

2014

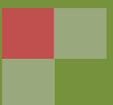
Annual Report

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



*An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta*

*Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*



Contents

Mission and Mandate	3
Focal ón Aire agus ó na hAirí Stáit.....	4
TO BE INSERTEDFocal ón Ard-Rúnaí.....	4
Focal ón Ard-Rúnaí.....	4
Goals and Strategies.....	7
Progress in 2014.....	8
Goal 1: Arts, Culture, Film and Music	8
Goal 2: Built and Natural Heritage	14
Goal 3: The Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands	25
Goal 4: North-South Co-operation.....	30
Corporate Matters	34
Appendix 1	36
Programme for Government	36
Commitments relating to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.....	36
Appendix 2.....	38
Agencies and Bodies funded from the Department’s Vote Group	38
Appendix 3.....	40
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.....	40
Expenditure in 2014.....	40

Mission and Mandate

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht oversees and has policy responsibility for the conservation, preservation, protection, development and presentation of Ireland's rich heritage, arts and culture. The Department is also engaged in the promotion of the Irish language, the development of the Gaeltacht and the sustainable development of island communities.

The key functions under its remit include:

- Arts, Culture, Film and Music, as well as oversight of Ireland's National Cultural Institutions;
- Ireland's Built and Natural Heritage;
- The Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands; and
- North/South Co-operation insofar as it relates to Waterways Ireland, An Foras Teanga and the wider functions of the Department.

In addition to their immense inherent value, our language, culture and heritage are a valuable amenity for business and tourism and a means of supporting economic renewal and presenting Ireland as an attractive destination for sustainable inward investment. In this regard, the Department has sought to further unlock the potential in the arts and in the cultural, heritage and creative industries to deliver sustainable growth and jobs in the wider economy.

Throughout 2014, the Department has sought to build upon the key comparative advantage which our arts, culture, language and heritage provide us, both at home and abroad, in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The Department continues to work with our partners in the tourism sector to help develop and promote the unique assets which we possess in these areas.

In 2014, the Department has also worked with key stakeholders and all other interested individuals and groups, as well as our partners throughout the public sector, to deliver a first-class service to our customers and to work together in meeting the Department's responsibilities in protecting, conserving and presenting our incomparable cultural and heritage legacy.

Focal ón Aire agus ó na hAirí Stáit

It is a pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for 2014. This report marks the completion of the Department's strategy cycle outlined in our Statement of Strategy 2011 – 2014, informed by the *Programme for Government*. The staff of the Department can be proud of the progress made during those years, which culminated in a successful and rewarding 2014.

The performance of our national cultural institutions was particularly positive. In 2014, they displayed their incomparable collections to over 4 million visitors, which represented a 10% increase on 2013 visitor numbers. The institutions also hosted a number of keynote events, including the Brian Ború and Battle of Clontarf exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland, as well as a number of evocative programmes to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War I.

The Irish film and audiovisual industry also enjoyed a very successful year - production activity in the independent film, TV drama and animation sector totalled €195 million, an increase of 6.5% on 2013. Productions funded through the Irish Film Board enjoyed worldwide success with *Calvary*, *Frank* and *Jimmy's Hall* given international releases, while *Song of the Sea*, produced by the Kilkenny-based Cartoon Saloon, secured an Oscar nomination. Meanwhile, the staging by Culture Ireland of *Ceiliúradh* at the Royal Albert Hall, London, which coincided with the first ever State visit to Great Britain by the President of Ireland, drew an audience of over 5,000 to the Royal Albert Hall, a television audience of 4.7 million across Ireland and the United Kingdom and extensive online hits worldwide.

Our work to conserve and promote the nation's built and natural heritage continued apace in 2014. The *Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme* was a great success. Programmes of public consultation were also undertaken in 2014 following the publication of major draft strategy documents on landscapes and peatlands. There was considerable interest in Ireland and abroad as details emerged from surveys of a number of submerged log boats in Lough Corrib which were undertaken by archaeologists from the National Monuments Service. The log boats contained stunning artefacts dating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Early Medieval periods, which were recovered for preservation in the National Museum of Ireland. The National Parks and Reserves managed by the Department's National Parks and Wildlife Service continue to attract growing numbers of visitors and are among the most visited locations in the State.

In 2014, we continued the implementation of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language*, as well as the language planning process provided for under the Gaeltacht Act 2012. Significant support was provided for the development and maintenance of various community language-centred facilities in the Gaeltacht. Support was also provided for programmes and schemes to promote the Irish language both inside and outside the Gaeltacht.

We have also taken significant steps to advance our programme of commemoration to mark Ireland's path to independence. Work continued on developing the *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme*, which is a comprehensive programme of events and activities to remember those who

fought or died in the Easter Rising, recognise our achievements over the last 100 years and to look ambitiously to the future. We are continuing to work with all interested parties in delivering this key initiative.

All of these achievements were made possible through the hard work and dedication of the Department staff and that of our associated bodies. Their dedication and expertise is fundamental to achieving the mission of the Department and in continuing to meet our responsibility to deliver a quality service to the public. We would like to convey our sincere thanks to all our colleagues, both within and outside the Department, who work with us in fulfilling our roles as Ministers.

Heather Humphreys T.D.
Aire

Joe McHugh T.D.
Aire Stáit

Áodhán Ó Ríordáin T.D.
Aire Stáit

Focal ón Ard-Rúnaí

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht works to enrich the quality of life in Ireland through the protection and promotion of our rich culture, arts, heritage and language. In doing this, the Department also contributes to supporting sustainable economic growth, both directly in the sectors for which it is responsible and indirectly by helping to create and sustain an attractive and stimulating environment for citizens and visitors.

The Department made significant progress in 2014 in delivering on the Government's reform agenda and in continuing to deliver services against a backdrop of reduced staff numbers, despite increased demand for those services. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the staff of the Department who rose to those challenges and exhibited a high degree of professionalism and commitment to public service throughout 2014.

A number of key government programmes and initiatives were launched or progressed by the Department in 2014. *Ireland 2016*, a national initiative to mark the year of the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising, was launched in November 2014, with the Department assuming responsibility for leading on and coordinating all activities relating to the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme to commemorate the Rising. In addition, a number of commemorative events were undertaken in partnership with our public sector and civil society partners in furtherance of the *Decade of Centenaries* programme, which continued apace in 2014.

Progress was made during the year on a number of other initiatives. The *Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme* was developed and implemented. This scheme facilitated conservation works at 540 historic structures across Ireland and contributed to employment creation in conservation and construction. The AranLIFE Project commenced in 2014 and will operate on the three Aran Islands up to 2017. This innovative project seeks to develop and demonstrate the best conservation management practices of local farmers on the islands' Natura 2000 sites. The Department also continued to progress the implementation of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language*, with a specific allocation provided for the first time from the Department's Vote to fund additional activities to support the implementation of the Strategy. Further progress was also made in relation to peatlands management and Ireland's compliance with the EU Habitats and Birds directive.

In 2014, there continued to be a productive partnership with the bodies, agencies and National Cultural Institutions funded from the Department's Vote and I would like to thank our colleagues for their co-operation and commitment to our shared goals. I also wish to acknowledge the good working relationship with our colleagues in Northern Ireland's Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, who, with us, are co-sponsors of two of the six North-South Implementation Bodies established under the Good Friday Agreement.

The Department looks forward to achieving further progress towards our goals and strategies in the year ahead and to our continued contribution to the programme of public service reform and economic recovery.

Seosamh Ó hÁghmaill
Secretary General

Goals and Strategies

The Department is involved in a wide range of activities and service provision. For the purposes of this Annual Report, the Department's work has been grouped into four main sectors, as set out below. For each of these sectors, key policy issues arise, bringing a need for effective consultation and co-ordination, both within and beyond the Department.

The four sectors, together with the goals identified for each, are:

Arts, Culture, Music and Film

- **Goal 1:** To promote and develop Ireland's world-class artistic and creative strengths at home and abroad, maximising their societal, economic and reputational value for the country.

Built and Natural Heritage

- **Goal 2:** To conserve and manage our unique heritage for the benefit of present and future generations, as a support to economic renewal and sustainable employment, and in compliance with legal obligations.

The Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands

- **Goal 3:** To support the Irish language, to strengthen its use as the principal community language in the Gaeltacht and to assist the sustainable development of island communities.

