An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Gaeltacht Service Towns

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is a Gaeltacht Service Town?

Gaeltacht Service Towns are defined as those towns situated in or adjacent to Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and which have a significant role in providing public services, recreational, social and commercial facilities for those areas. Under the Act, a town must have a minimum population of 1,000 according to the most recent census to be considered as a Gaeltacht Service Town.

Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge is responsible under the Act for supporting organisations to prepare and implement language plans in the Gaeltacht Service Towns, depending on whether the town is situated within a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area or outside of it.

2. What is the objective?

Statutory status as a Gaeltacht Service Town under the Gaeltacht Act 2012 will give particular recognition to a town in which services are provided to a Gaeltacht area. By preparing and implementing a language plan in the town, it is expected that the community, the voluntary sector and the public and private sectors will work together in the town to support the Irish language.

The aim of the language plan will be to enhance the use of the Irish language in the town in so far as it relates to a broad range of activities, including family, community, educational, social, business and public matters.

3. What are the advantages of being recognised as a Gaeltacht service town?

The Irish language is a unique selling point when businesses are attempting to achieve a competitive advantage in the market. The Irish language is a tool businesses can use to differentiate themselves from their competitors, particularly with regard to providing a service through Irish for their Gaeltacht customers.

The Irish language is a cultural asset which can be exploited to promote a positive image of the town and to attract cultural tourism to the town.

The study commissioned by Gaillimh le Gaeilge in November 2009, regarding the economic advantages of the Irish language, is worth mentioning in this context. The study, which is available at http://www.gleg.ie/taighde/taighde/, demonstrated that:

- the Irish language is worth over €136 million to Galway city and county each year and that it's worth around €59 million to the city of Galway alone;
- of that €136 million, tourism associated with the Irish language had an economic impact of €41 million in Galway city and county in 2008;
- over 91% of Galway city businesses that took part in a survey as part of the study stated that the Irish language is 'important' or 'very important' to the cultural identity of Galway city, that it is a tourism asset and that it is a unique selling point in terms of Galway's image;
- Gaeltacht households and businesses spent €705 million in Galway city in 2006. Of that €705 million, Gaeltacht households, including those in the city part of
the Gaeltacht, spent €400 million on retail sales in 2006. Gaeltacht companies spent €305 million in the city
on purchases of goods and services in 2006.
- the cluster of Irish language-based State services and
Government supported enterprises in the Galway Gaeltacht and city sustained in the region of 3,300 full-time jobs and around 2,000 part-time jobs in 2007;
- one of the most important sectors within the Galway
Gaeltacht economy is the Irish language audio-visual sector. This sector contributed €24.3 million in added value to
GNP (Gross National Product) in 2007; and
- within the tourism sector, the Galway Gaeltacht summer colleges represent an important economic activity. They generated €14 million in revenue for the local area
in 2007.

In addition, status as a Gaeltacht Service Town would undoubtedly be of great assistance to any town interested in hosting one of the major festivals such as Oireachtas na Samhna, An Fhéile Phan-Cheilteach or Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

Also, recognition as a Gaeltacht Service Town would greatly assist the town if applying for funding from Údarás na Gaeltachta/Foras na Gaeilge under the schemes run by those organisations.

4. What are the specific stages of the language planning process associated with the Gaeltacht Service Towns?

The [Language Planning Guidelines](#) set out the 7 specific stages of the language planning process associated with the Gaeltacht Service Towns. Following are the stages involved:

- Consultation Process
- Notices regarding the Gaeltacht Service Towns
- Selection of organisations to undertake the language planning process
- Preparation of language plans - (a period of up to two years)
- Designation of Gaeltacht Service Towns by order
- Implementation of language plans – (a period of seven years)
- Monitoring of the implementation of the language plans.

5. How were the towns selected as potential service towns and what is the role of Údarás na Gaeltachta and Foras na Gaeilge?

Suggestions were sought during the summer of 2014 from relevant stakeholders regarding the most suitable towns to be selected as Gaeltacht service towns. 20 submissions were received as a result of that process. When compiling the list of towns, the suggestions included in the submissions were taken into consideration, in addition to:

- the minimum qualifying criteria stated in the Act regarding the Gaeltacht Service Towns;
- the recommendations made in the *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht - 2007*; and
- the other opinions received during the consultation process, including the opinions of Foras na Gaeilge and Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge, as appropriate, will be working with the relevant organisations to prepare and implement language plans in these towns, depending on whether the town is situated in a Gaeltacht area or outside of the Gaeltacht.

The announcements under the Act will be published over time as and when organisations are in a position to submit applications to Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge, as appropriate, and as and when Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge are in a position to assist the selected organisations to commence the language planning process in the various towns.

6. What type of organisation is being sought to prepare and implement a plan?

The organisation must be based in the area in question and have the appropriate skills and experience in the Irish-language and community development field to head the preparation and implementation of a language plan for the town - in association with other stakeholders as appropriate.

