



SEKHUKHUNE
District Municipality

Private Bag X8611 Groblersdal 0470, 3 West Street Groblersdal 0470
Tel : (013) 262 7300, Fax: (013) 262 3688
E-Mail : sekinfo@sekhukhune.co.za

LANGUAGE POLICY

APRIL 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

No	Description	Page/s
1	Definitions	3
1	Introduction	3
2	Aims	3
3	Objectives	4
4	Scope	5
4.1.	External written communication	5
5	Provision for the use of official languages	5

5.1.	Meetings	5
5.2.	Policies and By-laws	5
5.3.	Notices and advertisements	5
5.4.	Correspondence	5
5.5.	Identification Signs	6
5.5.1.	People with language Disabilities	7
5.6.	Customer care	7
6.	Implementation	7
6.1.	Strategies	7
6.2.	Timeframes for implementation	7
7	Financial implications	8
8	Commencement Date	8
9	Policy Review	8

10	Enquiries	8

“This book has been translated into practically all the languages of the world. I can go to any place on earth and my story can be found in that language. Here I exist only in English. I want to be part of all the languages of my country. One’s language should never be a dead end. That is why I believe in translation; for us to be able to live together.”

Former president Nelson Mandela, when asked why he wanted The Long Walk to Freedom translated into all eleven official languages of South Africa

1. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable for the purpose of this policy framework document:

Policy: A policy is a” predetermined course of action established as a guide towards accepted business strategies and objectives”

Procedure: A procedure is a method by which a policy should be accomplished; it provides the instructions necessary to carry out a policy statement.

Executive Mayor refers to Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality.

Council refers to Sekhukhune District municipal council.

Indigenous Languages refers to the languages used by blacks in the District Municipality.

Official Languages of the District refers to Sepedi, IsiNdebele, IsiSwati, English and Afrikaans.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides for eleven official Languages and recognizes the historically diminished use and status of the Indigenous languages of the people of South Africa (Sec 6).

It provides further that everyone has a right to use their language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice (Sec 30).

The Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act enjoin municipalities to take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents when communicating, including the special needs of people who cannot read or write.

The 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, publicize and implement a multilingual policy.

According to the results of the last census the languages spoken in the District of Sekhukhune, in order of predominance, are Sepedi (80,9%), English (13,6%), IsiNdebele (2,3%) and Afrikaans (1,5%). Statistics for the five local municipalities of Sekhukhune follow similar trend with significant presence in areas of Makhuduthamaga and Greater Tubatse where IsiSwati is spoken.

It is in this spirit that Sekhukhune District Municipality adopts this Language Policy.

3. AIMS

The aims of this policy include the following:

3.1 To promote the equitable use of the main official languages spoken in Sekhukhune District, namely, Sepedi, IsiNdebele, Isiswati, Afrikaans and English.

3.2 To facilitate access to government services, knowledge and information

3.3 To ensure redress of the imbalances of the past in the use of languages.

3.4 To encourage and support citizens to learn official languages other than their own which will assist in achieving and sustaining national unity and cultural diversity.

3.5 To ensure equitable use of working languages by promoting good language Management.

3.6 To implement and give effect to the provisions of Section 6 of the Constitution as well as Batho Pele Principles and related service charters.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy include the following:

4.1 To determine the working languages for Sekhukhune District Municipality, that is Languages used in official communication.

4.2 To give due preference to the working languages for the Municipality.

4.3 To remove all language barriers thereby promoting equal access to municipal programmes and services.

4.4 To ensure that no person is denied or prevented from using their language of choice regardless of whether or not it is one of the working languages.

4.5 To (initially and on escalating basis) give Sepedi, IsiNdebele, IsiSwati, Afrikaans and English the equal status and treatment.

5. SCOPE

The provisions of this policy shall apply to all organs of the Municipality including entities, residents and service providers to any request to the Municipality about language use and language practices.

5.1. External written communication

5.1.1 The Municipality shall make every effort to promote multilingualism on its website and in its external publications by using the official languages of the Municipality.

