

**BOARD NOTICE 89 OF 2014**



# **ROAD ACCIDENT FUND LANGUAGE POLICY**

RAF LANGUAGE POLICY



### POLICY OUTLINE

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Language Policy
<b>Version:</b>	2
<b>Relevant Legislation:</b>	Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996; Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000; Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 2000; Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 2000; Public Finance Management Act of 1999; Road Accident Fund Act 56 of 1996; and Use of Official Languages Act 2012;
<b>Related Codes:</b>	King III
<b>Related Policies:</b>	Access Control Policy; Delegation of Authority and Approval Framework; Disciplinary Policy; Promotion of Access to Information Act Policy; Risk Management Policy; Road Accident Fund Language Style Guide; Road Accident Fund Delegation of Authority and Approval Framework; and Road Accident Fund Policy Management Framework.
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Chief Marketing Officer
<b>Responsible Person:</b>	Senior Manager: Communications
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Senior Manager: Communications
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Category A (Board Approval)
<b>Review Period:</b>	12 Months

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## 1. Abbreviations

- 1.1 **Board:** refers to the RAF Board.
- 1.2 **CEO :** refers to the Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.3 **DAC:** refers to the Department of Arts and Culture.
- 1.4 **HLT:** refers to Human Language Technology.
- 1.5 **LEP :** refers to Limited English Proficiency.
- 1.6 **PANSALB :** refers to Pan South Africa Language Board.
- 1.7 **RAF:** refers to the Road Accident Fund.
- 1.8 **SASL:** South African Sign Language.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Act:** means the Use of Official Languages Act of 2012.
- 2.2 **Constitution:** means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.
- 2.3 **Department:** means the National Department of Arts and Culture.
- 2.4 **Functional Differentiation:** The principle that not all eleven official languages need to be used for all contextual purposes, but that different languages may be more appropriate for certain functions.
- 2.5 **Language Practitioner:** means an employee of the RAF who is responsible for the management of usage of official languages.
- 2.6 **Language Unit:** means a language unit established in terms of section 7 of the Act.
- 2.7 **Limited English Proficient Individuals:** means individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.
- 2.8 **Minister:** means the Minister responsible for language matters, i.e. Arts and Culture.
- 2.9 **Mutually Intelligibility:** means shared or commonly understood languages in the two main language groups in South Africa.

## 3. Policy Statement:

- 3.1 The RAF recognises its legal responsibilities, under the Act and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, to promote multilingualism, language equity and contribute to the continual usage of the eleven official languages.
- 3.2 This policy is based on the principle that it is the responsibility of the RAF and not the LEP person to take reasonable steps to ensure that communications between the RAF and the LEP person are not impaired as a result of the limited English proficiency of the individual.
- 3.3 **This commitment means that the RAF will:**
  - 3.3.1 Promote an environment that enables all its stakeholders to fully exercise their right as enshrined in the Act and the Constitution.
  - 3.3.2 Demonstrate proficiency and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and other official languages.

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3.3.3 Promote good language management for effective and efficient public service administration to meet client expectations and needs.

3.4 Comply with all relevant legislation and regulations pertaining to the Act.

#### **4. Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

4.1 establish an acceptable and equitable operational language dispensation for the RAF, taking into consideration the constitutional imperatives related to the RAF and the restrictions imposed by the core functions of the RAF.

4.2 provide all the RAF employees with clear rules and guidelines regarding the use of official languages when administering service to members of the public and other stakeholders.

#### **5. Objectives:**

The objective(s) of this policy is to:

5.1 ensure that the RAF is compliant with the Use of Official Languages Act.

5.2 promote the equitable use of the eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa.

5.3 regulate and monitor equitable access to RAF services, knowledge and information.

5.4 promote parity of esteem and to facilitate equitable access to services and information of the RAF.

5.5 ensure redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages.

5.6 promote sound language management by the RAF for efficient public service administration and to meet the needs of the public.

5.7 respond to the need for minimum standards in respect of the Act.

5.8 ensure effective communication in and between departments, as well as access to services, resources, programmes, information and knowledge for all South Africans.

5.9 confirm the constitutional language obligation that requires careful planning and systematic implementation.

5.10 support progressive elimination of disparity and lack of equity in respect of previously suppressed indigenous languages.

5.11 outline governance and responsibilities of those involved in implementing this policy.

#### **6. Scope of Application:**

This policy applies to all RAF permanent and temporary employees, contractors, and subcontractors, as well as appointed agencies in the Marketing, Communications and Media and Public Relations domain.

## **7. Policy Content:**

### **7.1 This policy takes into account the Constitution and a range of legislative and regulatory requirements - in particular those contained in the Act and its related Regulations.**

- 7.1.1 The Constitution seeks to democratise languages and states that all languages have equal status and are to be treated equitably.
- 7.1.2 While the Constitution equalises the status of all the languages, it does not seek to enforce rigid use of all of them. Rather, the use of language should be guided by the practical and contextual considerations including trends in the use, needs and audience language preference.

### **7.2 The Use of Official Languages Act obligations**

- 7.2.1 The Act establishes a framework for language policy development in South Africa.
- 7.2.2 Provision is made for the use of eleven South African languages in official language function, thereby promoting a climate of multilingualism.
- 7.2.3 The status of the indigenous languages shall be elevated and advanced.

### **7.3 All official languages shall be accorded parity of esteem and equitable treatment.**

- 7.3.1 Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution.
- 7.3.2 Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community, to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language.
- 7.3.3 On the issue of correspondence with individual citizens, communication is to be conducted in the preferred official language of the citizen.
- 7.3.4 For external oral communication, English should be used and, depending on the target group(s), at least one other spoken language.
- 7.3.5 Certain languages should be allocated to publications for both internal and external communication. This should entail that the languages from mutually intelligible groups should be rotated.

