

# HANDBOOK

for the translation and adaptation of the  
**TERMINOLOGY GUIDELINES**  
for the protection of children from  
sexual exploitation and sexual abuse





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**[www.luxembourgguidelines.org](http://www.luxembourgguidelines.org)**



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# INTRODUCTION

**The Terminology Guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse** (hereinafter the ‘Luxembourg Guidelines’ or the ‘Guidelines’) are a tool guiding child protection professionals all over the world in their choice of words. Adopted by large consensus by the Interagency Working Group (IWG), composed of major international child protection agencies, they contribute to a more coherent, but also a more adequate and child-centred terminology in the work against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

To respond to the needs expressed by child protection professionals, and make sure that the Guidelines of the IWG can be a useful tool for professionals at all levels,

## **ECPAT INTERNATIONAL** decided to develop a set of two Handbooks:



One with concrete advice for how to use the Guidelines effectively in our every-day work,

**AND**



One aiming at facilitating the translation and adaptation of the Guidelines into other languages (this one).

These Handbooks take into account the many lessons learned by the IWG as it developed the Guidelines.

The Luxembourg Guidelines were initially published and



made available in **three languages**

**English, French, Spanish**

While these three versions can reach a large number of professionals in different regions of the world, there is a limit as to what can be achieved in terms of policy making and legislative work at the national level when the laws and policies of many countries are not written in one of those languages.

A strong need is therefore felt to develop additional language versions, and enable child protection professionals to use the Guidelines in their work to **define strategies, develop programmes and policies, advocate for legislative changes and do research in their own language.**

As explained in more detail below (paragraph 3), the use of correct terminology is critical for well targeted and effective actions, whether at **the level of prevention, protection, or prosecution of offenders and rehabilitation of victims.**

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ECPAT INTERNATIONAL

**wishes to promote and encourage**



**the development of the Guidelines  
in as many languages as possible.**

ECPAT International is aware that translating the Guidelines into a national language is a challenging endeavour. In order to assist organisations and/or governments in doing so, this **Handbook for the translation and adaptation of the Terminology Guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**



**aims at providing practical advice** for the process of developing the Guidelines into another language,

**AND**



suggests a **step-by-step work methodology.**



# BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT



The Interagency Terminology and Semantics Project, which led to the adoption of the Terminology Guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse,



was launched in  
**September 2014**



The project gathered



**18 major international  
child protection actors**

INCLUDING UN AGENCIES, NGOs AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANISATIONS, IN AN INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP (IWG).

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The work to develop the Guidelines lasted for almost **two years**, and consisted of a number of physical meetings in Geneva and Luxembourg, online meetings, internal and external consultations with **experts in the field of child protection**, research and analysis, negotiation and,



finally, the adoption of the  
**Guidelines by the IWG  
in Luxembourg  
in 2016**

(HENCE THE 'LUXEMBOURG GUIDELINES').



## The following organisations participated

in the project and appointed representatives to the IWG:

- African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Child Rights Connect
- Council of Europe Secretariat
- ECPAT
- Europol
- INHOPE- The International Association of Internet Hotlines
- Instituto Interamericano del niño, la niña y adolescentes (OEA)
- International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
- International Labour Office
- International Telecommunication Organisation
- INTERPOL
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Plan International
- Save the Children International
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)



## Observers to the project:

- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Oak Foundation
- University of Bedfordshire, The International Centre:  
Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking



WHY CORRECT TERMINOLOGY  
IS SO IMPORTANT



## Words matter because they affect how we conceptualise problems, prioritise issues, and forge responses.

Inconsistent use of language and terms can lead to inconsistent laws and policy responses on the same issue.

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The absence of consensus at the international level on the terms or language that should be employed to describe conduct amounting to sexual exploitation **has significantly impacted the global fight to eradicate sexual exploitation of children:**

- 🛡️ levels of protection afforded to children at the national level are inconsistent;
  - 🛡️ data collection and identification of different modalities of sexual exploitation and abuse suffer from inaccuracy and imprecision; and
  - 🛡️ advocacy work is undermined by confusion in the use of language and terms.
- 



Translating terms into different languages introduces further challenges. Without a clear conceptual understanding of their meaning, translating terms accurately across multiple languages becomes **an onerous and resource intensive task.**

Greater conceptual clarity, and ideally consensus, on terminology and **translation of terms is thus needed to ensure stronger, clearer and more consistent advocacy, policy and laws in all languages across all regions of the world.** To engender more clarity in how sexual exploitation of children is conceptualised, defined and translated, a multi-stakeholder dialogue is needed involving the voices of a multitude of actors at all levels.

