****

***Consultation Document***

***April 2017***

**Review of Funding for Irish Language Centres**

**Foras na GaeilgeForas na Gaeilge**

[www.forasnagaeilge.ie](http://www.gaeilge.ie)

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# Introduction

**Objective of the Consultation**

Foras na Gaeilge wishes to receive views from the public on how best to provide support for Irish Language centres throughout the country.

We wish to provide support for Irish Language centres throughout the country to provide the public with opportunities to use their Irish. Research informs us that if there is a "safe space" made available for people who speak a minority language that it greatly enhances the use of Irish in the community. Through this consultation document, Foras na Gaeilge is seeking views on a new scheme which will provide funding support for Irish Language centres throughout the country, to make usage opportunities available to the public.

This consultation document provides a background for people in terms of the methodology and implementation of the proposed scheme.

We would like to receive views from the public on the four different options which we discuss in this document. To help with this consultation process the document contains the Foras na Gaeilge proposals regarding the scheme. It also contains questions which we would like you to answer.

**Responding to the consultation**

Completed questionnaires can be sent by e-mail or in the post to the Responses Coordinator below. We must receive your response by 13.00 on **22 June 2017**. Your response will be acknowledged within 2 working days (by e-mail or 5 days in the case of hard copy). If you do not receive an acknowledgement please contact us at the telephone number below.

Please give the following details:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Responding on behalf of (if relevant):** **Organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

**Foras na Gaeilge** will publish a summary of the responses after the close of the consultation process and may publish them in their entirety. If you prefer your responses to be treated in confidence, please tell, detailing your reasons. However, even if you ask that your responses to be treated confidentially, Foras na Gaeilge may decide to publish your response, or the Information Commissioner may request that your response be published in its entirety or a part thereof. It will be assumed that any automatic disclaimer generated by your computing system does not apply to your answer, except for information for which confidentiality was specifically requested..

If we are requested to disclose responses under the Code of Practice for Freedom of Information to the North/South Implementation Bodies, we will consider any requests for confidentiality. We cannot, however, give any guarantees regarding confidentiality under freedom of information.

We will deal appropriately with personal details you provide in accordance with legislation on data protection.

To get more information on the confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner’s Office or visit the website at: at: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/) or [www.oic.gov.ie](http://www.oic.gov.ie)

# The Context

Foras na Gaeilge is seeking to cater for Irish Language centres throughout the country in a more strategic, overarching manner. We are seeking to achieve this by setting up a fund to provide grants.

There are a lot of Irish Language centres throughout the country which could provide new Irish Language usage opportunities to the public if they had grant support. If a grant were to be available, a programme of activities could be developed for those vibrant Irish Language communities as a 'safe space'.

A large number of Irish Language centres have been developed in the north due to capital investment delivered through ‘An Ciste Infheistíochta’ (‘The Irish Language Investment Fund’). ‘An Ciste Infheistíochta’ is seeking to establish community-based centres to serve the needs of the Irish Language communities on a local basis. New centres have already been opened as a result of this investment from ‘An Ciste Infheistíochta’ in Annalong, Belfast, Carntogher, Crumlin and Newry. Further centres are being developed in Armagh, Draperstown, Dungiven, Glenullin, Limavady and Maghera.

There are other Irish Language centres in the south that are not being funded by Foras na Gaeilge, in Cork, Limerick. Nenagh and Dundalk and new centres are coming on stream in other places in the south (Tallaght and Loughrea).

There are a number of other centres which are functioning as Irish Language centres which have an Irish Language development officer based in them through ‘Scéim Phobal Gaeilge’ (‘the Irish Language Communities Scheme’), even though Foras na Gaeilge do not provide funding for the centres: Áras Chrónáin – Dublin, Áras na nGael – Galway, An Carn – South Derry, Dún Mhuire – Nenagh, An Droichead – Belfast, Ionad Uíbh Eachach – Belfast, Áras Mhic Goill – Belfast and Áras Mhic Reachtain – Belfast

Foras na Gaeilge wishes to find a way to support these centres to help them provide Irish Language usage opportunities to the public.

Foras na Gaeilge does not have a scheme for centres which are opened to the Irish Language community throughout the country. We are seeking to establish an **Irish Language Centres' Support Scheme.**

**What is an ‘Irish Language Centre':**

An Irish language centre would have the objective to:

* create and sustain an all-Irish environment;
* encourage and develop the participation of the general local public in the Irish Language community;
* create and facilitate Irish language usage opportunities; and
* help the Irish language community (both fluent speakers and learners) to develop social networks.

