

20-Year Strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030

Progress Report: July 2013 - September 2014

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

The formal mechanism for cooperation, which was agreed in June 2013, between Údarás na Gaeltachta and Enterprise Ireland is working well, has and will continue to benefit enterprise development in the Gaeltacht. Discussions regarding enhanced cooperation between Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Industrial Development Authority are continuing under the auspices of a working group comprising officials from the relevant Departments and the development agencies. The Department is also in the process of drafting a protocol with Údarás na Gaeltachta regarding the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in Gaeltacht areas. This protocol will underpin the Government decision that Údarás na Gaeltachta will maintain responsibility for micro-enterprise and small business supports in the Gaeltacht as well as having appropriate access to supports from the new Local Enterprise Offices. Essentially the protocol will allow clients of Údarás na Gaeltachta to apply to the LEOs through Údarás na Gaeltachta for direct grant aid funding and other non-financial supports, once they meet the same eligibility criteria as other applicants.

Measures for Irish in the Public Service

The Department is currently in the process of finalising its second Language Scheme under the Official Languages Act 2003, which will cover the period 2014 – 2017. This scheme will outline the extent to which the Department's services are currently available through Irish and will reiterate its commitment to communicating through the medium of Irish to clients who wish to transact their business with the Department through the Irish language.

The new Language Scheme will also reflect the Department's approach to Irish language training in that courses will be offered to staff who agree to assist the Department to conduct its business through Irish as the need arises. Following a review of training needs earlier this year, a cohort of officers who wish to participate in training on this basis has been identified. Such a group of trained officers will provide the Department with greater capability and flexibility in meeting its business needs through Irish.

While the Department does have a number of staff who are fluent in the Irish language, it has not to date identified any specific posts within its business services which currently require fluency in Irish. The Department recognises, however, the importance of having a number of staff throughout the Department who are fluent in, and capable of, providing services in Irish. In accordance with Government policy, future language schemes of the Department under the Official Languages Act will specify the areas of work/posts that have an Irish language competency requirement.