An evaluation group has been established between the Department, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Foras na Gaeilge that has responsibility for the process under which organisations will be selected for the job. Further information about how to apply is available by contacting Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge, as appropriate. See table below:

7. What Towns have been selected as towns that could potentially be recognised as Gaeltacht Service Towns?

County	Town	State body dealing with it
Donegal	Leitir Ceanainn	Foras na Gaeilge
	An Clochán Liath	Údarás na Gaeltachta
	Donegal Town	Foras na Gaeilge
Mayo	Béal an Mhuirthead	Údarás na Gaeltachta
	Ballinrobe	Foras na Gaeilge
	Castlebar	Foras na Gaeilge
Galway	Galway City	Foras na Gaeilge
	Clifden	Foras na Gaeilge
Kerry	Daingean Uí Chúis	Údarás na Gaeltachta
	Tralee	Foras na Gaeilge
	Cahersiveen	Foras na Gaeilge
Cork	Cork City	Foras na Gaeilge
	Macroom	Foras na Gaeilge
Waterford	Dungarvan	Foras na Gaeilge
Meath	Athboy	Foras na Gaeilge
	Navan	Foras na Gaeilge

8. How to apply

An organisation may apply to Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge (depending on whether the town is within or outside of the Gaeltacht), to be recognised as an organisation that will prepare and implement a language plan for the town in question, by contacting either organisation, as appropriate, at the following address:

- Údarás na Gaeltachta: (091)503100, Údarás na Gaeltachta,
  Na Forbacha, Co. Galway, iarrataspt@udaras.ie
- Foras na Gaeilge: (074)9558126, Foras na Gaeilge, An Chrannóg,
  Na Doirí Beaga, Co. Donegal, bsg@forasnagaeilge.ie

Organisations will be asked to complete and application form and return it to either Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge, depending on whether the town is situated within or outside of the Gaeltacht.

9. How will applications be assessed?

An assessment committee, comprising representatives from the Foras, the Údarás and the Department, will study the applications received according to the following criteria:

- Community representation/structure
- Community development experience
- Proposed approach
- Financial/funding status
- Communications and marketing

An organisation may be asked to give a presentation on their application

10. What marking system will be used for assessment

Marking Criteria	Weighting	Mark Awarded
Community Representation/Structure	15%	
Community Development Experience	25%	
Proposed Language Planning Approach	30%	
Financial/funding status	10%	
Communications and Marketing	10%	
Irish-language Capacity	10%	

TOTAL MARK _____%

11. What are the Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas?

Following are the 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas identified for the purposes of the Gaeltacht Act 2012:

Co. Donegal
- North Donegal
- Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire and Loch an Iúir
- Cloich Chionnaola, Gort an Choirce, An Fál Carrach and Machaire Rabhartaigh
- Na Rosa
- Árainn Mhór
- An Ghaeltacht Láir
- South Donegal
- Toraigh

Co. Mayo.
- North Mayo
- West Mayo

Co. Galway
- Oileáin Árann
- Ceantar na nOileán
- An Cheathrú Rua
- Conamara Láir
- Dúiche Sheoigheach and Tuar Mhic Éadaigh
- Cois Fharraige
- Maigh Cuilinn
- Bearna and Cnoc na Cathrach
- Galway City East
- An tEachréidh

Co. Kerry
- West Kerry
- South Kerry

Co. Cork.
- Múscraí
- Cléire

Co. Waterford.
- Na Déise

Co. Meath
- Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib

12. What are the language planning criteria prescribed under the Gaeltacht Act 2012 for Gaeltacht Service Towns?

Following are the language planning criteria associated with the Gaeltacht Service Towns:

1. The existence of an organisation, selected by Údarás na Gaeltachta or Foras na Gaeilge, as may be, under subsection (5), (6), (10)(a) or (13)(a), as appropriate, of section 9 of the Act of 2012, to prepare and implement the language plan in the relevant town.
2. The proportion of the population for which Irish is the spoken language in the relevant town, having regard to the impact of demographic, economic and social factors on the relevant town.
3. The arrangements specified for the provision of Irish-medium services in the relevant town.
4. The provisions of the Act of 1998 (the Education Act 1998) being used, as appropriate, to support
the Irish language in the relevant town, having regard in particular to paragraphs (i) and (j) of section 6 of that Act.
5. The availability of Irish-medium primary and post-primary education in the relevant town, in accordance with the policy of the Department of Education and Skills, including the availability of Irish-medium streams in English-medium schools and the teaching of a number of subjects through the Irish language in English-medium schools, as appropriate.
6. The existence of appropriate language policies within the school environment which support the use of the Irish language as a spoken language outside of the education system in the relevant town.
7. The availability of appropriate Irish-medium childcare, pre-school and family support services, including language support services, in the relevant town.
8. The availability of appropriate Irish-medium social activities for young people and for other age groups and the existence of appropriate language policies with regard to those activities in the relevant town.
9. The availability of appropriate opportunities in the relevant town to learn and use the Irish language outside of the education system.
10. The degree of usage of the Irish language socially and recreationally in the relevant town.
11. The degree of usage of the Irish language in the business sector in the relevant town.
12. The degree of usage of the Irish language by local media in the relevant town.
13. The relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2013 being used to support the Irish language in the relevant town.
14. The availability of Irish-medium public services in the relevant town.
15. The degree of support from the public in general in the relevant town for the language plan.

13. Where can I find more information on this matter?

A comprehensive account of all aspects of the language planning process, including the Gaeltacht Service Towns aspect of it, can be found in the **Language Planning Guidelines** on the Department's website at:

https://assets.gov.ie/86337/68514d50-0c72-4e18-af06-e574535697bd.pdf

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