5.1.2. External correspondence of the Municipality shall be translated into the official languages in which the original communication was received, provided that an English translation of the document is archived for municipal record purposes and possible legal proceedings. The Municipality shall inform the client that the English text will be used in the legal proceedings.

5.1.3. English shall be used by the Municipality for international communication, but the Municipality shall make translation services available for ad hoc communication in the preferred language of the country concerned.

6. PROVISIONS FOR THE USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

6.1. Meetings

6.1.1 Any of the three working languages of the Municipality may be used in any Debates and other proceedings of the Council and its Committees.

6.1.2 During the sittings of the Council and its Committees there should be provision for interpreting services into either of the working languages. In the event of any member wishing to have the proceedings interpreted into a language other than the working languages, such member shall give adequate notice of the need for interpretation to the chairperson of Council or relevant Committee.

6.1.3 Sign language must be readily available as and when required.

6.1.4 Meetings or public hearings and or any public participation event must be conducted in either of the two working languages depending on the language preference of that audience. Should there be members of the audience who do not understand the preferred language, interpretation shall be provided.

6.2 Policies and by- laws

Policies, by-laws and resolutions of the Council and its Committees shall be written in the five working languages of the Municipality.

6.3 Notices and advertisements

Official notices and advertisements issued for general public information shall be published in English, Sepedi, IsiNdebele, IsiSwati and Afrikaans.

6.4 Correspondence

6.4.1 IsiNdebele, IsiSwati, Afrikaans, English or Sepedi may be used for purposes of internal written communication.

If the addressee does not understand the language used, she/he may request that Communication with her/him takes place in a language that she/he understands.

6.4.2 Circulars shall be issued in the five district official working languages.

6.4.3 Internal oral communication can be in English, Sepedi or IsiNdebele depending on the individuals that are conversing.

6.4.4 External communication shall be in either of the working languages, taking into account the language preference of the recipient. Response to external communication shall match the language of the original communication.

6.4.5 Outgoing correspondence shall carry an indication that should the recipient require the correspondence in a working language other than the one in which it is written, such will be provided on request.

6.4.6 Citizens have a right to communicate in the language of their choice.

6.5 Identification signs

Identification signs of and directions to municipal offices or facilities shall be in the working languages.

6.5.1. People with languages disabilities

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

6.6. Customer care

Customers shall be served in their preferred language, with the assistance of Interpreters, where necessary.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1. Strategies

7.1.1 The Municipality shall ensure that both councilors and staff are sensitized to the value of multilingualism and encouraged to accommodate the language use and preference of residents/clients, other councilors and officials.

7.1.2 Translating and or interpreting services to the Municipality shall be provided by skilled language professionals employed by the Municipality's Communication Services division.

7.1.3 The Municipality shall actively encourage and support the development of the language skills of both staff members and councilors.

7.1.4 Staff members and Councilors should be encouraged to learn and understand languages other than their own thus enhancing the value of multilingualism, promoting respect for cultural diversity and improving service delivery.

7.1.5 When recruiting new staff the Municipality's Units should take cognizance of the language policy.

7.2 Timeframes for implementation

7.2.1 Unless otherwise stated in this policy or by a Council resolution, provisions of this policy would come into effect upon adoption by Council.

7.2.2 The Municipal Manager shall, within six months after the adoption of this policy by Council, establish timeframes for the implementation of the provisions of this policy.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The various Units of the SDM shall make budgetary provision for the implementation of the language policy, e.g. development of language skills of staff & councilors, investing in translation & interpreting infrastructure, etc.

9. COMMENCEMENT DATE

Commencement date for this policy shall be upon approval by Sekhukhune district municipal council.

10. POLICY REVIEW

The policy will need to be reviewed periodically for improvement. Where it is concluded that it is not achieving the desired results, a policy review process along the same lines as the policy development process shall be undertaken and changes\ amendment made during the policy review session should be recorded. However, where it is deemed not necessary to review the policy, evidence leading to such decision should be recorded. The policy will be reviewed after every 3

years and will remain in force until and unless it has been withdrawn and amended by Sekhukhune district municipal council.

11. ENQUIRIES

Enquiries should be directed to Special Programme Unit in the Office of the Executive Mayor, Sekhukhune District Municipality.
