

BOARD NOTICES • RAADSKENNISGEWINGS

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PanSALB
PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD

PanSALB Language Policy



“One nation many languages”

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1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as "the Constitution") in Sections 6(1)-(4) provides for 12 official languages, recognises the diminished use and status of indigenous languages, and requires all organs of state to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages.
- 1.2. The Constitution further requires all official languages to enjoy parity of esteem and to be treated equitably. In Sections 9 and 30, discrimination based on language is expressly forbidden and the use of an individual's language of choice is promoted.
- 1.3. The Pan South African Language Board (hereafter referred to as "PanSALB") was established by the PanSALB Act of 1995 (Act 59 of 1995, amended by Act 10 of 1999, hereafter referred to as the "PanSALB Act") in terms of Section 6(5) of the Constitution to promote, and create conditions for the development and use of all the official languages of South Africa, and to facilitate an environment that is conducive for the use of any other non-official language used in South Africa for religious, cultural and heritage purposes (hereafter referred to as the "Heritage languages"). It practically advances the gains of South Africa's constitutional democracy through both individual and societal multilingualisms.
- 1.4. South Africa is a multilingual country that through Sections 6, 9, and 30 of the Constitution as well as the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012, hereafter referred to as the UOLA) legislatively places a high premium on granting equitable space for all official languages. Regardless of this noble intent, it emerges that such a space is, in practice, scantily afforded to the (previously) marginalised indigenous South African languages. Functional multilingualism is forever linked to the provision of adequate resources by both the state and private institutions. These parties, as well as the general public, are obliged to play a significant role toward an effective and successful multilingual context in South Africa.

- 1.5. PanSALB is therefore the strategic constitutional institution mandated to support, promote, and protect all the languages used in the country to ensure an environment that is conducive for effective multilingualism.
- 1.6. This language policy is therefore drafted in line with the Constitution, PanSALB Act, UOLA, as well as the PanSALB's Language Policy Development Guidelines, 2003, which offers an enabling framework for a coherent multilingual policy dispensation.
- 1.7. The implementation of this policy will also be guided by the South African Language Practitioners' Act, 2014 (Act 8 of 2014, hereafter referred to as the SALPC Act), which regulates the language practice in the country. That is, PanSALB will appoint and/or procure language practitioners that are registered and accredited by the South African Language Practitioners' Council.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless specifically indicated otherwise,

- 2.1 "Board" means the managing body of the Pan South African Language Board established in terms of Section 2 of the PanSALB Act;
- 2.2 "Chief Executive Officer" means the Chief Executive Officer of PanSALB;
- 2.3 "Communication Division" means the Communication and Marketing Division of PanSALB;
- 2.4 "Constitution" means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 2.5 "country" means South Africa;
- 2.6 "Executive Head: Languages" means the Executive Head of the Language Division Unit of PanSALB;

- 2.7 **"Heritage languages"** means the languages indicated by Section 6(5)(b) of the Constitution;
- 2.8 **"National Language Body"** means a National Language Body of PanSALB, established in terms of Section 8(b) of the PanSALB Act;
- 2.9 **"National Lexicography Unit"** means a National Lexicography Unit of PanSALB, established in terms of Section 8(8)(c) of the PanSALB Act;
- 2.10 **"organisation"** means PanSALB;
- 2.11 **"PanSALB"** means the organisation named the Pan South African Language Board established in terms of Section 6(5) of the Constitution;
- 2.12 **"PanSALB Act"** means the Pan South African Language Board Act, 1995 (Act 59 of 1995, as amended by Act 10 of 1999);
- 2.13 **"Parliament"** means the National Parliament of the Republic of South Africa;
- 2.14 **"Previously marginalised languages"** means the indigenous languages that are recognised as historically diminished use and status in terms of Section 6(2) of the Constitution;
- 2.15 **"Provincial Language Committee"** means a Provincial Language Committees of PanSALB, established in terms of Section 8(a) of the PanSALB Act;
- 2.16 **"language policy"** means the PanSALB language policy;
- 2.17 **"SALPC Act"** means the South African Language Practitioners' Council Act, 2014 (Act 8 of 2014);
- 2.18 **"staff"** means the PanSALB staff;

2.19 "**structure**" means the PanSALB structures established in terms of Section 8 of the PanSALB Act, specifically the National Language Bodies, Provincial Language Committees, and the National Lexicography Units;

2.20 "**UOLA**" means the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012).

3. PURPOSE

This policy outlines how PanSALB complies with the provisions of the Constitution, the PanSALB Act, the UOLA, and the SALPC Act to guide language planning, use, and management at PanSALB.

4. APPLICATION

This policy is applicable to staff and structures. All staff and structures shall adhere to it, as appropriate, at all times in executing the PanSALB mandate.

5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 This policy is approved by the Board after consultation with all staff and structures.
- 5.2 The ownership of this language policy is with the Chief Executive Officer who is accountable for the implementation, management, and review of this policy as well as reporting on it to the Board on an annual basis.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive Officer mandates the Executive Head: Languages and the Language Division Unit's Management Committee to advise and perform tasks with regard to the implementation of this policy on his/her behalf as may be determined from time to time.
- 5.4 Deliberate acts of non-compliance with this policy shall be regarded as an offence and shall be handled in accordance with the PanSALB's Consequence Management Policy and Disciplinary Policy.

