

**Local Government Computer Services Board Scheme**

**Scheme 2007 – 2010  
Under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003**

<b>1</b>	<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1	INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND .....	3
1.2	CONSULTATION PROCESS .....	3
1.3	CONTENT OF THE LANGUAGE SCHEME.....	3
1.4	COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE LANGUAGE SCHEME .....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPUTER SERVICES BOARD</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.2	CUSTOMERS & CLIENTS .....	5
2.3	BOARD STRUCTURE .....	5
2.4	FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD .....	6
2.5	ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT TO WHICH SERVICES ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE THROUGH IRISH .....	7
2.6	DOCUMENTATION/SERVICES NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH IRISH .....	7
<b>3</b>	<b>ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BILINGUALLY</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1	CORRESPONDENCE .....	8
3.2	WEBSITE AND E-MAIL .....	8
	PUBLICATIONS .....	8
3.3	.....	8
3.4	IT SYSTEMS.....	9
3.5	TELEPHONES .....	10
3.6	RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING.....	10
3.7	IMPLEMENTATION .....	11
<b>4</b>	<b>MONITORING &amp; REVIEW</b> .....	<b>12</b>
4.1	RESPONSIBILITY .....	12
4.2	IMPROVING THE BOARD'S IRISH LANGUAGE CAPABILITY.....	12
4.3	PUBLICISING AGREED SCHEME .....	13

# 1 CHAPTER 1

## **1.1 Introduction & Background**

On 31 January 2006, the Director of The Local Government Computer Services Board (“the Board”) was requested to prepare a scheme by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (“the Act”). Section 11 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services 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 provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

## **1.2 Consultation Process**

The Board published a bilingual notice under Section 13 of the Act on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2006, in the Irish Independent and Foinse, inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme under Section 11 from any interested parties. One submission was received, which is available for viewing on the Board’s website [www.lgcsb.ie](http://www.lgcsb.ie).

In accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Dept. of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under Section 12 of the Act, the Board carried out a consultation process with our customers, who are those who are directly or indirectly recipients of our services. The Board has no direct interaction with the public as, in the main, it is a service provider to Local Authorities and Government agencies. Its customers are therefore other public bodies. The Board invited the Heads of Information Systems and the Irish Language Officers in Local Authorities to make submissions on behalf of their Local Authority, for consideration by the Board in the preparation of the draft scheme. Three submissions were received. A meeting was also held with Heads of Information systems.

An internal staff survey was also carried out to ascertain the level of competency in the Irish language in the Board

The scheme has been informed by these submissions, views and suggestions.

## **1.3 Content of the Language Scheme**

Personnel from each functional area of the Board have assisted in drafting the scheme.

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the scheme will rest with the senior management within the Board. The scheme builds on the extent to which services are currently available through Irish as a starting base. Areas for future enhancement of the service provided by this Board are identified in the body of the scheme. The scheme also includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish by its customers and to ensure that the Board continues to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and accessible way. The Board will continue to gauge the level of demand for its services in the Irish language.

## **1.4 Commencement Date of the Language Scheme**

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. The scheme is commenced with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2007 (we have no difficulty with this date) and will remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the earlier.

## 2 Overview of the Local Government Computer Services Board

### 2.1 Introduction

The Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) is a public sector organisation established in 1975 for the express purpose of providing ICT development, support, and advice to Local Authorities in their provision of services to their communities. The mission statement of the LGCSB set out below:

***“It is our aim that through the quality, commitment and continuous development of our staff, the LGCSB will be the partner of choice for Local Government initiatives in the delivery of quality services through the optimum application of information and communications technologies within the National Information Society framework.”***

### 2.2 Customers & Clients

Local Government in Ireland consists of 34 counties/cities with an overall total of 114 independent organisations, operating within a legal framework defined primarily by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The technology and infrastructure within the sector where LGCSB operates has changed hugely in the last 31 years.

The external forces of the broader e-Government agenda both in Ireland and at EU level are pushing change at an unprecedented rate. This new era challenges us to rethink how a substantially improved public sector can positively enhance all our lives. This includes service delivery to citizens and business, efficiency and effectiveness measures in the use of public resources, and participation by citizens in the democratic process of government to ensure their inclusion and empowerment.

Continuing implementation of LGCSB's Strategic Plan will depend on the unique partnership between LGCSB and Local Authorities on all aspects of strategies building on the in-depth and shared understanding which ensures that LGCSB remains fully aware and focused on issues of strategic importance to Local Authorities.

### 2.3 Board Structure

The organisation is structured along the lines of a set of interlocking and complementary elements, divided into six broad areas of strategic activity:

- **Technical (ICT) Services:** This is the technical platform on which all Applications and Systems sit.
- **Software Standards and Development:** Activities here ensure that appropriate standards and common systems focus on creating compatibility across IT systems in the Local Government sector.
- **Local Authority Spatial and Infrastructural Services:** This area forms one part of the Applications Systems suite of services incorporating Planning and Development, Transportation, Water & Wastewater and Environment.

