A Study on a Potential Model for Accreditation and Regulation of Interpreters and Translators in Ethnic Minority Languages in Hong Kong

Executive Summary

Introduction and background

1. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) commissioned a research team from The University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct a project titled "A Study on a Potential Model for Accreditation and Regulation of Interpreters and Translators in Ethnic Minority Languages in Hong Kong". This project primarily aims to explore the possibility of establishing an accreditation and regulation system for interpreters and translators (I/Ts) working in ethnic minority (EM) languages and how such a system should be implemented.

2. The current research project commenced in December 2018 with the following specific objectives:

    (a)   To provide a statistical profile of practising I/Ts in EM languages for public services, including, but not limited to, community support services, medical services and legal services;

    (b)   To review overseas experiences in establishing an accreditation and regulation system, with particular focuses on major obstacles encountered and solutions adopted;

    (c)   To identify options for a standardised accreditation mechanism for I/Ts in EM languages with reference to the current practice, overseas experiences and major stakeholders' views;

    (d)   To examine potential regulation models, including, but not limited to, voluntary registration and licensing, with reference to the current practice, overseas experience and major stakeholders' views;

    (e)   To provide options for a regulatory body with its functions, powers and accountability delineated;

    (f)   To explore prospective pathways to introduce an accreditation and regulation system; and potential training needs for interpreters and translators to meet the requirements.

3. To this end, the research team reviewed representative overseas accreditation and regulation models. It also conducted online surveys and focus group interviews with stakeholders, including EM language I/Ts in Hong Kong, users and operators of translation and interpreting (T&I) services in EM languages, to collect their views on the establishment of an accreditation and regulation system.

Research methods

4. The research team conducted a literature review of overseas models for accreditation and regulation for I/Ts working in EM languages including in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).

5. The research team also conducted an online survey to collect stakeholders' views on the establishment of an accreditation system. Two sets of questionnaires were tailored made for this purpose, one for practising I/Ts who work in medical, legal, and other public service settings; and the other for institutional users who regularly use the services of I/Ts during the course of their daily work in the public sector.

6. Dissemination of the online questionnaires started in July 2019. SurveyMonkey was used to administer the online questionnaires, with the help of the Technology-Enriched Learning Initiative at HKU (TELI). TELI is staffed by a team of technology specialists with extensive experience and competence in developing and administering online questionnaires. A total of 100 completed questionnaires were collected.

7. Focus group interviews were conducted to give participants an opportunity to narrate their experiences and to triangulate the quantitative data from the online survey in order to explore issues at a greater depth. All participants in the online survey were asked to provide their phone numbers or email addresses should they wish to join the interviews. Nine focus groups and structured interviews were subsequently conducted at HKU and other locations, involving 26 participants comprising I/Ts, institutional users and service operators.

Profile of practising I/Ts in EM languages for public services

8. By way of background, T&I services in EM languages for public services are mainly provided by the Hong Kong Christian Service - Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (HKCS-CHEER), Hong Kong TransLingual Services (HKTS) and the Court Language Section (CLS) of the Judiciary.

9. In 2020, the manpower establishment of HKCS-CHEER is 30 I/Ts. It caters to eight of the high demand EM languages in Hong Kong, namely, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi,

Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese. It also employs a few part-time I/Ts to assist in the provision of T&I services. HKTS currently employs 100+ medical I/Ts, in a combination of full-time and part-time, providing T&I services in 19 languages and sign language. As the T&I service contractor for all hospitals and out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority, HKTS is the key medical T&I service provider in Hong Kong. Detailed profiles of their I/Ts were considered restricted information by the operators and were therefore not revealed.

10. As at March 2016, there were about 340 registered Part-time Interpreters (PTI) engaged by CLS for the provision of interpretation services during court proceedings in 35 foreign languages and 18 Chinese dialects. These PTIs are not Government employees. They serve as "an agent" on taking up an assignment to work for the Judiciary. Many of them have their own vocation and other engagements.

