

# Working Plan South Africa 2021-2024



## 1. Policy framework

- Union for the Dutch Language Treaty (9 September 1980), Article 3d, 4g and 5g
- Declaration of intent for further collaboration between South Africa and the Union for the Dutch Language (Taalunie) (20 November 2010)
- Memorandum of Understanding on collaboration in the field of Human Language Technologies (January 2012 – expired, but still a reference document)
- Framework Agreement between the General Secretariat of the Taalunie (Union for the Dutch Language) and the Afrikaanse Taalraad (Language Council), for the exchange of knowledge and experience and for collaboration to further support and promote the Dutch and Afrikaans languages (30 January 2020)
- Long-term policy 2020-2024 (Committee of Ministers, 15 June 2020)



*Hans Bennis and Conrad Steenkamp sign the cooperation agreement in the presence of Kris Van de Poel*

## 2. Context and basic principles

- Dutch and Afrikaans are different though related languages. The mutual linguistic connection offers perspectives and opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience in a language-related context. In addition to the linguistic relationship, the South African approach to multilingualism also offers such perspectives.
- Dutch language and literature are embedded in the Afrikaans university courses. This makes South Africa an important centre for the international study of the Dutch language, literature and history.
- Cultural expressions (literature, poetry, music) can count on a certain degree of mutual interest among a wider audience, as a result of the linguistic relationship.
- As a result of the historical ties, there are a large number of original Dutch sources (literature and archives) available in South Africa.
- The Taalunie is an organization for the Dutch language and it promotes activities that are relevant and in the interest of the Dutch language. At the same time these activities may be relevant for another language (e.g. Afrikaans), although this is not the first objective.

### 3. Strategic objectives 2020-2024

- **Internationalization:** exploit the linguistic relationship between Dutch and Afrikaans as an additional approach for the study of the Dutch language, literature and history *intra* and *extra muros*;
- **Inclusivity:** further expand the collaboration with ATR as an organization that unites all Afrikaans speakers, and explore the collaboration with other language groups;
- **Creativity and reading:** stimulate cultural creation and cultural enrichment through the combination of cultural distance and linguistic affinity between Dutch and Afrikaans.

### 4. Activities per focus area

#### Focus area 1 – Standard language

##### Tanguage Portal



We maintain the collaboration with South African organizations within the framework of the Language Portal, which at this stage incorporates Dutch, Frisian and Afrikaans (via ViVA) and will be expanded with two more official South African languages, i.e. Setswana and IsiXhosa (via SADiLar): [www.taalportaal.org](http://www.taalportaal.org)

##### Language and Speech Technology

We will encourage the collaboration between the INT (for the Dutch language) and ViVA and CText (for Afrikaans) with a view to access or develop language-technological applications and resources for both languages.

## Focus area 2 – Dutch and other languages and language varieties



### Intensifying our collaboration with ATR

We consider the Taalunie and ATR two central policy organizations, each offering access to other organizations with more executive tasks in the fields of Dutch, Afrikaans and other languages. We engage in mutual exchange, such as between the 'Staat van het Nederlands' / 'Stand van Afrikaans' (surveys on the use of languages in the different societies).

### Language policy higher education

since 2017 the Taalunie has a research program on language policy in higher education, with several universities in The Netherlands, Flanders, Suriname and the Caribbean. It remains an objective of the Taalunie to also include South African universities in the research program, and thus further broaden its international perspective, also towards non-Dutch contexts. We cooperate on the principle of mutual reinforcement between Dutch and Afrikaans as languages of scholarship and science.

### Receptive language skills

we stimulate the use of receptive language skills (*lingua receptiva*) between speakers of Dutch and Afrikaans, and offer tips to promote mutual intelligibility.

## Focus area 3 – Dutch education in Flanders and the Netherlands

### Making Dutch studies more appealing

we involve South African departments of Dutch and Afrikaans in initiatives in order to strengthen the interaction of the Dutch studies both inside and outside the language area. The Afrikaans perspective, in all its forms, can enrich the content of the Dutch courses in Flanders and the Netherlands.

### Reading and literacy

we are interested in exchange in the field of literacy and the promotion of reading with partners in South Africa.

## Focus area 4 – Dutch education outside of the language area

### Chair of Dutch

The Taalunie aspires to collaborate with the Dutch, Flemish and South African universities for the establishment of a rotating chair of Dutch language in South Africa, with two tracks: language proficiency and scientific research.

### Dutch language acquisition

The Taalunie supports initiatives that improve the active Dutch language acquisition by South African students, so that the Dutch language is not merely seen as a study object or an auxiliary science for Afrikaans, but also as a living language that opens doors to the Low Countries and the Dutch Caribbean.

### Support of international Dutch studies

The Taalunie supports the quality of higher Dutch studies worldwide, which also includes Dutch studies in South Africa, with the following programs:

- Summer courses for students;
- Professionalization of lecturers;
- Quality support of the departments;
- Stimulation of networking.



## Focus area 5 – Language and Culture

### Connection of Dutch departments with cultural activities in South Africa

In accordance with the long-term policy plan, the Taalunie strengthens its cultural networks and implements programs for international cultural exchanges. In doing so, we strive for an interaction between support of initiatives such as cultural festivals, and support for Dutch university departments (e.g. guest writers' arrangement). Through the Expertise Centre for Literary Translations, we focus on promoting translations of Dutch literature into Afrikaans and vice versa.

### Cultural exchange between South Africa and the Dutch language area



we encourage the exchange with South African cultural operators through e.g. the Festival for Afrikaans, and a series of online meetings with South African writers in collaboration with the Zuid-Afrikahuis.

### DBNL

we promote the inclusion of original Dutch linguistic and literary work from South Africa in the DBNL (The Digital Library of Dutch Literature). We also promote the existing Afrikaans works in the DBNL.

### Digitization of VOC-Daghregisters

In 2019, the Taalunie reached a tripartite agreement together with the National Archives of the Netherlands and the Tracing History Trust in South Africa to further digitize the VOC-Daghregisters pertaining to the Cape from the 17th and 18th centuries, and make them freely available online for further research, using the Transkribus tool. In the event of a positive evaluation of this project and tool, other opportunities to access Dutch language archives in South-Africa will be considered, with a possible connection with the “Dutch Sources” project of the University of Amsterdam.

## 5. Preferential institutional partners

- South African government:
  - Embassy in The Hague
  - Embassy in Brussels
- Afrikaans Language Council
- Suider Afrikaanse Vereniging vir Neerlandistiek (SAVN)
- Diplomatic representatives of The Netherlands, Belgium and Flanders in South Africa:
  - Dutch embassy, Pretoria
  - General Representation of the Government of Flanders, Pretoria
  - Dutch Consulate General, Cape Town
  - Belgian Consulate General, Cape Town
- Other partners:
  - Relevant research institutes such as the Institute for the Dutch Language, the Meertens Institute, Sadilar, ViVA, Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns
  - Zuid-Afrikahuis Amsterdam; Vlaams-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging; Vectis; Stichting Afrikaans en de Lage Landen, Algemeen-Nederlands Verbond, Sasnev
  - Chairs in Amsterdam and Ghent (and other temporary (rotating) chairs)
  - Dutch departments in South Africa and Namibia