our-cooperation-clients>

⁶ In the context of the evaluation, contractors of the Centre are language service providers that operate on the private market.

⁷ As per Article 4 of the Centre’s Founding Regulation EU institution, client and Member State representatives constitute the Management Board of the Centre.

The evaluation is supported by an external study (hereafter ‘supporting study’)⁸ that used a variety of primary and secondary data sources and combined qualitative and quantitative research tools to collect a wide range of evidence. The management and monitoring documents of the Centre were reviewed together with a previous study commissioned by the Centre in 2017⁹ and reports of the European Court of Auditors on the Centre’s financial operations. The supporting study included consultation of the Centre’s stakeholders¹⁰, its management, staff and clients. Interviews were conducted with persons and organisations collaborating with the Centre as well as members of the governance structure. Targeted online surveys were conducted with key stakeholders, contractors and agency staff. Findings were consolidated in a validation workshop including representatives of the Centre, DGT, clients, contractors and experts from academia. The full methodology is described in the supporting study.

In addition the evaluation draws upon the Commission's role in the Centre’s Management Board and on the preparation of the Centre’s planning and reporting documents and the negotiations with the budgetary authorities that DGT, as the Centre’s partner DG, leads on behalf of the Centre.

⁸ DGT commissioned ECORYS EUROPE EEIG – GEIE to conduct a study supporting the evaluation of the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union on the basis of the negotiated service contract EC-DGT/LUX/2024/MVP/0078.

⁹ The *Study on the Translation Centre as the Linguistic Shared Service Provider for the EU Agencies and Bodies* is an internal document of the Centre not publicly available.

¹⁰ ‘Stakeholders’ refers to the EU institutions, agencies and bodies and Member States represented on the Centre’s Management Board. In a broader sense it may additionally refer to the Centre’s contractors.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1 Description of the intervention and its objectives

The Centre was established in 1994 with its seat in Luxembourg and the main mission to provide translation and related language services to the other decentralised EU agencies. It may also assist those EU institutions and bodies which have their own translation services. Article 2 of the Founding Regulation of the Centre establishes that ‘the Centre shall provide the necessary translation services for the operation of the following agencies and offices:

- the European Environment Agency,
- the European Training Foundation,
- the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction,¹¹
- the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medical Products,¹²
- the Agency for Health and Safety at Work,
- the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (trade marks, designs and models),¹³
- the European Police Office (Europol) and the Europol Drugs Unit.’

In the same article, the Founding Regulation lays out that ‘Agencies and offices set up by the Council other than those referred to in paragraph 1 may have access to the services of the Centre on the basis of arrangements to be concluded with the Centre.’

The fundamental reasoning behind the establishment of the Centre was that ‘a single specialised centre provides a practical solution to the problem of meeting the translation needs of a large number of bodies in various locations throughout the Union’¹⁴. The Centre was to become the translation service for all the decentralised agencies created at the time and for agencies created subsequently. Setting up one central translation service was intended to provide for economies of scale and avoid duplication of efforts and expenses.

The Centre provides linguistic services¹⁵, except interpretation, to the other decentralised agencies of the European Union and to some of the services of the European institutions¹⁶. The services the Centre

¹¹ The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is now called European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA).

¹² The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medical Products is now called European Medicines Agency (EMA).

¹³ The Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (trade marks, designs and models) is now called European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).

¹⁴ Preamble of the Centre’s Founding Regulation.

¹⁵ The linguistic services the Centre provides as a standard are Translation of texts, Revision of translations, Paste ‘n’ Go translation, Automatic translation, Light post-editing of machine translations, Web translation, Modification of translations, Terminology, Translation and Revision of term lists, Subtitling, Transcription, Automatic transcription, Editing and Language consultancy. Translation of EUTMs and similar intellectual property related documents is provided solely to the EUIPO. See the Centre’s range of services, including their definitions at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/discover-range-our-services>

¹⁶ The Centre’s list of clients is available at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/our-cooperation-clients>

delivers are payable from the budget of the relevant client¹⁷. As such, and in contrast to many other EU agencies, the Centre is purely a service agency not linked to any EU policy, except for maintaining, supporting and fostering multilingualism¹⁸. In essence and unlike any other EU agency, the Centre functions and has been functioning with a business model based on free-market principles simultaneously constrained by the obligation to operate within the EU institutional framework.

The role of the EU agencies lies in the implementation of EU policies. They also support cooperation between the EU and national governments by pooling technical and specialist expertise and knowledge from both the EU institutions and national authorities. Decentralised agencies are spread across Europe and work on issues affecting the everyday lives of all the people living in the EU. Examples include food, medicine, justice, transport safety, drug addiction and the environment¹⁹. As such they are directly involved and have a key role when communicating on EU matters. In the European context communication to the Europeans logically inheres addressing them in their language²⁰. This is where the role of the Centre as a language service provider becomes crucial by acting as a linguistic mediator between its clients and the European public. The Centre's clients operate over a vast scope of subject areas and domains linked to the policy areas of the European Commission. They often have an obligation to make information available to the public in each of the official languages of the European Union. The Centre is thus in the position of having to cover a substantial number of language combinations and subject matter expertise.

The Centre has grown steadily since it was set up, hand in hand with an increasing number of official EU languages and highly specialised clients. Over the years, the Centre has gained considerable experience in meeting the specific needs of its clients, be these related to service types, file formats, deadlines, fields of expertise or the many possible language combinations. In the meantime, the Centre works for over 70 clients and counts around 220 staff members. The Centre's staff are recruited according to the Staff Regulations of the EU²¹, most are temporary agents, some are officials and others are contract staff. To cover all language combinations, domains and workload the Centre makes extensive use of translation service providers on the free market through targeted tendering procedures.

The Centre is bound by its Founding Regulation to participate in interinstitutional cooperation at EU level with a view to rationalising working methods and achieving global economies of scale. In the

¹⁷ Article 10 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

¹⁸ The use of official languages is defined in the EEC Council: Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/1958/1\(1\)/oj/eng](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/1958/1(1)/oj/eng)

¹⁹ Types of EU institutions and bodies at https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/types-institutions-and-bodies_en

²⁰ EEC Council: Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01958R0001-20130701&qid=1774254219052>

²¹ Article 17 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

context of its participation in the work of the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation²² the Translation Centre has been developing and managing the interinstitutional terminology database IATE²³ on behalf of its institutional partners since 2003.

DGT is the Centre's 'partner DG' and advises and supports it in close cooperation in matters regarding translation. DGT represents the Centre in the Commission internal budgetary hearings. The Director-General of DGT is also the chair of the Centre's Management Board and as such involved in the preparation of the Management Board meetings. The Deputy Director-General of DGT is the Commission's representative on the Management Board. DGT also has an Adviser for Interinstitutional Cooperation and the Translation Centre on its staff acting as alternate representative on the Management Board.

As per the Centre's Founding Regulation its Management Board consists of

- a representative from each of the agencies with which the Centre has signed a service level agreement,
- a representative from each of the Member States of the European Union,
- two representatives from the Commission; and
- one representative each from the institutions and bodies which have their own translation services but have concluded agreements with the Centre for collaboration on a voluntary basis²⁴.

The Management Board totals over 70 members²⁵ representing almost all clients (not all have chosen to be represented on the board), almost all the member states (exceptions at the time of writing were Bulgaria and the Czech Republic²⁶ for which no representatives had been nominated yet) and the European institutions. It adopts among others the annual activity reports, the budgets and the programming documents of the Centre. The decisions of the Management Board are publicly available on the Centre's website²⁷.

Operational context

Considering that the Centre's clients are the agencies, bodies and institutions of the European Union, the Centre operates in an environment regulated by the provisions of the Financial Regulation²⁸, the Staff

²² Article 2 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

²³ IATE at <https://iate.europa.eu/>

²⁴ Article 4 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

²⁵ The composition of the Management Board at [The Management Board | Translation Centre For the Bodies of the EU](#)

²⁶ Situation in March 2026.

²⁷ Summaries of decisions of the Centre's Management Board at https://cdt.europa.eu/en/documentation/filter?field_documentation_theme_target_id=358

²⁸ EU Financial Regulation at https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-financial-regulation_en

Regulations of the EU²⁹, the Centre's Founding Regulation and the budgetary constraints of the EU agencies and institutions.

As per its Founding Regulation the Centre establishes a yearly budget³⁰ for its operational and administrative expenditure that is adopted by its Management Board. The Centre's expenditure must be balanced with the income from the linguistic services it provides³¹. To cover any potential excess expenditure or loss of revenue, the Centre has set up a reserve for pricing stability from which it can draw to balance its budget. The Founding Regulation of the Centre allows for the possibility of it receiving a subsidy from the EU budget³².

The Centre programs and reports on its activities to the budgetary authorities, its Management Board and the public in the relevant annual and multi-annual documents, such as annual budgets, single programming documents and annual activity reports³³.

2.2 Point(s) of comparison

The baseline for this evaluation is mainly set by the situation in 2019. Figures for 2018 and 2024 have been added to the picture when available and useful to illustrate specific points worth highlighting. In 2019 the Centre was already looking back at almost 25 years of activity in providing translations and other linguistic services to the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. It was also looking ahead at upcoming major developments outlined in the recommendations of the 2017 study on the Centre that resulted in a Transformation Plan³⁴ adopted by the Management Board in March 2019. The plan identified four transformation areas with corresponding objectives: translation technology, human resources, the client experience and institutional aspects. In October 2021 the Management Board concluded that the elements of the Transformation Plan had successfully been integrated into the normal way of working for the Centre's management.

The evaluation draws from these points of departure and milestones to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value of the Centre.

²⁹ Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01962R0031-20230101>

³⁰ The Centre's financial documentation at https://cdt.europa.eu/en/documentation/filter?field_documentation_theme_target_id=319

³¹ Article 10 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

³² Articles 10 and 13 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

³³ The Centre's publicly available documentation at https://cdt.europa.eu/en/documentation/filter?field_documentation_theme_target_id=318

³⁴ <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/news/final-sprint-towards-our-transformation>

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

The Centre has set up a business model that enables it to cover the large and diversified field of subject areas the decentralised agencies deal with and to handle the relevant workload in the array of language combinations while retaining a relatively small and agile structure. For the purpose the Centre relies extensively on language technology, outsourcing to subject matter experts (i.e. language professionals with specialist knowledge in e.g. medicine, finance or law) and internal linguistic and quality-control competence. External language service providers are contracted by subject areas through open calls for tender.

Following the development of the needs of the agencies for their multilingual communication, the Centre has over the years expanded its scope of action beyond pure translation to cover most other linguistic services, except interpretation³⁵. In particular the technological advance brought along with its Transformation Plan has enabled the Centre to diversify its range of linguistic services substantially to cater for the agencies' needs.

The Centre was quick to react to the COVID-19 emergency and remained fully operational by swiftly moving to an expanded teleworking mode without any disruptions in its activities or its deliveries. In general and in contrast to the financial developments, and although some fringe activities had to be toned down or postponed, the Centre's basic operations have remained unaffected by any crisis over the evaluation period. However, translation output volumes have decreased over time, while budget and work-programme implementation have remained stable or increased, as has the range of services the Centre offers its clients. The Centre was not subsidised from the budget of the EU during the period under review. It was financed through the payments from its clients, of which 31 were agencies funded by the EU budget while 8 agencies were partially self-financed and 3 fully self-financed³⁶. However, the Centre needed an EU contribution to balance its 2025 and 2026 budgets.

The Centre was led by an acting director appointed by the Centre's Management Board from among the middle managers of the Centre in the years 2019-2021. The Management Board appointed a regular director in October 2021 who led the Centre in the years 2022-2025. A new director will need to be appointed in 2026. Until then the Centre will be led by an acting director appointed by the Management Board from among the Centre's managers. The duties and responsibilities of the director are laid out in article 9 of the Centre's Founding Regulation.

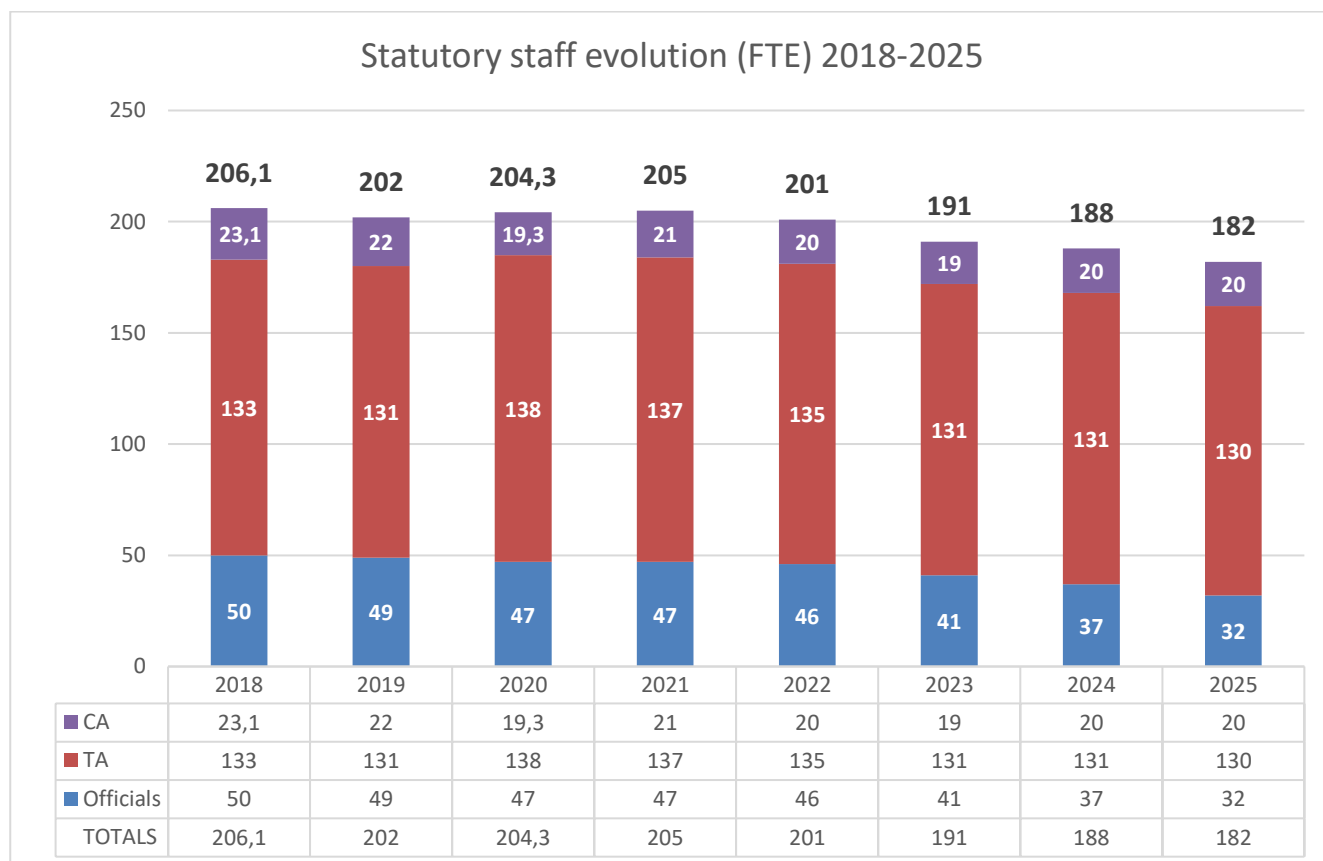
³⁵ The Centre's range of services at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/discover-range-our-services>

³⁶ Report of the European Court of Auditors: Annual report on EU agencies for the 2024 financial year <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SAR-AGENCIES-2024>

3.1 Staffing

The staffing numbers of the Centre remained stable over the period with a fixed number of authorised 193 establishment plan posts (51 officials and 142 temporary agents) supported by a fluctuating number of contract and agency staff³⁷. As part of the Centre's cost saving measures, not all the 193 establishment posts authorised in the budget were filled.

Table 1: Total staff numbers by year³⁸



Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018 – 2025.

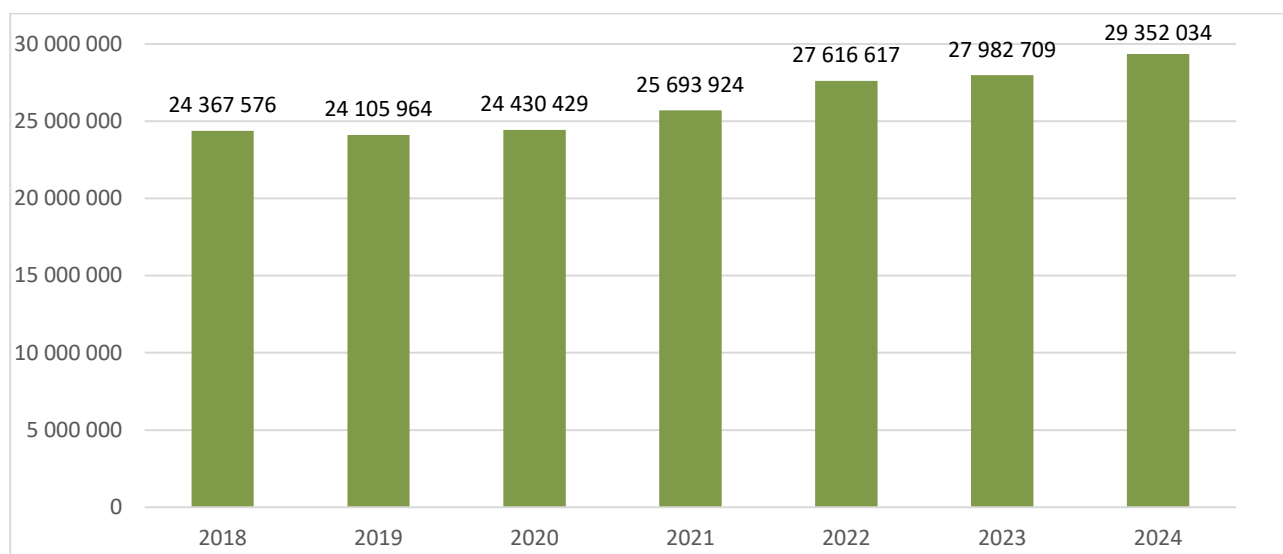
Notwithstanding the slightly decreasing staffing numbers, the Centre's staff expenditure has risen constantly and consistently since 2019 due to external factors, such as salaries which are determined by the Staff Regulations and the related indexation method. In 2025, despite decreasing staffing numbers, staff expenditure reached slightly over EUR 30.6 million.

³⁷ See the Centre's annual activity reports and single programming documents at https://cdt.europa.eu/en/documentation/filter?field_documentation_theme_target_id=318

³⁸ See the Centre's annual activity reports for the relevant years at https://cdt.europa.eu/en/documentation/filter?field_documentation_theme_target_id=318

All figures presented in the tables represent the state of employment as of 31 December of the respective year. The staff count includes permanent (officials) and temporary staff (TA), as well as contract agents (CA), which are outside the establishment plan. Seconded national experts interim staff and structural service providers are not included.

Figure 1: Staff expenditure (€) 2018- 2024³⁹



Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018-2024.

Translators and linguists make up roughly half of the staff, the other half having tasks in or related to management, administration (finances, human resources, legal affairs and facilities) and information technology (IT). It should be noted that the Centre underwent a reorganisation in 2023, following which, staff were organised in the directors' office and five departments, mainly resulting from the split of the Administration Department into the two departments Corporate Services and Finance & Facilities⁴⁰.

3.2 Clients

The number of clients the Centre works for has grown from 68 in 2018 to 73 by the end of the evaluation period and has continued to grow to reach 76 in 2024, among which were agencies with a legal obligation to use the Centre and others without an obligation to use the Centre. It must be noted that demand for translation and linguistic services varies substantially from client to client and that not all cooperation agreements automatically lead to guaranteed translation demand and revenue for the Centre.

It must be noted that almost half⁴¹ of the Centre's clients have the obligation to turn to the Centre for their needs in terms of translation and linguistic services inscribed in their founding regulation. All clients, whether obligated to use the Centre or not, have signed an arrangement or a Service-Level Agreement (SLA) with the Centre that defines the types of service the Centre provides and the conditions for providing them. The Management Board of the Centre adopts the prices for these services on a proposal by the Centre. The rates apply identically across all clients. Special rates may apply for specific projects or unique services required by only one client, e.g. the prices for the translation of EU trade

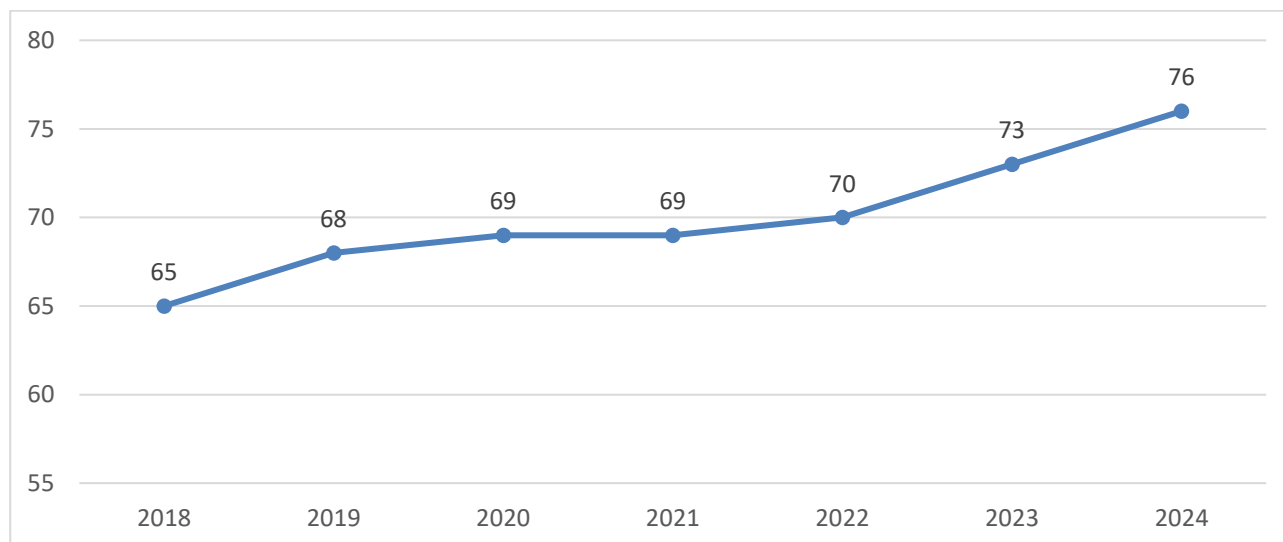
³⁹ The supporting study, Figure 41, p. 82.

⁴⁰ The organisational chart of the Centre at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/organisational-chart>

⁴¹ Situation in May 2025 – see Table 6 and Table 7 in Annex VI.

marks (EUTM), which are negotiated directly between the Centre and the EUIPO and laid down in the relevant arrangement or SLA. With these exceptions, the services on offer and the conditions for their provision are the same for all clients, independently of the latter's status or institutional role.

Figure 2: Evolution of the number of Translation Centre clients (2018-2024)⁴²



Source: CdT Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018-2024.

The top twelve clients account for more than half of the Centre's yearly revenue⁴³.

Table 2: Volume of pages translated for the top 12 clients over the evaluation period, 2018-2024

Pages translated	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend
EUIPO	94786	36863	43545	53353	42357	50950	248707	
EUAA/EASO	46488	30975	26091	39294	42165	50672	29104	
EMA	42928	33065	40793	35286	26712	27345	30830	
EPPO				2105	17431	19999	16751	
FRONTEX	6331	12770	14248	15339	25134	14528	19498	
SRB	6367	9575	10419	13049	15178	14495	5000	
ELA			1326	19741	17923	14259	9265	

⁴² The supporting study, Figure 20, p. 41.

⁴³ The supporting study, Table 4, p. 25.

FRA	11584	12583	12365	13703	15501	13007	1000	
ECHA	17102	18325	16888	21664	16720	11167	12219	
EDPS	5738	13308	17640	21792	11982	11147	8960	
EUROJUST	90	21	5163	8320	7971	10075	12131	
eu-LISA	10712	11559	11320	12045	11138	6150	12185	

Source: CdT Consolidated Activity Reports 2018-2024

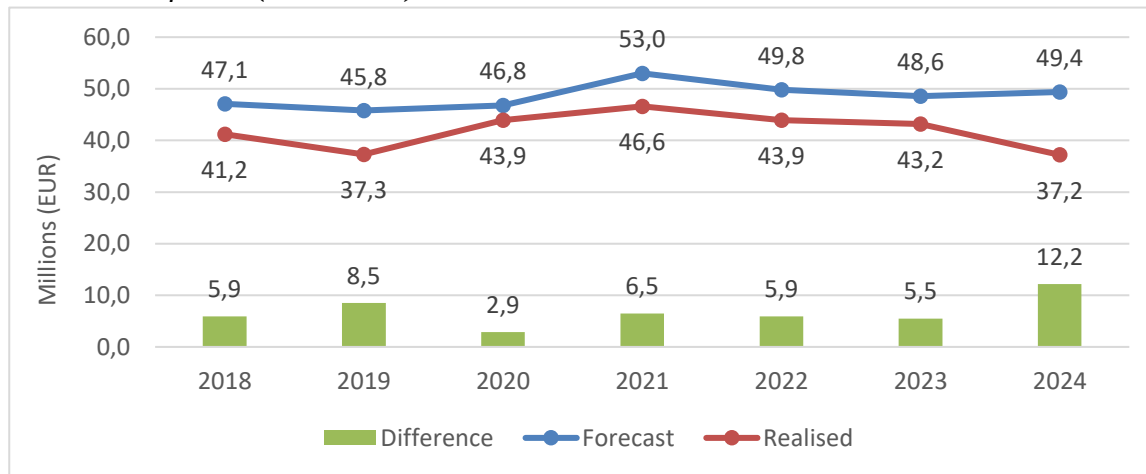
3.3 The reserve

The Centre drew from its reserve for pricing stability to balance its budget before, during and after the timespan covered by the evaluation period with losses between forecast and actual yearly revenue varying between almost EUR 3 million and EUR 8.5 million between 2019 and 2023. The deficits in 2024 and 2025 led to the depletion of the reserve for pricing stability in the second half of 2025. The Commission, represented by DGT, repeatedly stressed the importance of presenting a balanced budget in its opinions on the Centre's Single Programming Documents and raised concerns about the risk of depleting the reserve in the relevant Management Board meetings⁴⁴. In 2025 the Centre was not able to balance its budget and was forced to make a request for a contribution from the EU budget for the first time. The deficits are mainly due to a substantial drop in demand and a concomitant surge in expenses. In light of the demand forecasts, the Centre requested a contribution from the EU budget also for 2026 and 2027. According to the Centre's draft 2027-2029 Single Programming Document, there is a risk that the Centre will run a growing deficit in 2028 and 2029. This suggests that EU contributions may be needed also during that period⁴⁵, while the Centre must continue to pursue effective, efficient and economic ways to remedy the situation.

⁴⁴ The Commission raised reservations on the systematic use of the reserve to balance the Centre's budget, and in recent years of the risk of depleting it, at the Management Board meetings in October 2020, March 2022, October 2023 and March 2025. At the Management Board meeting in October 2025 the depletion of the reserve was presented as a fact. End results of the year 2025 were, however, better than expected as revenue increased and costs dropped in the last months. The replenished reserve carried over to 2026 amounted to EUR 3.9 million.

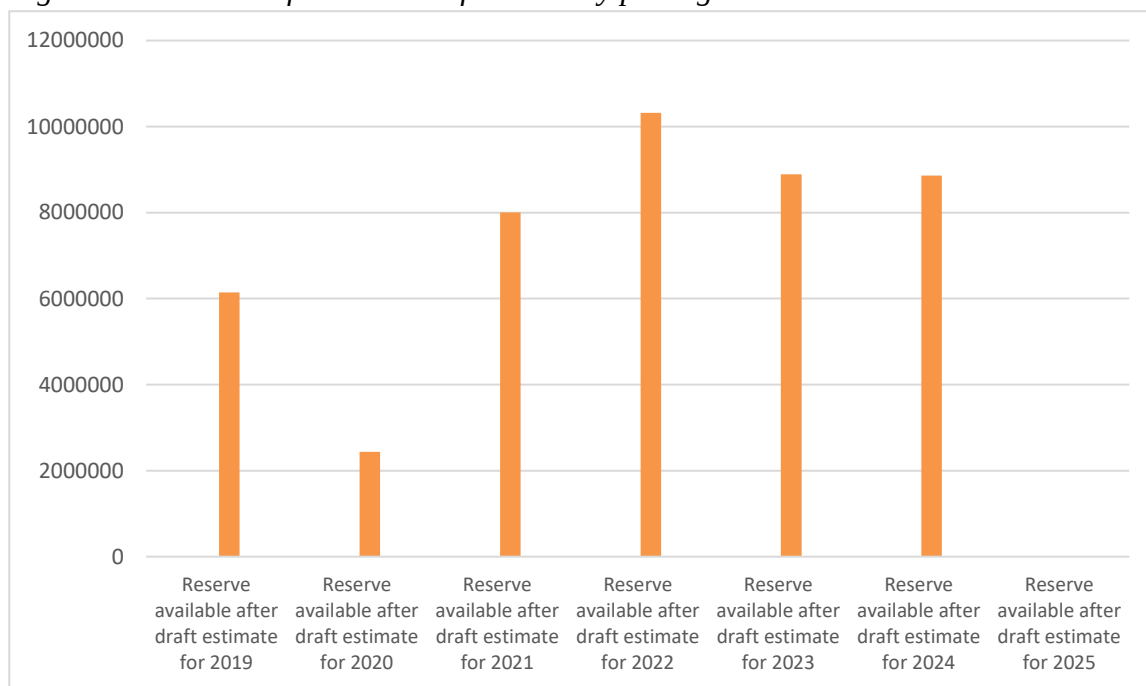
⁴⁵ Any information about the size of EU contribution beyond 2026 is based on the projections of the Centre and is strictly indicative. Any decisions on EU contribution will be taken by the Budgetary Authority in the context of the respective annual budgetary procedures.

Figure 3: Translation Centre forecast vs. realised revenues, including the annual difference, by year, in millions of EUR (2018-2024)⁴⁶



Source: CdT Budgets and Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018-2024.

Figure 4: Evolution of the Reserve for Stability pricing 2019-2025⁴⁷



Source: Translation Centre. Situation as per October 2025

⁴⁶ Annex of the supporting study, Figure 12, p. 69.

⁴⁷ Situation as estimated in October 2025. As stated earlier, end results of the year 2025 were better than expected and the reserve for 2026 amounted to EUR 3.9 million.

Where possible the Centre has strived to contain or reduce expenditure by improving operational effectiveness through automation, by shifting the workload from outsourcing to in-house, by reducing office space and by implementing energy saving measures.

3.4 Translation demand and related revenue

Translation and trademark translation are the main activities of the Centre accounting for 85% of the Centre's demand. Demand for both has dropped significantly during the evaluation period. Whereas the drop in demand for trademark translations can be attributed, on the one hand, to market developments with fewer trademarks being registered following a peak in 2021, and, on the other, to an increased investment in and development of internal linguistic capacities at the EUIPO, the drop in translation demand is mainly to be attributed to the increasing availability of free or low-cost translation solutions, such as machine translation technology.

Table 3: Annual percentage change in demand for the Centre's services, 2019-2024⁴⁸

Service	% of demand*	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average
Trademark translation (pages)	43%	-16%	-14%	-9%	-13%	-11%	-1%	-10%
Translation (pages)	42%	-16%	8%	10%	-5%	-23%	-24%	-8%
Full post-editing (pages)	11%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7%	7%	7%
Revision (pages)	2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-44%	282%	119%
Term list entries translated / revised (terms)	1% [†]	-14%	20%	20%	130%	-65%	111%	34%
Editing (pages)	1%	-71%	-64%	111%	14%	53%	-4%	6%
Modification (pages)	1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-58%	2%	-28%
Language consultancy (person-days)	1% [†]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	82%	-16%	33%
Terminology (person-days)	1% [†]	68%	-60%	12%	97%	-61%	-62%	-1%

⁴⁸ The supporting study, Table 15, p. 117.

