



An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation

Irish Language Scheme

October 2010 - October 2013

**Under Section 11 of the
Official Languages Act 2003**

Schedule of Contents

Chapter 1- Background and Scope of Scheme

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Requests for Submissions
- 1.3 The Scheme of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
- 1.4 Scope of the Scheme

Chapter 2 - The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation: its Mission, Functions and Service Delivery

- 2.1 Mission Statement of the Department
- 2.2 Main Functions of the Department
- 2.3 Department's Customers and Customer Contact
- 2.4 Service Delivery

Chapter 3 - Statement of Services available to the Public through Irish

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Main Activities of the Department - English Language Primarily
- 3.3 Services of the Department through the Irish Language

Chapter 4 - Enhancement of Services to be provided Bilingually

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Department's Plan for Enhancement of Irish Language Skills among Staff
- 4.3 Enhancement of Services to be provided Bilingually

Chapter 5 - Monitoring and Revision

Chapter 6 - Publicising of Agreed Scheme

Chapter 1 Background and Scope of Scheme

1.1 Introduction

This scheme was prepared under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (“the Act”) by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation.

Section 11 of the Act provides for the preparation of a statutory scheme by public bodies detailing the services they will provide

- through the medium of Irish
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe. The Scheme prepared by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation will primarily relate to the services provided by the Department to the general public in particular.

1.2 Requests for Submissions

The Department published a notice under Section 13 of the Act in the national newspapers on Friday, 29 May 2009, inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme under Section 11 of the Act from any interested parties. The notice was also put on the Department’s website and circulated to staff.

Two submissions were received in response to the call for public consultation. The scheme has been informed by these submissions and the views and suggestions put forward by staff in the various Divisions of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation. The Department appreciates the time and effort put in by all concerned in this process.

1.3 The Scheme of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation

The Scheme builds on the existing levels of services in the Irish language provided within the Department as well as on the principles of Quality Customer Service. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Scheme will rest with the Senior Management Group within the Department.

The Scheme outlines the extent to which services are currently available through Irish as a starting base. Areas for future enhancement of these services provided by the Department are identified in the body of the Scheme.

The Scheme also includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that the Department

continues to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and accessible way. The Department will continue to gauge the level of demand for its services in the Irish language by carrying out regular audits to determine the level of queries/requests for services through Irish in a given period.

1.4 Scope of the Scheme

The Scheme sets out a range of services in the Irish language, which the Department aims to deliver to its customers and staff, from the commencement of the Scheme on 25th October, 2010 and it shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the earlier.

Chapter 2 The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation: its Mission, Functions and Service Delivery

2.1 Mission Statement of the Department

The Mission Statement of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation, is currently in the process of being revised and will be included in the Department's *Statement of Strategy 2010-2012*, which will be published later this year.

2.2 Main Functions of the Department

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation is primarily a policy development Department. The Department has a central role in devising, promoting and implementing Government policy in the areas of enterprise development, competitiveness, science, technology, innovation, intellectual property, trade, consumer policy, competition policy, commercial regulation, employment rights protection as well as the promotion of stable industrial relations and in advising and supporting the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation, the three Ministers of State in the Department and the Government in all those areas.

The Department is organised into 6 functional Divisions, which broadly reflect the breadth of its statutory remit. The Divisions are:

1. *Enterprise and Agencies Division*
2. *Competitiveness, Trade and International Affairs Division*
3. *Employment Rights and Industrial Relations Division*
4. *Science, Technology and Intellectual Property Division*
5. *Commerce, Consumers and Competition Policy Division*
6. *Corporate Services and Economic Policy Division*

The work of the Department is carried out by the 6 Divisions listed above. Developing and implementing policies which fall within the Department's direct remit, together with advocating policies across Government and the Economy that support the Department's mission of employment creation, worker protection and competitiveness, is the primary focus of the Department. The policies, strategies and initiatives which the Department seeks to implement derive principally from the Programme for Government, the National Development Plan, the Social Partnership Agreements and, of course, day to day Ministerial and Government direction.

