

**Electricity Supply Board
Language Scheme**

2013-2016

Under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003

1. Overview of the Electricity Supply Board	3
2. Preparation of the 2nd Scheme	4
3. The Content and Objectives of the Scheme	4
4. Commencement Date of Scheme	7
5. Principal Means of Communication with the Public	7
6. Assessment of services available through Irish only	8
7. Assessment of services available through English only	8
8. Assessment of extent to which services are available through Irish and English	8
9. Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually	10
10. Work places in the Gaeltacht areas	11
11. Information Systems	12
12. Public Meetings Policy	12
13. Telephone Services and Oral Announcements	12
14. Promotional Measures	12
15. Implementation, Monitoring and Revision	13
16. Publicising of Agreed Scheme	13

1. Overview of Electricity Supply Board

Founded in 1927, Electricity Supply Board (ESB) is a statutory corporation. It is 95 per cent owned by the Government of Ireland, with the remaining stock held by an employee share trust.

ESB is a vertically integrated utility employing approximately 7,300 people.

This scheme applies to the Electric Ireland and ESB Networks businesses within ESB Group, as these provide ESB's main interface with its customers.

Electric Ireland was established in 2010 as ESB's single energy supply business integrating ESB Independent Energy (ESBIE), ESB Customer Supply and ESB Energy Services. ESB Electric Ireland supplies electricity to all sectors of the market including residential, small, medium & large business, and industry. The principal services provided by ESB Electric Ireland include:

- ❖ Provision of energy and related services;
- ❖ Billing of customers;
- ❖ Customer Account Management;
- ❖ Customer Contact Services (telephone, on-line etc.);

ESB Networks is the owner of the high voltage transmission system and the owner and operator of the medium and lower voltage distribution system. It provides services to all electricity customers and to all generators and suppliers of electricity. The principal services provided by ESB Networks include:

- ❖ New connections to the electricity networks including design of networks
- ❖ Alterations to existing connections (e.g. moving lines, cables, meters)
- ❖ Upgrading of existing connections due to increased customer capacity needs
- ❖ Resolving problems with quality of supply (e.g. voltage problems)
- ❖ Network fault repairs
- ❖ Meter reading
- ❖ Network maintenance
- ❖ Notification of interruptions of supply to facilitate work on the Networks
- ❖ Construction of new lines, cables and stations

2. Preparation of the Scheme

This is the second language scheme prepared by the Electricity Supply Board in accordance with Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (the "Act").

Section 11 of the Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services they propose to provide exclusively through the medium of Irish, exclusively through the medium of English, and through the medium of both Irish and English along with the measures to be adopted to ensure that any services not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

ESB published a notice under Section 13 of the Act inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from interested parties. This scheme has been prepared having regard to those submissions. A working group comprising representatives from the relevant business areas of ESB has assisted in drafting the scheme. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the scheme will rest with a designated Irish Language Project Leader reporting to the Corporate Communications Manager (or as revised by any organisation review).

3. The Content and Objectives of the Scheme

Prior to the implementation of the first scheme, ESB had demonstrated a well-established commitment to service provision in Irish. In the first scheme, existing services were enhanced, and new ones established. As with our first scheme, the primary objective of this second scheme is to ensure that ESB provides core services to customers in both official languages, and to develop further ESB's customer services through Irish, subject only to avoiding prohibitive costs.

It is our intention to consolidate on the progress made under our first scheme, by endeavouring to enhance the level of services provided through Irish to our customers. This scheme is based on the understanding that all of our commitments in the first scheme were implemented. In the event of commitments of that scheme not having

been fully implemented to date, this matter is being dealt with by the office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The following are the main areas of service enhancement under the first scheme:

3.1 Web & Interactive Services:

- The ESB Networks web site is available in both Irish and English.
- The core elements of the Electric Ireland web site are available in both languages for both residential electricity and gas customers. A similar service is now available to our business customers.
- Interactive services such as submitting a meter reading, registering for direct debit or paying a bill have been introduced for residential customers and are available on the ESB Networks and Electric Ireland web sites.
- Various documents of a technical nature are translated into Irish and are available on the ESB Networks web site.

To the extent practicable, we shall endeavour to make amendments to the relevant pages of translated web services available simultaneously in the Irish language and English language versions.

