

20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030:

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

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THE VISION

The objective of Government policy in relation to Irish is to increase on an incremental basis the use and knowledge of Irish as a community language. Specifically, the Government's aim is to ensure that as many citizens as possible are bilingual in both Irish and English. It is an integral component of the Government's Irish language policy that close attention be given to its place in the Gaeltacht, particularly in light of research which indicates that the language's viability as a household and community language in the Gaeltacht is under threat.

The aim of Government policy is also to:

- increase the number of families throughout the country who use Irish as the daily language of communication;*
- provide linguistic support for the Gaeltacht as an Irish-speaking community and to recognise the issues which arise in areas where Irish is the household and community language;*
- ensure that in public discourse and in public services the use of Irish or English will be, as far as practical, a choice for the citizen to make and that over time more and more people throughout the State will choose to do their business in Irish; and*
- ensure that Irish becomes more visible in our society, both as a spoken language by our citizens and also in areas such as signage and literature.*

Irish is part of the culture and heritage of Northern Ireland and the promotion and protection of the language there is also a priority for the Government.

The Government recognises the tremendous advantage to its citizens of fluency in English, the most widely used language in international affairs. The Government commits to ensuring that this advantage is retained through the development of a bilingual society, where as many people as possible can use Irish and English with equal ease and facility. However, the Government also recognises that the focus of policy in the Gaeltacht needs to be on maintaining the linguistic identity of the community in the Gaeltacht as a distinctive language region, rather than one of bilingualism.

While strengthening the position of the language within our education system is a key focus of this Strategy, the transmission of Irish as a living language within the family and between the generations is critically important. Our overall approach is to create a supportive framework and the opportunities in which Irish can be passed on in a natural way within households and communities. This is of special importance in the context of the Gaeltacht.

The future of the language depends on people who make a positive choice to embrace the opportunities that this Strategy will create. This is the challenge for all of us.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

Following on from the *Government Statement on the Irish Language 2006*, the headline goal has been set of increasing over 20 years:

- the number of people with a knowledge of Irish to 2 million; and
- the number of daily speakers of Irish to 250,000.

The achievement of these ambitious goals has been the overriding consideration in formulating the decisions on areas for action in this Strategy.

The specific objectives involved in the preparation of the Strategy are to:

- increase the number of speakers who speak Irish on a daily basis outside the education system to 250,000;
- increase the number of speakers who speak Irish on a daily basis in the Gaeltacht by 25% in overall terms as its invigoration will be critical to the overall Strategy; and
- increase the number of people that use State services through the Irish language and can access television, radio and print media through the language.

POLICY CONTEXT

Article 8 of the Constitution of Ireland states that:

“The Irish language as the national language is the first official language.”

This *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language* is built on the foundation of the Constitutional status of the language and follows on the *Government Statement on the Irish Language* published in December 2006. That Statement affirmed the Government’s support for the development and preservation of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht and set out 13 policy objectives. The following objectives are relevant to the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources:

Objective 1: The special status given to the Irish language in the Constitution and in legislation such as the Official Languages Act 2003, the Education Act 1998, the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Broadcasting Act 2001¹, will be upheld.

Objective 2: The Official Languages Act will be fully implemented. The right of the public to use Irish in dealings with the State and with other bodies will be developed and the appropriate arrangements to deliver this will be put in place.

Objective 3: The Irish language community inside and outside the Gaeltacht will be given encouragement and support to transmit Irish to the next generation as a living household language. Towards this end, a wide range of services in Irish will be provided.

Objective 4: The Gaeltacht will be given special support as an Irish-speaking area.

Objective 9: High quality broadcast services through the medium of Irish will be ensured, especially through the continuous development of RTÉ, Raidió na Gaeltachta and TG4.

¹ Now the Broadcasting Act 2009

Implementation Plan – Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

1. Media and Technology

The Irish language in the twenty-first century is already charting its course in new directions. The traditional sectors of education, community, arts and media are no longer discrete domains in which separate individual policies can be formulated and implemented. Languages which were previously disadvantaged by their dispersed community base are now well-positioned to benefit from opportunities for innovation through new communications and media technologies. These developments have immense potential for resource building in the arts and education and open up new channels for individuals and communities to increase their knowledge and regular use of Irish.