North/South Co-operation

- **Goal 4:** To maintain, develop and foster North-South co-operation.

Progress in 2014

Goal 1: Arts, Culture, Film and Music

To promote and develop Ireland's world-class artistic and creative strengths at home and abroad, maximising their societal, economic and reputational value for the country.

Strategy 1:

To nurture and develop Irish artistic and creative talent and enhance arts access, the national cultural institutions, regional arts infrastructure and cultural tourism countrywide, in co-operation with national and local authorities and other partners.

The Arts Council

The Arts Council is designated, under the Arts Act 2003, as the principal State agency for the promotion and development of the arts and through which State support is channelled. The Council's principal activity is to provide financial and other supports to the arts sector for which it exercises statutory independence and autonomy.

In 2014, the Arts Council received a total allocation of €56.668m from the Department and, in turn, provided funding to some 500 individuals and 490 organisations, including performance organisations, art venues, festivals, events and arts organisations throughout the country. The Council gives support across the range of art forms, including the promotion of literature, visual arts, film, drama, dance, traditional arts, opera, music, theatre, circus, architecture, funding of arts centres, education, community arts, arts festivals, regional support, acquisitions of works of art, the organisation of exhibitions and payments of grants to artists. Details in this regard are available on the Arts Council's website www.artscouncil.ie.

Regional Arts Infrastructure

In 2014, over €6.2m was spent on 133 projects to maintain and improve regional arts infrastructure throughout the country. Among the larger projects supported were the Garage Theatre in Monaghan, the West Cork Arts Centre and the Athlone Art Gallery and Studios.

The Department continued to fund Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, a key resource in our cultural tourism product and the primary organisation for developing and nurturing Irish traditional music. Branches are located throughout the country and overseas.

In addition, the Department continued its sponsorship of the seminal festival - *Other Voices*.

National Culture Institutions

The National Cultural Institutions continued to play a central role in the development of, and access to, Irish arts and culture. World-class exhibition programmes were mounted and visitor numbers exceeded 4 million during 2014. This represents a 10% increase on the 2013 figures and compares favourably with international counterparts. Keynote events included the Brian Ború and Battle of Clontarf exhibition, World War I programmes and the Dorothy Cross curated exhibition at IMMA.

Culture Night 2014 added to the success of previous years. 39 locations across the country made it the most extensive edition of the event to date.

In 2014, Phase II of the extensive upgrading works at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham was completed. The Local & Regional Museums Scheme also supported 25 projects at museums throughout the country.

Work continued on the refurbishment of the historic wings at the National Gallery of Ireland, with an allocation of €1m from the Department in 2014.

Strategy 2:

<p><i>To promote Irish arts in key territories worldwide, strengthening Ireland's global reputation and cultural profile and develop a strategy to exploit opportunities for philanthropy, sponsorship and endowment in the Irish arts and cultural sector.</i></p>
--

National City of Culture

The Department provided some €7.1m in funding to Limerick City and County Council to support the inaugural National City of Culture. This supported the delivery of a successful and extensive programme of cultural events and engagement in Limerick in 2014.

Digitisation

Digitisation programmes continued within the National Cultural Institutions and the *Inspiring Ireland* project, launched in 2014, is bringing Ireland's cultural treasures – paintings, letters, sculpture, manuscripts, historical objects, photography and ephemera – both digital and digitised, to a national and international audience. This historic endeavour won several eGovernment awards.

Promoting Ireland's Culture Internationally

Throughout 2014, the Department's Culture Ireland Programme continued to create and support opportunities for Irish artists and companies to present and promote their work internationally. In 2014, over 300 projects across all art forms were supported, enabling artists to perform in 51 countries around the world. Through these activities, the Department continued to strengthen its links with the embassy and consulate network and to reach an even bigger community internationally.

Artists supported by the Culture Ireland Programme won many high-profile awards and critical recognition and generated 3 million audience members and a further 6 million television viewers. Many international contacts were made and contracts for future events were concluded. At the Edinburgh Festival, Olwen Fouéré won the Herald Archangel award for her outstanding contribution to theatre and the Stage award for Acting Excellence for her performance in Emergency Room's production of *Riverrun*. Dead Centre's *Lippy* won a Herald Angel Award; a Scotsman Fringe First; and a Total Theatre Award for Innovation, Experimentation, and Playing with Form. The Culture Ireland 2014 Showcase Programme presented artists in 16 different disciplines at key industry events, both in Ireland and internationally, to delegates and promoters worldwide – from APAM in Australia in February to the WOMEX world music showcase in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain, in October.

Culture Ireland, in partnership with the Arts Council, also supported Ireland's participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2014. Ireland's exhibition at the Biennale, *Infra-Éireann*, curated by Gary A. Boyd and John McLaughlin, opened on June 5th. The exhibition was seen by over 200,000 visitors in Venice and will tour in Ireland in 2016 with support from the Arts Council. Following on from its presentation at the Venice Biennale in 2013, Richard Mosse's highly successful exhibition *The Enclave* was awarded the much coveted Deutsche Börse 2014 photography prize. A measure of this exhibition's success is its significant international touring profile and has already been shown by Palazzo Strozzi, Florence; Unsound Festival in both Poland and Latvia; Frankfurt's B3 Biennial, Germany; Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; and COFA Galleries, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

A highlight of the year for audiences, artists and for Culture Ireland was the presentation of *Ceiliúradh* on 10 April at the Royal Albert Hall, London. This concert, celebrating Irish culture and marking the contribution of the Irish community in Britain and the collaborative creativity between Ireland and Great Britain, coincided with the first ever official state visit by the President of Ireland to Great Britain. The evening enthralled over 5,000 audience members, who were joined by viewers worldwide online and over 4.7 million television viewers in Ireland and the UK.

Strategy 3:

To develop and promote the Irish audiovisual content creation industry.

Irish Film and Audiovisual Industry

In 2014, production activity in the independent film, television drama, and animation sector increased to €195 million. This is a healthy increase of 6.5% on 2013 production activity levels and 37% on 2012. The Irish Film Board supported over 40 significant productions involving creative Irish feature films, creative feature co-productions, feature documentaries, TV dramas, and animated projects.

The investment incentive for the film and audiovisual sector is vital. The Section 481 Film Tax Relief Scheme supported 66 audiovisual projects in 2014.

Also during 2014, a number of film projects that received funding from the Irish Film Board represented Ireland at international film festivals at Cannes, Toronto and Sundance to high acclaim. Some noteworthy examples of the films shown at recent festivals, and released worldwide in 2014, included *Calvary*, *Jimmy's Hall* and *Frank. Song of the Sea*, produced by Kilkenny-based Cartoon Saloon, was an Oscar nominee and some hugely significant contracts were won by the animation sector generally.

Strategy 4:

To lead the development and delivery of the Government's commemoration programme to mark significant centenaries during the decade 2012-2022.

Decade of Centenaries

In 2014, the Department continued developing commemorative events for the Decade of Centenaries. Public interest in these events is increasing, as evidenced by media coverage, public attendance and regional meetings.

Public interest and participation in the commemorative programme was encouraged through the use of two websites supported by the Department. The first is www.decadeofcentenaries.com, which details upcoming events with linked backgrounds. The second is www.rte.ie/centuryireland, a multi-platform online resource in the form of a fortnightly digital newspaper developed by Boston College in conjunction with the National Cultural Institutions and RTÉ. This latter website is complemented by daily twitter and blog news feeds offering reportage of events of 100 years ago, plus coverage and analysis of key events and major historical developments occurring in the period 1912-1922.

The Chairmanship of the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations transferred from Minister Jimmy Deenihan to the current Minister, Heather Humphreys, in July 2014. Minister of State Aodhán O'Riordan was named as Deputy Chair of the Group. The Group met on seven occasions and reviewed suggestions for commemorative events to be undertaken and discussed both capital projects and upcoming event plans. The Expert Advisory Group of historians, chaired by Dr. Maurice Manning, met on six occasions during the year, and also undertook public consultation meetings in both Thurles and Dublin. The Group continued to assist with historic assessment and analysis to ensure authentic representation of events.

