



# Continuous Localization

A comprehensive guide by Crowdin

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**English is not  
enough**



Promoting your product internationally is an essential part of any successful business strategy.

Getting customers and sales on your local market isn't enough; you need to keep moving forward and achieve results on a global scale. The effective way to do this is to settle localization running in parallel with the development process.



**Localization is a must when entering a new market and building a scalable global strategy. There is much research conducted showing that global users prefer products if they are in their native language.**

Selcen Kalender Coşkun, Head of Localization at Adjust

In 2021, around [1.35 billion people worldwide](#) spoke English, either natively or as a second language. But if the key to success was just making your product in English, it would be too easy, right?

Let's think like your customer for a minute. Would you enjoy, buy and recommend a product with UI in your native language or your second or third one? The [CSA research](#) on translation affecting the web customer experience shows that users are more likely to use or buy a product translated to their native language, including the customer support content.

And a simple one-time localization won't be enough. Each new piece of content must be available in the language of your international customers as soon as possible.

**44%**

of Internet users will immediately reject an English-only website\*

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\* Source: User language preferences online study – [European Union](#)



**Automation can be of great help to speed up processes in the localization industry. In an era where turnaround is of always increasing importance, it, therefore, plays a key role. Repetitive and manual tasks are eliminated. It helps scale operations. Automation allows to manage workflows better and keep costs down.**

Stefan Huyghe, Localization VP and LocLunch Ambassador

That's why you need to start implementing continuous localization in your workflow. The sooner you start, the better results you will see.

**Old-school**

**VS**

**continuous  
localization**

Nowadays, everyone knows that localization isn't just a linguistic process.

Translation into the language of the target audience is only one integral aspect of the process. The whole procedure typically consists of several steps and a whole team involved. However, approaches can differ.

You may be familiar with this approach, in our e-book, we'll call it "an old-school approach".

Software development teams used to hand over corresponding source files to the localization team after the product was finished. Thus, the final new version could be released once a year. The main job was to translate the product and provide support documentation. There was no collaboration between the localization team and the product development team.

Due to this, there were misunderstandings → delays.

The localization team needed additional context or clarifications. With the described approach, it was difficult to obtain them, or it was truly time-consuming.

Imagine translating one string with the word "clear" with no idea where it's located and its functions. It can be placed on the button and be a verb "to remove" or an adjective "easy to understand" and lead a customer to the next step. Without the context provided, imperfections are likely to occur.



**Having no context is like walking blindfolded and hoping you won't smash into a wall. A word or expression can take up a whole different meaning or nuance depending on where and alongside which elements it's going to appear, not to mention how it's going to be used. For example, is it for a call-to-action button? Then we'll have to take design and space constraints into consideration. What does it link to? Even this can completely change what the text should look like.**

Martina Russo, CEO of MovingWords, SaaS Localization Specialists

In the 21st century, companies are releasing updates monthly, weekly or even a couple of times a day, and you can't lag behind.

Not everyone can afford the long translation process. Users expect new features to be available instantly, ideally in as little time as possible. Make your information, updates, and products accessible to users in just a few clicks. Otherwise, you run the risk of losing a customer.

Localization after development is no longer an option. Development time has shortened, and translation time should be reduced too. The old-school localization approach is not adapted for this.

You need another solution – continuous localization. The main objective of this approach is to automate tasks that require little manual intervention or involvement from developers, automate content delivery to translators, and provide quicker release cycles.

**Continuous delivery is already a reality in the industry, and that means that the localization processes need to adapt and complement this approach. For this reason, there are many steps in the localization workflow that can benefit from a high degree of automation (project management, quality assurance, CAT tools, delivery process). The more we can automatise any repetitive, not creative tasks, the bigger the efficiency of the process, and the more time available to the production phase itself.**

*Jennifer Vela Valido, Localization Vendor & Quality Manager at Expedia*

Continuous localization is a never-ending process that works in parallel with software development cycles. Products created in the modern era follow these cycles regularly. Updates that alter how the software functions can happen weekly and can include bug fixes, new features, and modifications to the user interface.



Content development isn't just about software strings. It has expanded and includes technical documentation, knowledge base content, marketing material, web content, and apps. It can be applied to any category of written content your team continuously delivers for translation. Having an integrated localization tool is a crucial part of this workflow. It means that the work of your teams will be continuous as well as the results they show.

