Údarás
Náisiúnta Iompair
National **Transport** Authority

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME

2016 - 2019

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Official Languages Act 2003 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 Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, whichever is the later.

1.2 PREPARATION AND CONTENT OF THE SCHEME

In the preparation of NTA's first language scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 1).

The National Transport Authority (NTA) 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 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 the NTA will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

1.3 COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE SCHEME

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. It commences with effect from 2 August 2016 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 NTA

2.1 MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Our Mission is to increase the share of travel by sustainable transport across the country by

1. **Regulating and procuring attractive, high quality and safe public transport services**

2. **Securing the development and implementation of an accessible and integrated transport system**

3. **Contributing to the effective integration of transport and land use planning policy and investment, and**

4. **Enhancing the perception and raising awareness of public transport**

in a manner that supports Government policies and priorities and contributes to economic development, environmental sustainability and social cohesion in the State.

Our strategic objectives are set out in our Statement of Strategy 2015-2017, which is available in Irish.

2.2 MAIN FUNCTIONS

In broad terms, the NTA's current statutory functions can be summarised as follows:

National

- ➢ **Procure public transport services by means of Public Service Obligation contracts;**

- ➢ **Provide integrated ticketing, fares and public transport information;**

- ➢ **Develop an integrated, accessible public transport network;**

- ➢ **Licence public bus passenger services that are not subject to a public transport services contract;**

- ➢ **Manage the Rural Transport Programme and the successor structure of Transport Coordination Units;**

- ➢ **Provide bus infrastructure and fleet and cycling facilities and schemes;**

- ➢ **Develop and implement a single public transport brand;**

- ➢ **Develop and maintain a regulatory framework for the control and operation of small public service vehicles[1] and their drivers;**

- ➢ **Prepare statutory submissions on Regional Planning Guidelines;**

- ➢ **Collect statistical data and information on transport;**

- ➢ **Enforce EU passenger rights in rail, maritime and bus and coach transport;**

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[1] Taxis, hackneys and limousines

- ➢ **Validate EU authorisations and journey forms in relation to bus and coach travel in accordance with EU Regulation No. 1073/2009; and**

- ➢ **Operate as the national conciliation body for electronic toll service providers.**

Greater Dublin Area alone

- ➢ **Undertake strategic planning of transport;**

- ➢ **Invest in all public transport infrastructure; and**

- ➢ **Develop the effective management of traffic and transport demand.**

Other functions

In addition to its statutory functions the NTA also undertakes a number of functions on behalf of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on a non-statutory basis. The non-statutory functions include:

- ➢ **Planning and funding of sustainable transport projects in the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford;**

- ➢ **Administration of the Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus Programmes;**

- ➢ **Management of the Green-Schools Travel Programme; and**

- ➢ **Provision of accessibility funding to transport operators and other relevant bodies.**

2.3 KEY SERVICES

Broadly speaking the public services provided by the NTA fall into three main parts as set out in the following table. The table also describes the principal users of these services.

Nature of service	Service provided	Customers and clients
Promotion of sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling, public transport)	**Development of services in support of sustainable transport (real-time passenger information, National Journey Planner, Cycle Planners, Leap card);** **Provision of public transport information (e.g. through websites, social media, apps);** **Promotion of public transport (e.g. through social media, advertising, etc.)**	**This role directly impacts the travelling public by providing them with up-to-date information about public transport services.** **Leap card provides a more convenient, secure and cheaper means of paying public transport fares.**

Nature of service	Service provided	Customers and clients
Regulation of public transport services (bus, rail and small public service vehicles)	**Secures the provision of public transport services in accordance with the provisions of contracts or regulations. However, it is important to note that public transport services are provided by both public and private transport companies.**	**This role mainly impacts business users i.e. public transport operators (including small public service vehicle operators) who are required to comply with the relevant requirements.** **Of course, the general public has an interest in the regulation of public transport services. This public interest is mainly facilitated through targeted public consultations.**
Provision of sustainable transport infrastructure (walking, cycling, public transport)	**Planning and managing delivery of public transport infrastructure projects.**	**This mainly impacts personnel working in local authorities, transport operators, representative groups. However, the general public has of course an interest in the planning and delivery of public transport infrastructure. This public interest is mainly facilitated through targeted public consultations.**

2.4 CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS

See table above.

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

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English; **including services in Gaeltacht areas**.

Current Provision of Services		
Services (General)	**In English only**	**Bilingually, in English and Irish**
Real-time passenger information displays at bus stops	No.	Yes. The roll-out of RTPI displays at bus stops commenced in late 2010. By the end of 2014 there were nearly 600 displays located at the busiest bus stops in the Greater Dublin Area and the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. These displays show the arrival times of buses as well as other transport information (e.g. changes/delays to bus services). The displays, which are read every day by tens of thousands of bus users, are displayed in Irish and English.
On-board announcements	No.	Yes. NTA funding for new buses and the upgrading of the existing bus fleet has facilitated the provision of next-stop announcements (oral and visual) for passengers. These announcements, which identify the bus stops on the bus route in use, are in Irish and English.
Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) Information Cards[2]	No.	Yes. SPSV passenger information cards, which provide taxi, hackney and limousine passengers with useful information about their rights and responsibilities, and are required to be displayed in every SPSV as a licensing condition, are in Irish and English.
Bus stop information	No.	In progress. The NTA has commenced the roll-out of new bus stop infrastructure in order to provide a unified design for bus stops and the information displayed at those stops. The information will be displayed in Irish and English. The roll-out started in Cork City. However, ultimately it will be extended to approx. 10,000 bus stops across the State.

