



**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME
2022 - 2025**

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 (as amended) 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 currently 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 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, whichever is the later.

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 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. In addition, there has been a process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

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

- the 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 and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned 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 by Teagasc will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

This Scheme is predicated on the commitments in any previous scheme having been implemented.

The time and effort put in 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 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. It commences with effect from 1st January 2022 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 Teagasc

2.1 Mission and Objectives

Teagasc was established under the Agriculture (Research, Training and Advice) Act 1988 which states that the principal functions of Teagasc shall be:

- To provide, or procure the provision of educational, training and advisory services in agriculture, including horticulture and forestry.
- To obtain and make available to the agricultural industry the scientific and practical information in relation to agriculture required by it.
- To undertake, promote, encourage, assist, co-ordinate, facilitate and review, agricultural research and development (including research and development in relation to food processing and the food processing industry).

These responsibilities involve meeting the technology needs of the whole food chain from 'farm to fork' and Teagasc responds through the provision of integrated research, advice and training.

2.2 Main Functions

The above mandate gives Teagasc responsibility for meeting the knowledge and technology needs of the entire food chain and the scope to integrate research, advice and education services to deliver the innovation support necessary for a secure future in the agri-food sector.

The management structure of Teagasc consists of an eleven-member Authority with the Director as Chief Executive Officer whose responsibility it is to manage all aspects of the organisation. The Director is assisted in the implementation of policy by a Senior Management Group, consisting of the Heads of the three Directorates (Research, Knowledge Transfer and Operations) and other senior managers.

2.3 Key Services

2.3.1 Research Directorate

Teagasc's annual research portfolio comprises some 300 research projects carried out by 500 scientific and technical staff in its research centres throughout Ireland. Teagasc collaborates extensively with colleagues in Irish universities. Teagasc's post-graduate fellowship programme, which supports more than 100 MSc and PhD students annually, enhances this collaboration. Teagasc participates extensively in EU Framework Programmes and has developed bilateral agreements with research organisations in Europe, the USA and New Zealand.

The challenge for Teagasc's research is to provide leadership to the agri-food industry and rural communities by generating new knowledge and innovation to underpin competitiveness and sustainability. Teagasc has also strengthened its capacity in key areas of fundamental research, specifically by developing a new focus on, and by making significant investment in, the biosciences. This will ensure that agri-food research is fully competitive in the national science, technology and innovation (STI) programme and in the European Research Area. Insights provided by this new bioscience capacity feeds directly into the

organisation's traditional strengths in applied agricultural and food research and helps to broaden the scope and impact of ongoing activities.

2.3.2 Knowledge Transfer Directorate

2.3.2.1 Advisory Programme

The primary purpose of the Advisory Service is to develop the unique human capital resource within family farms in order to achieve international competitiveness, optimise income and protect the environment. The service has the capacity and flexibility to guide farmers to deal with ongoing change and adjustment and, in particular, the repositioning now required to combine competitive farming with good farm practice.

Teagasc delivers its advisory services from a network of about 50 offices nationally. Services provided include advisory farm visits, office and telephone consultations, regular technical newsletters, seminars, webinars, podcasts, discussion groups, farm walks and a client website. In addition, the organisation publishes a bi-monthly magazine for client farmers entitled "Today's Farm". More than 43,000 farm families are now availing of the Advisory Services, more than half of whom receive an intensive service.

2.3.2.2 Education Programme

In a learning society, education and training have a pivotal role to play in raising the skills, knowledge and competencies of school leavers, adult farmers and operatives. The modern era in agriculture places a requirement on farmers to equip themselves with new skills. The Advisory and Training Services provide a range of courses, many of which carry the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) accreditation. A dedicated team of education officers, supported by Agricultural Advisors and Specialists, deliver adult training at local level in a flexible manner to ensure maximum participation.

Training of young entrants, in the main, is provided at Teagasc Colleges. The Colleges provide the Advanced Certificate in Agriculture for part-time farmers in their own catchment area in conjunction with the Advisory Services. Teagasc also provides higher level training in conjunction with the Institutes of Technology, accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)

2.3.3 Operations Directorate

Administration is undertaken at both national and local levels. At the national level, the Operations Directorate provides centralised services covering Finance, Human Resources, ICT, and Corporate Services (which includes such activities as Procurement, Property Management and Insurance), which it would neither be economical nor efficient to provide at a local level.