**|| The more you can automate and cut down on the manual work (exporting the newly-created text, sending it out to the translation team, re-importing it back in the tool, etc.) can only speed up the whole release cycle. Automating the whole process works both ways, not only on the client's side aiming at reducing time-to-market, but also on the localization vendor's side: LSPs can considerably save Project Management time, which is essential when it comes to working on such a great amount of tiny projects that are usually compensated on a word-base rate.**

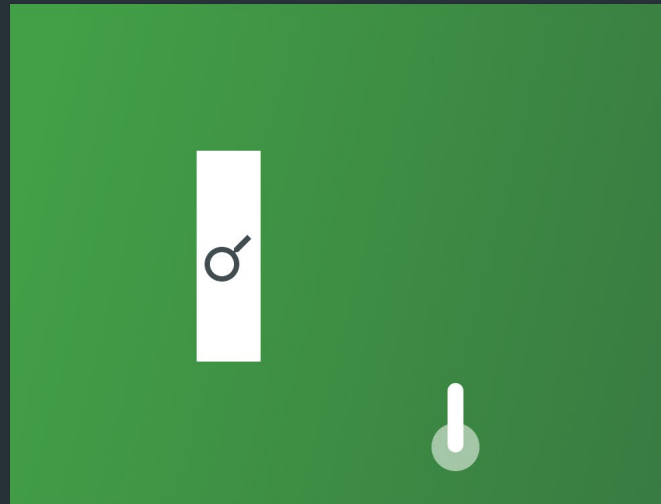
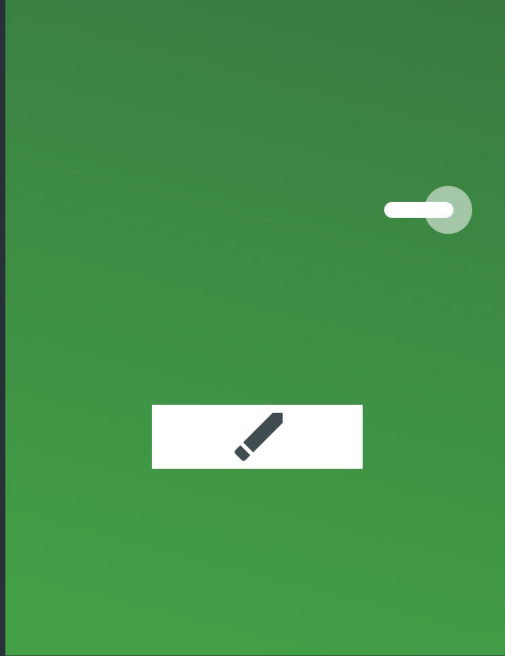
*Daniela D'Amato, Operations Manager at Creative Words / Events Manager, Women in Localization Italy & Global Community Events Manager / LocLunch Ambassador*

Progress and the benefits of continuous localization are crystal clear. It helps your product to stay agile and the localization team to work productively.

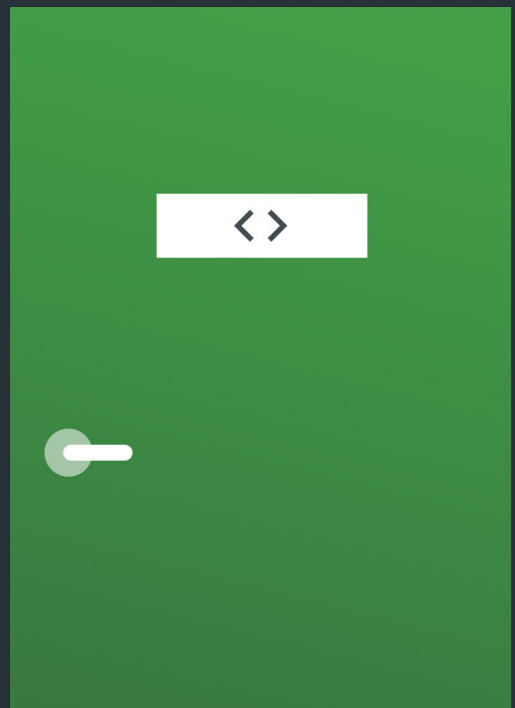
**|| The best localisation strategy is the strategy that helps the business achieve its goals, and for Canva that is definitely a continuous approach with great automation and internationalisation infrastructure.**

*Michael Levot, Localization Program Lead at Canva*

Find out what benefits each team can receive from continuous localization in the next paragraphs.



