

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
NOTICE 470 OF 2017
SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY COUNCIL**

**SAVC LANGUAGE POLICY
DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

In accordance with the section 4(1) of the Use of Official Languages Act, Act 12 of 2012, the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC), as a national public entity, has developed a proposed Language Policy regarding the use of official languages for government purposes that it will adopt after a public consultation process.

The SAVC encourages the public to engage with this *Draft SAVC Language Policy* and submit comments to the SAVC within 30 days of its publication in the Government Gazette.

Comments should be sent to: Mrs Dinamarie Stoltz at legaldirector@savc.org.za.

Kindly provide the following contact information when submitting comments: name, organisation (if applicable), address, telephone and fax numbers and email address.

The SAVC's view is that this draft policy will contribute to the quality of the services that the SAVC renders.

Mrs Lynette Havinga
SAVC Registrar

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PROPOSED SAVC LANGUAGE POLICY

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Use of Official Languages Act, Act 12 of 2012, the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC), as a national public entity, has developed a proposed Language Policy regarding the use of official languages for government purposes that it will adopt after a public consultation process.

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 The purpose of this Language Policy is to give details of the following:

1.1.1 The use, by the SAVC, of English for its day-to-day activities including communicating with the general public;

1.1.2 Communication with individuals who use an indigenous South African language other than English and who are not proficient in English; and

1.2 The SAVC Language Policy is based on the following Acts, Regulations and Guidelines:

1.2.1 **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (1996)** in terms of:

- Section 6(i) which affords official status to 11 languages and South African Sign Language;
- Section 6(3) which states that, "*The national government and provincial government may use any particular language for purposes of government taking into account usage, practicality, expense and regional circumstances and the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province*"; and
- Section 30 which states that "*Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice*".

1.2.2 **The National Language Policy Framework (2003)** which states that, "*a publication policy of multilingualism (i.e. the function, the audience and the message) should be followed in those cases that do not require publication in all 11 official languages. However, where the effective and stable operation of government at any level requires comprehensive communication of information, it must be published in all 11 official languages*".

1.2.3 **The Pan South African Language Board Act, Act 59 of 1995.**

1.2.4 **The Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act 2 of 2000.**

1.2.5 **The Batho Pele principles** as contained in the government white paper on "*Transforming Public Service Delivery*" (1997).

1.2.6 **Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No.12 of 2012) and Regulations.**

1.2.7 **The Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act, Act 19 of 1982.**

1.3 The SAVC has taken a decision to use English as the language of business and operations and to use English, Afrikaans and isiZulu for oral communications with the public. The decision taken is mindful of the following objectives and principles of the South African government, namely the need to:

1.3.1 Promote multilingualism amongst the South African public;

1.3.2 Support and grant equal access to information and services to all South Africans regardless of language, race religion, sexual orientation or creed;

1.3.3 Eradicate the marginalisation of indigenous South African languages;

1.3.4 Foster respect for and respect for language rights; and

- 1.3.5 Use language that is accessible to all.
- 1.4 English has been chosen as the language for daily operations at the SAVC for the following reasons:
- 1.4.1 The need to have a standardised format and terminology for dealing with members of the professions and the public and so avoid confusion and misunderstanding on the part of the professions and the general public;
- 1.4.2 English is used by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in official communications, as do all government departments;
- 1.4.3 The SAVC and its information system contain information in English that is accessed by interested parties around the world; and
- 1.4.4 Resource constraints. Reproducing the work of the SAVC in other languages in addition to English, for example the minutes and proceedings of meetings, publications, website, policies and certificates and annual report in other languages would require additional human and financial resources, as well as time.
- 1.5 Where required, information on the SAVC will be translated into other official languages.
- 1.6 The SAVC has an information manual which is available in three official South African languages on the SAVC website which gives details of the services it offers.
- 1.7 The rights of indigenous South African language speakers are safeguarded as is their right to access information as the SAVC handles client queries, both oral and written, in the preferred language of the client, if required.

