

National Initiatives:

Role of the National Library of South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

- Libraries are significant in the provision of information for human development and sustainability
- It is through libraries that information is collected and disseminated to society
- As a national heritage institution, NLSA is a critical role player in the facilitation of access to the nation and world's information resources
- The enabling legislative environment lays a solid foundation for active participation within the knowledge economy



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- The enabling South African LIS legislative environment consists of among others:
 - [The Constitution of RSA, Act No. 108 of 1996](#)
 - [Promotion of Access to Information Act, No. 2 of 2000](#)
 - [SA Community Library and Information Services Bill, 2010](#)
 - [Copy Right Act, No. 98 of 1978](#)
 - [Legal Deposit Act, No. 54 of 1997](#)
 - [NCLIS Act, No. 6 of 2001](#)
 - [NLSA Act, No. 92 of 1998](#)
 - [South African Library for the Blind Act, No. 91 of 1998](#)
 - And other legislation and policy framework which impact on the LIS sector

NLSA ACT

To provide for the National Library of South Africa;
for collecting, preserving, making available
and promoting awareness
of the national documentary heritage;
and to provide for matters connected therewith.



OBJECTS OF THE NLSA

The objects of the National Library are to contribute to socio-economic, cultural, educational, scientific and innovative development by collecting, recording, preserving and making available the national documentary heritage and promoting an awareness and appreciation thereof, by fostering information literacy, and by facilitating access to the world's information resources.



FUNCTIONS OF THE NLSA

(I) The functions of the National Library are-

- (a) (i) to build up a complete collection of published documents emanating from or relating to South Africa;
- (ii) to maintain and extend any other collections of published and unpublished documents with the emphasis on documents emanating from and relating to Southern Africa;
- (iii) to promote the optimal management of collections of published documents held in South African libraries as a national resource; and
- (iv) to supplement the national resource contemplated in subparagraph (iii) with selected documents;

- (b) (i) to record the documents contemplated in paragraph (a); and
- (ii) to render a national bibliographic service and to act as the national bibliographic agency;
- (c) to promote optimal access to published documents, nationally and internationally;
- (d) to provide reference and information services, nationally and internationally;
- (e) to act as the national preservation library and to provide conservation services on a national basis;
- (f) to promote awareness and appreciation of the national published documentary heritage; and
- (g) to promote information awareness and information literacy.



STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE NLSA

According to the National Library of South Africa Act 92 of 1998 [Section 4 (2)(b),(c),(f)] the NLSA must amongst others:

- Provide appropriate information products and services
- Provide leadership, guidance and advice to South African libraries and information services
- Undertake planning and co-ordination in co-operation with other library and information services
- Liaise with libraries and other institutions in and outside South Africa



CURRENT NATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Drafting of the LIS Transformation Charter
- Indigenous languages catalogues
- Reprint of classics in indigenous languages
- Integrated library management system
- Preservation and conservation services
- Marketing of the Department of Arts and Culture Conditional Grant



DRAFTING OF THE LIS TRANSFORMATION CHARTER

Working closely with DAC, NLSA implemented NCLIS decisions as follows:

- appointment of the LIS charter Technical Team and the Reference Group
- offered administrative support to the Technical Team and Reference Group throughout the process
- accompanied the Technical Team to all nine provincial consultations and made lead presentations
- organised and hosted the national consultative forum in December 2008 to present the first draft
- The Charter is now at its sixth draft and it is hosted on the NLSA website
- [Draft Transformation Charter](#)

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES CATALOGUES

- *Writing in Nine Tongues* published jointly with Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA) 2007 and launched at the IFLA conference in Durban, August 2007
- New editions were published in 2008 and 2009 by PASA
- A catalogue of South African Literature



REPRINT OF CLASSICS IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

- South Africans were requested to nominate what they consider classics in their respective indigenous languages
- From this nominations the highest nominated 27 titles were reprinted and distributed to community libraries
- Provinces are launching the distribution of these books to their respective libraries
- Reprint of classics (handing over of the Classics to one of the provincial political leaders)



INTEGRATED LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- NLSA has partnered with State Information Technology Agency (SITA) to implement the new library management system in community libraries throughout the country
- The project is to ensure that community libraries nationally have an integrated system
- The newly acquired system is open-source based which aligns itself to the Government Free Open Source Software (FOSS) policy as a directive from South African Cabinet – Aug 2007
- The new system is called SLIMS (SITA Library management system)
- The roll-out of the system started in the most geographic spread province – Northern Cape



PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICES

- NLSA provides preservation and conservation service on a national basis
- NLSA is offering in-service training and establishment of best practice models
- This is to ensure sustainable training of Community libraries staff to deal with disasters as well as other causes of danger to collections



MARKETING OF THE DAC CONDITIONAL GRANT

- Creating visibility of the DAC Grant in particular and the significance of Libraries in general
- Active participation at all LIASA national events and Cape Town Book Fair to create awareness on the importance of the LIS sector
- Provide media coverage more specifically highlighting success stories
- Production of DVD on the impact of the Conditional Grant in community libraries



CONCLUSION

Knowledge contributes immensely towards:

- “Enhancing critical thinking and deepening the roots of democratic principles” (former South African Minister of DAC, Dr Z. Pallo Jordan)
- the creation of social cohesion and the development of a humane society
- building an informed and better citizens
- Attainment of the MDGs and the achievement of the WSIS outcomes

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Thank you