The centenary of the Asgard/Howth gun-running and the Bachelor's Walk shootings were marked with a wreath-laying ceremony at Glasnevin Cemetery by Minister Humphreys and through President Higgins' attendance of a memorial Mass in the Pro-Cathedral to remember those who died at Bachelor's Walk. The President also led an official ceremony at Howth pier on Sunday, 27 July 2014, which incorporated a community programme with a re-enactment of the historic event. The programme included participation by the Department of Defence, including the Naval Forces, the Office of Public Works, the Howth Harbour authorities, as well as the local authorities.

In 2014, commemorations relating to the commencement of World War I began. In February 2014, the National Museum of Ireland hosted a conference at Collins Barracks, *Remembering World War*

One in Europe, 1914-2014, while the National Gallery of Ireland arranged a programme of events in March dealing the *War Artists*, and a consideration of *War Poetry and Images of the First World War*. On 31 July 2014 at Glasnevin Cemetery, President Higgins and HRH the Duke of Kent, Chairman of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, jointly commemorated the outbreak of World War I with a wreath-laying ceremony and the dedication of a “Cross of Sacrifice” to the memory of all Irish soldiers lost in the war. Colour parties and military bands from both the Irish and British armies participated.

On 18 September, at the invitation of the Wicklow War Memorial Committee, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Charles Flanagan, T.D., opened a memorial park at Woodenbridge, containing fifteen granite pillars listing over 1,000 Wicklow people who died as a result of their involvement in World War I. Also recalled was the speech, made on 20 September 1914, by the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond, MP, in which he encouraged enlistment to the British Army. The Department supported the occasion.

Annual World War I commemorative events also continued, including the Royal British Legion Commemoration at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens and the National Day of Commemoration at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. In partnership with Glasnevin Trust and the Royal British Legion, Minister Humphreys joined with her counterparts from Northern Ireland and Great Britain in Centenary Remembrance Day events on 10/11th November.

The issuing of commemorative postage stamps in 2014 and following years was kept under review by the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations and the Expert Advisory Group of historians. The Department of Education and Skills also held a successful essay competition for primary and secondary schools on commemoration topics.

The millennium of the Battle of Clontarf/Brian Ború was marked by a series of events and projects, with support from the Department. These included a major battle re-enactment at St. Anne’s Park in Raheny, exhibitions at the National Museum and Trinity College, a Battle of Clontarf Heritage Trail and a brochure outlining the national programme of events.

In 2014, restoration work at the Redmond Mausoleum in St. John's Cemetery, Wexford, was completed.

The Yeats 2015 programme commenced in 2014. This forms an important part of the official Decade of Commemoration celebrations. The celebrations of Yeats 2015 are intended to capture the wonder of his work and to understand what inspired him on the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Ireland 2016

The *Ireland 2016* initiative was formally launched in the General Post Office on 12 November 2014. Its objective is to develop, coordinate, and deliver a programme to honour and remember those who fought or died in the 1916 Easter Rising, and to recognise those whose lives were touched by the event. The *Ireland 2016* initiative will also reflect on the legacy of that period and look towards our future, based around the themes set out in the Government’s framework plan.

Achieving the greatest possible inclusivity is a core objective of *Ireland 2016*. Following the launch of the *Ireland 2016* initiative, a widespread public consultation process commenced, which involved active engagement with senior leadership and broader membership of communities, schools, universities, colleges, business and voluntary organisations, arts and culture institutions, historical societies, local government, representative groups – at home and in Irish diaspora around the world. This process was, in effect, the broadest possible invitation to become involved in commemorative events, and the objective was to foster a rich diversity of programmes and events throughout the year, complementary and additional to formal State occasions. These programmes and events will be inspired by communities, businesses and individuals – by young and old, by our people here and abroad, by our new citizens and by all who would like to be involved.

A dedicated 2016 Project Office was established in the Department, which has responsibility for co-ordinating and leading on all activities relating to the development and implementation of the *Ireland 2016* initiative. The Director of Market Development at Fáilte Ireland and one additional staff member of Fáilte Ireland have been seconded to the Department to assist with the development and delivery of the programme.

The key partners for *Ireland 2016* include all local authorities, the National Cultural Institutions, national sporting bodies, Irish embassies overseas, various Government Departments, Diaspora organisations and a wide variety of other bodies. The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the 2016 Project Office have been working with the Oireachtas All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations, the Expert Advisory Group and a wide range of stakeholders, and will continue to do so, to make the events of Easter 2016 a very special and poignant tribute to all those involved.

In 2014, capital provision of €22 million was secured, to be allocated in 2015 to a number of flagship commemorations projects, including:

- the development of a permanent exhibition space and interpretative centre at the General Post Office;
- the restoration of Kilmainham Courthouse to enhance the visitor experience at Kilmainham Gaol;
- the provision of a permanent visitor facility at Cathal Brugha Barracks for the Military Service Pensions Archive;
- the development of visitor facilities at Teach an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc;
- refurbishment works at Richmond Barracks;
- the development of a Tenement Museum in Dublin; and
- the commencement of refurbishment and development works at the National Archives and the National Concert Hall's Kevin Barry Rooms.

An allocation of €4 million in current funding was also secured, which will complement the capital programme through the development of an integrated national plan focused on the commemoration of the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

Goal 2: Built and Natural Heritage

To conserve and manage our unique heritage for the benefit of present and future generations, as a support to economic renewal and sustainable employment, and in compliance with legal obligations.

Strategy 1:

To ensure that Ireland has in place a suite of policies and up-to-date legislation in compliance with EU and international heritage obligations.

Natural Heritage

Peatland Management

Significant efforts continued in 2014 to solve the issue of the protection of Ireland's raised bog special areas of conservation within the framework of the EU Habitats Directive. This has included intense engagement with turf cutting interests, farmers, non-governmental organisations and with the European Commission.

In addition to measures taken in previous years, the need for a more strategic response to peatland management in Ireland was recognised to encompass not only the issues arising in relation to the EU Habitats and EIA Directives, but to the wider management of Ireland's peatlands. This would entail considering the policies and actions required for the long-term management and protection of all peatlands, including both protected and non-protected bogs.

A significant point in progressing that strategic response was reached in January 2014, when Government considered and published three significant documents for consultation:

- a draft National Peatlands Strategy;
- a draft National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan; and
- a Review of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network (designated under national legislation)

A public consultation process was held to provide an opportunity for stakeholders and the wider public to provide their views. Almost 1,500 submissions were received and further stakeholder engagement was fostered through the Peatlands Council.

Taken together, these initiatives provide for a comprehensive strategic approach to long-term management of Ireland's peatlands and will drive the implementation of the most effective policies and actions at all levels, as well as setting out clear and concrete plans for specific peatland sites throughout the State.

Reports to the EU on the status of habitats and species

The Government noted Ireland's reports to the EU under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive on the status of birds in Ireland. An overview of the Habitats Directive report is available at <http://www.npws.ie/publications/2013-article-17-conservation-status-assessments>. In terms of habitats, the reports show continuing declines or serious threats to Ireland's raised bogs, blanket bogs, coastal dune systems, areas of limestone pavement and some native woodland areas. Regarding non-bird species, there has been some improvement in the status of key species since the last report, including the otter and salmon. It is notable, for example, that the Irish hare is considered to be in good conservation status. On the other hand, the pearl mussel, found in clean inland waters, shows continuing and worrying decline.

The health of Ireland's bird populations is mixed: some species such as the Buzzard and Blackcap are expanding and some new species have arrived, such as the Little Egret and Great Spotted Woodpecker. However, other species have undergone significant declines in their long-term breeding distribution, including Corncrake, Curlew, Whinchat, Woodcock and Redshank. The Hen Harrier remains in long-term decline.

While noting the findings of the reports mentioned above, the Government approved Ireland's first Prioritised Action Framework for Natura 2000. The framework can be accessed at <http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/PAF-IE-2014.pdf>.

Threat Response Plan for the Hen Harrier

The Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) is listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive and is amber listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. Six Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been classified for the conservation of this breeding species. A 2010 survey of breeding Hen Harriers recorded notable declines in some traditional strongholds of this species' breeding range and a significant increase in the survey's coverage in 2010 is likely to have masked the detection of an overall national decline during the period 2005-2010.

The Hen Harrier is at risk due to a number of factors, such as the reclamation of upland open habitats for agriculture, the development of wind farms, and the maturing of the large-scale forests planted in upland areas.