The building would be open to the greater public on a regular basis and to the Irish language community on a daily basis. Irish would be used and promoted in the centre and Irish would be the working language of communication of the employed and voluntary staff, and in the centre generally.

This scheme seeks to provide funding for recognised Irish language communities to enhance the use of Irish in areas where there are Irish language Centres.

Funding through this scheme will be directed at creating and fostering Irish language usage opportunities at community level in the centre - **it will not be a capital scheme and only project funding will be available to applicants.**

In the '20 Year Strategy for Irish' there is an emphasis on the importance of a specific environment for the Irish-speaking community and the role of the Irish language Centre as an institution for providing the *'safe space'* for Irish speakers in various areas.

Networking is an important element of the principles of Language Planning. Irish Language Centres have a pivotal role in encouraging usage opportunities for Irish Language communities within a social environment.

# Timetable

**13.00 on the 22 June 2017** is the deadline for receiving submissions.

# Equality of Opportunity

This section gives the background to the creation and the objective of this document.

In accordance with Article 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Foras na Gaeilge must, in the discharge of its functions, pay due regard to equality of opportunity:

* between people of different religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
* between men and women generally;
* between those who have a disability and those who do not;
* between those who have dependents and those who do not.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, Foras na Gaeilge must give regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of differing religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

Foras na Gaeilge is fully committed to complying with the legislative requirements of article 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under article 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act1995(DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), Foras na Gaeilge is required, in carrying out its functions, to pay due regard to the need to:

* promote positive attitudes regarding people with disabilities; and
* encourage people with disabilities to participate in public life (‘the disability duties').

# Sector-focussed Consultation

The views of the currently funded groups and grantees under various Foras na Gaeilge schemes will be sought, as well as the views of the 6 Lead Irish Language Organisations, on these proposed funding arrangements and on the development of a new scheme for centres, through written submissions and on-going contact.

# Current position

Currently, funding is provided for the two centres below. Foras na Gaeilge is not funding these two Irish Language Centres through a scheme, but an annual grant is awarded to them through an application process.

* **Cultúrlann Mac Adam Ó Fiaich** in Belfast City
* Grant of €143,293 = £100,305 (2016).
* Number of employees: there are **3** full-time jobs funded by a Foras na Gaeilge grant.
* **An Gaeláras (Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin)** in Derry City
* Grant of €176,623 = £123,636 (2016).
* Number of employees: there are **4** full-time jobs funded by a Foras na Gaeilge grant.

Up to the end of 2016, funding investment of over €6,143,500[[1]](#footnote-2) = £4,490,395 has been provided to the two Cultúrlanna by Foras na Gaeilge.

# The Proposed Scheme

Foras na Gaeilge is seeking to cater on a broader basis for the demand from Irish Language communities in places where there are centres which could function as an Irish Language centre. We are seeking to do this within the current funding which we have for centres.

Foras na Gaeilge are seeking the public's views on the following proposals:

* That funding be provided on receipt of an application from committees for major Irish Language centres in a number of urban / major city areas throughout the country which have an emerging Irish Language community. The funding would enable them to employ a maximum of two employees (€70,000 = £50,000) to support the promotion of Irish through these centres;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Current Grant** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich** | £100k | £85k | £65k | £50k |
| **Gaeláras Uí Chanáin** | £123k | £100k | £75k | £50k |
| **Total Grant for the 2 cultúrlanna** | **£223k** | **£185k** | **£140k** | **£100k** |
| **Funds available for the Irish Language Community Centre Scheme[[2]](#footnote-3)** | €0 | €44k (£38k) | €95k (£83k)  | €140 (£123k) |

* That the two northern Cultúrlanna, (**Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich** and **Gaeláras Uí Chanáin)**,would accordingly have reduced funding available to them
* That funding on the same basis would be available to other major centres other than the two northern Cultúrlanna, dependent on additional funding from the Sponsor Departments in the Foras na Gaeilge budget; and
* That Foras na Gaeilge would have a fund for providing project grants to other centres to provide opportunities to use Irish and to encourage social networks.

# Options

Foras na Gaeilge is seeking views on the following options:

**(i) Not to operate a new scheme and continue with the current funding arrangement with the two Cultúrlanna.**

* Under this option there would be no new scheme nor any change to the current status.

