

GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

NATIONAL TREASURY

NO. 211

03 MARCH 2016

USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2012: PUBLICATION OF NATIONAL TREASURY'S LANGUAGE POLICY

In terms of section 4(2)(h) of the Use of Official Language Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), the language policy of the National Treasury is hereby published in the Schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

NATIONAL TREASURY'S LANGUAGE POLICY

Document reference library

Document file name	Context and relevance
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and the Bill of Rights	Section 6 recognises 11 official languages, requires the State to take measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages, and requires national and provincial governments to use at least two official languages and to regulate the use of official languages. The Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution guarantees access to any information which the government has and everyone's right to use the language of their choice subject to other rights in the Bill of Rights.
Use of Official Languages Act, No 12 of 2012	The Act provides for the regulation and monitoring of the use of official languages by national government for government purposes; to require the adoption of a language policy by a national department, national public entity and national public enterprise; to provide for the establishment and functions of a National Language Unit; to provide for the establishment and functions of language units by a national department, national public entity and national public enterprise; to provide for monitoring of and reporting on use of official languages by national government

Business areas impacted by this policy

Name of business unit / Area	Context and relevance
All divisions and business units within the Department	Impacts on all employees of the Department.

Definitions	
Functional multilingualism	An approach that relies on language preference, language use and language proficiency of employees. It implies identifying relevant demographic, economic and attitudinal factors in language planning and policy development.
Official languages	The languages referred to in section 6(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

1. Overview

- 1.1 South Africa is a multilingualism country which recognises the use of 11 official languages; namely Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.
- 1.2 The National Treasury adheres to a policy of functional multilingualism in order to accommodate linguistic diversity. The promotion of the principle of multilingualism is enshrined in section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 1.3 The development of the diverse languages of our country, in the face of certain obstacles and resource constraints, is a critical imperative. A policy of this nature cannot attain all its objectives in a short period of time, but it can be accepted immediately and phased in as existing resources and developmental needs permit.

2. Purpose

The National Treasury is a national department in the public service in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994, and the Public Finance Management Act, 1999, with a geographical mandate in the whole country. The National Treasury is responsible for the financial functions stipulated in section 216 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the Public Finance Management Act, the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003, and other applicable legislation.

The purpose of the Policy is to define the use of official languages by the National Treasury in all forms of official communication, including the recognition of the use of other languages, including sign language.

The Policy is aligned to the principle of promoting multilingualism as enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The Policy seeks to:

- Adhere to the requirements of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012;
- Align to the principle of promoting functional multilingualism as enshrined in section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;

- Recognise the diversity of the peoples of the Republic of South Africa; and
- Respect all 11 official languages of the Republic of South Africa.

3. Principles

- 3.1 All stakeholders have the right to be served in the primary official language of their choice.
- 3.2 No persons will be discriminated against whether directly or indirectly, based on NT's capability to provide functional multilingual service.
- 3.3 The National Treasury acknowledges that there are eleven official languages of South Africa and ensures that, together with South African Sign Language, they enjoy parity of esteem and equality of treatment.
- 3.4 The National Treasury recognises the constitutional provision pertaining to the right to receive government services in the official language(s) of choice, taking into consideration equity, practicability, and the need to redress the results of past racial discriminatory laws and practices.

4. Use of official Languages

The National Treasury will use English as choice for administrative, business and record purposes in terms of oral and written communication in the broader sense.

Departmental publications, marketing material and written correspondence shall only be translated into other official languages, taking into consideration:

- (i) expense;
- (ii) practicality; and
- (iii) usage.

In the spirit of promoting multilingualism NT is committed to ensuring that stakeholders are assisted in the primary language of their choice as far as practically possible. The National Treasury will endeavour to accommodate other official languages as much as possible. Efforts will be made for widely distributed publications such as The People's Guide to the Budget and other publications aimed at educating the public to be made available in at least four other languages. NT will accommodate the South African diversity of languages in the following ways:

- Use of language capability already exists within the National Treasury; and
- Reasonably procure suitably competent external translation resources when needed.

Other official languages:

- The National Treasury shall endeavour to use all 11 official languages in future, and in accordance with the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012, the NT shall adopt four languages, which are English, Setswana, IsiZulu and Afrikaans as official languages.
- Braille and sign language will be made available, if:
 - Use of language capability already exists within the National Treasury; and
 - Reasonably procure suitably competent external translation resources when needed.

- Requests from stakeholders for the provision of communication services in the languages other than English must be made in writing to:

Communication Unit

Email: media@treasury.gov.za

Tel: (012) 315 5944/5645

Cell: 073 001 3406

Fax: (012) 406 9055

Postal address:

Private Bag X115

Pretoria

0001

Physical address:

40 Church Square

Pretoria

0002

5. Language Unit

The Communications Unit of the National Treasury will serve as the Language Unit until a fully-operational Language Unit can be established over time. The responsibilities of the Language Unit include:

- Ensure / Provide support to Divisions that requires the translation of documents
- Ensure compliance with regards to NT's ability to serve stakeholders in their primary language or language of choice.

6. Access

The Policy will be made available and accessible to the public in English at official entrances as well as electronically (made available through e-mail on request and posted on the departmental website).

7. Complaints Mechanism

In terms of section 4(2)(f) of the Use of Official Languages Act, written complaints may be lodged and addressed to the Communications Unit in paragraph 4.1.