

Project grants for literary translators

Literary translators into Dutch Frisian, Papiamentu, Papiamentu or English* can apply for a project grant for a new translation of a book. This enables them to devote time and attention to the translation and to invest in the development of their talent. By means of such grants, the Dutch Foundation for Literature aims to enrich Dutch literature with high-quality translations of literature from all languages and genres, and also to stimulate the transfer of knowledge between more and less experienced translators, in order to facilitate the influx of translators and their progress in their profession.

For whom

Translators into Dutch, Frisian, Papiamentu, Papiamentu and English*

**These regulations cover translations into English only in the case of English as used by native speakers in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.*

For what?

New literary translations

Deadlines

Continuous

How much?

This depends on the magnitude of the translation project and the degree of experience of the translator.

Budget ceiling

€1,911,000

For what?

You can apply for a subsidy for a book translation in any literary genre, so not just fiction for adults but children's and young adult literature, poetry, literary nonfiction and graphic novels and theatre plays (only if published in book form).

Who can apply?

- For translators into Dutch or Frisian the following applies: you have signed a contract with a publisher for a new translation of a book that as a minimum includes all the conditions contained in the Model Contract of the Literaire Uitgeversgroep and the Auteursbond. In 2026 the minimum rate for prose is 7.80 eurocents per word; for poetry translations the minimum is €2.83 per line with a minimum of €49.77 per poem.

- For translators into Papiamentu, Papiamento or English (as used by native speakers in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) the following applies: you will work on a new translation of a book with at least one external publishing partner who has compiled a publishing plan; based on that publishing plan, this partner takes care of one or more of the following: editing, publication or promotion of the translation. There must also be an expert editing staff in place.

How much?

The size of the grant is determined according to the length of the source text to be translated and the experience of the applicant.

As a *beginner* (working on your first or second literary translation) you will receive a sum equal to the fee you are receiving from the publisher.

In the case of your third literary translation, you can choose: either you can apply one more time as a beginner, or you can submit an application as an advanced translator. Advanced translators receive 12 cents per word and €4.20 per line of poetry (or €72 per poem). From your fourth literary translation onwards, you belong to the group of advanced translators. Please note: advanced translators who translate from a new language (one for which they have never before applied for a project grant) will be regarded as beginners for their first literary translation, since the quality of their literary translations for this language combination is as yet unknown.

Conditions

In the translation the name of the translator will appear on the copyright page and on the cover;

- **Beginners** must submit their application, **complete with all the required attachments**, no more than a month after signing the Model Contract (or if the translation is to be published in the Caribbean, no more than a month after a publishing plan is compiled).

Advanced translators must always submit their application at the start of their translation work. You do not need to wait for the 'closing date' of a specific round. We request that you submit as complete an application as possible. If necessary, attachments can be added up to two weeks later.

You cannot apply if:

- You translate more than 40,000 words per month
- The translation is made via an intermediary language (and not straight from the source language)
- The translation is made by more than two translators
- The translation is less than 10,000 words in length; in the case of a publication in Papiamento, Papiamentu or English (as used by native speakers in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands), the minimum length is 5,000 words (or 10 poems in the case of poetry)

Also please bear in mind that:

- If a recent application has been rejected based on inadequate translation quality, a new application can be submitted only if a new work is available to be presented for evaluation
- The income limit for 2026 is €47,500 taxable income. The total taxable income must be no higher than that sum in the years in which you work on the subsidized translation project
- You can submit a maximum of four applications a year. There must be no more than four translations by you that have been subsidized by the Foundation and are as yet unpublished.

Junior-senior supplementary allowance

If you work with a co-translator of a different level of experience (in other words a colleague with significantly more or less translation experience than you), then you can apply for a junior-senior supplementary allowance. This consists of a doubling of the grant for both translators, because collaboration and knowledge transfer require an additional investment of time. In this case the following are of importance:

- Both translators are named in the Model Contract (or the publishing plan)
- The junior translator has previously made a maximum of eight literary translations
- The senior translator must have made a minimum of seven more translations than their less experienced colleague
- Together you will not translate more than 20,000 words per month, in order to allow enough time for the exchange of ideas and for consultation
- Your justification for applying for a junior-senior supplementary allowance must include a description of your method of collaboration, along with a description of the learning objectives you have laid down. It is important here to focus on the specific translation problems of the text you will be working on together. This description of may be 400 words in length maximum.