Service	% of demand*	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average
Subtitling (minutes)	<1% [†]	-18%	-38%	182%	-10%	-43%	12%	14%
Light post-editing (pages)	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-82%	-13%	-48%
Transcription, including automatic transcription (minutes)	<1% [†]	N/A	N/A	93%	74%	99%	-64%	50%
Automatic translation (pages)	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	38%	-76%	69%	10%
Paste 'n' Go (pages)	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	-45%	-53%	-5%	-34%

Source: CdT Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018-2024. * Share of pages translated in 2024. † Share of revenues in 2024.

As illustrated in Table 4, it must be noted that some linguistic services, e.g. translation and terminology, have not covered the costs the Centre sustained for the corresponding activities whereas other services, e.g. trademark translation, have produced surplus, although revenue from this latter activity has decreased significantly over the evaluation period and only concerns one client, the EUIPO.

Table 4: Net revenue - Activity Based Costing (ABC)⁴⁹

ABC activity (€)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Trademarks	2,134,101	717,301	136,442	453,122
Local installation of eTranslation (eTra-Local)	660,287	798,355	710,605	882,963
Modification	366,368	953,974	216,091	195,253
Revision	52,255	-211,281	-271,904	-178,057
Language consultancy	52,161	199,865	175,785	-39,653
Light post-editing	0	421,300	-24,312	-25,603
Term list	-16,281	291,670	24,526	142,847

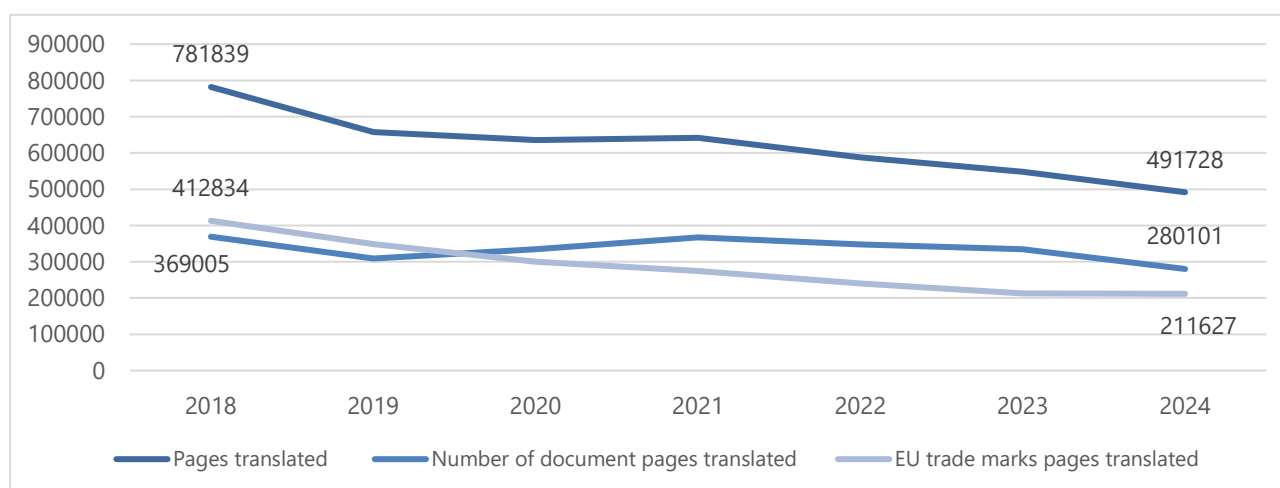
⁴⁹ The supporting study, Table 12, p. 90.

ABC activity (€)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Translation (including custom translation)	-39,546	-2,803,470	-878,744	-5,483,944
Editing	-81,686	-164,823	-107,444	-121,415
Other	-345,309	-591,668	-505,244	-487,202
Terminology	-517,309	21,311	-736,973	-1,004,040
Net revenue across ABC activities	2,265,042	-367,465	-1,261,173	-5,665,729

Source: The Centre's ABC reporting, 2021-2024.

As a result, the Centre's production figures have decreased significantly over the evaluation period and beyond.

Figure 5: Number of translated pages delivered by the Centre, 2018-2024⁵⁰



Source: CdT Consolidated Activity Reports 2018-2024

⁵⁰ The supporting study, Figure 8, p. 30.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The strategic objectives of the Centre for the evaluation period are laid out in its Strategy 2016-2020, which was extended until the end of 2023⁵¹. The aim of the Centre was to become a centre of excellence for EU linguistic services by 2020. Its strategy focused on multilingualism, proactive client engagement, and adapting to evolving needs. From 2019 to 2023, the Centre implemented a quality-driven business model with three strategic goals:

- Partnering with clients for holistic linguistic services
- Boosting operational efficiency
- Strengthening interinstitutional cooperation

4.1. To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

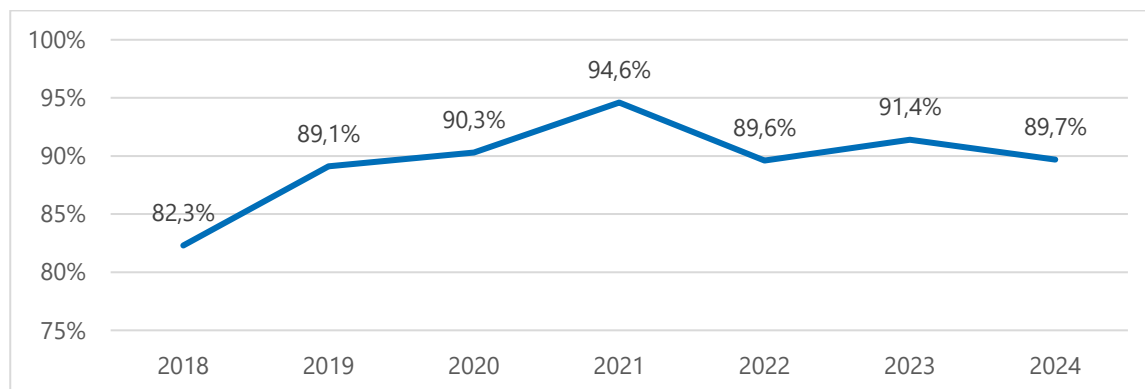
4.1.1 Effectiveness

To assess the effectiveness of the intervention this evaluation focuses on assessing the extent to which the Centre has achieved its objectives, the factors that have facilitated or hindered the Centre from being effective, the degree to which the Centre has adapted to change and whether there were any unexpected or unintended effects that could be corrected, mitigated or eliminated.

Key achievements

The evidence provided in the study shows that the Centre consistently exceeded its work programme targets, achieving an average implementation rate of 91% in the evaluation period 2019-2023.

Figure 6: Implementation rate of the work programme 2018-2024⁵²



Source: CdT Consolidated Activity Reports 2018-2024

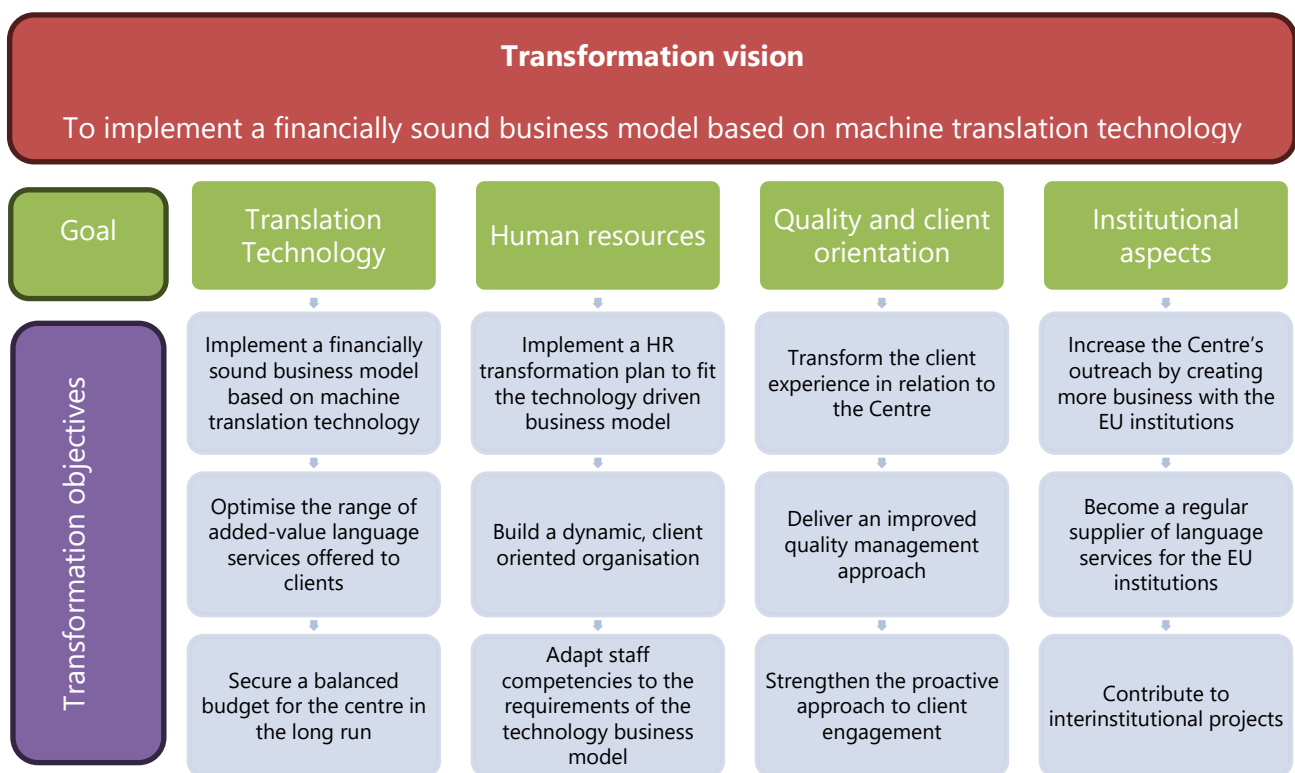
One of the main goals of the above-mentioned two-year Transformation Plan for 2019-2020 aimed at implementing a sustainable business model based on translation technologies. The Centre was very

⁵¹ The Centre's amended 2016-2020 strategy at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/amended-strategy-2016-2020-2019>

⁵² The supporting study, Figure 13, p. 34.

active in introducing tools and workflow systems to streamline its processes and operations. Activity-based management, activity-based budgeting and activity-based costing methodologies were applied to achieve cost improvements, both in-house and in the outsourcing of work to external language service providers. Support and management activities also saw advancements, including the deployment of new tools like digitalised recruitment systems and improved accounting software. The Transformation Plan had a 98% implementation rate by the end of 2020 and was considered by the Management Board to have become an integral part of the Centre's regular work processes in October 2021. As part of the plan, the Centre introduced a number of new and customised linguistic services. The uptake of those services, although satisfying clients' needs to some extent has, however, remained under expectations, each representing around or less than 1% of demand as shown in Table 3 above.

Figure 7: Transformation Plan Map (2019-2020)⁵³

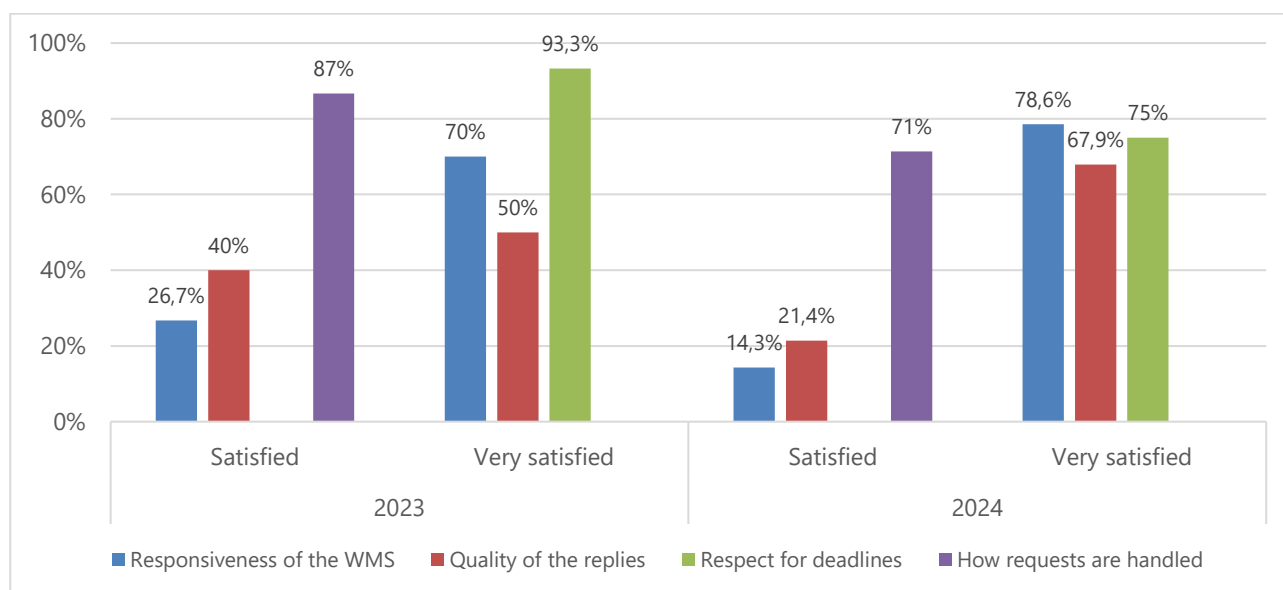


Source: Adapted from 'Final sprint towards our transformation', Translation Centre for the Bodies of the EU, 2020.

Client satisfaction improved through initiatives like the establishment of single contact points and tailored services. Engaging with clients with a so-called bespoke approach allowed the Centre to better understand specific needs and to optimise its service offer accordingly. The resulting extended range of services is available to all clients of the Centre. The direct channels established through the single points of contact aim at centralising and streamlining communication between requesters and linguists.

⁵³ The supporting study, Figure 26, p. 56.

Figure 8: Indicators of the satisfaction with the Centre's services (2023-2024)⁵⁴



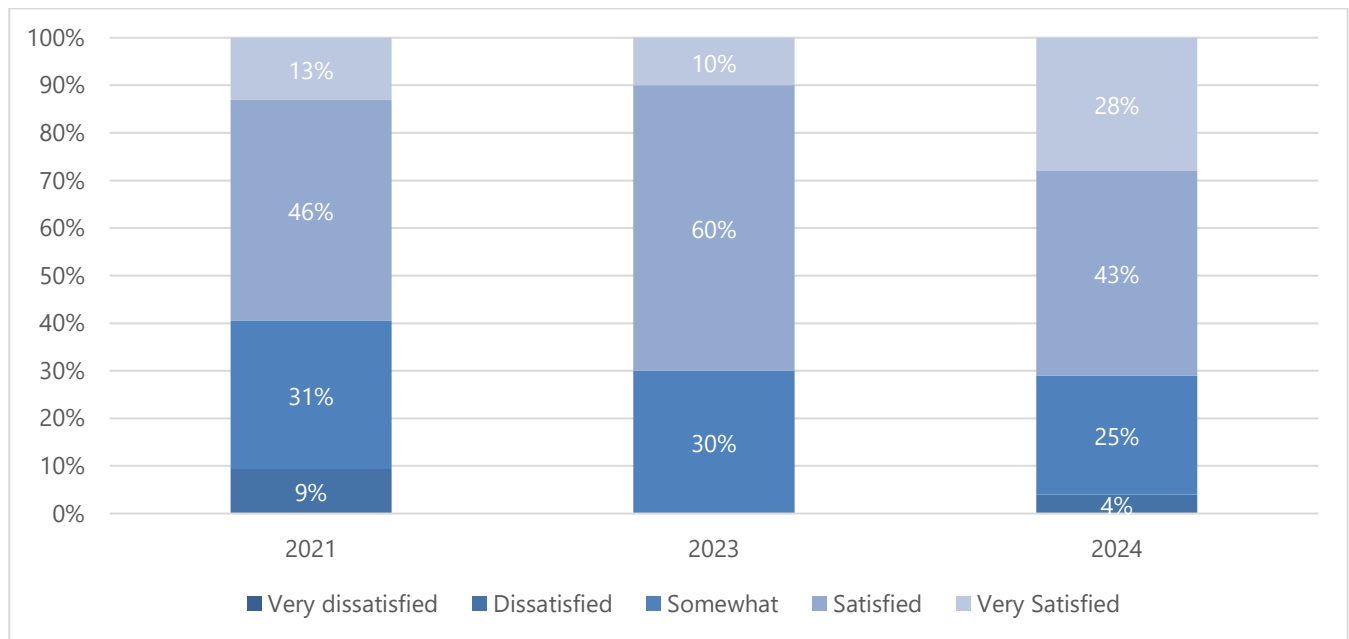
Source: Translation Centre's client satisfaction surveys (2023-2024).

By 2023 the Centre had expanded the number of its clients to 73 as new EU bodies were set up or new arrangements or SLAs were signed with existing entities both having and not having the legal obligation to use the Centre, as the legal obligation for an agency to use the Centre does not preclude the necessity to set up an SLA between the agency and the Centre. The number of clients the Centre can serve is mainly determined by the limitations in the Founding Regulation pertaining to the type of clients the Centre can actually address and serve, which are the EU institutions, bodies and agencies⁵⁵. It must also be noted that, with the exception of a few cases, the demand for linguistic services has not grown consequently. The reasons for this lie on the one hand in the differing requirements the bodies have as concerns multilingual communication and the corresponding resources at their disposal. On the other hand freely available language technology has reduced the need for human translation where a quality guarantee of the output is not a prerequisite. In contrast, the Centre is seen as a reliable but expensive high-quality provider that clients appreciate highly. However, balancing cost efficiency with maintaining high-quality levels remains a challenge.

⁵⁴ The supporting study, Figure 30, p. 60.

⁵⁵ With the exception of clients with specific requirements or specific projects, the services on offer and the conditions for their provision are the same for all clients, independently of their status or institutional role.

Figure 9: Clients' satisfaction with the quality of service - price ratio⁵⁶



Source: Client Satisfaction Survey, 2021-2024

Operational improvements

Capitalisation on technological innovations was and still is high on the Centre's agenda and the Transformation Plan led the way for the Centre to embrace technology by integrating machine translation and AI tools to enhance productivity and serve clients better. New systems like eCdT and the client and freelance portals have increasingly streamlined workflows, while tools for transcription and subtitling broadened service offerings. Along with the technological developments the Centre made efforts to optimise the business model by reducing outsourcing from 90% in 2018 to under 50% in 2024. This led to an increase of insourced work with higher in-house workload and productivity rates allowing the Centre both to make full use of internal resources and to make savings on outsourcing expenditure.

Operational effectiveness was enhanced not only by increasing automation but also by investing in the Centre's staff members through regular training activities, especially on integrating technological developments into the Centre's workflow, to better meet clients' needs and continue delivering high-quality outputs. A main feature contributing to operational effectiveness was the Centre's Translation Quality Assurance Action Plan (TQAAP) for 2019-2020. With the aim of enhancing the quality of its linguistic services, the plan produced a Translation Quality Management Model (TQMM) elaborated in consultation with clients and provided relevant training to staff members on post-editing of machine translation output, evaluation of the quality of customised machine translation engines and subject related training in clients' thematic areas (e.g. medical, fundamental rights). The revised quality

⁵⁶ The supporting study, Figure 18, p. 38.

assurance model for outsourced translations⁵⁷ based on a data-driven approach allows the Centre to define the degree of revision of outsourced work needed on the basis of a previous track record of providers and the intended use of the texts by clients. This shift whereby clients can decide for themselves the level of quality they expect when choosing the service allows the Centre to manage its internal resources more efficiently. Consequently the Centre invoices translations at different quality levels since 2022. The implementation of the follow-up TQAAP for 2023-2024 stood at 68.8% in 2023. Actions therein focused on training translators in specialist domains, establishing best practices and organising a workshop on quality control.

Interinstitutional cooperation

The Centre continued to play a key role in interinstitutional projects like IATE, the EU's publicly accessible terminology database, which it has been managing on a fee-based arrangement on behalf of the EU institutions since 2003. The database is considered to be one of the flagships of interinstitutional cooperation between the language services of the EU bodies and institutions. The database has been the object of a continuous evolution and has become an invaluable asset for linguists, subject experts and laymen within and outside the scope of the EU bodies and institutions.

In cooperation with its clients the Centre developed the *Guidelines and template for EU Agencies' multilingual policies*⁵⁸, setting out recommendations to improve multilingual policies across EU agencies that were welcomed by the European Ombudsman. In the same context the Centre delivered joint training ventures and participated in knowledge-sharing events to support the exchange of best practices.

The efforts invested in fostering cooperation have contributed to the Centre's marketing endeavours and have, above all, improved the Centre's reputation, contributing to the status of centre of excellence strived for in the Centre's strategy.

Technological challenges and areas for improvement

While technological advancements improved effectiveness and efficiency and opened up opportunities for new services to the Centre's clients, they also brought challenges. Generative AI tools made some planned services redundant⁵⁹ and freely accessible translation tools reduced the demand for some linguistic services of the Centre. The lower levels of reliability and quality of AI or machine translation outputs have, however, strengthened the Centre's role and added value when it comes to quality assurance.

⁵⁷ See also the Centre's approach to quality at <https://cdt.europa.eu/en/discover-our-approach-quality>

⁵⁸ Guidelines and template for EU Agencies' multilingual policies at https://agencies-network.europa.eu/newsroom/publications/guidelines-and-template-eu-agencies-multilingual-policies_en

⁵⁹ For example, a planned summarisation service was never set up because similar functionalities became freely available through generative AI tools.

The development of (bespoke) services integrating new technology has not always proven to be profitable as the revenue from these activities is often lower than that from translations and linguistic services that rely more on human intervention.

Demand forecasting

A major challenge is the planning uncertainty the Centre faces in relation to the demand forecasts of its clients (see figure 3 above). The Centre plans its yearly revenues on the basis of clients' demand forecasts. These forecasts have, however, mostly proven to be unreliable. The ensuing budgeting challenges for the Centre due to fluctuating demand, most often downwards, have put a major strain on resources to the point where the Centre has not been able to balance its budget with the revenues from the services it provides despite the savings made in operational costs. Additionally the Centre has, as all EU agencies and institutions, had to face rising inflation expenses that have put an extra strain on its finances. As explained earlier, these factors have led to the near depletion of Centre's reserves and to it having to ask for a contribution from the EU budget for 2025, 2026 and 2027. Furthermore, the Centre's Single Programming Document for 2027-2029 predicts a shortfall of EUR 10.2 million in 2028 and EUR 11.2 million in 2029⁶⁰. This suggests that the development of demand alone may not allow the Centre to balance its budget in the future. As such, alternatives must be sought. Following the recommendations of the Commission's Internal Audit Service⁶¹, the Management Board of the Centre agreed at its meeting on 18 March 2026 to set up a specific Working Group on Pricing⁶² composed of representatives of the Centre and representatives of the management board, agencies, institutions and member states. The working group will take up its work after the meeting of the Centre's Management Board on 26 October 2026 and will work under the responsibility of the Management Board to which it will also report.

Staff profiles

The measures the Centre has taken to save on expenses have included shifting from an approach largely based on outsourcing to more insourcing. In parallel to the need to upskill and reskill its staff to adapt to new requirements this has led to an increased staff workload. Centre staff have raised doubts about the adequacy and choice of learning and development activities at their disposal in the face of the fast technological developments that affect their job profiles⁶³.

Resilience and adapting to change

The Centre demonstrated resilience in adapting to external pressures, including the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs due to inflation. It transitioned to remote working, digitised processes and implemented

⁶⁰ [Draft Single Programming Document 2027-2029 of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union](#).

⁶¹ The Commission's Internal Audit Service: Final audit report on costing and pricing of the linguistic services in the Translation Centre (CdT) at https://webgate.ec.testa.eu/Ares/documentInfo/documentInfoDetails.do?documentId=080166e51fe77e76&_f=ext

⁶² The role of the working group will be to examine the analysis and scenarios prepared by the Centre, provide strategic guidance and input, and support the reflections on the future pricing policy and the Centre's long-term financial sustainability.

⁶³ The supporting study, p. 63-64.

energy-saving measures. The Centre also established working groups to explore the potential of AI and other technologies, ensuring it remains competitive in a rapidly evolving language industry. The evolution of language technology has proven to be a paradoxical in the sense that it has given the Centre new means and tools to improve its effectiveness but at the same it has given the Centre's clients the option not to resort to the Centre for at least a part of their multilingual communication.

While the Centre has made significant progress, it faces ongoing challenges in balancing innovation, quality and financial sustainability. Though staff see their profession and tasks significantly affected, even threatened, by the fast-paced technological advance, the Centre has so far managed to keep abreast of developments. Continued investment in staff development, client engagement and technology will be crucial for the Centre's future success.

The main change the Centre has not been able to master is the decline in demand for its services and the consequent loss in revenue. This is a challenge the Centre must address as its top priority to avoid having to request a contribution from the EU budget.

4.1.2 Efficiency

Evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the Centre

The Centre's cost-effectiveness was assessed in the supporting study by analysing its expenditure, comparing it with similar EU agencies and gathering stakeholder feedback. The findings highlight both achievements and challenges in balancing costs and maintaining high-quality services.

Expenditure trends and benchmarking

From 2018 to 2023, the Centre reduced its total expenditure from €44.8 million to €43.5 million, with further reductions to €42.5 million in 2024⁶⁴. This was achieved despite rising staff and energy costs, mainly through measures mentioned earlier such as automation, reduced outsourcing and streamlined administrative processes.

However, the Centre's total expenditure per staff member increased from €198,994 in 2020 to €214,804 in 2023. This reflects inflation and EU-regulated staff wages and the necessity to invest in technology, IT security and operational efficiency. Benchmarking against select EU agencies of similar size or with similar business models shows that the Centre's expenditure per staff member lies somewhere in the middle⁶⁵, most probably due to differences in staff numbers, country-specific cost factors and operational models.

Operational and administrative efficiency

The Centre has significantly reduced its administrative staff, from 20.4% in 2018 to 11.6% in 2024, by implementing tools like ARES for document management and eCdT for translation workflows. These

⁶⁴ The supporting study, p. 83.

⁶⁵ The supporting study, p. 80.

changes have streamlined operations and reduced costs. Automation and digitalisation in the processing and delivery of translations, including digital quality assurance procedures, have also contributed to efficiency savings within the Centre over the evaluation period.

The Centre's operational efficiency, measured by budget implementation rates, has been relatively high but below target since 2021. This reflects the Centre's reliance on client demand, which, due to its fluctuations, introduces uncertainty in resources planning compared to other EU agencies that have more predictable workloads and income levels.

Management board efficiency

The Centre's governance structure, in particular the size of its Management Board, has been questioned by legislators and auditors as disproportionate, cumbersome and potentially slowing decision-making on several occasions and by different stakeholders⁶⁶. The Centre has one of the largest boards compared to other EU agencies, with its clients along with Member States and the European institutions adding up to 73 members⁶⁷, which is by far more than recommended in the Common Approach, which promotes a 'standard' board consisting of representatives of Member States, the Commission and the European Parliament and a 'fairly limited number of stakeholders' representatives⁶⁸. According to the European Parliament Discharge Reports the large size of the Management Board complicates decision-making and hinders simplified management⁶⁹. Additionally, still according to the EP, the Management Board's architecture represents an inherent risk of conflicts of interest, considering that the Centre's clients have a potential influence on certain files such as the pricing of the Centre's products⁷⁰.

It should be noted that Member State governments have the opportunity to benefit and learn from the role of the Centre as an expert in the field of language technology and services through their role on the Management Board⁷¹. The analysis carried out through the supporting study failed to provide practical examples of conflicts of interest in the Management Board or of instances where there had been

⁶⁶ E.g.: European Parliament *Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union for the financial year 2019 (2020/2156(DEC))*. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_depotes/rapports/2021/0084/P9_A\(2021\)0084_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_depotes/rapports/2021/0084/P9_A(2021)0084_EN.pdf), and

European Parliament *Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union for the financial year 2021 (2022/2094(DEC))*. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0104_EN.html

⁶⁷ Situation at the Management Board meeting of 18 March 2026.

⁶⁸ Common Approach, point 10 at https://european-union.europa.eu/document/download/d4199ff4-1e3d-45e6-af7e-90cf1a7b10bc_en?filename=joint_statement_on_decentralised_agencies_en.pdf

⁶⁹ European Parliament (2021-2024), *Discharge Reports 2019-2021*.

⁷⁰ European Parliament *Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union for the financial year 2019 (2020/2156(DEC))*. Available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_depotes/rapports/2021/0084/P9_A\(2021\)0084_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_depotes/rapports/2021/0084/P9_A(2021)0084_EN.pdf)

⁷¹ The supporting study, p. 112.

difficulties or delays in the decision-making process due to its size. This is corroborated by the Commission's experience from its membership in the Management Board since the establishment of the Centre.

Key business activities and financial performance

As mentioned earlier the Centre's financial performance has declined, with total profit from key activities turning negative in 2022 and reaching a deficit of €5.67 million in 2024⁷². While some activities, like translation of EU trademarks (EUTMs) (43% of demand) and local installation of e-Translation, remain profitable, others, such as translation (42% of demand) and terminology (1% of demand) are not (see Table 4). The significant losses are mainly due to a steep decrease in demand, notably of EUTMs kicking in in 2022. Paradoxically some advanced workflows, such as the Centre's multi-engine strategy, whereby several MT systems and a quality-scoring system are used at the same time to produce the best possible automatic translation, have proven efficient in production but not generating significant additional revenue (see Table 3 above).

Outsourcing has been another historically important activity at the Centre complementing the Centre's internal capacity in its resources mix. The Centre signs service contracts with language service providers (LSPs) following targeted, time and resource consuming procurement procedures. Automatic pre-processing and pre-translation have over the years reduced the volume of work outsourced to contractors on the free market. In addition, the implementation of advanced language technology tools has increased the productivity of in-house translators and allowed the Centre to shift more demand to in-house production⁷³. These two factors helped reduce the expenditure related to outsourcing during the evaluation period. However, as the gains from technology reach a plateau, outsourcing, as part of the Centre's resources mix, will continue to contribute to maintaining the high-quality levels of the Centre's output in times of temporary or more durable saturation of internal production resources. Outsourcing of translation is foreseen to constitute 83.3% of the Centre's operational expenditure in its draft budget for 2027⁷⁴.

Stakeholder perspectives

While 58% of clients consider document translations cost-effective from their perspective, fewer see the Centre's other linguistic services as offering good value. Staff, however, are more positive, with many recognising the Centre's efforts to improve efficiency through technology and automation. Many stakeholders believe the Centre has made significant strides in improving cost-effectiveness. Stakeholders highlighted that the Centre's commitment to multilingualism and high-quality standards, and the associated costs, often makes it less competitive than private sector providers. Some stakeholders

⁷² The supporting study, pp. 89-90.

⁷³ The supporting study, pp. 94-95.

⁷⁴ [Draft Single Programming Document 2027-2029 of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union](#), p. 16.

are concerned about competition from private sector providers offering lower prices, the need for specialised skills in machine translation, and concerns over staff workload.

Challenges in the translation and linguistic services industry

The translation sector, and with it the Centre, faces significant disruption from advancements in machine translation and generative AI. These technologies offer low-cost options that appeal to budget-conscious EU agencies. While human translation remains essential for accuracy and security, clients are increasingly turning to automated solutions for less critical tasks.

The Centre has made efforts to integrate advanced technologies into its operations, including machine translation and AI tools. It has implemented a multi-engine translation strategy and launched initiatives to improve its technological capabilities. Further investment in AI and staff training may be needed to remain competitive. However, investments in new technology and the data needed to make it work appropriately are costly. It is not clear at this point in time whether effort and expense would compensate for the losses in the Centre's demand and revenue, nor whether they would contribute to lowering the prices for the Centre's services and consequently make them more attractive to the Centre's clients.

Further challenges and future opportunities for improvement

Financial performance figures clearly show that the Centre's current business model is not sustainable if demand does not rise to a level that allows the Centre to cover its costs. While the Centre has made progress in improving efficiency, its public service mandate and competition with private sector providers pose ongoing challenges as some of its clients limit their translation demand or possibly turn to more cost-efficient alternatives. Different measures have been suggested by the Centre's stakeholders, such as shifting to more tailor-made services for clients, replacing retiring staff with contract staff, outsourcing HR and IT services, and further economise on office space, to improve the current situation⁷⁵.