	Aims	Public Body	Action	Timeframe
1.1	The reading and writing of Irish will be supported through CDs, DVDs, audio books and print media in the short to medium-term through the development of a literary promotion brief by RTÉ and TG4, with a key role in literary awards, book programmes, profiling of authors and contributing to their visibility and media status, and cultivation of stronger links between writing for the media and for book publication as “complementary” activities; and development of initiatives to encourage writing in Irish by young people in a range of media – journalism, blogging, creative writing, drama and film scripts.	RTÉ TG4 Foras na Gaeilge	RTE and TG4 will continue to support writing in Irish through: continuation of current activities e.g. presentation of awards by RTÉ presenters / attendance at International Conference on Readership. RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta is nurturing creative Irish-language writing through the continued commissioning of contemporary drama. The service is currently seeking submissions for the commissioning of a contemporary drama series, with a strong social media thread as part of that commission.	Annually / ongoing Ongoing

		TG4	<p>RnaG has a monthly book club on the Cormac ag a Cúig drivetime show, so as to develop interest and engagement in Irish-language literature.</p> <p>There are regular items across a wide range of magazine programming focussing on newly-published Irish-language literature and authors.</p> <p>Development of multimedia approach as a more relevant / current initiative: TG4 will continue to provide comprehensive and wide-ranging coverage of Irish language literature through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning original Irish language drama, • Commissioning contemporary versions of Irish language literary classics • Offering a weekly arts programme covering Irish language literature issues and publications. 	<p>Quarter 4, 2013</p> <p>Quarter 3, 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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1.2	RTÉ, as the national public service broadcaster, will normalise the use of Irish and English in their broadcasts, building on the success of Irish Language Week (Seachtain na Gaeilge). RTÉ will continue to support and develop Raidió na Gaeltachta so that a broad spectrum of high standard programmes will be delivered to those communities that listen to this service.	RTÉ	In addition to complying with its statutory obligations under the Broadcasting Act in respect of the provision of services in Irish RTE will in its Irish language policy and in its Irish language scheme under the Official Languages Act, both of which are currently being developed, set out a number of proposals/commitments to both normalise and improve the provision and the use of the Irish language.	2013-2014
1.3	A youth-focused radio to target young people will be developed using both the internet and conventional radio broadcasting.	RTÉ Community channels	<p>Currently Raidió na Gaeltachta has a youth-oriented sub-station – AnochtFM and a number of youth-oriented Irish language community stations such as – Raidió Rí-Rá, Raidió na Life are also in operation.</p> <p>RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta will seek to explore partnerships with other radio services regarding the development and further provision of youth-orientated content.</p> <p>RnaG is also to examine the use of existing resources to explore the possibility of developing youth-orientated programming after 7pm.</p>	<p>2013-2014</p> <p>Quarter 1, 2014</p> <p>Quarter 2, 2014</p>

			<p>RnaG has developed oral Irish exam related-programming as support for Leaving Certificate students and has implemented an online marketing strategy around it.</p> <p>Following a process undertaken by the BAI, Raidió Rí-Rá is among a number of television and radio services identified for potential inclusion on the DTT (Digital Terrestrial Television) network, subject to an appropriate business case being put in place by Raidió Rí-Rá.</p>	Quarter 2, 2013 & ongoing
1.4	<p>TG4 will be further supported to provide television services through Irish. TG4 now has a target of a six-hour daily Irish language schedule, up from a current level of approximately 4.58 hours. Sufficient funding is vital for TG4 to carry out its statutory remit and to retain its market share as an independent statutory body in an increasingly competitive environment. The continued development of TG4 will also ensure that the independent production sector in the Gaeltacht continues to provide varied employment opportunities.</p>	<p>DCENR</p> <p>TG4</p>	<p>DCENR will ensure continued funding through the estimates process & prompt payments to facilitate commissioning of independent content.</p> <p>DTT free-to-air coverage of TG4 has risen from 80% to 98% & it is also available to all UPC and Sky customers in the State and on Saorsat.</p> <p>As viewing of TV content via smart devices continues to increase, TG4 will continue to develop its availability on such platforms.</p>	Annually, ongoing