6. AIMS

In accordance with the Constitution, PanSALB Act, and UOLA, PanSALB is committed to promotion of multilingualism. This policy therefore aims to:

- 6.1 Elevate the status and advance the use of all official languages (namely Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and South African Sign Language), and the Khoi and San languages;
- 6.2 Foster respect and protect language rights thereby avoiding the use of language for gender, racial, class, age, religious, cultural or sexual exploitation and domination, or for condoning violence;
- 6.3 Contribute toward effective social cohesion and improved relationships by embracing institutional language diversity;
- 6.4 Mainstream South African Sign Language and address the linguistic needs of the Deaf and the hearing impaired employees and structure members; and
- 6.5 Encourage the use of language in a manner that makes the meaning understandable to as many people as possible.

7. PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles for this policy are to give effect to:

- 7.1 provisions for PanSALB to be the principal champion of multilingualism by adhering to all the language legislative prescripts of the country, and, in doing so, lead by example;
- 7.2 the promotion of the effective use of multilingualism within the institution;
- 7.3 constitutional provisions for equitable use of all the 12 official languages of the country, as well as the Khoi and San languages;
- 7.4 the creation of conditions for the use and development of all 12 official languages as well as the Khoi and San languages.

8. POLICY PROVISIONS

- 8.1 PanSALB will ensure the use of all 12 official languages as its languages for communication (verbal, written, visual) at national level.
- 8.2 Communication (verbal, written, visual including signage) at a provincial level will be done in accordance with the official languages of each province, as determined by the relevant Provincial Language Act.
- 8.3 The official languages referred to in paragraph 6.1 are expected to be used in any record, engagement, publication (electronic or print) and in any other proceedings of the PanSALB and its structures, as appropriate.
- 8.4 PanSALB staff and structures may each reach sufficient consensus on their working

languages for internal, external, and intergovernmental oral or written communication, subject to the proviso that no person may be prevented from using any of the official languages or the Khoi and San languages and provided that every effort is made to comply with paragraph 6.2 provision of this policy.

- 8.5 PanSALB must make provisions for interpreting services, via the procurement of interpreters and interpreting equipment, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for Interpreting, for internal meetings, where and when necessary, for public engagements, from and into all official languages referred to in paragraph 6.1, and with any other stakeholder, where and when necessary.
- 8.6 The provision in 8.5 may be performed taking into consideration the rotation of language groups based on mutual intelligible languages (Nguni languages – isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele and Siswati) and (Sotho – Sesotho, Sesotho sa Leboa and Setswana) with Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English or Afrikaans and South African Sign Language being working languages in context. Interpreting into and from the Khoi and San languages must be provided where and when necessary taking into consideration usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance for needs and preference of the audience;
- 8.7 PanSALB must make provisions for translation services, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for Translation, for public-facing documents. The official records, reports, and other official documents of PanSALB must be kept in the official language(s) in which the engagement took place. Translation of any such record, report, and any other official document or sections thereof into any of the official language(s) referred to in paragraph 6.1 shall be made available upon request and in accordance with the Standard Operations Procedures for Translations. Translation into and from any official language must be provided where and when necessary taking into consideration usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance for needs and preference of the audience;
- 8.8 PanSALB must make provisions for editing services for any public-facing PanSALB document, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for Editing;
- 8.9 The above principles with regard to translation, interpreting, and editing are applicable to social media posts on PanSALB's social media sites. A minimum of three official languages should be used per post and the choice of language should be rotated on a

post-by-post basis to promote the use of all official languages.

- 8.10 Any member of the public, state entity or other institution in South Africa and abroad may use any one of the official languages referred to in paragraph 6.1 in his or her communication with PanSALB and PanSALB shall reciprocate as far as practical.

9. IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

- 9.1 Implementation is governed by the implementation plan for this policy, detailed separately, and revised annually as per the budget allocation for this specific Performance Area.
- 9.2 In case PanSALB cannot afford to publish a document in all official languages, PanSALB shall consider using a minimum of six (6) official languages following a rotational procedure of selecting one Nguni language (Siswati, isiXhosa, isiZulu or isiNdebele), one Sotho language (Sesotho, Setswana and Sesotho sa Leboa), Xitsonga, Tshivenda, English and/or Afrikaans, South African Sign Language.
- 9.3 Each division at PanSALB shall allocate a budget for the provision of language facilitation services on annual basis through the Annual Language Policy Implementation Plan.

10. REVISION

This policy shall be revised after a period of five years or when there is a need for revision.

11. DISCLOSURE

This is an internal document. It shall be published as Board Notice on the National and Provincial Government Gazettes and PanSALB website.

12. REFERENCES

- 12.1 Sections 6, 9, and 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996);
- 12.2 The Pan South African Language Board Act (No. 59 of 1995) as amended
- 12.3 The Use of Official Languages Act (No. 12 of 2012)
- 12.4 The South African Language Practitioners' Council Act (No. 8 of 2014)