3.2 Messaging & Telephony:

- Outgoing electronic messages from Electric Ireland (e.g. text message and, Automated Voice Telephony (AVT)) are provided bilingually.
- Customers who interact with Electric Ireland through ESB's Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) telephone service can complete their transaction through Irish.

3.3 Others:

- Customer application forms are available in Irish as well as English.
- ESB Networks provides invoices and quotation letters in Irish, on request.
- ESB includes by-line/disclaimer notices on all ESB emails in both Irish and English.

3.4 Support, Training & Awareness

- The position of Project Leader, Official Languages Act, was established, to provide a central supporting role, for all Irish language related services in ESB.
- ESB's National Customer Contact Centre and our Contact Centre Business Partners include Irish language awareness as part of induction and customer service training courses so as to ensure staff awareness of:
 - why ESB implements a bilingual policy;
 - the context and background to the policy; and
 - how the policy will affect their work.
- ESB measures customers' satisfaction with the provision of services through Irish through research surveys. We inform our customers of all services available in Irish through advertisements in the Irish Language media, brochures and bill inserts.
- ESB has prepared a Policy Document on the Official Languages Act. This policy document has been circulated to all staff.
- A dedicated intranet web site has been established to keep staff informed regarding the Official Languages Act.

3.5 An Active Offer of Service

ESB will take every opportunity in its day-to-day interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, which may be done by:

- directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with us through Irish, for example, by prominently listing on our website.
- incorporating footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets, and applications forms explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover).

- including notes in publications and advertisements stating that ESB provides services through Irish and, accordingly, welcomes customers who wish to deal with it in Irish, according to the commitments in its agreed scheme.

ESB will continue to meet its various commitments under its first scheme.

4. Commencement Date of Scheme

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. The scheme takes effect from 02 September 2013 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the later.

5. Principal Means of Communication with the Public

ESB's main communications with its customers include:

- ❖ Electricity Bills;
- ❖ Information leaflets and brochures;
- ❖ Correspondence and telephone calls, e-mails and texts;
- ❖ Common application forms;
- ❖ Media and press releases;
- ❖ Advertisements;
- ❖ Speeches or statements by ESB personnel;
- ❖ Web Sites, core pages;
- ❖ Interactive services & apps.

6. Assessment of services available through Irish only

ESB does not provide any services to its customers through Irish only.

7. Assessment of services available through English only

The services ESB currently provides in English only include:

- 7.1** Various interactive services.
- 7.2** Services which by their nature and complexity will necessarily be in English only, in the context of the ESB's increasingly competitive commercial environment.

8. Assessment of extent to which services are available through Irish and English

The following services are currently provided in both English and Irish:

- 8.1** Electric Ireland provides bills, on request, to domestic customers through Irish.
- 8.2** All information leaflets and brochures sent as inserts to domestic customers included with the bill, are in both Irish and English.
- 8.3** ESB replies to all written correspondence received in Irish, through Irish.
- 8.4** Our Customer Services and Sales Teams have staff competent in the Irish language available to deal with customer queries. All staff who deal directly with the public are made aware of ESB's policy on communications in Irish, through customer service & induction training, and are familiar with the procedures in place to ensure such communications are dealt with in a prompt and satisfactory manner.
- 8.5** All customer application forms are available in Irish as well as English.

- 8.6** The ESB Networks web site is bilingual. The core elements of the Electric Ireland web site are available in both languages for both residential electricity and gas customers. A similar service is also available to our business customers.
- 8.7** Various documents of a technical nature are available in Irish and English on the ESB Networks web site.
- 8.8** The following interactive services are provided:
- Domestic customers can submit a meter reading, online and in Irish, on the ESB Networks web site.
 - Domestic customers can pay bills, or register for direct debit, online and in Irish, on the Electric Ireland web site.
- 8.9** Customers who interact with ESB Electric Ireland through ESB's Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) telephone service can complete their transaction through Irish.
- 8.10** Where outgoing electronic messages from Electric Ireland (e.g. text message and AVT) are provided, they are available in Irish.
- 8.11** ESB is committed to maintaining the position of Project Leader, Official Languages Act. This officer has a central supporting role for all Irish language-related services in ESB.
- 8.12** The Project Leader continues to provide back-up assistance for staff taking telephone calls or dealing with other written or electronic correspondence in the Irish language. He/she ensures that any issues that arise in relation to ESB's services through Irish are dealt with swiftly and efficiently.
- 8.13** ESB Networks provides invoices and quotation letters in Irish, on request.
- 8.14** All public meetings in Gaeltacht areas are conducted principally through Irish.