**Given the fast evolution of new technologies,**



 which bring new manifestations **of sexual exploitation of children**

shaping a common understanding is increasingly important in the global effort to eradicate sexual exploitation of children.

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## **TERMINOLOGY: A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE**

Even more importantly, terminology is a human rights issue. **The wrongful use of terminology can undermine children's rights and dignity, and cause harm to the child.** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets forth that children have a right to have their dignity protected, and as child rights- and child protection professionals **we have a duty to uphold and defend that right.**

## CONCEPTUALISING THE PROBLEM

### How do words affect the way we conceptualise a certain issue?



- ✗ Whether we are conscious of it or not, words deeply affect us.
- ✗ Words determine how we think, and how we think determines how we act.
- ✗ When we are trapped in one set of concepts (words, ideas), we tend to think of things in a rigid way.

## COMMUNICATING OUR WORK

### What difference does the way we speak about our work make?



For a task as huge as eliminating sexual violence against children, the way in which we talk about our work is just as important as the work we do. For instance:



Words have an explicit meaning, but they also have an implicit, sometimes even an unintended, message:

- ✓ normalising or trivialising sexual violence against children
- ✓ undermining the gravity of certain forms of sexual violence
- ✓ causing misunderstanding or confusion around the issue



Our words risk ending up portraying the victims and survivors of sexual exploitation as part of the problem:

- ✓ making them feel ashamed
- ✓ making them appear guilty
- ✓ shifting the blame onto them

## FORGING OUR SOLUTIONS

### How does our terminology shape the solutions we look for in our work?



Our language – and our responses – risk ending up portraying the victims and survivors of sexual exploitation as **part of the problem, or as powerless, helpless, objects in need of saving.**

Most child protection professionals would agree that neither is true, and that the issues at stake are root causes such as **poverty, vulnerability, absence of choice and alternatives, manipulation, power imbalances in society, and so on.**

We need language that does not perpetuate power imbalances or enables social acceptance.

Moreover, we need language that accurately describes the phenomena that we are addressing, and that makes clear that, in the context of sexual violence against children, **the child is never the culprit but the person in need of protection.**

Importantly, we also need terminology that does not undermine our own work. For instance, when working with the rehabilitation of victims of child sexual exploitation, it is crucial not to use words that can **plunge an already suffering child into an even worse state by making her/him feel ashamed or guilty of what has happened.** When working with prevention projects, it is important to make young children understand the existing risks, but also to make them understand that if anything should happen to them they can safely reach out for help and will never be blamed for what happened. Indeed, underreporting of victims of sexual violence is estimated to be very common and, in part, **this also depends on the fear and stigma that victims experience.**

For more concrete examples of situations in which it is crucial to pay attention to our choice of terminology,



**please consult the Handbook with concrete advice for how to use the Guidelines.**

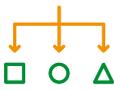


TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION  
OF THE GUIDELINES INTO  
**OTHER LANGUAGES**



This handbook suggests a **step-by-step methodology to help member organisations of the IWG (or any of their partner organisations) to translate and adapt the Luxembourg Guidelines** into another language, ensuring that they can serve as a useful tool for a broad range of child protection professionals.

Depending on the country or region, and on the configuration of **child protection actors in a certain country,**



## the working process

may of course differ somewhat.

Nevertheless, this Handbook may point you in the right direction and make sure no important steps are missing in the work.

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## PHASE 1

- i** In order to translate and adapt the Guidelines into your language, **you will need to set up a national work process.** We recommend that one organisation (or a coalition of organisations) take the lead responsibility for this work process, keeping track of the steps taken and facilitating exchanges between different relevant stakeholders.
- i** Before launching the work process, **remember to inform ECPAT International,** as the copyright holder of the English, French, and Spanish versions, of your wish to translate the Guidelines, **and await confirmation that no similar initiative has already been launched in your language.**

**i** **Identify relevant actors at national/regional level who use the same language** (as was done by the IWG for instance with the French Guidelines, where the work process included professionals from Canada and a number of European and African French-speaking countries). Share the existing Guidelines with identified actors and explain why you need them in your language. Invite relevant stakeholders to join the national/regional work process. It may be a good idea to start by inviting them to an information **meeting during which you can present the idea in more detail.**



**AN ADDITIONAL ADVICE AT THIS STAGE OF YOUR WORK** process is to have a **look at the list of partners** in the international Interagency Working Group (IWG) that drew up the English, French and Spanish Guidelines and to check if any of those organisations are also present in your country/region.