# Introducing continuous localization to each team



## Engineering department

Continuous localization helps the engineering team focus on their tasks. The key challenge engineers face during the process of localizing products is a lack of automation.

Teams can create their own automation processes in some cases, but this will not simplify their workflow. For various projects, each team needs different functionality. As a result, the development team will have to spend much more time on it and can still miss some features needed for the localization team.

Why spend time on it if there are ready-made solutions that take into account all possible scenarios and the experience of your colleagues.

The best choice is the localization tool that provides you with the necessary integrations, so you could integrate localization in the development process. It would be a good idea to choose a tool that has built-in integrations with GitHub, GitLab, Bitbucket, Azure Repos, and offers API, CLI, and webhooks.

This way, you can avoid almost any manual file transfer between developers and translators. The only action needed is to set up the integration that will download sources to the tool. There they will be correctly shown and ready for translation.

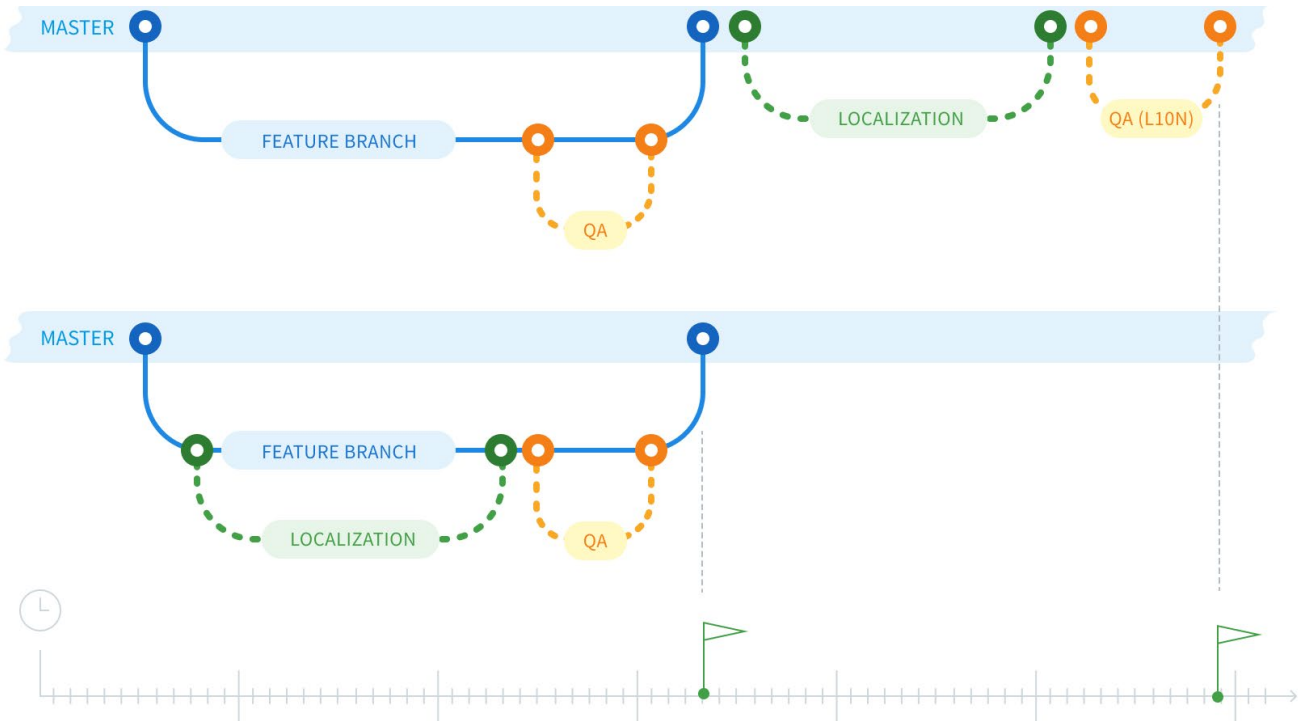
**|| The more a team works together with open communication and avoids getting stuck in silos the better. In an ideal world everybody works together in the same collaboration platform where updates happen in real-time and tasks can be done simultaneously, saving time and money.**

Stefan Huyghe, Localization VP and LocLunch Ambassador

The localization management platform guarantees you:

- translators won't crash the code during the localizing process
- translators could start localization of the features that are still in development
- you can keep sources in the localization projects and translations on the repo instantly up-to-date

For more information, check out our article about apps, integrations, and tools for development teams.



