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DECEMBER 2025



SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN  
PUBLISHING RESILIENCE  
AND RECOVERY

# Relay Translations for Ukrainian Books

A SHORT SET OF STEPS

## ABOUT

The objective of this short set of steps is to outline the steps required for acquiring, licensing, and producing a ‘relay’ translation of a book – i.e., a translation based on an existing translation rather than the original text. In the publishing business this is called a ‘relay’ translation (involving a third party sometimes called the ‘intermediary publisher’).

This set of steps aims to be useful to Ukrainian works where markets in countries of small languages are being sought.

We have here identified the generic steps and highlighted points that we feel need particular attention in this context. In effect this is a workflow to be applied once the title selection is completed.

This workflow was prepared at the request of the Ukrainian [Cultural Forces](#), a ‘platform, uniting artists, activists, business and international partners to address current challenges through culture’. It is, however, applicable for all translations from smaller languages to smaller languages where there are no routes to direct translations.

# RELAY TRANSLATION WORKFLOW

## 1. Identify title(s) to be translated

## 2. Rights Identification & Preparation (author/publisher and possibly with UBI assistance)

- Original rights-holder (author or primary publisher, depending on contractual status) identifies availability of translation rights for target market (verify to relay translation sponsor).
- Determine whether direct-language translators exist in target market.
- Decide whether relay rights will be offered.

## 3. Selection of Third Language Publisher

- Competitive bidding or targeting of the Third Language Publisher (TLP)

## 4. Third Language Publisher Request & Negotiation

- TLP requests (possibly with UBI assistance):
  - translation rights
  - *and specifically*, permission to translate from an intermediary version.
- Rights-holder confirms whether relay rights can be granted.
- Intermediary translator's contract is reviewed for relay-use clauses.

## 5. Intermediary Translator Rights Clearance

- Verify copyright status and obtain permission to use intermediary translation (from intermediary publisher or translator, depending on contractual status).
- Negotiate:
  - supplemental fee
  - royalty share (if applicable)
  - credit requirements

## 6. Contracting Stage

### ***Agreements finalised:***

#### **1. Primary Rights License (Original → Third Language Publisher)**

- Grants language, territory, and format rights.
- Explicitly authorizes relay translation.
- 2. Translator Permissions (from Intermediary Translator, or Intermediary Publisher if they control rights in intermediary translation)**
  - Grants permission for derivative use of their translation.
- 3. Relay Translator Contract (Third Party Publisher's Language Translator)**
  - Sets payment terms and delivery schedule; clarifies who will own copyright in relay translation.

## **7. Source Material Provision**

- Third Party Publisher receives:
  - intermediary translation text (PDF or print)
  - original-language edition (optional)
  - style sheets, glossaries, editorial notes
- Quality specifications and approval steps confirmed (intermediary publisher or translator).

## **8. Relay Translation Production**

### **Steps:**

1. Relay translator drafts translation based on intermediary version.
2. Relay translator flags unclear or ambiguous passages.
3. Third Party Publisher consults intermediary translator or primary publisher if needed.
4. First draft delivered.
5. Internal editing by Third Party Publisher.
6. Sensitivity/accuracy checks when required.

## **9. Quality Control & Approval**

- Rights-holder may review (or if not possible then delegated to trusted intermediary):
  - sample chapters
  - full manuscript
- Corrections integrated.
- Final approval granted before typesetting.

## **10. Typesetting & Proofing**

- Layout designed.
- Relay translator may proofread for fidelity.
- Final proofreading completed.

## 11. Credits & Copyright Notices

Standard credit example:

"Translated from the Japanese by A. Tanaka.

Relay translation from the English by B. Kristjánsdóttir."

- Copyright notices adjusted to include intermediary translator.

## 12. Publication & Distribution by Third Party Publisher

- Print, ebook, and/or audiobook editions released.
- Sales reporting begins.
- Royalties paid to original rights-holder (if agreed in contract).
- Supplemental payment to intermediary translator (if applicable).

## 13. Archiving & Rights Reversion

- Publisher provides final files toward contract expiration.
- On rights reversion, relay rights automatically expire unless renewed.

## Further Resources

[UK Society of Authors Guidance on Relay Translation](#)

Lynette Owen, *Selling Rights*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 2024, Routledge, pages 290-291 where English is the relay language

Lynette Owen, *Clark's Publishing Agreements*, 12<sup>th</sup> edition 2026, Bloomsbury Professional

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