
GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT**NO. 793****02 SEPTEMBER 2015****SCHEDULE****DRAFT OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY****NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT****1. PREAMBLE**

In the era prior to democracy in South Africa, Government used English and Afrikaans as the official languages of communication. In 1994, the multilingual character of South Africa was officially recognised and eleven languages were introduced as official languages. These are isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) also establishes Pan South African Language Board to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all official languages; the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and Sign language. The Board is also required to promote and ensure respect for all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa (including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu) as well as languages used for religious purposes in South Africa (such as Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit).

The use of all languages in the public service has been and continues to be a barrier towards improved and efficient service delivery, in the sense that official languages are not being fully utilised in an effective manner to communicate with the broader population. The promotion of multilingualism in the public administration space has been complicated by the lack of a clearly defined official languages policy, leading to the use of English and Afrikaans as dominant languages.

It is for this reason that government has introduced the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), which prescribes that every national department, national public entity and national public enterprise must adopt a language policy regarding its use of official languages for government purposes. It is therefore incumbent on the National School of Government (the NSG) to develop an Official Languages Policy, in responding to the prescripts of the Constitution and this legislation.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to define the use of official languages by the NSG in all forms of official communication, including the recognition of the use of other languages, sign language and Braille, as well as the promotion of good language management for cost-effective and efficient learning and development of public servants.

3. SCOPE

The provisions and scope of the Policy apply to all the NSG employees (including those contracted to undertake NSG activities for or on behalf of the School), to clients (being public servants and other learners of the School) and citizens of our country.

4. NATURE OF SERVICES OFFERED BY THE NSG

The National School of Government is, in terms of current legislation, a national department reporting to the Minister for Public Service and Administration, with a mandate of providing or facilitating the provision of training and development in the public service. The NSG provides generic training focused on improving skills in leadership, management and administration (including front-line services) in the public service. In addition, towards the professionalization of the public service, the NSG provides compulsory induction to all newly appointed public servants and an orientation programme for unemployed youth graduates aspiring for internship, learnership and employment opportunities in the public service.

5. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The NSG shall endeavour to use the 11 official languages towards improving communication with citizens and clients. In accordance with the Regulations: Use of Official Languages Act, 2012, the NSG shall adopt three languages, which are **English, Setswana** and **IsiZulu** as the three official languages for NSG business purposes. Given that the nature of the NSG services of learning and development cover a national spread of public servants (including those in municipalities), the rationale for the selection of Setswana and IsiZulu as official languages in addition to English, is that according to Census 2011 statistics, these are the most spoken languages (Sotho 4 million speakers and Nguni 11.5 million speakers)

English is the transactional language (spoken and written) for all forms of communication for operational purposes. The NSG will undertake communication with citizens and clients in English, unless the initiator of communication prefers to use Setswana or IsiZulu (or any of the other official languages, as well as Sign language) with the NSG. The School is then obliged to evaluate circumstances to provide (immediately or later) a response using same vernacular, including the possibility of recorded audio communication and/ or braille for the visually impaired. Where required, the NSG will also make available services to communicate in Sign language.

6. USAGE

The NSG will undertake the following:

- Provide all forms of learning and development (i.e. curriculum material, course/ programme facilitation, quotations and invoices, certificates, etc.) in English. The NSG may use Setswana or IsiZulu (or any of the other official languages) for purposes of course/ programme facilitation, where customised learning and development is provided to a specific group and based on a request from the recipient institution for the use of a particular vernacular.
- Use English in all marketing and communication related material, including banners and brochures unless material is developed for events conducted for an event with specific groups as determined in consultation with the Language Unit at the NSG, in line with the intent and provisions of this policy. The information contained on the NSG website remains to be in English; however, the NSG will over time translate some of the core business information using Setswana and IsiZulu.
- All training certificates issued by the NSG shall be written in English.

- Use English for public notices (e.g. advertisements for vacancies) and where required, as determined in consultation with the Language Unit at the NSG, in line with the intent and provisions of this policy, implement the use of the other two official languages.
- Use the three official languages for signage in public access facilities at its premises. Additionally, aspects related to service delivery improvement (such as service standards and complaints management procedures) will be publicised in the three official languages.
- Use English as its primary language for official publications (e.g. Annual Report, Strategic and Annual Performance Plans) and any government reports that the NSG produces. All documents, records and transcripts of the NSG will be maintained in English; unless otherwise required or necessary, as determined in consultation with the Language Unit at the NSG, the use of the two official languages will be implemented.
- Conduct all hearings (including internal disciplinary hearings) and other official proceedings in English, unless the use of *any* of the official languages is required as determined by the Presiding Officer of the hearing (including through applicable legislation)

7. LANGUAGE UNIT

The NSG may, over time, establish such unit and/or make arrangements to incorporate the language management function within the broader communications function of the NSG. The functions required of such unit will, nonetheless, be immediately fulfilled through Language Unit Officer, to be designated by the NSG Principal immediately upon approval of this Policy.

8. ACCESS

The NSG's "Use of Official Languages Policy" will be made available and accessible to citizens and clients by publishing in the three adopted official languages through hard copy (displayed at citizen and client service points in the NSG) as well as electronically (made available through e-mail on request and posted on the departmental website). The Policy will also be available in braille and audio recorded. Citizens and clients will also be encouraged to provide comments and suggestions towards improving this Policy over time.

9. COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

In line with the Act and Regulations, the NSG must provide mechanisms wherein any person who is dissatisfied with the use of official and non-official languages by the NSG may lodge a complaint. In terms of section 4(f) of the Act, a complaint may be lodged and addressed to the Principal of the NSG in terms of the NSG Complaints and Compliments Handling Policy.