



CITY OF
TSHWANE
IGNITING EXCELLENCE

**LANGUAGE POLICY
OF THE CITY OF TSHWANE**

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1. Title

Language Policy of the City of Tshwane

2. Document control

Department	Communication, Marketing and Events
Manager responsible	Kgomotso Mokgola
Version	1
Status	Draft
Process steps undertaken	Drafting the policy
Next review date	Anticipated review date will be five years after approval
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3. Definitions and abbreviations

Definitions and abbreviations are defined as follows in this policy, unless the context indicates otherwise.

“City of Tshwane” means the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality established by Gauteng Provincial Notice 6770 of 1 October 2000. **“The City”** has a corresponding meaning.

“Constitution” means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

“Council” means the Council of the City of Tshwane.

“Equitable use” means the use of language which is fair, impartial and does not discriminate.

“Functional multilingualism” means a choice of a particular language(s) in a particular situation, determined by the context in which language is to be used (that is, the function, the audience and the message for which it is to be used).

“Interpreter” means a person who translates the meaning of an utterance from one language, including sign language, orally into another language, and if the translation is into sign language, by means of manual communication and body language. **“Interpreting”** and **“interpret”** have corresponding meanings.

“Language of record” means an official language chosen for keeping records or archiving proceedings and procedures of the City.

“Language rights” means the rights citizens have in terms of the law to make language choices in particular circumstances.

“Liaison interpreting” means relaying what is spoken after a short speech or consecutively (sentence-by-sentence), and occurs in situations where –

- (a) a City employee does not understand the language of another employee or other employees (up to ten employees may be involved), for example in labour disputes or at disciplinary hearings; or
- (b) a City employee does not understand the language of a client of the City or a resident of Tshwane (up to ten clients or residents may be involved), for example in discussions between clinic staff and patients, between cashiers and clients at pay points, or between officials and the community at community information forums.

“Multilingualism” means the use of three or more languages by an individual or a group of people.

“Official language” means a language used in the government, education, business and the media.

“PanSALB” means the Pan South African Language Board, established by the Pan South African Language Board Act, 1995 (Act 59 of 1995).

“Terminology” means standardised terms established for a specific subject field.

“Translation” means the communication of the meaning of written language into an equivalent meaning in another language. **“Translating”** and **“translate”** have corresponding meanings.

“Working language” means an official language chosen by the City as the language most practicable for use during a particular communication event.

4. Problem statement

The Constitution recognises 11 languages as official languages. It further provides that the three spheres of government should create conditions for the promotion and use of all these official languages. Means and ways of promoting and protecting the official languages should also include the element of ensuring redress for previously marginalised languages.

In line with constitutional provisions and those of the National Language Policy Framework, provinces have to develop their own language policies from which local governments have to draw to develop their own language policies. Informed by these and other relevant documents, the City developed the Language Policy of the City of Tshwane, which was approved by Council on 2 August 2007 and subsequently revised in September 2012. The revision in 2012 was also important in ensuring that the language needs of the former Metsweding and Kungwini communities were accommodated in the then broader City of Tshwane Language Policy.

There is, however, a need to revise the current policy to ensure that it is aligned with the provisions of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012) and the South African Language Practitioners Council Act, 2014 (Act 8 of 2014) which came into operation after the policy was approved. The revised policy will also ensure that language will not serve as a barrier to Tshwane communities when receiving information and services in the languages they are conversant with.

5. Desired outcomes

This policy is in line with the constitutional provisions on multilingualism and the key performance indicators of the City. The policy aims to achieve the following:

- 5.1 Translating the language rights enshrined in the Constitution into a coherent and effective approach to multilingualism within the City
- 5.2 Promoting the equitable use of the official languages of the City
- 5.3 Facilitating equitable access to municipal services and information
- 5.4 Redressing the linguistic inequalities of the past, which resulted in the underdevelopment of the African languages
- 5.5 Protecting language diversity, and promoting respect for multilingualism and unity in diversity
- 5.6 Using multilingualism for effective administration and communication in the City

6. Strategic alignment

The review of this policy is in support of Strategic Pillar 2: A City that cares for its residents and promotes inclusivity. Care and inclusivity can also be realised by communicating information and service delivery initiatives to Tshwane residents in languages they are comfortable with. This in turn would result in maximum participation from residents without language being a barrier.

