British-Irish Council 4th IML Languages Ministerial

Friday 10th March 2017, Edinburgh

Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages and the Economy

Ministers are invited to note this paper and:

• consider the close inter-relationship that exists between economic factors and the vitality of IML languages;

• agree that promoting the use of IML languages within the economy can play an important role in efforts to support IML languages;

• note the various ways in which IML languages are used by businesses across Member Administrations;

• note that whilst some evidence exists with regard to the positive economic impact of IML languages, this is an area which would benefit from further empirical evidence;

• consider whether suitable initiatives with regard to the links between the economy and IML languages may be appropriate to their Member Administration; and

• agree to the publication of this report on the website of the British-Irish Council.
Introduction

1. At the last Ministerial meeting of the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Work Sector held in Cardiff in October 2014, Ministers agreed that the Work Sector should explore the links between IML languages and the economy.

2. The aim of this paper is to provide a brief overview of current thinking and activity in this area across BIC Member Administrations and beyond, in an attempt to find common themes and to share good practice.

3. At the outset, it is worth emphasising that the links between the vitality of IML languages and the economy are complex and multi-layered. Such complexity is augmented by the very different situations of each of the nine\(^1\) IML languages spoken across the eight BIC jurisdictions.

Policy context

4. A number of BIC Member Administrations already recognise the significance of the inter-relationship between IML language vitality and the economy. For example:

5. The Welsh Government, in its Policy Statement on the Welsh Language, *Bwrw Mlaen / Moving Forward* (2014), is committed to “creating the best environment to support the mutually beneficial growth of the Welsh language and economic development”. It recognises the synergy between nurturing economic growth, jobs, wealth-creation, and the well-being of the Welsh language, and makes commitments to create a stimulus to better support businesses to exploit these relationships. The Welsh Government is currently developing a new long-term Strategy for the Welsh Language, with the aim of creating one million speakers by 2050. The importance of the links between the language and economy were highlighted by a number of respondents to a recent consultation on a draft Strategy.

6. The Irish Government has identified “Economic Life” as an important action point for inclusion in its 20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-30. The Strategy therefore includes provisions to raise awareness and to promote the use of Irish in economic spheres generally. The Strategy also includes a commitment to a series of initiatives and state supports to be put in place to encourage entrepreneurship and economic activity among the Irish language speaking community on a company, sectoral or local basis.

---

\(^1\) Cornish, Gaelic, Guernésiais, Irish, Jèrriais, Manx, Scots, Ulster-Scots, Welsh
7. It is also widely acknowledged by the Scottish Government that there are cultural, economic and social benefits to be derived from its indigenous languages. For these reasons, the Scottish Government is committed to growing and nurturing these languages to ensure they are used in everyday activities in communities across Scotland as set out in the draft National Gaelic Language Plan 2017-22, the Scottish Government’s Gaelic Language Plan and Scots policy.

8. In Northern Ireland, the former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure’s Irish Language Strategy 2015-35, has an objective “to increase awareness of the economic and social value of the Irish language”, and a similar objective in its Ulster-Scots Strategy 2015-35 “to maximise the economic and social benefits of the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture”.

9. The Isle of Man in its “Programme for Government 2016-2021; Our Island: A Special Place to Live and Work” has a commitment to “promote and support our national heritage, culture and language at home and around the world”. In particular through the following guiding principles: Promoting lifelong learning that meets our social and economic needs, makes government effective for all, maintaining our strong identity and international reputation, enabling people to live healthier lives.

10. Through the development of the Draft Manx Language Strategy there is a clear 5 year plan for effective, coordinated promotion an delivery of the Manx Language, Yn Ghaelg. The 5 year plan will commence with the opening of a cultural centre which will have language at its heart and culminate in a celebratory year of the Manx Language in 2021. There is a strategic commitment within the strategy to “ensure Manx continues to be visible, inclusive and a valued part of our distinctive, contemporary, cultural and national identity, and that the value of bilingualism is recognised.