The localization team should work simultaneously with the software development team. If there are some changes in the source, they will be visible in the project, and the translation team will be informed. The most reliable way to do this is to notify them about new content and automate the file syncing between teams.

When working with several branches and frequent updates, it's important to manage duplicate strings correctly. A string becomes a duplicate if the same string has already been added to the project. You can choose to show them, hide, or auto-translate to share the translation of the original string. If you configure your project to automatically hide duplicates, translators will only see the new texts. Hiding duplicates will also save you costs on localization and ensure the localization team won't waste time doing the same job twice.

**Automation in localization is really about removing the bottlenecks that slow down software updates. For example, we use Crowdin to automate file syncing between our clients' repositories and the TMS so that we're always working on the latest texts. Manually uploading files is time-consuming and error-prone. Automated file syncing also makes small updates seamless and efficient.**

**Benjamin Zadik**, Head of Localization at Babble-on

Crowdin allows you to notify your translators when new content is added to a project. You can also configure custom notifications about updates on integrations you set up, created/deleted or updated tasks, and more. Notifications could be sent via the app, email, or both. In this way, they won't miss anything and will finish the project on time.

That's how you'll accelerate release cycles and move toward continuous localization and automated solutions with your developer's team.

## **Design stage**

Don't forget about an important part of the team. Most customers pay attention to a visually appealing product with a user-friendly UI. The goal of localization is to maintain the look of your product and adapt it to other markets. The sooner, the better. The most innovative way to achieve this is to include the design team into the continuous localization workflow as well.

### **What's the problem with an old approach?**

Its typical workflow consists of:

1. Product release.
2. Translating the released "original" product.
3. Fixing designs to suit another language/culture.
4. Pushing translations and design fixes.
5. Releasing localized versions.

This strategy could take a lot of time, especially before the actual localization starts, making it impossible to release the product into several markets (languages) at once. What's more, there is a considerable dependence of each team on one another. Designers wait until the developers finish the needed adjustments to the code, or developers wait until designers finish all their edits.

You can release all multilingual versions at once. Ensure simultaneous work of designers, translators and developers from the very beginning.



**Imagine, for example, having to localize a US videogame into 30+ languages, including those belonging to very different cultures: wouldn't it be better to know from the start if any parts of the script or any visual elements need to be amended according to how the target audience would perceive the final product? And wouldn't it be helpful to know it ahead of time, and not right before the launch? If Companies and LSPs could work together right from the start they would definitely save time, money (and headaches).**

*Daniela D'Amato, Operations Manager, Creative Words / Events Manager, Women in Localization Italy & Global Community Events Manager / LocLunch Ambassador*

**Crowdin features and design plugins that will assist your team.**

### **Prototyping Stage**

We believe it's best to start localization even before the development begins. Involving the localization team at the prototyping stage ensures simultaneous product release in several languages. Translators can have a "skeleton" of the future product or its new feature look and start translation even before developers write a single line of code.

**Of course, it is important to clarify with the designers early on how many characters will fit and whether the design can be adapted again if necessary. The sooner all those involved think globally and do not just focus on the source languages, the fewer problems there will be in the end.**

*Sarah Sandführ*, Content & Localization Lead at Trusted Shops, LoLunch ambassador and Events Manager for Women in Localization Germany

Moreover, this stage will allow designers to get production-ready texts from your localization project and use them in mock-ups. In other words, they can identify any UI issues that appeared after translation and fix them before developers even begin the work. The prototyping stage will help save time, money, and nerve cells for the developers, designers and the localization team.

## QA checks

What if the translated name of the register button didn't fit? A 14px font may be readable in English with no issues, while the same font may be extremely uncomfortable to read when translated into Chinese. Unfortunately, there isn't a font size that works for all languages without exceptions. To make sure translations fit the UI, you can turn on QA checks.