A Threat Response Plan for the Hen Harrier in accordance with Regulation 39 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 is seen as an appropriate vehicle to address the issues of concern in a holistic way. Ireland indicated its intention to develop such a plan as part of its response to the European Commission in relation to the 2007 finding against Ireland (the Birds Case).

A significant amount of work was undertaken in 2014 towards the development of the Threat Response Plan. An Inter-Departmental Steering Group was established in Summer 2014 to draw up the Threat Response Plan for the Hen Harrier, comprising representatives from the Department, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Department of the Environment, Community

and Local Government, and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The Steering Group is examining all of the issues at hand, including forestry consents, planning permissions for wind farms, and financial supports for farmers, with a view to determining the appropriate course of further action. The work of the Group and the completion of the sectoral analysis reports will form the basis of a first draft of the plan and early engagement with the European Commission, with a view to securing an agreement on the finalisation of the Plan and to ensure that it fully meets Ireland's obligations under European and national law.

A wider Consultative Committee was also established in late 2014, consisting of representatives from the sectors likely to be affected by the outcomes of the plan, including farming, forestry and wind energy, as well as non-governmental organisations and local authorities.

Memorandum of Understanding with An Bord Pleanála

The particular interest in, and complexity of, the planning system is recognised and the Department worked with An Bord Pleanála in 2014 to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The aim of the MoU is to facilitate enhanced co-operation in the discharge of the respective statutory responsibilities in the planning process and to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the interactions between the two, to the benefit of the users of the planning system generally. The MoU was at an advanced stage by the end of the year with a view to finalisation in 2015.

Rural Development Programme

As part of Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) intends to approve 50,000 GLAS farm plans. In 2014, this Department assisted DAFM in identifying priority areas and measures to be delivered in GLAS for Natura 2000 sites and for biodiversity in the wider countryside. In particular, it is expected that this will deliver on the priorities for Natura 2000 identified in the Prioritised Action Framework for Ireland and will contribute towards the delivery of the objectives and targets of the European Biodiversity Strategy. In addition, plans are in train for the expansion of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme in the current RDP cycle.

Built Heritage

On foot of the Critical Review of the Heritage Council in 2012, legislative changes were considered necessary in relation to the Heritage Act 1995. Amendments to the 1995 Act were agreed and are subject to formal legal drafting.

A Draft National Landscape Strategy was approved by Government in July 2014 and subsequently went through the public consultation process required as part of the process of screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). The revised document is expected to be published in 2015.

Archaeology

Monuments Bill

Drafting of the Monuments Bill commenced in May 2012 and significant progress continued to be made in 2014 with all substantive parts of the bill prepared to at least first draft stage. The Monuments Bill will consolidate and update the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, along with some related enactments, and will provide a more effective, efficient, and transparent regime for the recording and protection of monuments and the general regulation of archaeological activity. It will also allow the State to ratify a number of important international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage.

World Heritage

The periodic reporting required by UNESCO in relation to Ireland's two existing world heritage sites was completed in 2014, and the revised statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Sceilig Mhichíl was accepted at a World Heritage Committee meeting in Doha, Qatar. Also in 2014, a Technical Evaluation (i.e. an outline case to establish Outstanding Universal Value, the standard required to attain world heritage status) for the potential Royal Sites of Ireland nomination was completed by six of the Local Authorities in whose functional areas the individual Royal Sites are located and an evaluation of these reports was commissioned from outside experts. Preparations for a Technical Evaluation for the potential nomination of The Burren were also progressed. A revised Management Plan for the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site was prepared in 2014 and will be finalised and forwarded to UNESCO in 2015.

Strategy 2:

<p><i>To ensure effective implementation and, where appropriate, enforcement of heritage policies and legislation, including through and by third parties.</i></p>
--

Natural Heritage

Licensing

The Department is responsible for the licensing requirements under the Wildlife Acts and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. There were some 6,800 licences and permits issued by the Department for a variety of activities in 2014. The majority of the licences, some 65% (over 4,400) were issued for deer hunting.

Progress under the Turf Compensation Scheme

The Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme (CTCCS) was established in April 2011 to compensate land owners and turbarry right holders affected by the restrictions on turf cutting on the 53 raised bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Up to December 2014:

- 3,041 applications were received;
- 6,429 payments and 650 deliveries of turf had been made in respect of these applications; and
- 1,394 legal agreements had been returned and 1,310 once-off incentive payments of €500 made in respect of these legal agreements under the scheme.

The total expenditure under the scheme to the end of 2014 amounted to over €11.6 million. This expenditure is comprised of amounts paid in respect of annual payments, turf deliveries and once-off incentive payments.

In 2014, the scheme was extended to land owners and turbary right holders affected by the restrictions on turf cutting in raised bog Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). 164 applications were received and 94 payments were made at a cost of over €140,000 to applicants from these sites.

Relocation

There were approximately 800 applicants in the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme who had expressed an interest in relocation to a non-designated bog. In 2014, the Department wrote to over 250 of them, from 14 SACs, seeking expressions of interest in relocating to specific non-designated bogs which the Department has identified as suitable relocation sites. Where sufficient interest has been received, the Department is taking the necessary steps with a view to relocation to specific sites.

Notwithstanding the complexity involved, progress in relocating turf cutters to non-designated bogs is being achieved in a number of cases and arrangements have been made for:

- Clara Bog SAC in County Offaly, where 25 qualifying turf cutters have been accommodated on Killeranny Bog; and
- Carrownagappul Bog and Curraghlahanagh Bog SACs in County Galway, where 23 qualifying turf cutters have been accommodated on the Islands Bog and Killasolan Bog.

Works have been undertaken on Lemanaghan Bog in County Offaly with a view to facilitating turf cutters from Moyclare Bog SAC and on Cloonabricka Bog in County Galway to facilitate additional cutters relocating from Carrownagappul and Curraghlahanagh Bogs.

Enforcement of Prohibition on Turf cutting on Raised Bog SACs

An inter-agency programme of monitoring SACs for prohibited activity, particularly turf cutting, was put in place by Government over the past number of turf cutting seasons. Regular ground and aerial surveys have continued to identify turf plots that had been cut. Owners of land and turbary right holders have been identified and written to with any turf compensation payments related to these plots being withheld.

Prosecutions have been instigated and the first cases were referred by the District Court to the Circuit Court for trials on indictment. In March 2014 the defendants in one of the Circuit Court cases were granted leave by the High Court to bring a challenge to their prosecutions and a stay was put on other prosecutions from being progressed until the High Court action was concluded.

The National Survey of Upland Habitats (NSUH)

The National Survey of Upland Habitats continued in 2014 with mapping and assessment of habitats in Slieve Mish Mountains and Cahaa Mountains Special Areas of Conservation. To date, a total of 16 sites covering 939 sq. km have been completed. These habitat assessments informed the national assessments of the conservation status of 12 of the EU Habitats Directive habitats (see report on www.npws.ie). The NSUH maps and data will shortly become available on the NPWS website. Irish Wildlife Manual No. 79, which is on the website, explains the methodologies employed in the NSUH.

Corncrake

In 2014, a total of 230 calling male Corncrakes were recorded in the national census. This represents a 22% increase on the population recorded in 2013 and is the highest number recorded in 21 years of population monitoring. Not only has the decline in Corncrake numbers been halted nationally, but there has been resurgence in numbers in Counties Donegal and Mayo. The NPWS Farm Plan Scheme and Corncrake Grant Scheme are integral parts of the Corncrake Conservation Strategy (see www.npws.ie), which was published in 2014 (DAHG, 2014) and is central to Ireland addressing the findings of the Birds Case (C-418/04).

National Parks and Wildlife Service Farm Plan Scheme

The NPWS farm plan scheme closed to new applicants in April 2010. By the end of 2014, 147 plans were still active for the management of species such as Hen Harrier, Geese and Swans, Breeding Waders and Corncrake. €3.9 million was paid out in 2014 to farmers and planners for capital works and for administrative and technical supports. The GLAS scheme will generally provide measures for farmers in Natura 2000 and other important biodiversity areas from 2015 onwards.

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Offshore Baseline Programme

The Petroleum Affairs Division of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, in collaboration with the Scientific Unit in NPWS of this Department, put in place a programme of surveys to collect ecological data in the Atlantic Shelf area for whales, dolphins and seabirds in support of sustainable development and informed regulation of the petroleum sector.