11. Many of the above policies reflect the dual relationship that exists between IML languages and the economy, i.e.:
   - the role of the economy in sustaining and increasing the use of IML languages on the one hand, and
   - the potential of IML languages to support economic development on the other.

A. Role of the economy in sustaining and increasing use of IML languages

(i) Jobs and growth sustain IML language communities
12. The importance of the economy to the vitality of IML languages is undeniable. Jobs and growth help sustain communities, and communities sustain languages. For the languages which have the largest cohorts of speakers across BIC administrations, where there are significant numbers of communities where the languages are spoken, there is a clear focus on the importance of the economy in sustaining those communities.

13. For example, the Welsh Government (Bwrw Mlaen 2014) recognises the importance of the Welsh language in the economic development of towns such as Carmarthen, Aberystwyth and Bangor in West Wales and the predominantly Welsh-speaking communities they serve, and understands that any future development must go hand in hand with language planning. Maintaining and growing the use of the Welsh language in the economies of the main university towns which serve the communities in north and west Wales is an important component of efforts to promote the use of the language in those areas. As such, it is a strategic priority for the Welsh Government to support these communities. There is no doubt that the economic situation, and the availability of job opportunities in particular, is a major factor in the movement of Welsh speakers from their home communities.

14. In Ireland, as part of a strategic language process, a number of Gaeltacht Service towns are being invited to prepare language plans that will support the wider use of the Irish language. Gaeltacht service towns are defined as those towns situated in or adjacent to Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and which have a significant role in providing public services, recreational, social and commercial facilities to those areas. The aim of the language plan will be to enhance the use of the Irish language in the town in so far as it relates to the broad range of activities, including family, community, educational, social, business and public matters. The Irish language is a unique selling point when businesses are attempting to achieve a competitive advantage in the market and businesses can use this as a tool to differentiate themselves from their competitors, particularly with regard to providing a service through Irish for their Gaeltacht customers.

15. In recent months, the Scottish Government has provided financial support to work undertaken by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) to develop an e-school. The project is the direct result of the recognition that the young people of the Gaelic language community in the area need to be able to engage with the qualifications and skills base that will allow them to enter careers which use Gaelic and importantly remain in the community. This initiative will help address serious workforce issues in teaching and healthcare across the islands and provide career pathways for those involved. In addition, other Local Authorities have recognised the benefits that the e-school can deliver for their young people and have engaged with the development.
16. Several of the areas where Irish language regeneration is strongest in Northern Ireland have developed important economic dimensions to their language initiatives. These include a number of small, community-business enterprises that provide some employment opportunities and fundraising capacity that contribute towards the sustainability of their wider language-regeneration initiatives. Initiatives in An Carn, in Derry, in An Drochead, in south Belfast, in Armagh City, in Derry city and in the Gaeltacht quarter in Belfast contribute significantly to the longer-term sustainability of the language initiatives in these areas. Several community-based Irish language projects are also seeking to combine the development of language centres or Cultúrlanna with economic activities, such as hiring out their premises, running functions and events that generate a small income for the project.

(ii) Use of IML languages by the business community normalises language use and contributes to status and prestige

17. The Work Sector received evidence of many businesses across jurisdictions that successfully embrace the use of IML languages that provide guidance or inspiration to their peers. In some jurisdictions, support is provided to business by administrations, or agencies on their behalf, to develop use of IML languages.

18. There are many different ways in which business choose to use IML languages, including²:

- **as the explicit heart/core of the business** – where the IML language is fundamental to the enterprise;

- **as an inherent/implicit element of the business** – where the IML language has influenced and inspired the enterprise or business owner;

- **used within the business or product names** – including for business names, product or service names, branding, company logos, etc.

- **used in signage for the business** – either on its own, or in bilingual signage.

- **used in advertising, promotion & marketing** – either on its own or bilingually.

² Adapted from Ar Stòras Gàidhlig (Our Gaelic Resource), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2014)  
http://www.hie.co.uk/community-support/support-for-gaelic-development/gaelic-research.html
• **used to enhance the experience of the service or product** – for visitors (e.g. to museums and heritage sites), customers, etc.

