



# Government Gazette Staatskoerant

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Vol. 592

Pretoria, 31 October 2014  
Oktober 2014

**No. 38155**

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**GENERAL NOTICE****NOTICE 947 OF 2014****DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT (ACT NO.12 OF 2012)****LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

I, Grace Mandisa Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Science and Technology, in terms of section 4(2)(h) of the Use of the Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), hereby publish for public comment the Language Policy of the Department of Science and Technology.

Interested persons or organisations may submit their written comments, on or before 5 December 2014, to the Director-General of Science and Technology, c/o the Knowledge, Information and Records Management Unit –

- by hand to the Department of Science and Technology Building, Scientia (CSIR) Campus, Meiring Naudé Road, Brummeria, Pretoria;
- by registered post to Private Bag X894, Pretoria, 0001;
- by email to [paia@dst.gov.za](mailto:paia@dst.gov.za).

Kindly provide the name of the person or organisation submitting comments and their full contact details.



MRS GNM PANDOR, MP  
MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: 23 - 10 - 2014.

## DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LANGUAGE POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1 This policy has been developed to give effect to section 4 of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012). The policy is intended to set out how the Department of Science and Technology (DST) will use the official languages of South Africa to communicate effectively with the public and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 It is important that this policy be seen as part of a process towards multilingualism. While the DST is in favour of encouraging linguistic diversity, this is not its core business, and financial constraints will mean that it will have to find a balance between the language preferences and needs of its target audiences (internally and externally) and financial considerations. It is hoped that economic conditions will in the future make it possible for the Department to make more funds available and make a bigger contribution to the national effort.

### 2. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

The purpose of this policy is to comply with section 4(1) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012). It also takes into account the Use of Official Languages Regulations, 2013, and the National Language Policy Framework, 2003. All these documents are ultimately intended to give effect to section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

### 3. NATURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

- 3.1 The DST's vision is to create a prosperous society that derives enduring and equitable benefits from science and technology. Its mission is to develop,

coordinate and manage a national system of innovation that will bring about maximum human capital, sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life for all.

- 3.2 The Department is a national department and, except in the case of specific pilot projects, its services are therefore provided at national level rather than regionally.
- 3.3 Compared to other government departments (e.g. the South African Police Service, or the Department of Home Affairs) the Department's direct communication with the public is limited. Most of its communication is with the public entities and other government departments, where English is accepted as the language of common usage. However, the Department is working towards broader engagement with the public.
- 3.4 Most of the DST's work is implemented through the public entities that report to the Minister of Science and Technology, namely, the Academy of Science of South Africa, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Human Sciences Research Council, the National Research Foundation, the South African National Space Agency, and the Technology Innovation Agency.
- 3.5 As far as multilingualism is concerned, the South African Agency for the Advancement of Science and Technology, a business unit of the National Research Foundation, does the most important work in raising public awareness of science and technology, and should therefore be encouraged to increase its communications in official languages other than English.

#### **4. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE DEPARTMENT**

- 4.1 Owing to the international nature of science, and as English is the language of common use in Parliament, the Department, other government departments, and the public entities reporting to the Minister for Science and Technology, one of the three official languages used by the DST is English.

4.2 The two other languages selected for official use are isiZulu and Sepedi, as (according to the 2011 census) they are the most widely spoken first languages in the two biggest language groups (Nguni and Sotho). This was decided on the grounds that the Department's mandate is the communication of its activities, rather than the preservation and promotion of language, which is the mandate of the Department of Arts and Culture.

## **5. USE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES SELECTED**

5.1 Owing to financial constraints, the Department's language policy will focus on functional multilingualism, i.e. finding a balance between financial considerations and the need to ensure the effective communication of particular messages to particular target audiences.

5.2 For example, in the Northern Cape, where the Department's astronomy projects are under way, the language of the majority is Afrikaans (53,8%) followed by Setswana (33,1%). These two languages should therefore be used to communicate with the public in this province, while English will be used for the scientists who, in some cases will be foreign nationals, to participate in the MeerKAT and Square Kilometre Array projects.

5.3 In respect of indigenous knowledge systems projects, e.g. gathering information for the National Recordal System, the language of the community concerned is used wherever possible. Forms relating to prior informed consent have been translated into all the official languages. Members of the working groups that have been established in the various areas act as interpreters as part of their duties. All information is gathered in the original language of the knowledge holders. Afrikaans is used for communication with Khoi/San groups to avoid discrimination between the many different minority languages in this group.

- 5.4 National Science Week (NSW) radio advertisements are broadcast in all official languages, and NSW promotional materials offer an opportunity to promote multilingualism at the same time as science, engineering and technology.
- 5.5 Calls for nominations for the boards of the science councils will be published in English, as the business of the boards will be conducted in English, and the business people and scientists needed to serve on the boards will be familiar with English.
- 5.6 As far as official reports/publications such as the annual report are concerned, these will be published in English owing to the cost of translations and additional layout and printing, which are not possible to redirect from the Department's core functions. Executive summaries will be made available in isiZulu and Sepedi.
- 5.7 The Promotion of Access to Information Manual has been translated into all official languages and Braille.
- 5.8 In respect of indigenous knowledge systems conferences and workshops arranged by the Department, simultaneous interpreting services are generally beyond the Department's budget. Speakers are therefore encouraged to give an executive summary in English and their main address in their language of choice, or vice versa.
- 5.9 Members of the public whose language of choice is South African Sign Language are well accommodated, as most of the Department's communications with the public are written.
- 5.10 However, members of the public whose language of choice is South African Sign Language or another language that is not one of the official languages will be accommodated as far as possible on an ad hoc basis. Requests for translations into and out of these languages will be sent to the National Language Service.

## 6. REVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

## 7. ACCESS TO DST LANGUAGE POLICY

The language policy will be published in the *Government Gazette* in English, and translations will be made available on the Department's website in English, isiZulu, Sepedi and Afrikaans.

## 8. COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

- 8.1 Anyone who is dissatisfied with an aspect of the language policy may make a complaint, which will be dealt with in terms of Regulation 2(2) and 2(3) of the Use of Official Languages Regulations.
- 8.2 The complaint must be in writing, lodged within three months of the complaint arising, and provide the name, address and contact information of the person lodging the complaint.
- 8.3 The complaint may be delivered to the Director-General of Science and Technology -
  - (a) by hand to the Department of Science and Technology Building, Scientia (CSIR) Campus, Meiring Naudé Road, Brummeria, Pretoria;
  - (b) by registered post to Private Bag X894, Pretoria, 0001;
  - (c) by email to [paia@dst.gov.za](mailto:paia@dst.gov.za).
- 8.4 The Director-General or his/her delegate may request additional information from the complainant or a meeting with the complainant to discuss the complaint.

- 8.5 The Director-General will consider the complaint and make a decision no later than three months after receipt of the complaint, and inform the complainant of the decision in writing.
- 8.6 If the complainant is not satisfied with this decision, he/she may lodge an appeal with the Minister of Science and Technology. This must be done within one month of the decision referred to in par. 8.5, and the Minister will make a decision no later than three months after receipt of the complaint, and inform the complainant of the decision in writing.
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Printed by and obtainable from the Government Printer, Bosman Street, Private Bag X85, Pretoria, 0001

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