Built Heritage

In 2014, the Department issued 1,979 Ministerial Recommendations for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures for Counties Donegal and Dublin City, while 13 cases relating to Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 were processed.

The Department also provided input to the planning process for all relevant plans and projects with the potential to impact on protected built heritage.

Archaeology

In compliance with statutory requirements under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, 462 new Archaeological Excavation licences were issued, together with 108 extensions to excavations licences from previous years. 138 consents to use detection devices and 45 dive survey licences were also issued in 2014. 53 new Ministerial Consents in relation to works at national monuments were issued, while 87 approvals and responses to variations to existing Ministerial Consents were also issued in 2014.

In 2014, 210 reports of threat or damage to monuments were investigated, while 304 notifications of intention to carry out work at or near monuments were examined. 4,799 referrals on foot of the Planning and Development Acts in relation to archaeology were received by the Department. In 562 cases, archaeological mitigation measures were recommended to address the impacts of development on the archaeological resource. The Department also reviewed development impacts on underwater archaeology, including oil and gas exploration, offshore wind farms, cable laying, aquaculture, foreshore licenses, dredging and development of ports and harbours, and flood relief schemes.

The Department continued the on-going maintenance of the statutory list of recorded monuments, and completed work on the mapping, file-management, and data components for counties Sligo (7,103 records) and Wexford (4,001). An additional 1,025 records were added to the Archaeological Survey of Ireland database during the year. The record total at end-2014 stood at 151,854.

Strategy 3:

To promote greater appreciation and understanding of Ireland's rich heritage as a valuable amenity for business, farming and tourism and as a means of presenting Ireland as an attractive destination for sustainable inward investment.

Natural Heritage

In 2014, two further Irish Wildlife Manuals were published, as well as a guidance document on the survey and assessment of upland habitats and a species dossier on the rare woodland ant. A new information leaflet on pine martens was published and the Department was also involved in co-authoring and funding the publication of a new book entitled *Irish Bats in the 21st Century*.

National Parks

In 2014, a focused programme of capital works was undertaken at the National Parks and Nature Reserves in order to secure the conservation of our natural heritage, to enhance visitor experiences, and to improve the Irish tourism product offering. Some €953,000 was expended on 25 discrete capital projects. Examples of these projects include upgrading facilities at visitor sites and trails, capital works for health and safety purposes and removal of invasive alien species to protect vulnerable habitats.

Significant projects carried out in 2014 included Phase III works associated with the refurbishment programme for Killarney House and its ornamental grounds and gardens; the complete resurfacing of the access road to Glenveagh National Park and reinstatement works to the road network in Killarney National Park; works to the Claggan Mountain boardwalk to facilitate access to Ballycrooy National Park; and works to stabilise the crushing house at the historic mine in Wicklow Mountain National Park.

Built Heritage

In 2014, National Inventory of Architectural Heritage surveys were published for Counties Donegal (partially), Cavan and Monaghan and part of Dublin City. The Department also supported the work of the Heritage Council, planning authorities and other built heritage stakeholders in the delivery of their awareness and educational programmes.

The Departments' Buildings of Ireland website www.buildingsofireland.ie had 261,063 users and 1,271,209 page views in 2014. Approximately 73% of users were from Ireland, with the rest being international users. A significant number of the 27% non-Irish users were doing family history research.

The heritage-led regeneration pilot project, the Historic Towns Initiative, which was initiated in Listowel, Youghal and Westport in 2013, was concluded. This project was undertaken in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, the Heritage Council and the three town councils.

Archaeology

To further support third-party developments in the provision of information on monuments, including Heritage Tourism derived products, an additional 3,743 monument descriptions were uploaded to www.archaeology.ie. Enhancements were also made to the public map/search facility with the addition of images and supporting documentation. The total number of records with summary entries on the web at the end of 2014 was 107,559.

In October 2014, the Department published a leaflet *Advice to the Public on the archaeological potential of caves* in conjunction with the National Museum of Ireland.

In order to commemorate the 21st anniversary of Brú na Bóinne being inscribed as a World Heritage Site, the Department produced 3 informative banners for display at the Visitor Centre. The Department also commissioned a supplement to Archaeology Ireland titled '*Visiting Newgrange – Science, Ritual and Curiosity*'.

The Department conducted detailed surveys of a number of log boats on Lough Corrib, which contained artefacts dating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Early Medieval periods. Following severe storms in 2014, a number of dive surveys and intertidal surveys in response to threats to sites from coastal erosion and storm damage, including the wreck of the *Sunbeam* on Rossbehy Strand in Kerry with rapid protection measures being undertaken. A survey of five wrecks at Tramore, Co. Waterford, was also commissioned after they had been uncovered by recent storms. A rescue excavation was undertaken at the site of a late seventeenth- or eighteenth-century shipwreck at Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry. The wreck was under threat from souvenir and treasure hunters.

In terms of archaeological publications, 2014 saw the publication of a monograph on excavations of international significance carried at Poul nabrone portal tomb, Co. Clare, and at High Island, Co. Galway.

Strategy 4:

To ensure that the heritage services are delivered as effectively as possible, including through third parties.

Heritage Division

The Department continued the rollout of the eReferrals Project which seeks to provide an electronic mechanism for the referral of planning applications from planning authorities to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in her role as a statutory consultee under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

eReferrals has made further progress in 2014, resulting in savings in improved efficiencies in both the Department and the planning authorities through a substantial reduction in scanning, labour and storage costs for the Department and related savings and reduced postage costs for the authorities.

In 2014, eReferrals was rolled out successfully to the town councils in the previously integrated Cork, Sligo, and Limerick County Councils. Roll-out to Clare County Council has commenced and will be completed in Q1 2015, to be followed by Meath County Council. Kerry and Wicklow County Councils are the next identified authorities to integrate planning systems via eReferrals during 2015.

Built Heritage

540 historic structures across Ireland benefited from conservation works under the Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme (BHJLS) in 2014, of which 525 were protected or proposed protected structures, with the remaining 15 located in Architectural Conservation Areas. The direct State investment of €5 million in the BHJLS in 2014 unlocked almost €10 million in direct private investment, giving a total investment in this area of €15 million nationally. Feedback from local authorities has shown that this initiative has directly generated approximately 175 FTE jobs in 2014.

Funding was provided to the Office of Public Works for the conservation and presentation of national monuments and historic properties in State care under the Built Heritage Capital Programme. Further funding was allocated in 2014 to 5 local authorities for works to historic properties under the Conservation Works to Buildings in State Care scheme and an additional amount of emergency funding was allocated to two local authorities for urgent conservation works to protected structures in their care.

In 2014, funding was provided for 10 projects under the implementation programme of the Government Policy on Architecture (GPA) 2009-2015: Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment. The GPA also supported Ireland's participation in the 14th Venice Biennale 2014. The Department, along with the Department of Culture, Arts and the Leisure in Northern Ireland, co-funded the series of events to celebrate the work of the structural engineer Peter Rice. A pilot Traditional Buildings Skills Programme, which supported training in traditional conservation methods, was also funded by the Department in 2014.

The Department continued to support a number of heritage organisations in 2014, including the Irish Heritage Trust, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Ireland, the Irish Architecture Foundation and the Irish Architectural Archive.

Heritage Council

Over 1,800 events took place in 2014 during Heritage Week organised by the Heritage Council, an agency under the aegis of the Department.

In 2014, the Heritage Council allocated a total of €0.650m to 144 projects throughout Ireland under its grants programme for a range of heritage projects. The Heritage Council's statistics show that this grants programme directly generated 19 FTE jobs. The Council also funded several conservation projects under the Walled Towns Initiative, with walled towns and cities in Ireland recognised as an important national heritage asset.

In 2014 a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Department and the Heritage Council was signed, formalising an agreed level of service between both parties, to be renewed annually.

Archaeology

The Department provided archaeological advice and assistance, as required, to the Office of Public Works in relation to the day to day management of national monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister.

The Department provided input in terms of archaeological advice and assistance to projects funding by Rural Development Programme (LEADER). For the first time in 2014 the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine included provisions for the preventative maintenance of monuments in farmland with GLAS (a new agri-environmental measure) as part of the RDP, the aim of which will be to enhance the condition of monuments in rural holdings.

