



An Roinn Gnó,
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Business,
Enterprise and Innovation

**Department of Business,
Enterprise and Innovation**
Language Scheme 2019 - 2022
Under Section 15 of the Official
Languages Act 2003

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (“the Act”) provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language 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 the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

This is the third Irish language scheme prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. This scheme has been prepared pursuant to Section 15 of the Act. This revised scheme, as was the case in our earlier schemes, will primarily relate to the services provided by the Department to the general public.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. In addition, stakeholders have been offered the opportunity to contribute through a public consultation process and the Department has had regard to suggestions received through that process in drawing up this scheme.

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation 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 the provision of such services; and,
- the resources, including human resources, and the capacity of the Department to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This 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 on the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes. This scheme is predicated on all of the commitments in any previous schemes having been implemented.

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

1.3 Commencement Date of the Scheme

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from 18 February 2019 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Chapter 2 Overview of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

2.1 Mission of the Department

The Mission of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, as stated in its Statement of Strategy 2018-2021, is as follows:

“We will lead on the creation and maintenance of high quality and sustainable full employment across all regions of the country by championing enterprise and innovation across government, by supporting a competitive business base to incentivise work, enterprise, trade, innovation and investment and by promoting fair and competitive markets as well as best business practice through the regulatory and enforcement work of the Department, its Offices and its agencies.”

2.2 Main Functions of the Department

The Department of Business, Enterprise 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 Business, Enterprise and Innovation, the two Ministers of State in the Department and the Government in these areas.

The Department is currently organised into 7 functional Divisions, which broadly reflect the breadth of its statutory remit. The Divisions are:

1. Innovation and Investment Division
2. Workplace Regulation and Economic Migration Division
3. EU Affairs, Trade Policy and Licensing Division
4. Commerce, Consumer and Competition Division
5. Indigenous Enterprise Development Division
6. Strategic Policy Division
7. Corporate Services Division

The work of the Department is carried out by these 7 Divisions. 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, Our Public Service 2020, the Lansdowne Road Agreement and, of course, day to day Ministerial and Government direction.

Given the nature of the Department’s responsibilities, functions and roles, the 7 Divisions do not primarily provide services exclusively to the members of the public. Rather, they provide services directly to the Minister, to the two 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 stakeholders, including the social partners, business and sectoral representatives, trade unions, research forums and

institutions, etc. Direct interaction with members of the general public is not the predominant feature of the Department's activities.

The Units that are, to some extent, involved in the provision of services directly to members of the public include the Employment Permits Unit in the Workplace Regulation & Economic Migration Division, the Trade Licensing and Control Unit in the EU Affairs, Trade Policy and Licensing Division and the Freedom of Information Unit in the Corporate Services Division.

Another important function of the Department is liaising with its Statutory Offices (Companies Registration Office, Office of Registrar of Friendly Societies, Office of Director of Corporate Enforcement, Patents Office and the Workplace Relations Commission) and with the many State Agencies associated with the Department (Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, Inter Trade Ireland, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, National Standards Authority of Ireland, Health & Safety Authority, Personal Injuries Assessment Board and Irish Auditing & Accounting Supervisory Authority). 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 the Department's behalf.

Examples of the range of services delivered to individual customers by the Department through the dedicated structure of Statutory Offices and State Agencies include employment rights adjudication, patents and trade marks registration, company registration and filing, occupational health and safety and consumer issues. Having regard to the high level of direct engagement by the Offices of the Department with members of the public, many of the Offices have developed their own Customer Charters, Customer Action Plans and Language Schemes, where appropriate.

2.3 Key Services of the Department

Where the Department interacts with the public such interaction is, in the main, conducted through correspondence, phone, website and e-mail and visits by appointment. The variety of methods of communication with the Department ensures versatility and flexibility for our customers and that they receive the service they require in the most appropriate manner.

In addition, the Department's website (www.dbei.gov.ie) is a critical information source for customers, providing details of eligibility criteria for schemes, application forms, guidance notes and details of schemes, services, etc. The homepage, which describes the Department's structure, its policy areas and the work of its Agencies, is available in Irish.

2.4 Customers and Clients of the Department

The main customers of the Department, therefore, extend to numerous wider categories other than members of the public. However, as referenced above, some areas of the Department have considerable interaction with the public and these areas include:

Department's Telephonists

Reception Staff at the Department's main buildings

Employment Permits Unit

Freedom of Information Unit

Trade Licensing and Control Unit

The scheme outlined in the following pages of this document relates primarily to the above areas of the Department because of their relatively high level of interaction with members of the public.