11. While the full profile of I/Ts could not be acquired from the service operators, it was still possible to obtain a snapshot of the I/Ts' profiles through the online questionnaire survey conducted by the research team (discussed in paragraphs 21 to 29 below).

Summary of the comparison of overseas models

12. The research team conducted a review of the overseas experience in accrediting and regulating I/Ts in Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. These countries were selected on the basis of their long-standing and globally recognised T&I training and certification systems. In addition, since English is the most commonly used language in these traditional migrant-receiving countries, where translation and interpreting has long been an indispensable service for EM language speakers, these systems are the most relevant to Hong Kong's English/Chinese bilingual landscape.

13. Certification for translators and interpreters in Australia is administered by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Ltd, which is a not-for-profit company jointly owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and is governed by a Board of Directors. NAATI is the only organisation that issues certification for practitioners who work in the T&I profession in Australia. NAATI offers two levels of certification for I/Ts in the general stream: Certified Translator/Certified Advance Translator and Certified Provisional Interpreter/Certified Interpreter. Specialist certification is available only for interpreters and on only one level. These options include Certified Conference Interpreter, Certified Specialist Legal Interpreter and Certified Specialist Health Interpreter. Certification is administered by examination. Candidates are required to complete some form of training prior to submitting an application to NAATI for testing and must meet the

criteria in order to be eligible to sit a chosen certification test. For languages of emerging or low-demand communities where NAATI does not offer certification, a Recognised Practising credential can be offered to I/Ts who meet the requirements for qualifications/training and experience.

14. Certification for I/Ts in Canada is administered by the Canadian Translators, Terminologists, and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), which is an incorporated federation of several provincial and territorial bodies of professional I/Ts. Membership in any of these provincial and territorial bodies of I/Ts is necessary to be eligible for certification by the CTTIC. Candidates are also required to meet other prerequisites including holding relevant academic qualifications and passing tests on language proficiency and codes of ethics. Certification is available in general (for translators) and in specialist domains (for interpreters) and on only one level. These include Certified Translator, Certified Court Interpreter, Certified Conference Interpreter, Certified Community Interpreter, Certified Medical Interpreter and Certified Terminologist. There are three mechanisms of certification adopted by CTTIC, including On Dossier Certification, Certification by Mentorship and Certification by Examination.

15. In the UK, there are two organisations that represent the interests of T&I practitioners: the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) and the Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI). The CIOL coordinates and administers language assessment and awards accredited qualifications to interpreting candidates who have passed an assessment test after completing a long period of non-intensive training. General accreditation is offered for translators (Diploma in Translation), and for interpreters in the specialist legal domain (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, and Diploma in Police Interpreting). I/Ts who elect to be accredited through CIOL membership need to apply after passing the qualifying tests. Candidates who have passed the test required for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) can have their names included in the register maintained by the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI).

16. The ITI offers different levels of membership to I/Ts, which reflect varying lengths of experience. Qualified members of ITI have the right to bear the post-nominals "MITI" (Member of the Institute of Translation & Interpreting) or "FITI" (Fellow of the Institute of Translation & Interpreting). The qualification process by which a member acquires this right is by assessment of the candidate's work by his or her peers and an evaluation of references.

17. Certification for translators in the US is chiefly conducted by the American Translators Association (ATA). Specialist certification is available for medical and judicial

interpreters and performed by various state-based authorities, including the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI) and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. NBCMI offers medical interpreters a Certified Medical Interpreter (CMI) credential, which is the most prestigious credential offered in the industry. NBCMI only awards the CMI credential to individuals who meet all of the eligibility criteria and earn a passing score on both the written and oral examinations.