• **used to make events, performances, etc. bilingual** – i.e. the IML language being a key part of events, performances, festivals, etc.

• **as the language of the workplace** – where the IML language is the language of communication between staff within the business.

• **as the language of external communication** – where the IML language is used in communication between staff and customers, staff and suppliers, etc.

19. A number of **case studies** from across jurisdictions of business which embrace IML languages are included at annex 1.

**Support for businesses**

20. The Work Sector learnt about practical support provided to business to use IML languages.

21. In Ireland, a dedicated regional development authority, Údarás na Gaeltachta [www.udaras.ie], has responsibility for the economic, social, and cultural development of the Gaeltacht (Irish speaking areas). In that context, Údarás combines funding for a wide range of enterprise development and job creation initiatives in addition to promotion of the language in the business and community sectors.

22. **Gnó le Gaeilge** (Business in Irish) [www.udaras.ie/en/an-ghaeilge-an-ghaeltacht/tionscnaimh-teanga/gaeilge-agus-gno/] is an information pack developed by Údarás for businesses located in Gaeltacht areas. It provides practical guidance on how to incorporate use of Irish into their business in various ways, including branding, marketing, written and spoken communication, as well as providing advice on supporting staff to use and learn Irish in the workplace.

23. Outside the Gaeltacht areas, Foras na Gaeilge [www.forasnagaeilge.ie] has responsibility for the promotion of Irish language on an all-island basis. Foras offers a service “Gnó Means Business” to provide advice and assistance to businesses who wish to use the Irish language as a practical and productive business tool. In addition to many strategic collaborations to provide support for events and activities in the business sector, Foras has developed a new accreditation – **Q-Mharc** – for businesses that are functioning bi-lingually from 2016 onwards.
24. In Wales, the Welsh Language Commissioner provides a service for business to undertake a self-assessment questionnaire to establish their current Welsh language provision as a basis for developing a progress plan. The Welsh Government and the Mentrau Iaith (local language initiatives) are currently working with the Commissioner to develop further practical support to businesses who wish to develop their Welsh language provision.

25. **Highland and Islands Enterprise** (HIE) focus is now firmly on working with businesses, social enterprises and community organisations that can demonstrate adding economic and social value through using Gaelic as an asset. Their renewed Gaelic Language Plan aims to further develop and enhance the role that Gaelic identity and culture plays in creating vibrant, resilient communities and sustainable economic growth. In addition Comunn na Gaidhlig have previously provided support packs to businesses interested in developing their Gaelic as part of their operations. This has included providing signage and administration of a student placement scheme which provides financial support to businesses that employ students to take forward Gaelic development projects.

26. In Northern Ireland the **Gaeltacht Quarter Action Plan** aimed at economic and social innovation and regeneration of the Belfast Gaeltacht Quarter is being implemented and an Irish Language Academy and Ulster –Scots Institute will be developed. Consideration is also being given to the potential of extending a Gaeltacht Quarter-type Regeneration Plan to Shankill, Belfast and/or for the development of a similar Ulster-Scots plan. Actions are being taken to further develop the Gaeltacht Quarter International Communication Strategy and Economic Strategy.

27. The **Ulster-Scots Community Network** has recently established a social economy project focussing on heritage/tourism whilst another group ‘Small Steps’, has a social economy business and plans to develop a small social economy project to develop product lines reflecting Ulster-Scots in Belfast.

28. In the Isle of Man in order to increase engagement with the Manx Language by Government departments, community and business the aim is to “work with Government departments and the business sector to facilitate appropriate training relevant to language and culture, reinforcing positive national and cultural identity”. Furthermore this strategy supports the place of culture and language within the island being awarded prestigious UNESCO Biosphere designation, which was confirmed in 2016.

B. Potential of IML languages to support economic development

29. Exploration of the association between language and the economy has given rise to research activity in a range of areas. A number of these tend to be grouped
under the heading ‘economics of language’ and the ‘economics of language planning’. Consideration of the economic and employment benefits of bilingualism in the labour market have focussed to a large extent on the US context although there have been attempts also to reach conclusions about the advantage of skills in Irish in the labour market. A study commissioned by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2014 explores the current and potential role of Gaelic as an economic and social asset, and a recently completed study on the contribution of the Basque language to the economy of the Basque Country presents an attempt to quantify the economic value of the language (Eusko Jaurlaritza 2015).