**(ii) Operate a new scheme and find a budget from other sources within the Foras na Gaeilge budget, and continue with the current funding arrangements for the two Cultúrlanna.**

* Under this option, there would be no change to the funding approach for the two Cultúrlanna, and a budget for the new scheme would have to be found from within the current Foras na Gaeilge budget.
* This would affect the level of funding available to other Foras na Gaeilge grantees.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CurrentGrant** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich** | £100k | £100k | £100k | £100k |
| **Gaeláras Uí Chanáin** | £123k | £123k | £123k | £123k |
| **Total Grant for the 2 cultúrlanna** | **£223k** | **£223k** | **£223k** | **£223k** |
|  **Fund for the Irish Language Community Centre Scheme (from other sources in the Foras na Gaeilge Budget)[[3]](#footnote-4)** | €0 | €70k (£60k) | €70k (£60k) | €70k (£60k) |

**(iii) A reduction within one year of funding for the two Cultúrlanna**

* Under this option, there would be a significant reduction to the annual grant of the two Cultúrlanna within one year.
* Accordingly, there would be a budget for a new scheme from funding taken from the two Cultúrlanna, and Foras an Gaeilge would immediately have a fund to provide grants for other centres.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CurrentGrant** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich** | £100k | £50k | £50k | £50k |
| **Gaeláras Uí Chanáin** | £123k | £50k | £50k | £50k |
| **Total Grant for the 2 cultúrlanna** | **£223k** | **£100k** | **£100k** | **£100k** |
| **New fund for the Irish Language Community Centre Scheme from 2018 onwards** | €0 | €140k (£123k) | €140k (£123k) | €140k (£123k) |

**(iv) Reduce the annual funding for the two northern cultúrlanna over a period of 3 years (2018-2021), to provide a fund for the new Irish Language Centres scheme.**

* Under this option, the intention would be to provide a fund of €54,000 (£38,000) in 2018, to be increased to €175,000 (£123,000) in 2020, for the scheme.
* Accordingly, there would be a budget for the new scheme from funding taken from the two cultúrlanna and Foras na Gaeilge would have a fund which would gradually increase over a period of three years.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CurrentGrant** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich** | £100k | £85k | £65k | £50k |
| **Gaeláras Uí Chanáin** | £123k | £100k | £75k | £50k |
| **Total Grant for the 2 cultúrlanna** | **£223k** | **£185k** | **£140k** | **£100k** |
| **Fund for the Irish Language Community Centre Scheme on a progressive basis from the reduction to the 2 cultúrlanna** | €0 | £38k (€54k) | £83k (€118k)  | £123k (€175k) |

# Assessment of Impacts

**Section 75 Category:** **Religious Belief**

No issue is known to exist – apart, perhaps, the geographical spread of those seeking funding.

**Section 75 Category:** **Political Opinion**

No issue is known to exist – apart, perhaps, the geographical spread of those seeking funding.

**Section 75 Category:** **Racial Group**

No issue is known to exist.

**Section 75 Category: Age**

No issue is known to exist – apart, perhaps, the geographical spread of those seeking funding.

**Section 75 Category: Marital Status**

No issue is known to exist.

**Section 75 Category: Sexual Orientation**

No issue is known to exist.

**Section 75 Category: Men & Women Generally**

No issue is known to exist – apart, perhaps, the geographical spread of those seeking funding

**Section 75 Category: Disability**

No issue is known to exist

**Section 75 Category: Dependants**

No issue is known to exist

**Summary**

Foras na Gaeilge hopes that the changes to the funding of the two current grantees will have no negative impact on any of the Section 75 groups, which would require mitigation or other policies which are open to them. Indeed, paradoxically regarding policy change being subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), Foras na Gaeilge is proposing this change to address inequality regarding funding for other Irish Language Centres throughout the island of Ireland on an open competition basis.

**Choices and mitigation**

This proposed scheme will mitigate against inequality in this case by encouraging interest from suitable applicants from other areas where there are Irish Language Centres and the scheme will give them a competitive opportunity to apply to a Foras na Gaeilge fund.

It is acknowledged that there will be a significant decrease in the current funding of the two northern cultúrlanna (Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich & Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin) in order to fund the proposed new scheme.

All of the possible choices pertaining to the result of this review are included under section 9 above.

(i) Not to organise a New Scheme and continue with the current funding arrangement with the two Cultúrlanna - no change to the current status;

(ii) Organise a new scheme, and find a budget from other sources within the Foras na Gaeilge budget and continue with the current funding arrangements with the two Cultúrlanna - no change to the funding approach for the two Cultúrlanna and to source the budget for the new scheme from within current Foras na Gaeilge funding – there will be an impact from that on the level of funding available to grantees of other Foras na Gaeilge schemes;

(iii) Make reductions, within one year, to the funding of the two Cultúrlanna - a significant reduction to the annual grant for the two Cultúrlanna within a short time frame, but Foras na Gaeilge would be able to approve a higher number of grants from the resulting increased budget to the new scheme;

(iv) Under this choice, the intention would be to reduce the annual funding for the two Cultúrlanna over a period of three years (2018-2021), to provide a fund for a new Irish Language Centres scheme. Under this approach, there would be a fund of €54,000 (£38,000) available in 2018, increasing to €175,000 (£123,000) in 2020 for the Scheme. Under this approach, there would be a gradual reduction to the annual grant to the two Cultúrlanna and an incremental increase in the number of grants accordingly for other centres over the same period.

