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## GENERAL NOTICE

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### NOTICE 292 OF 2015

#### SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND

#### INVITATION TO COMMENT ON THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND

The Board of the South African Library for the Blind intends to adopt a Language Policy for the Library in terms of section 4(1) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012)

In terms of Regulation 3(2) of the Use of Official Language Act, the South African Library for the Blind hereby invites any interested person or body to provide written comments on its draft Official Language Policy of South African Library for the Blind as published under this notice. The draft Policy was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012).

The closing date for comments is 21 calendar days from the date of publication of this notice in the Gazette.

Comments must be submitted in writing to the Director, South African Library for the Blind, P.O. Box 115, Grahamstown, 6140, or by e-mail to the following persons:

[director@salb.org.za](mailto:director@salb.org.za)  
[natasha.agnew@salb.org.za](mailto:natasha.agnew@salb.org.za)

Signed by:



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F. Hendrikz  
Director: S.A. Library for the Blind

**SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND  
LANGUAGE POLICY**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, makes provision for eleven official languages. The Constitution also recognises the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of the people of South Africa and requires the State to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages. (Section 6).
- 1.2 The Constitution also makes provision that all citizens have a right to use their language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice (Section 30).
- 1.3 In response to the requirements of the Constitution, the implementation of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012) came into operation during 2013 and inter alia provides for the adoption of a language policy by a national public entity such as the South African Library for the Blind (SALB).
- 1.4 The Language Policy of the SALB was formulated by taking cognisance of the language usage and preferences of the people residing in the Eastern Cape, the registered members of the library who are located across South Africa as well as the employees of the Library residing in Grahamstown as well as people who engage with the library for various work related reasons, i.e. nationally and internationally.
- 1.5 The 2011 Census determined that the top three languages spoken in the Eastern Cape Province according to first language is IsiXhosa (78.8%), Afrikaans (10.6%) and English (5.6%). The top 4 languages nationally are IsiZulu (22.7%), IsiXhosa (16.0%), Afrikaans (13.5%) and English (9.6%). The National and Provincial profile corresponds and is used as guide in this Policy.

## 2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND (SALB): Mandate

The Mandate of the SALB, which is a National Library, is captured in the South African Library for the Blind Act (Act 91 of 1998). Furthermore, the SALB is recognised in Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act (Act 1 of 1999) as a National Public Entity and is responsible to:

- (a) build up a balanced and appropriate collection of South African and other documents for the use of blind and print-handicapped readers;
- (b) (i) record its collections appropriately;  
(ii) provide a bibliographic service to those readers;
- (c) provide access to documents nationally and internationally to those readers;
- (d) provide library and information services on a national basis to those readers;

- (e) co-ordinate and preserve the national audio and braille literary heritage;
- (f) produce documents in special mediums such as braille and audio in the formats required by those readers;
- (g) develop standards for the production of those documents;
- (h) research production methods and technology in the appropriate fields; and
- (i) acquire, manufacture and disseminate the necessary technology required to read, replay or reproduce the media referred to in paragraph (f).

All the above functions are performed solely in respect of documents for the use of or relating to blind and print-handicapped readers and services are rendered nationally as well as internationally.

### **3 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The purpose of the policy is to:

3.1 Implement and give effect to the provisions of Section 6 of the Constitution as well as The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 and related Regulations.

3.2 Promote the equitable use of three main official languages spoken in the Eastern Cape, i.e. isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English.

3.3 Facilitate access to the services of the Library by utilizing isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English.

3.4 Ensure the elevation of all marginalised languages by offering a library collection representative all the language needs of the registered members of the Library.

3.5 Encourage and support employees to learn at least one official language other than their own to promote national unity and to acknowledge and appreciate cultural diversity.

### **4. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

4.1 To promote the use of any of the indigenous languages in all printed material of the Library or during public engagement or through the book collection made available to the registered members of the Library.

4.2 To establish that English will be formally used as working language and business language of the Library and in all formal documentation of the Library.