7. Regulatory context

The following constitutes the regulatory framework for this policy:

- 7.1 Section 6 of the Constitution
- 7.2 Section 9(3) of the Constitution: The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, **language** and birth.
- 7.3 Section 1.2.4 of the National Language Policy Framework of 2003: Local government must determine the language use and preferences of its communities within an enabling provincial language policy framework. Upon determination of the language use and preference of communities, local

governments must, in broad consultation with its communities, develop, publicise and implement a multilingual policy.

- 7.4 Section 3 of the Language Policy Framework of the Gauteng Provincial Government (August 2005), which has the objective of supporting, developing and sustaining multilingualism in provincial and local government departments, and in their communication and interaction with the public.
- 7.5 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000)
- 7.6 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper, 1997)
- 7.7 Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012)
- 7.8 South African Language Practitioners Council Act, 2014 (Act 8 of 2014)
- 7.9 Gauteng Provincial Languages Act, 2016 (Act 3 of 2016)

8. Policy parameters

This policy applies to City employees and Tshwane residents and to any party that may require the provision of language services from the City.

Any party acting on behalf of the City, such as service providers, should ensure that they comply with the provisions of the Language Policy in carrying out their functions on behalf of the City. Recipients of municipal services and information through third parties should not be prejudiced on the basis of language.

9. Role players and stakeholders

9.1 Language Services Section

To ensure the successful implementation of this policy, the Language Services Section is important as the custodian and lead section in ensuring that the provisions of this policy are complied with.

The section is responsible for the following, among others:

- Facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the Language Policy by providing translation, editing, interpreting and terminology development services.
- Raise awareness of the Language Policy to ensure compliance.
- Advise departments, employees and other parties who act on behalf of the City about their linguistic obligations towards the communities they serve.
- Conduct regular language surveys and audits to assess the appropriateness of the existing policy and practices of the City and make recommendations for their improvement.

- Report to the relevant language control bodies (like the National Language Forum and PanSALB and its structures) on progress in the implementation of the Language Policy, when requested.
- Raise awareness among City employees and Tshwane residents of their language rights.

9.2 Other language stakeholders

Language structures that will collaborate with the Language Services Section in the implementation of the Language Policy are the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, PanSALB, institutions of higher learning, national lexicography units, the Gauteng Provincial Language Committee, national language bodies, Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), Parliament, provincial legislatures, and other independent language structures and formations. Although they may differ, the role(s) these institutions will play may include the following:

- Collaborating on mutually dependent language projects or programmes to avoid duplication of resources.
- Monitoring the use of the official languages of the City.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Language Policy.
- Initiating and sustaining a vibrant discourse on multilingualism in all communities.
- Initiating studies and research on –
 - the development of the official languages of the City;
 - the acquisition and use of the official languages in the City;
 - the promotion of multilingualism in Tshwane; and
 - the optimisation of the use of the City’s language resources.

10. Policy directives

10.1 Official languages of the City of Tshwane

The following table, which is taken from Census 2011, gives an indication of the spread of home languages in Tshwane.

Language	Number of speakers as percentage
Sepedi	19,4%
Afrikaans	18,4%
Setswana	14,7%
Xitsonga	8,4%
English	8,4%
isiZulu	8,3%
isiNdebele	5,6%
Sesotho	5,1%

Tshivenda	2,3%
isiXhosa	2,1%
siSwati	1,5%
South African Sign Language	0,3%
Other	3,0%
Not applicable	2,4%
TOTAL	100%

Census 2011 by municipality: (http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1021&id=city-of-tshwane-municipality)

The home language profile of Tshwane indicates that the most widely used home language is Sepedi, followed by Afrikaans, Setswana, Xitsonga, isiZulu, English and isiNdebele. Sesotho is next in line with 5,1%, followed by Tshivenda at 2,3%.