The combination of research and innovation support in one organisation uniquely positions Teagasc to ensure knowledge transfer and to deliver value for money invested. The organisation structure facilitates Teagasc to not only generate/procure the appropriate knowledge, but also to transfer the knowledge through its extensive advisory service and create the capacity within the community to use this knowledge through focused educational programmes. A renewed emphasis on innovation within the organisation aims to ensure that the knowledge is used in rural areas to create sustainable wealth.

Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only, in Irish only or bilingually

3.1 Teagasc is pleased with the outcome of the implementation of the measures committed to in previous Schemes and progress has been made in Teagasc's capacity to service clients through Irish. Some of these measures are set out below:

Name of Service	In English Only	In Irish only	Bilingual	Notes
Publication of Customer Charter			x	
Publication of Customer Action Plan			x	
Publication of Annual Report (comprising audited accounts and financial Reports)			x	
Publication of Press Releases			x	10% of Press Releases annually have been published in Irish since 2010 and are available on the public website. This figure will increase to 15% of annual Press Releases that will be translated into Irish and published on the public website under the new Scheme.
Publication of Statement of Strategy			x	
Customer comment cards at reception			x	
Online Customer Feedback Form http://interactive.teagasc.ie/Open/CustomerComment			x	
Telephone greeting			x	
Telephone service			x	In the event no Irish speaker is available, arrangements for a return telephone call will be made.
Provision of media services, including interviews.			x	Interviews available in language in which they were conducted.
Job advertisements on www.publicjobs.ie			x	
Editorial commentary in Today's Farm magazine			x	

Provision of information on Schemes operated by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine			x	
Stationary			x	
Written correspondence			x	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.
Emails			x	There is a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on the public website; gaeilge@teagasc.ie
Signage			x	
Website	x			
Social Media			x	Some of Teagasc's social media content is in Irish. An example is a recent short video clip in Irish (with English subtitles) on the importance of protecting our important habitats while farming, which was uploaded on the Teagasc Twitter page.
Podcasts	x			While none of Teagasc's own podcasts are exclusively in Irish, Teagasc staff do participate in other podcasts <i>as Gaeilge</i> . An example is a recent Met Eireann podcast on the environment - https://www.rte.ie/eile/met-eireann-podcasts/2021/0608/1226917-tionchar-na-haimsire-ar-fhas-bia/
Webinars	x			
An Ghaeltacht - placenames		x		The official Irish names of Gaeltacht areas are used.

Chapter 4: Enhancing the bilingual provision of services

4.1 Enhancement of services

Teagasc’s objective in this Scheme is to continue the delivery of its commitments and to enhance the level of service provided bilingually, taking into account the level of demand for this service. Teagasc will implement further measures aimed at providing services through Irish and improving access for clients, particularly in relation to oral and written communication, and information technology.

Although the level of spoken and written Irish among Teagasc staff seems to be generally quite low, many staff members nonetheless hold a strong level of enthusiasm towards the language. There has been increased interest in Irish language training and the possibility of providing such training will be explored under this Scheme. Teagasc will continue its focus on developing staff competency in both spoken and written Irish to facilitate the interpersonal delivery of an Irish language service.

4.2 Features of the Scheme

Teagasc will undertake the following lists of actions under each service:

Means of communication with public		Commitment
Oral / Written Communication	Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc recognises that reception staff are the first point of contact with the public and reception staff will continue to provide reception facilities in Irish at all offices. Reception staff will give the name of the office in Irish and English and be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish. ➤ Teagasc will provide follow-up training for those staff members who require receptionist training or who need a refresher course. ➤ Reception staff will, with the minimum possible delay, put customers in touch with the appropriate officer who can offer the required service through Irish. ➤ Alternatively, if no Irish speaker is available, arrangements will be made for a return telephone call to the customer as soon as possible.
	Face to Face/Counter Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Counter service provided through English will also be provided through Irish, where requested. ➤ An up-to-date list of staff members competent to provide a service and deal with the public through Irish is available on Teagasc’s internal intranet (T-Net) and will be made available to relevant staff.
	Telephone communications with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff will be provided with guidance on handling telephone calls from Irish speaking members of the general public. Customers will be greeted firstly in Irish and then in English.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bilingual staff will make customers aware that they are willing to conduct business in Irish, if required.
	Information Leaflets/ Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A bilingual version of the information leaflets and brochures most commonly used will be available. ➤ All new publications and information leaflets will contain a short introduction and summary in the Irish language to convey the general content. ➤ Teagasc will ensure that all policy documents are published simultaneously in both official languages on the public website. On request, a hard copy of such documents will be made available. ➤ Teagasc will continue to engage external translation services to support translation requirements where the resources are not available within Teagasc.
	Application Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There will be a bilingual version of the most commonly used application forms available. ➤ In certain circumstances, forms will be published in one language only but a statement will be included in the English version of the form, stating that an Irish version of the form is also available. ➤ The Irish version of application forms will be made available in the same outlets as the English version.
	Press Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10% of press releases annually have been published in Irish since 2010 and are available on Teagasc's public website www.teagasc.ie/about/gaeilge/preaseisiuintí. This figure will increase to 15% under the new Scheme. ➤ All press releases pertaining to the Gaeltacht or the Irish language will be issued simultaneously in Irish.
Media	Today's Farm (bi-monthly magazine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc publishes a magazine called Today's Farm six times each year, which is distributed to approx. 43,000 farming households. The editorial commentary in each magazine will continue to be printed in Irish and English. There are plans to increase the Irish language content of the Today's Farm magazine.
	TResearch (quarterly magazine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TResearch is Teagasc's official science publication and aims to disseminate the results of the organisation's research to a broad audience. The magazine is published quarterly and the editorial commentary in each magazine will continue to be printed in Irish and English.
	Media Spokespersons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Teagasc Public Relations and Customer Communications Unit will continue to maintain a record of staff that are in a position to carry out television and radio interviews with Irish language media. ➤ Teagasc Irish speaking spokespersons regularly give interviews and contribute to <i>Radio na Gaeltachta</i> and

