
VAASA.
VAASA
LANGUAGE
PROGRAM
A CULTURALLY RICH, MULTILINGUAL CITY



INTERNATIONAL AND ENERGETIC JEWEL

Vaasa is the international and energetic jewel of Ostrobothnia. We speak 100 different languages; 69 % of the residents are Finnish-speaking, 23 % speak Swedish and 9 % other languages. The legislation governing the city activities guarantees the residents the right to their language and culture and requires the authorities to use good language and practice non-discrimination.

The City of Vaasa's first language programme, covering the whole city, comes into force in 2021. It aims, among other things, to appreciate the role of national languages, promote the provision of services in English and support the city employees in lifelong learning. The programme's implementation will be monitored on an annual basis, and a more extensive language monitoring report will be produced once every electoral term.

Multilingualism is part of our daily life and an essential strategic priority in Vaasa. The language programme supports the inhabitants' well-being and serves the international companies and communities in the city.

We thank the experts, elected representatives and residents involved in the preparation of the programme.

CITY STRATEGY



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OBJECTIVES



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MUNICIPALITY RESIDENT

Customer values

- Multilingual Vaasa
- A shared, culturally rich Vaasa
- An equal Vaasa respecting cultural identities
- A resident can operate and study in both national languages

Processes

- Bilingual services and decision-making
- Versatile language teaching on all levels; immersion and early childhood education and school path from 1st to 9th grade in English
- Multilingual interpreting services
- Bilingual multichannel communications, in English when necessary

Resources and expertise

- International Baccalaureate school
- Welcome Office
- Linginno Language Centre
- Simultaneous interpreting in City Council meetings
- Also bilingual units and campuses
- Multilingual services

BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

Customer values

- International Vaasa
- Information and services in three languages

Processes

- Procurement processes in Finnish and Swedish and in English if considered necessary
- Project activities
- Website partly in three languages
- Swift decision making

Resources and expertise

- A strong and multilingual city of education and a university city
- International companies



PERSONNEL

Customer values

- Monolingual, bilingual and multilingual operating environments
- Life-long learning
- Linguistic positivity

Processes

- Internal communications in two languages
- Bilingual meetings and work environment
- Consideration of language skills in recruitment
- Versatile continuing education offer in Finnish and in Swedish

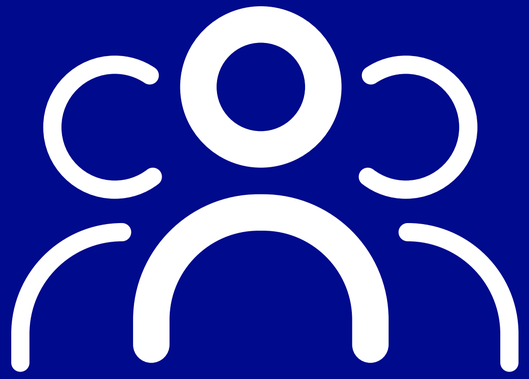
Resources and expertise

- Language proficient staff
- An encouraging language climate
- Coordination of translation resources



MULTILINGUAL ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	MEASURES
Maintaining and strengthening the current level of bilingualism	• A language monitoring report will be prepared once in a council term	• Administrative documents are available in Finnish and Swedish
Translation work is considered as part of the preparatory process		Documents will be delivered to the translation centre well in advance before the institutions need to work on them
Elected officials can work smoothly in Finnish and Swedish	• Training of elected representatives and other courses, lectures and seminars will be arranged in both Finnish and Swedish as far as possible, — number & participants per year • Elected officials will assess the implementation of bilingualism from the perspective of their activities once in a council term.	• Elected officials get orientation and guidance on the meeting and decision-making process in Finnish and Swedish • The city organs work in Finnish and Swedish
In the administration, the customer is served in their native language in Finnish or Swedish		• A resident can initiate matters in Finnish and Swedish • Documents delivered to the residents are available in Finnish and Swedish
At the level of the city as a whole, services in different languages will be implemented at least at the current level	• A network will be created for language monitoring	• Commitment to serving customers in spoken English
The City will consider the possibilities of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking entrepreneurs to participate in tenders. Also in English when necessary	Ensuring that procurement processes are bilingual following the city procurement guidelines	The tenderer must be able to choose whether to submit the offer in Finnish or Swedish. Also in English when considered necessary
City signs and other notices, press releases, consultations and surveys are bilingual		Ensuring that all signs, notices, press releases, consultations and surveys by the city are bilingual
Linguistic assessment in the structural reforms of the city organisation	Number of linguistic impact assessments per year	The linguistic impact assessment will be included in the preparation of reforms



LANGUAGE PROFICIENT PERSONNEL

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	MEASURES
Adequate language proficiency of the personnel **Securing the provision of bilingual services**	Number of training courses and participants	The personnel are offered opportunities for developing their language skills
Multilingual work communities and meetings	Number of participants in job shadowing	• Using one's mother tongue is encouraged in work communities > language immersion • Developing job shadowing
Good service level for internal customers / colleagues	Results of workplace satisfaction surveys	Briefings and workplace training for staff are organised in two languages if possible
Reassessment of language skills requirements and categories	Updated instructions will be published in 2022	The instruction on language skills requirements will be updated during 2022
The utilisation of personnel's language skills		Mapping the language skills and utilising the expertise of staff, especially in English
More flexible and more attractive recruitment		• Adjusting the language requirements in the recruitment phase • During the recruitment phase, language proficiency will be evaluated, and a skills development plan drawn up • It will be possible to recruit a person who can improve their language qualifications while working
Increasing the number of international student traineeships and summer jobs	Summer jobs for international students	In the summer job search 1-3 places for international students
Branding the Vaasa model: language positivity		Network of work community ambassadors: "positive marketing" of bilingualism / multilingualism



MULTILINGUAL EVERYDAY LIFE

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	MEASURES
Multilingual Vaasa	• Number of pupils in English and immersion education. • Number of participating daycare centres in the Language Friends programme • Tandem groups between Finnish and Swedish speakers; the number of participants • Number of customers at Welcome Office	• Language immersion and teaching in English transferred to the main campus • More effective integration of new residents in Vaasa • Electronic services, also in English when possible • Photos and videos highlight multilingualism and language versions at least in Finnish and Swedish and, if possible, in English
Vaasa that appreciates equality and cultural identity	A resident survey, language barometer	• Dismantling obstacles to participation • Better use and expansion of the Feedback service also into English • Interpretation services for other language minorities as far as possible
Information and services in three languages	• Communications contents bilingual • Number of pieces of news online in English	• Trilingual websites where possible and necessary • Customer service in Finnish, Swedish and partly English • External communications in all channels (vaasa.fi, main social media channels FB, IG, Twitter, and LinkedIn as well as printed products) as well as information to the media in Finnish and Swedish and as much as possible in English
Own cultural spaces and guidance		• Information bulletins and services also in other languages: e.g. the Welcome Office as well as leisure activities • Native language teaching and teaching of other religions

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