To avoid this, you can use QA checks, that look for:

- length issues
- spaces mismatch
- character case mismatch
- and other [QA checks](#)

On Crowdin Enterprise, you can also add custom QA checks like a color mismatch, emoji mismatch, or customize yours (e.g., max pixel limit). Read our article to find out more about how [QA checks](#) can help you to ensure top-notch translations.

## Design plugins

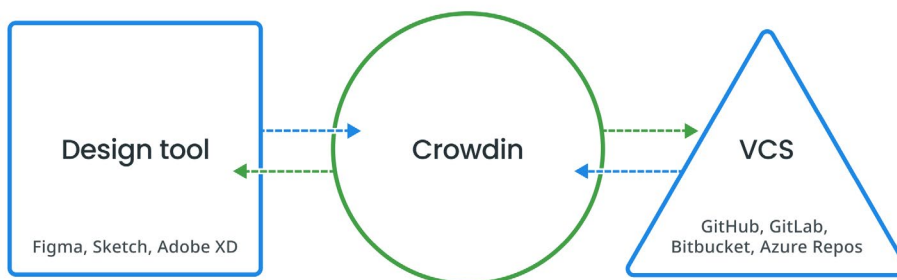
Avoid situations where designers correct errors in a hurry on the last stages. You just need to invite the localization team at the very beginning of the project and ensure team cooperation.

**A good brief is where it has to start. Then, during the actual translation phase, screenshots or even access to Figma (or other design) files are great to help translators understand the context. They can be added to localization software or at the very least provided alongside the brief.**

*Martina Russo, CEO of MovingWords, SaaS Localization Specialists*

Integrated design plugins for [Adobe XD](#), [Figma](#) or [Sketch](#), help translators get context, as they can preview the designs while translating.

With design plugins, you can also easily track the translated files/mock-ups/strings and modify them right away. Moreover, designers can add new strings right on the banner or mock-up and send them to the localization project in a click



Thus, teams can work simultaneously without any unnecessary delays..



## Marketing team

Marketing plays a significant role in ensuring customers can find your product. Imagine sending emails about a new product or feature in 10 languages simultaneously.

The process of continuous localization is crucial for marketers.

**56%**

of consumers consider the information in their native language to be more important than price\*

**Marketing translations still need to read well and be fully localised, but when you have a lot of the same content that gets translated regularly, templates save you a lot of time. It's all about finding a solution that works well for your team as well as for your client.**

*Kelsey Frick, Freelance Translation Account Manager*

Staying agile will be easier with favorite marketing tools integrated with the localization platform and having translated templates for emails or notifications, for example.

**With proper planning and a scalable localization program in place, it is possible to run global marketing campaigns simultaneously with all languages involved, and also provide any new content to customers/clients as quickly as possible. Taking localization into consideration from the very early stages of content creation, and adopting an agile approach is vital. It is important to understand that localization is never a one-off task in the context of global expansion, and should be nurtured and maintained in a continuous manner. A well-integrated TMS is essential to achieving this.**

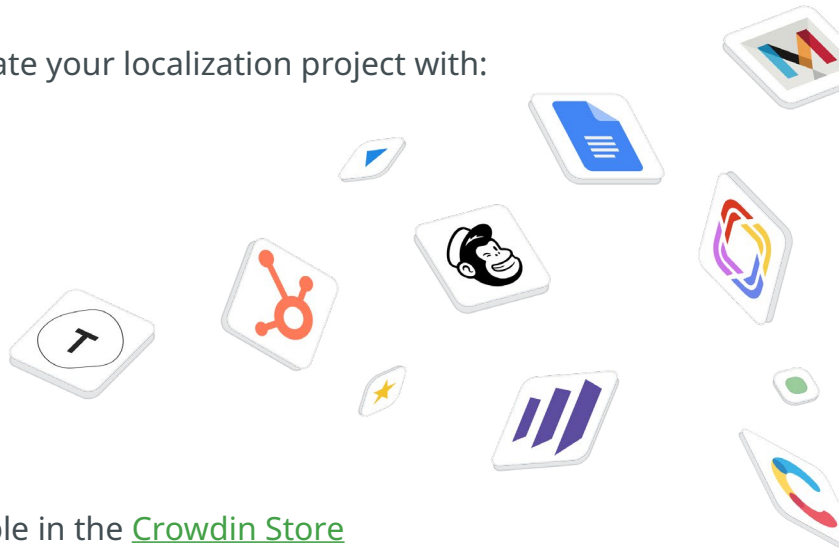
*Selcen Kalender Coşkun, Head of Localization at Adjust*

\* Source: User language preferences online study – [European Union](#)

You don't have to come up with anything new to accomplish these tasks. You can sync (send source texts and pull translations) content instantly between your localization projects and the applications your team uses.

