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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Tshwane (CoT) aspires to become the leading African capital city of excellence that empowers the community to prosper in a safe and healthy environment. To meet this endeavour, the CoT aims to enhance the quality of life of all people in the city through a developmental system of local government and the rendering of efficient, effective and affordable services.

The South African Government decentralised power to municipal governments to create opportunities for direct participation in policy, service delivery and decision-making processes by local communities. Municipalities are obliged to ensure the following (see NGO Pulse 2010):

- provide democratic and accountable government
- be responsive to the needs of local communities
- encourage the involvement of communities in the matters of local government
- provide services in a sustainable manner
- facilitate a culture of public service and accountability amongst its staff
- promote social and economic development
- promote a safe and healthy environment

Committed to continuously evaluate how CoT residents and businesses are responding to municipal strategies and developments and to endlessly explore ways in which the municipality can improve and expand the delivery of services and quality of life and business in the CoT, the Office of the Executive Major commissioned the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at the University of South Africa (Unisa) to conduct a resident satisfaction survey amongst households, businesses and foreign embassies entailing the
collection of primary information from residents in terms of the current service delivery performance of the CoT. In fact, the 2011 CoT Resident Satisfaction Survey is a direct result of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed between the CoT and the University of South Africa (Unisa) in July 2008. The objective of the MOA is to enable the CoT and Unisa, from time to time, to negotiate and conclude agreements dealing with, inter alia, various research projects such as resident satisfaction surveys.

As specified in the MOA, Unisa undertakes to furnish feedback to the CoT on the various research projects. The outcome of the 2011 Resident Satisfaction Survey is contained in this report. The MOA also clearly specifies close collaboration between the CoT and Unisa. To meet this endeavour, the BMR has collaborated directly with the Relations Management Division that forms part of the Corporate and Shared Service Department of the CoT. This section/division of the CoT is responsible for customer relations and management functions at the CoT and underscores the principles of service excellence and improved service delivery aimed at changing the quality of life of communities residing and doing business in Tshwane. As part of adhering to the Batho Pele principles, Customer Relations at the CoT is strategically positioned as a business unit within the CoT to continuously identify opportunities to improve services and to set and monitor service delivery standards. With the aim of delivering service excellence, Customer Relations is dedicated towards eliminating the obstacles to good service delivery. To meet this endeavour, Customer Relations aims to continuously monitor customer views on service delivery. This clarifies why the responsibility for the 2011 Resident Satisfaction Survey, as with previous surveys, falls under the direct jurisdiction of the Customer Relations Management Division of the CoT, who, in collaboration with the BMR, executed the 2009 and 2011 CoT Resident Satisfaction Surveys.

1.2 BACKGROUND

To date the CoT has conducted three resident satisfaction surveys, one in 2006 and the others in 2007 and 2009. The 2006 survey served as a baseline study while the 2007
follow-up study served to detect changes in service satisfaction levels of CoT residents. The 2006 and 2007 studies involved 1 200 respondents each (800 households and 400 businesses). No study was conducted in 2008. This, together with the CoT/Unisa MOA signed in 2008, motivated a resident satisfaction survey in 2009. The need for a much broader study in 2009 also followed from concerns about the sample sizes of the previous studies (2006 and 2007). The 2009 study included a much broader sample representation of 3 000 households; 750 businesses, distinguishing between formal (500) and informal (250) businesses; and 20 foreign embassies. The 2009 study also included a ‘mirror’ satisfaction survey whereby CoT employees were requested to indicate the perceived level of satisfaction of residents with the provision of municipal services by the CoT. The advantage of the study in 2009, was that it provided a more representative overview of residents’ satisfaction levels by not only including a much broader survey audience but also by identifying understanding gaps between perceived and actual resident satisfaction with CoT service performance areas. In 2011, a similar research design, excluding a mirror survey, was conducted. The 2009 and 2011 studies also added the additional advantage of conducting regional analysis that further supported more confined strategic planning.

Obviously, the revisited and new sampling approach followed in 2009 and 2011 entailed a re-engineering of the entire CoT resident satisfaction model previously used. The 2009 and 2011 surveys included satisfaction ratings of the most contemporary service performance areas and allowed for identifying specific reasons for dissatisfaction, securing the potential of identifying priority service areas to be addressed through carefully constructed strategic management planning. Although the major focus of the previous and both the 2009 and 2011 resident satisfaction models remained the same in terms of core service delivery areas, the 2009 and 2011 models were largely confined to the measurement of purely satisfaction dimensions, which ensured a much better structured and manageable research model serving the purpose of a true resident satisfaction study.
Logically, adjustments and additions and sample size differences, as highlighted above, make comparisons between the 2006/07 and 2009/11 studies very difficult and impact on the initial intention of the CoT to design a resident satisfaction model for longitudinal (tracking) purposes. As a result, longitudinal comparisons are only presented for the 2009 and 2011 surveys.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

It is highly commendable and a major challenge for service providers to gauge the satisfaction levels relating to their services in the community. This not only assists in correcting shortfalls in service delivery but may also be indicative of political leadership and management efficiency exercised by public institutions. Such an exercise is important, especially in an environment of multiple community needs that cannot always be met due to scarce resources. Notable inequalities between communities and a broad expansion of needs (due to urban migration) exacerbate the challenge, especially for larger municipalities. Many people migrate to metropolitan and other growth areas with the expectation of securing employment. These inflows often exceed the economic capacity to accommodate new arrivals.

Against this background, the aim of the 2011 study was to conduct a survey among a representative sample of households and businesses located within the demarcated area of the CoT. More specifically, the study aimed to assess the perceptions of residents and businesses about their awareness, usage, satisfaction and expectations with regard to service delivery, governance and development priorities in the CoT. On request of the CoT, the 2009 and 2011 studies also included a sample of foreign embassies as an additional customer segment of the CoT.

Broadly speaking, the study aimed to improve communication between the CoT and all its customers, which will help to determine the social, economic and material needs of the community and to improve the quality of lives and business conditions within the
CoT. The research results will inform the CoT business planning processes as well as the formulation of strategic plans.

1.4 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

The executive summary at the beginning of the report highlights the core issues contained in the report. The first chapter provides background to the study, defines its objective and outlines the structure of the report. A detailed description of the survey methodology is provided in chapter 2. Chapter 3 deals with the findings of the household survey. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the business survey and chapter 5 reports on the findings of the embassy survey. Chapter 6 contains the results of the focus group discussions/in-depth interviews in the 10 wards reflecting the lowest satisfaction levels. Chapter 7 provides a summary and some recommendations based on the 2011 CoT Resident Satisfaction Survey.