



# international relations & cooperation

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Department:  
International Relations and Cooperation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **LANGUAGE POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**



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## **1. Preamble**

- 1.1 The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012) (“the Act”) provides for the regulation and monitoring of the use of official languages by national government for official purposes. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (“DIRCO”), listed as a national department, has developed a Language Policy (“the Policy”) in compliance with the Act.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Policy is to comply with section 4(1) of the Act. It also takes into account the Use of Official Languages Regulations, 2013, and the National Language Policy Framework, 2003. All these documents intend to give effect to section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

## **2. Purpose**

The Policy outlines how DIRCO will comply with the provisions of the Act and the use of official languages to improve service delivery.

## **3. Scope**

The Policy addresses the linguistic needs of the Department, in its interaction with stakeholders and the public, thereby providing a more effective and multilingual communication strategy. The provisions of the Policy are applicable to all DIRCO employees in their interaction with members of the public and/or stakeholders interacting with DIRCO.

## **4. Nature of DIRCO**

- 4.1 DIRCO’s vision is that of an African continent which is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable. DIRCO is committed to promoting South Africa’s national interests and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all.
- 4.2 DIRCO focuses on the implementation of the country’s foreign policy and has adopted English as the preferred language of communication with relevant national and international stakeholders. DIRCO operates in an international environment where six official languages in which business is conducted, are recognised, namely English, French, Mandarin, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. Due to the international sphere in which DIRCO operates, the focus of language proficiency is on English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, as well as Portuguese and training is provided to DIRCO officials in these languages through its Language Training Unit that resides within the Branch: Diplomatic Training, Research and Development and offers interpreting and translation services in these languages.

## **5. Official languages of DIRCO**

Owing to the international nature of DIRCO's mandate, the language for all official means of communication will be English. However, an attempt will be made to accommodate all official languages where practically possible.

## 6. Use of official languages selected

6.1. This Policy should be seen as an ongoing process towards multilingualism. While DIRCO is in favour of encouraging linguistic diversity, it is not its core business, and, due to financial constraints, it will have to find a balance between the language preferences and needs of its clients (internally and externally) and financial considerations.

6.2. The choice of the above mentioned official languages is based on:

- 6.2.1. usage, according to the profile of members of the public requesting services from DIRCO
- 6.2.2. practicality
- 6.2.3. financial implications
- 6.2.4. regional circumstances

6.3. DIRCO will apply the Policy as follows:

Stakeholder	Language(s)
Inter- and intra-governmental and international communication	All official written communication will be in English
Written communication with members of the public	English
Verbal communication with members of the public	All official languages where practically possible
Manual on the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act No 2 of 2000)	English, IsiZulu and Sesotho
Public Participation Programmes	Language to be determined by the dominant language of the province, depending on the content of communication, form of the communication, target audience of the communication, feasibility and cost effectiveness. English will have a presence in all provinces.
Official publications of the department	English – owing to the cost of translations and additional layout and printing.

	The Department will strive to translate the forewords of official statutory publications, such as the Annual Report, subject to practicality and available resources. These summaries will be published on the DIRCO website.
Conferences and workshops arranged by the department	English
Communication with the hearing or sight impaired.	On request, DIRCO will endeavour to facilitate Sign Language interpreting and conversion of text into Braille or alternatively, audio, subject to practicality and available resources.

## 7. Access to The Policy

7.1 The Policy will be published on the Department's website, namely [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za).

## 8. Complaints mechanism

8.1 Any complaints regarding this Policy should be addressed to the Director-General, as required by Section 4 (f) of The Act. The complaint should be addressed as follows:

**The Director-General,  
Department of International Relations and Cooperation  
Service Delivery Improvement Unit  
Private Bag X152, Pretoria, 0001**

The complaints will be dealt with in terms of the existing approved "Citizen Complaints and Compliments Management Framework".

## 9. Review of the policy

This Policy will be reviewed as and when required.

**APPROVAL**



**Ambassador JM Matjila**

**DATE:**

19/05/2015