For example, in Crowdin you can integrate your localization project with:

- HubSpot
- Mailchimp
- Mandrill
- Typeform
- Marketo
- Google Docs
- Contentful
- Prismic
- or use any other integration available in the [Crowdin Store](#)



You can use these apps to manage the localized versions of your blogs, email campaigns, and other content more effectively and remain focused on your marketing localization strategy. Read more about some of the apps that can help you [localize your marketing content](#).

## Customer success team

Most successful businesses today put their customers first. You need to stay proactive and satisfy the client's needs. Localized support content helps your customer success team achieve this goal.

Frequently, customers contact companies through their help centers. Articles and responses to consumer inquiries appear there constantly, and agile localization of your help content will help you satisfy international customers. Through the continuous localization workflow, your team will translate important articles or responses in time and help the customer success team ensure your growth and profitability.

**|| The best solution is to have local, in-house agents responding to customers. However, it's not always possible for a growing business to have entities in every market their software is available. This makes it challenging or impossible to hire in-house agents. A mixture of outsourced, in-market agents and robust machine translation with a translation memory edited by human translators is a more achievable solution that meets the needs of international customers.**

Michael Levot, Localization Program Lead at Canva

In case you need to translate your help articles fast and have large amounts of content, you can pre-translate it using [machine engines](#) (e.g. Microsoft Translator, Google Translate, DeepL Translator). And improve them at the post-editing stage. You can also invite your community to help translate or proofread your documentation.

**|| Smart people have already translated millions of button names, emails, and documentation pages with roughly the same text. No need to reinvent the wheel when you can rely on their past experience.**

**In business terms, a translator with MT editing experience goes at 700+ words an hour, while manual work is around 250 words an hour. It's a big difference.**

**In addition to UI, you can machine translate documentation, support tickets, reviews, and forums. Pages in extra languages will give you traffic and the ability for people to find content, stop by and read.'**

Konstantin Dranch, Co-founder of CustomMT

To automate the process of receiving translations, you can use integration with the solution your team is using.

Read articles about how to integrate [Intercom](#), [Document360](#), [Zendesk](#) or [Wix Answers](#) with your localization project and make your help content multilingual.