**IF YES**, please invite them **to join the process as well**, or at least inform them of your initiative. **A list of the IWG members can be found on page 09 above, as well as at:**



[www.luxembourgguidelines.org](http://www.luxembourgguidelines.org)

- i** **If you are a non-governmental entity, you could also invite public authorities** (such as the ministry in charge of children's rights in your country) to be represented in the work process. This may help draw the attention to terminology issues at Government level, and may also contribute to sensitising the legislator and enable future law reforms.



**In some countries or contexts, involving state authorities may imply a risk of intimidating non-governmental actors, or of prolonging the work process due to administrative or political considerations.** These risks should be taken into account early on in the work process, and the organisation or coalition leading the process might make a decision to refrain from involving state actors, or to involve them in part of the process.

- i** **At the end of Phase 1, a working group should have been established.** It should be a multidisciplinary group with representatives of key actors in the field of prevention and protection against all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in your country.



It is a good idea to make sure that each participating organisation has one representative in the working group, **and that this person is responsible for bringing the voice of her/his organisation into the working group.**

## PHASE 2

- i** Once you have your working group set up, it is time to start the actual work of developing the Luxembourg Guidelines in your language. **This phase will be the most challenging one,**



and it is important to give sufficient **time for discussion and analysis in the working group.**

- i** Within the working group, make sure to first clarify the needs for and objectives of the Guidelines in your country/region, i.e. to whom is the tool directed (and to whom not), and how can the Guidelines help improve the way child protection professionals work.

At this stage, it is important to underscore the fact that terminology **is not only a communications issue,**



**but a human rights issue that can affect children and their dignity in many ways.**

- i** Evaluate from which language it will make most sense to translate the Guidelines into your language (i.e. from the English, French, or Spanish version). This may depend on the origin of your language (e.g. whether it is a Latin or Germanic language) or on other considerations, such as if, for instance, English is the most dominant second language in your country.



In order to facilitate the development of the Guidelines, it can be useful to make an initial literal translation from one of the existing versions. This does not mean that the literal translation can be considered a final version. It can be used as the basic working document for the working group during the adaptation process, whereby the working group goes through the content and discusses the different terms in your language and agree on the recommendations to be made.

**It is this adaptation process that represents the most crucial part of the work.**

- i** During the adaptation process, **you need to decide which terms should be included in the translated Guidelines.**

The Interagency Working Group generally used the following set of criteria in their reflexions on which terms to include:

- The term **has a legal definition** in international and/or regional treaties related to sexual exploitation and/or sexual abuse of children.
- The term, although not having a legal definition under international law, **is frequently used in the context of sexual exploitation and/or sexual abuse of children.**

- The term is used **for conduct whose primary purpose is to facilitate, enable, propagate, incite, or engage in the sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of a child.**
- The term **creates misunderstanding among different stakeholders** regarding the child's rights and entitlements to protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse under international law.
- **The term validates, encourages, propagates, or incites stereotypes, societal attitudes, cultural beliefs, or norms** that are harmful or undermine the child's right to protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.



You may decide to include all terms from one of the already existing versions of the Guidelines, but you may also need to **add certain terms that are commonly used in your language, or remove some terms** that exist in, for instance, the English version but that are not used at all in your language.

Sometimes, the literal translation from an already existing version of the Guidelines can result in a wording that is not well-suited to the situation in your language. **Terms translated wrongfully or inadequately need to be replaced by more appropriate and context-specific terms.**

**i** Make sure **to analyse the reasons why certain terms may or may not be appropriate** in your language, based on three guiding principles:

- Is there a general and common understanding of the meaning of the term and of how/when it should be used?
- Is there a risk of stigmatising or otherwise harming the child by using a certain term?
- Can the term give rise to confusion or contribute (even if inadvertently) to normalising or trivialising a certain issue?

**i** **Dedicate sufficient time to discussing the terminology during the adaptation process:** placing it in your own national context



and culture; examining potential taboos and how to go about them; and considering country/region-specific elements that need to be taken into account.

**i** **During the working group discussions, try to enable internal consultations within the participating organisations.**

It may be useful to include not only legal experts, but also colleagues from the fields of



psychology



social  
work



child  
participation



communication



advocacy

**which will provide useful insights for instance on how the child could react depending on our choice of terminology** and explain the risks of stigma and secondary victimisation, or reflect on how to communicate clearly and effectively on the relevant issues while at the same time avoiding terminology that could harm the child.