Other supplementary allowances

As a beginner, the junior-senior supplementary allowance is the only additional payment for which you can apply. As an advanced translator you can apply for a supplementary allowance based on the degree of difficulty of the translation, editing or selection work, or for writing a foreword or afterword. You can read more about these additional payments in the **FAQs** at the bottom of this page.

As a beginner or as an advanced translator you can also apply for a **development grant**. This grant is intended for your own development as a literary translator and enables you to further develop your professional knowledge and cultural entrepreneurship. A development

grant is not necessarily tied to your current translation project. Are you a beginner? Than we strongly advise you to also use this option.

Deadlines

You can apply for a project grant all year round. Applications by **beginners** are dealt with continually. Applications from **advanced translators** are dealt with in three rounds:

- Applications received before 15 December 2025: decision expected in mid-April
- Applications received before 15 April 2026: decision expected in mid-July
- Applications received before 15 August 2026: decision expected in mid-December

Assessment

Once your application has been received, the Foundation first checks that it is complete and that it complies with all the entry requirements.

If you are applying as a **beginner**, we first look at the Model Contract you have submitted: are the licenses, fee and royalties mentioned in it acceptable; has it been signed by all parties? Then we look at your motivation: does it indicate translation ambitions; does it display insight into the style and possible translation problems in the book to be translated? Applications from beginners are dealt with more quickly (within 8 weeks), so the grant is provided to a beginner at the start of the translation process.

If you are applying as an **advanced translator** (from your third or fourth literary translation onwards), then the Foundation will ask members of its advisory committee or external experts to assess the literary quality or the importance, literary or otherwise, of the book to be translated. In the case of your first application as an advanced translator, the quality of a recent translation will also be assessed. Please note: with any application, the Foundation may choose at random to have an assessment carried out of the quality of your translations (even if you have been submitting applications as an advanced translator for some time already). The advisory committee discusses all applications and the accompanying assessments. In doing so, it also looks at the time to be invested in relation to the degree of difficulty of the book to be translated. Finally, the committee reports its advice to the board.

Checklist for your application

Check whether you have all the necessary documents ready before you submit your application:

Beginners:

- Model Contract or publishing plan (signed by all parties)
- Description of the translation project
- Most recent definitive income tax assessment
- In the case of an application for a supplementary allowance, a description of the junior-senior collaboration
- If available, a pdf of the source text

Advanced translators:

- Model Contract or publishing plan (signed by all parties). Or: if you are still waiting for the Model Contract, a declaration of intent from the publisher in which the Model Contract is promised.
- Most recent definitive income tax assessment
- Description of the translation project
- In the case of an application for a supplementary allowance, a description of the degree of difficulty, editing work and/or junior-senior collaboration
- If available, a pdf of the source text
- If as part of your application a translation needs to be assessed, a grants specialist will contact you about this. We will then ask for two copies of an earlier translation in book form and two copies of a representative sample of 20 pages from the corresponding source text. Random checks can be made of all translations, but in the case of your first application as an advanced translator an assessment will definitely take place.

After the digital submission of your application, we expect to receive the following by post:

- Two copies of the source text in book form (or if books are not available two bound copies of the manuscript). In the case of a classic text, or a new book by an author whose work in translation has been supported several times already with a grant from the Foundation, it is sufficient to send one copy of the book.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make an application if I do not yet have a translation contract?

As a **beginner** you can make an application only if you have a Model Contract (or publishing plan). **Advanced translators** can also apply if they have a declaration of intent, meaning a letter or email from the publisher in which it is stated that a Model Contract will be concluded for the translation concerned. For most publishing companies this is an established concept and a familiar route. The declaration must also include the length of the work and the deadline for delivery of the translation. The signed Model Contract must then be sent to the Foundation later by email (as a pdf or copy). Please note: the Foundation expects to receive the contract *before* making a decision on your application. This often means that you must send the contract no more than ten weeks after submitting your application.

What kind of contract is usual for poetry?

For poetry different remuneration applies (based on the number of lines and/or poems to be translated) than for prose. The [Auteursbond](#) and the Literaire Uitgeversgroep (part of the Mediafederatie) make agreements each year about the prevailing fees and can tell you more about this.