# Policy Decision

The proposed scheme will be finalised after the consideration of statements given during the consultation process.

**Below is the text of the Qualifying Criteria for the Organising of the Irish Language Centres Support Scheme:**

**Qualifying Criteria:**

To be eligible to apply for this scheme, the applicant must fulfil the following qualifying criteria:

1. They must have a building capable of providing Irish Language opportunities and fostering social networks to promote, foster and sustain Irish on a community basis.
2. They must have a building in which Irish is being actively used and promoted and in which Irish is the working language of the staff (both employees and volunteers).
3. It must be a non-profit organisation and not distribute profit to members or shareholders. If there is any social economy enterprise included, any profit must be re-invested in the running of the centre or in the development of the Irish Language (e.g. investment in a nursery etc.).
4. A signed and dated copy of the organisation's regulatory documentation (for example, constitution, Membership Memorandum and Articles as appropriate) must accompany the application.
5. The application must be in accordance with the priorities of the scheme and Foras na Gaeilge strategy.
6. Evidence must be provided that the building is owned by the applicant or that the applicant has a long-term lease on it; that they can, legally, provide from the building, i.e. there is no exclusion clause or constraints in the deeds or the lease.
7. Annual accounts must be submitted with the application. If the accounts are older than 12 months, the management accounts must be provided, signed by the Chair of the organisation and minutes of the meeting at which they were accepted must be provided.
8. A bank account in the name of the organisation under the direction of the organisation's Committee or Board (the name of the bank account must be the same as the name of the applicant). It must be a necessity of the organisation's procedures that two people who are not related are required to sign cheques.
9. Bank statements for the last 3 months must be provided.
10. The organisation must have an appropriate management structure and be able to show management capability.
11. It must be based outside of the official Gaeltacht regions.
12. The organisation or applicant must fulfil all relevant statutory requirements for running a public building.
13. Insurance policies must be in force to cover public liability, the building and its contents and employer liability.

**Included amongst ineligible organisations are:**

* Local authorities, schools, colleges or other educational institutions, nurseries or organisations from the profit-making sector
* Organisations receiving core-funding from Foras na Gaeilge i.e. Lead Organisations; including the 6 Lead Irish Language Organisations, Community Radio Scheme grantees, An tÁisaonad, Gaelchultúr and Irish Language Publishing Companies
* Branches & Cumainn of the GAA (clubs and clubhouses) and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
* Private Sector Businesses
* Other Community Centres where Irish is not the centre's working language
* Community Centres located in the Gaeltacht.

# Seeking Your Views

We are seeking your views on the proposed changes to the current funding for Irish Language Centres and the additional proposals to create and to add to the number of funded centres under the fund:

C 1. **Which is your preferred option?**

Give your view on the best of the four possible options as they are laid out in this document:

C 2. **Have you any recommendations regarding the centres' scheme?**

Have you any recommendations regarding the scheme being proposed in this document? Please explain your recommendations.

C 3. **Have you any recommendations for improvement?**

Have you any recommendations for improving the administration and arrangement of the scheme in this document? Please explain your recommendations.

C 4. **Do you have any other recommendations?**

Do you have any other recommendations regarding the scheme, as proposed in this document, to develop and foster Irish Language usage opportunities at local community level - include the following in your recommendations: social opportunities, cultural opportunities, life long learning, language awareness and supports, supporting the establishment and development of new Irish Language infrastructure, etc?

We would welcome any additional information and comments which you think would help inform our judgement. Please send us your comments by **22 June 2017** to:

**Response Coordinator Response Coordinator**

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**E-Mail:** **ionaid@forasnagaeilge.ie**

N.B. Please give your contact details

**7.** **Formal Consultation, Decision and Publication of Results**

The formal consultation process will start in April 2017.

A summary of responses will be published on the Foras na Gaeilge website in the autumn of 2017.

The result of the consultation process will be launched on the Foras na Gaeilge website.

The Board of Foras na Gaeilge will make their decision in the autumn of 2017.

1. Estimated in accordance with an exchange rate of £1:€0.70 as applied by Foras na Gaeilge in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The figures in Euro in the tables are estimated in accordance with an exchange rate of £1:€0.87 (as applied by Foras na Gaeilge in 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Foras na Gaeilge could provide 5 grant awards with this fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)