

SSI.PUB.002.03


# Language Policy

June 2018

Direct any enquiries regarding this policy to:  
Chief Director: Publishing Services  
Stats SA, Private Bag x44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa.

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This done and signed in Pretoria on behalf of Statistics South Africa as the employer on the 29 day of June 2018

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_  
PP Statistician-General

**REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND MANDATE**

**Regulatory framework**

The Language policy for Stats SA is based on the following constitutional and legislative provisions:

1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996  
 Section 6(1) which afforded the official status to all 11 official languages, namely: *Tshivenda, Sesotho, SiSwati, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele, Sepedi, Setswana, Afrikaans, Xitsonga, IsiZulu and English.*  
  
 Section 6(3) of the Constitution states that:  
*'The national government and provincial government may use any particular official languages for purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned...'*  
  
 Section (30) of the Constitution also states:  
*'Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice...'*
2. Statistics Act 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999)
3. Section (1.3) of the National Language Policy Framework, 2003, which emphasises the importance of
  - (a) *Reinforcing of government responsibility to ensure that the benefits of service delivery are distributed equally by providing equitable access to services for all citizens irrespective of language in order to enhance their participation and voice in government matters.*
  - (b) *The management of language to ensure the functional use of all the official languages and to promote the public image of the Government.*

This is in line with the language stipulations as outlined in section 4(2)(c) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012), stating that every national department must adopt a language policy which must:

*'Stipulate how official languages will be used, amongst other things, in effectively communicating with the public, official notices, government publications and inter- and intra-government communications.'*

4. The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000)
5. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (*Batho Pele* White Paper), 1997

**Mandate**

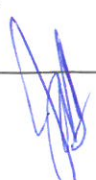
The Language Policy will facilitate accessibility of official statistics as stipulated in section 3(2)(e) and section 7(2)(k) of the Statistics Act where the Statistician-General must seek to ensure appropriate public awareness of statistical collection and activities.

**Normative references**

Statistics South Africa Style Guide  
 Multilingual Statistical Terminology Guide 2013

**Amendments to this policy**

This Policy is an amendment to the Language Policy, which was approved by the Statistician-General on 07 October 2013.



<b>DISTRIBUTION LIST</b>
1. Publishing Services Project Team
2. Chief Director: Publication Services
3. Chief Directors Forum
4. Departmental Bargaining Chamber
5. Executive Committee
6. Statistician-General



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## 1. Introduction

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is mandated by the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999) to ensure that the dissemination of official statistics is impartial and that it is also accessible. Therefore, taking into consideration the multilingual nature of South Africa, and the illiteracy level, language becomes a relevant tool in breaking the linguistic barrier to enhance the collection of and access to official statistics. This Language Policy is based on the principle of inclusivity. That is, no one should be discriminated against when it comes to access to information on the basis of language.

In order for Stats SA to deliver on its objective to expand the statistical base, depth and geographic spread of official statistics, the different language groups that are afforded official status should be taken into consideration to ensure effective internal and external communication processes. The Language Policy of Stats SA therefore becomes crucial as it seeks to give guidance on how language matters should be applied in order to comply with the constitutional language stipulations as Stats SA raises awareness of its programmes/activities and collects data from different language groups. It is therefore crucial that the linguistic diversity of the country be taken into account. This policy will also enhance the quality of responses during the data collection process. This will in turn improve the quality and credibility of statistics produced.

## 2. Definitions and abbreviations

<b>Constitution:</b>	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
<b>Council:</b>	The South African Statistics Council, established by section 8(1) of the Statistics Act (Act No. 6 of 1999)
<b>External communication:</b>	Communication between Stats SA and external stakeholders
<b>Functional multilingualism:</b>	An approach in which the demographic, economic and attitudinal factors contemplated in section 6(3) of the Constitution are taken into account in language planning and policy development so as to ensure effective communication and participatory democracy
<b>Internal communication:</b>	Communication with Stats SA employees
<b>Interpreter:</b>	A person who transposes or interprets an utterance from one language into another
<b>Interpreting:</b>	In relation to oral utterances, means the transposing of utterances of one language into utterances of another language and, in relation to signed utterances, means the transposing of sign language signs into a spoken language and the other way round, with " <b>interpret</b> " having a corresponding meaning
<b>Language awareness:</b>	Consciousness of how language is used in society to empower or disempower
<b>Language of record:</b>	An official language chosen for keeping record or archiving proceedings and procedures of Stats SA