In exceptional cases, a contract that departs from the norm may be concluded for a lengthy poetry translation. It needs to concern a poetry translation such that if the usual minimum fee per line and/or poem were applied, the commercial exploitation of the publication would be impossible and furthermore the publisher has no other available means of obtaining a subsidy (for example a production grant from a foreign foundation or organization) for the translated edition. In exceptional circumstances of this kind, you would always do best to contact one of the grants specialists at the Foundation in advance; for one thing, they can tell you what the minimal remuneration requirements are that a contract must meet. Bear in mind that if the rate from the publisher is different from the norm, the grant from the Foundation will also be based on a different rate.

Can I apply for nonfiction?

Yes, translations of nonfiction with a literary character and/or of cultural-historical, philosophical, cultural-political or social importance qualify for a grant. The Foundation will also look at what the text adds to the existing availability of work on the subject in the target language. Texts regarded as of a character that is too specialist, educational or informative, such as academic studies or reference works fall outside the scope of these regulations (and outside the domain of the Foundation).

Can I apply for a retranslation?

Yes, that is possible. It is important however that you mention in your application which edition of the source text you are using. We will also ask you to explain the added value of the new translation. We are particularly interested in your vision of the book to be translated and your approach: how will you set to work, what do you believe are the most important characteristics of the source text that must show through in the translation? You do not necessarily need to refer to an earlier translation or translations. The advisory committee assesses the desirability of a new translation. It takes into account the availability and age of the earlier translation and its quality. Each proposal for a retranslation is assessed and

decided upon based on the criteria given above, whether or not the translation is to be part of a series.

This is my third application; how do I choose between applying as a beginner and as an advanced translator?

If you continue to apply as a beginner, the time in which your application is decided upon will be shorter, so you will receive the grant more quickly. Do take into account that you will receive a lower fee per word than an advanced translator and that you qualify only for the junior-senior supplementary allowance.

If you choose to apply as an advanced translator, you should bear in mind that the Foundation will have an assessment made of the literary quality or the importance, literary or otherwise, of the book to be translated, and of the quality of a recent translation. This necessitates a longer consideration period, so you will have to wait longer for a decision (more information about this can be found under 'Deadlines'). As an advanced translator you will qualify for a higher rate per word and be given the opportunity to apply for other supplementary allowances (in addition to the junior-senior allowance), namely for a high degree of difficulty, for writing a foreword or afterword, or for selection and/or editing tasks.

Can I apply if I will be collaborating with other translators?

Are you making a new translation along with one colleague? Then both of you should submit an application. Naturally, you must both meet the conditions. When completing the application form, you must explain how you intend to collaborate. It is important that you plan to spend enough time, so that you will have sufficient opportunity to consult each other about choices made and to edit the translation together. If you are working with several colleagues on a translation (in other words there are three or more translators in total), then you cannot submit an application.

I live in Belgium (or in another country); do these regulations apply to me?

Applicants who live in Belgium must submit their application to [Literatuur Vlaanderen](#). If you live in another country, but your translation is to be published in Dutch by a Dutch publisher, you can submit your application to the Foundation. Applicants in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands can also submit their application to the Foundation (for translations into Papiamentu, Papiamentu, or English as it is used by native speakers on the islands).

How do you determine the length of the translation?

The length of the translation is specified in your contract: for prose the number of words, for poetry the number of lines and/or poems. If you collaborate on a translation, the division of the number of words between the two translators will also be laid down in the contract. If no

specific division is mentioned in the contract, we assume it will be 50-50. You can submit an application only for your share of the translation.

In drawing up a Model Contract for literary translations, the fee is normally determined by the number of words in the original language. But for languages that are very different from Dutch, this is not always fair; take, for example, languages that are written in characters (Chinese, Japanese) or agglutinative languages (Hungarian, Turkish). It is usual in such cases for the number of words in the contract to be determined based on the (expected) length of the text when translated into Dutch rather than the number of words in the source text. Bear this in mind when negotiating your contract. The Auteursbond can provide general guidelines for different languages.

It is also important to know that positive decisions are based on the number of words (or lines/poems) in the translation contract. That number cannot be adjusted or corrected later, so supply the definitive number of words as soon as you know it.

How do I provide a justification for my application?

In explaining your motivation for translating the particular title concerned, you briefly introduce the author and look primarily at the literary qualities of the book. You do not need to recount the plot or the contents. It is important that you give an insight into the narrative and stylistic characteristics of the text in connection with the subject matter of the book. For the advisory committee it is important that the explanation of your motivation gives a clear picture of the source text and of the impression you as a translator have formed of the work. In the case of a less well-known author, rather more information is needed than for classic titles, but do not assume that everyone knows the work. Your motivation must be expressed in a maximum of a thousand words.