The Department provided funding support for the ‘Ogham in 3D’ project being undertaken by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (School of Celtic Studies), which facilitated the recording of stones designated as National Monuments. The Department also provided some grant assistance to the Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research (INSTAR) Programme administered by the Heritage Council, to the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) for research excavations, and to Wordwell Ltd. to assist with the redevelopment of www.excavations.ie website, which aids the public dissemination of the results of excavations.

Goal 3: The Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands

To support the Irish language, to strengthen its use as the principal community language of the Gaeltacht and to assist the sustainable development of island communities.

Strategy 1:

To implement the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030

As the Department with the overarching responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Strategy in co-operation with a wide range of key stakeholders, the Department continued to progress the implementation of the Strategy during 2014. Progress reports on the overall implementation of the Strategy for the period July 2013 to September 2014 were published by the relevant Departments, 12 in total, in September 2014. In their progress reports, and in line with Government policy, the Departments recognise the importance of having a number of staff fluent in and capable of providing services in Irish in each Department. Accordingly, commitments have been given to specify in future language schemes under the Official Languages Act 2003 the posts or areas of work that have an Irish language competency requirement.

The Gaeltacht Act 2012

The language planning process which the Act provides for continued to be implemented during 2014.

- Language Planning Guidelines were published by the Department in January 2014.
- Notices were made in accordance with the provisions of section 7(3) of the Act in respect of 9 of the 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas.
- 9 organisations were selected by Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake the preparation and implementation of language plans in respect of 9 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas.

A public consultation process in relation to the selection of Gaeltacht Service Towns was conducted and arising from that process, a list of potential towns was published, in December 2014.

Gaeltacht Support Schemes

Funding was provided in 2014 to a range of language-centred programmes and organisations for the purpose of promoting the Irish language as the primary household and community language in the Gaeltacht in the context of the implementation of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language*.

Capital funding

Capital funding of €1.420m was provided for the development and maintenance of various community language-centred facilities in the Gaeltacht. Included in this expenditure are grants for the refurbishment/building of various facilities such as crèches, community halls, football pitches and Irish colleges. The purchase of equipment by committees was also grant aided.

Current funding

€6.108m was spent on various programmes and schemes to promote the Irish language.

- A total of €3.583m was paid under the Irish Learners Grant Scheme; 22,236 students attended 49 Irish Colleges, including 3 colleges outside the Gaeltacht; a daily grant of €9.50 per student was paid to 613 Gaeltacht households;
- Funding was provided to support Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge's outreach centres in Gaoth Dobhair, An Cheathrú Rua and Carna;
- 100 Irish Language Assistants were employed in 99 Gaeltacht schools under the Language Assistants Scheme;
- 5,176 Gaeltacht children attended some 200 Irish Language Summer Camps;
- Funding was allocated for sports and fitness classes through the medium of Irish in Gaeltacht schools; and
- Funding for the provision of music classes through Irish was provided to An Gaelacadamh and An Crann Óg.

In addition, the information support pack for Gaeltacht parents who are raising, or who wish to raise their families through Irish continued to be distributed. To date, some 2680 packs have been distributed.

Irish Language Support Schemes

Funding of €3.768m was provided in 2014 under the Irish Language Support Schemes to a broad range of Irish language organisations and projects outside the Gaeltacht. These included Gaillimh le Gaeilge, Gnó Mhaigh Eo, Gael Taca, Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe, An Cumann Scoildrámaíochta and Raidió Rí-Rá.

Expenditure in 2014 included the following:

- €1.048m for projects supported in the digital humanities and terminology sectors. These include Dúchas.ie, logainm.ie, abair.ie and the LEX project; which provides Irish language terminology for the European Union;
- €1.026m to support 11 3rd level courses in Ireland under the Advanced Irish Language Skills Initiative;
- €824,000 to support projects in the business and arts sectors;
- €775,000 to support the teaching of Irish in 39 international universities, including 13 universities under the auspices of the Fulbright Commission and 7 under the auspices of the Ireland Canada University Foundation; and,
- €95,000 for a capital project at Coláiste na bhFiann's headquarters in Co. Meath.

Allocation for the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language in 2014

For the first time, in 2014 a specific allocation of €500,000 was provided in the Department's Vote for the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language to fund additional activities which support the implementation of the Strategy and the language planning process, including:

- €200,000 to community-based organisations selected by Údarás na Gaeltachta to prepare and implement language plans under the Gaeltacht Act 2012;
- €141,000 approved for pilot projects to promote the Irish language in the technology sector (including machine translation technology) and to develop an online course in the Irish language and Irish traditional culture.
- €89,710 (€335,700 in total over 3 years) for 8 pre-school services in the Gaeltacht. These grants, which were approved under the Department's Pre-School and After-School Services Scheme, are being provided to support the network of crèches and pre-schools operating through Irish in the Gaeltacht; and
- €39,547 (€120,000 in total over 3 years) approved for the organisation Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta to enable it develop its services for parents raising children through Irish in the Gaeltacht.

Údarás na Gaeltachta

The overall Exchequer allocation for Údarás na Gaeltachta, the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht, was €17.485m in 2014.

2014 saw the highest rate of job creation in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in five years. At year-end, total employment in Údarás client companies stood at 7,682, of which 7,053 were full-time jobs and 629 were part-time jobs. Údarás client companies created 737 new full-time jobs during 2014. When job losses are taken into consideration, there was a net increase of 84 jobs overall.

Údarás na Gaeltachta administers various social employment schemes, which are funded by the Department of Social Protection and play an important role in providing work experience and training for Gaeltacht communities. In 2014, over 1,000 participants were involved in 47 schemes throughout the Gaeltacht.

Under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, Údarás na Gaeltachta is responsible for supporting organisations with regard to the preparation and implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and in Gaeltacht Service Towns situated in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas.

Official Languages Act

During 2014, a total of 21 language schemes were confirmed, including 6 inaugural, 9 second and 6 third schemes. By the end of 2014, there were 99 schemes in force, covering a total of 109 public bodies. All schemes are available on the website of An Coimisinéir Teanga at www.coimisineir.ie.

Funding of €567,000 was allocated in 2014 to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga, which is an independent statutory office responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Official Languages Act. Mr Rónán Ó Domhnaill was appointed for a six-year term of office as An Coimisinéir Teanga on 12 March 2014.

13 Placenames Orders have been made since the enactment of the Official Languages Act. Research continued on the preparation of draft Placenames Orders for various counties, including Mayo, Galway, Longford, Carlow and Wexford. Four meetings of the Placenames Committee were held.

The review of the Official Languages Act 2003 was published in April 2014 along with the Heads of a Bill to amend the Act. It is intended to publish the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill in 2015.

Strategy 2:

<i>To facilitate the delivery of services to island communities.</i>
--

The Department facilitates the delivery of services to islands communities through the granting of financial support to 25 transport services on 19 offshore islands.

- Eight transport service agreements were renewed in 2014.
- The review of the Public Service Obligation air service for the Aran Islands was published in May 2014.
- The air service contract was extended for one year until 30 September 2015 in order to allow the Department time to study the review and to bring forward recommendations based on its conclusions.

A number of island and island-related infrastructure projects were progressed by the Department in 2014, including the development of a helipad on Toraigh, County Donegal, for which tenders were sought by Donegal County Council. The Department also commenced a dialogue with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government with a view to reaching an agreed position with regard to continuation of funding for the non-Gaeltacht islands beyond 2014.

Aran LIFE

- The AranLIFE project which is based on the Aran Islands - and will run for four years until December 2017 - commenced in 2014. The project budget is some €2.6m and is being funded principally by the EU's LIFE+ funding programme, as well as a number of other stakeholders, including the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which is acting as co-ordinating beneficiary. The project seeks to develop and demonstrate the best conservation management practices among island farmers. It will harness local farming knowledge and experience with the scientific expertise of other project partners with a view to both overcoming some of the challenges of island farming and improving the conservation status of the designated sites. A team of 3 is engaged full-time on the project

and is actively working with about 67 island farmers to implement agreed farm management plans containing specific actions, including:

- improving access to land parcels by clearing boreens;
- scrub and bracken control within fields;
- improving access to water for stock; and
- nutrient management of grasslands.

Participating farmers will qualify for payment in respect of the successful completion of agreed works undertaken as part of the project.