Given the nature of the Department's responsibilities, functions and roles, these Divisions do not primarily provide services directly to the members of the public. The Divisions primarily provide services directly to the Minister, to the three Ministers of State, to the Government, to the Oireachtas, to other Government Departments, to EU and International Bodies etc. The Department is also

constantly in consultation with a wide range of interests, including the social partners, business and sectoral representatives, trade unions, research forums and institutions, etc. Direct interaction with members of the general public would not be a major feature of the Department's activities.

Another important function of the Department is liaising with the 8 Statutory Offices of the Department (Companies Registration Office; Office of Registrar of Friendly Societies; Office of Director of Corporate Enforcement; Patents Office; Labour Relations Commission; Labour Court; Employment Appeals Tribunal; National Employment Rights Authority) and with the many State Agencies associated with the Department (Enterprise Ireland; Forfás; IDA Ireland; County & City Enterprise Boards; Inter Trade Ireland; Competition Authority; National Consumer Agency; National Standards Authority of Ireland; Health & Safety Authority; Injuries Board). In the context of the responsibilities conferred on the Department, these Statutory Offices and State Agencies carry out the main interaction with members of the public on behalf of the Department. Examples of the range of services delivered to individual customers by the Department through the dedicated structure of Statutory Offices and State Agencies would be employment rights adjudication, patents and trade marks registration, company registration and filing, occupational health and safety, consumer issues.

Some of the Divisions of the Department would to some extent be involved in the provision of services directly to members of the public e.g., the Information Unit, the Press Office and the Freedom of Information Unit of the Corporate Services and Economic Policy Division, the Employment Permits Unit of the Employment Rights and Industrial Relations Division, the Redundancy Payments Unit of the Employment Rights and Industrial Relations Division (which is scheduled to transfer to the Department of Social Protection on 1 January 2011), etc.

2.3 Department's Customers and Customer Contact

The main customers of the Department would not, therefore, be members of the public. However, some areas of the Department have considerable interaction with the public and these areas are:

Corporate Services and Economic Policy Division

Department's Telephonists

Reception Staff at Department's main buildings (Kildare Street, Davitt House and Earlsfort Centre)

Information Unit

Press Office

Freedom of Information Unit

Employment Rights and Industrial Relations Division

Employment Permits Unit

Redundancy Payments Unit/Insolvency Payments Unit (both of which are scheduled to transfer to the Department of Social Protection on 01 January 2011)

The Scheme outlined in the rest of this document relates primarily to the above areas of the Department because of their interaction with the members of the public.

2.4 Service Delivery

Where the Department interacts with the public it is done through correspondence, phone, computer website and e-mail and visits by appointment in the main. The variety of methods of communication with the Department ensures versatility and flexibility for our customers and that they receive the service they require as and when they need it. New opportunities for communicating information with customers, such as text alerts, are kept under review as technological advances are made.

In addition, the Department's website (www.deti.ie) is a critical information service to customers, providing details of eligibility criteria for schemes, application forms, guidance notes and details of schemes, services, etc.

Chapter 3 Statement of Services available to the Public through Irish

3.1 Introduction

One of the key objectives of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation is to provide an efficient, high quality service to its customers in line with the standards and targets set out in the Department's Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter. The Customer Service Action Plan promises to do its best to facilitate a customer who wishes to conduct his/her business through Irish in the following ways:

- Reply in Irish where correspondence is received in Irish;
- Publish key Departmental documents simultaneously in Irish and English.

The Department is committed to providing a quality service to the public through the medium of the Irish language within the constraints of staff availability, demand for services in Irish and the Irish language skills and proficiencies of officials, who will frequently be moving between the Department and its Offices as the requirements of the Department dictate. It should also be remembered that many of the general public customers of the Department are foreign nationals, often with very poor English linguistic skills, particularly in the areas of Employment Permits and Redundancies (this latter area is scheduled to be transferred to the Department of Social Protection as from 01 January 2011), and that such customers would have no interest in communicating through the Irish language, and in some cases would find it very difficult to deal with the Department, if we had the initial introduction to the Department for such people per phone in the Irish language.

