

**MORETELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**



**COST CONTAINMENT POLICY**

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## PREAMBLE

**Whereas** Section 62(1)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003 (MFMA) stipulates that the accounting officer of a municipality is responsible for managing the financial administration of a municipality and must for this purpose take all reasonable steps to ensure that the resources of the municipality are used effectively, efficiently, and economically.

**Furthermore**, in terms of the legal framework, municipal councils and accounting officers should institute appropriate measures to ensure that the limited resources and public funds are appropriately utilised to achieve value for money

**“Accounting Officer”** means the Accounting Officer appointed in terms of Section 82 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 and being the head of administration and Accounting Officer in terms of Section 55 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 as well as Section 60 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003.

**“Act”** means the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003.

**“Approved budget”** means an annual budget (original or an adjustments budget) referred to in Section 15 of the Act approved by the Municipal Council in terms of Sections 24 and 28 of the Act.

**“Chief Financial Officer”** means an official designated by the Accounting Officer as the Chief Financial Officer in terms of Section 80(2)(a) of the Act.

**“Financial Year”** means the twelve (12) month period between 1 July and 30 June of the following year.

**“Senior manager”** means a person appointed by Council in terms of Section 56(a) of the Act as a manager directly accountable to the Accounting Officer

## 2.OBJECTIVE OF THIS POLICY

Moretele Municipality wishes to achieve the following objectives by adopting this Cost Containment Policy:

2.1.1 To assist the Accounting Officer to ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place to ensure an effective system of financial control.

2.1.2 To enable the Chief Financial Officer to advise the Accounting Officer and to assist senior managers in the exercising of powers and duties assigned to them in terms of Section 78 or delegated to them in terms of Section 79 of the Act.

2.1.3 To provide guidelines to the Accounting Officer and senior managers implement cost containment measures in line with National Treasury Circular 82.

## 3. COST CONTAINMENT PRINCIPLES

Moretele Municipality wishes to record that the following measures must be implemented, consistently with immediate effect to ensure the containment of costs: -

### 3.1 ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS

3.1.1. Accounting Officers must only contract with consultants after a gap analysis report has confirmed that the municipality does not have the requisite skills or resources in its permanent employment to perform the services required.

3.1.2. Evidence of acute planning of the project must be visible to all relevant persons including the administration and political oversight mechanisms in place at the municipality.

3.1.3 Consultants, including construction and infrastructure related services, must only be remunerated at the rates equal to or below those:

- determined in the “Guidelines on fees for audits done on behalf of the Auditor-General South Africa”, issued by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA);
- set out in the “Guide on Hourly Fee Rates for Consultants”, or
- Prescribed by the body regulating the profession of the consultant.

3.1.4 Ensure an exacting “specification” of the work to be accomplished accompanies the tender and is used as a monitoring tool, are appropriately recorded, and monitored.

3.1.5 Ensure that contracts for consultants include retention and penalty clauses for poor performance and in this regard, against the above specification, accounting officers must invoke such clauses, where deemed necessary.

3.1.6 It is mandatory that accounting officers of municipalities and municipal entities conclude on the best “value for money”, i.e., matching fees against quality and against benchmarked practices.

3.1.7 Accounting officers must appoint consultants on a time and cost basis with specific start and end dates.

## **3.2 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE FOR CONSULTANTS**

3.2.1 If travel and subsistence costs for appointed consultants are exclusive of the contract, the costs must be in accordance with the following provisions:

- a) Hotel accommodation must be in line with the Municipality’s travelling and subsistence policy
- b) Only economy class air tickets may be purchased for flights as prescribed in the travelling and subsistence policy
- c) Only group B vehicles or lower may be hired for engagements, as mentioned in the travel and subsistence policy

3.2.2 Kilometers claimed for the use of private vehicles may not exceed the rates approved by the National Department of Transport, as updated from time to time.

3.2.3 Undertake all engagements of consultants in accordance with the SCM Regulations and the municipality’s SCM policy

### **3.3 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE FOR MORETELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

#### **EMPLOYEES**

3.3.1 The National Treasury, on behalf of all three spheres of government, has negotiated improved upfront discounts for flights as well as discounted accommodation rates. Therefore, Moretele local municipality is requested to utilize these agreements to assist in their respective cost containment measures, unless they can negotiate lower air travel rates or utilize other service providers that offer lower rates.

3.3.2 Officials and Councillors receiving travel allowances should not make use of Municipal vehicles.

3.3.3 Two or three officials/councillors attending a similar gathering should travel together if practical to do so.

3.3.4 In the event different vehicles are used, only one vehicle will be reimbursed as agreed by officials/councilors travelling together

3.3.5 Kilometers travelled will be reimbursed subject to reasonability. Should the kilometres claimed be unreasonable, only kilometres from the municipality office to the destination will be considered.

