

TSANTSABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

COST CONTAINMENT POLICY

2024/25

Subject: Cost Containment Policy

Date: 20 June 2024

Council Resolution: ITEM SCM/2024

1. DEFINITIONS

“Act” Means the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003).

“Consultant” means a professional person, individual, partnership, corporation, or a company appointed to provide technical and specialist advice or to assist with a design and implementation of projects or to assist a municipality or municipal entity perform its functions to achieve the objects of local government in terms of section 152 of the Constitution;

“Cost containment” means measures implemented to curtail spending in terms of these regulations; and

“Credit card” means a card issued by a financial service provider, which creates a revolving account and grants a line of credit to the cardholder.

2. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that resources of the municipality are used effectively, efficient and economically by implementing cost containment measures.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative framework governing cost containment are:

- Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003 section 62(1) a, 78 (1) b, 95(a) and 105(1) (b).
- Municipal Finance Management Act, Circular 82
- Municipal Cost Containment Regulations 2018; and
- Travelling and subsistence policy

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The following measures must be implemented, consistently with immediate effect to ensure the containment of costs: -

1. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

Measure

Ensure effective control over travel claims.

Controls

- 1.1 Directors must implement systems in their respective Directorates to ensure cost-effective and time efficient travelling.
- 1.2 Travelling must be pre-authorized by the appropriate delegated official, before such costs are incurred.
- 1.3 Officials of the municipality must make use of municipal fleet when travelling for all official trips.
- 1.4 Directors must check with Budget and Treasury to confirm if there is available budget before approval of the trip. Travelling to outside the province must be pre-approved by the Municipal Manager before the employee can embark on them.
- 1.5 No travel and subsistence allowance will be paid for employees and non-employees attending interviews.
- 1.6 The National Treasury, on behalf of all three spheres of government, has negotiated improved upfront discounts for flights as well as discounted accommodation rates.
- 1.7 Therefore, municipality should 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.

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- 1.8 Sharing of the mode of transport when Employees / Councillors travel to the same destination.
- 1.9 Overnight accommodation **must** be limited to instances where the distance by road exceeds 500 kilometres to and from the destination (return journey).
- 1.10 Only economy class tickets to be purchased for employees and Councillors, where the flying time of the flight is five (5) hours or less.
- 1.11 The Municipal Manager may approve the purchase of business class tickets for employees with disabilities or for those with special needs, where the flying time is five (5) hours or less.
- 1.12 When a vehicle is hired, it must be shared between the Employees/Councillors attending the same workshop, conference, seminar, etc. (one vehicle to be hired per occasion).
- 1.13 Flight bookings must be made timeously, to prevent unnecessary overnight stay costs.
- 1.14 Domestic hotel accommodation linked to travel and subsistence may not exceed R1 500 per night per person (including dinner, breakfast and parking). National Treasury may periodically review this amount.
- 1.15 The amount of R1500 quoted above may be exceeded with approval of the Municipal Manager in instances:
- (i) such as peak holiday periods, and
 - (ii) when South Africa is hosting an event in the country or in a particular geographical area that results in an abnormal increase in the number of local / international guests in the country or in that particular geographical area.

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2. ACTING ALLOWANCES

2.1 Acting will be for the purpose of providing officials with an opportunity to gather experience and will not have a monetary benefit.

2.2 **Conditions to be designed to measure the official acting performance before any monetary benefit is paid after accessing performance of the preceding month.**

3. OVERTIME

Measure

Overtime must be undertaken in compliance with all relevant policies, SALGBC Collective Agreements and applicable legislation (e.g. Basic Conditions of Employment Act).

Controls

- 3.1 Overtime should only be approved where the necessary budget provision exists, after a need analysis has been undertaken by the relevant Directorate.
- 3.2 Planned overtime must be submitted to management for consideration on a monthly basis.
- 3.3 No overtime in excess of 40 hours per month will be paid out, officials will receive time off.
- 3.4 The Director **must** ensure that overtime worked in excess of 40 hours, is authorised **by the Municipal Manager prior** to the actual overtime being worked, as this is in contravention of Section 10 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA).
- 3.5 The core working hours of the employees to be changed to a shift system, where applicable, to obviate the need for overtime.
- 3.6 The regulations issued by the Collective Agreement, relating to annual salary thresholds within which overtime may be paid, must be adhered to. Where it is impractical based on the current staff compliment, prior approval should be given by the Municipal Manager.
- 3.7 A work plan to reduce overtime should be submitted quarterly.

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4. CATERING COSTS

4.1 Municipality must 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:

a) The hosting of conferences, workshops, courses, forums, recruitment interviews, training courses, hearings;

b) Meetings related to commissions or committees of inquiry; or

c) Meetings hosted by municipal councils, including governance committee meetings.