3.2 Main Activities of the Department - English Language Primarily

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation provides its services primarily through the medium of English because the Department's remit encompasses responsibility for the areas listed in Chapter 2 above. The Department's customers and stakeholders are many and varied and their widespread preferences are for dialogue in the English language. It is envisaged that for the foreseeable future the position outlined here will continue to apply and this is essential for the viability of the Department's operations. Given the nature of its functions and its responsibilities, the Department does not have a high level of direct contact with individual members of the general public nor does the Department, with some exceptions, provide schemes and services directly for individual members of the public.

Because of the nature of the core activities undertaken by the Department, as outlined previously, a large proportion of the documentation produced by the Department on an ongoing basis are not produced as a service to the general public or for classes of the general public or as a means of communication with

the general public in relation to any such services. In view of this, many documents from the Department will continue to be available in English only. Included here would be documents of a specialist or technical nature produced by the Department but not designed for the general public, e.g. documents in relation to Requests for Tenders, large and detailed application forms, circulars, internal instruction manuals, operating instructions, etc.

3.3 Services of the Department through the Irish Language

The Department primarily provides its services to its key stakeholders and to the general public through the medium of the English language. Nevertheless, since the enactment of the Official Languages Act 2003, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation has been conscious of the obligations on public bodies to accommodate their customers who wish to access official documentation in the Irish language. Since 2005, the Department has published documents in both the Irish and English languages, in accordance with Section 10 of the Official Languages Act and has ensured that customers and stakeholders who might want the Irish versions of important Department documents are facilitated in their wishes.

In addition, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation has been conscious of the obligations on public bodies to accommodate their customers, who may wish to conduct their business with the Department and avail of the services provided by the Department through the medium of the Irish language, and has provided the following services for customers of the Department through the medium of Irish in recent years:

- The Department lists its main services in Irish and English in the Eircom telephone directory for each year in the State Directory section;
- The official identity cards for the staff of the Department are predominantly in the Irish language;
- The Department replies to correspondence (traditional and electronic) in the language in which it is received (Irish/English) in accordance with the provisions of Section 9(2) of the Act;
- The staff of the Department have been advised on the Department's Intranet that if they wish to enhance their Irish language skills in anticipation of providing their particular Business Unit's services to the general public through the medium of Irish, they should contact the Training and Development Unit of the Department;
- The Department simultaneously publishes certain key documents in both the Irish and English languages in accordance with the provisions of Section 10 of the Act, including:

- Documents setting out public policy proposals
 - Annual Reports
 - Annual Audited Accounts or Financial Statements
 - Strategy Statements
 - Major policy documents (Green Papers/White Papers)
- The Department simultaneously publishes Acts of the Oireachtas in both Irish and English through the Government Publications Office;
 - In response to all e-Mails received in the Customer Service Unit of the Department, the reply contains a bilingual signing off in terms of contact details, Department address etc;
 - Security footers on all e-Mails issued from the Department are in both the Irish and English languages;
 - The Department's website provides a link to an Irish section;
 - The Department tries to ensure that if a member of the public wishes to conduct his/her business with the Department through the medium of Irish over the phone that an official of the Department with some experience in the Irish language will, if possible, be available for such a person.

Chapter 4 Enhancement of Services to be provided Bilingually

4.1 Introduction

The points made in previous chapters about the activities and responsibilities of the Department must be borne in mind when considering what enhancements should be made by the Department on the question of enhancing its bilingual services for any member of the general public who may wish to conduct their business with the Department through the medium of the Irish language.