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<b>Language rights:</b>	The linguistic human rights that are established by legislation, which determine the situations in which residents can choose to use their home language
<b>Liaison interpreting:</b>	The process whereby an interpreter interprets from one language into another and back, most often in a short consecutive interpreting mode, in situations where an employee of Stats SA does not understand the language of another employee or other employees in labour disputes or at disciplinary hearing
<b>Multilingualism:</b>	The use of several of the official languages within Stats SA, in written and oral communication
<b>Official language:</b>	An official language referred to in terms of section 6(1) of the Constitution
<b>PanSALB:</b>	The Pan South African Language Board, established by the Pan South African Language Board Act, 1995 (Act No. 59 of 1995)
<b>Translation:</b>	The transposing of a text from one language into another, with "translate" having a corresponding meaning and
<b>Working language:</b>	An official language chosen by Stats SA as the language most practicable to use in a particular communication event

### 3. Purpose and objectives

This policy gives guidance on how language matters should be handled in order for Stats SA to improve the communication processes with all its stakeholders.

The policy therefore has the following objectives:

- 3.1 Improve on both internal and external communication processes;
- 3.2 Improve on access to official statistics by all language groups within South Africa;
- 3.3 Translate language rights as enshrined in the Constitution into a coherent and effective approach to multilingualism within the organisation;
- 3.4 Promote equitable use of official languages, especially during data collection (censuses and large surveys);
- 3.5 Protect language diversity and respect for multilingualism and unity in diversity;
- 3.6 Provide for redress for the previously marginalised official indigenous languages; and
- 3.7 Reduce the information gap between Stats SA and information users.

### 4. Scope of application

This policy is applicable to employees of Stats SA, with regard to language usage.



## 5. Policy provisions

### 5.1 Policy recommendations

- 5.1.1 All South Africa's 11 official languages shall be used in the communication process. This will be implemented through a functional multilingual approach.
- 5.1.2 To ensure better response rates, the language of the respondents in each province or district will be taken into consideration when communicating with the community or during data collection.
- 5.1.3 Statistical terminology based on Stats SA's publication, *Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa* will be developed in all official languages on an ongoing basis to facilitate the translation of questionnaires and promotional materials into all official languages for surveys to increase response rates and improve the quality of responses.
- 5.1.4 Information that is of public interest such as promotional material, census and publicity material shall be translated into the 11 official languages.
- 5.1.5 Monitoring mechanisms for quality assurance of translation and editing services shall be developed.
- 5.1.6 The Language Services unit shall coordinate the development of terminology in the 11 official languages.
- 5.1.7 The collection of data for all surveys such as the census shall be done in the main languages of the particular community.

The functional multilingualism approach will be implemented as follows:

### 5.2 Internal spoken communication

- 5.2.1 English will be the working language in spoken intradepartmental and interdepartmental communication.
- 5.2.2 In general, labour relations matters at Stats SA shall be conducted in English and an interpreting service shall be made available, on request, for those who cannot speak, understand or express themselves in English, or for deaf employees.

### 5.3 External spoken communication

- 5.3.1 Stats SA shall, in their spoken communication, strive to serve all their clients in the language of their choice. The recruitment of officials especially fieldworkers and communication officers at provincial and district levels should take into consideration the languages spoken in these areas in order to ensure an effective and meaningful communication process.
- 5.3.2 Stats SA shall provide, on request, interpreting services into the official languages of South Africa (including sign language) when important or strategic information is to be conveyed orally to groups.
- 5.3.3 To ensure an effective communication process with delegates or stakeholders from countries whose official language(s) is not English, interpreting services in the foreign language will be sourced.



#### 5.4 Internal written communication

- 5.4.1 To promote operational efficiency, English shall be the working language of Stats SA for written communication regarding intradepartmental and interdepartmental administration, provided English is understood by everyone in the communication process.
- 5.4.2 In conducting meetings, members of the meeting should agree on the language that should be used, taking into consideration the aim of the meeting, languages, education and position levels of the members, provided the choice of the language is not used to exclude any employee. However, records of the meeting should be kept in English for administrative purposes.
- 5.4.3 The use of plain language in internal documents shall be encouraged to facilitate understanding and improve communication.

