



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

Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
Office of the Secretary General

Ms. Sarah Cremin
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

7 March 2023

Dear Sarah

With regard the timely submission of Accounts to the Houses of the Oireachtas as required (under Circular 24 of 2021 to Accounting Officers) I am writing to inform you of a delay in the submission and laying of the 2020 An Foras Teanga Accounts.

An Foras Teanga, the North South Language Body, is a North South Implementation Body comprised of two agencies, Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster Scots Agency, and is subject to a number of processes across Sponsor Departments in both jurisdictions.

The requirement for both the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) to jointly certify the accounts, followed by joint agreement of the text in Annual reports by both agencies, and the current added complexity in North/South relations from the absence of the NSMC, means the approval processes takes longer.

The position in regard to An Foras Teanga Accounts for 2020 is as follows:

1. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) both signed the certificate to the 2020 Accounts on the 18 May 2022.
2. The agencies set about agreeing and finalising the text and layout of the annual report, including a joint introduction from the Chairpersons of both agencies. This process involved extensive and prolonged engagement between the two agencies and the Sponsor Departments.
3. The final agreed Annual Report and Accounts 2020 were submitted to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and the Department for Communities (Northern Ireland) on 10 November 2022.
4. A memorandum to note the Annual Report and Accounts 2020, was brought to Government on 14 February 2023.
5. Once noted by the Government, the Annual Report and Accounts 2020 were both laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly on 16 February 2023.


The dual oversight of the North South Implementation Bodies and many of the steps outlined above are outside the control of this Department contributed to a delay in the laying of An Foras Teanga's accounts.

Going forward every effort is and will be made to complete the process within a reasonable timeframe.

As previously advised, I have also established systems to monitor progress on Annual Reports and Accounts, ensure that the Clerk to the Committee of Public Accounts is informed of any delays and that the process for approving Annual Reports and Accounts and laying them before the Houses of Oireachtas will improve over the coming year. I am arranging for the Department to write to all the bodies under the aegis of the Department, advising them of the requirement to submit annual accounts to the Department within one month of the C&AG sign off, regardless of the status of the accompanying annual report.

Should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katherine Licken', written over a horizontal line.

Katherine Licken
Secretary General