



**Oifig an Ard-Reachtair Cuntas agus Ciste
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME
2018**

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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 approach by the Office to fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Irish language.

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, a notice was published under Section 13 of the Act inviting representations from interested parties.

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General 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 Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

This Scheme is predicated on all of the commitments in the previous scheme having been implemented. In the event of commitments in earlier schemes not having been fully implemented to date, this matter will be the subject of discussion with the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

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 19 March 2018 and shall remain in force for three years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

2: Overview of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

2.1 Mission and Objectives

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is appointed by the President on the nomination of Dáil Éireann. The C&AG holds office under Article 33 of the Constitution.

The C&AG is responsible for auditing the public accounts, undertaking examinations on the management and use of public resources and reporting the results of the work to Dáil Éireann.

In this regard, the C&AG's mission is to provide independent assurance that public funds and resources are used in accordance with the law, managed to good effect and properly accounted for and to contribute to improvement in public administration.

2.2 Main Functions

The C&AG is required by law to

- issue opinions on the accounts of government departments and public bodies which are audited by him
- publish reports on important matters selected at his discretion relating to value for money and the administration of public funds
- authorise, under the Comptroller function, the release of public money from the Exchequer for purposes specified by law.

The Office assists the C&AG in his statutory functions and is staffed by civil servants.

The management team of the Office leads and manages the implementation of the systems, processes and behaviours necessary to promote good corporate governance across the organisation so that all staff of the Office work together as a high performing team.

2.3 Key Services

The work of the Office is directed by three Directors of Audit, each having a directorate which carries out audit and report work. This frontline work is supported by a Corporate Services division headed by the Secretary of the Office who is also the Accounting Officer of the Office.

2.4 Customers and Clients

No area of the Office has a significant amount of contact with the general public. The Office generally deals with the public bodies which it audits and not with the general public. Where possible, staff members with the competence to conduct business through Irish are allocated to the audits and examinations of public bodies where Irish is the working language.

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

The standard working language of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General is English. However, the Office provides services bilingually in compliance with its obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003. The following are a list of services provided by the Office and their availability in the relevant language:

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Performance report *(bilingually)*

Strategy statement *(bilingually)*

Office website *(bilingually)*

Comptroller and Auditor General Reports

Report on the accounts of the public services *(bilingually)*

Appropriation Accounts *(bilingually)*

Special Reports *(bilingually where the body subject to examination conducts its business through Irish)*

4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The following requirements under the Official Languages Act 2003 are carried out by the Office.

Written Communication

Letters and electronic mail

All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.

Stationery

Headings of stationery, including notepaper are provided bilingually.

Signage

All signage placed by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General or on its behalf will be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulation (S.I. No.391/2008).

Publications

Documents including the Office's annual appropriation accounts, corporate information and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.

Information leaflets such as recruitment pamphlets and advertisements will be provided bilingually.

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General will also undertake the following actions under each service.

First Point of Contact

The C&AG reception is the first point of contact with the public. Reception staff are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish. The choice of language of the customer will be established and he/she will be directed to the appropriate official. If an appropriate Irish speaking official is unavailable, the following options will be offered:

- calling back when an appropriate Irish language speaker is available
- conducting business through another member of staff providing a translation service, or
- continuing to conduct business in English.

Media

Press releases in relation to audits, or reports of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General will be published bilingually where the body concerned conducts its business through Irish, or bilingually.

Information Technology

We will publish a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on the office website. Standard email messages such as disclaimers will be bilingual.

The html content of our website is available in both Irish and English. All reports of the C&AG will be published on the website in line with the publication policy outlined above. The website is available at the following address www.audgen.gov.ie

5: Improving Language Capability

5.1 Recruitment

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.

5.2 Training and Development

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General 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 develop or improve their competency in Irish.

The Office will take steps to ensure that staff appreciate the thrust of the Act, understand the immediate legal requirements and the commitment to deliver a progressively enhanced service and see the service as an integral part of the commitment to quality client service. The Office will encourage staff to use their existing competence. The Office will train and support staff so that existing competence can be improved and it will provide the appropriate administrative supports required in order to ensure that the identified standards/actions can be met. Staff who have passed the civil service Irish language competence test will be encouraged to use and build on their existing skills from the commencement of the Scheme.

Volunteers will be sought across the Office to participate in providing the service.

Staff competence will be developed through language training courses. Staff will continue to be encouraged to attend language-training courses during or outside office hours.

Training needs will be identified in the course of the Performance Management Development System and the Training Unit will incorporate those needs into individual and generic training programmes as appropriate.

Irish language templates of frequently used letters/documents will be developed to encourage staff to participate in providing services in Irish. Staff are made aware of language resources such as www.tearma.ie and www.focloir.ie

5.3 Irish Language Capability

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Office will, by the end of the period covered by 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 Office to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

6: Monitoring and Review of Scheme

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the Office's Audit Board. This monitoring will be based on progress reports provided by the Corporate Services Division.

The day to day operation of the Scheme, together with ongoing monitoring of the level of demand for services in Irish, will be the responsibility of the Senior Auditors who will report to their Deputy Director.

There will be a continuous review of the Scheme and monitoring of the number of instances whereby a service through Irish is requested.

7: Publishing of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally. The scheme will be made available in both Irish and English 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 clients to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- the Scheme itself and subsequent updates on the delivery of commitments on particular services will be published on the website and reported upon in the Office's annual performance report;
- directly informing clients on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language publications.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.