Taking into account the above figures on home language usage, the preferences of Tshwane residents and the options proposed by the Gauteng Provincial Languages Act, 2016, the City adopts and approves the following **eight languages** as official languages:

- Sepedi
- Afrikaans
- Setswana
- Xitsonga
- English
- isiZulu
- isiNdebele
- Tshivenda

It is evident from the Census 2001 results that the percentage of Sesotho speakers is higher than that of Tshivenda speakers. Because Sesotho falls within the Sotho language group alongside Sepedi and Setswana, and the three are mutually intelligible, for the purpose of wider inclusion and functional multilingualism, Tshivenda was adopted as one of the official languages rather than Sesotho.

The City must also make every effort to use the other official languages of the Republic of South Africa, as well as South African Sign Language, on request.

It should, however, be noted that the City's official languages will be reviewed if and when necessary, based on the results of future Tshwane-wide language and communication audits or surveys.

10.2 Internal spoken communication

10.2.1 Any of the official languages of the City may be used in spoken intradepartmental and interdepartmental communication, provided that all involved in the communication event understand the language(s) being spoken.

10.2.2 English is recommended as the working language in spoken intradepartmental and interdepartmental communication. Another official language of the City may be used, provided that it is understood by all parties involved in the communication event.

10.2.3 Any of the official languages of the City may be used in any debates or proceedings of Council. The City must therefore provide for simultaneous interpreting from and into its official languages.

10.2.4 In general, formal disciplinary hearings, job interviews and performance assessments in the City will be conducted in English, provided that translation and interpreting services are made available for those who cannot speak or understand English.

10.3 External spoken communication

10.3.1 The City must, in its spoken communication, strive to serve all its clients in the language or languages of their choice.

10.3.2 If staff members are not available to assist clients orally in their language of choice at a customer care centre, pay point, clinic or other public venue of the City, liaison interpreters must be used to assist them. Where necessary, every effort must be made to use interpreting services (consecutive, simultaneous, telephone and whispered) where practicable.

10.3.3 The City must provide liaison interpreters if important or strategic information is to be conveyed orally to groups of multilingual residents at public events organised by the City (for example indabas, imbizos, workshops, training, etc).

10.4 Internal written communication

10.4.1 To promote operational efficiency, English will be the working language of the City, and translations into its other official languages will be made available on request.

10.4.2 The City will provide translation services on request for intradepartmental and interdepartmental written communication.

10.4.3 Services will be made available on request for the translation of motions presented at Council meetings into any of the other official languages of the City.

10.4.4 The City's policies, procedures, conditions of service, strategic circulars, important human resources information, health and safety information, and other strategic documents must be made available in all the official languages of the City.

10.4.5 Upon request, the City must provide multilingual liaison interpreters from among its own staff to assist staff members who are not conversant in English to gain

access to municipal information. Liaison interpreting should be seen as a mechanism to support written communication.

10.4.6 Although no employee of the City may be prevented from using an official language of his/her choice at any given time, all municipal documents that need to be archived must, for practical administrative reasons, be available in the original language and in English as the language of record.

10.4.7 The use of plain language in internal municipal documents must be encouraged in order to facilitate understanding and to improve communication.

10.5 External written communication

10.5.1 Official notices, statements, tariffs, by-laws, regulations, policies, advertisements and so forth that are issued or published by the City for public consumption must be made available in all the official languages of the City, where practicable and financially viable.

10.5.2 The City should provide multilingual liaison interpreters from among its own staff as a mechanism to supplement written communication and assist clients who are not conversant with English in gaining access to municipal services and information. The liaison interpreters should be used for liaison interpreting at customer care centres, pay points, clinics or other public venues of the City if multilingual staff members are not available for this purpose.

10.5.3 The City must make every effort to promote multilingualism on its website and in its external publications by using all the official languages of the City.