30. The findings of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) study *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig (Our Gaelic Resource)* (2014) was presented to the BIC IML Work Sector last year. This is seen as the most significant piece of research to date on the economic benefits from the Gaelic language. It researched ways in which Gaelic is currently being used to deliver economic and social benefits to businesses, social enterprises and communities, and how its impact can be maximised.

31. The resulting report demonstrated how the Gaelic language is currently being used to add value in a wide variety of circumstances and highlights its considerable potential to bring further benefits to businesses, communities, individuals and social enterprises which currently use Gaelic. Almost 70% of businesses consulted said that Gaelic is an asset to their activities with more than half of businesses (60%) and 85% of community organisations who responded to the survey stated that Gaelic features as a key element of their work. Examining data from the respondents, the researchers were able to quantify that the combined impact on turnover which was attributable to their use of Gaelic totalled £5.6m. From this result, they calculated that the potential economic value of Gaelic as an asset to the wider Scottish economy could be from £81.6m to £148.5m. HIE plan to build upon this study to ensure they maximise the results of the research.

32. The BIC IML Work Sector also learnt about a study looking at the economic benefits associated with the Irish language which accrue to Galway City and to the Galway Gaeltacht (2009). This study showed that the Irish language is worth in excess of €136 million annually to the economy of Galway City and County (approximately €59 million accruing to the city). It is worth noting that more than 91% of Galway city businesses surveyed as part of this study felt that the Irish language was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to Galway city’s cultural identity, that it is a tourism asset and unique selling point in terms of Galway’s image. Another key finding was that, within the tourism sector, the Galway Gaeltacht Irish language Summer colleges represent an important economic activity, generating €14 million in revenue for the Galway area in 2007. A further
33. In terms of some of the challenges to be overcome, there is a need to increase awareness and positivity among businesses outside of Gaeltacht areas and among the public at large in addition to continuing to engage with new technology as it develops. A thesis in 2008 evaluating the Irish language in branding concluded that only a small number of companies operating in Ireland use the Irish language, with 94% of same located in Gaeltacht areas where availability of funding is a major factor. Studies by Ipsos MRBI on public reaction to the increased use of Irish by businesses found that favourability towards increased visibility of Irish in advertising and marketing was significantly down (48%) in 2011 (possibly influenced by prioritisation of spend in recessionary times), although this increased to 55% in 2012. The study also noted that while support for the increased use of Irish by business in day-to-day dealings lags behind the increased visibility, this has increased by 5% to 44% in 2012.

34. In Wales, whilst some studies have been undertaken by academics and other organisations to explore aspects of the relationship between the Welsh language and the economy, it is acknowledged that the evidence base in relation to the Welsh language and the economy needs to be strengthened. The Welsh Language Commissioner recently published a report which adds to the evidence base in relation to the Welsh language and the economy. The Commissioners findings in her “Welsh in the shopping basket” report highlighted the role the Welsh language plays in:

- supermarkets establishing relationships with their customers
- supermarkets establishing links with the communities they serve
- food labelling
- distinguishing products as local produce

35. In 2014, the Welsh Language Commissioner also published the findings from research she commissioned on the Value of the Welsh Language to the Food and Drink Sector. The Commissioner reported that the strategic findings of the research were that using the Welsh language:

- makes the product stand out
- offers opportunities to sell in new markets

---

3 http://www.comisiynyddygymraeg.cymru/English/Publications%20List/Archfarchnadoedd%20Saesneg.pdf
• reinforces the brand image
• ensures customer support
• increases awareness of the product
• reinforces the local origin
• is a sign of good quality

36. Indeed, the food and drink sector is identified by other jurisdictions as being prominent in using IML languages as a market differentiator – both within the local economy and helping to raise profile across administrations. Examples are cited in the Ar Stòras Gàidhlig research, as well as a recent national TV advertising campaign for Kelly’s ice cream which used Cornish. Many companies in Cornwall use Cornish in their branding, such as St Austell Brewery with their Korev lager and the Hagervor surf product company. One of the longest-standing users of Jèrriais branding is La Robeline Cider, who use the language to name their ciders and apple brandy. They also use a Jèrriais slogan “Toute la gouôte – rein d’ ajouôté!” [All the flavour, nothing added].