- **The Local Authority Customer Systems and Internal Support Services:** These form the other part of the Applications Systems suite of services incorporating Housing, Franchise, Community & Enterprise, Recreation & Amenity, Finance, Sectoral Level Procurement, Human Resources & Payroll and Local Authority Corporate Services.
- **Business Development Services:** Entrepreneurial and strategic activities that benefit Local Government and LGCSB are handled by this unit. Areas of activity include e-Government Strategic Projects, EU & International, Corporate ICT Strategic Advice & Consulting, Strategic Marketing & Resourcing and the Projects Office.
- **Customer Support & Internal Corporate Services:** All internal organisation and support mechanisms in the areas of Customer Support Services, Internal Corporate & Legal Services, Financial Management Services, Human Resources & Employee Development and Internal IT Support.

## ***2.4 Functions of the Board***

LGCSB is committed to ensuring that Local Authorities are provided with the best possible solutions for meeting all their Information and Communication Technologies needs and to help them develop appropriate strategies to underpin their business needs and implement appropriate solutions. The main functions of LGCSB are:

- to provide a service for Local Authorities in respect of computer facilities;
- to co-ordinate and secure compatibility in computer use by individual authorities;
- to arrange for the provision of training and education and the carrying out of research in matters related to Local Authority computerisation;
- to furnish advice and assistance to the Minister and to Local Authorities.
- to host websites on behalf of specified bodies
- provide consultancy services in respect of products developed or employed by the Board

The LGCSB will have a critical supporting role in the implementation by local authorities of the Official Languages Act 2003.

## ***2.5 Assessment of extent to which services are already available through Irish***

The LGCSB, given the nature of its functions and work, does not have a high level of direct contact with, or provide schemes and services, directly or indirectly, to individual members of the general public.

It does however provide schemes and services to local authorities. These schemes and systems may be public facing but it is the local authority which is responsible for providing the service, either directly or indirectly, to individual members of the general public. None of the public facing systems currently supported and maintained by the LGCSB are available through Irish.

Services are provided by the Board primarily through English except for the documents published in both Irish and English under Section 10 of the Act. Documents such as Annual Report, Financial Accounts and Strategy Documents are published in both Irish and English.

## ***2.6 Documentation/services not available through Irish***

Because of the nature of the Board, a large proportion of documentation produced is outside the scope of a scheme under the Official Languages Act. This is because documentation is for internal purposes or is of technical services nature and not made available to the general public or classes of the general public. As such, these documents will continue to be available in English only. A summary of the documents produced by the LGCSB is attached at Appendix 1.

Documents of a specialist or technical nature produced by the Board not designed for the general public include requests for tender documentation and technical instruction manuals. It also includes details of internal documents prepared by the Board.

## 3 Enhancement of Services to be Provided Bilingually

### 3.1 Correspondence

Action	Timescale
3.1.1 The Board will initiate correspondence in Irish with those who are known to prefer to correspond in Irish. Staff will be instructed to maintain a record of such persons with a view to fulfilling this commitment.	ongoing

### 3.2 Website and E-Mail

Action	Timescale
3.2.1 The Board's website will be navigable in both the Irish and English Language. An Irish version of all static content of the website will be provided.	When the existing website is being significantly upgraded or within the lifetime of this scheme whichever is the earliest
3.2.2 The Board will provide bilingual standard headings and disclaimers on the Board's email system	By end of 2008

### 3.3 Publications

Action	Timescale
3.3.1 In addition to documents coming within the scope of section 10 of the Act, the Customer Service Action Plan will be published bilingually. All Board bilingual publications will be within the same cover in accordance with best practice.	Ongoing
3.3.2 Where a publication is to be produced bilingually, it will be assumed that the document is not ready for publication unless both language versions are available.	Ongoing
3.3.3 The Board will establish a planned structure for the translation needs of the Board including the use of external translators.	By end of 2007
3.3.4 Any press releases, information leaflets and brochures (aimed at ordinary members of the public) issued by the Board will be issued in both English and Irish.	Within the lifetime of this scheme.

### 3.4 IT Systems

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.4.1 Provision of functions in Irish will be facilitated at the request of local authorities and other customers, when major upgrades to public facing systems, including interactive systems, are being implemented subject to compatibility issues. As some systems are very complex relational systems developed in-house over many years, and retro-fitting is difficult, costly and resource-intensive, impact analyses will be required for each upgrade.	Within lifetime of scheme
3.4.2 The Board will facilitate local authorities and other customers who require that any new public facing systems, including interactive systems, developed by the Board will allow for any public facing communications (such as letter, application forms, etc.) to be made available from the system in both Irish and English.	Within lifetime of scheme
3.4.3 The Board will facilitate local authorities and other customers who require that new public facing systems developed by the Board will be bilingual.	Within the lifetime of 2 schemes (January 2007 – January 2013)
3.4.4 The Board will ensure that any new public facing systems procured from 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties will be specified as bilingual as requested by our customers where it is available and within timescales for delivery of the systems.	Within lifetime of scheme
3.4.5 The Board will ensure that all new PCs and printers purchased will be fully capable of handling the Irish language	By end of 2007