18. The Administrative Office categorises their interpreters into Certified, Professionally Qualified, and Language Skilled Interpreters. Certified Interpreters are those who have passed the certification examination in Spanish. The category of Professionally Qualified (PQ) Interpreters applies to all other languages. Credentials for PQ interpreters require sufficient documentation, authentication and must meet certain qualification criteria. Language Skilled Interpreters, also called Ad Hoc Interpreters, are those who do not qualify as Certified or PQ interpreters, but who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court the ability to interpret court proceedings from English to a designated language and vice versa.

19. All or most of the overseas models share the following features:

   (a) The principal accreditation and regulation bodies in all four countries are either I/T professional bodies themselves or work closely with provincial or national I/T professional bodies;

   (b) I/T accreditation in all four countries is not mandatory but widely recognised especially by the institutional users;

   (c) All of the countries have specialist accreditation for interpreters. In the US, two separate bodies grant specialist accreditations: the NBCMI offers accreditation for medical interpreters while the Administrative Office of the US Courts administers the assessment for court interpreters. All four systems grant specialist accreditation for court/legal interpreting;

   (d) All four systems adopt codes of ethics developed by the affiliated I/T professional bodies;

   (e) All or most of the principal bodies in the four countries uphold the following functions to varying degrees:

   • All conduct assessment and examination;

   • All maintain a publicly accessible register of practising I/Ts; and

   • Except for the CTTIC in Canada, all of the other three accrediting bodies handle complaints and can take disciplinary action when necessary. These functions are performed by the associated member organisations in the Canadian system; and

(f) All four principal bodies do not provide I/T training, but some have affiliated institutes for continuing professional education or endorse qualifications offered by tertiary institutions.

Online questionnaire survey

20. The majority of the survey respondents (78) are practising I/Ts working in the legal, medical or other public service settings, and account for 78% of the 100 completed online responses. A total of 22 completed responses, or 22% of the total, were received from institutional users.

Survey results – I/Ts

<u>Demographic data of I/Ts</u>

21. 79% of respondents listed their roles as both interpreters and translators, while 21% identified themselves as interpreters only.

22. 60.3% of the respondents were female and 35.6% were between 30 and 40 years old (the largest age group represented).

23. Around 95% of respondents had been living in Hong Kong for more than five years. Over 33% of them had lived in Hong Kong for over 20 years.

24. With regard to ethnicity, most of the respondents identified themselves as Pakistani or Indian, each taking up an equal percentage (22.8%) of all the I/T respondents, followed by Filipino (12.9%), Nepalese (10.9%) and Indonesian (7.9%).

25. A relatively larger percentage of the respondents indicated Urdu (23.8%) as their native language, followed by Punjabi (20.8%) and Hindi (16.8%).

26. Over 94% of the respondents claimed to hold a bachelor's degree or above while around 6% had only completed secondary education. However, only 29.7% claimed to hold some form of qualification to practise as I/Ts.

27. Over 35% of the respondents had been practising for less than five years and 47.7% had between 5 and 10 years of professional practice.

28. Slightly over 76% of the respondents indicated that they had undergone relevant training with different organisations. The three main organisations that provided training to them were HKCS-CHEER, HKTS and CLS.

29. The five main institutions which the respondents have provided services for are: the Hong Kong Judiciary (51.6%), Hospital Authority (49.5%), Labour Department (47.4%), Department of Health (43.2%) and Duty Lawyer Service (40.0%).

Views on accreditation and related issues

30. Over 65% of the respondents preferred a compulsory type of accreditation system for three main reasons: it would enable them to obtain 1) official recognition of their skills (82.4%); 2) professionalisation of their work (80.4%) and 3) standard assessment for their interpretation or translation skills are assessed (76.5%).

31. For those respondents preferring an optional accreditation system (34.6%), the majority (64.3%) were mainly concerned about the possibility of losing their jobs if they did not get accredited. Another 32.1% chose "difficulty getting accredited" as their reason while those who chose "Other" (17.9%) specified concerns about *"the qualifications and biased opinions of assessors"* and suggested that due consideration should be given to the *"seniority and work experience"* of I/Ts who have been practising for several years already. Others opined that accreditation was *"not required in the present context"*; that service operators with smaller budgets could choose to hire *"less qualified I/Ts and give chances to those who are not accredited"*; and the accredited I/Ts might be given higher remuneration by these companies *"in accordance with their higher performance"*.