2. THE NATURE OF THE SAVC

- 2.1 The SAVC is a juristic person established by virtue of section 2 of the Act.
- 2.2 The SAVC advises the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (the Minister) in relation to any matter affecting a veterinary profession or a para-veterinary profession and submits a report on its activities to the Minister within six months after the close of its financial year, which report must be tabled in Parliament.
- 2.3 Section 3 of the **Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act, Act 19 of 1982**, provides as follows regarding the SAVC's objects:

"The objects of the council shall be to —

- (a) regulate the practising of the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions and the registration of persons practising such professions;*
- (b) determine the minimum standards of tuition and training required for degrees, diplomas and certificates entitling the holders thereof to be registered to practise the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions;*
- (c) exercise effective control over the professional conduct of persons practising the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions;*
- (d) determine the standards of professional conduct of persons practising the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions;*
- (e) encourage and promote efficiency in and responsibility with regard to the practice of the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions;*
- (f) protect the interests of the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions and to deal with any matter relating to such interests;*
- (g) maintain and enhance the prestige, status and dignity of the veterinary professions and para-veterinary professions and the integrity of persons practising such professions;*

(h) advise the Minister in relation to any matter affecting a veterinary profession or a para-veterinary profession.”

3. THE SAVC's ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

In addition to achieving its objectives, the SAVC is responsible for the following:

- 3.1 Keeping registers in respect of all persons whose applications for registration in terms of this Act to practise veterinary professions or para-veterinary professions have been approved by the Council.
- 3.2 Evaluating the degrees, diplomas and certificates, granted after examination by a university or other educational institution, which shall entitle the holders thereof to registration in terms of this Act to practice veterinary professions or para-veterinary professions and make recommendations to the Minister may to prescribe those qualifications for automatic registration in terms of section 25.
- 3.3 Ensuring that no person practise a veterinary profession or a para-veterinary profession in any manner whatsoever unless he or she is registered or deemed to be registered in terms of the Act to practise the profession concerned.
- 3.4 Regulate the veterinary and para-veterinary professions by:
 - 3.4.1 Setting and maintaining the minimum standards for the practising of the veterinary and para-veterinary professions;
 - 3.4.2 Inspection of veterinary facilities to ensure compliance with minimum standards for facilities;
 - 3.4.3 Making rules for the veterinary and para-veterinary professions regarding ethical conduct;
 - 3.4.4 Investigating complaints in respect of unprofessional conduct and conducting inquiries where indicated;
 - 3.4.5 Setting and conducting an annual Council examination for the veterinary and para-veterinary professions for persons who do not qualify for automatic registration in terms of section 25 of the Act; and setting standards for specialisation.

4. THE NATURE OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SAVC

The SAVC provides support and information to veterinary and para-veterinary professions and the general public regarding registration requirements, minimum standards of practise, training, education, specialisation, ethical requirements, liaison with international veterinary regulatory bodies regarding standards of training and education.

5. REGIONS OR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS WHERE THE SAVC PROVIDES ITS SERVICES

The SAVC is situated in Pretoria, but as required, provides its services across the country and internationally. Services are provided and queries answered either face-to-face at the SAVC or by use of telephone, fax, e-mail and writing to members of the professions and the public who are unable to visit the SAVC personally.

6. THE SAVC's OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The SAVC uses English as its medium of communication for all its day-to-day operations and three languages, namely English, Afrikaans and isiZulu for oral communications. The SAVC's business activities in English include:

- All meetings, workshops and conferences both within the SAVC and for the general public;
- Agenda documents for meetings and minutes and records of meetings;
- Publications, e.g. policies, criteria and guideline documents and research findings;
- The SAVC Annual Report;
- Information on the SAVC website;
- Communication with the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- Communication with other government departments;
- Completion of official forms;
- Advertisements of the SAVC vacancies in the media;
- Notices in the government gazette;
- Registration certificates, letters of good standing, contracts;
- Inquiries into unprofessional conduct, suspension hearings and appeals; and
- Official signage in the SAVC building identifying facilities and services.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO'S LANGUAGE OF CHOICE IS NOT ENGLISH

The SAVC communicates with members of the public whose language of choice is not English, as follows:

- 7.1 Written queries (faxes, letters and e-mails) in a language other than English are referred to a staff member who is proficient in the language used, and will compile a response. If that staff member is unable to answer the query, then assistance is provided to prepare an appropriate response which is then translated into the language of the query.