The Centre has elaborated an HR Strategy that will be supported by the accompanying Business Development Strategy, Finance Strategy and IT Strategy, all intended to guide the Centre through the programming period up to 2027–2028 and to reinforce long-term stability⁷⁶.

The Centre is committed to finding a long-term solution to its sustainability and also to identifying more immediate solutions to balance its annual budgets. However, the scope of action may be limited by the fact that the Centre has already applied most of the remedial actions that it can implement under the current legal and administrative context⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ The supporting study, p. 98.

⁷⁶ Announced at the Centre's Management Board meeting of 16 October 2025.

⁷⁷ The supporting study, pp. 97-98.

4.1.3 Coherence

Collaboration between the Centre and the Commission

The Translation Centre works closely with the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT), its partner DG, and other European Commission services, fostering strong partnerships and effective collaboration. Both the Centre and DGT share a good relationship built on trust and mutual understanding of their respective needs⁷⁸. Despite the absence of a formal Service-Level Agreement (SLA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) defining the working arrangements between the Centre and its partner DG, cooperation has been smooth and conflict-free⁷⁹. DGT supports the Centre in preparing key documents like the yearly multiannual Single Programming Document and any other document that is scrutinised by the Centre's Management Board and represents the Centre in budgetary hearings. Whenever possible and appropriate DGT facilitates arrangements or SLAs with other Commission services, e.g. with DG GROW. There are no overlaps nor competition between the two translation services as they operate in different fields as defined in their underlying documents: the Centre mostly for the agencies⁸⁰ and DGT, as the Commission's internal translation service, mostly with Commission proposals for EU-legislation⁸¹.

The Centre plays a key role in managing IATE - Interactive Terminology for Europe, the EU's terminology database, in partnership with DGT, its main contributor both in terms of content and of the development of tools and technical functionalities of the database. The Centre and DGT also worked closely on more sensitive aspects in the management of the entries of the database, namely on granting public access to contents in non-EU languages.

Further to having set up cooperation agreements with the EU institutions and bodies (Council of the EU, European Parliament, European Court of Justice, European Court of Auditors and European Central Bank) as per its Founding Regulation, the Centre has also signed direct arrangements or SLAs with other

⁷⁸ The supporting study, p. 99.

⁷⁹ A working arrangement was agreed between the Centre and DGT in 2026 following the departure of the Centre's director.
The Centre and DGT signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on local installations of eTranslation (eTra-Local)' in 2020 covering the cooperation between DGT and the Centre on the development and maintenance of local installations of eTranslation to satisfy a specific request from the EPPO.

⁸⁰ COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 2965/94 of 28 November 1994 setting up a Translation Centre for bodies of the European Union at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01994R2965-20031001>

⁸¹ The Commission's translation strategy Communication to the Commission C(2016)2000 Translation as part of the Commission's decision-making process at [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C\(2016\)2000&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C(2016)2000&lang=en)

Commission DGs, such as DG EMPL, DG GROW⁸² and DG JUST⁸³ for specific translation projects that fall outside the categories of documents translated by DGT under the Communication to the Commission on translation as a part of the Commission’s decision-making process.

Working with EU decentralised agencies and other bodies

The Centre positions itself as the linguistic shared service provider for EU decentralised agencies⁸⁴. Regular engagement activities, such as bilateral meetings and the Translation Contact Network, help align services with client needs, the latter being seen as a major investment to foster knowledge sharing and operational improvements between the Centre and its clients but also between the clients themselves.

The Centre serves all its clients on the same footing, although closer partnerships have developed with some of them over the years with the aim to deliver tailored projects and services due to their specific needs. Cases include the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), where cooperation has improved significantly through joint projects like the Centre’s Transformation Plan, the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO), the European Asylum Agency (EUAA) and others⁸⁵.

Despite closer cooperation and relationships there is evidence that some agencies make use of alternative, sometimes internal⁸⁶, translation solutions to cut costs or to satisfy specific needs, as admitted by over half of the respondents to the survey in the supporting study⁸⁷. Expenditure for translation becomes a regular target for savings, resulting in outsourcing to cheaper language service providers or resorting to freely available or internal language technology, often with consequent quality losses⁸⁸. This approach, resulting from budgetary pressure on most EU agencies, is a severe threat to the Centre’s sustainability finally materialising in the depletion of the Centre’s reserve for pricing stability in 2025 and the need for a contribution from the EU budget to balance the Centre’s budgets in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

⁸² An arrangement between the Centre and DG GROW was signed on 26 April 2024 for the translation of content for the Technical Regulation Information System (TRIS) at <https://technical-regulation-information-system.ec.europa.eu/en/home>

⁸³ For the translation of content for the Open Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform closed in 2025.

⁸⁴ The supporting study, p. 100.

⁸⁵ The supporting study, pp. 102-103.

⁸⁶ See the example of the EUIPO, which is one of the agencies with a legal obligation to resort to the Centre, with its internal Linguistics and Publications Service.

⁸⁷ The supporting study, p. 104.

⁸⁸ The supporting study, Figures 55 and 56, p. 105.

The quality the Centre provides is highly regarded and clients operating in areas where accuracy and legibility are vital are prepared to pay the prices and make use of the Centre despite internal pressure to cut translation costs⁸⁹.

Interinstitutional cooperation

The Centre actively contributes to interinstitutional cooperation among the language services of the EU institutions. It shares working methods, rationalises resources, and harmonises translation procedures. The Centre's flagship project, IATE mentioned earlier, is a prime example of successful collaboration, with ongoing improvements and features developed to meet user needs in the interinstitutional context and beyond.

The Centre also participates in international networks like the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP), sharing best practices and innovations in translation and interpretation.

The Commission's experience from the information and good practice exchanges in the context of the Interinstitutional Cooperation on Translation and Interpretation (ICTI) pictures the Centre as a forward-looking entity constantly on the search to implement innovative solutions in the use of language resources, technical and human. It regularly shares its experience with the EU language services, often acting as a spearhead from which the other institutions can learn and find their own solutions.

Opportunities for improvement

Without questioning the coherence with which the Centre operates, nor of its *raison d'être*, the study identified a number of points on which the Centre could act with the aim to better serve its clients and ensure financial sustainability:

- Reduce turnaround times to handle more work efficiently.
- Enhance communication with clients through direct contact, bilateral meetings, and a dedicated client support service.
- Promote its services to raise awareness of its offerings.
- Address specific client concerns.
- Maintain a strong emphasis on quality to meet the diverse needs of clients.

This could help address the issue of some clients using alternative ways of procuring linguistic services.

A number of aspects mentioned above were also confirmed by the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS). In its 2025 audit report on costing and pricing of the Centre's linguistic services the IAS made recommendations for the Centre to clarify obligations of Centre's clients to use its services and monitor the compliance. The Centre has laid out an action plan to implement the IAS recommendations mainly aiming at analysing the legal framework on the use of Centre's linguistic services and monitoring

⁸⁹ The supporting study, p. 106.

compliance with the legal framework; and setting up a pricing strategy on the basis of which the Centre should establish a pricing model that addresses the Centre's financial sustainability.

4.2. How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

The added value of a centralised EU translation service

The initial aim of setting up the Centre as a centralised translation service was to provide for economies of scale and avoid duplication of efforts and expenses rather than having a translation service in each and every decentralised EU agency remain valid today. As shown in the study⁹⁰, there is a widespread understanding that the European Union benefits significantly from having a centralised translation and language service provider.

Key benefits

The Centre ensures high-quality, tailored translations for EU bodies and institutions, saving time and resources while avoiding duplication. Clients value its ability to adapt to their needs, particularly for specialised and technical translations, and the Centre is widely regarded for its reliable and precise translations, with 88% of surveyed clients rating its work as very high quality⁹¹. This is especially important for technical and specialised documents, such as those related to medicine or legal matters.

While some clients find the Centre's prices high, many agree that it saves them time and resources compared to managing their own translation processes⁹² or outsourcing to private providers.

The Centre provides a 'one-stop-shop' for multilingual services, offering translations in all EU languages, terminology databases, and bespoke tools tailored to EU-specific needs. In principle, this centralisation prevents duplication of efforts and fosters specialised expertise.

In a world where secure handling of data has become an absolute priority, the Centre ensures high levels of data security, protecting its clients' sensitive information that might otherwise be at risk with external providers⁹³.

Customised services

The Centre is known to its clients and the EU institutional community for its ability to deliver tailored solutions. The shift from the approach providing an identical or similar (general) service to all its clients to an approach focusing on providing bespoke services has brought the centre to work more closely with those agencies that have specific needs. This has included joint training activities with specific bodies to enhance both the quality of the original texts and of the translations the Centre delivers. The Centre

⁹⁰ The supporting study, p. 111.

⁹¹ The supporting study, p. 111.

⁹² The supporting study, Figure 58, p. 111.

⁹³ The supporting study, p. 112.

also helps clients draft texts that are easier to translate and provides terminology tools like the IATE database, which is widely used across the EU and beyond.

The Centre developed some client-specific services using new machine translation technologies like light post-editing of machine translation outputs, custom machine-translations, language consultancy and web translations. Not all of them yielding the desired long-term effects and revenue (e.g. automatic translation service and Paste'n'Go⁹⁴) but closing an initial gap in the Centre's service portfolio.

Challenges and opportunities

As seen above, the Centre faces challenges despite its strengths. Demand for its services has decreased, partly due to the rise of generative AI tools able to process multiple languages⁹⁵, partly due to the pressure to reduce costs. Some clients prefer machine translations for routine tasks, as these are often 'good enough' and more cost-effective. However, for high-quality, complex translations, the type of services the Centre provides remains indispensable.

Clients also appreciate the Centre's transparency in pricing⁹⁶ and its efforts to innovate, such as introducing new customised services demonstrating the Centre's commitment to meeting evolving client needs.

Impact on stakeholders

The Centre's work directly benefits EU agencies, bodies and institutions, ensuring their multilingual communication is effective and accessible in, at least, all 24 EU languages. Indirectly, it supports EU citizens by promoting multilingualism and ensuring translated texts are clear and understandable for the EU citizens in a wide range of fields, which is the fundamental mission of the Centre⁹⁷.

The impact on the clients can also be measured on the hypothetical basis of the non-existence of access to centralised translation services. Clients acknowledge that each EU agency would have to outsource their translation needs and develop specific in-house language and translation expertise in all 24 EU languages, including investing in more sophisticated language and AI tools, which would lead to unnecessary duplication of efforts and a heavy burden, especially for the smaller EU Agencies. Centralising translation and linguistic services in principle allows to reduce duplication. The availability of generative AI translation tools does not compensate for the high quality the Centre is able to provide by its services. Clients have even noted that resorting to the Centre saves them resources overall compared to using external translation providers: 'This is because the overall efforts required to organise

⁹⁴ The supporting study, Figure 60, p. 115.

⁹⁵ Although often not all 24 EU languages, not to mention non-EU languages, nor to the same quality level.

⁹⁶ The supporting study, p. 111.

⁹⁷ The supporting study, p. 114.

their own procurement of translation services with private sector providers outweigh the benefits of the lower costs.⁹⁸

Similarly, if a centralised translation service did not exist, the terminology databases and tailored tools to facilitate clients' multilingual output in their respective EU-specific contexts would not continue as smoothly. Setting up in-house structures in every agency with staff and tools to handle translation and language specific tasks would be far more expensive in the long run. The Centre also has the advantage that it understands the importance its clients' projects⁹⁹.

Consequently, from tailored training to advanced tools, the Centre's services make a tangible difference to its clients and to their audience and the Centre continues to play a vital role in fostering multilingualism and supporting the EU's communication needs, adapting to new technologies and client demands while maintaining its high standards.

4.3. Is the intervention still relevant?

The Translation Centre has successfully fulfilled its mandate to provide translation and linguistic services to EU agencies and bodies. It has adapted to clients' evolving needs by introducing new linguistic services such as automatic translation, post-editing, and transcription to name a few. Clients, Management Board members and staff agree that the Centre's services are essential, particularly for high-quality, specialised translations across numerous languages and topics to address the commitment to of the EU bodies and agencies. The Centre's responsiveness to urgent requests and its ability to tailor translations to local contexts are highly valued¹⁰⁰.

Reports from the European Parliament (EP) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) have raised concerns about the declining demand for the Centre's services, leading to reduced revenues. Between 2018 and 2024 realised revenues dropped from €41 million to €37 million, despite an increase in the number of clients served. This trend is attributed to budget constraints faced by EU agencies combined with the growing availability and use of low-cost alternatives like machine translation. As also observed by the EP and the ECA another issue is that not all EU agencies are obligated by their founding regulation to resort to the Centre¹⁰¹, which has led several of them to bypass the Centre for their multilingual communication in search of cheaper LSPs or setting up internal linguistic services. None of the above questions the relevance of the original decision to set up a central service to provide translation and other linguistic services to the agencies.

⁹⁸ The supporting study, p. 111.

⁹⁹ The supporting study, p. 113.

¹⁰⁰ The supporting study, p. 40.

¹⁰¹ The supporting study, p. 41.

Meeting client needs

The Centre's services are praised for their quality and timeliness¹⁰². Clients appreciate the Centre's strong communication, user-friendly processes, and ability to develop tailored services. Surveys show high satisfaction with most services. Clients also value the Centre's commitment to security and confidentiality, which is often superior to private market alternatives¹⁰³.

The Centre's pricing is a concern. Many clients find the costs high, especially when compared to free or cheaper alternatives. While the Centre has introduced modular pricing and passed on savings from machine translation, these measures have not been enough to reverse the decline in demand, nor has the decision not to adjust prices to inflation for several years during and after the COVID pandemic.

Future considerations

Economic pressures, political shifts, and technological advancements will continue to shape the Centre's relevance. Budget constraints, de-prioritisation of multilingualism, preparation for potential new EU languages as part of the ongoing enlargement process, and the rise of generative AI are key challenges.

Despite of the above, stakeholders generally agree that human intervention in the services offered by the Centre should remain, as it is the sole guarantee for confidentiality paired with quality. One of the Centre's main advantages is that its (linguistic) staff operating within the framework of the EU staff regulation play, and will continue playing, an important role in complying with the security, confidentiality and procurement rules with which the Centre's clients must also comply¹⁰⁴. This gives the Centre a privileged position in dealing with the texts of the EU bodies, in particular as the Centre can provide quality assurance levels that machine or AI-powered tools cannot. The Centre will still need to increase outreach to clients, emphasising the benefits of its services and the importance of multilingualism in the EU, and continue to innovate and adapt.

¹⁰² The supporting study, p. 44.

¹⁰³ The supporting study, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ The supporting study, p. 51.

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1. Conclusions

All in all the evaluation of the Centre has shown it to be an agency with an effective, coherent and relevant activity providing EU-added value as defined in the Better Regulation guidelines. At the same time, the Centre faces some challenges as described below which may put into question the efficiency of this setup.

The Centre was set up in 1994 as a self-financed agency with the option of receiving a subsidy from the EU budget inscribed in its founding regulation. With a few exceptions, all other agencies are funded, at least partially, by subsidies from the EU budget. According to the European Court of Auditors' latest report on EU agencies, in 2024 there were:

- 4 self-financed agencies (CdT, CPVO, EUIPO and SRB);
- 8 agencies partially financed by the EU budget (ACER, EASA, EBA, ECHA, EIOPA, EMA, ERA and ESMA);
- while all others (31) were fully financed by the EU budget¹⁰⁵.

The Centre's self-financing model worked for almost 30 years. However, with the budget constraints under the current MFF and the technological advancements in freely available language processing tools, the demand for translation and linguistic services from Centre's clients, that was driving the business model, has significantly decreased.

The Centre has to generate revenue to cover its expenditure by functioning with a free market-based business model – until 2025 without a contribution from the EU budget – at the same time being constrained by the obligation to operate within the EU institutional and regulatory framework. This involves high statutory costs and limits flexibility as to the sources of demand and revenue the Centre can draw from. The Centre faces significant challenges to its sustainability due to declining demand for its services, combined with a growth of costs (mostly staff costs¹⁰⁶, determined outside the Centre's control by the regulatory framework). This dual role – generating revenue for its own operation like a private company while complying with public sector rules – restricts its ability to explore broader alternative solutions and compete fairly and effectively.

¹⁰⁵ European Court of Auditors: Annual report on EU agencies for the 2024 financial year, Figure 1.4, p. 17 at https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2024/SAR-AGENCIES-2024_EN.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ See Figure 1 on page 10.

Declining demand for services

Between 2018 and 2024, the Centre experienced a 37% drop in annual translation volumes, with significant decreases in the demand for document and EU trademark translations. While some services, such as automatic translation and light post-editing, are expected to see slight growth, most clients anticipate their demand for the Centre's services to remain stagnant or decline further. Technological advancements, such as generative AI tools like CoPilot and the European Commission's translation tool eTranslation, are increasingly being used by clients for cost-effective and quick translations.

To address these challenges in line with the transformation plan, the Centre has implemented measures to improve efficiency and attract clients over the years covered by the evaluation period. Initiatives include integrating machine translation, using translation memories, automating workflows, and launching new services like light post-editing, transcription, and automatic translation. An Advisory Group on AI has also been established within the Centre to explore further advancements. However, resource constraints and staff training gaps have slowed progress, and big investments do not guarantee compensation in terms of demand and revenue.

Barriers to sustainability

The Centre's operational costs put upward pressure on prices charged by the Centre to cover the costs. This remains a key concern for clients, many of whom are under increasing budget constraints themselves. Regulatory limitations also restrict the Centre's ability to expand its client base beyond the category of agencies, offices, bodies and institutions of the European Union specified in the Founding Regulation. As explained earlier, the operational context of the Centre is consequently a 'closed space' regulated by the provisions of the Financial Regulation¹⁰⁷, the above-mentioned Staff Regulations and the Centre's Founding Regulation. Many clients, seeking to contain expenditure on multilingualism, continue to reduce their usage due to cost and the availability of alternative solutions including in-house translation, LSPs in the private sector or machine translation. The Commission's machine translation tool, eTranslation, caters for many translation needs that do not require high accuracy while still providing high security levels.

Working towards sustainability

While looking into all potential options for the future of a centralised translation service for the agencies, also in the framework of the large-scale review of the Commission, the Centre must continue to work on its business model to reach profitability or at least a balance between its revenue and its expenditure. In principle it means reaching a level of demand that the Centre can handle, applying economies of scale, without incurring additional costs, and that at the same time provides a stable level of income high enough for the Centre to operate in the long run.

¹⁰⁷ EU Financial Regulation at https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-financial-regulation_en

Stakeholders consulted for the supporting study have suggested several ways to improve the Centre's sustainability. The current legal framework covers only one of the suggested options¹⁰⁸: introducing a contribution to the Centre's budget from the EU budget. This would move the Centre into the group of agencies that are partially self-financed and partially supported by the EU budget. The Centre received a contribution from the EU budget for 2025 and 2026 and requested a contribution also for the draft budget 2027. Considering the volatility of demand and revenue, keeping the current setup may require a yearly contribution from the EU budget to systematically comply with the obligation to balance the Centre's budget. A review of the status and role of the Centre may be necessary to avoid undue burden on the EU administrative budget.

In 2025, the Centre elaborated a strategy paper based on four strategic pillars (HR Strategy, IT Strategy, Business Development Strategy and Finance Strategy) to be set up by the end of 2026, the Centre aims at diversifying and boosting its revenue streams, at maximising its operational efficiency and agility and at continuing and strengthening sound financial management. The Acting Director presented the paper to the Management Board in its meeting on 18 March 2026.

The size of the Centre's Management Board

The Centre has one of the largest Management Boards when compared to other agencies. Although this has been criticised as an obstacle to efficient decision making on a number of occasions, there is no evidence that decisions regarding the management of the Centre have actually been hindered or delayed because of the size of its Management Board, nor is its size of any consequence to the financial sustainability of the Centre. The same is valid as concerns any perceived risk of conflicts of interest in that the Centre's clients act as voting members on the Centre's Management Board. The above notwithstanding, aligning the structure of the Centre's Management Board to the recommendations of the Common Approach, or at least to the initial configuration intended in the Centre's Founding Regulation, should be explored.

On alternatives to the Centre

Many clients are exploring alternatives, such as developing in-house translation capabilities or using external language service providers, which goes against the intended purpose of setting up a central language service provider in the shape of the Centre and in many cases also seems to constitute a deviation from existing legal obligations to use the Centre. While these options offer the individual agencies cost control and flexibility, they come with disadvantages like duplication of efforts and overheads, data security concerns, and loss of shared EU translation resources, including the loss of multilingual EU language data. A centralised translation service remains the preferred option for most clients due to its ability to handle diverse language combinations and its role in maintaining shared EU

¹⁰⁸ Other options identified in the supporting study ranged from converting the Centre to a private organisation freed from complying with EU regulations to merging it with other EU translation services or to allowing it to deliver to a wider range of clients; p. 133.

translation tools. It should, however, be considered whether these benefits could not be achieved more efficiently in a different institutional setup.

The quality of the output produced by the Centre is considered to be higher than that provided by machine translation or LSPs. Technology-supported human translation still provides the highest level of accuracy, particularly when maintaining the style and tone of the original document choosing the correct terminology in a given context matter. The Centre's services remain particularly relevant for translations where a high level of quality and specialised terminology as well as a high level of security and confidentiality are necessary. The Centre's focus on combining human expertise with advanced technology remains crucial. As translation technology evolves, the Centre must continue to adapt and collaborate with EU institutions to stay relevant and competitive.

5.2. Lessons learned

The idea of a centralised translation service to provide linguistic services to the EU agencies remains valid from efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, relevance and EU-added value perspectives. There is appreciation for the Centre's services and demand for them averaged over EUR 40 million revenue per year during the 2018-2024 period¹⁰⁹, albeit generating revenue which is insufficient to fully cover the costs. The Centre continues improving its business model by seeking efficiencies, investing in technology and staff development. However, given the trends in the Centre's costs, driven by factors beyond the Centre's control, and the decrease in demand and consequently in revenue, there is a risk that the Centre may continue to need an EU contribution and not be able to return to operating as a self-financed agency should current circumstances persist.

Considering the constraints of the current and upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework, other potential solutions to provide centralised translation services would need to be explored, possibly through the ongoing Large-Scale Review of the Commission. A systematic, and possibly variable, subsidy from the EU budget constitutes a burden on the EU administrative budget which should be avoided. In addition, raising demand from the Centre's clients would presuppose clarifying and implementing the legal obligations for agencies to resort to the Centre.

While assessing other potential solutions, demand from the Centre's clients must rise to a level that allows the Centre to balance its expenses with the revenue from its operations.

¹⁰⁹ Excluding revenue from IATE and revenue from other sources. The average over the evaluation period 2019-2023 almost reaches EUR 41.5 million. See table on Direct benefits for the Centre in ANNEX IV on page 65.

ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

- **Lead DG**
DG Translation (DGT)
- **Decide reference**
SWD(2026) XXXX
- **Derogations granted and justification**
Considering the closed field of operation in which the Translation Centre operates, which is restricted to serving the EU agencies, offices, bodies and institutions with no interaction with the public, a public consultation was deemed not pertinent and was not carried out prior to launching the evaluation exercise.
- **Organisation and timing**
Chronology of the evaluation

Step	Timeline
Publication of the call for tender for the supporting study contract	2 August 2024
Signature of the supporting study contract	3 December 2024
Kick-off meeting with the contractor carrying out the supporting study	16 December 2024
ISG meeting: presentation and discussion of the inception report of the supporting study	14 February 2025
Finalisation of the supporting study inception report	17 March 2025
ISG meeting: Presentation and discussion of the interim report of the supporting study	4 June 2025
Validation workshop	2 July 2025
Finalisation of the supporting study interim report	5 September 2025
ISG meeting: Presentation and discussion of the final report of the supporting study	12 September 2025
Finalisation of the supporting study final report	25 September 2025
ISG meeting: Presentation of the draft Staff Working Document	11 March 2026
Finalisation of the draft Staff Working Document	August 2026
Interservice consultation	14-25 September 2026
Finalisation of the Staff Working Document	October 2026
Transmission of the evaluation to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU	October 2026
Presentation of the evaluation to the Centre's Management Board	26 October 2026

- **Consultation of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (if relevant)**
Not applicable
- **Evidence used together with sources and any issues regarding its quality (i.e. has the information been quality assured?)**
The evidence underpinning this evaluation was collected through an external study conducted by ECORYS EUROPE EEIG which were also responsible for quality assuring according to their internal mechanisms. The information and findings of this study were complemented by further analysis of the Commission staff responsible for this evaluation. The limitations of the evidence collected, as well as a broader overview of the methodology used is detailed in Annex II.
- **Use of external expertise**
DGT contracted ECORYS EUROPE EEIG, an external consultant, to provide the study to support the evaluation.
The following annexes have largely been elaborated by ECORYS EUROPE EEIG and validated by DGT.

ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

Introduction

This Annex provides an overview of the different methods and analytical models used in the study supporting the evaluation of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (the Centre) covering the period 2019 – 2023. It then describes the limitations of the study and lists the accompanying materials used to implement it.

The study assessed the Centre’s activities, outputs and results over the five-year period, focusing on its ability to adapt to external and internal changes, including technological advancements and evolving client needs. The study also examined the sustainability of the Centre’s business model and considered whether more cost-efficient alternatives exist for delivering translation and language services to EU decentralised agencies.

The study was guided by and followed the Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox¹¹⁰ and the Common Approach on EU Decentralised Agencies¹¹¹. It addressed the following questions in line with the Better Regulation criteria:

- ▶ To what extent is the intervention still relevant? (relevance)
- ▶ To what extent has the Centre achieved its objectives effectively and efficiently? (effectiveness, efficiency)
- ▶ How coherent is the Centre’s work with other EU actions and policies? (coherence)
- ▶ What is the added value of the Centre at EU level? (EU added value)
- ▶ How sustainable is the Centre’s business model and operations? (sustainability)

The findings on these questions are presented in the main report, to which this document is annexed. This methodological annex outlines the approach to evaluation and analytical models, detailed overview of the methodology and the limitations of the methodology. The research tools used for data collection are presented separately in Annex 4 – research tools.

¹¹⁰ See Better Regulation Toolbox Chapter 6 – How to carry out an evaluation and fitness check, https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox_en.

¹¹¹ See more info here: https://european-union.europa.eu/document/download/d4199ff4-1e3d-45e6-af7e-90cf1a7b10bc_en?filename=joint_statement_on_decentralised_agencies_en.pdf

Approach to evaluation and analytical models

The evaluation followed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. The overall methodological approach was guided by an intervention logic presented below (see Figure 1), and an evaluation framework. The evaluation framework is included as Annex 1 of the Final report.

Figure 1. Intervention logic

Needs ¹¹²			
Meeting the translation and related language services needs of a large number of bodies throughout the Union through a single, specialised centre, creating economies of scale			
General Objectives (GOs) ¹¹³			
GO1: To provide a single, specialised service for translation and related language services to EU decentralised agencies		GO2: To contribute to rationalising the use of resources and to harmonising procedures in the field of EU translation through interinstitutional cooperation	
Specific (SOs) ¹¹⁴			
SO1: Position the Centre as a partner in the holistic provision of language services to clients 1.1 Improved quality management 1.2 Strengthen client engagement 1.3 Optimise the range of language services offered	SO2: Enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency 1.1 Build a dynamic, client-oriented organisation 1.2 Optimise the business and improve sustainability 1.3 Promote a culture of integrity, ensure transparency and accountability	SO3: Contribute to interinstitutional cooperation 3.1 Contribute to interinstitutional cooperation 3.2 Contribute to interinstitutional arrangements	
Operational objectives (activities)			
Core operational activities	Support activities	Management and supervision	Projects, innovation

¹¹² Regulation (EC) No 1645/2003 amending Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 2965/94 setting up a Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union. Official Journal of the European Union, https://cdt.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documentation/pdf/CELEX_32003R1645_EN.pdf

¹¹³ Source: Mission statement from Programming documents covering the period 2019-2023.

¹¹⁴ Source: Programming documents covering the period 2019-2023.

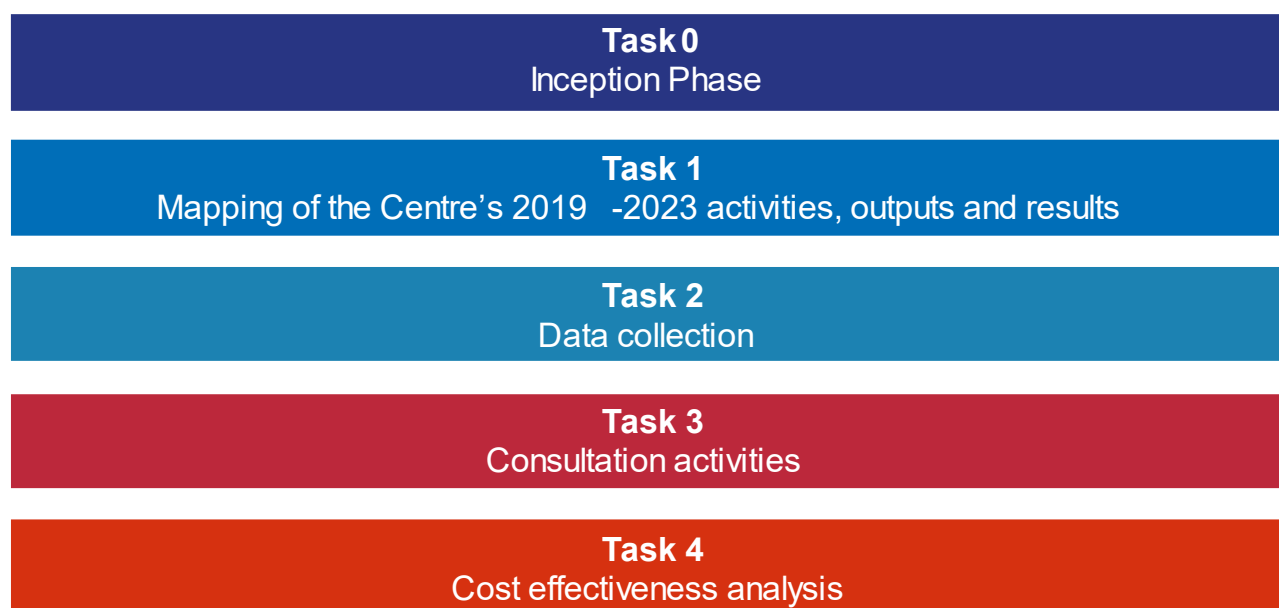
• Translation services (SO1) • Terminology services (SO3) • Audiovisual language services (SO1) • Other services (SO1, SO3) • Client feedback collection (SO1) • Quality assurance actions (SO1) • Exploitation of translation technologies (SO1)	• IT, finance management, procurement, other tools (SO1, SO2) • Support actions in the programming documents (SO1, SO2, SO3)	• Internal controls (SO2) • Compliance with the quality management system (SO1, SO2) • Multiannual planning and programming (SO2) • Communication (SO1, SO2, SO3) • Staff development and engagement (SO2) • Client engagement and business development (SO1)	• Initiatives and projects identified in the multiannual programming documents (SO1, SO2, SO3)
Inputs			
Human resources I Financial resources I Technological resources I Institutional resources			
Outputs			
Core operational activities	Support activities	Management and supervision	Projects, innovation
• Pages translated by service • Documents translated • EU trade marks translated • Minutes of services provided • % of services by turnaround times	• Qualitative overview of the support actions implemented • Percentage of targets achieved where relevant	• Qualitative description of the actions implemented • Number of outputs when relevant e.g. number of staff trained • % of targets achieved	• Qualitative description of the actions implemented • % of targets achieved
Results			
Linked to SO1.1 On-time delivery Improved quality of outputs Optimised QA processes	Linked to SO2.1 Enhanced staff competencies and engagement External providers are better integrated into the Centre’s work	Linked to SO3.1 Acquired, developed and shared best linguistic practices at the interinstitutional level	
Linked to SO1.2 Enhanced partnerships with clients New services developed Increased client satisfaction	Linked to SO2.2 Capitalisation on the latest technologies Enhanced client base	Linked to SO3.2 IATE project developed and implemented, backed by IT support	
Linked to SO1.3 Services respond to clients’ needs Centre benefits from the language technology tools	Linked to SO.2.3 Enhanced transparency Well-functioning management and administration processes		
Short-term or direct impacts			
Linked to SO1 Highly reputable Centre with client-oriented, comprehensive services	Linked to SO2 A sustainable Centre, integrating state-of-art translation technologies	Linked to SO3 Improved effectiveness and efficiency of terminology projects	
Long-term or indirect impacts			

EU citizens receive high-quality information in their language on EU policies and programmes
Improved public perception of the EU

Detailed methodology

The Figure below presents an overview of the tasks used to implement the study, which are then described in more detail in the following sections. As Figure 2 shows, the study tasks included desk research, targeted consultations with the Centre's staff, clients and contractors, and a cost-effectiveness analysis of the Centre's business model. Data collection tools were designed and refined following feedback from the kick-off meeting and scoping interviews during the inception phase. This approach ensured a comprehensive assessment of the Centre's performance and strategic positioning, taking into account both internal documentation and external stakeholder perspectives.