- 4.3 To promote the use of isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English to communicate with members of the public and informally between employees;
- 4.4 To make provision for translation services when required during verbal discussions and/or official documents issued by the Library as provided in section 5 of this Policy.
- 4.5 To remove all language barriers to promote equal access to the products and services provided by the Library and to engage with the public and employees of the Library in a respectful and meaningful way.
- 4.6 To ensure that no person is denied or prevented from using their language of choice regardless of whether or not it is one of the working languages.

## **5. SCOPE**

The provisions of this policy shall apply to the Board and the Employees of the South African Library for the Blind.

## **6. PROVISIONS FOR THE USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

### **6.1 MEETINGS**

6.1.1 English will be used as medium of communication during internal meetings.

6.1.2 Where meetings are conducted with members of the public or other stakeholders provision will be made for interpreting services. In the event of any participant wishing to have the proceedings interpreted into a language other than English, such participant must give the chairperson of the meeting at SALB at least two weeks' notice, through any communication medium.

6.1.3 The requirement for Sign language during meetings or during any engagement with the Library will be arranged where applicable if the person requiring it give the Office of the Director at the SALB at least two weeks' notice, through any communication medium, of the need for interpretation.

### **6.2 POLICIES**

Policies and all other official documentation of the SALB will be available in English. A person requiring it in any other official language must give the Office of the Director of the SALB at least two weeks' notice, through any communication medium, of the need for interpretation or translation.

### **6.3 NOTICES AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

All official notices and advertisements issued for general public information will be published in English using mainstream media available in the Eastern Cape and Nationally. A person requiring it in any other official language must give the Office of the Director of the SALB at least two weeks' notice, through any communication medium, of the need for interpretation or translation.

### **6.4 CORRESPONDENCE AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

6.4.1 All official correspondence required for internal written communication purposes at the SALB will be in English. If the addressee does not understand the language used, she/he may submit a request to the Office of the Director of the SALB that communication with her/him takes place in a language that she/he understands.

6.4.2 Internal and informal oral communication can be in isiXhosa, English, Afrikaans or any of the official language of South Africa depending on the individuals that are conversing.

6.4.3 Outgoing correspondence will carry an indication that should the recipient require the correspondence in a language other than English, such will be provided on request to the Office of the Director of the SALB.

## **7. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1 Access to the Language Policy**

7.1.1 This Language Policy will be available in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English.

7.1.2 The Policy is obtainable in print, electronic or Braille format from the Office of the Director of the SALB. Request for copies of the Policy should be directed in writing to:

The Director  
The South African Library for the Blind  
P.O. Box 115  
Grahamstown  
6140

[director@salb.org.za](mailto:director@salb.org.za)

### **7.2 Implementation Strategies**

7.2.1 The SALB Board and Management of the SALB will ensure that Board members and employees are sensitized to the value of multilingualism and encouraged to accommodate the language use and preference of library members, board members, employees and other stakeholders.

7.2.2 Translating and or interpreting services to the SALB must be provided by skilled language professionals. The Library will approach the Language Service Program of the Department of Arts & Culture for assistance and guidance on all matters related to interpretation and translation.

7.2.3 Staff members and Board Members will be encouraged to learn and understand languages other than their own thus enhancing the value of multilingualism, promoting respect for cultural diversity and improving service delivery.

7.2.4 The Language Policy will be considered when recruiting new staff and issued to all new employees of the Library.

### **7.3 TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

7.3.1 Unless otherwise stated in this policy or by a SALB Board resolution, provisions of this policy will come into effect upon adoption by the SALB Board.

7.3.2 The Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

### **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The SALB will make financial provision for the implementation of the language policy, e.g. development of language skills of staff, procurement of translation and interpretation services, and the printing and publishing of material.

### **9. COMPLAINTS**

Any member of the public or an employee of the Library has full right to submit a complaint with regards to the use of official languages at the SALB.

The complaint mechanism provided in the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012: Regulations, Section 2(2) and Section 2(3) are applicable.

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