32. The majority of respondents (66.7%) believed there should be different levels of accreditation and most (64.1%) also wished to have different types of accreditation as well. An overwhelming 86.1% of the same group also wanted the establishment of a publicly accessible register.

33. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of importance of different types of training (on a scale of 1–10 with 1 being the least and 10 being the most important) if an accreditation test is implemented in Hong Kong. They rated language competence as the most essential (8.38), followed by terminology (8.03).

Survey results – institutional users

Demographic data of institutional users

34. Out of the 22 responses we received from this group, 90.9% of the respondents have worked with interpreters, while 59.1% of them have also collaborated with translators.

35. The respondents were from different sectors such as government departments, NGOs and private companies. For the government sector, some were from law enforcement,

legal and court services such as the Hong Kong Police Force, Department of Justice, Duty Lawyer Service, Hong Kong Judiciary and Torture Claims Appeal Board, and others were from public medical service providers such as the Hospital Authority and Department of Health, while the rest were from the Labour Department and Housing Department. The non-governmental organisations and schools included Christian Action, HELP for Domestic Workers, Hong Kong Christian Service, Justice Centre Hong Kong, Pathfinders, the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, and Ho Yu College and Primary School. There were two support service centres for EMs. The rest were from private law firms.

Details of I/T services received

36. Almost 82% of the respondents said they used the services of I/Ts less than a year ago. Half of them reported to use T&I services occasionally while 36.4% of them used the services frequently.

37. 50% of respondents used interpretation services in Urdu, 40.9% in Hindi and 40.9% in Tagalog.

38. Over 90% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the performance of I/Ts, although over 40% of them agreed that the quality of interpretation services in EM languages was not as good as the quality of interpretation between Chinese and English.

Views on accreditation and related issues

39. The majority of the respondents (71.4%) preferred a compulsory system to an optional one (28.6%).

40. Most of the respondents (85.7%) considered it necessary to have different types of accreditation according to the specialisation of each I/T, since each field required a specific set of knowledge about terminology, cultural awareness and sensitivity.

41. A great majority of the respondents (95.2%) agreed to the creation of a publicly accessible register of I/Ts who have passed the accreditation test, primarily because a register would make it easier to access the service and allow T&I service users to make an informed choice when engaging the service.

42. All respondents agreed that I/Ts should undergo training. When asked to indicate the level of importance of different types of training (on a scale of 1–10 with 1 being the least important and 10 the most important), the respondents chose "Professionalism and ethics training" (8.20), "Training for special domains such as legal or medical

services" (8.19) and "Orientation for new I/Ts" (7.90) as the three most important types of training for I/Ts.

Focus group interviews

43. A total of 26 participants provided further feedback to the research team via interviews or email. A total of 18 I/Ts from the legal, medical and other community settings, three institutional users and two service operators attended focus group interviews arranged by the research team. Another three institutional users sent in their responses to a set of questions by email.

Responses from I/Ts

Satisfaction with current work conditions and career prospects

44. Most of the I/Ts interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with their work conditions owing to low pay rates and unstable working hours. They said that due to the lack of official recognition of their profession, most service users, including fellow EMs, looked down on them as mere cogs in a machine.

45. Most of them were not satisfied with their career prospects due to the nature of the job including the lack of security. They stated that several organisations look for freelancers or part-timers instead of regular full-time I/Ts. Therefore, the work tended to be ad-hoc and they were expected to constantly be on call. This resulted in no fixed working hours or salaries each month. They wanted better job security in the field and the establishment of a career path.