Chapter 3 Details of Services being provided in English only or Bilingually

3.1 Introduction

One of the key objectives of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation is to provide an efficient, high quality service to its customers in line with the standards and targets set out in its Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan. The Customer Action Plan commits to facilitating 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 continues to be committed to providing a quality service to the public through the medium of the Irish language having regard to the demand for services in Irish, and the Irish language skills and proficiencies of officials. It is also noted that many of the customers of the Department are foreign nationals, particularly in the areas of Employment Permits, and that such customers do not have a preference to communicate with the Department through the Irish language.

3.2 Services of the Department through the Irish Language

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation primarily provides its services to its key stakeholders and to the general public through the medium of the English language.

Nevertheless, the Department is mindful of the obligations on public bodies to accommodate customers who wish to conduct their business through the Irish language and avail of the services provided through the Irish language.

The Department is pleased with the outcome of the implementation of the measures committed to in its 2nd Irish language scheme. Section 6.2 outlines the services which the Department currently provides through the medium of Irish.

3.3 Main Activities of the Department - English Language Primarily

As outlined in Chapter 2, the Department's customers and stakeholders are many and varied and their widespread preferences are for dialogue in the English language. Accordingly, the Department provides its services primarily through the medium of English. 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. Consequently, a large proportion of the documentation produced by the Department on an ongoing basis is 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 are documents of a specialist or technical nature produced by the Department but not designed for the general public, such as documents in relation to Requests for Tenders, circulars to the Department's Offices and Agencies, internal instruction manuals, operating instructions, etc.

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Chapter 4 Improving Language Capability

4.1 Recruitment

All new entrants to the Department participate in a two day induction training programme. This training programme includes a briefing on the Official Languages Act 2003 to inform participants of the Department's obligations under this Act. There is also be a strong focus on the Department's Irish language scheme in order to heighten awareness among this cohort of the commitments made by the Department under the scheme.

4.2 Training and Development

In accordance with the Commitments made in its 2015-2018 Language Scheme, the Department offers accredited Irish language training courses at all levels to staff who wish to enhance their Irish language skills and who agree to make these available to the Department to enable it to meet its business needs through Irish. Irish language refresher courses are offered to switchboard/reception staff and all staff who are dealing directly with the public.

In addition to continuing to provide tailored induction training programmes and accredited Irish language training courses, the Department is committed under this scheme to using modern technology in order to foster communication between colleagues on social/topical issues through the Irish language. It will also use this technology to encourage the organization of Irish speaking social events, thereby providing staff with opportunities to enhance their Irish language skills in informal training environments.

4.3 Designated Irish Language Posts

Mindful of its obligations under the Official Languages Act, 2003 and the commitment given in its 2015-2018 Irish language scheme to assess the need to designate Irish language posts, the Department assessed the level of demand for customer services to be provided through Irish over the period of the scheme. Due to the very low demand for such services, the Department did not identify any posts where a competence in Irish is a requirement. The Department has, however, as outlined earlier, formed a cohort of staff who can engage with customers who wish to conduct their business through the Irish language.

It is proposed that the Department will continue to monitor the demand for the provision of Irish language services over the period of this scheme for the purpose of identifying any posts for which Irish is an essential requirement.

Chapter 5 Monitoring & Review

5.1 Enhancement of Monitoring Arrangements

The Department, in its 2015-2018 Irish language scheme, committed to enhancing arrangements to monitor the implementation of the commitments made in that scheme. Consequently, the day-to-day monitoring function is carried out primarily by line managers in each of the line Divisions of the Department who are responsible for the implementation of the scheme, where appropriate, within their own areas. In order to support line managers in this regard, the Department's cross Divisional Committee, which is representative of all Divisions of the Department, was established in late 2014. This Committee has been meeting on a quarterly basis since then to ensure that the commitments made in the Department's Irish language scheme are being implemented and that any challenges arising can be addressed and brought to the attention of the Department's senior management team, as necessary. It is proposed that these current monitoring mechanisms will remain in place for the duration of this scheme.

6.1 Introduction

The Department's 2015-2018 Irish language scheme committed to ensuring that the actions proposed in the Scheme would be implemented. While day-to-day monitoring functions of individual commitments are carried out primarily by line managers in the Business Units with responsibility for implementing those actions, further support is provided by a Cross Divisional Committee, which is chaired by the Customer Service Unit and which is representative of all Divisions. This Committee meets at quarterly intervals for the purpose of ensuring that the commitments made in the Department's Irish language scheme are being implemented and that any challenges arising can be addressed and brought to the attention of the Department's Management Board, as required.