If you are applying for a **nonfiction work**, when justifying your application you can look at the literary character or cultural importance of the work (specifically for the reader in the target language). Literary characteristics include for example the deployment of literary tools (such as stylistic devices or the choice of a perspective), the use of rhetorical procedures, the personal involvement or vision of the author, the choice of an original angle and subject matter, or an inventive approach and structure.

Can I apply for a supplementary allowance for a translation of above-average difficulty?

If the translation you are working on is of above-average difficulty, then if you are an **advanced translator** you can apply for a supplementary allowance on top of the basic grant. We require you to provide additional information and/or justification. Since it can be difficult to estimate how difficult a translation is when you have only just started, you have until six weeks after the deadline for the application period to apply for a supplementary allowance and to provide justification. A supplementary allowance raises the standard grant by 15 or 30

per cent. It is important to note that you will receive this allowance only if you have applied for it yourself.

A justification for a supplementary allowance based on the degree of difficulty ideally consists of two parts: a translated extract and the corresponding extract from the source text (1 or 2 pages in total), and along with that an explanation of the translation choices made and the problems you encountered in making them. You can mark examples of difficulties in the translated extract and add comments next to them. Or you might decide not to select one translated extract but instead to list the translation difficulties and provide an illustrative sentence or a short illustrative sample in each case (source text + (provisional) translation).

In determining the translation problems, you might want to refer to this checklist:

- Does the sentence structure demand considerable inventiveness from the translator?
- Does the text include core concepts that are hard to translate?
- Does the text involve many different genres?
- Does the text include large or subtle differences in register, dialect, or made-up language?
- Is there a lot of playing with sound effects?
- Does the text include realia or references that require additional research or inventive transformation?

These characteristics of a text do not necessarily make a translation more difficult than average. In determining the degree of difficulty, the advisory committee also looks at the frequency, complexity and diversity of the translation problems and takes account of linguistic differences and the distance between the source culture and the target culture.

How do I apply for a supplementary allowance for writing a foreword or an afterword, or for selection/editing tasks?

If you are an **advanced translator**, then for the writing of a foreword or an afterword you can receive a supplementary allowance if the publisher is paying an additional fee for it. That fee for the foreword or afterword must be included in your translation contract. The allowance, if granted, amounts to 150% of the fee paid by the publisher. The Foundation regards a foreword or afterword as adding value, since it gives literary translators a chance to make their work, choices and expertise visible.

If you compile an anthology, translate a text (for example an older text) that requires explanation or footnotes, or need to make a selection from various texts, then as an advanced translator you can also apply for a **selection/editing allowance**.

This allowance is intended as remuneration for the additional investment of time that selection and/or editing tasks demand of you and it increases the standard amount of the grant by 30%. If the work involves editing, then we ask you to indicate what form this will take and how much additional time you think you will need (beyond the usual translation work). Annotations are regarded as editing work; if you are to include notes, you need to indicate whether you will be using existing notes, adjusting existing notes to some extent, or adding notes yourself.

If you are making a selection, then you must explain your choice, describe how you go about making it and give an indication of the additional time involved.

What can I do if I disagree with a decision?

The Foundation is an independent administrative body and falls under the Dutch General Administrative Law Act. This means that applicants can lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision. The period within which an applicant can appeal against a decision is six weeks from the day on which the decision is made known. After that period ends, there is no further opportunity to lodge an appeal. Read more about [appeals](#).

How and where is the project grant paid out?

Grants are in theory paid immediately, or at least within eight weeks. On the application form you can state whether you would like the grant to be paid in instalments (in two years), but this is possible only if you will still be working on the translation in the second year.

Where can I find a list of grants that have been awarded?

The grants that have been awarded are published under the heading [Toekenningen](#) in the Dutch-language part of this website, in the digital newsletter and in the Foundation's annual report. See [Publicaties](#) on this website.

What other grant regulations exist for current or upcoming literary translators?

You can also apply to the Foundation for a development grant. Development grants are intended for both beginners and advanced translators. More information about them is available on the [subsidy page](#). A list of more applications you can make in the Netherlands and Flanders is available from the [Expertisecentrum Literair Vertalen](#).