Goal 4: North-South Co-operation

To maintain, develop and foster North/South co-operation.

Strategy 1:

To promote North/South co-operation, particularly in the context of Waterways Ireland and An Foras Teanga.

Waterways Ireland

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, together with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the North/South Ministerial Council, supports and funds Waterways Ireland in the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland waterways.

Two North South Ministerial Council meetings were held in relation to the Inland Waterways sector in 2014.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provided €24.18m in funding to Waterways Ireland during 2014. The main outputs achieved during the year included:

- Continuation of the maintenance programme, with over 99.08% of the navigable waterways open during the boating season (April to October).
- Furtherance of the capital works programme which was largely concentrated on major infrastructural repairs. Work commenced on replacing the lock gates at Tarmonbarry on the Shannon Navigation and on bridge repairs on the Grand Canal. Repairs were completed at Mosstown Culvert on the Royal canal and new floating moorings were installed at Crom Estate on Upper Lough Erne.
- Provision of 415m of additional moorings, 255m of which were developed in the village of Sallins, Co Kildare, creating additional visitor moorings and extended long term moorings.
- Waterways Ireland reported an additional 587 new vessel registrations during the year.
- Targeted marketing programmes combined with moderate weather conditions for much of the year resulted in an overall increase in recreational activity on the waterways.

The Lakelands and Inland Waterways Programme (L&IW)

This programme continued to be implemented in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism and the various Local Authorities along the Shannon, Shannon-Erne and Erne systems.

Activities included:

- the redesign of the Lakelands section of the www.discoverireland.ie website;
- development of the Primary Schools Booklet with 117,120 copies issued to schools in the North and South; and
- the further extension of the free Lakelands Treasure App to the Android platform, which is available from the Playstore and includes over 100 heritage, cultural and family attractions across the Midlands of Ireland.

Blueway

Ireland's first Blueway between Drumshanbo and Carrick-on-Shannon in Co. Leitrim opened in October 2014. This Blueway, which is a multi-activity trail, was developed by Waterways Ireland in conjunction with the National Trails Office, Canoeing Ireland, Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Tourism. The canoe trail, linking the waterways to local towns and villages, is 16.5km long with 3 looped walks and provides for a range of recreational activities such as paddling, walking and cycling. The development won the "Best Tourism Initiative" category in the Local Authority Members' Association (LAMA) Community and Council 2015 awards, in recognition of the impact the project has had on the local community and the potential for attracting both domestic and international tourism to the North Shannon area.

Schools Education Programme

The Schools Education Programme was expanded with projects delivered, including:

- The development of a project around the 20th anniversary of the re-opening of the Shannon-erne Waterway;
- The development of a schools walking tour around the Grand Canal Basin, Dublin, with 875 children taking part from 32 different schools;
- Participation in Engineers' Week during which 455 students from 16 primary schools visited the waterways and engaged in learning activities with the engineering staff;
- Development of a 'celebrating City Canals' tour in partnership with the 107B Heritage Barge Project in Dublin; and
- The 'All About Waterways' teachers pack continued to prove an attractive resource with 138 copies distributed to schools during 2014.

Other Developments

The 2014 edition of the 'What's On' events guide was published.

The Sponsorship Programme continued with 105 events supported. The events attracted in excess of 39,000 participants and 221,000 spectators to the inland waterways, with an estimated economic benefit of €10.4 million.

The Waterways Ireland Visitor Centre organised and supported over 180 events in 2014, involving 40,000 people and with an economic impact of €1.6m in the Grand Canal Basin area. The Community Programme continued to deliver activity based projects to the residents and groups in the Pearse Street and Ringsend areas of Dublin.

2014 also saw further enhancements to the Waterways Ireland website and the publishing of a series of online Navigation Guides for the Lower Bann, Erne and the Shannon Navigation systems.

An Foras Teanga

An Foras Teanga is the North/South Implementation Body responsible for promoting both the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language and culture throughout the island of Ireland. There are two separate agencies under the auspices of this Body - Foras na Gaeilge and Tha' Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch. Foras na Gaeilge carries out all of the designated responsibilities regarding the Irish language, including facilitating and promoting the development of Irish in the public and private arena. Tha' Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch has responsibility for the development of the Ulster-Scots language, including the promotion of greater awareness and the use of the language and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues. Both Foras na Gaeilge and Tha' Boord o Ulstèr Scotch have their own boards, whose members together constitute the board of An Foras Teanga. An Foras Teanga is accountable to the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and to the Ministers in the Sponsoring Departments, i.e., this Department and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland. 3 NSMC meetings were held in Language Sectoral format in 2014.

During 2014, total funding of €13.469m was provided by this Department to An Foras Teanga, including ringfenced funding of €1.117m for Clár na Leabhar Gaeilge (supporting reading, writing and publishing initiatives in the Irish language) and €74,715 for Colmcille (a tripartite initiative to promote the Irish and Scots Gaelic languages).

The following key Ministerial priorities were set for Foras na Gaeilge in 2014:

- Implementation of new funding arrangements, including the establishment of an all-island partnership forum and an all-island language development forum, and the development of a community radio scheme;
- Publication of a report on the attitudinal survey undertaken on the Irish language;

- Commencement of a new online ordering system which will enable bookshops to order books directly from Áis (the book distribution service) in addition to facilitating the general public in ordering electronic books; and
- Publication of a broad range of school material for primary and post-primary levels, both electronically and in hard copy.

The following key Ministerial priorities were set for Tha' Boord o Ulstèr Scotch in 2014:

- Progression of key initiatives in regard to the Flagship Schools Programme and the Ulstèr-Scots Hairtlan;
- Implementation of a new grants database system;
- Establishment of 2 east-west primary school twinnings;
- Undertaking of two major east-west showcases at Bannockburn and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in Scotland; and
- Development of a World War I themed exhibition in Co. Cavan.

Significant progress was achieved in 2014 in respect of both sets of priorities. More detailed information is available on the websites www.forasnagaeilge.ie (Foras na Gaeilge) and www.ulsterscotsagency.com (Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch).

Strategy 2:

To promote North/South co-operation in other areas of activity within the Department's remit.

In addition to the language and inland waterways sectors, other areas of cross border co-operation included work on the planning of commemorations, collaborations between museums on either side of the border, participation by a number of projects in Northern Ireland in Culture Night, as well as engagement on built and natural heritage, and environmental matters.

Corporate Matters

Human Resources

The Department continued to work with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to achieve savings in staff numbers and associated costs, while maintaining operational capacity against a background of reduced financial and staffing resources in 2014. Implementation of the Haddington Road Agreement and the Civil Service Renewal Programme was also continued throughout the year.

Within this context the Department was successful in securing sanction for the filling of key posts including that of Director of the National Archives. The Department also assigned staff to the 2016 Project Office which was established in the latter part of the year. Overall permanent staffing numbers showed a further small reduction to 561 during by year end.

The Department is committed to the ongoing training and development of its staff, to ensure they continue to have the workplace knowledge, skills and behaviours required to maintain organisational performance and achieve business objectives and also the necessary health and safety training. Some €246,400 was spent on training and development in 2014.

Customer Service

The Department is committed to providing a high-quality, efficient and effective service to its customers. In 2014, some 360 customer queries were submitted by email to our dedicated customer service mailbox customer.service@ahg.gov.ie

The Department's *Customer Service Action Plan* and *Customer Service Charter* are available on the Department's website at <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/AboutUs/CustomerService/>

These documents reaffirm our commitment to delivering high quality services to all our customers and they outline the standards of service that customers can expect to receive when they interact with us by phone, in writing or in person. The Action Plan identifies how the Department will implement the Charter commitments and review/report on its performance level in this regard.

Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment

Between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014, the Department received 82 requests under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997-2003 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (which became effective on 14th October 2014). Of the 82 requests, 24 were eventually granted in full, 34 were part-granted and 7 were refused. A total of 17 applications were withdrawn or handled outside of the FOI Act.

Between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014, the Department received 42 requests under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations. Of the 42 requests, 19 were eventually granted in full, 11 were part-granted and 8 were refused. 3 applications were transferred and 1 was handled under the FOI Act instead.