Current recruitment assessment for I/Ts

46. Ten out of 18 I/T interviewees said that the current assessment criteria for recruitment in their own sectors were not effective. Some legal interpreters said that their training was insufficient and the minimum educational requirement was set at too low a level, especially for those who were recruited in the 1980s, when recruitment standards were far more lax and bilingual EMs were recruited purely out of necessity. Some interviewees shared their doubts on the professionalism and neutrality of the recruiters and assessors.

Views on accreditation and regulation

47. All I/Ts interviewed supported the idea of setting up an accreditation system as this would enable I/Ts' professionalism to be acknowledged, which would impact the demand and quality of work. More than half of the I/Ts interviewed preferred a

compulsory system — with some proposing that it be optional in the first stage — and with different levels of accreditation. One respondent pointed out however that multiple levels might lead to unequal treatment not only from their peers but also from service operators when choosing I/Ts for their projects.

48. Almost all I/Ts believed the accreditation system should be introduced in stages. Newcomers to the profession should be required to take the accreditation examinations first, followed by regular evaluations of everyone's performance after a few years. Only one interviewee preferred the immediate introduction of a compulsory system, even for experienced interpreters.

Regulatory body

49. Half of the I/Ts interviewed suggested that the profession be regulated by a public body. They believed that privatising it would commercialise the profession and would mainly benefit private companies in the long run. Other interviewees preferred semi-privatisation: i.e. a private body that regulates the profession with government monitoring and a self-regulatory body that consists of I/Ts representing all sectors. One I/T however wanted a fully privatised system and said it should be run by "that association or body which should be raising my voice if I have any problems."

Public register

50. Seven out of the 18 I/T interviewees supported the idea of a publicly accessible register of professional I/Ts, especially for freelancers, but with the exclusion of highly identifiable personal information. Those who disagreed with the idea believed it would not be safe for personal information to be freely accessible, particularly of those who work in courts, and they suggested that only the government and certain organisations should have access to their personal information.

Training

51. All I/Ts interviewed were of the view that workshops and training on sector-specific terminologies, interpreting skills such as note-taking and using symbols, language efficiency, and specialised training in other areas such as computer literacy should be provided for I/Ts. Some emphasised the importance of learning Cantonese and certain terms specific to the Hong Kong context.

Responses from institutional users

Views on accreditation and regulation

52. All of the six respondents were in favour of setting up an accreditation system mainly in order to ensure quality T&I services.

53. Three interviewees preferred an optional system, with one saying that despite the current lack of an accreditation system in Hong Kong, they could still receive good service from experienced I/Ts. Two respondents preferred a mandatory system in order to maintain standards but with periodic reviews of the system. One other respondent was non-committal, saying that a downside of a mandatory system could be the "decrease of availability and capacity of such interpretation services because the accreditation might require a process that may turn people away from being accredited."

54. All the institutional users preferred that the system be set up in stages. One of the respondents opined that many existing senior I/Ts might not wish to be accredited, these senior I/Ts may nevertheless offer valuable advice and experience in the process. Establishment of the system in stages may be sensible with new entrants accredited first, and once they reached an adequate number of service hours or sessions, they could apply for entry to the next level. The whole system should be reviewed a few years after its implementation.

Regulatory body

55. Three of the institutional users agreed that the government should have the resources, capability and framework to regulate the profession. A representative of a government department, however, opposed this idea and instead suggested that having a private body regulating the industry would encourage a competitive market and would continuously raise the quality of service. According to him, complaints should be handled by an independent body such as an NGO or private company and that an open platform should be established for public rating of the services.

56. A staff of another government department suggested that the system currently used to govern Chinese/English language interpreters in the CLS of the Judiciary be adopted, with necessary adjustments made depending on its suitability to EM language interpreters.

Public register

57. All respondents agreed to the idea of having a publicly accessible register for transparency reasons and for the benefit of the public. One respondent said it would

suffice to have the names and working languages of the interpreters. Another reasoned that by having access to the identity of the I/Ts beforehand, they could request to change the assigned interpreter if needed.