10.5.4 All external correspondence of the City must be translated into the official language in which the original communication was received, provided that an English translation of the document is archived for municipal record-keeping purposes and possible legal proceedings. The City must inform the client that the English text will be used in the legal proceedings.

10.5.5 All external documents of the City (especially letters) must carry a sentence in the footer of the page which states that the document can be made available in any of the official languages of South Africa, and the corporate identity manual of the City must stipulate this as a requirement.

10.5.6 All municipal documents that need to be archived must, for practical administrative reasons, be available in English as the language of record.

10.5.7 English must be used by the City for international communication, but the City must make translation services available for *ad hoc* communication in the preferred language of the country concerned.

10.5.8 The use of plain language in external municipal documents must be encouraged in order to facilitate understanding and to improve communication.

10.6 Municipal signage

The City must give due consideration to the language preferences of local communities when erecting local direction signs. All identification signage and direction signs that relate to municipal buildings, services, facilities, infrastructure and vehicles must be in at least three official languages of the City, where practicable. Where this is not practicable, at least two languages (English and another official language of the City) may be used, provided that English is the one language and the other is the dominant language of the area concerned.

10.7 People with language disabilities

The City must, on request and where practicable, provide for the needs of people with language disabilities.

10.8 Training in the City of Tshwane

10.8.1 The medium of instruction for municipal training will be English, provided that the principle of functional multilingualism is applied where practicable. A presenter may, for instance, use any of the City's other official languages, depending on the language usage and preferences of the trainees. In all circumstances, consideration must be given to the desired outcome (that is, effective training).

10.8.2 Provision must be made for the oral component of any municipal programme or campaign directed at improving the well-being of employees. It must be conducted in any of the official languages of the City, alongside videos for the internal information channel, for example.

10.8.3 To serve the public effectively, City employees must be encouraged to learn, in an organised manner, the official languages of the City that they do not know, as well as South African Sign Language.

10.8.4 The City must organise training programmes and refresher courses for its employees to assist in the development of their skills in using the official languages of the City, so that they can render an effective and efficient service to communities.

10.8.5 Services must be made available to translate internal training and course material into any official language of the City at the request of trainees.

10.8.6 To improve access to training and to improve communication between trainees and trainers, trainers and course designers must be encouraged to use plain language in their training manuals.

11. Implementation programme

The Language Policy will be phased in so as to have enough time to build financial and human capacity for successful full-scale implementation. A phased-in approach will also make room to evaluate and monitor the application

of the policy. This will help to ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly and that corrective measures are taken at set intervals.

The implementation of this policy will result in an increase in the demand for translation, editing, terminology development and interpreting services in the official African languages of the City. The increased demand will result in the need for further training in language skills.

The following strategies will be employed to ensure the successful implementation of the Language Policy:

- Providing interpreting services at Council meetings, disciplinary hearings, IDP consultations, public participation meetings, City or Tshwane conferences, mayoral imbizos, municipal courts and other relevant forums
- Facilitating communication in the different official languages at customer care points and call centres
- Translating information documents into the official languages of the City
- Creating terminology that will help develop the official languages of the City, especially the official African languages
- Editing reports of the Mayoral Committee, Council and other documents to ensure appropriate language use in these documents
- Advising the City on the training programmes to be offered to employees who require this training for effective service delivery to different language communities
- Collaborating with internal stakeholders to ensure that municipal signage appears in at least three official City languages
- Facilitating language awareness campaigns across Tshwane
- Ensuring that the City of Tshwane website, as a public tool, reflects multilingualism
- Giving effect to functional multilingualism by providing training opportunities for departmental liaison interpreters (like short courses in liaison interpreting)
- Conducting regular language audits and/or surveys

12. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- 12.1 The City must conduct regular internal and external language preference and proficiency audits to determine the linguistic needs and linguistic capabilities of municipal officials and Tshwane residents.
- 12.2 The Language Services Section must use the results of these audits to revise and update the Language Policy.
- 12.3 The Language Services Section must regularly assess the implementation of the Language Policy and implement the required changes.