Figure 2. Overview of study methodology



Source: Ecorys 2025

Task 0: Inception Phase

The objective of this task was to hold the kick-off meeting and conduct preliminary research activities to refine the Intervention Logic, Evaluation Framework, and relevant research tools. As part of this task, four scoping interviews were conducted with DG Translation and CdT staff members. Insights from these interviews, combined with the preliminary research, informed the refinement of the above elements, which were then mirrored in an Inception Report.

Task 1: Mapping of the Centre's activities, outputs and results

The objective of this task was to describe the state of play of the Centre's programmes and activities at the beginning of the evaluation period (end of 2018), to establish a baseline and find relevant points of comparison against which to evaluate the Centre's performance in line with the Better Regulation Guidelines. The task also aimed to present quantitative and qualitative indicators reflecting the Centre's performance in 2019-2023, and offer explanations for what worked well, and what worked less well, also considering the impact of the Transformation Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic and other major external events where relevant. Although the evaluation period did not cover the year 2024, when

quantitative information was available for this year, it was added to the analysis. This is to ensure that the latest data was used for developing conclusions and lessons learned.

Two sub-tasks were conducted, involving a desk review of legal and documentary frameworks, analytical, policy-focused and academic literature concerning the Centre (Task 1.1), as well as an analysis of monitoring information from the Centre (Task 1.2). These sub-tasks informed the state of play chapter of the report, as well as the evaluation questions under various criteria, particularly effectiveness and efficiency. They also helped assess the extent to which recommendations from the previous evaluation had been implemented.

Task 2: Data Collection

The objective of this task was to collect data not publicly available under Task 1, as well as data from existing documentation at the Centre and the consultation activities specified under Task 3.

To deliver this task, the research team liaised with a main contact person from the Centre overseeing the evaluation to request documents, as needed. These documents were incorporated into the mapping exercise which informed the Final Report. In particular, the analysis included:

- ▶ An overview of the Centre's mandate, objectives, key activities, structure, budget and performance indicators over the evaluation period (*state of play*).
- ▶ An assessment of the relevance of the Centre in achieving its mandate, responding to technological challenges, as well as a description of megatrends which might impact the Centre's operations, and a review of the implementation of recommendations from the previous evaluation (*relevance*).
- ▶ An assessment of the effectiveness through the interpretation of statistical data on activities and outputs, achievement of key performance indicators, the use and visibility of services, adaptability to changing policy priorities, and responses to external events such as COVID-19 (*effectiveness*).
- ▶ An assessment of efficiency through the interpretation of budget data, efficiency measures, governance structures, and the Centre's monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (*efficiency*).
- ▶ An assessment of coherence through an examination of synergies between the Centre and the Directorate-General for Translation, other Commission services, decentralised agencies, and other stakeholders at EU, international, and national levels (*coherence*).
- ▶ An assessment of EU added value through an analysis of outputs and stakeholder feedback, and a comparison with findings from the previous evaluation (*EU added value*).
- ▶ An assessment of the Centre's business model, including a review of its medium- and long-term viability and potential cost-efficient alternatives to a centralised translation service (*sustainability*).

Task 3: Consultation activities

The objective of Task 3 was to gather relevant data and opinions from key stakeholders to describe the state of play and provide evidence to address the research questions across all evaluation criteria. Task 3 consisted of several sub-tasks, including the development of the consultation strategy, the design and

implementation of a stakeholder survey, the conduct of in-depth interviews, the organisation of a validation and forward-looking workshop, and the preparation of a synopsis report.

Subtask 3.1. Consultation strategy

The consultation strategy defined the approach to the consultation activities, by detailing their main aims and the stakeholder groups to be consulted. In line with the tender specifications, the consultation activities covered a wide range of stakeholders, including the Directorate-General for Translation, the Centre's Management Board members, staff across different functions and levels of seniority, external language service providers subcontracted during the evaluation period, and EU agencies and bodies acting as clients of the Centre.

In addition to the stakeholder groups specified in the tender, the evaluation also involved consultations with subject matter experts in innovative language technologies. These experts were engaged mainly through in-depth interviews focusing on forward-looking areas, such as the potential impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning on the Centre's future activities.

An overview of the consultation approach, following its refinement after the kick-off meeting and the scoping interviews is summarised in the Table below.

Table 1. Consultation approach¹¹⁵

Consultation activity	Management Board¹¹⁶	Staff members	External providers	Clients¹¹⁷	Experts in language tech
Surveys	Entire population	Entire population	Entire population	Entire population	
In-depth interviews	3 (3)	15 (10)	1 (4)	16 (15)	0 (3)
Validation and forward-looking workshop¹¹⁸	1 (2)	2 (5)	1	2 (2)	2

¹¹⁵ The consultation numbers in the parenthesis reflect the maximum planned figures, while the consultation numbers outside the parenthesis reflect the actual figures achieved.

¹¹⁶ Management Board Members that are clients of the Centre are included in a separate 'Clients' category and are not counted under the Management Board.

¹¹⁷ Other EU institutions such as European Commission DGs who have service level agreements with the Centre are included under the clients category.

¹¹⁸ Please note that, on one occasion, a participant fulfilled the role both of a client and an alternate Management Board Member. In addition, a representative from the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) attended the workshop, although this is not reflected in the table for ease of reading.

Source: Ecorys, 2025.

Subtask 3.2: Stakeholder survey

The stakeholder survey was designed to provide an anonymous forum for management and staff, subcontractors, and clients to share feedback on the Centre's activities and operations, and to allow other stakeholders to express their views. Since the number of individuals in each stakeholder group was known and relatively small, the entire population was invited to participate to ensure maximum representativeness.

The stakeholder survey was programmed in EUSurvey and was administered to various stakeholder groups (see also Table 1 above) from 7 April to 12 May 2025, totalling 243 responses. The research team prepared the invitation email and survey link, while the Centre managed the distribution of the survey for personal data protection reasons. To maximise participation, reminders were used to encourage responses across all target groups. The survey questionnaire was refined during the Inception Phase together with the Centre, and its final version is available in Annex 4.

The survey analysis included descriptive statistics for all numerical variables, while thematic analysis was used to identify the main patterns in the open-ended responses. The results of the survey were triangulated with findings from the mapping exercise, literature review, stakeholder interviews, validation workshops, and cost-effectiveness analysis, ensuring a robust and comprehensive evidence base for the evaluation.

Subtask 3.3: In-depth interviews

The research team conducted a total of 35 interviews with stakeholders and staff involved in the Centre's activities and operations. The interviews added considerable depth to all evaluation questions by generating insights that were not available in the mapping exercise, desk research, or from the primarily closed question survey. A sample of stakeholders was drawn to ensure balanced representation across and within groups:

- ▶ **Management Board members:** Representative sample by nationality, geography, gender, and language.
- ▶ **Staff members:** Sample across departments and seniority levels, with key roles represented (e.g., IATE and language tools).
- ▶ **External language service providers:** Sample based on size, contract specificity, demand volume, language combinations, subject areas, and geography.
- ▶ **Clients:** Sample by type of body (agencies and institutions), size, service uptake patterns, and subject areas. Specific cases, such as the European Labour Authority and the Joint Research Centre, were also considered.
- ▶ **Experts in language technologies:** Sample based on expertise in innovative language technology and familiarity with the Centre's activities.

Since most individuals in these groups were European Union officials, interviews were conducted over an extended period — from after the Inception Report approval (M2) until before the draft Final Report submission (M7) — to maximise participation. When inviting stakeholders, the team acknowledged that they may have already participated in the survey and clarified that the interviews were distinct, focusing

on exploring the 'why' and 'how' behind patterns identified in the survey. Where individuals from specific groups were unavailable, alternative participants were discussed and agreed with DGT.

Following agreement on the interviewee list with DGT, the interviews began and continued throughout the main research phase. Most interviews took place online via MS Teams, while interviews with Centre management and staff were conducted in person during a visit to the Centre on 27–28 February. Group interviews were organised where appropriate to benefit from shared perspectives among staff. Interviews generally lasted 45–60 minutes. A two-page background note was shared with invitees to provide project context and facilitate informed consent.

In relation to the analysis of interviews' results, researchers took detailed notes, which were written up and transferred in an Excel file in line with the topic guide, to support structured analysis. The approach ensured robust, balanced conclusions, with supporting quotes traceable to source transcripts.

Subtask 3.4: Validation and forward-looking workshop

The validation and forward-looking workshop served as a final opportunity for key stakeholders to confirm the evaluation's findings and to share further perspectives on the Centre's future strategic direction. The event was designed as a small-group, targeted session to ensure open and constructive exchanges.

Recruitment for the workshop took place in close cooperation with DGT. The draft agenda and list of participants were included in the interim report and agreed upon to allow sufficient time for planning and alternative arrangements if needed. 'Save-the-date' notifications were shared early to secure attendance, given the short timeline between the workshop (end of M7) and the final report (end of M8). A discussion note summarising key findings was to the registered attendees before the event to help participants prepare effectively.

The workshop was organised online via Microsoft Teams and structured into two sessions: one focused on validating evaluation findings and a second on exploring forward-looking aspects. Nine participants attended (excluding the research team), ensuring balanced representation and adequate time for discussion. The workshop lasted approximately 2 hours.

Findings were summarised and integrated into the consultation synopsis report and final evaluation report.

Subtask 3.5: Consultation synopsis report

In line with the tender specifications and Better Regulation guidelines (Tool 54), a consultation synopsis report was produced, summarising the outcomes of all consultation activities carried out for the study. These included the stakeholder survey, in-depth interviews, and the validation workshop. The report provided a coherent narrative and systematic analysis of stakeholder perspectives, strengthening the overall evidence base and ensuring transparency on how feedback was incorporated.

The report presented aggregated findings and highlighted trends across stakeholder groups. Results were clearly structured under each evaluation criterion: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, EU added value and sustainability.

Specifically, the consultation synopsis report included:

- ▶ An overview of the consultation strategy, outlining each activity’s objectives and methods.
- ▶ A breakdown of the consulted stakeholder groups, including participant numbers and key characteristics (e.g., institutional roles, customer categories).
- ▶ A list of EU institutions, agencies, and Member States that had participated, along with the main issues raised, as required by Tool 54.
- ▶ Headline findings for each evaluation criterion, integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights.
- ▶ Conclusions summarising cross-cutting themes and identifying implications for the Centre’s future activities.

The consultation synopsis report is included in Annex 3, serving as a key supporting document to demonstrate stakeholder engagement and provide further context for the study’s conclusions.

Task 4: Cost-effectiveness analysis

The objective of Task 4 was to conduct a comprehensive cost-effectiveness analysis of the Centre’s activities. This focused on examining the unit costs of outputs and results where feasible and identifying the factors influencing cost-effectiveness. The analysis combined quantitative assessment of cost indicators (mainly from Task 1) with qualitative insights gathered through consultations (Task 3).

A mixed-method approach was applied. Quantitative analysis involved calculating cost-benefit ratios, benchmarking, and evaluating the reasonableness of unit costs. Qualitative analysis focused on identifying factors affecting efficiency, including management arrangements, procurement processes and IT solutions. Findings were summarised in an “Overview of benefits and costs” table included in the final report.

The cost-effectiveness analysis aimed to identify whether resources were used proportionately to deliver outputs, results, and impacts. It also assessed possibilities to reduce administrative burdens and improve operational processes, ultimately supporting recommendations for future efficiency gains.

Task 4.1: Agency-level analysis

The agency-level analysis examined the balance of expenditure between administration, management, and operational activities. Data from annual reports and monitoring systems (2019–2023) informed this analysis. Key indicators included:

- ▶ Management and administration costs as a percentage of total expenditure
- ▶ Administrative expenditure per staff member
- ▶ Balance between administrative and operational staff

Consultations explored reasons behind the cost structure, including efforts to streamline processes, reduce burdens, and optimise resource allocation. Interviewees shared views on the effectiveness of governance and management arrangements, as well as on the benefits of IT solutions and shared services.

Task 4.2: Activity-level analysis

The activity-level analysis focused on specific operational activities and their related costs. Monitoring data were used to examine expenditure by activity type, trends in cost per activity, and whether changes in costs were justified by corresponding improvements in outputs or results. A scoping exercise assessed the feasibility of developing unit cost indicators. This included:

- ▶ Defining outputs and results for each activity
- ▶ Verifying alignment with intended effects
- ▶ Aggregating total outputs where possible
- ▶ Assessing the reliability of expenditure data
- ▶ Identifying potential for comparative analysis

Where suitable data were available, indicative unit costs (e.g. cost per translated page) were calculated. However, in many cases, it was not feasible to derive robust unit costs due to the diversity of services, differences in language complexity, and variations in demand from clients. Furthermore, many activities aimed to achieve longer-term benefits (e.g. improved quality of multilingual communication) rather than immediate measurable outputs.

Despite these challenges, qualitative evidence from stakeholder consultations helped judge overall cost-effectiveness. Users generally considered the Centre's services cost-effective, highlighting the professional quality and added value of centralised language services. Some stakeholders suggested exploring further automation and digitalisation to enhance future efficiency.

Limitations of the study

The study was subject to a set of limitations associated with the scope, data availability and the consultation activities conducted. The key limitations are summarised below:

- ▶ The mapping task (Task 1) collected a range of quantitative indicators associated with the Centre's activities. However, some of the data identified does not cover the full evaluation period. Given the importance of this data to the evaluation questions, the available values have been used in the

analysis. Similarly, some of the quantitative data used does not have targets associated with it, in which case trends over time were analysed instead of comparisons with the expected targets.

- ▶ The mapping task provided the necessary data for the evaluation but has limited scope to incorporate an outsider perspective. Therefore, the interview programme and targeted survey were conducted to collect views from the clients, contractors and Management Board members. Moreover, given that the Centre operates in a closed market, it is unlikely that wider range of stakeholders would have sufficient knowledge of the Centre and its activities to be able to answer the evaluation questions. Therefore, the stakeholder consultations focused on clients, contractors and Management Board members.
- ▶ While the survey aimed to achieve a representative sample of stakeholders by covering the full population of Management Board members, staff, external providers and clients, this was not fully achieved in practice. A higher number of responses came from staff members compared to other stakeholder groups. To address this, the reporting clearly indicates which stakeholder groups expressed specific views, while the survey findings were triangulated with those of the other research activities.
- ▶ Benchmarking against the performance of the other agencies (Task 4) was challenging due to the difference between the Centre and most of the other decentralised agencies, which either tend to be policy-focused agencies or provide very different services and are of different sizes. We have prioritised similar sized agencies for comparison with the Centre and when comparable data is available other self-funded agencies.
- ▶ The data available for benchmarking (Task 4) in the case of some of the indicators, e.g. Management Board expenditure, is significantly different for the other agencies compared to those of the Centre. This difference is likely to be linked with the different methodology for calculating the Management Board expenditure and therefore it might be that comparisons are not like for like.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (BY CRITERION)

This annex presents the analytical framework used to address the overall objectives of the study and the specific questions set out in the tender specifications. Table **Error! Reference source not found.** below provides an overview of the judgement criteria for each evaluation question and sub-question, developed by the research team and when relevant, it includes indicators, comparison points and data collection methods used during the course of the study.

Table 2. Evaluation framework

Evaluation Criterion	Research question, as specified in the tender specifications	Judgement criteria and indicators	Tasks					
			T1: Mapping	T2: Desk-research	T3: Interviews	T3: Surveys	T3: Workshop	T4: CEA
Relevance	RQ1: To what extent has the Centre achieved its mandate and is in line with the intention/expectations of the legislators?	Documentary analysis of the Founding Regulations and the services provided by the Centre. Documentary review of the extent to which the Centre generates sufficient revenue to cover its costs. The number of new clients using the Centre's services between 2019 – 2023. The European Parliament discharge reports, audit reports and other documents assessing the Centre's work confirm/raise concerns regarding the relevance of Centre operations to achieving its mandate. The extent to which DGT, other European Commission officials, the MB, clients and staff agree that the services and activities of the Centre are relevant to achieving its mandate.						
Relevance	RQ2.1: Does the Centre still appropriately address its original purpose and the needs of	Detailed analysis of the demand for the Centre's services during 2019-2023 based on annual activity reports; The return rate of Client Satisfaction Forms (CFS) and Corrected Version Forms (CVR) is lower than						

	the EU bodies and institutions? RQ2.2: To what extent did the range of translation, and other language products and services of the Centre meet the needs of EU bodies and institutions in terms of quality, timeliness, and price?	5% (Quantitative evidence: CFS 2019-2020¹¹⁹ (return rate), Quantitative evidence: CVR 2020-2023¹²⁰ (return rate); Quantitative evidence from survey to clients: % of clients reporting satisfaction with the Centre's services covering quality, timeliness, price; Centre's clients report that they have their own in-house linguistic services departments, use subcontractors and/or online tools including the reasons for seeking alternative solutions where relevant; Centre's clients are reporting the rationale for using alternative solutions and estimations of costs related to the alternative solutions; Centre's clients' perception of whether the same quality of translations and language services can be sustained when using alternative solutions; Analysis of the financial and reporting documents of up to five of the biggest Centre's clients to identify the overall translation budget and compare it with the Centre's income from the same clients in 2023. Reporting documents of up to five of the largest Centre's clients to identify the number of people working at the in-house linguistic services teams in 2023 (if applicable). The extent to which stakeholders interviewed confirm that the Centre addresses their needs, including a qualitative explanation of what needs are addressed and the current gaps (focusing on quality, timeliness and price); The comparison of the translation costs of the Centre with those of other translation services of the EU institutions to the extent possible;							
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¹¹⁹ The 2020 results will cover the timeframe between January to August, as of September a new system for handling client feedback, based on the Corrected Version Request (CVR) was introduced.

¹²⁰ The 2020 results will cover the timeframe between September to January, when the Corrected Version Request (CVR) was introduced.

		Factors facilitating and hindering the Centre meeting the needs of EU bodies and institutions (e.g. the language of translation, technical difficulty, urgency).						
Relevance	RQ3: In terms of foresight, are there any present or upcoming trends, such as technological advances, and political or other developments, that could affect the language industry and consequently the Centre's future relevance, and how?	Staff, MB members, clients and external providers identify the current and future trends in the survey and suggest how they affect the Centre and its operations. The agency staff members and stakeholders interviewed identify the language technology trends that will affect the Centre's operations; Staff interviewees, MB members, and external providers report the ways through which the Centre is taking advantage of the new developments in language technology; Client interviews insights on how the technology developments is likely to affect the demand for Centre's services in the short to medium term; Gap analysis based on the literature review and validation workshop insights; Staff, MB, contractors, client and other interviewees reporting on other external factors that are likely to affect the Centre's operations in the future; Review of strategic and planning documents to identify the known trends that are likely to affect Centre's operations.						
Effectiveness	RQ4: To what extent has the Centre achieved its objectives?	The extent to which the main objectives set out in the Centre's Annual Work Programmes/ Programming documents have been reached (% of objectives by type of activity). Review the achievement of the annual work programme targets based on the Centre's performance management system as reported in the programming documents and Annual Activity reports. Staff, clients, management board members perception of the extent to which the Centre's strategic and general objectives were achieved.						

		Perception of the Centre’s stakeholders and staff of the main reasons why any of the objectives were not achieved.						
	RQ5: Which factors have facilitated or hindered the effectiveness of the Centre’s operations?	Documentary evidence indicates the factors that facilitated and/or hindered achievement of the objectives. Centre’s staff reporting examples of factor that facilitated and hindered the achievement of the objectives. Management Board’s perceptions on factors that facilitated and hindered the achievement of the objectives. Centre’s clients and EU level stakeholders’ perceptions on factors that facilitated and hindered Centre’s operations.						
	RQ6: To what degree has the Centre adapted to changes over the evaluation period, and where applicable, to the socio-economic situation in general?	Documentary review of evidence of any changes in the Centre’s activities in relation to: <i>Internal drivers:</i> - Response to the previous evaluation study commissioned by the Centre and the implementation of the subsequent Transformation Plan; - Organisation and workflow changes to improve effectiveness and efficiency. <i>External drivers</i> - Making the most of technological developments; - Responding to changing demand for its services; - Adaptation to the budgetary constraints of the Centre’s clients - Adaptation to Covid-19 and its aftermath; - Adaptation to inflationary pressures. Staff and stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which the changes introduced contributed to the effectiveness of the Centre’s operations. What are the key factors contributing and hindering this? Staff and stakeholders' perceptions of the extent to which the changes introduced in the Centre’s						

		business model (increased range of services, technological tools, client liaison) contributed to its sustainability.						
	RQ7: Were there any unexpected or unintended effects? If so, which were they and have they or can they be corrected, mitigated or eliminated?	Documentary evidence in annual activity reports, European Parliament Discharge Reports and audit reports on the unintended effects of the Centre's operations. Staff, MB, clients, and EU institutions share examples of unexpected (positive or negative) effects (if relevant). Staff, MB, clients, and EU institutions report the factors that caused the unintended effects, how they have been mitigated and if there is anything more that could be done (if applicable).						
Efficiency	RQ8: Considering the legal and institutional context, has the Centre been cost-effective?	Expenditure tracking per title (benchmarked against other EU decentralised agencies). Operational efficiency (% of budget approved actually committed). Competitive cost per output (e.g. page and language combination, minutes transcribed) compared to industry standards and other translation services of the EU institutions. Competitive output per translator. Clients consider that the translation, and other language services costs are cost-effective (rating by type of services in the stakeholder survey). Clients report that they don't seek alternative solutions to meet their translation needs. Outcomes of audits and European Parliament discharge reports. Comparative rating by stakeholders with regards to the Centre's cost-effectiveness. Stakeholders' perceptions of the composition and size of the Management Board and how it affects decision-making efficiency. Management Board, staff, and clients' perceptions of whether efficiency could be improved by						

	establishing an Executive Board in line with the provisions of the Common Approach. Management Board, staff and client's perceptions on the benefits and challenges associated with the Task Force that led the implementation of the Transformation Plan and the lessons learned for the possible set up of the Executive Board (based on interviews). The costs associated with the Management Board activities are benchmarked against the other EU decentralised agencies, particularly those which have large Management Boards, such as Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA (based on recent evaluation report). Stakeholders' perceptions of the efficiency of support and management activities. Benchmarking of the Centre's expenditure for support and management functions against other EU decentralised agencies and against the baseline (previous evaluation). Stakeholder and staff perceptions on organisational processes¹²¹ and how well they are functioning and are optimised, including how the potential inefficiencies they create have been addressed. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on productivity gains from the adoption of IT solutions. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the extent to which the Centre's reliance on private sector translators contribute towards efficiency of its operations (particularly in terms of quality, timeliness and price)						
RQ9: Can cost	Staff and stakeholders report areas in which the cost-effectiveness of the Centre could be improved (use						

¹²¹ Organisational aspects to be explored might include the following: (In)efficiencies from (a) human resources composition e.g. in terms of staff grades, (b) task allocation, (c) decision making processes e.g. hierarchical vs horizontal decision-making processes, (d) accountability and control mechanisms, (e) programming of activities

	effectiveness of the Centre's business model be improved while keeping the professional standards?	of technological advancements, management and support functions and other areas of the Centre's operations) while maintaining professional standards. Language technology experts identify/ do not identify other tools which could improve the Centre's cost-effectiveness. Clients and staff report potential means to minimise costs and increase sources of revenue without compromising professional standards. Management Board, client, staff perceptions on how the centre's business model should evolve to remain sustainable and relevant.						
Coherence	RQ10: How closely does the centre work with DGT and other Commission services?	DGT and other Commission services representatives' perceptions on the formal and informal cooperation between the Commission and the Centre. What are the areas for improvement? Centre's staff perceptions on the formal and informal cooperation between the Commission and the Centre. What are the areas for improvement? DGT and other Commission services report that the Centre's business model meets their expectations.						
	RQ11: How closely does the Centre work with other EU decentralised agencies? Are there any gaps or overlaps?	Analysis of the client satisfaction surveys on how easy it is to use the Centre's services, quality of the guidance, support and training provided. Clients' and Centre's staff perceptions on the level of cooperation between them and the Centre, including the planning and forecasting demand, client support and guidance, and level of cooperation (including the factors that facilitate and hinder it). Documentary evidence on the synergies between the Centre, other decentralised agencies and joint undertakings based in Luxembourg and other countries in relation to procurement, cost sharing, and recruitment. Staff perceptions on the extent to which the synergies with other decentralised agencies and joint undertakings are fully explored and to what extent						

	they lead to increased efficiency and coherence among the agencies. Benchmarking the efforts of the Centre to increase the synergies in terms of procurement, recruitment and cost-sharing with those of other decentralised agencies that were recently evaluated e.g. those that fall under the remit of the DG EMPL taking into account the different nature of the agencies. The extent to which the changes in the Centre's approach to becoming more closely engaged in planning and developing the services affected the level of cooperation based on the perceptions of staff and clients. Client feedback on the extent to which their needs are met, particularly in terms of services provided and client support. How it could be improved? Client and staff perceptions on how the cooperation could be improved.						
RQ12: To what extent does the Centre contribute to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the European institutions?	Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the Centre's contributions to the work of ICTI, including sharing of working methods; rationalising resources; harmonising procedures in EU translation, etc. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the Centre's contributions to the IATE project, including the added value to achieving the project's objectives, technical support and management. Are there any areas for improvement? Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the Centre's contributions to other terminology projects. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the factors that facilitate and hinder the cooperation and how it could be improved.						
RQ13: In what areas could the centre do more?	Stakeholder and staff perceptions of the types of services that Centre could introduce to meet the needs of its clients. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the extent to which the demand for the existing and potentially new services could improve.						

		Stakeholder and staff perceptions on how technology could be further exploited to reduce the costs of the translation and related language services. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on how the cooperation with EU institutions and its clients could improve.						
Added value	RQ14: What is the added value for the European Union in operating a centralised translation and language service provider to cater for the translation and multilingual communication needs of the EU bodies and institutions?	Stakeholder and staff perception of the extent to which the centralised translation and language services help EU bodies to avoid duplication, ensure the quality of translation services, and save time and resources (process effects). Stakeholder and staff perceptions of the unique characteristics and expertise (range of services, languages, technological capabilities, information security) of the Centre that contribute to its added value (role effects). Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which it would be possible to ensure the same level of quality and translations without the Centre (volume effect). Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which the same range of services could be acquired without the Centre (terminology projects, translation, audiovisual language services) (scope effect). Stakeholder and staff perceptions on the need for centralised translation services.						
	RQ15: To which stakeholders concretely has the Centre's work made a difference?	Documentary evidence of demand for the Centre's services by clients, including how it evolved during the evaluation period and compared to the baseline. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on which services are most relevant to their needs and why.						
	RQ16: The Centre is dependent on the revenues it earns from the linguistic services it	Documentary analysis of the demand by type of services and how it evolved during the evaluation period and compared to the baseline. Client assessment on the extent to which the demand for Centre's services is likely to increase, continue,						

	delivers. What are the prospects of the Centre's current model remaining sustainable in medium to long run?	decrease by major types of services based on survey results. Client perceptions on their ability to continue using the Centre's services and why. How the challenges related to operating budgets is likely to affect their ability to use the Centre's services. Stakeholder and staff perceptions on how the technology has contributed to the improved efficiency gains during the evaluation period and how this could further be mobilised to ensure the sustainability of the business model. Stakeholders' and staff perceptions on the factors that facilitate and hinder the sustainability of the Centre's business model. Management Board, client and staff perceptions on how the business model of the centre should evolve.						
	RQ17: Are there more cost-efficient alternatives to a centralised translation and language service provider like the Centre to serve the decentralised agencies?	DGT and other EU institution suggestions on potential alternatives Stakeholders' perceptions on possible alternatives to a centralised translation and language service provider, including their advantages and drawbacks. Survey responses on the areas for improvement						

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

This Annex presents a summary of the cost and benefits examined in the accompanying main report produced for the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union – agency evaluation 2019-2023. Monetary values are presented in euros (€). The cost and revenue data is taken from the Centre’s Consolidated Annual Activity Reports (CAARs), with data from the Centre’s Activity Based Costing (ABC) provided directly by the Centre for 2021-2024 for key activities. Unless otherwise stated, output and performance measurement figures are taken from the CAARs, while stakeholder views are reported based on the information obtained from the interviews and surveys carried out as part of this evaluation. Where figures were not published for certain years n/a is shown in the below table. Further details on the sources used are contained in the main report.

The table presents direct costs and benefits identified through this evaluation. While the work of the Centre can be assumed to result in indirect outcomes as well as additional direct outcomes, identifying and quantifying these is highly challenging – for example, it is very difficult to identify specific health outcomes that related back to the work of the Centre, although many of the translations the Centre provides are designed to lead to longer-term downstream effects on a wide range of individuals or organisations.

Direct costs (borne by the Translation Centre)								
Headline-level operating costs		Total expenditure of the Centre		Total administrative costs (and percentage over total costs)		Administrative costs: administrative costs per staff member		Administrative costs: cost of governance meetings
2018		44,757,716		6,309,111 (14%)		29,901		43,208
2019		42,563,350		6,676,130 (16%)		32,097		55,215
2020		42,117,319		6,725,501 (16%)		31,457		27,859
2021		44,300,208		7,590,045 (17%)		36,667		25,132
2022		44,398,138		7,002,178 (16%)		33,991		27,575
2023		43,497,803		7,143,379 (16%)		35,276		32,154
2024		42,498,900		6,959,202 (16%)		41,424		43,022
Cost by key activity	Translations	Internal validation	External translation services ¹²²	IATE	Client request management	Modifications	Management of translation memories and machine translation	
2021	9,612,318	9,676,972	10,160,000	883,102	500,424	846,737	103,929	
2022	9,729,120	10,383,830	10,290,000	838,762	698,968	591,700	349,484	
2023	10,551,387	11,318,280	n/a	926,911	880,565	554,510	389,303	
2024	15,784,451	6,922,767	n/a	941,084	866,625	299,593	376,794	

¹²² Values for 2023-2024 are not available as this category was merged into ‘Other operational activities’ from 2023.

Direct benefits (for the Centre)								
Revenue generated	Total revenue of the Centre	Revenue from translations	Revenue from interinstitutional cooperation - IATE database	Revenue from terminology	Revenue from terms lists	Revenue from subtitling	Revenue from other operations	Other revenue¹²³
2018	41,195,142	38,806,742	734,003	401,400	191,270	127,428	4,725	929,574
2019	37,288,116	35,573,865	733,669	26,325	147,080	137,950	0	669,227
2020	43,949,315	40,641,507	628,653	2,052,450	184,321	63,140	8,221	371,022
2021	46,560,692	44,481,369	632,642	28,350	216,969	150,675	192,004	858,682
2022	43,962,513	41,903,480	660,092	330,570	406,249	136,333	215,304	310,484
2023	43,159,760	39,827,201	697,017	454,500	324,751	134,931	617,427	1,103,931
2024	37,221,069	33,708,115	895,985	975,451	430,261	105,411	14,324	1,091,521
Increased efficiencies and effectiveness through changes in the Centre's workflow		Digital tools			Automatising internal processes to streamline administrative tasks			
		Nearly three quarters (74%) of staff respondents to the evaluation survey agreed to a large or moderate extent that the use of digital technologies to deliver translations had contributed to the efficiency savings within the Centre.			New systems developed during the evaluation period included: ARES, a system that registers incoming and outgoing mail, enabling everything to be registered and signed for electronically. This has reduced postal costs and sped up the process of contract signature.			

