

# DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, HERITAGE AND THE GAELTACHT

## REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003

### Template for submissions

The Official Languages Act ("the Act") ratifies the obligations of State organisations to provide certain services through Irish and it sets out the structures for developing those services over time. This template contains various themes that encompass the main operational areas of the Act and you are invited to give your views on them.

You are asked to return the completed template to [maire.uichurraoin@ahg.gov.ie](mailto:maire.uichurraoin@ahg.gov.ie) or to Máire Uí Churraoin, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Na Forbacha, Co. Galway **by 5.30 p.m. on 31 January 2012.**

The cover sheet below must accompany your submission.

## Respondent's Details

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Postal Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**Is this response the personal opinion of the respondent or is the response given on behalf of the above organisation?**

**Personal [       ]       On behalf of the above organisation [       ]**

**Are you willing to have this response published on the Department's website [www.ahg.gov.ie](http://www.ahg.gov.ie)?**

**Yes [       ]       No [       ]**

## Themes to be considered

### Communication under section 9 of the Act (Letters, emails & mail shots)

Current obligations under the Act:

- To respond to communication in the language in which it was received;
- To issue information in writing or electronically in Irish or bilingually.

**1. *In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?***

### Publications under section 10 of the Act

Current obligations under the Act:

- To publish certain documents simultaneously in Irish and in English (e.g. annual reports, audited accounts, public policy proposals, strategy statements etc.)

**2. *In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?***

### Signage, stationery & recorded oral announcements under Regulations of the Act (S.I. No. 391 of 2008)

Current obligations under the Act:

- To comply with the Regulations in regard to the use of Irish and English on signs, stationery and in recorded oral announcements.

**3. *In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?***

### Language Schemes under the Act

The language schemes form the core of the Language Act. The language schemes set out the system through which public bodies develop their services in Irish over a period of time. It is through the language schemes that the use of Irish is dealt with on websites, leaflets, brochures, forms, through telephone services, through other interpersonal services, through online services etc.

**4.(a) In your opinion, is the system of language schemes satisfactory, excessive or does it need to be amended?**

**4.(b) Would you recommend an alternative system which would be more efficient and more effective?**

**Services from public bodies in the Gaeltacht**

In order for the State to support the status and use of Irish in the Gaeltacht, it is vital that Gaeltacht communities can carry out their official business with the State through Irish.

**5.(a) Are you satisfied with the services being provided by public bodies in Irish in the Gaeltacht?**

**5.(b) Would you recommend any amendments that would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public bodies in this area?**

**Other provisions of the Act**

Other provisions of the Act ratify rights with regard to the use of Irish in the Oireachtas, in the courts and in the State's placenames system.

**6. In your opinion, are these provisions adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?**

**Public bodies under the Act**

The Act requires public bodies, which are listed under the Act, to provide services through Irish. The full list of public bodies featured under the Act can be found at [www.ahq.gov.ie](http://www.ahq.gov.ie).

The following public bodies are listed under the Act – Government Departments and offices, local authorities, universities, other third-level institutions, vocational education committees, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Revenue Commissioners, the Health Service Executive, other State agencies, boards & companies.

7. ***In your opinion, is this list of public bodies under the Act appropriate or is an amendment necessary in this area?***

**The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga**

The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga was established under the Act. The main role of the Office is to monitor the implementation of the Act.

8. ***In your opinion, are the powers and functions of that Office adequate or excessive and do they need to be amended?***

**In general**

9. ***Are there other amendments to the Act that you would recommend in order to ensure that the legislation is suitable and appropriate to its function?***

10. ***What services through Irish do you personally require from public bodies or what services do you think should be given priority?***

11. ***What do you think are the obstacles or difficulties associated with providing the same standard of services in Irish by public bodies?***

12. ***What amendments would you recommend to the Act in order to develop State services through Irish in an efficient and cost-effective manner?***