		other Irish language media and Teagasc will continue to ensure that such spokespersons are available.
Information Technology	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a dedicated email address for queries in Irish available on the Teagasc public website, which is gaeilge@teagasc.ie ➤ Standard email messages such as disclaimers will continue to be bilingual.
	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc will continue to provide an Irish language section on its public website. This section will have key documents available bilingually, including the Language Scheme, the Customer Charter, the Customer Action Plan and the Statement of Strategy. ➤ An Irish language page is available on the internal intranet (T-Net) which includes basic guidance regarding the provision of Irish language services and the availability of Irish language resources. ➤ Irish language pages will be developed on the public website and will be kept up-to-date.
	Computer Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All current computer systems are Irish language compatible. ➤ Any new computer system being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language. ➤ Any new printing facilities will be fully capable of handling the Irish language. ➤ Teagasc will continue to actively use technology to improve the provision of bilingual services. ➤ The Official Languages Act section and Irish language page of Teagasc’s intranet (T-Net) will be expanded as a support and resource for staff.
	Payslips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc will continue to ensure that the online payslips received by staff are available in both Irish and English.
	Other - Workvivo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc introduced an employee communication platform called Workvivo in 2020. Workvivo caters for Irish and, if Irish is set as the default language, all key labels will automatically display in Irish e.g. button text, navigation labels. Instructions have been issued to staff on how to set Irish as the default language on their Workvivo page. ➤ A dedicated Irish space within Workvivo called “<i>Fáilte Isteach</i>” was launched in March 2021 for <i>Seachtain na Gaeilge</i>, where staff can share ideas, suggestions and interesting articles in Irish. Almost 1,900 staff members, students and contractors have joined the Irish space. ➤ The Irish language will continue to be celebrated on that forum and staff who wish to engage <i>as Gaeilge</i> will be facilitated and encouraged to do so.

Gaeltacht	Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advisory meetings with clients in Gaeltacht areas will be conducted in Irish, where possible and as appropriate. ➤ Contributions in Irish or English will be welcome at public meetings organised by or on behalf of Teagasc. ➤ Meetings organised by Teagasc that deal with Irish language issues will be held in Irish or bilingually, as appropriate.
	Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Correspondence with members of the Gaeltacht community will be in Irish only, if they so require.
	Placenames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc will continue to use the official Irish placenames of Gaeltacht areas.
	Video series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In 2020/2021, Teagasc produced a series of five short videos in Irish (with English subtitles) in association with <i>Teach na Gaeilge Mhaigh Cuilinn</i>, <i>Conradh na Gaeilge</i> and <i>Údarás na Gaeltachta</i> on farming in the Moycullen Gaeltacht. These videos were uploaded to a number of social media platforms and have been viewed more than 40,000 times to date. They were also featured on Teagasc’s internal communications platform, Workvivo, where they are available for viewing by all staff. ➤ A short Irish video was also made in the Kerry region by Teagasc and featured an interview <i>as Gaeilge</i> between a Teagasc Advisor and a local farmer client who spoke about the difficulties of sheep farming in <i>Ghaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne</i>.
	Aran Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are four Teagasc representatives on the Steering Committee of the <i>Caomhnú Árann</i> EIP-AGRI project on the Aran Islands. The aim of the project is to manage the habitats of the Aran Islands and to maximise their agricultural and ecological output and it works with 127 farmers on the three islands. Teagasc’s role is to support and contribute to the direction of the project and to provide a link to other agricultural schemes relevant to local farmers on the Aran Islands. In 2020, the <i>Caomhnú Árann</i> project was nominated by the European Commission as one of the finalists for the European Natura 2000 Award. Teagasc will continue its involvement in the <i>Caomhnú Árann</i> project.
Iveragh Peninsula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc is represented on the Iveragh Task Force or <i>Tascfhórsa Uíbh Ráthaigh</i>, which was set up in 2017, in conjunction with <i>Údarás na Gaeltachta</i>, to preserve and maintain Gaeltacht traditions and to prevent further decline in the population and language. The Teagasc Advisor’s role on the Task Force is to work with local farm families to create an alternative source of farm income and to develop opportunities for those who may wish to return to the family farm. Teagasc will continue its involvement with <i>Tascfhórsa Uíbh Ráthaigh</i>. 	