### **3.4. AIR TRAVEL**

3.4.1 The National Treasury has negotiated with South African Airways (SAA) and Comair/British Airways (BA) for upfront discounted air fares for government employees travelling domestically for official purpose. These Domestic Air Travel Fares will be regularly reviewed by the National Treasury (These rates are not applicable for International Air Travel).

3.4.2 For SAA, the discounts range from 5% (L class) up to 30% (Y Class) for Economy Class tickets; and 10% (D Class) up to 26% (C Class) for Business.

3.4.3 For BA the discounts range from 10% (O, Q class) up to 25% (Y Class) for Economy Class tickets; and 20% (J Class) for Business Class tickets.

Please note that business class is not encouraged, however where a single flight exceeds 5 hours, consideration may be applied.

3.4.4 Accounting officers of municipalities and municipal entities are advised to include a clause in their respective documents that travel agencies are only

permitted to make booking arrangements on behalf of municipalities in line with this Circular. Current arrangements need to be updated and amended to reflect these changes.

3.4.5 Disabled persons can be accommodated in economy class, however, in extremely exceptional and rare cases an Accounting Officer may approve, with evidence, other than economy class air travel.

### **3.5. DOMESTIC HOTEL ACCOMODATION**

3.5.1 National Treasury has established maximum allowable rates for domestic accommodation. When sourcing accommodation for officials, municipalities should find options that are equal to or lower, depending on the allowable star grading and the band and in accordance with the Municipality's travelling and subsistence policy. Competition and cost effectiveness must remain a key principle as per supply chain management policy.

3.5.2 Bookings for accommodation should not be done when single trip is less than 250km and duration of event is one day.

3.5.3 Bookings should not be done when the gathering of any form starts from 9H00 or later and duration of event is one day.

3.5.4 Bookings should not be done when the gathering ends at 15H00 or earlier and duration of event is one day

3.5.5 Accommodation costs are assumed to be inclusive of Parking and Wi-Fi (if available), and exclusive of laundry expenses including Exclusive and Shared Facilities. Exclusive facilities offer travelers a sole occupancy unit consisting of one or more bedrooms and self-contained public areas e.g. kitchen, dining area and lounge. Shared Facilities consisting of one or more bedrooms and -contained shared public areas e.g. kitchen, dining area and lounge.

3.5.6 Maximum amounts as per S&T policy can be claimed for meals.

3.5.7 The claim for the actual amounts must be supported by a receipt.

3.5.8 Accounting officers must ensure that overnight accommodation is limited to instances where the distance travelled by road by the employee exceeds 500 kilometres to and from the destination (return journey).

### **3.6. VEHICLE HIRE**

Municipalities are encouraged to continue considering their own fleet first, where viable, prior to hiring of vehicles.

3.6.1 Notwithstanding the provisions above, all employees must make use of shuttle services if the cost of such a service is below the cost of hiring a vehicle.

Accounting officers must also consider making use of shuttle services if the cost of kilometres claimable by the employee and the cost of parking are higher than the shuttle services.

3.6.2 Ensure the hiring of vehicles from a category below Group B or an equivalent class. Accounting officers may permit employees to accept up-graded group of hired vehicles if such an up-grade is offered for free or at a lower charge than Group B.

3.6.3 Vehicle travel claims by employees of municipalities must be restricted to the actual distance travelled more than the normal distance from the employee's residence to his or her place of work or as may be negotiated using a motor vehicle allowance scheme.

### **3.7. CATERING COSTS**

3.7.1 Do not incur catering expenses for any meetings where only municipal officials are in attendance. Notwithstanding the above, the accounting officer may incur catering expenses for the following, provided that such lasts for five (5) continuous hours or more:

- The hosting of conferences, workshops, courses, forums, recruitment interviews, training courses, hearings;
- Meetings related to commissions or committees of inquiry; or
- Meetings hosted by municipal councils and the board of directors of municipal entities, including governance committee meetings.

3.7.2 Ensure that entertainment allowances of qualifying officials do not exceed two thousand rand (R2 000) per person per financial year. The National Treasury may periodically review this amount.

3.7.3 Do not incur expenses on alcoholic beverages.

3.7.4 Ensure that team building and social functions, including year-end functions, are not financed from the municipal budgets or by any suppliers or sponsors.



Notwithstanding the above, accounting officers may incur no more than the petty cash allocation or limitations on expenditure from their respective budgets to host farewell functions to employees who are either:

- proceeding on retirement due to ill health; or
- proceeding on retirement after reaching the qualifying age limit of a minimum of ten (10) or more years working for the public service.

3.7.5 Accounting officers and accounting authorities may not host farewell functions for employees who have:

- been dismissed.
- elected to resign or leave by accepting severance packages; or
- Approached the end of their contractual term.

### **3.8. EVENTS, ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP**

3.8.1 Eliminate wasteful expenditure on events, advertising in magazines, television, newspapers etc. where the municipality can use other cost effective means such as websites to market the institution or properly publicise the matters or events under consideration.