4.2 Directors must 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.

4.3 Municipality must not incur expenses on alcoholic beverages.

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

4.5 The municipality may **not** host farewell functions for employees who have:

(a) Been dismissed;

(b) Elected to resign or leave by accepting severance packages; or

(c) Approached the end of their contractual term.

5. EVENTS, ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIPS

5.1 Municipality must 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.

5.2 Memorabilia, gifts and other novelties should be of token value only and should only be offered by the municipality 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.

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5.3 No expenditure should be incurred for 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.

6. COMMUNICATION

6.1 Publications such as newsletters must be published quarterly in an electronic media format and on the municipal website/intranet. Copies should only be printed for stakeholders approved by the Municipal Manager.

6.2 Newspapers and other related publications for the use of officials must be discontinued.

6.3 The acquisition of mobile communication services must be done by using the transversal term contracts that have been arranged by the National Treasury.

6.4 Allowances for officials for private calls should be limited.

6.5 Provision of diaries be limited to secretaries and electronic diaries be kept by directorates.

7. ATTENDANCE OF CONFERENCES, SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

Measures and Controls

7.1 Conferences, seminars and workshops may be attended by Officials and Councilors, but only when absolutely necessary.

7.2 The Director concerned must submit a motivation to the Municipal Manager, outlining the absolute necessity for attendance.

7.3 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.

7.4 Conferences abroad must be limited to its ultimate minimum or none at all.

7.5 The total size of municipal delegations attending conferences, seminars and workshops outside the Municipality, must be restricted to three delegates.

7.6 The Director concerned must submit a motivation to the Municipal Manager, if the number of required attendees exceeds three delegates from the Municipality.

7.7 Budget availability must be confirmed by the Budget & Treasury Section, in the first instance.

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7.8 In the event of training being provided at no cost to the Municipality, the size of the municipal delegation may be increased, subject to approval by the Municipal Manager.

8. MUNICIPAL WORKSHOPS, RETREATS, STRATEGIC SESSIONS AND INTERNAL TRAINING

Controls

8.1 The Director concerned must submit a motivation to the Municipal Manager, in the event of local municipal venues not being available.

8.2 Alternative facilities at other government institutions must then be sourced, where such sessions cannot be held in-house.

8.3 The necessary proof must be provided to the Municipal Manager, where local municipal venues or facilities at other government institutions are not available.

8.4 Budget availability must be confirmed by the Budget & Treasury Section in the first instance, prior to the Municipal Manager approving the use of external venues.

9. ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

9.3 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”, by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA); or
- Prescribed by the body regulating the profession of the consultant (i.e. Law Society of South Africa, ECSA and etc.).

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- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 Ensure that contracts for consultants include retention and penalty clauses of 15% for poor performance and in this regard against the above specification, accounting officers must invoke such clauses, where deemed necessary.
- 9.6 It is mandatory that the accounting officer of municipality must conclude on the best “value for money”, i.e. matching fees against quality and against benchmarked practices.
- 9.7 Accounting officer of municipality must appoint consultants on a time and cost basis with specific start and end dates.
- 9.8 Travel and subsistence costs for the appointment of consultants must be in accordance with the travel policy of government and the contract price specifies all travel & subsistence costs.
- 9.9 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 may not exceed the amount mentioned in this Circular;
 - b) Only economy class air tickets may be purchased for flights;
 - c) Only group B vehicles or lower may be hired for engagements, as mentioned in this Circular;
 - d) Kilometres 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.
- 9.10 Municipalities are urged to develop consultancy reduction plans.
- 9.11 Undertake all engagements of consultants in accordance with the SCM Regulations and the municipality’s SCM policy.

10. UNIFORMS AND CLOTHING

Controls

- 10.1 A Uniforms Policy must be drafted stipulating the guidelines, including type of uniforms, shoes and frequency of issue, etc in line with the working environment of the respective employees.

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10.2 A monthly reconciliation of uniforms purchased and issued to staff members must also be performed by the respective Directorates.

11. GENERAL MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

11.1 In order to curb petrol expenditure, the municipality's vehicle tracking system should be utilised by the Directorates to monitor usage in order to curb abuse of municipal vehicles and excessive petrol consumption.

11.2 E-Learning methods should be considered for in-house training.

11.3 Telephone and/or Video conferencing facilities must be used, where possible, to avoid unnecessary travelling and subsistence costs.

11.4 Where possible, transversal contracts must be used for the procurement of goods and services.

11.5 Consideration must be given to utilising the services of the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) for media related needs.

11.6 Bulk purchases should be considered for regularly consumed inventory.

12. IMPLEMENTATION DATE OF THE COST CONTAINMENT POLICY

12.1 The Cost Containment Policy (CCP) will be implemented as soon as Council approves it.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

13.1 Directors are required to report on a quarterly basis regarding the respective Status of implementation of the Cost Containment Policy (CCP) for their respective Directorates.

13.2 The required reporting framework will be developed by the Municipal Manager will be made available to all Portfolio Committees and the Mayoral Committee on a quarterly basis.

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