¹²³ Other revenue covers the grant for rent from Luxembourg government, miscellaneous revenue, and financial income.

		Additionally, 66% of staff agreed to a large or moderate extent that enhancing the use of technology to automate routine tasks had contributed to efficiency savings, with 62% agreeing to a large or moderate extent that the use of digital tools for managing workflow processes had contributed to this outcome.		eCdT, an automated workflow tool, which has enabled the Centre to manage translation requests more smoothly and reduced manual monitoring needs, improving efficiency.		
Direct benefits (to consumers of the Centre’s outputs) ¹²⁴						
Centre outputs	Number of pages translated	Number of document pages translated	EU trade marks pages translated	Number of terms list entries translated and revised	Minutes of subtitles produced	Minutes of transcriptions produced
2018	781,839	369,005	412,834	47,661	3,127	n/a
2019	657,523	309,047	348,276	41,002	2,571	n/a
2020	635,269	334,921	300,348	49,277	1,601	793
2021	641,970	367,264	274,706	58,893	4,520	1,528
2022	588,033	348,070	239,964	135,608	4,066	2,661
2023	547,737	334,639	213,098	48,101	2,337	5,283
2024	491,728	280,101	211,627	109,734	2,617	1,875
Client satisfaction scores ¹²⁵	Linguistic quality of outputs		Layout quality of outputs		The quality of service to price ratio	

¹²⁴ Customers include the Agencies the Centre is providing the translation for, as well as the wider public reading the available translations.

¹²⁵ This data is taken from the Centre's client satisfaction survey and is only available from 2021. Satisfaction with the layout quality of outputs was not available for 2022.

	The following share of clients were either very satisfied or satisfied with this aspect of translations:	The following share of clients were either very satisfied or satisfied with this aspect of translations:	The following share of clients were either very satisfied or satisfied with this aspect of translations:
2021			
2022	2021 88%	2021 88%	2021 59%
2023	2022 83%	2022 n/a	2022 n/a
2024	2023 90%	2023 93%	2023 70%
	2024 89%	2024 97%	2024 71%

Stakeholder perceptions	Document translations	EU trade mark translations	Automatic translation	Light post-editing	Revisions and modifications	Editing	Full-post editing	Transcription	Subtitling	Terminology	Language consultancy	Ex-post quality control
Share of stakeholders agreeing to a large or moderate extent that the service is cost-effective	Large extent: 30% Moderate extent: 29%	Large extent: 31% Moderate extent: 14%	Large extent: 26% Moderate extent: 21%	Large extent: 23% Moderate extent: 21%	Large extent: 26% Moderate extent: 21%	Large extent: 23% Moderate extent: 16%	Large extent: 26% Moderate extent: 21%	Large extent: 16% Moderate extent: 14%	Large extent: 24% Moderate extent: 18%	Large extent: 25% Moderate extent: 22%	Large extent: 25% Moderate extent: 18%	Large extent: 18% Moderate extent: 13%
Strategic & Operational Benefits	Provides specialised translation services with wide language coverage				Avoids duplication of efforts promoting economies of scale				Understands and upholds EU security and confidentiality procedures			
	Interviewees noted that the Centre provides tailored services for complex and sensitive content alongside expertise in multilingualism and EU-specific terminology. As such it supports the EU's commitment to multilingual communication through providing translations into the 24 EU languages as well as a wide range on non-EU languages. For example, in				Interviewees noted that the existence of the centralised service offered by the Centre promotes translation resource sharing, preventing each agency from having to develop its own in-house specialised translation infrastructure and network of translation specialists. This reduces overall costs enabling economies of scale across the EU system. This is especially valuable for				Interviewees noted that as an EU organisation the Centre is fully knowledgeable of the EU commissions regulations on data protection and procurement, unlike private providers. As such the Centre is trusted for the translation of sensitive legal and policy documents.			

	2023 translation were made to 47 non-EU languages and the Centre was noted as having the ability to translate from and to all possible language combinations. The Centre offers robust quality checks of outputs. For example, work produces via machine translation is routinely checked and the Centre does not rely on open access translation tools. Translation tools tailored to specific technical subjects are used (such as using tools developed to translate medical information for medical text) and the Centre has developed detailed terminology engines and databases that it can draw on to enhance translations. The Centre also developed a multi-engine strategy for machine translation. This uses several machine translation systems at the same time and via an automatic quality-scoring system determines the most appropriate machine translation for every single sentence. The Centre's ex-post reviews of translations delivered to clients found that the following share of translations	smaller agencies that lack the resource for in-house translation teams, as well as for more 'niche' language combinations.	
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	were ranked as excellent or fit for purpose over 2018-2024: 2018 n/a 2019 45% as excellent, 55% as fit for purpose 2020 46% as excellent, 53% as fit for purpose 2021 48% as excellent, 51% as fit for purpose 2022 53% as excellent, 47% as fit for purpose 2023 53% as excellent, 46% as fit for purpose 2024 62% as excellent, 37 % as fit for purpose		
Increased efficiencies and effectiveness through changes in the Centre's workflow	Digital tools	Automatising internal processes to streamline administrative tasks	Stakeholder views on increased efficiencies and effectiveness created by the changes in the workflow
	Approximately half of client respondents to the evaluation survey agreed to a large or moderate extent that digital tools had contributed to efficiency savings, with 48% noting their impact on delivering translations, 48% on managing workflow processes, and 43% on the automation of routine tasks.	In 2020, the Centre participated in two joint selection procedures with the European Medicines Agency, which allowed for the sharing of resources and efforts invested in establishing reserve lists for horizontal administrative profiles.	The share of survey respondents agreeing to a large or moderate extent that changes to the workflow introduced during the evaluation period contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Centre in terms of were: Delivery of the requests to the client: large extent: 29%, moderate extent: 17%

			Collecting and addressing client feedback: large extent 29%, moderate extent: 15% Submitting requests to the Centre: large extent: 27%, moderate extent: 16% Pre-processing of the requests: large extent: 27%, moderate extent: 16% Quality control: large extent: 24%, moderate extent: 20% Training to the clients on the use of its services: large extent: 18%, moderate extent: 18%
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ANNEX V. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT

Introduction

This report presents an overview of the stakeholder consultation activities for the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union – agency evaluation 2019-2023. The report comprises the following sections:

- ▶ Overview of consultation activities
- ▶ Overview of results of consultation activities

Overview of consultation activities

The stakeholder consultation activities aimed to gather the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including the Directorate-General for Translation; members of the Centre's Management Board; staff across various functions and seniority levels; external language service providers subcontracted during the evaluation period; EU agencies and bodies that are clients of the Centre; and subject matter experts in innovative language technologies.

An overview of the consultation approach, including the activities used to engage stakeholders, is summarised in the table below. Each activity is then described in detail in the following subsections.

Table 3. Consultation approach¹²⁶

Consultation activity	Management Board ¹²⁷	Staff members	External providers	Clients ¹²⁸	Experts in language tech
Surveys	Entire population	Entire population	Entire population	Entire population	
In-depth interviews	3 (3)	15 (10)	1 (4)	16 (15)	0 (3)
Validation and forward-looking workshop¹²⁹	1 (2)	2 (5)	1	2 (2)	2

Stakeholder survey

The stakeholder survey aimed to provide an anonymous platform for management, staff, subcontractors, and clients to share feedback on the Centre’s activities and operations. It also allowed other stakeholders to express their views. Given the relatively small and known number of individuals in each stakeholder group, the entire population was invited to participate to ensure maximum representativeness. The stakeholder survey questionnaire is available in Annex II – Methodology and Analytical models used.

The survey was programmed in EUSurvey and it was administered to various stakeholder groups (see Table 3 above) from April 7 to May 12, 2025, resulting in a total of 243 responses from all EU27 countries, Albania and Iceland. The Figure below shows the distribution of responses across the different stakeholder groups.

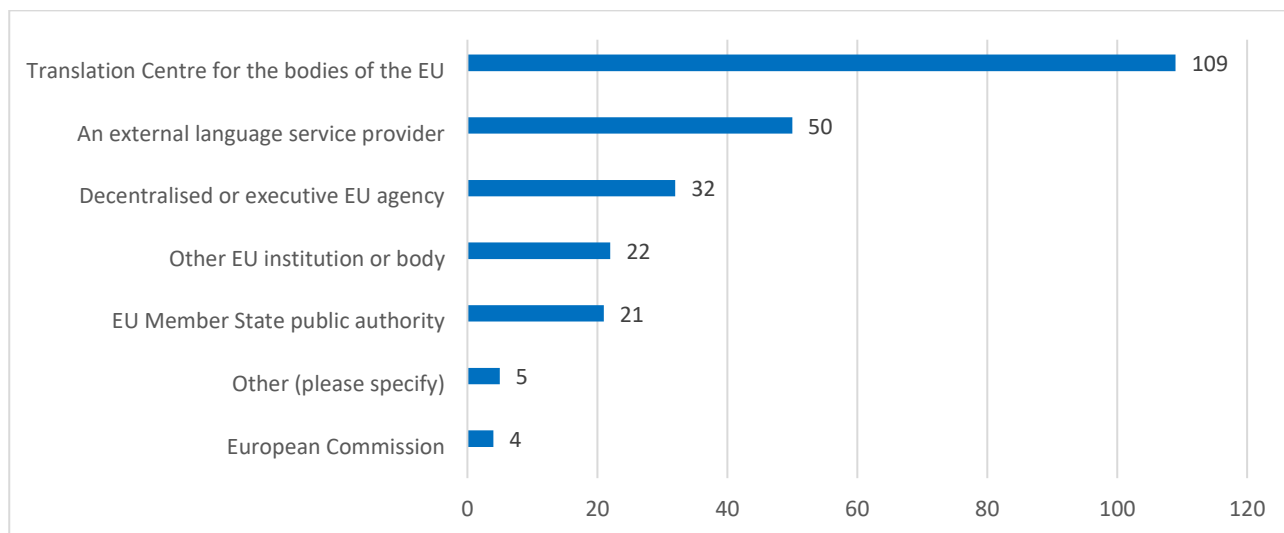
¹²⁶ The consultation numbers in the parenthesis reflect the maximum planned figures, while the consultation numbers outside the parenthesis reflect the actual figures achieved.

¹²⁷ Management Board Members that are clients of the Centre are included in a separate ‘Clients’ category and are not counted under the Management Board.

¹²⁸ Other EU institutions such as European Commission DGs who have service level agreements with the Centre are included under the clients category.

¹²⁹ Please note that, on one occasion, a participant fulfilled the role both of a client and an alternate Management Board Member. In addition, a representative from the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) attended the workshop, although this is not reflected in the table for ease of reading.

Figure 3. Distribution of survey responses across stakeholder groups (count)



Targeted interviews

Between February 27 to July 7, 2025, 35 interviews with the stakeholder groups listed in Table 3 above took place. The interviews aimed to gather a deeper and more nuanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives and to complement the quantitative data collected through the survey. Most interviews took place online via MS Teams, while interviews with Centre management and staff were conducted in person during a visit to the Centre on February 27–28, 2025. Group interviews were organised where appropriate to benefit from shared perspectives amongst staff. Interviews generally lasted 45–60 minutes. A two-page background note and where requested, an interview guide,¹³⁰ was shared with interviewees to provide them with the evaluation’s context and facilitate informed consent. Where individuals from specific groups were unavailable, alternative participants were discussed and agreed with DG Translation.

Validation and forward-looking workshop

A validation and forward-looking workshop took place on 2 July 2025. The workshop aimed to confirm the main findings of the evaluation, discuss issues related to the sustainability of the Centre, and explore future perspectives with key stakeholders. In total, there were 9 workshop participants, excluding 6 participants from the contractor. The workshop’s agenda and input paper are available in Annex II – Methodology and Analytical models used.

¹³⁰ The background note and the interview guides for the different stakeholder groups are available in Annex II – Methodology and Analytical models used.

Methods for data processing

All stakeholder consultations followed specific data analysis processes described in detail in Annex II – Methodology and Analytical models used.

- ▶ The stakeholder survey was scripted in EUSurvey and was distributed by the Centre to the entire population of the stakeholder groups listed in Table 3. Survey analysis was carried out using MS Excel and included descriptive statistics presented in Tables and Graphs, to improve the reader-friendliness of the evaluation report and make the information accessible to a non-expert audience. Open-ended responses were organised in themes, where feasible, and they were used as supporting evidence to address the evaluation questions, as relevant.
- ▶ The targeted interviews were transcribed in an Excel file in line with the topic guide, to support structured analysis. The approach ensured robust, balanced conclusions, with supporting quotes traceable to source transcripts.
- ▶ The focus group discussions were written up in a summary report that was used to finetune and complement the evaluation findings, as well as enhance the forward-looking aspect of the evaluation.

Limitations of stakeholder consultation activities

Overall, stakeholder cooperation was good, and there were no major barriers to consultation activities. However, it is important to note that the results of the stakeholder consultation activities were not fully representative of the entire population of Management Board members, staff, external providers, and clients.

For example, the survey results were skewed because a higher number of responses came from staff members compared to other stakeholder groups. Therefore, where relevant sub-group analysis of the survey results was conducted. Alongside task-specific measures to address such limitations, the evaluation report clearly indicates which stakeholder groups expressed specific views and uses extensive triangulation.

Overview of results of consultation activities

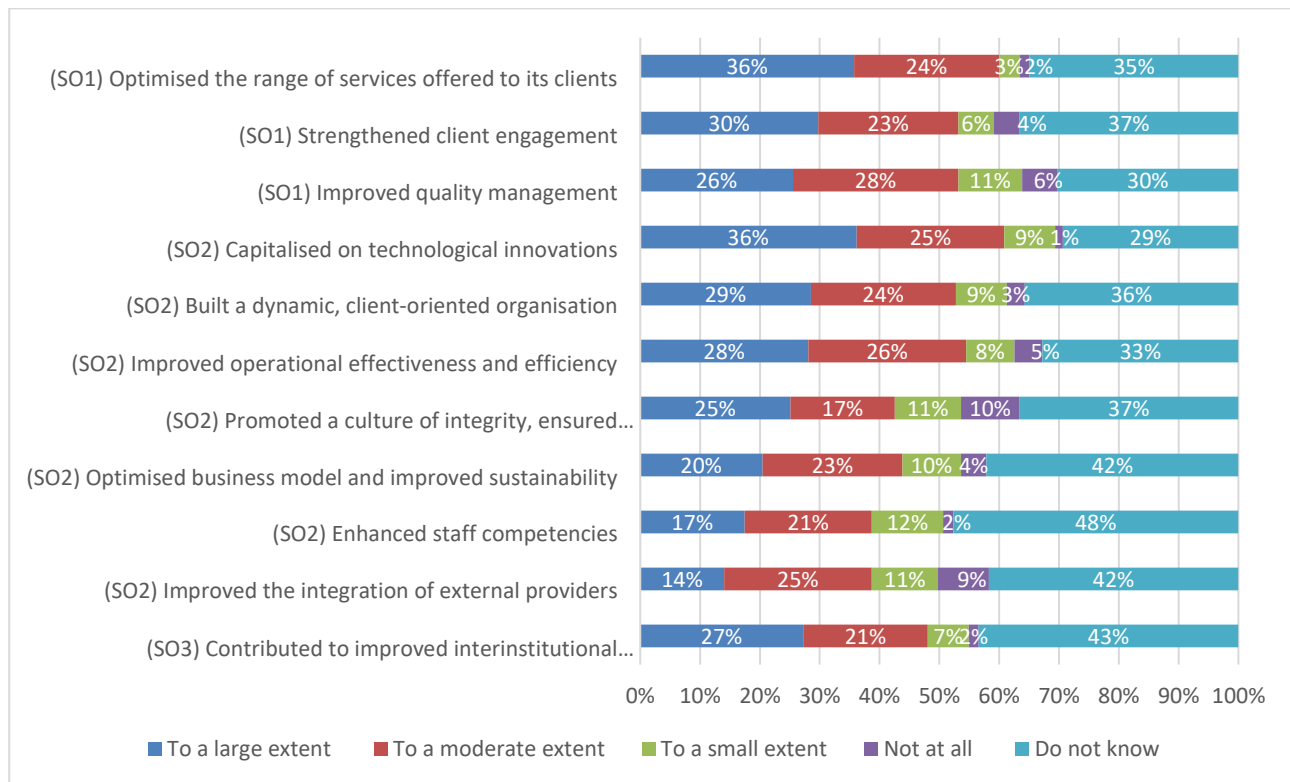
To what extent was the Centre successful, and why?

Effectiveness

The Centre's success was measured against its general, specific and operational objectives, and in particular, its three specific objectives: positioning the Centre as a partner in the holistic provision of language services to EU decentralised agencies (SO1), enhancing operational effectiveness and efficiency (SO2), and contributing to interinstitutional cooperation (SO3).

Stakeholder consultations suggested that the Centre was largely successful in achieving these objectives over the evaluation period, albeit to a different extent, and with the important caveat that a large majority of respondents were unable to answer the relevant questions (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Achievement of the Centre's specific objectives (Survey 2019–2023)¹³¹



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, 2025, N=235.

In particular, the Centre was largely reported to be successful in positioning itself as a partner in the holistic provision of language services to the EU decentralised agencies (SO1). A majority of client respondents agreed to a large or moderate extent that the Centre had optimised the range of services provided (83%; 45 out of 54) and strengthened its engagement with them (76%; 41 out of 54).

Survey respondents across all stakeholder groups also largely reported that the Centre was successful in terms of enhancing its operational effectiveness and efficiency (SO2). In particular, 69% of clients (37 out of 54), 60% of staff (62 out of 103) and 52% of Member States (11 out of 21) agreed that this had been achieved to a large or moderate extent.¹³²

Similar levels of agreement were reported as regards the Centre's success in contributing to interinstitutional cooperation (SO3). 59% of clients (42 out of 54), 51% of staff (53 out of 103) and 57% of Member States (12 out of 21) agreed that this had been achieved to a large or moderate extent.¹³³

¹³¹ Original survey question: To what extent do you agree that the Centre achieved its specific objectives listed below during 2019-2023?

¹³² This includes respondents who reported do not know.

¹³³ This includes respondents who reported do not know.

Stakeholder interviews and the validation and forward-looking workshop helped to unpack and complement the findings presented above by shedding light on the factors that enabled or hindered the Centre's effectiveness in achieving the aforementioned specific objectives.

Amongst the factors facilitating the Centre's effectiveness in achieving its objectives, interviews with Centre staff members pointed to the importance of implementing advanced technologies following the Transformation Plan for 2019-2020. These included machine translation, translation memories, speech-to-text technology, automatic transcription, and automatic subtitling. Each of these technologies, in its own right, and altogether, were reported to improve operational effectiveness by improving workflows, shortening delivery times, reducing outsourcing costs, and enhancing the consistency of translated material. According to interviews with the Centre's staff members, improvements in the eCdT platform also contributed to these improvements, streamlining translation processes and improving client interaction. Finally, interviews with the Centre's clients highlighted strong relationships with the Centre and effective workflow management – including client training and smooth interactions via the client portal – as key factors contributing to the Centre's overall effectiveness.

Stakeholder consultations suggested that the above-mentioned strengths may also carry certain drawbacks that hindered the Centre's effectiveness. For example, interviews with the Centre's staff indicated that translators often lacked sufficient time to provide feedback on the technologies used, which could contribute to future improvements. In parallel, some survey respondents expressed concerns that an overreliance on machine translation technologies, without effective post-editing, may hinder the quality of certain outputs. In addition, consultations with Centre staff and clients highlighted that developments in generative AI were able to provide services that the Centre might otherwise have developed using traditional AI and offered for a fee. For example, a planned summarisation service was ultimately abandoned because similar functionality became freely available through generative AI tools.

The Centre made several adaptations to address these external and also internal factors hindering its effectiveness.

For example, stakeholder consultations with Centre staff and clients suggested that through gauging client interest for new services and recruiting specialists in new language technologies, the Centre was able to diversify its offering. These stakeholders further noted that the various changes to the Centre's workflow – such as the training provision, submission and pre-processing of requests, and others – improved its effectiveness and efficiency, albeit a large number of them was not able to answer the relevant questions.

At the same time, according to the Centre's staff, the creation of four language sections, each managing 20–25 people, improved internal human resources planning and strengthened relationships between managers and staff. Centre staff also reported that the creation of a Working Group and an Advisory Group on Artificial Intelligence helped the Centre to better understand the areas of technological development that could have the strongest impact to its operations and therefore steer its work in these areas. Nevertheless, the Centre still faced challenges, as technological changes made staff upskilling and reskilling difficult, despite the allocation of dedicated training resources.

Participants in the validation and forward-looking workshop proposed several ideas that the Centre could leverage to address these issues and enhance its effectiveness. A strong theme that emerged in this regard was the need for the Centre to closely monitor developments in emerging language technologies – possibly in collaboration with other translation organisations and services, such as eTranslation – in

order to anticipate change. At the same time, there was a clear emphasis on maintaining translation quality through human input, rather than compromising it for the sake of cost-efficiencies achieved through new technologies.

Participants further proposed some ideas that the Centre could use to enhance its effectiveness in serving clients. These included: communicating the range of services more simply, given that the recipients on the client side may be administrative or finance staff who are not fully aware of their institution's translation needs; using a structure or checklist to the free text section of requests to the eCdT platform to support staff making requests; addressing resistance to change and; continuing to understand client needs and advertising the Centre's broader offer.

Efficiency

The stakeholder consultation activities invited various stakeholders to share their views on whether the Centre was cost-effective during the evaluation period, and whether its cost-effectiveness could be improved while maintaining its professional standards.

Overall, stakeholder consultations suggested that the Centre's cost-effectiveness over the evaluation period was moderate, with the Centre's staff being generally more optimistic in their assessment, compared to the Centre's clients, although this varied across services (see, Table 4). As Table 4 shows, clients who were knowledgeable about cost-effectiveness indicated that the Centre's most cost-effective services were language consultancy (3.51), subtitling (3.46), terminology (3.45), and ex-post quality control (3.42).

Table 4. Perceptions around the Centre's cost-effectiveness¹³⁴

Task	Average Likert Score - Centre staff	% Do Not know	Average Likert Score - Centre clients	% Do Not know
Ex-post quality control	2.93	46	3.42	74
Language consultancy	3.3	43	3.51	61
Terminology	3.33	38	3.45	56
Subtitling	3.23	41	3.46	61
Transcription	2.73	54	3.39	72
Full post-editing	3.5	29	3.27	74
Editing	3.32	40	3	63

¹³⁴ Scores are calculated as weighted averages on a 4-point Likert scale, where 4 = "To a large extent," 3 = "To a moderate extent," 2 = "To a small extent," and 1 = "Not at all." Responses marked "Do not know" are excluded from the calculation. The average score reflects the perceived extent of cost-effectiveness for each service.

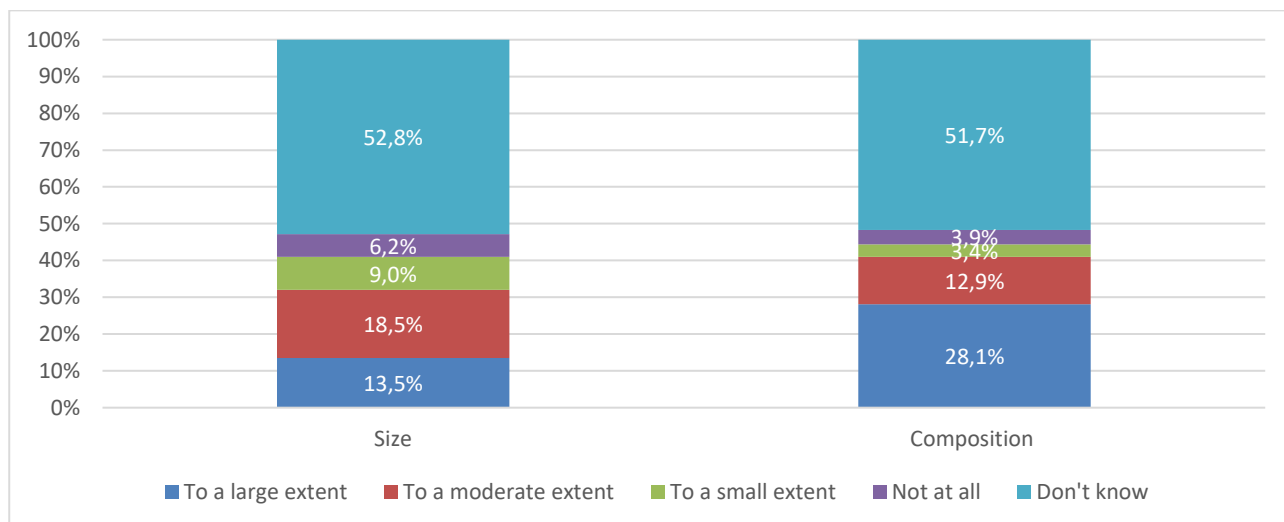
Revisions & modifications	3.38	30	2.9	50
Light post-editing	3.25	35	3.19	63
Automatic translation	3.43	30	3.07	59
EU trademark translations	3.67	31	3.11	81
Document translations	3.53	25	2.72	13

Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, CdT staff N =102; clients N=54.

Consultations with clients suggested that the Centre's moderate cost-effectiveness is expected as it is required to operate like a private business, even though it operates under public sector constraints, including high salary costs. Several clients acknowledged these constraints as a trade-off; offset by the benefits of having a single, reliable provider, eliminating the need to go to the market through often costly procurement procedures. In particular, one interviewee noted that the Centre provides a quality seal, which is especially critical for EU translations in projects such as the European Travel Information and Authorisation System. In this context, the conclusion was that considering its legal and institutional context, the Centre's costs were high but justified.

The stakeholder consultation activities also invited stakeholders to share their views on whether the composition and size of the Management Board was appropriate to ensure efficiencies, for example, in terms of decision-making. Amongst the survey respondents, around 3 out of 10 considered the size of the Management Board to be appropriate to a large or moderate extent, while around 4 out of 10 found its composition to be appropriate (see, Figure 5).

Figure 5. Management Board appropriateness in ensuring decision-making efficiency¹³⁵



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, N=178

Interviews provided additional, albeit inconclusive, insights into this issue. In particular, some interviewees suggested that the size of the Management Board is large but acknowledged its value in upholding democratic principles. Conversely, other interviewees and workshop participants suggested that a smaller board would be more appropriate. For example, having a single representative e.g. the EU Agencies Network represent all EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings was proposed, although approaches like this could also pose challenges due to the diverse needs of the Agencies. Interviewees and workshop participants also highlighted that in-person meetings tended to increase the engagement and networking opportunities for the Management Board members.

As regards the Management Board composition, interviewees pointed to the fact that there seems to be an inherent conflict of interest in the composition of the Management Board, as its members, who are also the clients of the Centre, might also have to prioritise their own institutional interests.

Staying within governance topics, survey respondents also reported that an Executive Board would bring potential benefits in streamlining decision-making processes and increasing decision-making efficiency (45% reported to agree with the statement to a large or moderate extent), and improving the monitoring of the Centre's activities (42% reported to agree with the statement to a large or moderate extent), although 48% of respondents did not respond to the question. At the same time, however, interviews pointed to the potential frictions that such an Executive Board could bring in terms of who takes the decisions.

Looking to the future, interviewees and survey respondents reported that replacing retiring staff with contract staff, outsourcing HR, helpdesk and IT services, and further encouraging homeworking could be explored to reduce costs.

¹³⁵ Original question: In your opinion, to what extent are the following characteristics of the Management Board appropriate to ensure the decision-making efficiency?

Coherence

Coherence with DG Translation and other Commission services

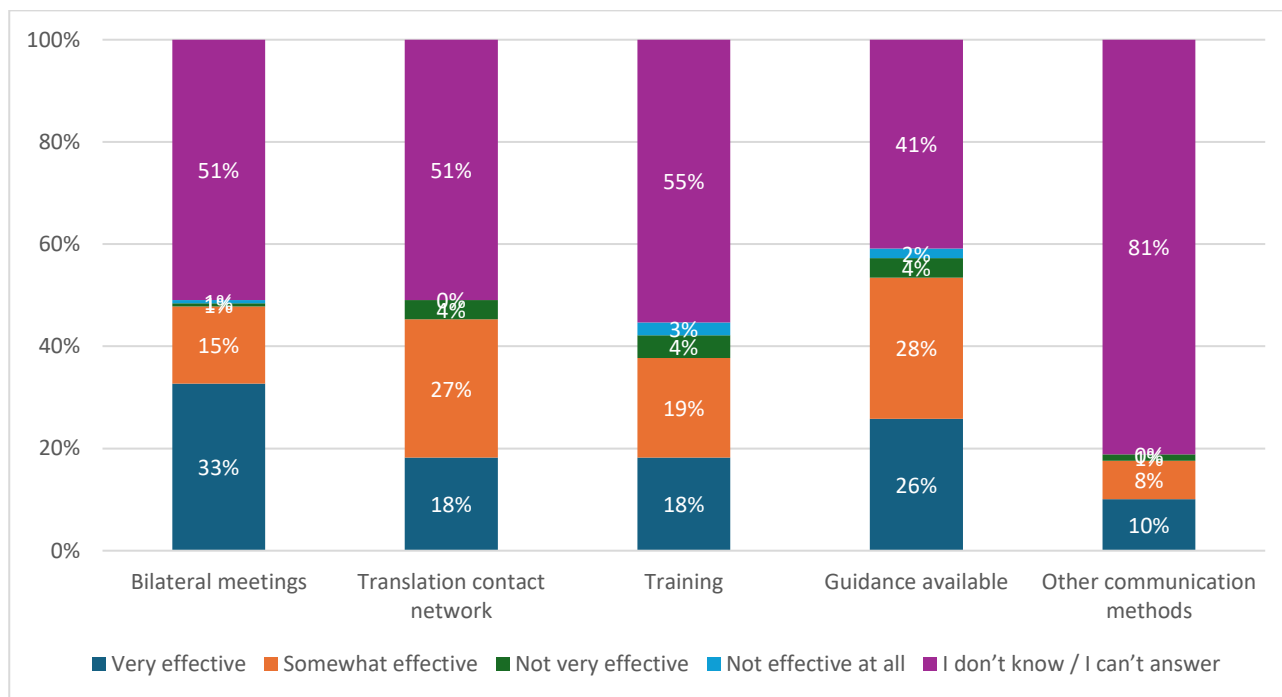
The stakeholder consultations suggest that, although the Centre and DG Translation work in the same area, there is a good, trust-based relationships between them. For example, according to interviews with the Centre's staff, DG Translation interacted with the Centre when wanting to develop tools and services and facilitated a new service contract between the Centre and DG GROW. In addition, the Centre acted as a mediator between DG Translation and other bodies concerning the migration of data to the *Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE)* database.¹³⁶ Interviews also highlighted that interinstitutional networks and working groups such as the Interinstitutional Committee for Interpretation and Translation play an important role in facilitating cooperation between the Centre and the other language services of the EU institutions and bodies. Despite the reported improvements, however, the interviews suggested that there is scope for further enhancing the communication between the Centre and DG Translation, for example, in areas where there are potential overlaps, in order to avoid competition.

Coherence with other EU decentralised agencies

During the evaluation period, the Centre employed several communication approaches to align with the needs of its clients, including the EU decentralised agencies. As the Figure below shows, approaches such as bilateral meetings and guidance appeared to be effective in helping the Centre to align with its clients' needs.

¹³⁶ IATE is the European Union's inter-institutional terminology database. EU institutions and bodies use it collect, disseminate and manage terminology since 2004. Source: <https://iate.europa.eu/home>

Figure 6. Effectiveness of the Centre's communication with its clients¹³⁷



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, N=159

Client interviews also indicated that collaboration between the Centre and other decentralised agencies is generally positive. Good examples include the small group discussions held in the context of the Translation Contact Network, which facilitate knowledge sharing between Agencies, and the presence of a dedicated contact point to support client requests, which personalises and streamlines client support. The Centre was also reported to be responsive in its communication and actively participate in technical discussions aimed at improving service delivery and streamlining communication. According to the discussions held at the workshop, introducing new communication services that allow clients to quickly speak or meet with someone at the Centre could help the Centre to further align its services with client needs.

