DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY APPROVED

LANGUAGE POLICY

DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY LANGUAGE POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS   PAGE NUMBER

1. INTRODUCTON AND BACKROUND

The Public Liaison Unit in the Municipal Manager's office has responded to a call for cultural diversity by developing the draft Dr JS Moroak Language policy, which aims at redressing the inequalities of the past where English and Afrikaans were the only language used to communicate.

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa provides for eleven official languages and recognises the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of the people of South Africa *(Section 6).*

The municipalities are obliged in terms of the Constitution and Municipal Systems Act to take into account the language needs of their residents when communicating including special needs of people who cannot read or write.

National Language policy framework provides that upon determination of the language use and preference of communities, local government, in broad consultation with their communities, develop, publicise and implement a multilingual policy.

Language is a sensitive issue and people generally feel most comfortable communicating in their own language (mother tongue). This is natural as the mother tongue is the medium they known best and in which they better express their thoughts and feelings precisely and fully. Many officials and members of the communities are bi- and/or tri-lingual. Each of the official languages merits attention and strengthening to optimise service delivery and community participation in local government activities.

Officials should sensitize to the value of multilingualism as a tool for building relationships with the public and promoting cultural pluralism.

Municipalities in South Africa are obliged in terms of subsection 6(3))b) of the Constitution t adopt language policies and to use the language if the 20% of its community uses a specific language.

To determine the official languages of the Municipality, the 2011 Census figures on internal and external surveys were used. It shows that there is no one dominant language in Dr JS Moroak Local Municipality.

According to the results of the last Census (2011) the language spoken in Mpumalanga, Nkangala, Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, in order of predominance are, IsiNdebele, SePedi, Setswana[2]

2. DEFINITIONS

"Bilingual" means spoken or written in two languages

"Census" means the Census of Statistics (StatsSA), South African National Census of 2011 is a comprehensive census performed by StatsSA, the latest in a series that is done once a year in every 10 year

"PanSALB" means Pan South African Language Board, established by the Pan South African Language Board Act, 1995 (Act 59 of 1995);

"Council" means Municipal Council;

"Indigenous language" means the languages which originates in South Africa and include the African official languages;

"Official language" means language contemplated in 6(1) of the Constitution;

"Working language" means English, as the official language chosen and used for the running of the Municipality;

"**Multilingualism"** means the use of three or more languages by an individual or a group of people

"StatsSA" means the Statistics South Africa, a National Department responsible for statistics in South Africa

"Translation" means to put (by means of writing speaking or any kind of communication) information or texts from one language into another

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The following forms the legal framework for this policy:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, (Act 108 of 1996) and Regulations Chapter 2(Bill of Rights) *Section 6* , Section 9(3) and Sections2 (29-31), 35(3) (k).

Local Government: Municipal Systems Act ,(Act No 32 of 2000 and Regulations) Chapter 4 (Community Participation), Section 18(2) (a) and section 21 (2).

PanSALB Act (Act 59 of 1995), Section 2.

Principles of Batho Pele (Government Gazette No 18340 of 1 October 1997)

Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act of 2000 **)***Section 3* and *Section 31* A

The National Language Policy Framework (the NLPF)

South African Language Act, 2011

4. OBJECTIVES

Objectives of this policy include the following:

- ✓ To determine the working languages of Dr JS Moroak Local Municipality, that is languages used in official communication.
- ✓ To remove all language barriers thereby promoting access to Municipal programmes and services.
- ✓ To ensure that no one is denied or prevented from using their language of choice regardless of whether or not is one of the working languages.
- ✓ To give all official languages (English, IsiNdebele, SePedi and SeTswana), equal status and treatment, equitable use of all languages.
- ✓ To promote multilingualism, particularly with respect to the official languages of communication.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The policy is based on the following principles:

Language rights and equity, redress, non-discrimination, people centeredness, partnerships, good governance and participation

Municipality is required by law and its very nature to be customer driven. It will therefore communicate in the languages understandable to the community with due regard to practicalities and affordability. The following guidelines underlie the Language policy of Dr JS Moroak Municipality.

- ✓ It is the Municipality's responsibility to provide language facilitation services such as editing translation, interpreting, as such may be required, and to make sufficient funds available for such services, provided such service be required, and be made within a reasonable time limit and within financial constraints of the council.
- ✓ Multilingualism will be encouraged and basic language standards will be determined when making appointment and promotion within the Municipality.
- ✓ Municipality should strive to promote the use of all official languages .
- ✓ Preventing the use of any language for the purposes of exploitation, domination and discrimination.
- ✓ The norms for language policy as contained in section 6 (2) and 6 (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, must be adhered to in accordance with advice provided by language stakeholders.

6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The scope of this policy therefore regulates the languages used to communicate between the Municipality and its stakeholders (internal and external). It is applicable t o all and to any request to the Municipality about language use and language preference.