To enable a broad consultation, while still keeping the working group at a size that is manageable, it is helpful if each participating organisation has appointed one representative to the working group, and that this person is responsible for bringing the voice of her/his organisation into the discussions.

- i** As the working group goes through the different terms and sections of the Guidelines, try to identify consensus and/or partial agreements along the way. **This will help reaching a final approval of the text at the end of the work process.** If there are any specific terms that prove difficult to agree upon, you may wish to leave those terms until the end, and do some additional research meanwhile.



**In case of difficulty,** always recall your initial decision regarding the objective of the Guidelines and the selection criteria, as well as the three guiding principles mentioned above.

**You may also contact ECPAT International** if you wish to ask for specific advice on a certain term, or if you would find it useful to set up a discussion with and/or presentation by a member of the Secretariat.

## PHASE 3

- i** Once you reach an agreement on the final text of the Guidelines in your language, **it may be a good idea to formalise the adoption of the text by the organisations participating in the working group.**

An adoption or endorsement procedure can be made in public, for instance through a press event or with a joint press release, which can also serve to draw attention to the Guidelines.

- i** Sharing the result with ECPAT International will provide you with a formal approval to publish the Guidelines as the official language version of the “Terminology Guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” **in your language, and to publish it on the official website**



[www.luxembourgguidelines.org](http://www.luxembourgguidelines.org)

**ECPAT International will be able to provide you** with the cover picture for the Guidelines, as well as a standard formatting model similar (but not identical) to the three initial versions of the Guidelines.

**While ECPAT International holds the copyright of the three initial versions** (English, French and Spanish), it will not be the copyright holder of your product. For each country/region developing a new language version of the Guidelines, an organisation (or coalition) involved in the translation and adaptation process should be the copyright holder. Ideally, but not necessarily, this should be the organisation leading or coordinating the work process.

- i** The next step after adopting the Guidelines in your language will **be to disseminate them broadly**, making them known among child protection professionals in your country, and promoting their use.



The broader your consultation process has been during the work, the more stakeholders will be aware of the initiative and can contribute **to sharing and promoting the Guidelines at national/regional level.**

**In the working group, reflect upon what would be the best way for you to make the Guidelines visible in your country/region. For instance, a joint awareness raising campaign or a set of information events could be organised.** You may also wish to involve media professionals in the dissemination of the Guidelines, and at the same time raise their awareness on terminology in reporting on issues related to child sexual exploitation.

- i** **The final step** is, of course, to actively use the Guidelines in the everyday work of your organisations, and to ensure that terminology is one of the factors taken into account in the written reports or studies that you publish, as well as in the oral presentations that you make. **The Guidelines can also serve as an important tool in your advocacy work with public authorities, to shape future policies and laws in a more child-centred language.**

## REGIONAL TRANSLATION PROCESSES

- i** If you wish to launch a translation and adaptation process of the Guidelines in a language that is spoken in several countries, you may consider launching a regional initiative including relevant stakeholders from all countries speaking your language.

A regional working group can be more complicated to set up and you may consider choosing one partner organisation in the other relevant countries, which can each take the lead and coordinate a consultation process at national level.

- i** Whether in a national or regional process to develop the Guidelines into a new language, it may be useful to invite a representative of any relevant **regional organisation** that works on child protection related issues in your country or region.
- i** With regard to Phase 2 of the work process (see above), working at the regional level may complicate the process, since differences may exist between two countries speaking the same language. In that case, it may be useful to include the different terms and explain that they are used in a specific way in a certain country.



CONCLUSION

Today, the Luxembourg Guidelines, and the recommendations therein, represent the strongest **existing consensus at the international level regarding terminology in the child protection field.**

This means that by choosing to use the terms recommended in the Guidelines,



**we are building,  
together,**

a more **coherent** and **uniform** way of communicating  
**on sexual exploitation and  
sexual abuse against children**

We are also, consciously, choosing a terminology that will refrain from harming the children that we aim to protect, and that will continue to build a child-centred and child-friendly vocabulary for this field of work.

**This way, we are also contributing to the implementation of the CRC and upholding the child's inherent right to have her/his dignity protected.**

By translating the Luxembourg Guidelines and making a collective effort with national child protection professionals to adapt the terminology to the reality of each language and context, we are bringing this work closer to the reality of all children, **making sure no child is stigmatised or harmed by the terminology that we, as professionals, are using.**



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