### **7.4 Language Policy Standards**

- 7.4.1 Dominant languages tend to differ from province to province and from one region to another.
- 7.4.2 However, some languages are widely understood beyond provincial and regional borders. It is therefore essential to understand both regional and provincial language variations in order to produce communication material that will be appropriate to different people in various contexts.
- 7.4.3 The Nguni languages (isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele and isiSwati) can be grouped together on the basis of linguistic similarities between them, and likewise, so can the Sesotho languages (Sesotho, Setswana, and Sepedi). Following this, the RAF will select the following configuration of languages:

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- 7.4.3.1 One Nguni language;
- 7.4.3.2 One Sesotho language; or
- 7.4.3.3 One Tshivenda and/or Xitsonga

## **7.5 Internal Oral Communication**

- 7.5.1 English shall be the operating language of the RAF. The above recommended official languages may be used where the situation warrants or demands it.
- 7.5.2 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of language in the RAF.
- 7.5.3 Linguistic diversity shall be managed with the same fairness and sensitivity as other aspects of diversity within the RAF.
- 7.5.4 The language rights applicable in specific circumstances to all members of the RAF shall be respected.

## **7.6 External Oral Communication**

- 7.6.1 Subject to the language policy standards set out in paragraph 7.4, and further subject to paragraph 7.3.4, English shall be the operating language of the RAF. The other official languages may be used where the situation warrants or demands it.
- 7.6.2 Communicators shall ensure that what they want to communicate is, in fact, understood by their target audiences(s).
- 7.6.3 Linguistic diversity shall be managed with the same fairness and sensitivity as other instances of diversity.

## **7.7 Written Internal Communication**

- 7.7.1 Internal correspondence, training and instruction manuals, publications (newsletters, bulletin boards, annual reports, etc.) shall be published in English.
- 7.7.2 The other official languages may be used where the situation warrants or demands it.

## **7.8 Written External Communication**

- 7.8.1 Correspondence with local, national and international stakeholders will be in English, unless a special request is made for the use of another official language.
- 7.8.2 The Language Unit will be used in cases where there is a special request for a specific publication in another official language.

## **7.9 Labour Relations Documents**

- 7.9.1 Conditions of service, internal policy documents, job interviews, disciplinary hearings performance agreements, health and safety requirements will be published and/or conducted in English unless the situation dictates otherwise.

## **7.10 Translation and Interpreting Services**

- 7.10.1 The RAF shall maximise language expertise within the Language Unit, where applicable.
- 7.10.2 Where necessary, contracting out or translation and interpreting services will be desirable to ensure effectiveness of communication.

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## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **8.1 Language Unit must:**

- 8.1.1 Advise the CEO or Board on the development, adoption and implementation of the Language Policy.
- 8.1.2 Regulate, monitor and assess the use of official languages.
- 8.1.3 Monitor and assess compliance with the Language Policy.
- 8.1.4 Compile and submit a report to the Minister and to the Pan South African Language Board.
- 8.1.5 Promote parity of esteem and equitable treatment of official languages of the Republic and facilitate equitable access to services and information of the RAF.
- 8.1.6 Promote good language management within the RAF.
- 8.1.7 Display at all RAF offices, a summary of this policy in such a manner that it can be read by the public.

### **8.2 ICT is responsible for:**

- 8.2.1 The implementation of a Language Policy will increase the demand for translation and editing work and interpreting services, especially in the indigenous languages; therefore ICT should avail Human Language Technology applications (e.g. machine-assisted translation, translation memories, and spellcheckers), which will play a major supporting role in the language facilitation activities.

### **8.3 Compliance Unit shall:**

- 8.3.1 Conduct regular reviews to ensure optimum compliance with this policy.
- 8.3.2 Assist and ensure publication of this policy in the Gazette, 90 days after its adoption.

### **8.4 Complaints Unit shall:**

- 8.4.1 Receive, investigate and resolve any complaints by members of the public regarding the use of official languages and report to Language Unit.

### **8.5 Chief Marketing Officer**

- 8.5.1 Establish the Language Unit.
- 8.5.2 Provide human resources, administrative resources and other resources necessary for the effective functioning of the unit.
- 8.5.3 Provide human resources and administrative resources to the Call Centre.

## 8.6 Other RAF officials

8.6.1 All officials of the RAF shall, in respect of their respective areas of responsibility, comply with this policy.

## 9. Non-compliance

Non-compliance with this policy or any applicable regulatory requirement through any deliberate or negligent act or omission, including allowing any staff, either expressly or impliedly, not to comply with this policy or any applicable regulatory requirement, will be considered serious and will be dealt with in terms of the RAF's disciplinary policies and procedures.

## 10. Policy Effective Date

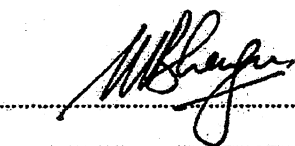
This policy comes into effect on the date when approval of this policy is communicated to RAF staff via e-mail, provided that if the e-mail communication does not fall on a business day then the policy comes into effect on the first business day following the date on which the e-mail communication was sent.

## 11. Policy Management and Review

This policy shall be managed and reviewed in accordance with the RAF's Policy Management Framework and Policy Management Standard Operating Procedure.

## 12. Approval

The signatory hereof, duly authorised in terms of the Road Accident Fund Delegation of Authority and Approval Framework, approves this **Category A** policy.

Signature:	
Name and surname:	Dr Ntuthuko Bhengu
Capacity:	Chairperson of the Board
Date:	29 <sup>th</sup> of April 2014.

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