4.2 Department's Plan for Enhancement of Irish Language Skills among Staff

The Department is committed to building on the existing levels of knowledge and competency in relation to Irish language skills currently available within the Department. In order to ascertain the level of expertise in Irish among staff, a survey will be carried out of staff asking them to rate their ability to write, read and speak Irish and to indicate if they are satisfied that their existing level of knowledge and skills would enable them to be included in a contact list for the Department (i.e. would they be able and willing to accept callers referred from the Department's switchboard operators or reception). This survey will update a similar survey undertaken throughout the Department in 2006 which clearly indicated that the existing level of competence in spoken and written Irish to deal with administrative, technical issues and verbal enquiries in Irish is very limited within the Department. The proposed survey will also seek to ascertain the precise demand for the Department's services to be provided through the medium of the Irish language from our customers/stakeholders and especially from members of the general public.

There will be a need for significant effort over a long number of years to raise the level of knowledge and competency in relation to the Irish language for staff within the Department. The principal mechanism to deepen the capacity of the Department to transact more of its business with the general public through the medium of Irish will be the training and development of the Department's staff.

The Department will continue to seek additional volunteers to provide Irish language services across the Department as Irish language capability develops within the Department. With the agreement of staff they will be identified in an appropriate way on telephone lists and organisation charts.

In this context, and as part of an ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for staff to meet the evolving needs of the Department's customers and to develop the potential of staff, it is planned to take the following steps throughout the duration of the current scheme to enhance the level of Irish among staff in the Department:

- the Department will continue to encourage and support staff who wish to attend a range of Irish language classes especially those provided by Gaeleagras na Seirbhíse Poiblí, which promotes the Irish language throughout the Civil Service;
- the Department will continue to facilitate staff attending Irish language classes during office hours;
- advice will be provided to staff in relation to the range of high-quality Irish language classes available outside office hours (e.g. third-level Diploma in Irish; Sult, Gael-Linn, etc) and financial support will be provided to staff pursuing such courses under the terms of the Post-Entry Education Refund of Fees Scheme.

This work will be carried out with a view to addressing the issue of seeking to provide a quality one to one service for any member of the public who may wish to conduct his/her business with the Department through the medium of the Irish language with the relevant sections of the Department.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation has in the past supported staff who express an interest in developing their fluency in Irish language skills by affording them opportunities to attend classes, sit examinations and attend refresher courses in the Gaeltacht.

Recent enquiries in the Department show that there is a reasonably low level of competency among staff in Irish language skills despite the Department's proactive approach in supporting the acquisition of language skills among staff.

Traditionally, approval for Irish language training has been made at the discretion of the line manager subject to the requirements of the Service. The requirements of the Service are undergoing substantial change in the current environment due to the recent decentralisation programme; early retirement and incentivised career break programmes, non-filling of vacancies and family friendly short time working structures. As before, the Department will attempt to be flexible and will endeavour to facilitate staff wherever possible.

4.3 Enhancement of Services to be provided Bilingually

Based on previous customer surveys, the Department's staff inventory of demand for Irish language services from customers and on website hits where Irish and English versions of documents are available, the demand for services in Irish by the Department's customers is very low.

With a view to improving both the level and standard of its services provided bilingually to the public the Department will implement the following general and specific measures throughout the life of this Scheme, resources permitting and conditional on the impact of staff recruitment/ embargoes and other significant change initiatives on our key activities:

- The Department will continue to provide its range of services currently available through the medium of Irish to its customers as outlined in Chapter 3;
- Receptionists/Switchboard Operators are the first points of contact with the public. It shall be the policy of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation to ensure that standard Quality Customer Service (QCS) practice applies in this area, which is that within 2 years of the commencement of the Scheme:
 - Reception/switchboard staff will be able to give the name of the Department in Irish;
 - They are at least familiar with the basic greetings in Irish;
 - Suitable arrangements are in place so that they can put members of the public in touch, without delay, with the office or officer responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where available.
- A 'G' on phone lists provided to Receptionist and Switchboard Operators will identify staff who are willing to deal with telephone queries in Irish. The Switchboard Operators or Receptionists will transfer calls received in Irish to an Irish speaker in the relevant Division;
- Individual staff members will be free to leave telephone voice mail announcements in the language(s) of their choice and will be encouraged to make use of the Irish language in such voice mails whenever practicable;
- The Department will include a Language Awareness topic as part of both Induction and Customer Service Training Courses so as to ensure that staff understand why the Department is endeavouring to increase the level of services provided bilingually, the context and background to the policy and how the policy will affect their work;
- The Department will ensure over the period of the Scheme that new and existing forms, leaflets or circulars used by the Department in its interaction with the public will be made bilingual in accordance with the following schedule:-
 - By the end of the **first year** of the Scheme – **15%** of new and existing forms, leaflets and circulars;
 - By the end of the **second year** of the Scheme – **30%** of new and existing forms, leaflets and circulars;
 - By the end of the **third year** of the Scheme – **40%** of new and existing forms, leaflets and circulars.

The relevant forms, leaflets and circulars will be made bilingual within the one cover save where this is not practicable because of the size or nature of the document.

Press Office

The Press Office handles communications to/from the media on behalf of the Minister, the Ministers of State and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation. Its main customers are the Minister, the 3 Ministers of State, the Department, the Government Information Services, the national and international media and the general public.

To improve the level of service provided bilingually to its customers the Press Office will:

- Publish at least ten press releases per annum in bilingual format from the beginning of year two of the Scheme. The bilingual press releases will relate to issues or developments of national/international significance, and/or address themes of general interest to a national audience. They may relate to significant policy announcements by Ministers in relation to key aspects of their portfolios. Any press releases in relation to Irish language issues will also be issued bilingually;
- Speeches and statements by the Minister, a Minister of State and Senior Officials of the Department will continue to be made available in the language(s) in which they are delivered be this Irish or English;
- Letters, phone calls, requests, etc, received in Irish in the Press Office will be logged to allow for monitoring of demand;
- As the capability of staff in the Department to deal with the public in Irish is currently limited, the Press Office relies on outside contractors to translate press releases, speeches, notes to editors, correspondence etc, into Irish. Staff in the Press Office will be offered training in basic Irish conversation and writing skills relevant to their work during the course of the Scheme in an effort to enhance their level of fluency.

Website

The Department's website (www.deti.ie) is not currently fully navigable in Irish. By the end of the Scheme the Department will increase the number of pages available in Irish on the website by 20%, over their 2010 levels.

In addition, it will be the policy of the Department to ensure that all publications including policy statements, annual reports, information leaflets, circulars and brochures, that are produced in Irish or bilingually will continue to be made available on the Irish version of the website at the same time as the English version.

Any new website or websites introduced by the Department for the benefit of the general public during the course of the Scheme will contain Irish language material.

Computer Systems

Any new computer systems being installed in the Department for the use of the general public will be fully capable of handling the Irish language and existing systems will, where necessary, be made compatible in conjunction with the next suitable planned maintenance or upgrade work. Given the major technical and resource issues involved, this is an issue to be tackled over the long term.

On-line Interactive Services

Existing interactive services available in the English language only for the general public will be upgraded as soon as resources and pressures of other work in the IT area of the Department allow.

Any new interactive services, which allow the general public to make applications or receive benefits on-line, will be introduced simultaneously in both the English and Irish languages by the end of the Scheme.

Chapter 5 Monitoring & Revision

The Senior Management Group within the Department will keep the effective operation of the Scheme under review.

The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers in each of the line Divisions of the Department who will be responsible for the implementation of the scheme, where appropriate, within their own areas and for reporting on a regular basis to their Assistant Secretary.

Chapter 6 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the Scheme will be publicised to the general public by means of:

- the circulation of the scheme to appropriate agencies and public bodies;
- inclusion on the Department's website.

A copy of this Scheme will also be sent to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

The English language version is the original text of this Scheme.