7. STAKEHOLDERS

Language services or practitioners will work in collaboration with the following language stakeholders, PanSALB, National Language Services, Mpumalanga Department of Arts &

Culture, National Department of Arts and Culture and Institutions of higher learning, language activists, and other interested parties to-

Monitor the implementation of the policy, the use of the Municipal official languages by Municipal officials and to popularise the language policy and assist in its review, when necessary.

8. Official languages

For the purpose of conducting the business of the Municipality, English is the primary language and will be the medium of communication prioritised.

The following are official spoken languages of Dr JS Moroak Local Municipality: English, SePedi, IsiNdebele and Setswana. An effort should be made to use other South African official languages, including those for special needs such as Braille and Sign language. It should be noted that the municipality's official languages will be reviewed based on the results of municipality's language and communication audits which will be conducted in future.

To promote operational efficiency , English should be the working language of all documents of the Municipality, and translations in the other official language of the Municipality should be available on request. The use of language understood by most, must be encouraged to facilitate understanding and improve communication . No employee may be prevented from using an official language of his or her choice at any given time.

All correspondences addressed to the municipality must be answered in the same language as the original correspondence. Translations must however also be kept on file along with the original correspondence.

8.1 Internal and external spoken and written communication

Any of the official languages may be used in spoken and written intradepartmental and interdepartmental communication, provided all involved understand the language/s being spoken or written, including in Council proceedings, disciplinary hearings, interviews, accounts, bills, contracts, forms, invitations, reports, notices, bylaws, policies, advertisements, recruitments and selection regulations, training, etc.

English is recommended as a spoken language in both spoken and written communication and provide the interpreting and translation services are made available for those who cannot read or speak and understand English.

On request, municipality must provide interpreting and translating services.

The use of plain language must be encouraged to facilitate understanding and improve communication.

For archival purposes and practical administrative reasons, documents must be available in the original language and English as the language of record.

English must be used for international communication, but make translations services available for ad hoc communication in the preferred language of the country concerned.

Municipality must promote multilingualism on its website and in its external publications by using all the official languages.

All external correspondence must be have a caption at the foot of the page , stating that the document can be made available in any in any official language.

 The Municipality must, on request, provide for the needs of people with language disabilities, those who are blind and/or partially blind.

Sign language and Braille services must be provided, if and when required.

All identification signage, direction signs and road signs relating to municipal signs buildings, services, facilities, infrastructure and vehicles must be in official languages of the municipality where practicable.

Customers and other external stakeholders got the right to be served in an official language of their choice.

9. Implementation

The Language policy as set out in this document, unless otherwise provided, should be implemented immediately after approval, with the assistance of the language forum/council to be established by the Municipal Manager.

The Municipality must establish a language /translating subunit in public liaison unit, and recruit a multilingual language practitioner/officer, to ensure that the unit is provided with personnel, administrative and other resources necessary for its effective functioning. Municipality must make available translating and interpreting services so that its residents can have equal access to municipal programmes, such services must be made available if and when considered necessary.

The implementation of this policy is to be implemented by all and the language Forum/Council to be established by the Municipal Manager, starting with the main switch board, all frontline offices and other telephone exchange in municipal buildings by personnel manning municipal telephone exchange by welcoming all in all four official languages of the Municipality.

All communications must be done in a plain language, w*hatever the language it is* communicated in, so that the essence of the communication is conveyed clearly without undue use of excessive technical, legal or other jargon.

In written official communication , it is not allowed to use a smsing language such as:

 UR meaning *you are,*

FYI meaning *for your information*,

HUD meaning *how are you doing* such language is not allowed and is not an official nor business language to be used by the municipality.

10. Non-compliance

Public Liaison Unit and to be established Language Council are responsible for monitoring the use of the policy. Non-compliance:

- by the officials shall be regarded as misconduct which may lead to disciplinary actions

-by contractors, nominees or agents, who act in the interest of or behalf of the Municipality shall, as the case maybe constitute breach of contract or exceeding of the mandate of the person concerned.

-when it comes to the attention of the municipality that a provision of this policy has not been complied with, omission must be rectified immediately.

-if the omission is related to a written notice to a member of the public, a substitute notice shall be issued.

11. Policy review

The Municipality must conduct regular internal and external language preference and proficiency audits to determine the linguistic needs and capabilities of municipal stakeholders. Municipality may on a regular basis use the results of these audits to revise and update the language policy accordingly.

12 Implications

Municipality must make budgetary provisions for the implementation of language policy, planning and training, translation and interpreting services, language audits and other related matters by skilled language professionals in order to meet its obligations in terms of this policy.

….The latest results of the last Census (2011), the three most spoken languages in the province of Mpumalanga, Nkangala District, in Dr JS Moroak Local Municipality, in order of dominance are, IsiNdebele, SePedi, SeTswana…It is in this spirit that the Municipality should adopt this language policy.

The Policy was approved by Council on the 30th May 2014