37. A recent exercise undertaken in Guernsey has revealed some evidence of small businesses seeing an economic value to using Guernésiais in their products. Examples include arts and crafts producers and a folk festival (further details in the annex).

38. For the smaller languages, it is harder to gather data on economic impact of IML languages. The total host population is smaller and use of the language usually scattered. The language community may currently be too small to create a range of economic opportunities for businesses to rely on, while the wider economic impacts of using the local language in branding and marketing by small companies are rarely assessed. Although contexts will always be different, the work sector is committed to continuing to share across BIC jurisdictions any emerging research on economic impact of IML languages so that common understanding and methodologies can be identified.
Annex: Case Studies of IML being used by business

Praban na Linne

Praban na Linne is a whisky retailer on Eilean Iarmain, on the Isle of Skye. Established in 1976 by Sir Iain Noble it has been a key element of the continuing developments around Eilean Iarmain since this period. Praban na Linne has one shop on the premises, although the bulk of its product is exported. Gaelic used in promoting the business – on leaflets, “even if everyone doesn’t understand”…..The company believes it possibly helps create a niche market and “gives a flavour” of the type of business Praban na Linne is.

Gaelic and Scotch Whisky

Consultations and focus group discussions have highlighted the use of Gaelic in the branding of Scotch whisky, with many suggesting that over time Gaelic has become strongly embedded in the sector. It is regarded as being a valuable asset in enhancing differentiation, emphasising the uniqueness of the product and positively contributing to customer perceptions of authenticity and provenance. Gaelic is also argued to have a role in attracting new customers in existing markets and helps to enhance the overall attractiveness of the area to visitors.

An Comunn

In the case of An Comunn who deliver the Royal National Mòd across Scotland they have found that a week’s activity in an area can be worth between £1.5 and £4m. The Mòd is hosted in a different town or city every year and this is to not only to engage more people in Gaelic culture, but also to boost the local economy.

Findings from the 2014 in Inverness generated £3,547,661 to the business community and saw a return on Highland Council’s investment in the event, with £19 spent for every £1 invested in their governing area and this rose to £25 for every £1 invested at a local level.

The study for the Royal National Mòd 2015 held in Argyll and Bute Council area generated £2,755,413, with the majority of the benefit being felt in the town of Oban. This showed there was huge return on investment in the event, with £11 spent for every £1 invested by the council in their locality.

Even with the isolation of the Mòd taking place on the Isles in 2016, the event attracted 7573 people to the Western Isles and the headline spending at the event was £2,929,701 which includes the event staging costs. This equates to a daily spend at the Mòd of £366,213.
Sark Folk Festival

Guernesiais is used in branding and merchandise for the Sark Folk Festival to promote the language and to encourage engagement with local culture. We are proud to use the language in our merchandise because it is part of our Channel Island heritage and that is something that we would like to share. It adds a bit of interest also to those who haven't been to the event as it's likely that they have to ask the person wearing the merchandise what it means. I think to have the language used prominently in our programme, merchandise, and workshops does add some intrigue and something a bit different. We do work on providing a different festival/event experience to other events in the Channel Islands so that there is variety and selection available. The language is one of a few ways in which we try to achieve this.

UEFA EURO 2016 Championships

Over the course of the EURO 2016 Championships, the Welsh language was given unprecedented exposure on an international level. Through its promotional activities, FA Wales demonstrated its commitment to the Welsh language which ultimately saw the Welsh language being used for the first time in a European Championships press conference.