Training

58. A case manager for an NGO that deals with abused domestic workers suggested training interpreters not only on cultural issues but also on their awareness of the mental and emotional experiences and trauma that their clients such as assault survivors may have had. Another social worker advocated for training on cultural awareness for I/Ts to understand more about Hong Kong people. Others proposed training on a code of ethics, specialised training on medical and legal interpreting and even training on communication skills on a regular basis in order to keep interpreters updated.

Responses from service operators

Views on accreditation and regulation

59. Two service operators interviewed believed in establishing an accreditation system as it would benefit I/Ts professionally. Both preferred an optional system in the beginning in order to have a grace period of at least a few years before the final model of accreditation became mandatory.

60. They suggested that an accreditation system be introduced on a voluntary/optional basis first, for the reason that there is currently no educational institution providing accreditation or official training to EM language I/Ts. They suggested that educational institutions should provide training or accredited courses as a benchmark for official assessments before an official body is set up to govern the assessments for the accreditation system. They added that most of the practising I/Ts were educated abroad and the qualifications they obtained might not receive the same recognition in Hong Kong. It would be good if these I/Ts could undergo some training before applying to get official accreditation.

Different types and levels of accreditation

61. One service operator suggested setting up interpreting domains that should not be exclusive of each other so that interpreters could specialise in a specific domain but could also take up assignments in other sectors. For example, public service interpreters may apply for accreditation in the general stream which would cover the usual skills such as knowledge of the code of ethics and memory enhancement drills. However, they should have the option to get accredited at an advanced level that would

include training on specialised terminologies, education about the psychological effects of domestic violence, torture or other forms of persecution and abuse, and debriefings on the emotions that I/Ts face in particular settings.

62. The other service operator suggested creating different levels of accreditation within different domains (e.g. in the medical setting), and to define these according to experience and educational background. The service operator observed that currently the educational qualifications of medical interpreters are quite varied.

Specific concerns with a mandatory accreditation system

63. Service operators expressed their concerns about a potential shortage of accredited I/Ts in the short run. One of them pointed out that academic qualifications could be recognised differently in Hong Kong and may not allow some practising I/Ts who had obtained degrees in their own countries to take the accreditation tests.

64. Service operators said that if the accreditation system was in place, accredited I/Ts hired by their institutions might still be required to take another internal training course. One service operator said that if I/Ts got accredited in the medical domain then it could refocus its training in more professional and medical-related content that do not overlap with the accreditation training. But the service operator added that they would still assess the content of the accreditation courses to make sure they are well suited to their own organisation's requirements.

Specific concerns about optional accreditation

65. One service provider expressed concern that practising part-time I/Ts might lack the motivation to join the accreditation if and when there are no added-value to do so. The same service operator also said that if part-time I/Ts did not see any benefits such as an increase in salary, they would have no incentive to attend training courses and get accredited. So the challenge, in the service provider's opinion, was how to package this as an attractive means of achieving career enhancement or professional development.

Training

66. Service operators firmly felt that there had to be flexibility in the introduction of an accreditation system because most of the practising I/Ts do not possess formal training in interpreting and translating but their work experience and past experience needs to be recognised. They advocated setting up a vocational qualification or vocational courses to be conducted by an educational institution, and encouraging EM youngsters who speak fluent Cantonese to be trained to become interpreters. They suggested that

educational institutions offer a GCSE course in EM languages to spark interest in the interpreting field.

Recommendations

67. Having reviewed the representative overseas accreditation models for I/Ts, and having considered the survey findings and focus group interview results, the research team has come up with the following recommendations.