Contribution to interinstitutional cooperation

According to stakeholder consultations, the Centre contributes well to interinstitutional cooperation amongst the translation and interpretation services of the European institutions, with the survey suggesting important contributions in the Centre's role in sharing of working methods with other institutions, rationalising resources across institutions and harmonising procedures in EU translation. The consultations further highlighted the importance of IATE, although the Centre's staff reported that there is room to improve its timelines.

Areas where the Centre could do more

¹³⁷ Original question: To what extent are the Centre's communication methods with clients effective in ensuring alignment with their needs?

Interview findings suggested placing emphasis on quality as a key factor in maintaining client demand. These findings further highlighted the importance of engaging and listening to clients on a regular basis, in order to tailor services to their evolving needs, and to help them recognise the value of high-quality services as worthwhile investments. Survey respondents also highlighted other areas where the services could do more. In addition to those mentioned earlier – such as increasing awareness of the Centre’s offering and enhancing its direct contact with clients – these included a need for more active involvement of various departments in communications.

How did the Centre make a difference?

Stakeholder consultation activities explored the extent to which the Centre provided added value in terms of process, role, scope, and volume effects, as well as the ways in which this added value was delivered.

In terms of process effects, the survey indicated that having a centralised translation and language service provider, such as the Centre, offered clear benefits to clients. These included avoiding duplication of efforts across decentralised agencies, accessing high-quality translation and language services, and – despite perceptions of high costs – saving time and financial resources compared to what would be possible to achieve in-house. Interviewees similarly emphasised the value of a centralised provider as a transparent and reliable one-stop shop. Some also noted that the administrative burden of organising their own procurement of translation services from the private sector often outweighs the potential cost savings.

In terms of role effects, interviewees and participants pointed to the distinctive features of the Centre which can be hard to find in the market, including bespoke services, translations in all EU language combinations, and contributions to terminologies. As seen earlier, they further highlighted the importance of the Centre’s training to clients (see, Figure 6) and its work in IATE.

In terms of scope effects, there was also agreement amongst interviewees and workshop participants that finding the comprehensive suite of services which the Centre provides in the market in a single provider is difficult. In particular, clients reported benefitting from this integrated model and highlighted its capabilities of covering in addition to translation, other services, such as audiovisual language services.

In terms of volume effects, the Centre’s clients reported that they did not foresee either an increase or a decrease in the volume of the documents they would translate. However, they reported that in the absence of the Centre, it would have been difficult to find a single point of contact for all their requests. In addition, they suggested that as an EU institution, the Centre is better placed to appreciate the importance of certain projects compared to the private sector.

Interviewees and workshop participants offered numerous examples in which the Centre delivered value in these domains. These include keeping the clients’ language data within the EU institutions, providing a level of specialisation that is hard to match and showing a large degree of adaptability to client needs. For example, the eCdT workflow tool was adapted at the request of ELA to enable the involvement of National Authorities in the Member States in the translation process. This adaptation was reported to have made a real difference in the Agency’s work, as it allows National Authorities to be directly engaged in managing their translation requests at the national level.

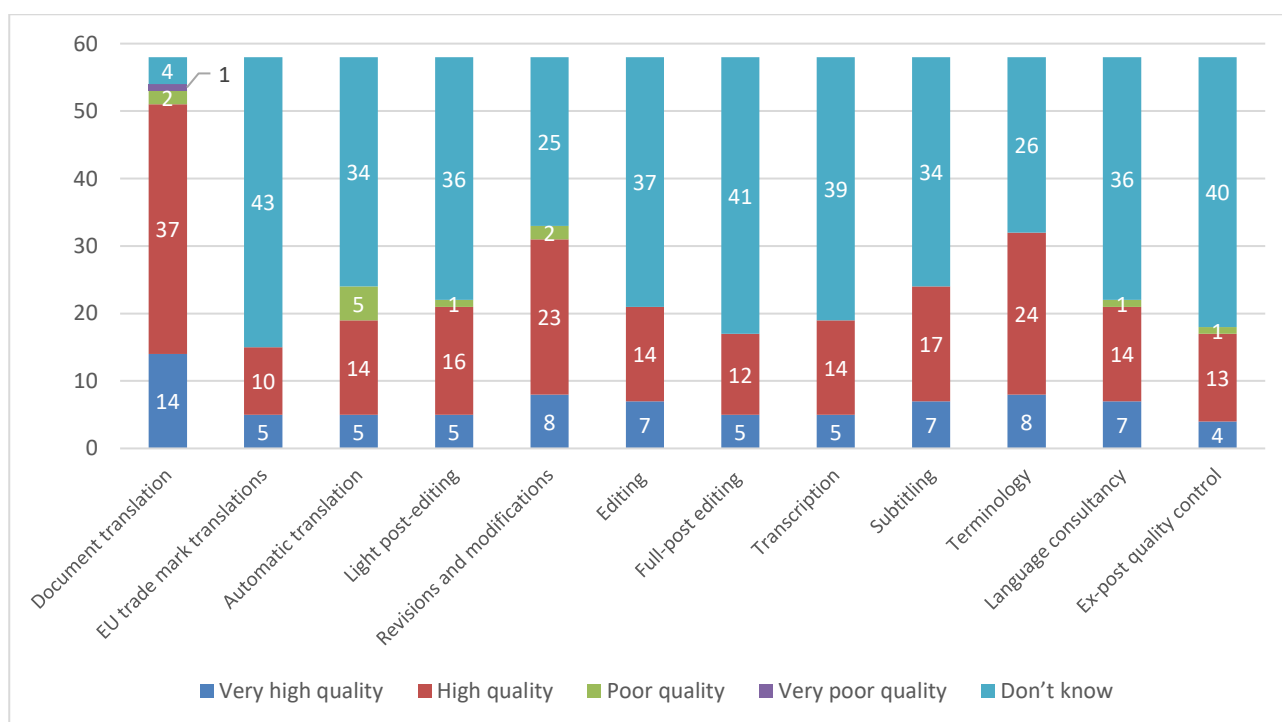
Is the Centre still relevant?

The large majority of stakeholders consulted through the evaluation consider the Centre and the translation and linguistic services it provides to be relevant to the multilingualism needs of EU bodies

and institutions. In the interviews conducted, staff and clients mentioned the variety of services provided by the Centre, the tailored and bespoke solutions that the Centre offers, the range of language combinations and topic areas that are covered, and the fact that the Centre is part of the EU family and already complies with EU Regulations as all key ways in which the Centre remains relevant to their needs. The ways in which the Centre has integrated advanced language technologies was also often highlighted by staff, clients, and Management Board members in the interviews, as is presented in greater detail below.

The relevance of the Centre's services is assessed against their quality, timeliness and price. The Centre's services are considered to be particularly relevant in terms of their quality by clients consulted through both the interviews and the survey. Taking out respondents that did not use a particular service, the quality was assessed as high or very high quality for all services except for automatic translation, where five clients indicated the quality was poor (see Figure 7 below). In the stakeholder interviews, the majority of clients expressed satisfaction with the Centre's quality, as well as the feedback procedures in place to address potential issues. However, there were some concerns raised by staff and members of the Management Board during the interviews that budgetary pressures and cuts to translation staff could have an impact on the overall quality of the Centre's services.

Figure 7. Client perceptions of the quality of the Centre's services (Survey 2019-2023)



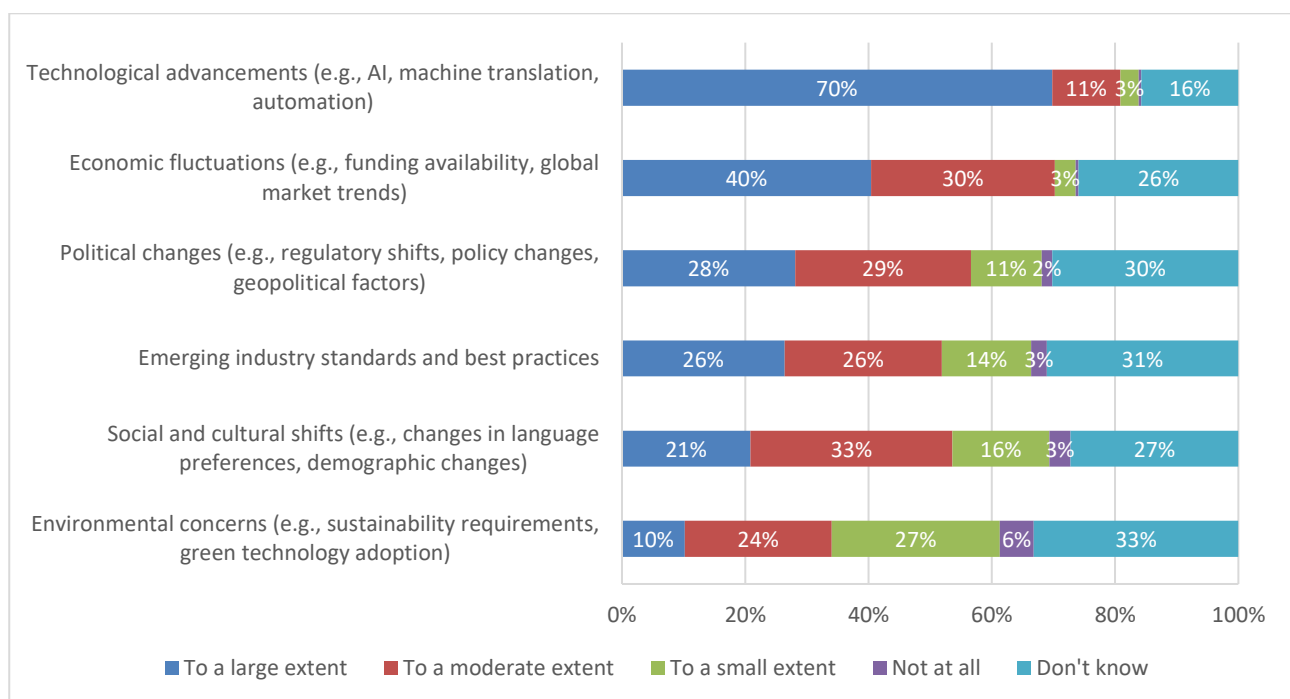
Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, 2025, N=58.

The timeliness of the Centre's services was also assessed positively by stakeholders, with the majority of client respondents to the survey indicating that turnaround times met the needs of their organisation to a moderate or large extent for slow (n=36 out of 58), standard (n=49), urgent (n=48), and very urgent requests (n=30). A lower share of respondents were satisfied with the turnaround time for slow and very urgent requests; however, this is accounted for by a higher share indicating that they did not know, and thus likely had not used those services.

A majority of clients also indicated that they were either satisfied (n=22 out of 58) or very satisfied (n=6) with the prices the Centre charges; however, a significant share still indicated being either a little dissatisfied (n=18) or very dissatisfied (n=5) with the Centre's prices. A similar finding came through from the interviews, with a significant share of the clients, as well as some staff, expressing the view that the prices of the Centre are very high, and can limit the amount that clients can translate due to their own constrained budgets.

Another aspect explored through the consultation activities was the broader trends that could affect the Centre's future relevance. Technological advancements such as AI, machine translation, and automation was the trend expected to have the largest impact on the Centre and its services by the stakeholders surveyed, followed by economic fluctuations, such as funding availability and global market trends, as shown in Figure 8 below. In follow-up questions, stakeholders indicated that these trends would have the largest impact on technological infrastructure and tools (51%; n=120), relevance and demand for services (44%; n=103), the business model of the Centre (43%; n=100), and funding sources and financial sustainability (43%; n=100).

Figure 8. Stakeholder perceptions on the extent to which trends may affect the Centre



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, 2025, N=235.

During the interviews, staff, clients, and Management Board members indicated that advancements in language technology, particularly machine translation and generative AI, have the largest impact on the sector because they provide low-cost or free alternatives to the services provided by the Centre. The majority of clients indicated in the stakeholder survey that they used alternatives to the Centre's services (n=24 out of 38), with half of those indicating that they used machine translation tools. This was supported by the interviews, although most clients still expressed the view that the quality of the Centre's services is much higher than the alternatives, with many stating that human translation is still essential where high quality and specialised terminology is necessary.

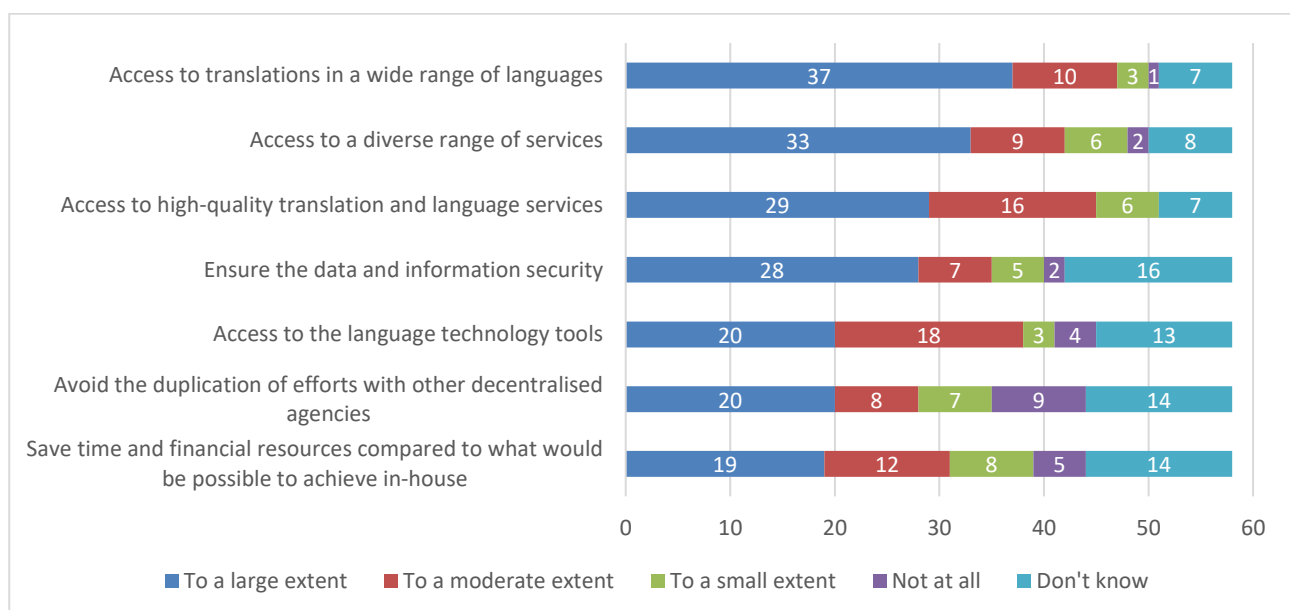
Is the Centre's business model sustainable?

The final research criterion covered by the evaluation focused on the sustainability of the Centre's business model, particularly in light of decline in demand and revenue in recent years. Numerous staff noted in their interviews that the business model of the Centre has unique challenges. The Centre must comply with EU Regulations, which can impose high costs on the Centre, but is not directly supported by the EU budget. As a result, the Centre must pass these costs onto its clients. While the majority of clients interviewed expressed an understanding of this situation, a notable proportion of clients consulted through both the interviews and survey still indicated that the prices of the Centre are too high for them to fully make use of its services.

Further, the advancement of language technologies was mentioned by stakeholders as the most significant threat to the Centre's relevance, as outlined above, with low-cost alternatives to the Centre increasingly used by clients. Staff consulted through the interviews expressed the view that the Centre has made significant efforts to integrate these technologies, which has improved the quality and timeliness of the Centre's outputs, allowed for the addition of new services and enabled it to use efficiency gains to avoid increasing prices throughout the evaluation period. This was also supported by the survey. Excluding responses where respondents indicated that they did not know, the vast majority of respondents expressed the view that the use of machine translation and translation memories contributed to the sustainability of the Centre's business model to a large or moderate extent (88%; n=117). However, a few staff stated during interviews that further efforts could be made to integrate AI in the Centre's activities.

Despite these challenges, client respondents to the survey were overall positive about the benefits of having a centralised agency and language provider. In particular, it was considered beneficial for access to translation in a wide range of languages, access to a diverse range of services, and access to high-quality language and translation services, as shown in Figure 9 below. Clients and staff provided some suggestions for alterations to the Centre's business practices in light of these challenges, including better integrating AI, raising more awareness amongst clients about their full offering and the importance of quality translation, outsourcing a greater share of their work. There were also suggestions to assess restructuring the business model of the Centre altogether.

Figure 9. Benefits of having a centralised translation and language service provider



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, 2025, n=58.

RESEARCH TOOLS

Survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire is available in the embedded file below. Please note that the survey shown here includes the full set of questions, except for a few that were specific to Management Board members. In practice, certain questions were displayed only to relevant stakeholder groups.

Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union – agency evaluation 2019-2023

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

[Ecorys](#) has been commissioned by the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission to conduct a study supporting the evaluation of the Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union. The study aims to:

- ▶ Provide the Commission with an objective, independent and analytical assessment of the Centre and its operations between 2019-2023.
- ▶ Assess the Centre based on the Better Regulation principles of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value, while also examining its long-term sustainability.
- ▶ Consult with stakeholders on the extent to which the Centre has achieved its objectives and addresses the needs of its clients and legislators.
- ▶ Identify lessons learned for the future, including on the sustainability of its business model.

The study will inform the Commission's evaluation of the Centre, including the preparation of its Staff Working Document (SWD).

We would be very grateful if you could complete this survey by **Friday May 2nd**. It will take about 20 minutes to complete, and you can save your progress as you go along.

If you have any questions, please contact the Deputy Project Manager for the study, Neringa Collier at neringa.collier@ecorys.com.

Thank you for your participation!

The endorsement letter and privacy notice linked below include further information on the study and how we will use your data.

[CdT Evaluation - Endorsement letter.pdf](#) [CdT Evaluation - Privacy Note.pdf](#)

☒ I have read the privacy notice and consent to participate in this survey.

Background

* What organisation do you work for (please choose one)?

☒ Translation Centre for the bodies of the European Union

- ☒ European Commission
- ☒ Decentralised or executive EU agency
- ☒ Other EU institution or body
- ☒ EU Member State public authority
- ☒ An external language service provider
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* In which country are you currently based?

- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czechia
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal

- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovak Republic
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Your role

* Which department are you working for?

- ☐ Linguistic Services Department
- ☐ Operations Management Department
- ☐ Corporate Services Department
- ☐ Finance and Facilities Department
- ☐ IT Department
- ☐ Other, please specify:

* Are you a member of the management team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* What is your role in relation to the Centre?

- ☐ Contact point for the engagement with the Centre in my organisation
- ☐ Request the translations and other language services from the Centre
- ☐ Management Board Member
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* Are you a Member of the Centre's Management Board?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* How regularly do you provide translation and other language services to the Centre?

- ☐ Rarely (zero to 10,000 pages per year)

- ☐ Sometimes (10,000 to 20,000 pages per year)
- ☐ Often (20,000 pages or more per year)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Evaluation Questions

Objectives

To what extent do you agree that the Centre achieved its specific objectives listed below during 2019-2023?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know
* Improved quality management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Strengthened client engagement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Optimised the range of services offered to its clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Optimised business model and improved sustainability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Promoted a culture of integrity, ensured transparency and accountability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Enhanced staff competencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Improved the integration of external providers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Capitalised on technological innovations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Improved operational effectiveness and efficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Contributed to improved interinstitutional cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Built a dynamic, client-oriented organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What were the Centre's main achievements and challenges between 2019-2023?

What more can the Centre do to make progress in achieving these objectives going forward?

--

Services

How do you rate the quality of the following services provided by the Centre between 2019-2023?

	Very high quality	High quality	Poor quality	Very poor quality	Don't know
* Document translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* EU trade mark translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Automatic translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Light post-editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Revisions and modifications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Full-post editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Transcription	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Subtitling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Terminology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Language consultancy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Ex-post quality control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent did the quality of the outputs depend on the following factors?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Language/s of the required translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* The technical difficulty of the request	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Urgency of the request	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Type of service requested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Use of in-house translators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Use of private sector providers for translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent did the turnaround times meet the needs of your organisation?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Slow requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Standard requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Urgent requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Very urgent requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*To what extent are you satisfied with the prices that the Centre charges for its services?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Quite satisfied
- ☐ A little dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Don't know

To what extent do you agree that the following services provided by the Centre are cost-effective?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Document translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* EU trade mark translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Automatic translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Light post-editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Revisions and modifications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Full-post editing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Transcription	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Subtitling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Terminology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Language consultancy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Ex-post quality control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent do you expect the volume and size of your requests for translation and other language-related services from the Centre to increase in the coming period?

[illegible]

What factors do you believe might affect trends in demand for translation and other language-related services from the Centre?

Are there any additional translation or language services that your organisation requires but that are not currently offered by the Centre? If so, please describe them.

*Did you use alternative translation and related language services during 2019-2023?

- ☐ Yes – in-house translation and language services capabilities
- ☐ Yes – private sector providers (subcontractors)
- ☐ Yes – machine translation tools
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Do you have any suggestions for how the Centre can better meet your organisation's needs, particularly in terms of quality, turnaround times and price?

To what extent are the Centre's communication methods with clients (e.g., bilateral meetings, Translation Contact Network) effective in ensuring alignment with their needs?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not effective at all	I don't know / I can't answer
* Bilateral meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Translation Contact Network	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Guidance available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other communication methods (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide specific examples of how the Centre's communication methods have led to stronger alignment with client needs. How communication could be improved?

Private sector providers

To what extent do you agree that the use of external providers enables the Centre to:

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Deliver high-quality outputs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Provide specialised technical expertise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Ensure the timely delivery of the outputs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Provide competitive prices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How could the integration of the private providers be improved further?

*To what extent do you agree that the Centre improved the integration of external providers into its operations?

- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know

To what extent did the following changes contribute to the achievement of the above objective?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* The increased use of the eCdT portal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Periodic meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Training sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Workflow changes (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*Have you encountered challenges working with the Centre during 2019-2023?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

What improvements were introduced during 2019-2023? What worked well and what were the challenges?

Interinstitutional cooperation

To what extent does the Centre contribute to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the European institutions?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Sharing of working methods with other institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Rationalising resources across institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Harmonising procedures in EU translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other areas of contribution (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide specific examples of how the Centre has contributed to interinstitutional cooperation and the results of this cooperation.

Efficiency

To what extent did the changes to the workflow introduced during the evaluation period contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Centre's operations?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Training to the clients on the use of its services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Submitting requests to the Centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Pre-processing of the requests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Quality control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Deliver of the requests to the client	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Collecting and addressing client feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In your opinion, to what extent have the following changes introduced during the evaluation period contributed to the efficiency savings within the Centre?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Use of digital technologies to deliver translations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Use of digital tools for managing workflow processes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Enhancing the use of technology to automate routine tasks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Increasing collaboration between departments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Forecasting the demand	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Outsourcing certain administrative or operational tasks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide further details of what contributed the most to the efficiency savings during 2019-2023 and what else could the Centre do to improve it.

In your opinion, to what extent are the following characteristics of the Management Board appropriate to ensure the decision-making efficiency?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Size	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Composition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In your opinion, to what extent could having a small Executive Board improve the following:

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Streamline decision-making process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Increase decision-making efficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Improve monitoring of the Centre's activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other – please specify	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Business model

To what extent did the measures introduced during the 2019-2023 to adapt the business model contribute to the sustainability of the Centre?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Use of machine translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Quality scoring system	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Translation memories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* New services (e.g. light-post editing of machine translated texts, transcription, subtitling, unrevised translations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* End-to-end services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Staff training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Cross-departmental working initiatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Internal communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Training to external language service providers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Feedback to language service providers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Enhance collaboration with the clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide further details to explain your answers.

To what extent does having a centralised translation and language service provider, such as the Centre, benefit your organisation to?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Avoid the duplication of efforts with other decentralised agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Access to high-quality translation and language services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Access to translations in a wide range of languages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Access to a diverse range of services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Save time and financial resources compared to what would be possible to achieve in-house	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Ensure the data and information security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Access to the language technology tools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are there other unique characteristics of the Centre's services that make it distinctive from the other alternative solutions?

What are the specific advantages and disadvantages of maintaining a centralised translation and language service provider like the Centre, compared to using alternative providers?

Foresight

To what extent do the following trends affect the Centre and its services?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Technological advancements (e.g., AI, machine translation, automation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Political changes (e.g., regulatory shifts, policy changes, geopolitical factors)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Economic fluctuations (e.g., funding availability, global market trends)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Social and cultural shifts (e.g., changes in language preferences, demographic changes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Environmental concerns (e.g., sustainability requirements, green technology adoption)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Emerging industry standards and best practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent do the trends presented in the Table above (technological advancements, political changes, economic fluctuations, etc.) affect the below dimensions?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Business model of the Centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Relevance and demand for services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Skills needs for staff and stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Technological infrastructure and tools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Partnerships and collaborations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Funding sources and financial sustainability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Policy and regulatory compliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please elaborate on your previous answer regarding future trends and how they are likely to impact the future relevance of the Centre.

To what extent do you believe the Centre's initiatives, listed below helped it anticipate and leverage upcoming trends to remain relevant?

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
* Transformation plan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Multi-engine translation strategy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* AI working group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Change Board	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
* Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What else could the Centre do to adapt to the foreseen changes in order to remain relevant to its clients?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to add in relation to the key topics covered during the survey?

Would you agree to be contacted further regarding this evaluation? If so, please provide your name and email address.

Email

Contact

kyrillos.spyridopoulos@ecorys.com

INTERVIEW MATERIALS

The interview background note, as well as the interview questionnaires for each stakeholder group are available in the embedded files below.

Interview Guide – CdT Staff

Background questions

1. Could you begin by outlining your current role?

Relevance

2. Are the Centre's services and activities relevant to achieving its mandate and in what way?
3. What are your thoughts around the European Parliament's observations, as well as the European Court of Auditors findings? How does the Centre address these observations and findings?
4. How would you rate the relevance of the Centre's services to its clients' needs (quality, turnaround times, price)?
5. What kind of improvements could the Centre introduce to make its services better match the needs of its clients?
6. Are there any other translation or language-related services that could be relevant for clients, but are not offered?
7. What facilitates hinders the relevance of the Centre's services to its clients (e.g. technical difficulty, languages required, urgency, use of subcontractors)?
8. What kind of technological, political or other developments could affect the language industry, and consequently the Centre's business model, relevance of services, skills needs, (IT) infrastructure?
9. In what way does technology development affect the Centre's business model? What more could it do to make the most of the technological developments?
10. What is the role of different initiatives of the Centre such as its AI advisory group in anticipating changes in language technology and ensuring the Centre is on top of them?

Effectiveness

11. What were the main achievements of the Centre during the 2019-2023 period?
12. How do the following factors help the Centre effectively achieve its strategic objectives?
 - a. Governance structure
 - i. Size of the Management Board
 - ii. Composition of the Management Board
 - b. Organisational structure
 - i. Hierarchical vs vertical

- ii. Resource allocation
 - iii. Task allocation
 - c. Use of language technologies
 - d. Other factors
13. In your view, how could the Centre address the factors hindering its performance, and leverage those increasing it? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
14. What were the most significant changes introduced during the evaluation period (2019-2023) that increased the effectiveness of the Centre? To what extent these changes contribute to achieving Centre's objectives?
15. Are you aware of any unintended effects related to the Centre's operations? What were they and how this could be avoided?

Efficiency

16. What changes, initiatives adopted in 2019-2023 contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the Centre?
17. Do the following factors impact the operational processes of the Centre e.g. in terms of creating bottlenecks (delays by slow decision-making, communication gaps, lack of coordination, etc.)?
- a. Governance structure
 - i. Size of the Management Board
 - ii. Composition of the Management Board
 - b. Organisational structure
 - i. Hierarchical vs vertical
 - ii. Resource allocation
 - iii. Task allocation
 - c. Use of language technologies
 - d. Other factors
18. Would a smaller Executive Board be beneficial to improve decision-making, monitoring and governance of the Centre? What would be the key benefits and drawbacks? What should be its composition?
19. How can the Centre improve efficiency of its operations? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
20. How did the Centre adapt to the changes over the evaluation period that affected its operations, the implementation of the AARs; demand for services; costs (inflation), skills needs (new language technologies), IT infrastructure (increased risks), and others?
21. In your view, are there any areas where costs can be reduced without compromising the Centre's professional standards, and how?

22. Equally, are there any opportunities to increase the revenues of the Centre, and how?

Coherence

23. How does the Centre cooperate with the DGT and other Commission services? Are there any formal or informal cooperation mechanisms in place, are they effective, and how could they be optimised? Could the Centre do more to provide capacity to other EU translation services during the busy periods?

24. How does the Centre communicate with its clients (bilateral meetings, Translation Contact Network, others), and is this communication effective in ensuring strong alignment with their needs?

25. Are you aware of examples of cooperation with other agencies and joint undertakings in Luxembourg and other countries in relation to procurement, recruitment, cost sharing? If so, please provide examples. How could this cooperation improve?

26. How does the Centre concretely contribute to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the European institutions, and what were the results of this interinstitutional cooperation?

27. How would you rate the Centre's contributions to the terminology projects?

28. How could the Centre, stimulate the demand for its services?

EU Added Value

29. To which stakeholders, how, and in which domains did the Centre's work made a difference to?

Sustainability

30. Do you have any suggestions on how the Centre could improve its business model to remain sustainable?

31. What are the reasons behind the changes in demand of the Centre's services? To what extent the current trends are likely to continue?

32. What are the potential productivity gains from new technologies, and does the Centre take necessary actions to make the most use of them?

Interview Guide – Clients

Background questions

1. Could you begin by outlining your current role?

2. Could you outline how you engage with the Centre's services and operations?

3. What are the translation needs in your organisation? What types of documents you tend to translate and in which languages?

4. How translation is organised in your organisation (e.g. in-house team, communications team, policy officers role in identifying, commissioning and quality assurance)?

Relevance

5. How would you rate the relevance of the Centre's services to its clients' needs (quality, turnaround times, price)?
6. What kind of improvements could the Centre introduce to make its services better match the needs of its clients?
7. Are there any other translation or language-related services that could be relevant for clients, but are not offered?
8. What facilitates hinders the relevance of the Centre's services to its clients (e.g. technical difficulty, languages required, urgency, use of subcontractors)?
9. Is your organisation using alternative solutions? How they are organised (in-house team, use of subcontractors, machine translation)? How does the quality compare to the Centre's outputs?
 - a. What are the drivers for using alternative solutions?
10. What kind of technological, political or other developments could affect the language industry, and consequently the Centre's business model, relevance of services, skills needs, (IT) infrastructure?

Effectiveness

11. What were the main achievements of the Centre during the 2019-2023 period?
12. How do the following factors help the Centre effectively achieve its strategic objectives?
 - a. Governance structure
 - b. Size of the Management Board
 - c. Composition of the Management Board
 - d. Organisational structure
 - e. Hierarchical vs vertical
 - f. Resource allocation
 - g. Task allocation
 - h. Use of language technologies
 - i. Other factors

Efficiency

13. What changes, initiatives adopted in 2019-2023 contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the Centre?
14. Would a smaller Executive Board be beneficial to improve decision-making, monitoring and governance of the Centre? What would be the key benefits and drawbacks? What should be its composition?

15. How did the Centre adapt to the changes over the evaluation period that affected its operations, the implementation of the AARs; demand for services; costs (inflation), skills needs (new language technologies), IT infrastructure (increased risks), and others?

Coherence

16. How does the Centre communicate with its clients (bilateral meetings, Translation Contact Network, others), and is this communication effective in ensuring strong alignment with their needs?
17. How would you rate the Centre's contributions to the terminology projects?

