

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on how the South African Weather Service (SAWS) interacts with its stakeholders in respect of language use. This is to ensure effective implementation of the SAWS mandate as well as achieve compliance with the prescripts of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012) and the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (No. 2 of 2000) in terms of language use.

Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary	1
2.	Effective Date of the Policy	2
3.	Term of the Policy.....	2
4.	Interpretation	2
4.1	Policy Statement.....	2
4.2	Purpose	2
4.3	Policy Objectives.....	2
4.3	Scope	3
4.4	Reference to Other Policies and Governance Frameworks.....	3
4.5	Reference to Statutory and Regulatory requirements	3
4.6	Terms and Definitions.....	3
4.8	Abbreviations.....	3
5	Key Role Players and Responsibilities.....	3
6	General Principles of the Policy.....	4
7	General	4

1. Executive Summary

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) is a leading provider of useful and innovative weather, climate and related products and services. The language policy is aimed at fulfilling constitutional language requirements of SAWS in-line with the organisations philosophy and in compliance with, The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012). Through this policy, SAWS commits to the use of relevant official languages in the execution of its mandate, the promotion of parity of esteem and equitable treatment of the official languages of the Republic as well as equitable access to the services and information of SAWS in line with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (No. 2 of 2000).

This policy provides guidance on various aspects of language policy monitoring and regulation including but not limited to, how official languages will be used in effectively communicating with the public, describes how members of the public can access the language policy, as well as provides a complaints mechanism to enable members of the public to lodge complaints regarding the use of official languages by SAWS.

Language Policy: South African Weather Service

The Act requires that a language unit be established. Within SAWS this function will be managed through the Corporate Communications unit which will amongst other responsibilities, facilitate the regulatory and monitoring responsibilities as well as related activities aimed at promoting constitutional language equity and language rights as required by a democratic dispensation.

The provisions of this document constitute a Policy and are therefore binding.

2. Effective Date of the Policy

This Policy, as amended from time to time, shall become effective on the date of approval by the Board of SAWS. The Policy was approved by the SAWS Board on 28 October 2016.

3. Term of the Policy

This Policy shall remain effective until it is repealed, amended or replaced.

4. Interpretation

4.1 Policy Statement

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) is a provider of useful and innovative weather, climate, and related products and services with both a public good and commercial mandate. In line with the organisations philosophy and ethos, and in compliance with, The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012). SAWS commits to the use of relevant official languages in the execution of its mandate. SAWS also commits to the promotion of parity of esteem and equitable treatment of the official languages of the Republic as well as equitable access to the services and information of SAWS in line with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000), to the extent possible.

Through this policy, SAWS provides for the regulation and monitoring of the use of official languages by the Corporate Communications unit which functions as a virtual language unit, monitoring and reporting on the use of official languages by SAWS as well as provide for matters connected therewith. This policy shall be supplemented by the SAWS Communications and Media Strategy.

4.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on how SAWS interacts with its stakeholders in respect of language use. This is to ensure effective implementation of the SAWS mandate as well as achieve compliance with the prescripts of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012) and the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (No. 2 of 2000) in terms of language use.

4.3 Policy Objectives

This Policy:

- 4.3.1 regulates how SAWS responds to the prescripts of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No 12. of 2012);
- 4.3.2 provides guidance on the identification of official languages that SAWS will use for government purposes;

Language Policy: South African Weather Service

- 4.3.3 stipulate how official languages will be used in effectively communicating with the public, official notices, publications, and inter and intra-government communications;
- 4.3.4 describes how members of the public can access the language policy; and
- 4.3.5 provides a complaints mechanism to enable members of the public to lodge complaints regarding the use of official languages by SAWS.

4.4 Scope

- 4.4.1 This Policy shall apply to all SAWS employees, including all SAWS Board members, the Executive Management Committee, Senior Managers and other employees.

4.5 Reference to Other Policies and Governance Frameworks

- 4.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- 4.5.2 SAWS Communications Policy

4.6 Reference to Statutory and Regulatory requirements

- 4.6.1 South African Weather Service Act, 2001 (No. 8 of 2001 as amended)
- 4.6.2 The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012)

4.7 Terms and Definitions

- 4.7.1 **Act** shall mean The Use of Official Languages, 2012 (No. 12 of 2012).
- 4.7.2 **CEO** shall mean Chief Executive Officer of the South African Weather Service.
- 4.7.3 **Constitution** shall mean The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- 4.7.4 **Minister** shall mean Minister of Environmental Affairs.
- 4.7.5 **Policy** shall mean The Language Policy of the South African Weather Service.
- 4.7.6 **Regulations** shall mean the regulations in terms of the Act.