# Workflow-driven localization

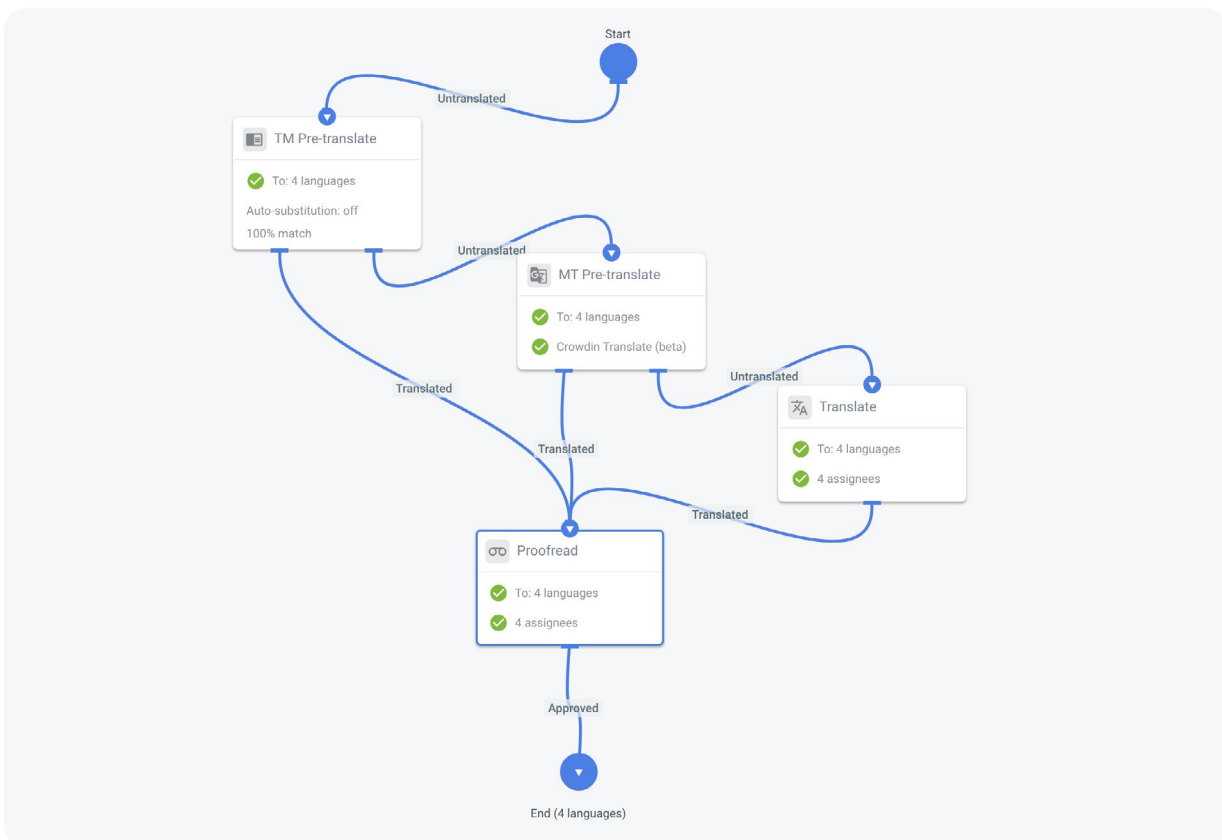


Everyone agrees that a well-organized project is easier to work on. Use workflows to organize the localization steps, like TM pre-translation, human translation, and proofreading. It's possible to customize the default workflow or create your own based on the requirements you have, like several levels of proofreading or adding MT pre-translation.

On Crowdin workflows are pretty straightforward. You can add as many proofreading/review steps as needed. Also, you can automate TM or MT pre-translation, so once new content is added it will be automatically translated.

On Crowdin Enterprise workflows are more elaborate. You can use the following workflow templates:

- Crowdsourcing
- In-house+Machine Translation
- In-House Translators
- Translation Agency



Workflow on Crowdin Enterprise

One of the benefits you can use is the source text review. It means that you can review and approve source strings before sending them to the pre-translation or translation step. You can also assign different teams to each workflow step. So each translation or proofreading step can have its assignees. It can be your in-house translators, freelancers or vendors. Each vendor will receive a secured copy of the defined step in their incoming projects. There is an option to add the [Custom Code](#) step to divide the content flow from a single step into two, based on the criteria you need.

Moreover, you can edit and build your own workflow with predetermined steps. If there are typical approaches to how your localization processes are organized, you can create [workflow templates](#) and save them for your future projects.

**Our website has a lot of content of different types that have their unique needs and workflows. Crowdin allows us to automate the workflows to manage localization of all that content. This has allowed the localization operations to become quite seamless and streamlined.**

Anoop Goyal, Co-founder at Inspirock

To learn more about available workflow steps and how to customize them, read our [Workflow Overview](#) article.



# Final thoughts



Your localization process should be flexible, scalable, and complement a continuous delivery approach.

Localization that runs in parallel with development or is done at the design stage is a modern approach. It helps you release updates in several languages with no delay. This way, your customers will have equal access to the latest features and new content.

Even outstanding products might face troubles expanding to new locales. Speaking the language of your potential customers is a great advantage. Especially if there are local competitors. A well-integrated localization management platform helps you reach new markets faster.

The core benefits of a localization tool are automation, translation quality assurance, and team collaboration.

Start localizing your product, marketing, support, and design content. Use integrations to automate updates of your source texts and translations. Cooperate with your team and translators to make sure all the right content has relevant translations in time.

## Begin your localization journey with Crowdin

[Book a demo call](#)

[Start free 14-day trial](#)

# What is Crowdin?

Crowdin is a cloud-based localization management software for teams. It helps to efficiently create and manage all your multilingual content in one place. You can localize your apps, websites, games, help documentation, designs.

Speed up the localization process and automate content updates with our automation, collaboration, and translator's efficiency features. View the [full list of Crowdin features](#).



For more information, visit [crowdin.com](https://crowdin.com).

For enterprise businesses, try our new product – [Crowdin Enterprise](#).

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