EU Added Value

18. What are the benefits of having a centralised translation and language service provider, instead of relying on an external subcontractor e.g. in terms of:
- a. increasing the volume and range of services used,
 - b. saving time and financial resources,
 - c. maintaining quality standards,
 - d. enhancing accountability and transparency of resources?
19. To which stakeholders, how, and in which domains did the Centre's work made a difference to?

Sustainability

20. Do you have any suggestions on how the Centre could improve its business model to remain sustainable?
21. What are the reasons behind the changes in demand of the Centre's services? To what extent the current trends are likely to continue?

Interview Guide – Member States

Background questions

- 1. Could you begin by outlining your current role?
- 2. How do you engage with the Centre's activities and services?

Relevance

- 3. Are the Centre's services and activities relevant to achieving its mandate and in what way?
- 4. What kind of improvements could the Centre introduce to make its services better match the needs of its clients?
- 5. Are there any other translation or language-related services that could be relevant for clients, but are not offered?
- 6. What facilitates hinders the relevance of the Centre's services to its clients (e.g. technical difficulty, languages required, urgency, use of subcontractors)?

7. What kind of technological, political or other developments could affect the language industry, and consequently the Centre's business model, relevance of services, skills needs, (IT) infrastructure?
8. In what way does technology development affect the Centre's business model? What more could it do to make the most of the technological developments?
9. What is the role of different initiatives of the Centre such as its AI advisory group in anticipating changes in language technology and ensuring the Centre is on top of them?

Effectiveness

10. What were the main achievements of the Centre during the 2019-2023 period?
11. How do the following factors help the Centre effectively achieve its strategic objectives?
 - a. Governance structure
 - i. Size of the Management Board
 - ii. Composition of the Management Board
 - b. Organisational structure
 - i. Hierarchical vs vertical
 - ii. Resource allocation
 - iii. Task allocation
 - c. Use of language technologies
 - d. Other factors
12. In your view, how could the Centre address the factors hindering its performance, and leverage those increasing it? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
13. What were the most significant changes introduced during the evaluation period (2019-2023) that increased the effectiveness of the Centre? To what extent these changes contribute to achieving Centre's objectives?
14. Are you aware of any unintended effects related to the Centre's operations? What were they and how this could be avoided?

Efficiency

15. What changes, initiatives adopted in 2019-2023 contributed to the cost-effectiveness of the Centre?
16. Do the following factors impact the operational processes of the Centre e.g. in terms of creating bottlenecks (delays by slow decision-making, communication gaps, lack of coordination, etc.)?
 - a. Governance structure
 - i. Size of the Management Board
 - ii. Composition of the Management Board

- b. Organisational structure**
 - i. Hierarchical vs vertical
 - ii. Resource allocation
 - iii. Task allocation
- c. Use of language technologies**
- d. Other factors**

17. Would a smaller Executive Board be beneficial to improve decision-making, monitoring and governance of the Centre? What would be the key benefits and drawbacks? What should be its composition?
18. How can the Centre improve efficiency of its operations? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
19. How did the Centre adapt to the changes over the evaluation period that affected its operations, the implementation of the AARs; demand for services; costs (inflation), skills needs (new language technologies), IT infrastructure (increased risks), and others?
20. In your view, are there any areas where costs can be reduced without compromising the Centre's professional standards, and how?
21. Equally, are there any opportunities to increase the revenues of the Centre, and how?

Coherence

22. How does the Centre cooperate with the DGT and other Commission services? Are there any formal or informal cooperation mechanisms in place, are they effective, and how could they be optimised? Could the Centre do more to provide capacity to other EU translation services during the busy periods?
23. How does the Centre communicate with its clients (bilateral meetings, Translation Contact Network, others), and is this communication effective in ensuring strong alignment with their needs?
24. Are you aware of examples of cooperation with other agencies and joint undertakings in Luxembourg and other countries in relation to procurement, recruitment, cost sharing? If so, please provide examples. How could this cooperation improve?
25. How does the Centre concretely contribute to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the European institutions, and what were the results of this interinstitutional cooperation?
26. How would you rate the Centre's contributions to the terminology projects?
27. How could the Centre, stimulate the demand for its services?

EU Added Value

28. To which stakeholders, how, and in which domains did the Centre's work made a difference to?

Sustainability

29. Do you have any suggestions on how the Centre could improve its business model to remain sustainable?
30. What are the reasons behind the changes in demand of the Centre's services? To what extent the current trends are likely to continue?
31. What are the potential productivity gains from new technologies, and does the Centre take necessary actions to make the most use of them?

Interview Guide – Subcontractors

Background questions

1. Could you begin by outlining your current role?
2. Could you outline how you engage with the Centre's services and operations?

Relevance

3. What kind of technological, political or other developments could affect the language industry, and consequently the Centre's business model, relevance of services, skills needs, (IT) infrastructure?

Effectiveness

4. In your view, how could the Centre address the factors hindering its performance, and leverage those increasing it? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
 - a. *e.g. on issues related to calls for tenders*
5. What were the most significant changes introduced during the evaluation period (2019-2023) that increased the effectiveness of the Centre? To what extent these changes contribute to achieving Centre's objectives?
6. Are you aware of any unintended effects related to the Centre's operations? What were they and how this could be avoided?

Efficiency

7. How can the Centre improve efficiency of its operations? Please provide as concrete examples / ideas as possible.
 - a. *e.g. on issues related to calls for tenders*
8. How did the Centre adapt to the changes over the evaluation period that affected its operations, the implementation of the AARs; demand for services; costs (inflation), skills needs (new language technologies), IT infrastructure (increased risks), and others?

Coherence

9. How does the Centre communicate with its clients (bilateral meetings, Translation Contact Network, others), and is this communication effective in ensuring strong alignment with their needs?

a. *e.g. on planned procurement*

EU Added Value

10. What are the benefits of having a centralised translation and language service provider, instead of relying on an external subcontractor e.g. in terms of:
- a.** increasing the volume and range of services used
 - b.** saving time and financial resources
 - c.** maintaining quality standards
 - d.** enhancing accountability and transparency of resources?
 - e.** To which stakeholders, how, and in which domains did the Centre's work made a difference to?

FOCUS GROUP MATERIALS

The focus groups materials are available in the **embedded** files below. These include the following:

Agenda – Online Validation Workshop

Study overview

Ecorys was commissioned by the European Commission to provide an external study supporting the evaluation of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (the Centre). The evaluation covers the period between 2019 – 2023.

This study will provide the EU and the Centre with evidence on the six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value, relevance and sustainability. The conclusions of the evaluation will aim to take stock of the Centre's progress in achieving its overall objectives during the evaluation period and will help to guide the Centre's future operations.

As part of this evaluation, we have collected data through desk research, analysis of the Centre's monitoring data, stakeholder interviews and a targeted survey. This validation workshop is part of the consultation activities carried out for the study and will allow us to address gaps in our data, and test and strengthen our findings and preliminary conclusions.

Objectives of the validation workshop

The validation workshop will focus on the following key aspects:

- ▶ Presentations and discussion of the key findings in relation to the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value, relevance and sustainability criteria of the Centre.
- ▶ Discussion on key lessons learned from the Centre's activities between 2019 and 2023 and key priorities for the future and challenges ahead.

The objectives of the workshop will be to:

- ▶ Validate and expand the findings and conclusions of the evaluation; and
- ▶ Discuss learning points for the future.

Participants

The workshop will bring together around 10 representatives drawn from the Centre, its Management Board, the European Commission, EU decentralised agencies and other EU institutions that are the Centre's clients, external language services providers, and experts.

Workshop set-up and logistical arrangements

The meeting will be interactive. Participants will be encouraged to share their views and engage in discussions.

The meeting will take place **online** on Microsoft Teams and last around 2 hours. The meeting link has been sent via email invitation to participants.

Outputs

The research team will produce detailed notes following the meeting to capture the discussion. The notes will be anonymised and allow the research team to feed key points and learnings into the final evaluation report.

Contact details

Should you have any questions about the workshop, please get in touch with the Ecorys Research Team.

Draft agenda

Time (CET)	Session	Items
09:45 – 10:00		<i>Start of the online meeting</i>
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and Introduction	Introduction to the meeting and welcome words from the Project Manager and the European Commission. <i>Moderator and introduction to the meeting: Ecorys Project Manager</i> <i>Welcome words: European Commission Directorate General for Translation</i>
10:10 – 10:30	Relevance	Presentation of key findings on relevance (5 minutes) Discussion on key questions related to relevance (15 minutes) ▶ How could the Centre further improve the optimum range of services to its clients and stimulate the demand? ▶ What type of services should be prioritised? Are there some services that should be discontinued or new services that should be prioritised? ▶ How could economies of scale be improved, and what could be done to encourage the clients to use services that have been developed?
10:30 – 10:50	Effectiveness	Presentation of key findings on effectiveness (5 minutes) Discussion on key questions related to effectiveness (15 minutes) ▶ What could the Centre do to make the most of the recent technology developments in terms of the services it provides to its clients? ▶ What could the Centre do to improve its effectiveness further in terms of reaching its specific objectives to:

		▷ Position the Centre as a partner in the holistic provision of language services to clients. ▷ Enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency. ▷ Contribute to interinstitutional cooperation.
10:50 – 11:10	Sustainability	Presentation of key findings on sustainability (5 minutes) Discussion on key questions related to sustainability (15 minutes) ▶ Given the challenging situation in terms of demand and changes of the language technology, what are the potential options for improving the business model of the Centre? ▶ What alternative solutions could be considered to consolidate the Centre's position as centralised translation service for its clients?
11:10 – 11:25	Efficiency	Presentation of key findings on efficiency (5 minutes) ▶ Discussion on key questions related to efficiency (10 minutes) ▶ To what extent does the size and composition of the management board contribute to its effectiveness and efficiency? ▶ Would smaller executive board be beneficial to improve efficiency of the governance structures? ▶ What could the Centre do to increase efficiencies in the workflow management and its operations?
11:25 – 11:40	Coherence	Presentation of key findings on coherence (5 minutes) Discussion on key questions related to coherence (10 minutes) ▶ What could Centre do to further improve working relationships with other decentralised agencies and EU institutions? ▶ Could the Centre contribute more to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the EU institutions?
11:40 – 11:55	EU added value	Presentation of key findings on EU added value (5 minutes) Discussion on key questions related to EU added value (10 minutes)

- ▶ What key characteristics of the Centre distinguish it from other translation services (e.g. know-how of the clients and their needs, security, economies of scale, efficiency savings)?
- ▶ Are there any particular services that could be improved or amended to increase the Centre's EU added value and improve the range of services that it provides to its clients?

11:55 – **Closing**
12:00 **remarks**

Brief summary of the discussions and next steps

INPUT PAPER – VALIDATION WORKSHOP

About the workshop

The European Commission is conducting an evaluation of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union. The evaluation covers the period between 2019-2023. The Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines, the Financial Regulation and the Common Approach on EU Decentralised Agencies require periodic evaluation of EU interventions of over EUR 5 million, which is applicable to the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (the Centre).

The study began in 2025 and will provide evidence on these six evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and sustainability. The conclusions of the evaluation will take stock of the Centre's progress in achieving its objectives during the evaluation period and will help to guide the Centre's operations in the future. The figure below provides an overview of the methodology used to conduct the study.

Figure 10. Overview of the methodology



The online validation workshop (part of the consultation activities under Task 3) aims to serve as a space to share, validate and expand the study's findings and will contribute directly to the final report. It brings together around 10 representatives drawn from the Centre, the Management Board, the European Commission, EU decentralised agencies and other EU institutions that are the Centre's clients, external language service providers and experts. This workshop aims to address remaining gaps from the data collected to date and strengthen the findings and preliminary conclusions.

This background paper provides an overview of the findings for the Centre around the six evaluation criteria and includes key questions for further discussion under each criterion.

Overview of the Centre

The Centre was established in 1994 to provide centralised translation and related language services to the other EU decentralised agencies. The rationale behind setting up the Centre was to provide efficient and highly specialised services to a wide range of EU agencies, operating across a breadth of thematic areas and based in different EU Member States. The Founding Regulation setting up the Centre¹³⁸ defines its **mandate to provide necessary translation services to the other EU decentralised agencies and to fully participate in the work of the Interinstitutional Committee for Translation**. The preamble of the regulation also highlights “that establishment of a single specialised centre provides a practical solution to the problem of meeting the translation needs of a large number of bodies in various locations throughout the Union”.¹³⁹ In addition to supporting other EU agencies, the Centre works with the other EU institutions and bodies who have their own translation services, particularly in terms of supporting them during busy periods by providing additional capacity.

The Founding Regulation was updated in 2003, although the Centre’s mandate remains largely unchanged. The strategy for 2016-2020, which was extended for the duration of the evaluation period, highlights the dual mission of the Centre, which is to:¹⁴⁰

- ▶ provide translation and related language services to the EU institutions, agencies and bodies; and
- ▶ contribute to rationalising the use of resources and harmonising procedures in the field of EU translation through interinstitutional cooperation.

In addition, the Centre aims to **contribute to the EU’s policies related to multilingualism** by providing information to EU citizens in the official languages of the Union. During the evaluation period, its work was underpinned by two core principles: **embedding a more robust quality management approach** to its operations and **developing a sustainable business model**.

Between the years 2019-2023 (the evaluation period), the Centre had three key strategic objectives. These are outlined in the figure below.

¹³⁸ European Council (1994), *Council Regulation (EC) No 2965/94 of 28 November 1994 setting up a Translation Centre for bodies of the European Union*. Available at: [3b2_to_ps.ps 1..15 \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (2021), *Strategy 2016-2020*. Available at: [037_2016_03_strat_2016_2020_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

Figure 11. Strategic CdT objectives 2019-2023



Source: Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (2021), Strategy 2016-2020

EMERGING FINDINGS

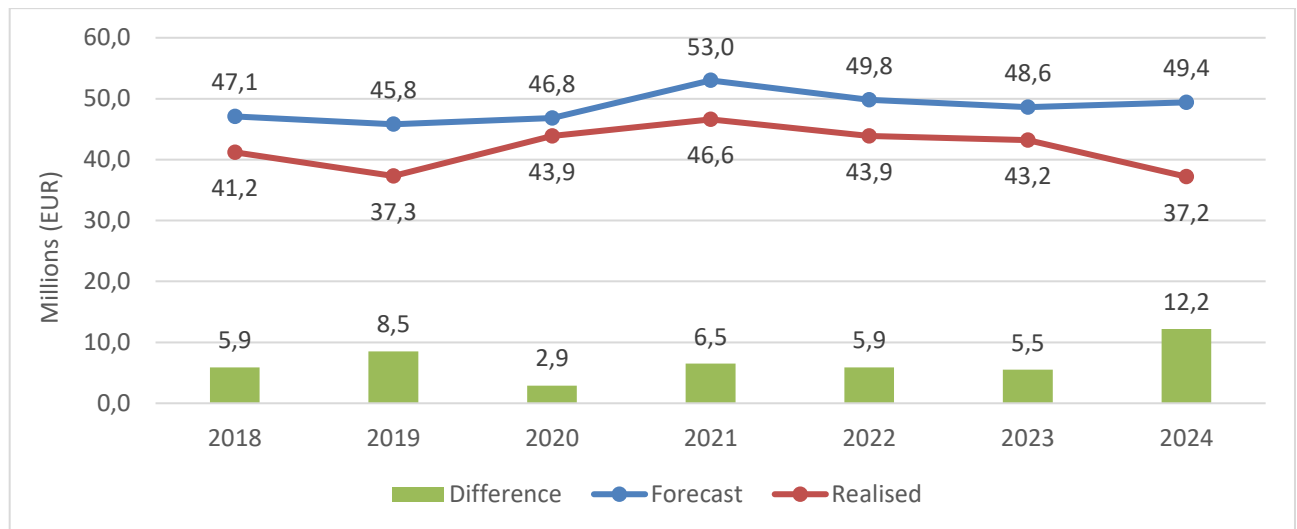
In this section, we set out our main findings in relation to each of the six evaluation criteria.

Relevance

The Centre has largely fulfilled its mandate, offering a wide range of translation and linguistic services that are targeted and tailored to EU agencies' needs. It has introduced services (such as automatic translation, post-editing and automatic transcriptions) and stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation have praised the Centre's responsiveness, adaptability and multilingual coverage. However, reports from the European Parliament and European Court of Auditors raise concerns about declining demand and revenues. This threatens the Centre's financial sustainability and is further explored in the sustainability section below.

The Centre's services are seen as high-quality and timely, especially in the case of complex or urgent translations. Clients tend to appreciate the way that the Centre communicates, its user-friendly tools and its willingness to develop ad-hoc customised services. However, forecasted revenues have remained flat while actual revenues have declined, with a growing gap between the two – reaching over €12 million shortfall in 2024.

Figure 12. Translation Centre forecast vs. realised revenues, including the annual difference, by year, in millions of EUR (2018-2024)



Source: CdT Budgets and Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018-2024.

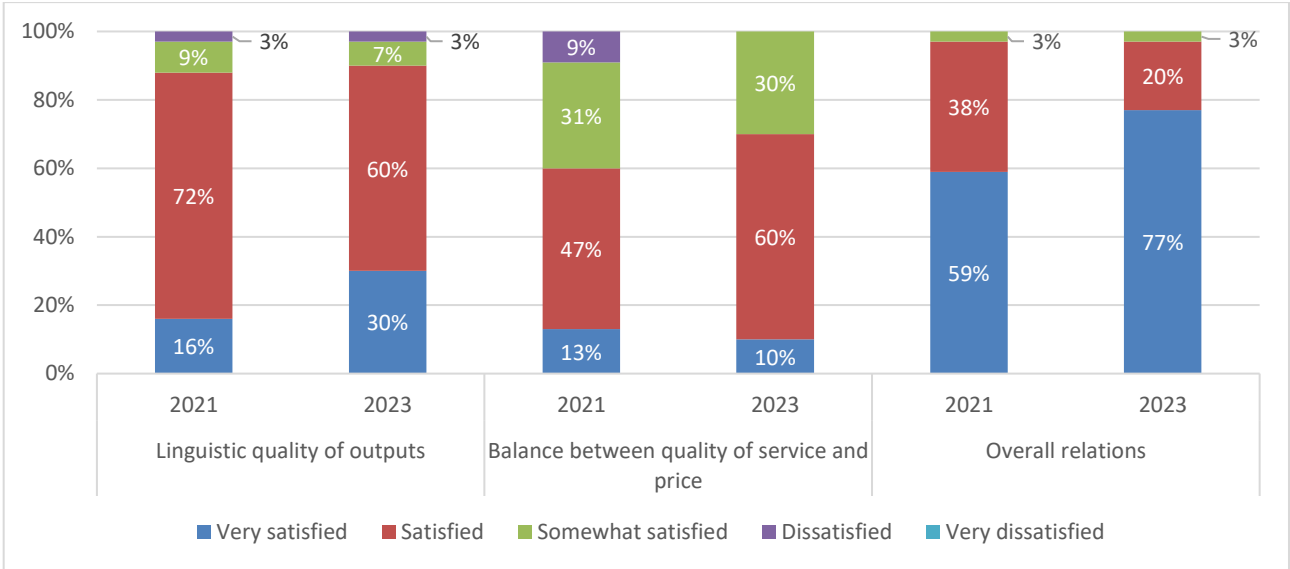
The Centre's pricing model is one of the contributing factors to this shortfall. As part of the Centre's Transformation Plan, a modular pricing model was implemented, enabling different pricing based on the type of document and services provided. As machine translations are integrated into the Centre's workflow, the cost savings of this were passed on to the clients. This was an important change, highlighted by the Centre's staff as well as by the European Parliament. However, pricing is still considered high, in particular in the context of the financial pressures that many of the Centre's clients experience, which has in turn decreased the growth in demand for the Centre's services.

Additionally, the Centre charges clients for the provision of services, but in many cases, there are costs associated with development of these services borne by the Centre that are not justified due to usage falling short of what was originally envisaged. Specific examples of this included the development of the online dispute resolution service and automatic subtitling / transcription. Lastly, the Centre faces challenges in achieving economies of scale due to variation between clients in what they are willing to outsource to the Centre and what they prefer to keep internal.

Nevertheless, satisfaction with the quality of Centre's services is still high. The timeliness of the delivery of services has been generally praised, especially in the case of urgent requests. The Centre's services are valued very highly for quality, confidentiality and compliance with EU standards. The Centre has expanded its client base and introduced a broader range of services, but growth in the client base is limited because the Centre operates in a closed market and cannot expand its client base outside of the EU institutions, in accordance with its Founding Regulation. The Centre measures client satisfaction through Corrected Version Forms (CVFs), Client Satisfaction Surveys (CSSs), and ongoing discussions with key clients. Since the introduction of CVFs in 2020, the average return rate has been 3%, indicating that most deliveries were accepted as satisfactory. The CSSs, conducted annually between 2021-2023, showed that clients are generally satisfied with the

services provided, particularly with the quality of services, whilst the balance between price and quality was not as appreciated, ranking least favourably compared to quality and overall relations (see Figure 13). However, client satisfaction with the quality and price ratio improved between 2021 and 2023, decreasing the percentage of dissatisfied clients from 9% to none.

Figure 13. Results of Client Satisfaction Surveys on quality, price, and overall relations, 2021 and 2023



Source: CdT Client Satisfaction Survey Conclusions, 2021 and 2023.

Since 2018, demand has steadily declined, particularly in the case of trademark translations. Clients are increasingly turning to alternatives such as in-house teams, private providers, and free machine translation tools as they are also facing constraints on their budgets, and spending on translation has been deprioritised by clients. Technological advances pose significant threats to the Centre's relevance. In response, the Centre implemented a Transformation Plan, including AI working groups and new tools such as the Multi-engine Machine Translation (MEMT). However, staff and clients see room for improvement in integrating AI tools and upskilling staff. To add to this, political and economic factors could also impact the demand for the Centre's services.

Despite these challenges, the Centre is preparing for future needs, including new EU languages linked to enlargement, but still faces resource and staffing challenges. To address the overall decrease in demand, the Centre has recently introduced a 5% increase to its prices, active from 2025.

RELEVANCE - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

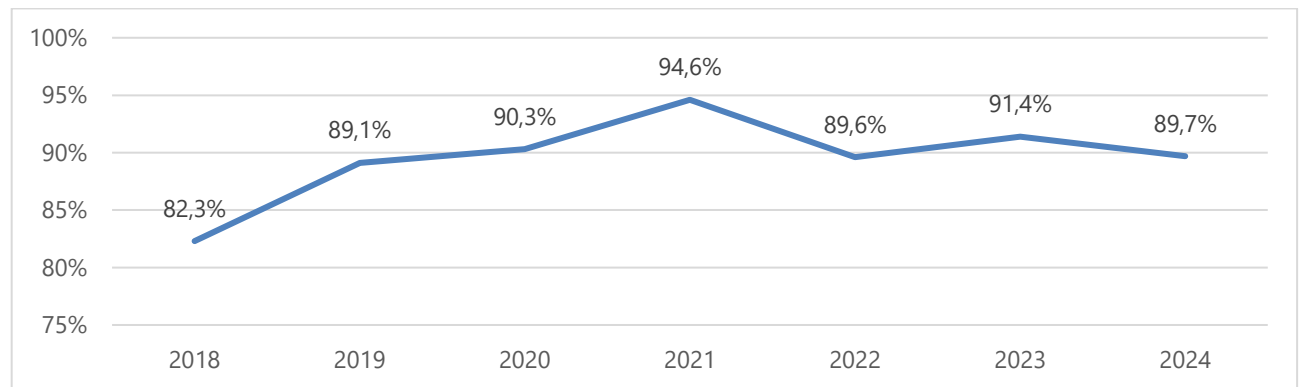
1. How could the Centre further improve the optimum range of services to its clients and stimulate demand?

2. What type of services should be prioritised? Are there some services that should be discontinued or new services that should be prioritised?
3. How could economies of scale be improved, and what could be done to encourage clients to use services that have been developed?

Effectiveness

The Centre consistently exceeded and/or met its work programme implementation targets over the evaluation period (Figure 14), with a target of 88.1% in 2019, 85.0% over 2020-2021, and 82.3% in the baseline year.

Figure 14. Implementation rate of the work programme 2018-2024



Source: CdT Consolidated Activity Reports 2018-2024

The implementation of the Centre's workplan is split between its core operational activities, support activities, and management and supervision activities.

Core operational activities

The Centre delivers a range of translation and related language services, maintaining an ongoing review of its services and clients' needs. This has resulted in the introduction of new services during the evaluation period, which are highlighted in the overview table below.

Category	Service
Translation services	Translation of documents
	Revision of translations
	Paste 'n' Go translation (introduced in 2021)
	Automatic translation (introduced in 2021)
	Light post-editing of neural machine translation output (introduced in 2022)
	Web translation

	Translation of EU trademarks, Madrid Protocol files, and registered Community designs
Terminology services	Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE) Translation and revision of term lists
Audiovisual language services	Subtitling Transcription (introduced in 2020) Automatic transcription (introduced in 2020)
Other services	Editing of source texts Language consultancy

On average, the implementation of core operational activities has been consistently high, reaching 91% overall.

Support activities

Over the evaluation period, several related initiatives were undertaken to improve the Centre's operations through dedicated support activities, which were carried out through feasibility studies, new tenders, and the sourcing of new tools. Particular highlights include the document management action plan updated in 2019, and several tools developed in 2022 to better manage internal budgets, manage training and translation management of EU trademarks, as well as activity-based management methodology refined in 2023.

Management and supervision activities

During the evaluation period, the Centre undertook several management and supervision activities. The Transformation Plan (2019) aimed to address the recommendations of the previous study on the Centre, and a majority of actions from the plan were implemented in the first year (98%). Another activity was the launch of the general client satisfaction survey in 2021 which has led to further action plans being developed each year to help the Centre to more effectively support its clients. Other activities have included the introduction of activity-based costing, a single point of contact for clients to facilitate relationship management, and the updating training programmes for staff members.

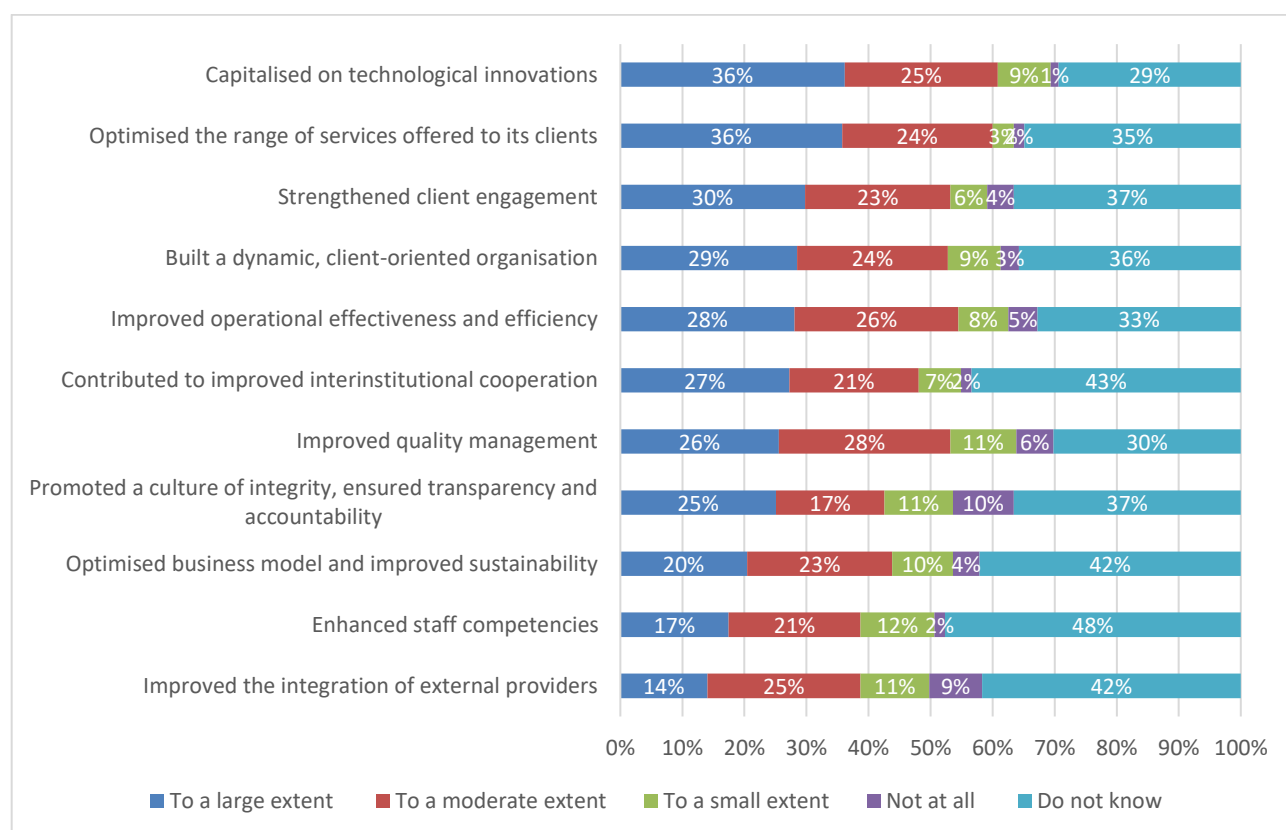
Achievement of objectives

Preliminary evidence indicates that staff, clients, external providers and Member States largely agreed that the Centre achieved its specific objectives, to varying degrees, over the evaluation period, and in particular the Centre's capitalisation on technological innovations and optimisation of a range of services offered to clients. Clients overall have been satisfied with the quality of the Centre's outputs and services provided.

Furthermore, clients have remarked on the overall good reputation of the Centre, both in terms of the quality of the services that it provides and the Centre's flexibility in adapting to its clients' needs.

During stakeholder interviews, clients mentioned that their relationship with the Centre has “come a long way” and its services are overall reliable. The survey carried out for the evaluation indicated that respondents largely agreed that the Centre had achieved its specific objectives, to varying degrees, over the evaluation period. The objectives most frequently identified to have been achieved over the evaluation period, to either a large or moderate extent, were the Centre’s capitalisation on technological innovations (61%) and optimisation of the range of services offered to clients (60%) (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Survey responses on the extent to which the Centre achieved its specific objectives



Source: Ecorys, CdT Evaluation Survey, 2025, N=235

Facilitating and hindering factors

There are several facilitating factors to the Centre’s effectiveness. These include technological developments, state-of-the-art tools, staff perceptions, a shift towards innovation and change management, optimisation and digitalisation of processes, and the establishment of strong client relationships. The quality of translations was generally high, although some lower-quality outsourced translations were reported to have hindered the effectiveness of operations, as did increased staff workloads. Other hindering factors identified include the underdevelopment of KPIs to assess the outcomes and impacts of the Centre’s activities, budgeting challenges related to fluctuations in clients’ budgetary forecasts and subsequent difficulties in anticipating client

requests, a lack of clarity related to client requirements in some cases, and finally cancellation of events and paused recruitment due to COVID-19.

Adaptation to changes

During the evaluation period 2019-2023, the Centre had to adapt to many different challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation, which had implications for the internal running and budget of the Centre. There was also decreasing demand for services from clients over the evaluation period. Ultimately though, and in addition to the implementation of the Centre's Transformation Plan, the Centre adapted to such developments by reviewing its activities and how to offer new opportunities and services for its clients, which enabled the Centre to balance its budget without increasing prices.

Technological developments, in particular the rise of generative AI, have provided opportunities for the Centre to be innovative. Simultaneously, however, these rapid developments impacted the Centre's service provision, with efforts to develop a summarisation service becoming obsolete due to publicly available tools accessible to clients for free.

EFFECTIVENESS - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. What could the Centre do to make the most of the recent technology developments in terms of the services it provides to its clients? 2. What could the Centre do to improve its effectiveness further in terms of reaching its specific objectives to: a. Position the Centre as a partner in the holistic provision of language services to clients. b. Enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency. c. Contribute to interinstitutional cooperation.