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[2] SPSVs comprise taxis, hackneys and limousines

SPSV Information Line	No.	Yes. The SPSV Information Line can be contacted by members of the public as well as industry members. The Line, which is operated by a third party under contract, does have a bilingual contact facility.
Services in Gaeltacht Areas	In English only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
As above.		

Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions shaded in grey in the table below are <u>mandatory requirements</u> under Official Languages Act 2003.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	
Recorded Oral Announcements		The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual: (a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed; (b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system; (c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system. This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements rather than 'live announcements'. Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.	Mandatory
Written Communication	Letters and Electronic Mail	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Mandatory
	Stationery	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Mandatory
Signage	Signage	All signage placed by the public body or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).	Mandatory

	Publications	Documents setting out public policy proposals, audited accounts or financial statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	Mandatory
Publications	Circulars/Mailshots	Where a public body communicates in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information to the public or the class, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish language or in the English and Irish languages.	Mandatory
An Ghaeltacht	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body in accordance with the legislation.	Mandatory

National Transport Authority

The objective of the NTA's first language scheme is to start the process of providing services directed to the general public through Irish.

However, it is important to acknowledge that some progress has been made already. The previous chapter outlined the significant measures already in place to extend the use of Irish in respect of public transport services which represent a practical and positive way of meeting the demand for services in the Irish language from the public at large.

The majority of the responses to our public consultation appear to support similar further practical measures to extend the use of Irish for public transport users through the provision of bilingual "permanent and oral notices on all transport services" and "websites and ticket reservation methods".

In this regard the key areas in which the NTA plays a role are:-

1. **provision of public transport information, and**

2. **provision of integrated public transport tickets and supporting services (Leap Card).**

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Oral / Written Communication	Reception	The NTA does not employ a receptionist. The NTA reception area is manned by security personnel provided by a security firm under a contract with	

		the NTA.	
		We will compile a guide to the basic greetings in Irish and circulate to staff	**By end Yr 1**
		We will establish and distribute to staff a list of Irish speakers within the NTA who are willing to speak to callers to our HQ who wish to converse in Irish.	
	Face to Face/Counter Service	The NTA does not provide any counter services for the general public. A temporary public office in Dublin city centre, staffed with Transport Infrastructure Ireland personnel, provides information about the Luas Cross City project. However, this office will be closed during 2017.	
		We will establish and distribute to staff a list of Irish speakers within the NTA who are willing to speak to callers to the Luas Cross City office who wish to converse in Irish, and we will engage with TII to do likewise.	**By end Yr 1**
	Switchboard	As telephone operators are the first point of contact with the public we will ensure that they give the name of the organisation in Irish (where recorded oral announcements are not already provided).	**By end Yr 1**
		We will ensure that telephone operators are provided with details of Irish speaking staff (where available) designated to take calls from Irish language speakers and assist them in identifying the appropriate contact person.	
	Telephone communications with the public	We will seek volunteers from among our staff who are willing to take telephone calls from members of the public seeking service in Irish.	**By end Yr 1**
		We will provide Irish language training for staff who are willing to take telephone calls from members of the public seeking service in Irish.	**By end Yr 2**
		When the next procurement process for the operation of the Leap Card customer centre is being undertaken (in 2018) we will examine the feasibility and cost of requiring the successful	**By end Yr 3**

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		bidder to provide an appropriate level of service through Irish, where requested.	
	Recorded Oral Announcements	As outlined in Chapter 3, the NTA is funding the provision of bilingual oral and visual announcements on subsidised public transport services and at real-time passenger information displays	**Continue to roll-out existing programme as funding allows**
	Live announcements	Not relevant to NTA.	**n/a**
	Other	**None**	
	Information Leaflets/ Brochures	NTA ezines will be bilingual. Public transport timetables, leaflets and brochures distributed by the NTA to the public will be bilingual.	**By end Yr 2** **By end Yr 3**
	Application Forms	Application forms for jobs will be published in Irish and English. FOI application forms will be available in Irish and English	**Immediate**
	Other	None	**n/a**
Media	**Press Releases**	A bilingual press release, announcing a news development, industry information or a new initiative, will be issued on a quarterly basis. It will be issued at the same time as its English language version. A bilingual press release will be issued every second month.	**By end Yr 1** **By end Yr 2**
	Media Spokespersons	None.	
	Speeches	None	
	Other – Social Media	Social media is an increasingly important means of communicating directly with customers in real time. Accordingly, the NTA has a presence on *Twitter* and *Facebook* and regularly issues updates concerning public transport matters. The NTA will examine and test the achievability of	**By end Yr 2**