- 8.15** ESB's Annual Report is published in Irish and in English as required by the Act.
- 8.16** All press releases will be made available in Irish to local and national media, on request.
- 8.17** All reasonable requests for translations of scripts of speeches and statements of ESB Personnel, where such scripts exist, are favourably considered.

9. Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually

ESB is committed to the ongoing improvement of its services, through Irish, to the general public, in line with the requirements of the Act. In its second scheme ESB will adopt the following specific measures:

Web & Interactive Services:

- 9.1** The core elements of the main ESB website www.esb.ie are now available in both Irish and English.
- 9.2** Electric Ireland will amend its online switching application service so that new customers can request to have their bill in Irish, over the lifetime of the scheme.
- 9.3** ESB Networks now provides an online facility to access the following services through Irish:
- Apply online for an electricity connection to a single house built on its own site
 - Apply online for an electricity reconnection to a house which has been disconnected for over 2 years (full new connection requirements apply).
- 9.4** Over the lifetime of the scheme, ESB Networks and Electric Ireland will investigate the viability of bilingual formats for other interactive services.
- 9.5** From the commencement of this scheme, press releases with a particular pertinence to Gaeltacht areas will be issued simultaneously in bilingual format.

Press releases of significant importance to the general public will be issued bilingually, where appropriate.

9.6 From the commencement of this scheme ESB will provide bilingual web based educational resources, to teachers and school going children. Examples of such existing on line resources include:

- Safety Tips from Captain Safety
- Ampville : The Electric City

Training and Support

9.7 Employees will be facilitated as part of their Personal Development Plan (PDP), to pursue an Irish language course, where they express an interest in becoming a designated panel member.

9.8 ESB's dedicated Irish language OLA intranet site will continue to be developed as a staff resource to promote bilingualism.

9.9 The commitments made by ESB in this, and our first scheme, will be brought to the attention of all ESB staff.

10. Work places in the Gaeltacht areas

10.1 ESB has no public offices in Gaeltacht areas.

10.2 The official Placenames of Gaeltacht areas, [as declared by the Minister in the relevant Placenames Orders] will continue to be used by ESB for official purposes.

11. Information Systems

11.1 Subject to resources, as new information systems are introduced, or existing systems are upgraded, ESB will continue to actively and positively explore how bilingual facilities can be incorporated.

12. Public Meetings Policy

12.1 All meetings in the Gaeltacht will be held through Irish or bilingually.

12.2 Outside the Gaeltacht, all meetings will normally be held in the official language chosen by the participants in the meeting unless prior notice is given of a *bona fide* requirement for a bilingual meeting.

13. Telephone Services and Oral Announcements

13.1 Receptionist / switchboard staff in the main ESB customer service centres, if requested by the customer, shall be able to transact business through Irish or direct customers to the appropriate office or staff member who can provide the service required through Irish.

14. Promotional Measures

The following are some additional proposals which ESB shall provide and develop over the life of the scheme:

- Participation in Seachtain na Gaeilge / Irish Language Week (e.g. events/exhibitions etc).
- Ongoing support for, and participation in, Irish language events.
- Introduction and encouragement of voluntary Fáinne Scheme among staff so that Irish-speaking staff are readily identifiable to the public and to each other.
- Organisation of Irish language events for staff.
- Inclusion of Irish language section/material in staff magazine.

15. Implementation, Monitoring and Revision

15.1 Implementation

As with the first scheme, an annual progress report from ESB Networks and ESB Electric Ireland will be prepared and a summary of these reports will be included in ESB's Annual Report.

15.2 Monitoring and Revision

ESB will keep the effective operation of the scheme under review, principally through the mechanisms outlined in 15.1 above.

The Irish Language Project Leader, as well as providing ongoing specialist support to line managers and staff, will have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the scheme.

ESB will carry out research surveys to assess customers' satisfaction with the provision of services through Irish.

ESB may initiate further development activities not covered in this scheme.

16. Publicising of Agreed Scheme

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

- ❖ Official launch of scheme.
- ❖ Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies.
- ❖ Website and intranet site.

A copy of this scheme has also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

The English language version is the original version of this scheme.

All queries on the scheme and requests for clarification should be forwarded to the Project Leader, Official Languages Act, ESB Head Office.