



# **Shannon Airport Authority**

## **Language Scheme 2014-2017**

under Section 11 of the  
Official Languages Act 2003

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## **1. Introduction**

This is the first Language Scheme prepared by Shannon Airport Authority plc (SAA) under section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (“the Act”).

Section 11 of that Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services which 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 SAA through the medium of the Irish Language shall be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

## **2. Preparation for the Language Scheme**

This scheme has been prepared at the request of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under Section 11 of the Act and, in accordance with the Guidelines under section 12 of the same Act.

In preparation for this scheme, an internal Irish Language Committee was established to address the various areas of the scheme, taking into account what is achievable over the coming three years.

Under section 13 of the Act, a public notice was published in March 2013 of our intention to prepare a draft scheme under the Official Languages Act, 2003. Twelve submissions were received and examined and many of the suggestions are included in the scheme. These submissions can be viewed at [www.shannonairport.ie](http://www.shannonairport.ie). SAA would like to thank all those who took the time to engage with this important process.

## **3. The content of the Language Scheme**

The scheme aims to improve and enhance the service that the SAA has traditionally provided in the Irish language. It contains an outline of the services currently available in Irish and plans to improve the provision of services over the course of this three year scheme.

## **4. Commencement Date of Scheme**

The Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht. The Scheme will commence with effect from the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and shall remain in force for a period of three years from that date or until a new Scheme is confirmed by the Minister, pursuant to Section 15 of the Act.

## **5. Overview of Shannon Airport Authority**

Shannon Airport is part of Shannon Airport Authority plc with registered offices at Shannon Airport, Co. Clare. Register number 391054 Ireland. Head Office, Shannon Airport, Ireland.

The core activities of the SAA can be described as the management and development of Shannon Airport along with commercial activities such as property portfolio management, commercial and retail management. The airport handled 1.5m passengers in 2012.

The SAA is currently governed by a Board of nine members, seven of whom were appointed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and two members appointed by the staff.

The current Board members are:

- Rose Hynes (Chairman)
- Neil Pakey (CEO)
- Kathryn O’Leary Higgins
- Pat Dalton
- Liam ’Shea
- Tony Brazil
- Tom Coughlan
- Michael Leydon
- Joe Buckley
- Kevin McCarthy

The Board oversees the work of the Shannon Airport Authority Executive and ratifies all funding decisions and all aspects of policy making and industry development.

## **6. Commitment to service delivery in Irish**

Shannon Airport Authority supports the principles of Irish, English and duality, as outlined in the Official Languages Act 2003, and is committed to facilitating and accommodating its customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish to the greatest extent within its resources.

SAA also recognises that it is operating within a highly regulated industry where the official language, as instated since 1951 by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), is English.

Notwithstanding our obligations to meet the requirements of the ICAO, Shannon Airport Authority endeavours to promote the Irish Language and improve our services to the public through Irish, and welcomes the preparation of this Scheme as an opportunity to formalise the services already offered through Irish and to expand on the availability of services through Irish.

#### **6.1 Principal Means of Communication with the Public**

- Face to Face Contact
- Telephone Services
- Electronic Communication
- Website
- Social Media
- Press / Publicity

#### **6.2 Services currently provided by Shannon Airport Authority through Irish**

- Correspondence:-  
All Letters, facsimile transmissions and electronic mails (e-mails) received in the Irish language are responded to in Irish.
- Signage:-  
Directional Signage throughout the Terminal is bi-lingual.
- Computer Systems:-  
All computer systems installed since 2007 are fully capable of handling the Irish language.

#### **6.3 Services Currently Available Through English Only**

All other services are delivered through English only.

#### **6.4 Services Currently Available Through Irish & English**

- Publication of Shannon Airport Authority's Annual Report
- All SAA letterheads and stationery incorporate the bilingual company name and details.
- Road Signage (in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1961)

## **7. Enhancement of Service to be provided bilingually**

### **7.1 Correspondence:-**

In addition to fulfilling its legal obligation to reply in Irish to correspondence received in Irish, SAA will initiate correspondence in Irish with those who are known to prefer correspondence in Irish.

*Timeframe for completion: From the commencement of this Scheme.*

### **7.2 Email Messages:-**

Standard messages on SAA's email, such as disclaimers of responsibility, will be in both Irish and English. Individual staff members **shall** be encouraged to use the non-system generated part of 'out of office' replies in both Irish and English.

The Shannon Airport Authority standard email disclaimer will be made bilingual.

*Timeframe for completion: End of first year of this scheme*

### **7.3 Reception and Telephone:-**

The SAA receptionists/switchboard operator is the first point of contact with the public. It is the policy of SAA to ensure that standard quality customer service practice applies in this area; this includes:-

1. The SAA receptionist answers the phone with the name of Shannon Airport bilingually, for example Aerfort na Sionnainne /Shannon Airport, Dia dhuit Good Afternoon.
2. The SAA receptionist is familiar with basic greetings in Irish

*Timeframe for completion: By the end of 2014*

### **7.4 Staff Training & Development:-**

Irish language training courses shall be provided for reception staff and all other staff will be encouraged to avail of same. The focus of these language training programmes will be airport relevant training to specifically increase the capability of SAA staff in dealing with Irish Language customer requests.

*Timeframe for completion: End of first year of this scheme*

- The commitments made by SAA in this Scheme will be brought to the attention of staff through an internal communications campaign.
- SAA proposes to enhance the celebration of certain public / cultural events in Irish such as Saint Patrick's Day with a particular focus on celebrations through and promotion of the Irish Language. SAA will participate in Seachtain na

Gaeilge where all staff will be encouraged to communicate in their daily tasks through the medium of Irish.

**7.5 Oral Announcements:-**

Pre-recorded announcements shall be bilingual.

**7.6 Publications:-**

Major reports published by SAA such as the annual report shall be published bilingually, with the exception of specialised internal instruction manuals or documents of a technical, scientific and specialist nature, which will be available in English only. Where length of any bilingual publication would reduce its effectiveness or involve excessive additional cost, separate Irish and English language versions may be provided. In this regard, each will contain a statement that a version is available in the other language.

*Timeframe for completion: End of first year of this scheme*

**7.7 Press Releases:-**

All press releases pertaining to social / cultural events shall be issued and posted to the Company's website bilingually. Upon request by local and/or national media press releases shall be made available in Irish.

All press releases and statements connected with the issuing of bilingual reports (such as the annual report) will be issued bilingually from the commencement of the Scheme.

*Timeframe for completion: From the commencement of this Scheme.*

**7.8 Communication:-**

Upon request by local and/or national media, the SAA will aim to ensure that an Irish speaking spokesperson, of sufficient authority, will be available for media interviews .

*Timeframe for completion: End of first year of this scheme*

**7.9 Website:-**

The website of Shannon Airport Authority is in English apart from corporate publications. .

## **8. Monitoring and Review of the Scheme**

The overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the scheme shall be assigned to the Airport Operations Director.

Regular updates on progress shall be reported to the Board of SAA Plc.

It is intended that the operation of this scheme will be reviewed from 18 months of its commencement and again at the end of the three year period to ensure delivery of agreed targets and adequate provision of services and initiatives through Irish in line with present and future demand from the industry and the Official Languages Act 2003.

## **9. Publication of agreed scheme**

The contents of the final approved scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the scheme shall be publicised to staff and the general public by means of:

- Press Release
- Company Website

A copy of the Scheme has been forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.  
The English language version of this scheme is the official version.