

**Irish Language Networks announced by Foras na Gaeilge**

Following guidance from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, under the Gaeltacht Act (2012), Foras na Gaeilge requested expressions of interest in December 2014 for prospective applicants to prepare and implement language plans in areas which would be suitable for Irish Langauge Networks. The areas in question shall have community support for the Irish language and would, therefore, benefit from state support for Irish.

In both jurisdictions Foras na Gaeilge is responsible for choosing organisations and supporting them in preparing and implementing a language plan to develop an Irish Language Network in their own areas.

On the 11 December the Board of Foras na Gaeilge approved the following applications to proceed to the next stage of the selection process:

**Republic of Ireland**

* Muintir Chrónáin Teo
* Gaeilge Locha Riach
* An Clár as Gaeilge

**Northern Ireland**

* Forbairt Feirste
* Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair

The successful applicants will have to prepare a language plan in the next stage of the process. The applicants will have to plan, develop and agree all aspects of the plan with all interested parties in their own areas. These plans will seek to increase the use of Irish in their areas within families, in the community, in education, in social life, in business and throughout the public sector.

In the southern jurisdiction Foras na Gaeilge will submit all plans to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for approval. Under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the Minister shall issue an order designating this area as an Irish Language Network. In the northern jurisdiction Foras na Gaeilge will be responsible for designating Irish Language Networks and approving the language plans.

The CEO of Foras na Gaeilge, Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh, welcomed the Board’s decision; “This is a great step towards creating the Networks mentioned in the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The chosen groups will now have a year to compile a language plan for their own area. This timescale is challenging but we are hopeful that the groups in these areas will be able to prepare the plan in this period. I congratulate the chosen areas and we look forward to supporting them with their plans”.

**Further information:**

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