Sustainability

The Centre currently faces declining demand, as explored briefly in the Relevance section, with a 37% drop in pages translated between 2018 and 2024. In many ways, the Centre operates like a private company, as it has not received any subsidy from the EU budget to date and is fully self-financed, as well as having to compete with alternative service providers. However, the Centre is not a private company, as it must comply with EU regulations, which have costs associated with their implementation, such as high service costs, and regulatory limits on client eligibility. There are regulatory limits on who can become a client of the Centre, and the findings of this evaluation suggest that this has limited the ability of the Centre to fully address the challenges it faces, which may undermine its sustainability in the medium to long term. In addition, there is a problem of forecasted revenues overestimating actual revenues, which creates budgetary strains. Reports from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) have called on the Agencies to increase their usage of the Centre's services, however multiple clients already forecast a decrease in their usage of the Centre's services in the future.

Major decreases have taken place in relation to the Centre's core services: document translation (369,005 pages translated in 2018 vs. 280,101 in 2024) and EU trademark pages translated (412,834 pages in 2018 vs. 211,627 pages in 2024) as shown in Table 5. In face of these decreases, the Centre

has implemented several changes to increase the efficiency of its workflow and to stimulate the use of its services. In addition, the Centre has developed a number of new linguistic services, including Paste 'n' Go translation, automatic translation, light-post editing of neural machine translation, transcription services and automatic transcriptions. The Centre also undertook communication campaigns after the launch of the services in order to ensure that clients were aware of new offers. Some of these services show potential for growth and clients and staff acknowledged the efforts that have been made to improve financial resilience and service quality. Nonetheless, it should be noted the Centre is still valued for high quality and secure translations.

Table 5. Demand of Centre' services

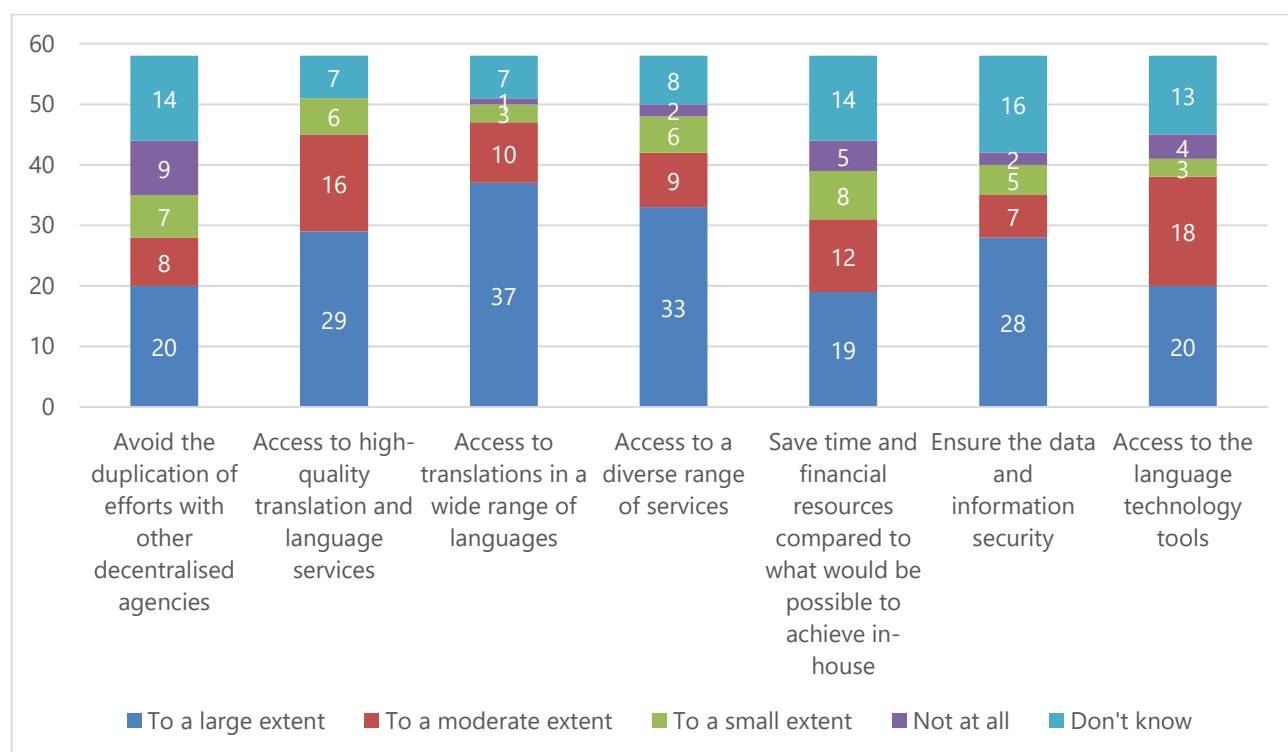
Service	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend
Total pages translated	781,839	657,523	635,269	641,970	588,033	547,737	491,728	
Trademark translation (pages)	412,834	348,276	300,348	274,706	239,964	213,098	211,627	
Translation (pages)	369,005	309,047	334,921	367,264	348,070	268,598	204,594	
Term list entries translated / revised (terms)	47,861	41,002	49,277	58,893	135,608	48,101	101,551	
Full post-editing (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	45,945	49,003	52,494	
Revision (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,679	2,065	7,896	
Editing (pages)	19,814	5,647	2,012	4,241	4,844	7,431	7,141	
Modification (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,533	4,392	4,496	
Subtitling (minutes)	3,127	2,571	1,601	4,520	4,066	2,337	2,617	
Light post-editing (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13,468	2,388	2,076	

Transcription¹⁴¹ (minutes)	N/A	N/A	793	1,528	2,661	5,283	1,888	
Automatic translation (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,319	3,189	762	1,291	
Language consultancy (person-days)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	381	693	582	
Terminology (person- days)	672	1,129	448	503	993	387	149	
Paste 'n' Go (pages)	N/A	N/A	N/A	469	260	121	115	

Survey respondents were positive overall about the benefits of a having centralised agency and language provider. The benefit most widely recognised as being largely achieved was access to translations in a wide range of languages, with 37 respondents affirming this to a large extent. This is followed closely by access to a diverse range of services, which 33 respondents also rated as being achieved to a large extent. A total of 29 respondents agreed on how the Centre provides access to high-quality translations and language services to a large extent, whilst 28 respondents are pleased at the Centre's ability to ensure data and information security.

¹⁴¹ Including automatic transcription.

Figure 16. Survey responses on benefits of centralised agency and language providers



Source: Stakeholder Survey, Ecorys, N=58, 2025.

Regulatory obligations also lead to higher service costs, which are passed on to clients. As a result, clients face budget pressures and increasingly turn to cheaper alternatives such as eTranslation or generative AI tools. This shift explains the significant decline in demand, as agencies themselves are constrained by broader economic pressures and shifting political priorities. While these tools are cost-effective for low-stakes content, they lack the quality and security required for official documents. Outsourcing to private providers is also seen as a cheaper option, but it comes with risks related to data security, consistency, and quality as well as management and quality assurance costs

SUSTAINABILITY - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. Given the challenging situation in terms of demand and changes of the language technology, what are the potential options for improving the business model of the Centre? 2. What alternative solutions could be considered to consolidate the Centre's position as centralised translation service for its clients?

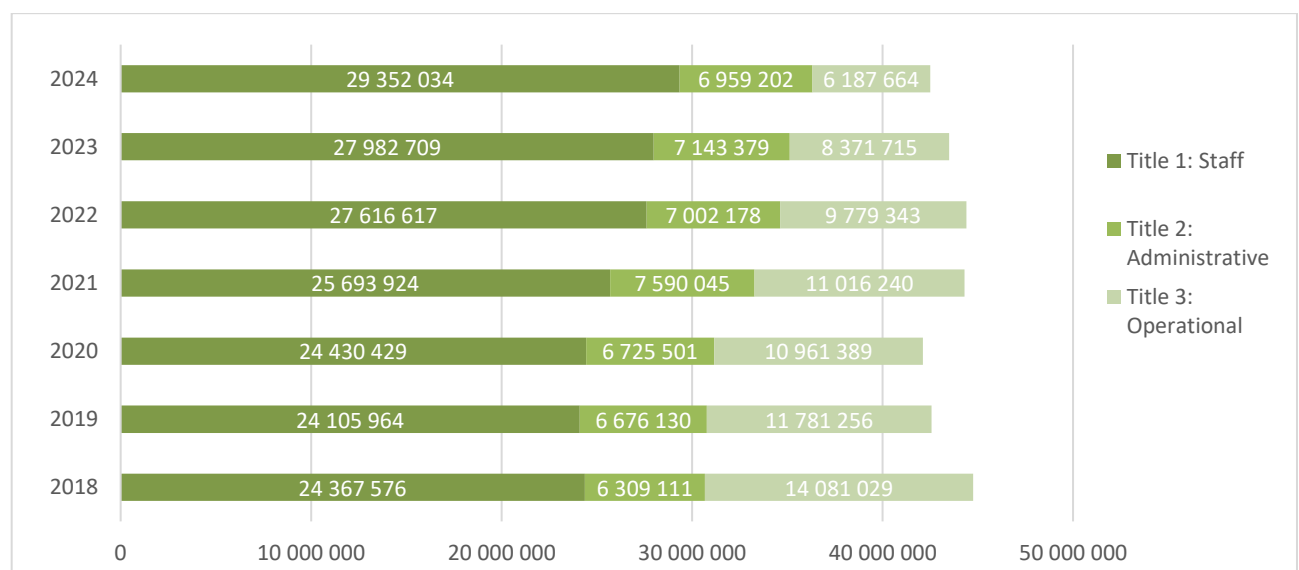
Efficiency

Over the course of the evaluation period, the Centre has operated in a cost-effective manner and has sought to improve efficiencies in delivering its services. The Centre has been successful in reducing its overall costs, with a large decrease in operational costs during the evaluation period. Reduced outsourcing and the automation of specific tasks has decreased costs on the operational side.

However, the decrease in total numbers of employees has not corresponded to a decrease in the staffing costs due to the effect of inflation over the evaluation period, which resulted in particular in rising staff and energy costs. Given that staff wages are set by the Commission rather than the Centre itself, an increase does not relate to any specific inefficiencies on the part of the Centre. It still however highlights a fundamental difference between the Centre and private sector translation providers, with the private sector having the freedom to set their staff wages at a level they regard as competitive. However, the decrease in staff numbers during the evaluation period has led to an increase in the staff workload, which created some dissatisfaction as a result, with some staff member survey respondents highlighting that their workload has increased considerably during the evaluation period.

A key factor contributing to the cost-effectiveness of the Centre is the balance between front line operational activities and administrative costs. While administrative functions (such as human resource management, finance, ICT and legal support) are essential to the performance of the Centre, it is expected that such functions will be streamlined as far as possible to maximise the proportion of expenditure focused on operational activities. Figure 17 analyses total expenditure by each Title. While staff expenditure has increased during the evaluation period, total expenditure has also decreased, falling from €44,757,716 to €43,497,803 between 2018-2023 and then to €42,498,900 in 2024. This decrease has been achieved via efficiency gains from the increased use of automation, translation memory solutions and machine translations and a reduction in the volume of outsourcing to external language providers, decreasing from almost € 13 million to € 7.6 million in 2023. In addition, the Centre has been able to keep expenditure under Title 2 relatively stable by introducing tools that automate internal processes and streamline administrative tasks. For example, the development of the eCdT, an automated workflow tool, has enabled the Centre to manage translations requests more smoothly and reduced manual monitoring needs. Additionally, the development of the ARES is a system registering incoming and outgoing mail, enabling everything to be registered and signed for electronically.

Figure 17. Type of expenditure in € Million 2018 and 2024



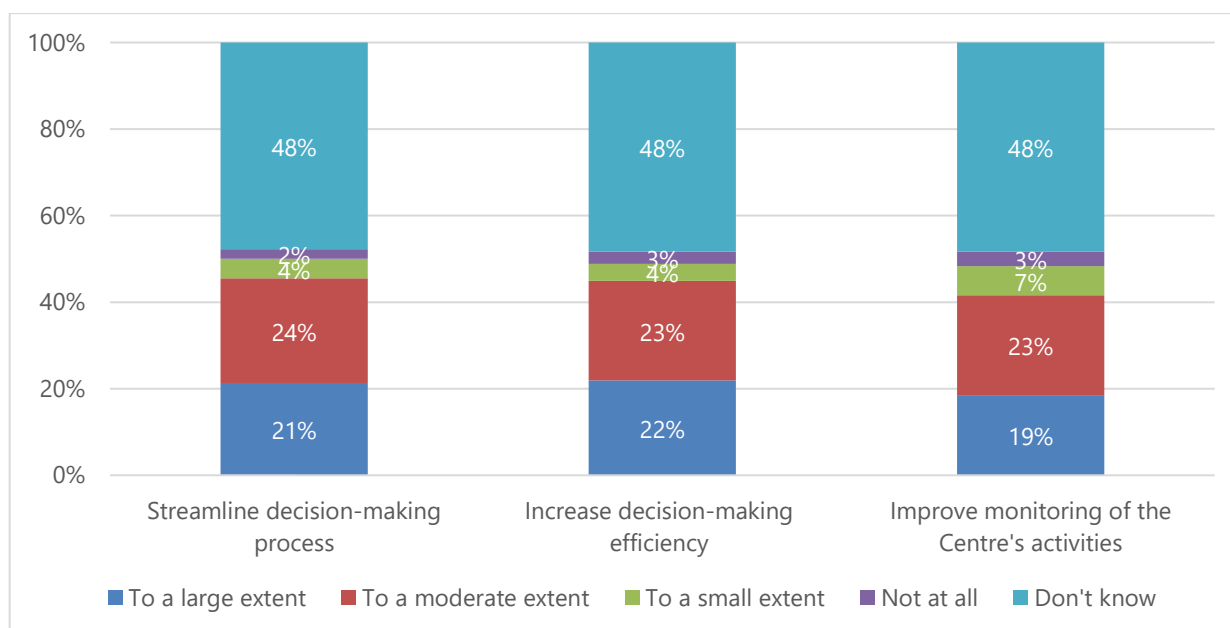
Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2018- 2024.

Management Board

An increase in online and/or hybrid meetings drove a reduction in the cost of Management Board meetings during the evaluation period. It is not clear, however, whether this has led to an improvement in cost-effectiveness, as the online format was deemed to reduce active engagement of some attendees. Nevertheless, hybrid meetings are worth considering as opportunities to cut costs and potentially increase cost-effectiveness, even though some interviews noted that the hybrid setting has increased interpretation and technical costs, which add to the financial burden. This explains the increase in Management Board expenditures after 2021.

Concerns have been raised about the size of the Management Board and also client representation on the Board. It has been noted that the fact that clients are well represented on the Board could raise a potential conflict of interest, as these representatives have a duty to support the Centre but also a potential incentive to prevent the Centre from increasing the price it charges for its translation services, for which they are clients. Evidence from the consultations conducted in Task 3 of this evaluation highlighted that the size of the board was considered a potential area of improvement, whilst the representation was considered less of an issue in terms of cost-effectiveness. A smaller Executive Board was suggested as a potential benefit. The figure below shows the extent to which survey respondents (N =178) thought that having a small Executive Board could streamline the decision-making process, increase decision-making efficiency, and improve monitoring of the Centre's activities. In each case, over 40% of respondents agreed to a large or moderate extent that a smaller Executive Board could result in the aforementioned benefits. This figure rose to 49% or more when considering staff responses alone. However, it is important to note that in each case just under half (48%) or respondents felt unable to offer a view on the potential outcomes of a having a small Executive Board.

Figure 18. Survey respondents' opinion on potential improvements from creating a small Executive Board



Source: Stakeholder Survey, Ecorys, N=178, 2025.

Operational efficiency

Since 2021, budget implementation rates have declined and have not kept pace with peer agencies. This is likely to be due to the unique operational model of the Centre, which relies on client-driven work rather than controlling its own workload and expenditure. Consequently, the Centre faces greater uncertainty when setting its budget. Despite this, a number of workflow changes have been implemented to enhance operational efficiency. Stakeholders have evaluated these changes positively, particularly in terms of the use of digital technologies, which have increased the ability of the Centre to deliver client requests and to collect and address clients' feedback. However, initiatives to increase forecasting services and outsource certain administrative or operational tasks were seen as less impactful on cost-effectiveness.

Overall, the consultations conducted under Task 3 of this evaluation showed moderate satisfaction with the cost effectiveness of the services provided by the Centre, with a particular emphasis on document translations and EU trademark translations, which are the core sources of revenue. Most interviewees felt that the Centre had done a lot to reduce costs by streamlining services. Survey data showed that respondents appreciated machine translation and translation memories in terms of enhancing sustainability. The new services and quality assurance mechanisms were also valued, while internal communication, quality of the scoring system and staff training were assessed as having some room for improvement.

EFFICIENCY - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. To what extent does the size and composition of the management board contribute to its effectiveness and efficiency? 2. Would smaller executive board be beneficial to improve efficiency of the governance structures? 3. What could the Centre do to increase efficiencies in the workflow management and its operations?

Coherence

In accordance with the Centre's Founding Regulation, its services are provided to a range of EU institutions, agencies and bodies. Preliminary evidence shows that there is good coherence and complementarity between the Centre and DG for Translation (DGT), its parent DG. Without a formal SLA in place, the relationship between the two institutions is trust-based and cooperative. DGT has in particular supported the Centre in areas such as the IATE terminology database and contract facilitation (e.g. with DG GROW). It should be noted, however, that given the fact that the Centre and DGT work in the same area, there is some inevitable overlap between the two organisations and the view from Centre staff was that communication could sometimes be improved and that any areas of overlap or potential overlap should be discussed.

In addition to, DGT, the Centre works with other DGs (e.g., DG GROW, DG JUST) to fill service gaps that DGT cannot cover, as well as with the European Parliament, covering non-EU languages for sensitive documents. Some examples of joint initiatives on which the Centre has collaborated with European Commission DGs include eTranslation software development with DGT and DG CNECT, and the translation of the Single Digital Gateway portals for DG GROW.

Regarding the Centre's coherence with the EU decentralised agencies, the Centre positions itself as a shared linguistic service provider and its core task does not overlap with those of the other agencies. The cooperation with the Centre's clients is ensured through regular engagement activities and ad-hoc projects and initiatives, such as through the Translation Contact Network and bilateral meetings. According to survey data, clients appreciate bilateral meetings the most out of the CdT's communication methods.

The Centre has worked closely to develop stronger partnerships with particular EU agencies, such as the EUIPO, EMA and EUAA. In the case of the EUIPO this was especially facilitated by the joint work on the CdT's Transformation Plan to ensure mutual benefit. Other examples of joint projects with EU agencies include the IATE terminology database, the piloting and roll-out of the Paste'n'Go service, as well as e-recruitment with the EMA.

From an interinstitutional perspective, the Centre is viewed as actively contributing to harmonising translation practices across EU institutions. For example, the Centre participates in interinstitutional groups, and internal meetings (such as the IAMLADP), supporting methodological alignment and knowledge sharing. More directly related to its own work, the Centre organises regular meetings, once or twice a year, for those involved in terminology projects (such as IATE), to report back on

feedback from clients and to resolve disputes about terminology issues. This allows for IATE to continue to be a flagship example of collaborative terminology management, with continuous updates and shared ownership.

Some areas have been identified in which the Centre could improve coherence further. These include the importance of engaging and listening to clients on a regular basis in order to better tailor services to their needs. The Centre already does this to a large extent, but suggestions to improve on this aspect further include:

- ▶ More direct communication (calls, visits) to avoid any potential misalignment.
- ▶ Greater internal coordination across departments in relation to client engagement.
- ▶ Clearer promotion of services and capabilities to increase awareness and uptake of the Centre's services.

It should be noted, however, that the Centre is already committed to addressing any issues raised by clients in relation to the services offered by the Centre. For example, clients have raised the issue of reducing turnaround times and the need for consistent attention to quality. However, due to the Centre's hybrid status as not publicly funded, yet not fully market-competitive (see the section on Sustainability above) there remain challenges in terms of covering costs, which can have an impact on the ability for the Centre to satisfy client demands.

COHERENCE - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. What could Centre do to further improve working relationships with other decentralised agencies and EU institutions? 2. Could the Centre contribute more to interinstitutional cooperation among the translation and interpretation services of the EU institutions?

EU added value

Overall, this evaluation has shown that the Centre provides added value in a range of areas through process, role, volume and scope effects.

Process effects

Preliminary evidence shows that the centralised nature of the services provided by the Centre ensures high quality translations, which is particularly appreciated by clients. Although some clients use machine translation for routine tasks, the Centre remains essential for the delivery of high-quality, specialised translations. The centralised nature of the services also enables a reduction of duplication and saves time and resources. For example, the burden on agencies related to the development of in-house capabilities or the contracting of private service providers for translation requirements is seen as significant.

Role effects

Part of the role effects of the Centre is the emphasis on offering a bespoke approach, and tailoring services to client needs as well as piloting new services that have the potential to become permanent.

For example, in 2021, pilot projects were carried out in the following areas: with DGT on the outsourcing of formatting and layout; with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on the outsourcing to the Centre of the translation and modification of one of the Court's special reports; and with the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) for summarisation combined with the translation of documents, with this last service becoming a fully-fledged new service in 2022. Particular services appreciated by clients include the training that the Centre has provided to the staff of their EU Agency clients and stakeholders to draft texts that are easier to translate, as well as the terminology projects, specifically the IATE, which enhances multilingual consistency across the EU.

Volume effects

This evaluation has found that if the Centre did not exist, the terminology databases and tailored tools to facilitate its work in the EU-specific context would likely not continue. Furthermore, the centralised service provision at the Centre would not be possible elsewhere, especially with regard to having a single point of contact for all language combinations. Clients acknowledge that while private providers may offer similar quality, the Centre's understanding of EU-specific needs adds unique value. Therefore, while demand has declined, the Centre continues to serve a growing number of clients with a wide range of services.

Scope Effects

The Centre provides a comprehensive suite of services (e.g. legal translation, subtitling, terminology, post-editing) that would be difficult to replicate through multiple providers. Clients benefit from integrated services that go beyond translation, including formatting and transcription. Some stakeholders have suggested that DGT could share some services with the Centre, but the Centre's breadth and EU-specific expertise remain unmatched.

How the Centre has made a difference to its key stakeholders.

The key beneficiaries of the Centre's work are the clients to whom it provides its services – these are primarily the EU decentralised agencies, which use a variety of the services provided. For these stakeholders, document translation remains the mostly widely used and valued service (both in number of clients using this service each year as well as number of pages translated). However, subtitling and transcription services are used by a small number of clients and represent a modest share of the Centre's work. New services such as automatic translation and Paste'n'Go saw initial uptake but this has now declined, possibly due to the rise of generative AI tools.

Stakeholders have in particular benefited from the tailored services developed by the Centre in response to the needs of their clients. For example, bespoke interventions like improved Hungarian translations for EMA and multilingual strategy support for FRA have been well received. Services like Paste'n'Go and eCdT workflow were developed in response to specific client needs (e.g. REA, ELA), demonstrating responsiveness and adaptability on the part of the Centre.

Indirect beneficiaries of the Centre's services are EU citizens who benefit from communications from the EU decentralised agencies in their native language. This is in line with one of the key aims

of the Centre: to promote multilingualism in the EU by providing information to citizens in the official languages of the EU.

EU ADDED VALUE - KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. What key characteristics of the Centre distinguish it from other translation services (e.g. know-how of the clients and their needs, security, economies of scale, efficiency savings)? 2. Are there any particular services that could be improved or amended to increase the Centre's EU added value and improve the range of services that it provides to its clients?

Preliminary conclusions

Relevance

- ▶ The Centre has successfully delivered translation and linguistic services to EU agencies, aligning with the Founding Regulation and objectives.
- ▶ The Centre has shown adaptability by introducing new services in response to evolving client needs and technological developments, providing high quality services and support to the clients. Both clients and staff alike agree that the Centre's services are relevant, of high quality and are responsive to specific needs, including urgent requests and complex language combinations. The Centre has made significant progress in integrating machine translation and launching AI initiatives. However, it is recognised that there is room for improvement.
- ▶ Demand has steadily decreased since 2018, which could be largely due to the budgetary constraints within client agencies, the rise of low-cost and free alternatives, such as machine translation tools. The lack of mandatory usage requirements for many EU bodies was seen as a contributing factor. Pricing is considered a major barrier, and many clients see the Centre's services as expensive.
- ▶ The Centre's revenue model has proven to be volatile, with forecast revenues consistently exceeding actual revenues, with a growing gap. This mismatch, combined with fixed operational costs, has led to a financial deficit. In addition, staffing cuts and pressure to deliver quickly might have an impact on quality and innovation capacity.

Effectiveness

- ▶ The Centre has been largely effective in the implementation of its different activities over the evaluation period, with consistently high implementation rates of its core operational activities in particular.
- ▶ A notable management and supervision activity was the implementation of the Transformation Plan 2019-2021, which led to changes in how the Centre is run internally, to improve efficiency and ensure continued positive development of activities and client relationships.
- ▶ Clients have largely been satisfied with the activities and services implemented by the Centre, in particular with technological innovations and optimisation of the range of services offered to them.

- ▶ Factors facilitating effectiveness include technological developments, use of state-of-the-art tools, staff perceptions of the Centre, and quality of outputs. Hindering factors identified include the underdevelopment of KPIs, budgeting challenges, lack of clarity related to client requirements and COVID-19-related challenges.
- ▶ The rise of generative AI has resulted in both benefits and challenges for effectiveness. The Centre has integrated AI-based processes and introduced new services. However, the development of a summarisation service was rendered obsolete due to the availability of free public tools for clients.

Sustainability

- ▶ The Centre has experienced a 37% drop in total pages translated during the evaluation period, with particularly sharp declines in document and trademark translations. This trend is driven mainly by technological alternatives, such as Generative AI and internal tools, which clients are increasingly using for non-critical translations.
- ▶ The Centre's Transformation Plan and the integration of machine translation, translation memories and automation have been key to improving the efficiency of the business model. Staff and clients acknowledged that these changes are critical to maintaining service quality and economic resilience. In addition, the new services created show promise for the existing clients, with some early signs of increasing demand, whilst others remained low in use. Exploring which services could be viable in terms of future investment would enhance the sustainability of the business model.
- ▶ The Centre has to comply with EU staffing and procurement regulations, which increases operational costs, and limits flexibility in pricing and workforce management, making it harder to compete with low-cost private sector alternatives. The Centre is expected to operate like a private entity but there is a structural mismatch due to the public sector constraints.
- ▶ As the Centre is self-financed, its revenue model is highly sensitive to fluctuations in client demands. Despite efforts to attract new clients, regulatory limits on eligible clients restrict the Centre's ability to expand its customer base, as well as current clients are shifting to cheaper, automated solutions for routine translations.

Efficiency

- ▶ The Centre has leveraged technological advancement to decrease expenditures and increase efficiencies. The Centre's investments in tools like ARES and eCdT have streamlined administrative processes, reduced the share of administrative staff and counterbalanced higher costs in energy and staffing due to inflation. Operational expenditure dropped largely due to automation and reduced outsourcing, leading to a decrease in total expenditure. External providers were still seen as valuable for timely delivery, quality and technical expertise. However, some interviewees expressed a view that staff reductions had been too severe, leading to overwork and potentially quality issues.
- ▶ The Management Board is seen as too large and potentially conflicted due to client representation, which may hinder its decision-making efficiency. The hybrid setting of

meetings reduced costs during COVID-19, but interpretation and technical costs have since risen.

- ▶ Stakeholders have mixed perceptions on the cost-effectiveness of the services provided, and while document translation and trademark translations were considered positively, ex-post quality controls and transcriptions were not considered to be as cost-effective.
- ▶ The Centre consistently missed its budget implementation targets post-2021, which is to be attributed to its client-dependent workload model. Improvements in forecasting would improve the ability of the Centre to programme the budget and ensure streamlined services.

Coherence

- ▶ Overall, the Centre has a good relationship with the majority of its clients, encompassing Commission DGs, EU decentralised agencies, as well as the European Parliament. Interinstitutional networks, meetings and working groups enable coherence between the Centre and its stakeholders and better tailoring of its services to its clients' needs (for example, feedback on terminology projects).
- ▶ Clients particularly appreciate the opportunity to participate in bilateral meetings with the Centre. This is also seen as a communication method to further prioritise in the future, in order to continue to develop these partnerships.
- ▶ IATE is a positive example of interinstitutional cooperation and is seen as a flagship project of the Centre. It is currently being improved and refined in a collaborative way with the relevant stakeholders.
- ▶ Some areas for further improvement with regard to coherence include:
 - ▷ Enhancing client communications through increased bilateral meetings, direct contacts (visits, calls, video), and improved internal coordination for handling client queries and expanding the methodological portfolio as well as developing client relationships and managing clients' expectations.
 - ▷ Expanding and adapting services by refining light post-editing, exploring non-EU language offerings to certain services, and tailoring drafting styles to diverse document needs, addressing the clients' diverse needs for different types of documents and publications.
 - ▷ Raising awareness of the Centre's services through targeted promotions, better communication channels, and clearer demonstration of its capabilities to clients. Increasing the visibility of the Centre's services would support also better iterations with clients.

EU added value

- ▶ The Centre's greatest added value lies in the quality of its services and its ability to deliver tailored, EU-specific services. Even though machine translation is considered to be a viable alternative for simpler content by some clients, this technology does not meet the quality criteria for complex or sensitive documents.

- ▶ The centralised nature of the translation and language services for EU institutions has reduced administrative burdens and ensured consistency, which are highly valued features even though the prices for the Centre's services are high.
- ▶ The Centre's services and pilot-to-service model are highly valued by clients. In particular, the tailored services have made a concrete difference for the clients, especially in technical and sensitive contexts.
- ▶ The most impactful services are still document translation and terminology work. Newer services have had a limited uptake so far but have been appreciated by the clients where used.

ANNEX VI. EU BODIES WITH AN SLA WITH THE CENTRE¹⁴²

TABLE 6: Clients with a legal obligation to use the Centre inscribed in their Founding Regulation

Acronym/short name	Full name	Legal obligation
ACER	European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators	YES
AMLA	Anti Money Laundering Authority	YES
BEREC	The office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications	YES
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training	YES
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (European Police College)	YES
CPVO	Community Plant Variety Office	YES
EASA	European Union Aviation Safety Agency	YES
EBA	European Banking Authority	YES
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency	YES
EEA*	European Environment Agency	YES
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency	YES

¹⁴² EU institutions excluded

EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality	YES
EIOPA	European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority	YES
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology	YES
ELA	European Labour Authority	YES
EMA*	European Medicines Agency	YES
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency	YES
ENISA	European Union Agency for Cybersecurity	YES
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office	YES
ERA	European Union Agency for Railways	YES
ESMA	European Securities and Markets Authority	YES
ETF*	European Training Foundation	YES
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum	YES
EUDA*	European Union Drugs Agency	YES
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office	YES
eu-LISA	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice	YES

EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	YES
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	YES
Eurojust	European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)	YES
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation	YES
EUSPA	European Union Agency for the Space Programme	YES
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	YES
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency	YES
SRB	Single Resolution Board	YES

* Listed in the Centre's founding regulation, but with no language arrangement clause in its own founding regulation.

TABLE 7: Clients without a legal obligation to use the Centre inscribed in their Founding Regulation

Acronym/short name	Full name	Legal obligation
CBE JU	Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking	NO
Chips JU	Chips Joint Undertaking	NO
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency	NO
Clean Aviation JU	Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking	NO
Clean Hydrogen JU	Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking	NO
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency	NO
ECCC	European Cybersecurity Competence Centre	NO
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	NO
EDA	European Defence Agency	NO
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor	NO
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority	NO
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency	NO
ERCEA	European Research Council Executive Agency	NO
EU SatCen	European Union Satellite Centre	NO

EuroHPC JU	European High-Performance Computing Joint Undertaking	NO
Europe's Rail JU	Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking	NO
F4E JU	Fusion for Energy Joint Undertaking (European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy)	NO
GH EDCTP3 JU	Global Health EDCTP3 JU	NO
HaDEA	European Health and Digital Executive Agency	NO
IHI JU	Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking	NO
JRC	Joint Research Centre	NO
REA	European Research Executive Agency	NO
SESAR 3 JU	Single European Sky ATM Research 3 Joint Undertaking	NO
SNS JU	European Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking	NO
MAOC (N)	Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre (Narcotics)	NO
ESM	European Stability Mechanism	NO
UPC	Unified Patent Court	NO