

# MOHOKARE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY LANGUAGE POLICY

## PREAMBLE

**WHEREAS** the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) provides that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents;

**WHEREAS** the Government must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages;

**AND WHEREAS** the Government should ensure the use of at least two of the eleven designated South African languages in official domains;

**NOW THEREFORE** the Municipality subscribes to the Language policy set out in this document and binds itself to ensure that the language policy will be implemented and executed at all levels of administration in its area of jurisdiction.

## Definitions

This section provides definitions of terms used in this policy document unless otherwise indicated.

PanSALB	PanSALB is an acronym for the Pan South African Language Board. PanSALB is a statutory body established in terms of Act 59 of 1995 for, inter alia, the creation of conditions for the development and for the promotion of the equal use and enjoyment of all the official South African languages.
Municipal Languages	Official languages of the Municipality
Within a reasonable period	Within such period of time as may be justifiable to execute the task but not exceed four weeks.
Business of the Municipality	Day to day activities involved in the running of the affairs of the Municipality.
Administrative Purposes	Activities, actions and/or communication relating to the working and/or the affairs of the municipality/a specific area of the Municipality.
Municipal Language Committee	The committee selected by the Municipal Council to implement, monitor and revise the Language policy of the municipality.

## **1. Guiding principles**

The following guidelines underlie the language policy of the Municipality:

- (1) The norms for language policy as contained in section 6(4) and 6(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, must be adhered to in accordance with advice provided from time to time by PanSALB.
- (2) There shall not be discrimination on the basis of language preference in the management and administration of the Municipality.
- (3) The Administration must strive to promote the use of the municipal official languages.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the Municipality to provide language facilitation services such as translation and interpreting, and such others as may be required, and to make sufficient funds available for these services.

## **2. Municipal languages**

- (1) For the purpose of conducting the business of the Mohokare Local Municipality, Sesotho, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English are to be used as the official languages of the Municipality (hereafter called the *municipal languages*) in accordance with the norms of status and use provided by section 6 of the Constitution.
- (2) Council will make provision to address the special needs for the Blind and Deaf people such as providing Braille and/or audio tapes/CDs for the Blind and South African Sign Language interpreting for Deaf people based on the availability of resources.

## **3. Proceedings and languages of record of the Municipality**

- (1) The municipal languages must be used at all meetings, namely council meetings, committee meetings, ward/constituency meetings, ward committee meetings of the Municipality and provision must be made for professional interpreting services during such meetings, to be paid for by the Municipality: Provided that the participants will be required to indicate their language preference with the Office of the Municipal Manager and/or chairperson of the proposed meeting(s) upon receipt of the agenda/notice of the meeting or at least 48 hours before the date and time of the meeting.
- (2) All By -laws, official reports, agendas and resolutions of the Municipal Council and its committees must be made available in all the municipal languages: Provided that practical arrangements may be made in order to make By-Laws, official reports and resolutions drawn up in one municipal language first and that it is made available in the other two municipal languages within a reasonable period. All documentation received from external sources may remain in its original format i.e. the original language it was written in.

#### **4. Official notices**

Official notices, publications, advertisements and tenders of the Municipality must be published or issued in all municipal languages based on the target audiences.

#### **5. Written Communication with the public**

Written communication including official notices, publications, advertisements, tenders, accounts, invoices, newsletters, replying to letters, and forms with the inhabitants of the Municipality must be in the municipal languages of their preference. Provided that where such preference has not been indicated, the following shall prevail; when replying to letters, such correspondence must take place in the language, in which communication was received. In the case of publishing advertisements at least two of the municipal languages should be used with due regard to the target audience.

#### **6. Oral communication**

- (1) Members of the public, including Deaf people, must be communicated with in the municipal language which they understand including South African Sign Language (SASL) and/or audio tapes/CDs.
- (2) Any member of the public may use any of the municipal languages when he or she communicates with any institution of the Municipality.
- (3) All four municipal languages must be used for the purpose of communication in the Administration of the Mohokare Local Municipality.

#### **7. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Language policy**

Non-compliance with the provisions of this Language policy on the part of officials of the Municipality shall be regarded as misconduct which may lead to appropriate disciplinary action. Non-compliance on the side of the Municipality shall be regarded as violation of language rights on the basis of the provisions of the Constitution.

#### **8. Implementation**

- (1) The Language Policy as set out in this document must, unless otherwise provided, be implemented within a period of three years of the date of commencement of this policy.
- (2) The implementation is to be managed by the Municipal Language Committee. PanSALB should be part of this Language Committee to advise the municipality and monitor the implementation of the Language Policy.
- (3) The Language Committee will operate like any other committee of the municipality other than Section 79 Committees.

## **9. Review of the Mohokare Local Municipality Language Policy**

The Language Policy as set out in this document must, unless otherwise provided, be reviewed within a period of five years of the date of commencement of this policy. The review will follow section 79 committee requirements through the Corporate Services Committee as required by law.

## **10. Municipal Language Committee**

- (1) For the purposes of monitoring and revising this language policy in accordance with section 6 of the Constitution, the Council shall, appoint a committee to serve as a Municipal Language Committee
- (2) The Municipal Language Committee shall have a responsibility:
  - (a) to be involved in the implementation of the language policy with regard to translation and editing, in-house or outsourced, interpreting services, and printing of publications according to policy;
  - (b) to give rulings, in an expert and impartial way, on handling the policy on language issues in the Municipality which may give rise to friction;
  - (c) to review the language reality of the Municipality on a continuous basis in order to make recommendations regarding the municipal languages;
  - (d) to draft revisions to the policy based on feedback regarding the continuous reviewed language reality of the councillors, staff and public;
  - (e) to monitor the phased-in implementation of the language policy;
  - (f) to initiate studies and research directed at and ensure the following:
    - (i) the promotion of respect for the official languages;
    - (ii) the promotion of multilingualism in the Municipality;
    - (iii) the promotion and use of the language resources of the Municipality;
    - (iv) the prevention of the use of any language for exploitation and domination.
  - (g) to interact with other stakeholders on language related issues.
- (3) The Municipal Language Committee may also deal with complaints concerning the violation of language rights of citizens in accordance with this Language Policy.

- (4) Furthermore, the Municipal Language Committee must:
- (a) continuously ensure that councillors and staff are sensitised to the value of multilingualism as a tool for building social cohesion, promoting economic development and consolidating democratic government through respect for cultural diversity.
  - (b) ensure that notices are placed in all its buildings/offices informing the public that it promotes multilingualism and that officials will make every effort to use the language(s) of the client(s).
  - (c) ensure that all officials and councillors accommodate the language use and preferences of other officials and councillors with courtesy.