

# **Bilingual 2030**

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## **Summary**

Taiwan is a major trading nation and plays a key role in global supply chains. As more and more multinational corporations have invested in Taiwan in recent years, demand for local talent with bilingual proficiency has greatly increased. At the same time, to meet trends in global supply chain deployment, Taiwanese enterprises also require large numbers of professionals who possess a wide range of expertise and skills, including English proficiency and international mobility. To boost the competitiveness of Taiwan's young people and enable them to gain better job opportunities and higher salaries, the government has launched the Bilingual 2030 policy. Build upon Taiwan's advantages as a Mandarin-speaking nation, this policy aims to enhance young people's English communication capabilities, further their professional expertise and skills, and strengthen their global competitiveness.

Taking a holistic approach to cultivating bilingual talent, the government has cooperated with the British Council to carry out a survey of students in the final year of junior high school and senior high school (equivalent to grade 9 and grade 12 students in the US system) for an international comparative assessment of English proficiency so as to better understand the current status of Taiwan's bilingual education and provide a baseline for future planning and implementation strategies. In the education domain, the government will adopt a dual-track approach of focused cultivation and general improvement, i.e., nurturing an elite group of students in key professional fields while also comprehensively raising the English communication ability of all youth. Digital learning will be deployed to reduce resource gaps between regions. Affordable and convenient English proficiency tests will be provided for the general public to help them ascertain

how their English proficiency compares with international standards. In the civil service, the goal is to gradually enhance English proficiency of all personnel, with priority given to those who handle international affairs.

Since the Bilingual 2030 policy seeks to achieve long-term goals, the government will legislate to establish a related administrative agency with a set budget in order to ensure that this important policy, which is vital for raising the international competitiveness of Taiwan's workforce, can be steadily implemented. The policy will enable Taiwanese professionals to enhance their bilingual skills and bolster their international competitiveness. Furthermore, it is expected to attract more multinational corporations to set up operations in Taiwan and encourage Taiwan's industries to connect with the world, thereby creating a brighter and more prosperous future for coming generations.

## **I. Why promote a bilingual 2030?**

### **(I) Introduction**

Taiwan is a major trading nation strategically situated in the Indo-Pacific region. By capitalizing on its geographic advantages to create its own niche in the global economy, Taiwan has laid a solid foundation for its national economic development. Supply chain restructuring caused by globalization, the fourth industrial revolution, the US-China trade war, and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as changing patterns in global economic development resulting from the rapid development of the digital economy, are clear trends that will continue to exert a great influence in the years ahead. Amid these changes, governments and industries across the world are deploying advance strategies and vying for top talent. At the same time, professionals in all countries are striving to enhance their own competitiveness in order to stand out in this fierce competition.

To make Taiwan into a pivotal force in the global economy and thereby provide its citizens with higher-quality job opportunities, the government has successively launched initiatives such as the Five Plus Two Industrial Innovation and the Six Core Strategic Industries programs. Along with efforts to optimize the investment environment, these measures have already attracted a growing number of multinational corporations and technology giants to invest in Taiwan or set up R&D and innovation hubs here. This is also leading to greater demand among multinational corporations for local talent with bilingual skills, whether in AIoT R&D centers or offshore wind farm projects. At the same time, domestic firms also require large numbers of professionals who possess a wide range of expertise and skills, including English proficiency and international mobility, to adjust to global supply chain restructuring and explore business opportunities overseas.

Therefore, to enable the next generation to enjoy better job and salary opportunities, Taiwan's workers must not only align their professional expertise with international standards, but also be able to communicate and collaborate with counterparts from other countries and work in global markets targeted by Taiwan's industries. The government has launched the Bilingual 2030 policy precisely to boost the competitiveness of Taiwan's young generation. Building on our national advantage as a Mandarin-speaking nation, it aims to further enhance English communication skills among young people. Equipped with better proficiency in English, they will be able to use the language as a tool for absorbing knowledge, broadening their international outlook, and bolstering their global competitiveness. The policy also aims to utilize digital learning to narrow the resource gap between regions in order to help disadvantaged children acquire language skills that can help them obtain high-quality job opportunities, thereby gradually creating a brighter future for coming generations.

