

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION


NO. 1331

11 DECEMBER 2020

USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2012 (ACT NO.12 OF 2012)
DWS LANGUAGE POLICY

I, **LINDIWE NONCEBA SISULU**, Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, hereby give notice to the Members of the Public that the Language Policy for the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has now been adopted, under Regulation 3(2) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No 12 of 2012) set out in the Schedule hereto.

Any enquiries in connection with the notice can be directed to Mr S Ratau (012) 336 8264.

LINDIWE NONCEBA SISULU**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

DATE: 30/07/2020



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION

JULY 2020

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1. Acronyms

DWS	The National Department of Water and Sanitation – also referred to as the department
DG	Director-General
PanSALB	Pan South African Languages Board
UOLA	The Use of Official Languages Act No.12 of 2012 was enacted
SASL	South African Sign Language
NWA	National Water Act of 1998
WSA	Water Services Act of 1997

2. Definition of Terms

Department	The Department of Water and Sanitation (also referred to as DWS)
Director-General	The Director-General of the Department of Water and Sanitation
Official Languages of the Department	The selected South African Official Languages that the department will use for government purposes.
South African Sign Language	The official sign language that is recognised and used as a first language by a large number of Deaf South Africans.
Working Days	Any days other than Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays
Braille	A written form of communication, aimed at the blind. For purposes of this policy, it is not classified as a separate language
Language Practitioners	Employees appointed to lead language policy implementation for the Department of Water and Sanitation
Multilingualism	The use of more than one language by an individual or by a group of speakers such as the inhabitants of a particular region or a nation.

3. Introduction

Section 4 of the Constitution mandates national and provincial government departments to regulate and monitor their use of languages. The Use of Official Languages (UOLA) Act No.12 of 2012 was enacted to realise this constitutional mandate.

This policy is therefore compiled as a statutory requirement in compliance with Section 4 (1) of UOLA which mandates national departments to adopt a language policy that will command its use of official languages for government purposes.

The policy represents the National Department of Water and Sanitation and is not applicable to its entities and provincial departments.

4. Purpose

As prescribed in Section 4 (2) of UOLA, a language policy intends to:

- 4.1** Identify at least three official languages a department will use in rendering its services;
- 4.2** Stipulate how official languages will be used in: effectively communicating with the public, official notices, government publications, and inter and intra-government communication;
- 4.3** Describe how a department will effectively communicate with the members of the public whose language of choice is not one of its chosen official languages, or is South African Sign Language
- 4.4** Describe how members of the public can access the language policy;
- 4.5** Provide complaints mechanism to enable members of the public to lodge complaints regarding the use of official languages in a department.

5. Nature of the National Department of Water and Sanitation

5.1 Vision

5.1.1 Equitable and sustainable water and sanitation services that support socio-economic growth and development, and the well-being of current and future generations.

5.2 Mission

To ensure the universal access of all South Africans to equitable water resources, and sustainable water and sanitation services by:

- 5.2.1 Protecting, developing, conserving, managing and regulating water resources;
- 5.2.2 Managing, regulating and providing efficient and effective water and sanitation resources;
- 5.2.3 Providing strategic leadership and evidence-based policy direction that will result in a coordinated water and sanitation sector for improved sector performance and service delivery;
- 5.2.4 Building the skills and capabilities of the sector and enhancing information management to inform decision making; and
- 5.2.5 Enhancing communication and stakeholder partnerships with communities and sector constituencies to advance the national development agenda.

5.3 Values

- 5.3.1 Promoting and maintaining high standards of professional ethics;
- 5.3.2 Utilising resources efficiently and effectively;
- 5.3.3 Providing service impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- 5.3.4 Responding to people's needs;
- 5.3.5 Encouraging citizens to participate in policy making;
- 5.3.6 Rendering an accountable, transparent, and development-oriented public administration.

5.4 Legislative and other mandates

- 5.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: The Constitution sets out water resources management as a national competency. It also states that everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing and supports socially justifiable economic development. The Constitution indicates the rights of individuals to have access to basic water and sanitation and sets out the institutional framework for the provision of these services. It gives municipalities the Executive Authority and the right to administer the provision of water services within their areas of jurisdiction. The Constitution gives national and provincial government authority to regulate local government in terms of water services. It further gives them the obligation to support and strengthen the capacity of local government to provide services.
- 5.4.2 The National Water Act, 1998 (Act No.36 of 1998): the National Water Act seeks to ensure that the country's water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved,

managed and controlled in a sustainable and equitable manner for the benefit of all people. The Act assigns national government as the public trustee of the water resources. Acting through the Minister, the department has the power to regulate the allocation, use, flow and control of all water in the Republic.

