



Department of
**Agriculture,
Food and the Marine**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**

Official Languages Act 2003

Language Scheme

2016 - 2019

www.agriculture.gov.ie

Contents

Section 1

Background	3
Preparation of the Scheme	3
The Content of the New Scheme	4
Commencement Date of Scheme	4

Section 2

Overview of the Department	5
Our Customers	5
Assessment of extent to which services are already available through Irish	6

Section 3

Enhanced measures to promote services in Irish	7
Reception facilities	
Publications and Media	
Media and Speeches	
Public Meetings	
Website and Information Technology:	
Training & Development	
Other Initiatives	
An Ghaeltacht	
Designated Irish Language Posts	

Section 4

Monitoring and Review	12
-----------------------	----

Section 5

Publicising of Agreed Scheme	13
------------------------------	----

Appendix

A. Organisation and Structure	14
-------------------------------	----

Section 1

Background

The Department's first Language Scheme was introduced in June 2006. This second Language Scheme was prepared under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, 2003. Section 11 of the Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory Scheme detailing the services they will provide:

- through the medium of Irish;
- through the medium of English and;
- through the medium of Irish and English.

It also details 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.

Section 12 of the Act provides for the preparation of guidelines by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and their issue to public bodies to assist in the preparation of draft Schemes. This Scheme has been drawn up in conformity with these guidelines. A notice under section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003 was received from the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht requesting that the Department carry out a review of its first Scheme and to prepare and submit to him a new draft Scheme.

The first Scheme has now been reviewed as requested and this second Language Scheme has been prepared setting out specific measures to develop and advance the level and quality of service the Department will provide to speakers of Irish.

Preparation of the Scheme

In the preparation of this Scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. In addition, there has been consultation with relevant stakeholders. The new Scheme has been informed by our experience with the first Scheme.

The Department is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language
- the importance of a proactive approach to provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

The Scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by the Department will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future Schemes. In the event of commitments in our first Scheme not having been fully implemented to date, this matter has been the subject of discussion with the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The Content of the New Scheme

The objectives of this second Scheme are to build on the progress achieved since 2006 by the Department in the provision of quality services to our Irish-speaking customers and to broaden the range of services available bilingually over the lifetime 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 new Scheme also builds on the principles of quality customer service and will continue to ensure that persons who wish to conduct their business through Irish are facilitated. However, the prevailing public service context must be taken into account and in this regard, the constraints on resources and on public sector recruitment, allied with budgetary constraints, may impact on the level of progress that can be achieved.

The time and effort put in by all concerned in this process is acknowledged and appreciated.

Commencement Date of Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed on **24 October 2016** by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. It will commence with effect from this date and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new Scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Section 2

Overview of the Department

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine was established on March 9 2011. It retains all of the former functions of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and has additional responsibility for sea fisheries, aquaculture, marine research, marine engineering, pier and harbour development (other than those commercial and island harbours which are under the responsibility of the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Community, and Local Government respectively) and aquaculture.

The Department retains its former functions of providing advisory services for the formulation of Governmental policies pertaining to the agriculture and food sectors, as well as making representations on behalf of the sectors at EU and global level. The Department has responsibility for the regulation of the agricultural and food industries through national and EU legislation, as well as for monitoring animal and plant welfare. It will also continue to monitor the direction of state bodies under its aegis engaged in research, training, advice, market development/promotion and industrial development. The Department's mission statement is:

“To lead the sustainable development of the agri-food and marine sector and to optimise its contribution to national economic development and the natural environment

In December 2015 the Department had a full time equivalent staff complement of 3,032. A summary of the Divisions of the Department are set out at Appendix A.

Our Customers

In order to achieve its goals, the Department works in close partnership with other Government Departments, statutory agencies and non-Governmental organisations on a range of cross-cutting issues in relation to both policy and scheme implementation. Our customers are drawn from stakeholders across the agriculture, marine and forestry sectors.

Assessment of extent to which services are already available through Irish

The Department is pleased with the outcome of the implementation of the measures committed to in its first Irish Language Scheme. It notes that significant progress has been made in its capacity to service customers conducting business with it through Irish.

Its commitments to improve the level of service in the Irish language included:

- the development of reception facilities in Irish for customers seeking to transact business in Irish at Department offices, especially those serving Gaeltacht areas;
- the provision of information bilingually on schemes operated and services provided by the Department;
- the provision of enhanced bilingual web based facilities by the Department;
- the establishment of a generic email address for correspondence in Irish (aonadnagaeilge@agriculture.gov.ie);
- the provision of services to the media through Irish where required; and
- the implementation of a range of training and development initiatives to enhance the skills level of the staff of the Department with a view to meeting the needs of customers transacting business through Irish.

Section 3

Enhanced measures to promote services in Irish

The objective of this second Scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and to enhance the level of service. The Department has decided to implement a range of fresh initiatives to develop and enhance the capacity and quality of its services to customers through Irish over the course of its second three year Scheme. The Department considers that these initiatives can build substantially on the progress made in the lifetime of the first Language Scheme. In addition, the commitments in relation to sea fisheries made in the former Department of Communication, Marine and Natural Resources' Scheme have been integrated into the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Scheme.