The EURO Championships also saw large multinational companies see the value in using Welsh in their marketing. Over the course of the Championships, Budweiser worked with Awr Cymru (the parent company of Yr Awr Gymraeg mentioned below) and used the Welsh language on billboards and social media adverts. Adidas also made use of the Welsh language in their adverts and Konami Digital Entertainment B.V. released the first ever Welsh language cover for the officially licensed UEFA EURO 2016 game for Playstation 3 and 4. The Championships also saw Coca-cola use the Welsh language on the plastic cups it issued at Wales games.

NatWest Bank

Natwest Bank branches in north east Wales are offering Welsh language lessons to their staff to improve the customer service experience they provide to their customers.

The Welsh for banking course was developed in partnership with Coleg Cambria (FE College). Staff are given an internal recognition for their commitment to learning the language through a work-based skill certificate through Bangor University, and staff
have also noted the positive impact of being invested in and rewarded for taking part in this development.

Staff have noted that customers greatly appreciate the fact that they make the effort to provide a bilingual service and it enhances the relationship that they provide on a one-to-one basis, with a number of customers traveling to specific branches some distance away to access this service.

**Gwin Dylanwad Wine, Dolgellau**

We try and use Welsh through the business in everything we can. Whether it’s the printing, the signage, the staff speaking Welsh, or using the Welsh they’ve got. We find it important obviously for our local customers but also for visitors as well. We’ve used Twitter in Welsh but in English as well to reach. There’s such a great loyalty with people if you try and use some Welsh on Twitter, they respond very positively to it.

And it’s not just Welsh people, visitors – they’re over the moon to hear the language, to see it used. People from the continent want to know more about the language and how unique it is. So it’s very important to our business as a tourist business, but also as a local business as well.

**Yr Awr Gymraeg #yagym Welsh language hour on Twitter**

This is a Twitter network to promote Welsh language businesses and events. Businesses use the #yagym hashtag every Wednesday evening between 8pm and 9pm to tweet about their businesses and special offers etc.

https://twitter.com/yrawrgymraeg

**Lovelypop (handmade products which includes Guernesiais)**

There is definitely a sense of ownership from locals and also a quirky, individual attraction for visitors. Very often the use of Guernesiais will spark a discussion and it is definitely the first choice for locals sending Guernsey gifts away, especially for expats. There is plenty of English in the marketplace so an alternative adds to the individuality which links perfectly with the handmade message. Without a doubt the use of the Guernesiais phrases adds to the attraction for customers.

With a limited capacity for production, I would choose to make the Guernesiais version as I know it is more likely to sell. A quick look at my production over the last few years where I have made both an English and Guernesiais version of the same product shows that I sell more of the Guernesiais version.
Siopa An Carn
Originally established by Carntogher Community Association in January 2007 to promote the work of craft people and artists from all over Ireland, Siopa An Carn is now a successful business in its own right. Situated at the foot of the Carntogher Mountain, two miles outside Maghera, Co. Derry, Siopa An Carn has become popular with both the local community and tourists alike. Siopa An Carn is widely respected as a tasteful gift shop specialising in traditional and contemporary Irish crafts and gifts. www.siopaancarn.com

Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin
Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin is available for private/artistic hire. Located in the heart of Derry city, it offers a selection of unique venues and spaces, exhibiting the very best in heritage and modern architecture, as well as top quality facilities and services.

Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich
You can experience live traditional and contemporary music sessions, poetry readings, céilís, concerts, workshops and the children’s arts programme all under the one roof in Belfast.

Lloyds Bank
Lloyds Bank in the Isle of Man has been an active supporter of the Manx language over the last few years. They have provided funding to support the publication of the Manx Language versions of both “the Gruffalo” and “the Gruffalo’s Child”, whilst their staff have the opportunity through a pilot programme to learn the language in a regular lunchtime class supported by Culture Vannin. Culture Vannin is presently working with Lloyds to create a Cultural Awareness Programme for its staff. This would involve a series of events throughout the year, which would allow staff to engage in Manx culture as well as increase the visibility and usage of the language. The creation of a successful template will lead to the programme being rolled out to the other Island businesses as part of the Manx Language Strategy.