	Public events	<p>➤ Public events in Gaeltacht areas will continue to incorporate bilingualism as part of Teagasc’s efforts to positively promote Irish in the community. For example, a high-profile bilingual event titled <i>Imeacht Feirme Chonamara</i> was organised in Galway by Teagasc in conjunction with <i>Conradh na Gaeilge</i> to celebrate <i>Bliain na Gaeilge</i>. There were over 330 attendees and a short film in Irish (with English subtitles) was aired at the event. The speakers on the night delivered most of their presentations <i>as Gaeilge</i>.</p>
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Chapter 5: Improving Language Capability

5.1 Recruitment

The recruitment of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language in each area of work of Teagasc will be the primary means of optimising the availability of services through Irish. Our recruitment policy, which is subject to the framework of agreed national recruitment procedures, will have regard to the need to improve Irish language capability on an incremental basis.

All new staff will be provided with an on-line induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

5.2 Training and Development

Teagasc will continue to ensure that staff are committed to delivering a progressively enhanced service in Irish and will actively encourage staff to see that service as an integral part of the commitment to Quality Customer Service. Teagasc is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of such facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish through our e-induction programme and annual staff development programme.

		Commitment
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New staff will be provided with access to new staff induction material containing a copy of Teagasc’s Irish Language Scheme. ➤ Teagasc acknowledges the target set out in the draft Official Languages Bill, that 20% of new recruits to the public service will have to be proficient in Irish by 2030.
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teagasc will continue to encourage staff to use their existing competence in the Irish language and will make staff members aware of opportunities to develop and improve their Irish. Information will be furnished to staff in relation to the range of Irish language classes available, including online training and classes. ➤ Training needs will continue to be identified in the course of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and appropriate arrangements will be made for the provision of Irish language training. Requests for Irish language training are always prioritised as part of the PMDS system in Teagasc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff will be made aware of language resources such as www.tearma.ie www.focloir.ie www.teanglann.ie and www.abair.ie, as well as WinGléacht, the electronic version of the Ó Dónaill Irish-English dictionary ➤ Media skills training in Irish will be offered to staff who represent Teagasc on Irish television and in radio interviews. ➤ An Irish section will be developed on Teagasc's new internal learning platform, T-Learn, where relevant links, information, resources and material can be shared.
	<p>Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff will be encouraged to participate in cultural language events and activities, such as <i>Samhain</i>, <i>Seachtain na Gaeilge</i>, <i>Lá Fhéile Pádraig</i> and <i>Lá Bealtaine</i>, and share their own experiences, through the dedicated Irish space on Teagasc's internal communications platform (Workvivo). ➤ Access to further information on language resources (as set out above) will be facilitated on T-Learn and T-Net. ➤ A Language Awareness and Bilingual Customer Service Provision Training document is available to staff on the Teagasc intranet (T-Net). This contains a glossary of Irish words and phrases, including basic conversational phrases, likely to be used in dealings with customers.

5.3 Designated Irish Language Posts

5.3.1 Irish Language Capability

Having regard to government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, Teagasc will, by the end of year one of the scheme, identify any posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be made to fulfil these requirements by the end of this scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This will enable Teagasc to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the Irish Language Officer and the Corporate Services Department. The contact person for the scheme will be Emma Fogarty, Irish Language Officer, who may be contacted at emma.fogarty@teagasc.ie

A formal system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be available and recorded in our Annual Report.

Chapter 7: 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 Teagasc's website and circulated to all staff and appropriate stakeholders and agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

In addition, Teagasc will take every opportunity in its day-to-day interaction with clients to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing clients on a proactive 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 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 the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.