These will complement a separate range of measures, which the Department will be implementing to comply with the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003 and particularly the Regulations introduced in October 2008 under the Act. These Regulations provide mainly for the enhancement of the profile of the Irish Language in signage, stationery and recorded oral announcements for which public bodies are responsible.

In formulating these proposals the Department is mindful that factors such as constraints on public finances may result in the curtailment of public sector recruitment and of public services generally. These may impinge upon the capacity the Department to achieve all of its ambitions in the delivery of services to the public, including those relating to Irish speaking customers.

Reception facilities

The Department recognises that receptionists/switchboard operators are the first points of contact with the public. The Department will continue to ensure the ongoing service delivery of reception facilities in Irish for customers seeking to transact business in Irish at Department offices in Gaeltacht areas. We will endeavor to deliver the following:

- Reception/switchboard staff give the name of the Department in Irish;
- Reception/switchboard staff are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish;
- Suitable arrangements are in place so that Switchboard and reception staff can put members of the public in touch, at the earliest opportunity, with an officer who can converse in Irish.

Publications and Media

- Section 10 of the Act requires a Statement of Strategy, Annual Report, Audited Accounts or Financial Statements and any document setting out policy proposals to be published by the Department simultaneously in Irish and English.
- In addition to meeting its obligations under Section 10 of the Official Languages Act 2003 to publish certain documents in both official languages simultaneously, the Department will publish other corporate documents, such as the Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan, the Farmers' Charter of Rights and the Schemes and Services booklet, in both Irish and English.
- Departmental publications on major policy statements or reviews will in general, be made available bilingually. If the cost of bilingual publication in any individual case is deemed excessive due to the size of the document, the Department may choose to publish the executive summary and recommendations in bilingual format.
- Publications generated by other bodies but available from the Department will be made available in the language in which they have been published by the generating Department or body.
- Other significant leaflets and documents will be made available bilingually as they are published, within budgetary constraints.
- The ongoing provision of services to the media through Irish where required.

Media and Speeches

- 20% of Departmental press releases will be made available bilingually to those media outlets that require them.
- Speeches will be made available in the language in which they are delivered.

Public meetings

- The Department conducts the majority of its public meetings in the English language only. However, the Department will, when warranted, provide staff proficient in Irish for meetings in Gaeltacht areas or when dealing with Gaeltacht / Irish language issues.
- Where required, the Department will endeavour to ensure that meetings held in the Gaeltacht will be conducted in Irish with simultaneous translation to English provided, as appropriate.
- Meetings organised by the Department that deal with Irish language issues will be held in Irish or bilingually, as appropriate.

Website and Information Technology

- A number of key documents and forms of interest to the public are available in Irish on the website. The Department plans to expand the number of documents available in Irish over the lifetime of the scheme.
- Should the Department introduce any new websites during the course of the Scheme, the static introductory content on these websites will be bilingual.
- For pre-recorded computerised messaging. The standard disclaimer on email communications will be bilingual. Individual staff members can choose to put the non-system generated part of the “out of office” e-mail message in Irish or English or bilingually

Training & Development

- The Department will continue to provide Irish language training, as required by the Department, to staff, having regard especially to offices which serve Gaeltacht areas.
- The Department will encourage staff who conduct official business through Irish to engage in self-directed study to certificate, diploma and degree level through the Refund of Academic Fees Scheme.

- The Department will maintain and develop a dedicated section in its Staff Intranet service ('eZone') for staff to advise staff of the Department's obligations under the Official Languages Act and the Irish Language Scheme and assist them in complying with the provisions of both.

Other Initiatives

- Requests for Tenders will be made available in English only unless the tender itself relates to an Irish language issue.
- The Department will seek to optimise the quality of documentation it publishes in the Irish language and to ensure maximum value for money from its expenditure on Irish-language activities.
- Over the period of the Scheme the Department will roll out telephone technology to facilitate the recording of bilingual out of office messages with a view to offering customers an easier opportunity to transact their business through Irish.
- To facilitate compliance with the Regulations insofar as they relate to signage, the Department will make available to staff Irish translations of a range of useful terms for temporary signs which they may need to display from time to time in their offices.

An Ghaeltacht

Following a reorganisation of Government Departments in 2007 and the consequent reassignment to it of the responsibility for sea fisheries matters, the Department now has two offices (both of which are Fishery Harbour Centres) located in Gaeltacht areas.

One is located in Ros a Mhíl, Co. Galway and the other in An Daingean, Co. Kerry. These offices represent the most direct interface which the Department has with Irish speakers and as a consequence, their capacity to provide a high level of services through Irish is very important. The Department is satisfied that there are staff deployed in those locations who are functionally bilingual. The Department will endeavour to ensure that Irish becomes the working language in offices located in Gaeltacht areas by the end of 2020 and the Department undertakes to provide a service through Irish to members of the public in Gaeltacht areas over the lifetime of this Scheme.