4.8 Abbreviations

- 4.8.1 SAWS – South African Weather Service
- 4.8.2 SASL – South African Sign Language

5. Key Role Players and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The competency for managing the language policy and use of official languages will be managed by the Corporate Communications department. The functions of the department in this regard are to:
 - 5.1.1 advise the SAWS Executive Committee and Board on the development, adoption and implementation of this Policy;
 - 5.1.2 monitor and assess the use of official languages by SAWS;
 - 5.1.3 monitor and assess compliance with this Policy;
 - 5.1.4 include matters of compliance and adherence in SAWS' quarterly reports;
 - 5.1.5 promote parity of esteem and equitable treatment of the official languages of the Republic;
 - 5.1.6 facilitate equitable access to the services and information of SAWS in line with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000); and
 - 5.1.7 promote good language management.

Language Policy: South African Weather Service

6. General Principles of the Policy

The Principles underpinning this policy are:

- 6.1 commitment to the promotion of official languages in the Republic in order to ensure constitutional language equity and language rights as required by a democratic dispensation;
- 6.2 recognition of multilingualism as a resource to maximise collaborative partnerships in nation building, economic development and social cohesion;
- 6.3 promotion of good language management by SAWS to ensure efficient administration that meets the needs of the public and ensures equitable access to the services and information of SAWS;
- 6.4 prevention of the use of any language(s) for the purposes of exploitation, domination and discrimination within SAWS; and
- 6.5 support for special redress programmes for previously marginalised official indigenous languages.

7. General

7.1. Training and capacity building

- 7.1.1 In order to achieve the professional and efficient implementation of this policy, the Corporate Communications department will advise on training and capacity building required for the effective implementation of this policy.

7.2. Official languages of the South African Weather Service

SAWS has adopted English as the business language and shows recognition for all 11 official languages of the Republic for purposes of this policy.

7.3. Communication with members of the public whose language of choice is South African Sign Language

- 7.3.1. A member of the public who wishes to communicate with SAWS in South African Sign Language must notify SAWS in writing.
- 7.3.2. SAWS will arrange for appropriate interpretation services following the request having been received.

7.4. Publication of and access to this policy

- 7.4.1 This policy will be published in English.
- 7.4.2 Translations to any of the other South African official languages will be made available upon request.
- 7.4.3 The policy will be available on the SAWS website (<http://www.weathersa.co.za>).
- 7.4.4 The policy will be made available in Braille or in audio on request.
- 7.4.5 The policy will be displayed at all SAWS offices in such a manner and place that it can be read by the public.
- 7.4.6 All the above conditions will be subject to the conditions indicated in 7.6.

Language Policy: South African Weather Service

7.5. Complaints mechanism

- 7.5.1. Any person who is dissatisfied with a decision of SAWS regarding its use of official languages may lodge a complaint in writing to the SAWS Corporate Communications department.
- 7.5.2. Any complaint must be lodged in writing within three months of the complaint arising.
- 7.5.3. Any complaint lodged must state the name, address and contact information of the person lodging it.
- 7.5.4. Any complaint lodged must provide a full and detailed description of the complaint.
- 7.5.5. The responsible function may request a complainant to supply additional information necessary to consider the complaint and to attend a meeting for the purpose of making an oral enquiry into the complaint.
- 7.5.6. The responsible function will consider the complaint and respond in writing, informing the complainant of the decision.
- 7.5.7. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Corporate Communications department, he or she may make use of escalation options provided for in paragraph 7.5.8 of this policy.
- 7.5.8. Escalation of complaints in writing will be handled by the General Manager: Corporate Affairs and the CEO as required.

7.6. Choice of official languages to be used

SAWS shall endeavour to use all the official languages in its communication with its stakeholders depending on the conditions as indicated in i – v below. It will endeavour, as far as practicable, to use the indigenous language of choice for radio, television and other broadcast purposes.

The following factors will be taken into account in arriving at the choice of official language(s) SAWS will use in each context/ situation

- i. Usage
- ii. Practicality
- iii. Expense
- iv. Regional circumstances
- v. The balance of the needs and preferences of the public it serves

The Table below indicates how SAWS will use the official languages.

SAWS purpose	Languages
Inter- and intra-government communication	English
Communicating with members of the public (official written correspondence)	The official languages of the Republic with due regard to the criteria outlined in clause 7.6 above.
Communication with members of the public (oral communication)	The official languages of the Republic with due regard to the criteria outlined in clause 7.6 above.
Official publications intended for public distribution (notices on websites, advertisements, forms and signage on buildings)	The official languages of the Republic with due regard to the criteria outlined in clause 7.6 above.
Public hearings (Izimbizo) and other official proceedings	The official languages of the Republic with due regard to the criteria outlined in clause 7.6 above.
Communication with the hearing or sight impaired	Facilitated Sign Language interpreting , conversion of text into Braille or alternatively audio on request, subject to 7.6 above.
International communication	English