#### 5.5 External written communication

- 5.5.1 All statistical publications (releases and reports) will be published in English. However, a footnote will be put on the publication stating that the publication can be made available in any official languages of the country, on request.
- 5.5.2 All publicity material and information on surveys and census, shall be made available in all the official languages and for any other operations this will be done taking into account availability of necessary resources. Budgets for translation services should form part of the project plans.
- 5.5.3 All Stats SA external correspondence shall be translated in the official language in which the original communication was received, provided that an English translation of the document is archived for record purposes and possible legal proceedings. Stats SA shall inform the client that the English text will be used in the legal proceedings. The client shall be informed of the turnaround time to produce such translations in the required language(s).
- 5.5.4 English should be used by Stats SA for international communication, but Stats SA shall make translation services available for ad hoc communication in the preferred language of the country concerned.
- 5.5.5 The use of plain language in external documents shall be encouraged to facilitate understanding and improve communication.

#### 5.6 People with language disabilities

- 5.6.1 Stats SA shall, on request and where practicably possible, provide for the needs of people with language disabilities. For example, provision of sign language posters and sign language interpreting services to facilitate communication between the hearing and the deaf employees and providing audio or Braille documents for blind employees in consultation with the Employment Equity component.

### 6. Role players and stakeholders

#### 6.1 Roles and responsibilities

##### 6.1.1 *Publication Services (Language Services unit)*

To ensure the successful implementation of this policy, the Language Services unit will:

- 6.1.1.1 facilitate and coordinate the implementation of this policy through the provision of translation, editing, language training (in official languages and foreign languages) and terminology development services;

- 6.1.1.2 conduct regular language policy reviews to assess the appropriateness of the existing policy and practices of Stats SA, and make recommendations for the improvement of the policy and practices;
- 6.1.1.3 raise awareness of the policy to ensure compliance;
- 6.1.1.4 report annually to the relevant language control bodies, e.g. the National Language Forum and PanSALB, on progress with the implementation of the policy; and
- 6.1.1.5 create awareness among all Stats SA employees of the role of PanSALB as the official watchdog and protector of their language rights, and among different clusters and divisional heads of the need to avoid using one language at the expense of the other official languages and so violate the language rights of the employees.

## **6.2 Delegations**

As per attached Annexure A.

## **7. Controls**

### **7.1 Monitoring**

The monitoring of this policy will be conducted by the Publication Services division. This shall be done to ensure that the documents translated and produced by Stats SA facilitate effective communication.

### **7.2 Reporting**

Reports on compliance as well the violation of the language rights stipulated herein shall be submitted to the Chief Director: Publication Services. The implementation of the language policy of any public institution shall be reported to the Department of Arts and Culture (National Language Forum) annually as stipulated in the National Language Policy Framework.

### **7.3 Evaluation**

The implementation of the policy will be evaluated based on the number of documents of public interest translated and quality assured and the terminology development process. This shall be done annually as the newly developed terminology in all official languages shall be tested for effectiveness. That is, users will be allowed to give comments on the use of terminology, whereas the quality of translation will be evaluated by the Language Services unit, for each translated product or document.

### **7.4 Review**

This policy must be reviewed every three years. Any amendments will be issued by a practice note which will be put into the policy when it is due for review.

## **8. Compliance and non-compliance**

The Language Services unit will sign off all translated work done for Stats SA. No translated documents shall be published or considered official without the sign-off from the Language Services unit of the Publication

Services division. In cases of non-compliance, the relevant component shall be required to rectify the matter, as non-complying documents will not be published.

The Pan South African Language Board is the overall watchdog with regard to the implementation of language policies. Therefore, any violation or discrimination of any person on linguistic grounds must be reported and resolved internally, failing which, the matter should be reported to the Pan South African Language Board.

## **9. Code of conduct**

The Code of Conduct as prescribed in the Public Service Regulations, 2016 as amended is applicable.





**Annexure A: Delegations**

<b>Policy clause</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Lowest rank of delegation</b>	<b>Remarks/notes</b>
Section 8(e) and (f) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012)	<p>Promote parity of esteem and equitable treatment of official languages of the Republic and facilitate equitable access to services and information of the national department, national public entity or national public enterprise concerned.</p> <p>Every language unit must promote good language management by the national department, national public entity or national public enterprise concerned.</p>	Coordinating and facilitating roles	<p>Deputy Director General: Marketing, Communications and Publishing</p> <p>Chief Director: Publication Services</p>	Chief Director: Publication Services, Director: Publishing Services and Deputy Director: Language Services will be responsible for the facilitation of equitable access to services and information and promotion of good language management.