On accreditation system

- *Recommendation 1: A system of accreditation should be in place in both a general stream and specialist domains. Specialist accreditation can be offered for legal and medical interpreting, and general accreditation for I/Ts working in other public service settings such as housing, social welfare, education, labour and so on.*

- *Recommendation 2: Languages to be assessed for accreditation should primarily include the eight high demand South Asian & South East Asian languages in Hong Kong, namely, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese; other languages can be added on a need/demand basis.*

- *Recommendation 3: An optional system should be adopted initially and reviewed after a certain period of time. In the long run, it is advisable that where accreditation for T&I services in a language is offered, only accredited I/Ts should be hired to provide services in key public services in order to ensure the quality of T&I services.*

- *Recommendation 4: A single-tier accreditation mechanism is recommended for both the general stream and the specialist domains to streamline the assessment process.*

On accreditation mechanism

- *Recommendation 5: Accreditation should be obtained through examination as an objective and a fair assessment method. The Australian NAATI assessment model can be taken as a key reference.*

- *Recommendation 6: The introduction of accreditation should be supported by a quality assessment involving linguists, qualified and experienced I/Ts, as well as experts from specialist domains such as legal and healthcare professionals as the assessors.*

- ***Recommendation 7:*** *Training, language proficiency or relevant qualifications/ experience should be prerequisites for accreditation, except for those holding the title Registered I/Ts in the grace period (see registration for practising I/Ts below).*

On registration of practising I/Ts

- ***Recommendation 8:*** *To enable a smooth transition to accreditation, existing practitioners can be given a Registered Interpreter/Translator (Registered I/T) status. The title Registered I/T can be a prerequisite for and a pathway to accreditation (see accreditation prerequisites above). Registered I/T status applies to three groups of I/Ts, namely, practising I/Ts of languages for which no assessment is currently available; practising I/Ts who have yet to be accredited although assessment is available for their languages; and new I/T entrants who have undergone basic training and registration but have yet to be accredited.*

- ***Recommendation 9:*** *Once an accreditation system is in place, Registered I/Ts can be given a grace period of five years to take the assessment test. At the end of the grace period, those who fail to get accredited may be required to complete a training course and pass the competency tests before they can take the accreditation test again.*

On pre-accrediting training

- ***Recommendation 10:*** *Non-language-specific training courses on T&I skills, cultural awareness and professional practice and ethical issues should be provided to prepare candidates for the accreditation tests. Special training should also be provided for candidates sitting for specialist accreditation such as legal interpreting and medical interpreting.*

- ***Recommendation 11:*** *It is advisable that the courses be funded or subsidised by the government and preferably run by a designated UGC-funded university or an institution properly accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications.*