		providing service in Irish on the NTA's social media platforms having regard to the likely demand and the resources required to meet that demand.	
	Email	Automated messages on NTA emails, such as those explaining the timeframe for responding to an email, will be in Irish and English.	**By end Yr 1**
Information Technology	**Websites**	**Websites** *Transport for Ireland* is the overarching brand name which the NTA has developed to promote and integrate public transport provision for the public in Ireland. The Transport for Ireland website (www.transportforireland.ie) which provides information about public transport services to the travelling public, receives about 700,000 visits annually. At present the website has no Irish language content. The NTA undertakes to develop the website into a fully bilingual website. Where the *Transport for Ireland* website provides links to other websites or services, the website will explain that these websites or services may not be available in Irish. Having regard to the experience gained from this process, the NTA will examine the scope for developing other public-facing websites such as www.leapcard.ie and www.locallink.ie (the website for rural transport services) into bilingual websites.	**By end Yr 2** **By end Yr 3**
	Computer Systems	Our word-processing systems are currently capable of handling Irish. We will ensure that this capability is retained in any future upgrades to our systems.	**Immediate**
	Interactive Services	None	
	Other	**Real time passenger information (RTPI) system** We will continue to ensure that bilingual information is provided on RTPI displays at bus stops as the scheme is extended to new areas (subject to the availability of funding).	

		Next stop announcements	
		We will continue to ensure that automated systems on public transport vehicles which provide passengers with next stop information will be bilingual.	
		Corporate Publications	
		The NTA's Annual Report, Financial Statements and Statements of Strategy will continue to be published in Irish and English.	
		In addition, the NTA commits to the publication in Irish of all of its major statutory plans and policies (Transport Strategy, Integrated Implementation Plan, Strategic Traffic Management Plan).	
		Public consultations	
		Where there is a statutory requirement to consult with the general public on public transport issues the public notice inviting to submissions and the principal consultation document will be published in Irish and English.	
Gaeltacht	**Meetings**	None	**n/a**
	Rural Transport	All rural transport booking services through Locallink offices in Gaeltacht areas will provide the facility to book a service through Irish	**n/a**

Chapter 5: Enhancing the Provision of Irish Language Services in Gaeltacht Areas

Enhancing the provision of Irish language services in Gaeltacht areas and ensuring that Irish becomes the working language in offices located in Gaeltacht areas by a certain date.

Commitments in Gaeltacht Areas

Description of services in Gaeltacht areas	Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Subsidised public transport services	Gaeltacht areas are included in the national programmes to provide bilingual i. announcements (oral and visual) on board public transport services; ii. timetable and other customer information at bus stops. The speed of roll-out of these programmes across the State is dependent on the available capital funding.	Dependent on funding and prioritisation aspects

Irish as the working language in Gaeltacht offices		

Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
The NTA does not have any offices in Gaeltacht areas.	n/a

Chapter 6: Improving Language Capability

6.1 RECRUITMENT

The recruitment of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language in each area of work of the NTA 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 induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

6.2 Training and Development

The NTA 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 facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Improving Irish Language Capability	**Recruitment**	We will provide job application forms in Irish.	**With immediate effect**
	Training	The NTA will offer Irish language training and development opportunities to staff.	**By end Yr 2**
	Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources	We will participate in Irish language promotions such as Seachtain na Gaeilge through social media, press releases, events for staff, etc.	**By end Yr 2**
	Other	None	**n/a**

Irish Language Capability

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the NTA 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 the NTA to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

Chapter 7: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by Heads of Sections who will provide feedback to the NTA Management Team. The contact person for the scheme will be Sara Morris.

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

Chapter 8: 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 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 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.

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

Appendix 1 - Consultation process

In accordance with the provisions of Section 13(1)(a) of the 2003 Act, the NTA published a bilingual notice of its intention to prepare a draft scheme on 16 September 2015 in the *Irish Independent* and *Tuairisc.ie*. The notice invited submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from interested parties by 19 October 2015. Requests for submissions were also issued on the NTA's *Twitter* and *Facebook* pages.

In total 11 separate responses were received . Of these 10 suggested the use of Irish for every service starting with those most frequently used, especially permanent and oral notices on all transport services, as well as for websites and ticket reservations. The remaining submission suggests that the scheme should focus initially on translating press releases and websites as well as developing a bilingual public relations function which would be able to engage directly with Irish language media. These inputs have been considered in the preparation of the draft scheme.

The CEO also sent an email to NTA staff inviting them to make submissions. This was supplemented by an online survey of staff to gather information about the demand for Irish from service users, number of Irish speakers, etc. in the NTA.

The response to the survey was good. In total 50 responses were received. The main results of the survey are as follows:

> - 7 staff members dealt with a query in Irish in the last 12 months;
>
> - most staff have only a rudimentary knowledge of Irish or none at all;
>
> - 18 staff expressed definite interest in receiving Irish language training; and
>
> - 15 staff indicated that would be prepared to consider becoming a contact point for Irish language queries if appropriate training was provided.
>
> - A number of responses suggested that the NTA's service through Irish could be improved mainly through the provision of Irish language training and provision of Irish language versions of NTA websites.