

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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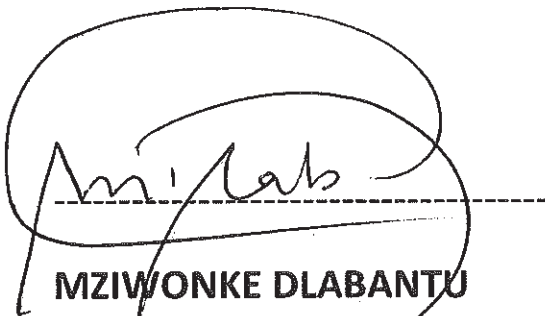
Corporate Services Branch

Communications and Marketing

Language policy

Policy no: CS/2015/05

I, Mziwonke Dlabantu, Director General for the Department of Public Works, hereby publish the Department of Public Works Language Policy in terms of section 4(2)(h) of the Use of Official Languages Act, (Act No. 12 of 2012) for public knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mziwonke Dlabantu', is written over a horizontal dashed line. The signature is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

MZIWONKE DLABANTU

DIRECTOR GENERAL: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

DATE: 19/02/2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

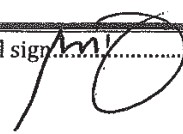
SUBJECT	PAGE
---------	------

1. PURPOSE	4
2. BACKGROUND	4
3. PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION	5
5. NATURE OF DPW	5
6. USAGE	5-7
7. LANGUAGE UNIT	7
8. ACCESSING THE POLICY	7
9. COMPLAINT MECHANISM	7
10. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY	7
11. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY	7

1. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

1.1 DEFINITIONS

Development of a language	The promotion of a language by graphisation, standardisation and elaboration of functions so that the language can be used in the media, education, legal and administrative systems, etc.; and by generally providing scope for the publication of literary works in that language.
Employee	<p>a. Any person other than an independent contractor who works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration; and</p> <p>b. In any manner assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employee.</p>
Historically disadvantaged languages	In the South African context, these are the languages that were assigned low status by previous regime and as a result were not used in the media, education (after early primary school), or in public or economically significant domains. Little support was also given to the development of verbal art forms in these languages. They included indigenous languages, heritage languages and SASL.
Head Office	The National Head Office of the Department
Indigenous language	A language native to a country.
Interpreting	The act of transposing an utterance from the source language into a target language in spoken form.
Language awareness	Sensitivity to how language is used in society, whether the users are accorded their language rights, and how language is used to empower or disempower or are centralised or marginalised in the public domain.
Language equity	The fairness of language provision and/or treatment of two or more languages. Matters such as the number of speakers and the status of a language may require policy to determine the domains of use of a particular language. This use may not be necessarily equal.
Language policy	An official decision/decreed on how various languages spoken in heterogeneous/multilingual communities should be used in the public domain.
Language rights	Laws which allow citizens to use the languages of their choice.
Language units	A function in the department and provinces which deal with specific language issues of that department and/or province arising from the National Language Unit and which liaise with other departments on language matters especially through the National Language Forum (NLF).
Sign language	A sign language (also signed language) is a language which, instead of acoustically conveyed sound patterns, uses manual communication and body language to convey meaning. This can involve simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to fluidly express a speaker's thoughts.



Marginalised language	Any official language that is excluded from official use or the use of which is discouraged in formal settings (e.g. education, health care). "Marginalised" usually implies the low status of the language and possibly the speakers. For example, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiNdebele, and siSwati are regarded as marginalised languages in South Africa.
Multilingualism	The use of three or more languages by an individual or by a group of speakers such as the inhabitants of a particular region or nation.
Official Language	A language used in government, courts of law, education, business, and the media.
Regional Office	Any of the eleven regional offices situated across the provinces
Translation	The act of transporting a text from a source language to another (target) language in a written form.

1.2 ACRONYMS

4.2.1	DG	Director-General
4.2.2	DPW	Department of Public Works
4.2.3	EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
4.2.4	NLF	National Language Forum
4.2.5	PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
4.2.6	SASL	South African Sign Language

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act No.108 of 1996)
 The Use of Official Languages Act, (Act No. 12 of 2012)
 Regulations in terms of section 13 of the Use of Official Languages Act (Act No. 12 of 2012)
 The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000)
 The Pan South African Language Board Act (Act No. 59 of 1995)

3. PURPOSE

The purposes of developing a language policy are to ensure that DPW provides effective service delivery to the citizens of South Africa through meaningful access to its services and promotes knowledge of, respect and use of the formerly marginalised official languages of the country.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has developed a Language Policy to promote historically disadvantaged languages as well as to:

- 3.1 Promote the equitable use of the 11 official languages
- 3.2 Facilitate equitable access to the DPW's services, knowledge and information by its clients;
- 3.3 Ensure redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages;
- 3.4 Promote good language management for efficient service delivery to meet client expectations and needs; and
- 3.5 Promote the practice of language rights, indigenous language equity and language awareness.

The policy would enable DPW to expedite access to government communications and information and fast track service delivery to internal and external clients.

4. BACKGROUND

Pre-1994, DPW used only English and Afrikaans as official languages of communication. Post-1994 elections, the multilingual character of South Africa recognised official eleven languages. They were isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and siSwati (*referred to as the Nguni language group*); Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana (*referred to as the Sotho language group*); Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans. Furthermore, Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 provides for 11 official languages and requires the State to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages. The Constitution further requires all official languages to enjoy parity of esteem and treated equitably.