On accrediting and regulatory body

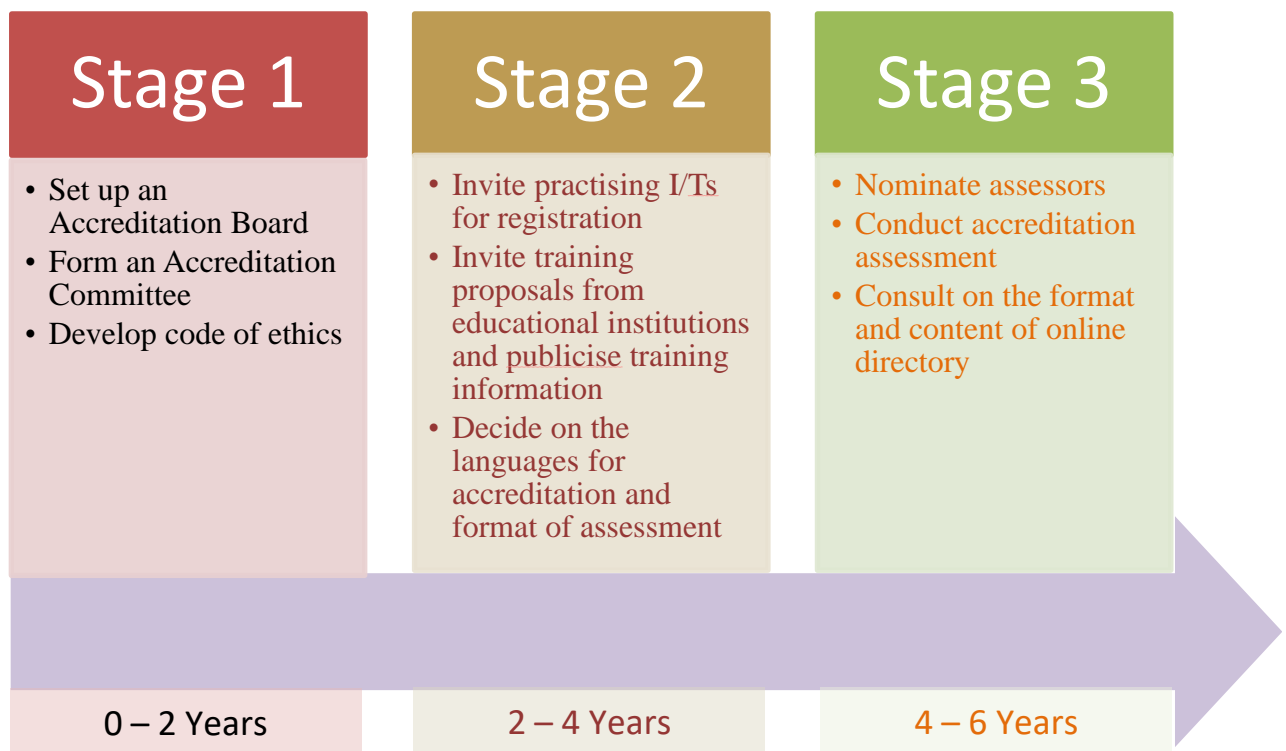- ***Recommendation 12:*** *An accrediting and regulatory body endorsed and supported by the Government should be established to administer the accreditation system. Some possible options include setting up of a statutory body, appointment of a tertiary institution as the accreditation agent or partnership formed between a tertiary institution and a professional body/organisation (see paragraphs 5.8.12.1 – 5.8.12.4).*

- ***Recommendation 13:*** *The accrediting and regulatory body endorsed and supported by the Government should serve the functions of registration, conducting assessments, maintaining a directory of registered/accredited I/Ts, developing a code of ethics, handling complaints and exercising disciplinary actions. The body might also conduct study and consult on the fees to be charged for registration and accreditation.*

On establishing the system

- ***Recommendation 14:*** *It is recommended that, upon the availability of the Government funding, six years are allocated for setting up the accrediting and regulatory body, developing its rules and regulations, confirming the accreditation mandates and linking up with academic institutions.*

Roadmap to establish an accreditation system

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
• Set up an Accreditation Board • Form an Accreditation Committee • Develop code of ethics	• Invite practising I/Ts for registration • Invite training proposals from educational institutions and publicise training information • Decide on the languages for accreditation and format of assessment	• Nominate assessors • Conduct accreditation assessment • Consult on the format and content of online directory
0 – 2 Years	2 – 4 Years	4 – 6 Years

Roadmap to accreditation for practitioners and new entrants

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                                          ┌──────────────────┐
   ┌──────────────────┐                   │   New Entrants   │
   │  Practising I/Ts  │                   └──────────────────┘
   └──────────────────┘                            │
          │                                         ▼
          │                             ┌──────────────────┐
          │                             │  Training Course │
          │                             │     Completed    │
          │                             └──────────────────┘
          │                                         │
          │                                         ▼
          │                             ┌──────────────────┐
          │                             │      Passed      │
          │                             │  Competency Test │
          │                             └──────────────────┘
          │                                         │
          ▼                                         ▼
   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │        Registration with Accreditation Board            │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Language not offered for accreditation

Language offered for accreditation

| Registered I/Ts in Non-Accredited Languages | → | Registered I/Ts in Accredited Languages |

If assessors are available in future

| Take Accreditation Test | | Do not Take Accreditation Test |

| Passed | | Failed |

Accredited I/Ts

- END -