			<p>TG4 will continue to provide direct employment to 80+ highly qualified Irish-speaking staff at its Connemara Gaeltacht HQ.</p> <p>TG4 will continue to commission content from the independent production sector in the Gaeltacht, supporting high-end employment, estimated at 300 Gaeltacht-based jobs.</p> <p>The proposed TG4 Archive Scheme also envisages the creation of additional employment in high-skill language-centred disciplines.</p> <p>TG4-supported employment for highly-committed Irish language speakers in the Gaeltacht, both core staff and in the independent sector is a crucial component for the survival/development of the language in the traditional Gaeltacht communities with many essential economic, social and linguistic benefits.</p> <p>TG4 will continue to support training and education initiatives and programmes in the areas of media, journalism</p>	
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			<p>and jrTV production through its partnerships/internships with third-level institutions - NUIG, (Acadamh), WIT, GMIT and DCU.</p> <p>A specific multi-media Irish language learning project on TG4 is at an advanced stage of development. This will provide a fresh and interactive approach to learning Irish and will be accessible worldwide through the TG4 Player and other web-based platforms.</p> <p>The pioneering development by TG4 of language-learning Apps for iOS and Android devices will continue, in conjunction with the new language learning project. Irish language versions of games based on the most popular kids' cartoon series will also assist greatly with the normalisation of Irish as a "fun" language for kids.</p> <p>TG4 will continue to deliver innovative outreach initiatives, seminars and workshops to increase awareness of TG4 content as a resource for teachers of Irish at pre-school, primary and post-primary</p>	
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1.5	<p>In fulfilment of the obligations created by the Broadcasting Act, the Government will specifically ensure that the support provided to the Irish language services of the public service broadcasters is further strengthened.</p> <p>Subtitling options will be substantially increased in order to offer the option to have subtitles in Irish, English, or both, or no subtitles, thus significantly reinforcing the accessibility of TG4 to learners and non-proficient users of Irish as well as fluent speakers.</p>	DCENR	<p>DCENR will seek to ensure continued revenue streams from TV licence sales.</p> <p>TG4 will continue to offer subtitling and other access options that will enable those not fluent in Irish to enjoy the output, using options that are not excessively intrusive for those fluent in Irish.</p>	Ongoing
1.6	<p>The Good Friday Agreement provided that the British Government would work with the relevant British and Irish broadcasting authorities to make TG4 more “widely available” in Northern Ireland. The Government will continue to work with the relevant British authorities to ensure that this will be achieved in the context of the switchover to digital television by 2012.</p>	RTÉ, TG4, DCENR, Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the UK (DCMS)	<p>DTT – RTÉ 1 & 2, TG4 & Raidió na Gaeltachta are available on DTT in Northern Ireland (approx. 60% coverage).</p> <p>Overspill from RoI brings total DTT availability of TG4 in NI to over 94%, with TG4 also available to all Sky satellite and Virgin Cable customers in NI.</p>	Objective achieved in October 2012

2. Broadcasting Act 2009

The Broadcasting Act 2009 sets a framework for both RTÉ and TG4 in the coming years.

Section 25 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 imposes an obligation on the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland to endeavour to ensure:

that the number and categories of broadcasting services made available in the State by virtue of this Act best serve the needs of the people of the island of Ireland, bearing in mind their languages and traditions and their religious, ethical and cultural diversity,

and an obligation to:

promote and stimulate the development of Irish language programming and broadcasting services.

A number of detailed changes in the legislative framework enhance the position of the Irish language through the activities of the public service broadcasters. These include:

	Aims	Public Body	Action	Timeframe
2.1	Allowing more favourable charges, terms and conditions in respect of archive schemes by public service broadcasters for the purpose of Irish language broadcasts.	BAI RTÉ TG4	Archive Scheme to be set up by 2014. Irish Language broadcasts will fall into the Irish heritage category, if any applications are received. RTÉ Archive Scheme, approved August 2012, states: "RTÉ reserves the right to provide more favourable charges, terms and conditions in respect of programme material used for the purpose of Irish language broadcasts TG4 has drafted and submitted to BAI a major Archive Scheme proposal that would result in	By 2014

			the digitisation of the entire Irish language archive (since 1996) with appropriate archive access envisaged for educational and other users.	
2.2	Increase in the allocation of licence fee money from RTÉ to the Broadcasting Funding Scheme (from 5% to 7%), of which independent productions commissioned by TG4 are a major beneficiary.	DCENR		Objective achieved
2.3	Continuation of a statutory provision of 365 hours a year of Irish language content to TG4 by RTÉ, annual cost €7m-€8m (costs published in RTÉ Annual Report)	RTÉ		Ongoing
2.4	Deepening RTÉ's remit in relation to the Irish language.	RTÉ DCENR	See 1.2 above	2013-2014
2.5	Irish language programmes now free from the “peak hours” restriction in the case of the Broadcasting Funding Scheme.	BAI	The Scheme provides that commercial / community offerings are free from the restriction; it doesn't apply to TG4 / RTÉ, who would offer programmes during peak times regardless.	Achieved.
2.6	TG4 has been given specific powers to provide online non-linear services in Irish.	TG4	TG4 offers and a Web-based world-wide comprehensive Player and catch-up service for its Irish language content. TG4 has already made the investment in the necessary infrastructure that will enable the major Digital Archiving Scheme outlined above. (See 2.1 above)	Achieved/ongoing

		TG4 proposed language-learning initiative	TG4 is at an advanced stage of planning for a new interactive Irish language learning project, comprising TV and online content to provide adult learners of Irish world-wide with the opportunity to learn/improve their fluency in Irish.	
2.7	The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to consider multi-annual funding requirements of TG4.	DCENR	<p>This issue will be considered in the context of the annual estimates process. However, the allocation of funding on a multi-annual basis is difficult at present, given the current economic environment and the nature of funding.</p> <p>The payment of almost €10m annually from the TV Licence Fee Revenue, as per the amendments to the Broadcasting Act, gives some certainty to TG4.</p>	Effected by Postal Act 2011