Evaluation

The Department's Evaluation Unit continued to provide analysis, research and evaluation services to the Department with a view to fostering a culture of evaluation across all sections of the Department so that decisions on policy and programmes are evidence-based, have clear objectives, and are subject to rigorous appraisal, monitoring and evaluation. Its primary activity in 2014 has been the ongoing review of the Arts Council with a particular focus on the period 2009 to 2012, as part of the Government's Value for Money and Policy Review (VFMPR) Initiative. The objective of the VFMPR is to analyse Exchequer spending in a systematic manner and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions can be made on priorities within and between programmes.

Appendix 1

Programme for Government

Commitments relating to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

The commitments referred to here, in respect of the *Programme for Government 2011-2016*, are ones for which the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has lead responsibility.

Arts, Culture and Sport

We will make strategic policy formulation the primary function of the Department, with line agencies and bodies responsible for policy implementation.

We will encourage the Arts Council to continue to dedicate resources to touring in order to protect the State's investment in regional arts infrastructure around the country and to bring cultural tourism opportunities to towns and villages across the country.

We will work with stakeholders in the arts community to develop new proposals aimed at building private support of the arts in Ireland exploring philanthropic, sponsorship or endowment fund opportunities.

We will make the Culture Night Initiative a twice yearly event, and introduce a National Lottery Funding Anniversary Day, whereby all facilities which have received funding from the National Lottery will open their doors to the public free of charge.

We will also review the opening times of our national cultural institutions.

We will develop a cultural plan for future commemorative events such as the Centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016.

We will promote genealogical tourism by updating the National Cultural Institutions Act in relation to the Genealogical Office to put it on a proper statutory footing, modernise its operations and enable publication of the 1926 census to stimulate genealogy tourism.

We will also explore philanthropic opportunities for the development of a national archives and genealogy quarter, providing easy access to archives and tapping into an area of cultural tourism which is of huge interest to the vast Irish Diaspora.

We will encourage greater cooperation between local authorities to provide assistance where possible for local authorities currently lacking a local authority Arts Officer due to recruitment restrictions and to cooperate in developing cultural tourism opportunities.

We will seek to capture some public good from NAMA by identifying buildings that have no commercial potential and which might be suitable as local facilities for art and culture.

Responsibility for policy-making will revert to the Department, while agencies will be accountable for implementing policy, assessing outcomes and value for money.

An Ghaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht

We will support the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 and will deliver on the achievable goals and targets proposed.

Gaeltacht regions will benefit from the jobs action plan outlined in this document. Under our proposals, we will deliver new job creation prospects to Gaeltacht regions. We will invest in energy, broadband and water infrastructure, creating the modern infrastructure needed to attract and support new businesses and jobs. We will also strongly support the potential for jobs in tourism and marine activities. We will continue to support the Irish language broadcasting and arts sector.

We will review the Official Languages Act to ensure expenditure on the language is best targeted towards the development of the language and that obligations are imposed appropriately in response to demand from citizens.

We will review current investment and funding programmes that benefit Irish language organisations in order to achieve visible value for money for citizens and tangible outcomes on a transparent basis.

Natural Heritage

We will allow an exemption for domestic turf cutting on 75 natural heritage area sites subject to the introduction of an agreed national code of environmental practices.

We will establish an independent mediation between all relevant stakeholders with the specific objective of facilitating resolution to 55 special area of conservation designated bogs.

We will establish an independent mediation to resolve outstanding issues associated with turf cutting on blanket bogs.

Appendix 2

Agencies and Bodies funded from the Department's Vote Group

Body	Website	Address
An Coimisinéir Teanga	www.coimisineir.ie	An Coimisinéir Teanga An Spidéal Co. na Gaillimhe
Arts Council	www.artscouncil.ie	The Arts Council 70 Merrion Square Dublin 2
Chester Beatty Library	www.cbl.ie	Chester Beatty Library Dublin Castle Dublin 2
Crawford Gallery	www.crawfordartgallery.com	Crawford Gallery Emmet Place Cork
Foras na Gaeilge	www.gaeilge.ie www.forasnagaeilge.ie	Foras na Gaeilge 7 Merrion Square Dublin 2
Heritage Council	www.heritagecouncil.ie	Heritage Council Áras na hOidhreachta Church Lane Kilkenny
Irish Film Board	www.irishfilmboard.ie	Irish Film Board Queensgate 23 Dock Road Galway
Irish Manuscripts Commission	www.irishmanuscripts.ie	Irish Manuscripts Commission 45 Merrion Square Dublin 2
Irish Museum of Modern Art	www.modernart.ie	Irish Museum of Modern Art Royal Hospital Military Road Kilmainham Dublin 8
National Archives	www.nationalarchives.ie	The National Archives Bishop Street Dublin 8
National Concert Hall	www.nch.ie	National Concert Hall Earlsfort Terrace Dublin 2

National Gallery of Ireland	www.nationalgallery.ie	National Gallery of Ireland Merrion Square West Dublin 2
National Library of Ireland	www.nli.ie	National Library of Ireland Kildare Street Dublin 2
National Museum of Ireland	www.museum.ie	National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks Benburb Street Dublin 7
Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch (Ulster-Scots Agency)	www.ulsterscotsagency.com	The Ulster-Scots Agency The Corn Exchange Belfast BT1 2LG Northern Ireland
Údarás na Gaeltachta	www.udaras.ie	Údarás na Gaeltachta Na Forbacha Co. na Gaillimhe
Waterways Ireland	www.waterwaysireland.org	Waterways Ireland 2 Sligo Road Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh BT74 7JY Northern Ireland

Appendix 3

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Expenditure in 2014

SUBHEAD	EXPENDITURE IN 2014	OUTTURN €'000
ADMINISTRATION		
X.1	Salaries, Wages and Allowances	29,865
X.2	Travel and Subsistence	1,032
X.3	Traning and Development and Incidental Expenses	496
X.4	Postal and Telecommunications Services	494
X.5	Office Equipment and External IT Services	1,248
X.6	Office Premises Expenses	649
X.7	Consultancy Services and Value for Money and Policy Reviews	7
X.8	EU Presidency	0
	TOTAL	33,791
ARTS, CULTURE & FILM		
A.1	Administration – Pay	5,771
A.2	Administration - Non-Pay	897
A.3	Payments to match resources generated by the National Archives	40
A.4	General Expenses of the National Archives and National Arvchies Advisory Council	1,190
A.5	General Expenses of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Chester Beatty Library, National Concert Hall and the Crawford Gallery	10,437
A.6	Regional Museums, Galleries, Cultural Centres and Projects	3,180
A.7	Cultural Infrastructure and Development	5,909
A.8	Culture Ireland	3,158
A.9	An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Part Funded by National Lottery)	56,668
A.10	General Expenses of the National Museum of Ireland	11,864
A.11	General Expenses of the National Library of Ireland	6,340
A.12	Irish Film Board	13,962
A.13	EU Presidency - Cultural Programme	0
A.14	National City of Culture	7,117
A.15	Decade of Centenaries 1912-1922	1,999
A.16	Cork Event Centre	0
A.17	EXPO Milano 2015	756
	TOTAL	129,288

HERITAGE

B.1	Administration – Pay	19,734
B.2	Administration - Non-Pay	2,174
B.3	Grant of An Chomhairle Oidreachta (Heritage Council_	4,493
B.4	Built Heritage	2,323
B.5	Natural Heritage (National Parks and Wildlife Service)	14,296
B.6	Irish Heritage Trust	324
B.7	Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme	5,000
	TOTAL	48,344

GAELTACHT

C.1	Administration – Pay	3,255
C.2	Administration - Non-Pay	467
C.3	Gaeltacht Support Schemes	7,555
C.4	Irish Language Support Schemes (Part Funded by National Lottery)	3,768
C.5	An Coimisinéir Teanga	566
C.6	Údarás na Gaeltachta – Administration	8,798
C.7	Údarás na Gaeltachta - Current Programme Expenditure	3,000
C.8	Údarás na Gaeltacht - Grants for Projects and Capital Expenditure on Premises	5,687
C.9	Islands	6,543
C.10	20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language - 2010-2030	500
C.11	Decade of Centenaries - Teach an Phiarsaigh	250
	TOTAL	40,389

NORTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION

D.1	Administration – Pay	1,105
D.2	Administration - Non-Pay	388
D.3	An Foras Teanga	13,469
D.4	Waterways Ireland	24,183
	TOTAL	39,145

GROSS TOTAL 257,166