The Department has put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure that official Placenames of Gaeltacht areas as declared by the Minister in the (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) Placenames Order 2005 will continue to be used as the default for corporate purposes, including, where appropriate, legislative corporate and statistical purposes.

Designated Irish Language Posts

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Department has identified six posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Five of those posts are currently filled by officers with competence in Irish and every effort will be undertaken to fill the remaining position by the end of this Scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This enables this Department to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

Designated Irish Language Posts			
Title of Post	Location	Gaeltacht/Irish speaking community served	Indication of standard of Irish required (basic, intermediate or advanced)
Executive Officer (currently vacant)	Corporate Affairs Division, (Irish language Unit)	Located in Portlaoise	Functional Irish bilingual
Agricultural Inspector	Agricultural Environment Structures (AES)	Covering Cork/Kerry	Functional Irish bilingual
Agricultural Inspector	Agricultural Environment Structures	Covering Donegal	Functional Irish bilingual
Assistant Agricultural Inspector	Agricultural Environment Structures	Covering Mayo and Galway	Functional Irish bilingual
Clerical Officer	Management Engineering Division	An Daingean Fishery Harbour Centre (Dingle)	Functional Irish bilingual
Clerical Officer	Management Engineering Division	Ros an Mhíl Fishery Harbour Centre	Functional Irish bilingual

Section 4

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the Scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis with senior management within the Department

- Information summarising the provisions of this Scheme will be distributed to staff and made available to the public online through the Department's website.
- Implementation of this Scheme will be an integral part of the Department's business planning processes.
- The Management Advisory Committee will be kept informed of any issues arising from the implementation of the Scheme.
- The Irish Language Unit will continue to facilitate and drive implementation of the Act, the Regulations and the Scheme and to assess the effectiveness of the measures being taken.

Section 5

Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This Scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the Scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish.

A copy of the agreed Scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The English language version of this Scheme is the official version.

Appendix A - Organisation and Structure

Divisions of the Department

The Management structure of the Department under the Secretary General comprises of Assistant Secretaries, the Chief Veterinary Officer, the Chief Inspector, Information Management and Technology (IMT) Director and Director of Laboratories.

The structure is given below including reporting Divisions:

Assistant Secretary - Marine and Fisheries

- Seafood Policy & Development
- Aquaculture & Foreshore Management
- Marine Engineering
- Sea Fisheries Administration
- Marine Agencies & Programmes

Chief Inspector

- Crop Policy, Production and Safety
- Crops Evaluation and Certification
- Plant Health and Horticulture
- Pesticides Control
- Pesticide Registration
- Feedstuffs, Fertilisers, Grain and Poultry
- Livestock Breeding, Production and Trade
- Nitrates, Biodiversity & Engineering
- Research Food and Codex

Chief Veterinary Officer

- Audit, Enforcement, Ethics and Organisational Governance and Special Investigations Unit
- Veterinary Public Health Implementation
- Veterinary Public Health Policy and International Trade
- NDCC/Contingency response & Animal Health International
- Non-ruminant Animal Health, Animal Welfare & Animal Remedies
- TSE, Animal By-Products & Animal Health Surveillance
- Veterinary Area Management - South

- Veterinary Area Management - North
- Ruminant Animal Health, ERAD, Premises Registration and Animal Identification
- Animal Identification & Movement
- Animal Health & Welfare
- ERAD/Veterinary Medicines & Regional Office Administration

Director - IMT

- IMT Direct Farm Payment Systems
- IMT Animal, Customer, Financials & Fisheries Systems
- IMT Infrastructure
- IMT Programme Office

Assistant Secretary - Governance

- Finance
- Accounts
- Legal Services
- Corporate Affairs/F.O.I & Minister's Office
- Personnel and Training
- Accommodation, ISO and Health & Safety
- Management Services and Central Procurement Unit
- Internal Audit Group (*oversight role*)
- Agricultural Appeals (*oversight role*)

Assistant Secretary - Agriculture Structures, Market Supports, Forestry

- Agriculture Structures and Other Market Supports
- Agricultural Environment and Structures
- Forest Service
- Forest Service Inspectorate
- Forest Sector Development

Assistant Secretary - Livestock Products, Food

- Meat & Milk Policy
- Milk & Meat Hygiene & Animal By-Products
- Dairy Controls
- Food Safety Liaison
- Food Industry Development

Assistant Secretary - EU, Trade, Economics, Rural Development, Sustainability

- EU & International Trade
- CAP Rural Development
- Economics and Planning
- Climate Change and Bio-Energy Policy

Director of Laboratories

- Dairy Science Labs
- Pesticides, Seed Testing and Plant Health
- Veterinary Public Health Regulation Laboratory
- Bacteriology
- Pathology
- Virology
- Regional Veterinary Laboratories and Blood Testing Laboratory
- Biosecurity
- Backweston Labs Admin Unit
- Longtown Farm

Assistant Secretary - Direct Payment, Suckler Cow, Coillte

- Single Payments/Suckler Cow Schemes/Disadvantaged Areas
- Single Payments Scheme/Inspections
- CAP/Single Payment Entitlements & Financial Control
- Direct Payment Integrated Controls