### 3.5 Telephones

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.5.1 At present, switchboard services are through English only. The LGCSB will ensure within the lifetime of the Scheme, that switchboard staff operating the switchboard will be able to answer with the name of the LGCSB in Irish and English; that they are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and that arrangements will be in place to transfer callers to the appropriate service through Irish. We will continue to upskill switchboard staff over a number of schemes.	During the lifetime of the scheme.
3.5.2 Staff will be provided with guidance on handling telephone calls from Irish speaking members of the public.	By end of 2007

### 3.6 Recruitment and Staffing

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.6.1 Where bilingual communication skills through the medium of Irish and English are considered essential or desirable for any post, this will be specified in the job specification	By end of 2007
3.6.2 All new members of staff will be given an introduction to the Irish Language Scheme and it's implications for the way they execute their job as part of their induction training.	By end Q1 2007
3.6.3 Publicity will be given to the fact, that in accordance with equal opportunities practice, that Irish-speakers, those who are able to communicate bilingually and English-speakers, are welcome to join the workforce.	By end of 2007
3.6.4 Access to Irish language classes will be made available to all staff	By end of 2007
3.6.5 Consideration will be given to identifying existing staff or recruiting new staff who are willing and able to work on the technical aspects of bilingual system development	By end of 2007

### **3.7 Implementation**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.7.1 To facilitate the development of any new services or systems through the Irish language, the LGCSB will set up a working group to examine the issues which will arise during the development or upgrade of any system to include bilingual functionality.	By end of 2007
3.7.2 The function of the working group will be to agree and make available to staff and customers a set of standards to be applied in the development of bilingual functionality.	By end of 2008
3.7.3 The LGCSB will assign responsibility to a manager to oversee the implementation of the commitments given in this draft scheme.	Ongoing
3.7.4 The LGCSB will include reference to Official Languages Act in any new strategy documents.	When LGCSB new strategy is being drafted.

## **4 Monitoring & Review**

### **4.1 Responsibility**

This Scheme has the full approval of the Board's Senior Management Team. An Assistant Director will be responsible for the overall implementation, monitoring and review of this Scheme. Managers will be responsible for implementing the Scheme within their own Sections and for reporting progress on implementation at least annually. Each Manager will be required to - include in their annual action plans, details of the actions required to ensure implementation of the requirements of this Scheme, together with target dates which correspond to the target dates set out in this Scheme.

The day to day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers in each of the sections who are responsible for the implementation of the scheme within their own areas.

Information will be collected annually on:

- Description of materials published in whole or in part in Irish.
- Achievements against the timetable in the scheme.
- The incidence and nature of any complaints and suggestions relating to the provision of services in Irish by the Department.

A report of the measures implemented under the Scheme will be included in the Board's Annual Report.

### **4.2 Improving the Board's Irish language capability**

The Board is committed to building on the existing levels of knowledge and competency in relation to Irish language skills currently available within the Board. In order to ascertain the level of expertise in Irish among staff a survey has been carried out of staff asking them to rate their ability to write, read and speak Irish. While a large response to the survey was received, it clearly indicated that the existing level of competence to deal with administrative and technical issues through Irish is rather limited.

There will be a need for significant effort over a long number of years to raise the level of knowledge and competency in relation to the Irish language. The principal mechanism to deepen the capacity of the Board to transact more of its business through the medium of Irish is the training and development of the Board's staff.

In this context, and as part of an ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for staff to meet the evolving needs of the Board's customers and to develop the potential of staff, it is planned to take the following steps throughout the duration of the current scheme:

- The Board will facilitate staff, who wish to attend Irish language classes
- Advice will be provided to staff in relation to the range of high-quality Irish language classes available outside office hours (i.e. third-level Diploma in Irish) and financial support will be provided to staff pursuing such courses under the Educational Assistance Programme.

With a view to improving both the level and standard of its services provided bilingually to the public the Board will implement the following general and specific measures by the end of this scheme:

4.2.1 Receptionist/switchboard operators, who are the first points of contact with the public, will be offered training to enable them to be able to provide the name of the Board in Irish and English and to be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish.	By end Q1 2007
4.2.2 Staff who are willing to deal with telephone queries in Irish will be identified by a 'G' on phone lists provided to receptionist and switchboard operators.	By end 2007
4.2.3 The Board will include language awareness as part of both induction and Customer Service training courses so as to ensure that staff understand why the Board is aiming to increase the level of services provided bilingually, the context and background to the policy and how the policy will affect their work.	By end 2007
4.2.4 LGCSB will examine the potential for staff to have easy access to information and language resources, e.g. dictionaries, both hard copies and in electronic format, advice on written Irish and lists of common phrases in usage.	Within lifetime of scheme

### **4.3 Publicising Agreed Scheme**

Staff are aware of the Board's requirement to prepare this scheme under the Official Languages Act. Detailed guidance and instructions will be made available to those who may need to implement Irish Language measures. Staff will be made aware of their responsibilities under the scheme through a variety means.

The contents of this scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the scheme will be made available on the Board's website.

A copy of this scheme has also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisineir na dTeangacha Oifigiula and those who made submissions to the Board in the context of this scheme being developed.