Feedback provided by Divisional representatives at these meetings since 2014 has served to confirm that the volume of correspondence/telephone calls received by staff members across the Department is very low.

This trend is mirrored in the results of a survey of staff which was conducted earlier this year to inform the drafting of this scheme. Of the 138 staff members who responded to the survey:

- 128 (96%) had not received any telephone queries in Irish; 5 (4%) had received less than 5, with one member (1%) receiving between 5 and 10 calls.
- 120 (89%) had not received any written queries or requests in Irish; 14 (10 %) had received less than 5, with one member (1%) receiving between 5 and 10 written queries.
- All 135 (100%) of respondents had not attended a meeting that had been conducted in Irish.

An earlier survey conducted by the Department's Learning and Development Unit in 2016 had revealed that there were 6 staff who were fluent in Irish. Additionally, in order to ensure that the Department is accessible and capable of engaging with all customers proficiently, Irish language training is provided by the Learning and Development Unit. This training is delivered to ensure that the Department has a cohort of staff who can assist Business Units to respond to clients who may wish to communicate through the medium of Irish, in addition to supporting staff to further develop their Irish language skills. In this regard, at mid 2018, 22 staff were in the process of completing accredited Irish language training courses commenced in 2017.

In addition to facilitating staff to attend formal training courses, the Department has encouraged staff to enhance their Irish language skills in an informal environment by organising tea clubs, table quizzes and other social events.

Notwithstanding the continuing low level of demand from customers for this Department to provide services in Irish, 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.

Following consultation with staff and the public for the purpose of informing the drafting this Scheme, the Department has now 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 third Irish Language Scheme. The Department considers that these initiatives can build substantially on the progress made in the lifetime of its second Irish Language Scheme.

The Department will implement the following general and specific measures throughout the life of this scheme, having due regard to resources and the impact of staff recruitment/embargoes and other significant change initiatives on our key activities.

6.2 Department's Plan for Enhancement of Irish Language Services

Means of Communication with the Public	Existing Commitments	
<p><u>Oral Communication</u></p> <p>Reception & Switchboard</p> <p>Telephone communications with the public</p> <p>Recorded Oral Announcements</p>	<p>Reception/Switchboard staff are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish; Arrangements are in place so that Reception/Switchboard staff can put members of the public in touch, without delay, with the relevant official(s) responsible for providing the service required through Irish, where available.</p> <p>Individual staff members are encouraged to leave telephone voice mail announcements in the Irish language, where practicable.</p> <p>The following recorded announcements will continue to be in Irish or bilingual: (a) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by telephone that are intended to be heard when the offices of the Department are closed; (b) announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging service or computerised telephone answering service.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><u>Written Communication</u></p> <p>Letters and Emails</p>	<p>All written communication will continue to be responded to in the</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Means of Communication with the Public	Proposed New Initiatives	Timeline By end Yr1/Yr2/Yr3
Written Communication	<p>The Press Office will publish at least 15 press releases, and related social media posts, per annum, in bilingual format. 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.</p> <p>The Department will consider publishing further major policy documents bilingually. If the cost of bilingual publication is prohibitive due to size of the document, the Department may choose to publish the executive summary and recommendations in bilingual format.</p>	By end Year 1
Information Technology	<p>A dedicated section will be developed in the new Staff Intranet to advise staff of the Department's obligations under the Official Languages Act and its Irish Language Scheme. This section will also contain the names of staff who are willing and able to provide service through Irish and a list of external companies who provide translation services at a level of excellence.</p> <p>Similarly, a "Pop-Up" Irish Section will be established under the Social area of the Departmental Intranet in order to facilitate and encourage the organization of Irish speaking social events and the creation of a network of Irish Speakers throughout the Department.</p> <p>It will also foster communication between colleagues on social/topical issues through the</p>	By end Year 1

	Irish language thereby enhancing their written and verbal Irish language skills.	
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Chapter 7 Publicising Agreed Scheme

7.1 Publicising Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, including through a press release which will be issued in Irish and English. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

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 through the following means:

- Directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- Prominently listing these services on the Irish language version of our website;
- Signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- Giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

A copy of this scheme will also be sent to Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.