

# International SEO Checklist

Checklist · 20 items · 7 sections

Expanding your website to target international markets requires a specific set of SEO actions beyond standard optimization. This international SEO checklist covers hreflang tags, site structure, content localization, currency/language targeting, and all technical requirements for global search visibility.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/international-seo-checklist>

## SITE STRUCTURE

- Choose your international URL structure: ccTLD (.co.uk), subdomain (uk.site.com), or subdirectory (/uk/)

HIGH

*ccTLDs have the strongest geo-signal but require separate authority building. Subdirectories are easiest to manage on one domain.*

## HREFLANG IMPLEMENTATION

- Implement hreflang tags on all international pages (rel='alternate' hreflang='x')
- Include x-default hreflang tag for users with no targeted language/region match
- Ensure hreflang tags are bidirectional: each page must reference all its alternates
- Submit hreflang sitemap to Google Search Console for each country property
- Validate hreflang implementation using hreflang checker tools (e.g., hreflang.org)

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

HIGH

## GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE

- Set up separate Google Search Console properties for each country/language version
- Set geo-targeting for subdirectory or subdomain versions in Search Console

HIGH

HIGH

## CONTENT LOCALIZATION

- Translate content by native speakers: not just machine translation  
**HIGH**
- Conduct keyword research in each target language: do not translate keywords directly  
**HIGH**
- Localize prices, currencies, phone numbers, and date formats  
**HIGH**
- Localize images, colors, and cultural references appropriate for each market

## TECHNICAL

- Use correct language code in HTML lang attribute (e.g., lang='fr' for French)  
**HIGH**
- Use UTF-8 encoding to support all character sets  
**HIGH**
- Serve site from servers or CDN nodes geographically close to target markets
- Ensure each language version has its own crawlable URL: not client-side language switching  
**HIGH**
- Do not use cookies or JavaScript to determine and redirect language: Google cannot follow  
**HIGH**

## OFF-PAGE & AUTHORITY

- Build local backlinks in each target country from relevant local sites  
**HIGH**
- Create country-specific Google Business profiles if you have physical locations

## MEASUREMENT

- Monitor rankings separately for each country using a rank tracker that supports geo-segmentation  
**HIGH**