5.4.3 The Water Services Act, 1997 (Act No. 108 of 1997): the Water Services Act prescribes the legislative duty of municipalities as water services authorities to supply water and sanitation in accordance with the national norms and standards set out by the Minister. In addition, it regulates Water Boards as water services providers. This Act compels the Minister to maintain a National Water Services Information System and to monitor the performance of all water services institutions.

5.4.4 The Water Research Act, 1971 (Act No. 34 of 1971): this Act established the Water Research Commission and the Water Research Fund and thus promotes water related research. The Minister appoints members of the Water Research Commission (the Commission) and thus exercises executive oversight over the Commission.

6. Official languages of the Department

6.1 The Constitution promotes the use of all eleven official languages in line with its mandate as explained above. However, owing to financial constraints, the department's language policy will focus on functional multilingualism by striking a balance between financial considerations and the need to ensure effective communication with members of the public.

6.2 The department uses English as its operating language. Thus internal correspondence will be in English. Efforts will be made to ensure that externally focused communication will accommodate other languages depending on the availability of funds.

6.3 The Department has, in addition to English as its language of business, identified six (6) other languages based on either their frequency of use in South African homes, or according to special needs of a particular language group. These languages are: isiZulu, Sepedi, Xitsonga, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and Braille. Because the policy now is undergoing a review, a decision to add Setswana on a list of languages adopted by the Department has consciously been made, which will make this language the seventh language adopted. All seven (7) languages will be used as languages of communication when communicating with members of the public. The Department will further endeavour to facilitate communication in other official languages depending on the practicality and effectiveness of doing so.

6.4 Provincial and practicality requirements will still apply in influencing languages to use in a particular area, e.g. Public Participation Programmes (Izimbizos) and other provincial proceedings will be conducted in the dominant language of a particular province depending on the target audience, feasibility and cost effectiveness.

6.5 In the light of the motivation made above, the Department of Water and Sanitation thus adopts the following languages (in no preferential order):

6.5.1 English

6.5.2 isiZulu

6.5.3 Sepedi

6.5.4 Xitsonga

6.5.5 isiXhosa

6.5.6 Afrikaans

6.5.7 Braille

6.6 The following factors were taken into account in arriving at the choice of official language(s) DWS will use in each context/situation:

6.6.1 Practicality,

6.6.2 Expense,

6.6.3 Regional circumstance,

6.6.4 The needs and preferences of the public,

6.6.5 Section 6 (2) of the Constitution, which mandates government departments to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages.

7. Communication with the members of the public whose language of choice is not one of the official languages of the Republic

7.1 A member of the public who wishes to communicate with DWS in a language that is not one of the official languages of the Republic must notify DWS in writing.

7.2 DWS will arrange for appropriate translation and interpreting within 20 working days of the date of the request having been received.

8. Communication with members of the public whose language of choice is South African Sign Language

8.1 A member of the public who wishes to communicate with the department in the South African Sign Language must notify the department in writing.

8.2 DWS will arrange for appropriate interpreting within 20 working days of the date of request having been received by the department.

9. Publication of and access to this Policy

9.1 This policy will be gazetted for public knowledge in English.

9.2 The approved policy will be made available in at least three languages and will be placed on the departmental website (www.dws.gov.za).

9.3 The summary of the approved language policy will be placed at prominent areas within DWS premises, including regions.

10. Complaints mechanism

10.1 Any person who is dissatisfied with the decision of DWS regarding its use of official languages may lodge a complaint to the DG.

10.2 The complaint must be lodged in writing, and within three (3) months of the complaint arising.

10.3 The complaint should be addressed to:

The Director-General

National Department of Water and Sanitation

Private Bag X350

Pretoria

0001

Email: centralp@dws.gov.za

- 10.4** Any complaint lodged must state the name, address, and contact information of the person lodging it.
- 10.5** Any complaint lodged must provide a full and detailed description of the incident.
- 10.6** The DG may request a complainant to supply any additional information necessary to consider the complaint, and to attend a meeting for the purpose of making an oral enquiry into the complaint.
- 10.7** The DG will consider the complaint and respond in writing not later than three months after the complaint was lodged, informing the complainant of the decision.

11. Appeals procedure

- 11.1** A complainant not satisfied with the decision of the DG may lodge an appeal with the Minister of Water and Sanitation.
- 11.2** The appeal must be in writing and should be lodged within one (1) month of a decision by the DG.
- 11.3** The appeal should state the name, address, and contact information of the person lodging the appeal, with full description of the complaint.
- 11.4** The appeal should be addressed to:

Minister of Water and Sanitation

Private Bag x350

Pretoria

0001

Email: ministry@dws.gov.za

- 11.5** The Minister of Water and Sanitation will consider the appeal and make a decision no later than three (3) months after the appeal was lodged, and inform the complainant (in writing) of the decision.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years and as when necessary.