3.8.2 Memorabilia, gifts and other novelties should be of token value only and should only be offered by municipalities in order to acknowledge support or a visit or attendance by a dignitary in connection with a benefit to the local community; to reciprocate the giving of a similar token gift by another organisation; or similar but in all cases there must be an identifiable benefit to the community.

3.8.3 Limit or stop all unnecessary expenditure on matters such as printing of shirts, hosting of sporting events, festivals and other associated events, cruises, lavish functions, and extraordinary costs associated with visits of dignitaries or induction of new councillors.

### **3.9. CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, STUDY TOURS, ETC.**

3.9.1 Employees of municipalities may attend conferences hosted by professional bodies or non-governmental institutions (external conferences) held within the borders of South Africa provided that expenses related to their attendance do not exceed two thousand five hundred rand (R2 500) per person per day.

3.9.2 In instances where the cost exceeds this amount, officials must obtain prior approval from the accounting officer. The number of municipal officials attending such conferences and workshops must be limited

3.9.3 Employees must make every effort to take advantage of early registration discounts by seeking the required approvals to attend well in advance of the conference as it relates to their area of work. No late registration is acceptable.

3.9.4 Utilise municipal and/or provincial office facilities for conferences, meetings, strategic planning sessions etc. where an appropriate venue exists within the municipal jurisdiction.

3.9.5 The number of employees travelling to conferences or meetings on official duty for the same matter is limited to three (3) employees, unless otherwise approved in advance by the relevant accounting officer, having due regard to the cost containment measures.

3.9.6 Similar to the above, the number of employees travelling by air to other centres to attend an official engagement on the same matter is also limited to three (3) employees, unless otherwise approved in advance by the relevant accounting officer, having due regard to the cost containment measures.

### **3.10 OFFICE FURNISHING**

3.10.1 Municipalities should exercise due precaution in refurbishing offices, purchasing equipment, etc. especially when new persons are elected or appointed. Use of existing facilities and equipment is encouraged.

3.10.2 Office furnishing, when required, should be contained to minimal costs, avoiding elaborate and expensive furniture or equipment.

### **3.11 STAFF STUDY, PERKS AND SUSPENSION COSTS**

3.11.1 Training attended by employees and councillors of municipalities may only be attended at pre-approved service providers to ensure sufficient quality of training and obtain value for money.

3.11.2 Expenditure associated with overseas study tours by councillors or officials must be reduced and preferably stopped.

3.11.3 Encourage staff to take time off to make up for overtime worked.

3.11.4 Planned overtime must be submitted to management for consideration on a monthly basis.

3.11.5 Unplanned overtime worked must be motivated and approved by management.

3.11.6 Costs associated with long-standing staff suspensions and legal costs associated with not following due processes when suspending and dismissing staff must be eliminated.

3.11.7 Constant management of staff, improvements in productivity levels and feedback must be provided to all staff.

### **3.12 COST CONTAINMENT ON OTHER RELATED EXPENDITURE ITEMS**

3.12.1 Accounting officer of municipalities are advised to ensure that all commodities and products that the National Treasury designated as transversal contracts are utilised to benefit from savings where lower prices or rates have been negotiated.

3.12.2 Periodic or quarterly threat assessments against councillors and key officials should be undertaken by the appropriate authority (SAPS) and reported to the Speakers Office. Approval for security measures must be informed by such reports, if paid for from municipal funds. The use of metropolitan traffic officers for such purposes should be avoided.

3.12.3 Municipal funds may not be used to fund election campaign activities, including the provision of supporting material, clothing, food, inducements to vote either as part of, or during election rallies.

3.12.4 Printing of documents should carefully considered be back-to-back and use of colour printing for graphs only, while use of electronic means should be preferred.

3.12.5 All agendas be availed in an electronic format for both officials and councillors

3.12.6 Review and introduce limits on municipal staff telephones and limiting private call to a reasonable amount.

3.12.7 Ensure synergy between municipal divisions or departments to avoid duplication of processes and efforts.

3.12.8 Where possible the warranties on vehicle and computer equipment should be extended instead of procuring new ones.

3.12.9 Labour saving devices should be shared to optimize the capacity utilization of each device.

3.12.10 Purchasing of newspapers and other publications for municipal employees to limited and stopped.

3.12.11 Municipalities should ensure that awareness is raised with municipal staff so that a high degree of energy saving measures can be introduced, e.g. air-conditioning and lights in buildings are switched off at night and when offices are not in use.

#### **4 DELEGATIONS**

8.1 The approval of virements will be done in terms of the approved System of Delegations of Council.

8.2 Any official acting in a position of a senior manager, the Chief Financial Officer and the Accounting Officer will have the delegated powers to authorise or approve virement applications.

#### **5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

The policy will be effective as from 1 July 2023. This policy is to be reviewed annually. and approved by Council together with the adoption of the MTREF for the following year.