Written requests in a language other than English for certificates, and others are dealt with as in point 7.1 above.

Certificates, letters and statements are issued in English as that is the language used by most education and training institutions, business, the public service and government departments.

- 7.2 Verbal requests (telephonic and from walk-in clients) in a language other than English are referred to a staff member proficient in the language of the client.

When there is no staff member at the SAVC proficient in the client's language to act as an interpreter, the client is requested to return to the SAVC at an appointed time (within 10 working days) for a meeting with an interpreter. The SAVC arranges for an appropriate interpreter to be present.

- 7.3 Should a client with a hearing impairment approach the SAVC with a query and there is no SAVC staff member proficient in sign language, the client is requested to:

- 7.3.1 Submit the query in writing with the answer provided in writing while the client is present; or
- 7.3.2 Bring his/her own sign-language interpreter for a meeting at an arranged time; or
- 7.3.3 The SAVC will secure the services of a sign-language interpreter for a meeting at a predetermined time.

The follow-up meetings in all cases will be scheduled within 10 working days

of the client approaching the SAVC with the query.

8. ACCESS TO THE SAVC LANGUAGE POLICY BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 8.1 The SAVC Language Policy will be available in English, Afrikaans and isiZulu on the SAVC website and in hard copy format.
- 8.2 Requests for a hard copy of the Language Policy may be made to the SAVC in writing, telephonically or in person. Copies of the Policy can either be handed to clients or sent to them.
- 8.3 People making telephonic requests will in the first instance be referred to the SAVC website, but can be provided with a hard copy on request.
- 8.4 The SAVC documents will not be available in Braille, due to the high cost of production and as no requests for Braille versions of documents were made in the past.

9. COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

- 9.1 Any person (either a SAVC staff member or a member of the public) who is dissatisfied with the SAVC's use of official languages may lodge a complaint. The complaint must be in writing. The name, address and contact details of the complainant, and full details of the complaint must be provided. Such a complaint must be:
- Addressed to the Registrar of the SAVC;
 - Either delivered by hand to the SAVC, or sent by e-mail to the Registrar of the SAVC or sent by registered post to the SAVC's postal address; and
 - Lodged within 3 months of the complaint arising.
- 9.2 The Registrar of the SAVC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the complaint.
- 9.3 The Registrar of the SAVC may request the complainant to:
- Supply more information to aid the investigation into the complaint; and
 - Arrange a meeting to conduct a verbal enquiry into the complaint.
- 9.4 The Registrar of the SAVC must, within three (3) months of receipt of the complaint:
- Consider the complaint, conduct the necessary investigation and make a decision on the complaint; and
 - Inform the complainant in writing of the decision.

Contact details of the SAVC office

Physical Address: The SAVC, 21 Victoria Link Street, Route 21 Corporate Office Park, Nellmapius Drive, Irene x72, Pretoria.

Postal Address: PO Box 60114,
PIERRE VAN RYNEVELD,
0045.

Telephone: (012) 345-6360

Fax: (012) 345-6369

E-mail address: savc@savc.org.za

Website: <http://www.savc.org.za>

- 9.5 A complainant not satisfied with the decision of the Registrar of the SAVC may lodge an appeal with the ad hoc Appeal Committee.
- 9.6 The appeal must be in writing. The name, address and contact details of the appellant and the full details of the appeal must be provided. Such an appeal must be:
- Addressed to the Registrar;
 - Either delivered by hand to the Registrar or sent by registered post to the postal address of the SAVC; and
 - Lodged within one (1) month of the Registrar of the SAVC's decision being received by the complainant.
- 9.7 The ad hoc Appeals Committee, in accordance with the Regulations must:
- Consider the appeal and make a decision; and,
 - Inform the appellant in writing of the decision.

10. THE LANGUAGE POLICY UNIT

The SAVC established a Language Policy Unit.

11. SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORTS

The SAVC will on an annual basis, and within 3 months of the end of its financial year, submit a report to the Minister of Arts and Culture and to the Pan South African Language Board. The report will include details on:

- 11.1 The implementation of the SAVC's Language Policy;
- 11.2 Any complaints received regarding the SAVC's use of official languages and the manner in which these complaints were addressed; and
- 11.3 Any other matter that the Minister may prescribe.