The Use of Official Languages Act (Act No. 12 of 2012) gives impetus to this section and requires National Government Departments, National Public Entities and National Public Enterprises to develop and adopt departmental language policies to give expression to the recognition of 11 official languages and promote linguistic diversity in post-apartheid South Africa.

5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

DPW is a National Department that has eleven regional offices. The clientele of the DPW constitutes of diverse, multilingual societies. It is important that respect for language rights and broad acceptance of linguistic diversity should be encouraged to build a united DPW.

6. SCOPE OF APPLICATIONS

This policy applies to all DPW National and Regional offices, all its (DPW) employees and members of the public who interact with the Department.

7. NATURE OF DPW

DPW is the custodian of the state built environment, state immovable asset portfolio and a driver of the national goal of job creation and poverty alleviation through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

8. USAGE

8.1 Gradual implementation of the policy

The application of the language policy must be phased in on a quarterly basis: first in the national office and then in the regional offices.

8.2 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The adopted official languages of the DPW are **isiZulu, Sepedi and English**. This choice is guided by the regulations of the use of official languages and the results of the 2011 Census.

- 8.2.1 Working Language for Internal Communication:** English will be used as the main language of correspondence within the department especially in Department budgeting, tenders and strategic planning.
- 8.2.2 Working Language for External Communication:** English will be used as a language of communication between the Regional Offices and the Head Office. At regional level, the choice of working language should be informed by the languages of the said province. Careful consideration should be given to use at least **three dominant languages of the province**.
- 8.2.3 Oral Communication:** External oral communication of the Ministry, the Director-General (DG) and senior officials must be in English or the language of the target audience. If the Minister or a DPW official cannot speak the language of the target audience, an interpreter must be provided. South African Sign Language (SASL) should be considered provided practicality and expense do permit it. It should be noted that where required, provision will be made to assist deaf and blind people to do business with the DPW in a way that accommodates their needs.
- 8.2.4 Written Communication:** It will be in the adopted languages and where necessary in all official languages depending on the need.

8.2.5 In cases where the departmental documents may not be made available in all 11 official languages, the Department will make documents available simultaneously in at least six languages. The selection criteria of language shall be as follows:

- At least one from the Nguni group (isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and siSwati);
- At least one from the Sotho group (Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana);
- Tshivenda;
- Xitsonga;
- English; and
- Afrikaans.

A principle of rotation should be applied when selecting languages for publishing within the Nguni and Sotho groups respectively and the Language Unit should determine such rotation.

8.2.6 External written communication and correspondence with individual citizens will be conducted in their preferred official language.

8.2.7 Languages for external communications as regards forms, brochures, letterheads, public notices, signage, etc. in all DPW buildings should take into account regional language preferences. (This includes emergency signage).

The DPW must make documents targeted for specific regions in three languages dominant in the areas.

8.3 Publications

8.3.1 All publications will be published in plain language versions of all languages as required. It is important that the publication, whether electronic or in print, must be accessible and understood to all those addressed.

8.3.2 Where practically possible, policy documents can be made available in all official languages or on request.

8.3.2.1 Language of Response: When dealing with correspondence, the DPW personnel should respond in the same language used by the public.

8.4 Advertising and official notices

8.4.1 All official notices issued by the Department as general public information must be in English. Other language requirements will be met on request.

8.4.2 When the Department uses local newspapers, consideration must be given to the demographic status. Advertisements in newspapers must be in the languages of the newspaper of a particular region. Depending on financial availability and practicality, they can also be placed in the language of choice of the target group.

8.5 Translations

8.5.1 On request, and where practically possible, major DPW policy documents such as manuals, white papers, etc. can be made available in any international language. When a request is made for a document to be made available in an international language, a reasonable time must be allowed for the translation to such international language.

- 8.5.2 Translations of official policy documents, where practically possible, must be made available in all official languages, depending on client needs. Where it is not possible, the six-language model will apply.
- 8.5.3 Request for translations of official policy document must be done in writing and ample time should be given for translation purposes.

9. LANGUAGE UNIT

The Department shall ensure that adequate financial and other relevant resources are made available to establish the DPW Language Unit to support and realize the policy.

10. ACCESSING THE POLICY

The policy shall be available in all official languages on request and must be published on the DPW intranet and website. Printed summaries must be available in all official languages and distributed to regions based on the criteria of selected Provincial languages.

11. COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Any person who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Department regarding its use of official languages may lodge a complaint in any of the 11 official languages and address it to the Director General. If submitted electronically, the complaint must be transmitted to: languageunit@dpw.gov.za or if submitted in hard copy format delivery can either be by hand to the Departments street address or mailed by registered post to the department's postal address which is: **Private Bag x 65 Pretoria 0001**.

The complaint must:

- Be in writing and lodged within 1 months of the complaint arising
- State the name, address and contact information of the complainant
- Provide a full and detailed description of the complaints.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be constantly monitored and reviewed whenever necessary. This should happen at least once every three (3) years.

13. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

The Director-General hereby approves the DPW Language Policy that serves to give effect to the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No.12 of 2012). It comes into effect from date of the DG's signature.

Language Policy

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