In addition, the government will improve English skills in government agencies through examination and training mechanisms. The government has already put considerable effort into improving the English environment and enhancing the provision of English-language services for foreign nationals working in Taiwan. In the future, the government will continue to strive to create a bilingual-friendly environment, particularly with regard to policy, laws and regulations, and the living environment, so as to provide foreign enterprises and professionals with greater convenience in doing business and living in Taiwan. As for raising the English proficiency of civil servants, priority will be given to those handling

international affairs. The policy plans to advance step by step in promoting the capacity of government agencies to use English in conducting international affairs, gradually increasing the overall English proficiency of the nation's civil service.

In summary, the Bilingual 2030 policy, with regard to talent cultivation and the creation of high-quality job opportunities, will be guided by a twofold vision.

**A. Helping Taiwan's workforce connect with the world**

The policy aims to enhance the bilingual skills of Taiwan's professionals so as to make them more competitive in the global arena and equip them with an international outlook.

**B. Attracting international enterprises to Taiwan; enabling Taiwanese industries to connect to global markets and create high-quality jobs**

By forging a bilingual 2030 and attracting international enterprises to invest and set up operations in Taiwan, and by enabling domestic enterprises with bilingual capabilities to connect to the world, international business opportunities can be expanded for domestic enterprises and high-quality job opportunities can be created for Taiwanese citizens.

**(II) British Council's assessment of Taiwanese students' English proficiency**

In order to gain a better understanding of Taiwanese students' English proficiency, the Ministry of Education collaborated with the British Council to conduct a sample survey<sup>1</sup> on grade 9 (age 15) and grade 12 (age 18) students through assessments, questionnaires, and other means. The survey found the following:

**A. The overall English level of 20 percent of grade 12 students reached the B2 level or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for**

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<sup>1</sup> The sampling method was designed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) based on its rich experience of large-scale international education surveys. The method echoed important international comparative education survey practices and experiences over the past 10 years, especially surveys used by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)—such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)—and for OECD-related studies, particularly the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). These surveys are highly regarded globally because of their high quality and their important contributions to global education research and policy development.

Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR<sup>2</sup>), but with considerable unevenness of performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In particular, they performed far better in the receptive skills of reading and listening than in the productive skills of writing and speaking. At present, the percentages of grade 12 students achieving CEFR B2 and above are, per skill, 27.68 percent (listening), 27.32 percent (reading), 19.81 percent (writing), and 8.27 percent (speaking). In other words, although students with a good English level will not experience major problems with reading English textbooks and listening to English instruction, many of them will encounter difficulties in writing English reports or participating in classroom discussions. The top priority for Taiwanese students is thus to substantially improve their speaking and writing skills in order to participate in courses fully conducted in English.

**B.** Domestic and foreign studies indicate that when students' English proficiency reaches a level equivalent to CEFR B2 or C (equivalent to passing the high-intermediate or advanced level of Taiwan's General English Proficiency Test, GEPT), they have the basic proficiency to take courses fully conducted in English, and their efforts to learn professional content will not be affected by unfamiliarity with the language of instruction. According to the survey conducted by the British Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in 2020-2021, at present 17.1 percent of Taiwan's grade 12 students have reached CEFR B2 level and 4.3 percent are at C level, together making up 21.4 percent of all students. That is to say, one-fifth of grade 12 students already have the basic ability to take courses fully conducted in English, a favorable condition for promoting bilingualism in higher education.

A regional comparison of the British Council's assessment results indicate that students in the six special municipalities demonstrate better performance in all of

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<sup>2</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) divides language skills into six levels, which are A1 (breakthrough or beginner), A2 (waystage or elementary), B1 (threshold or intermediate), B2 (vantage or upper intermediate), C1 (effective operational proficiency or advanced), and C2 (mastery or proficiency).

the four skills than students in other cities and counties. Grade 9 students in northern Taiwan performed better than those in other regions; grade 12 students in central Taiwan have caught up with their counterparts in northern Taiwan; and students in eastern Taiwan performed worse than those in other parts of the country. In total, 6.5 percent of grade 9 students, and 21.4 percent of grade 12 students, were at B2 (high-intermediate) level.

The British Council survey shows that the number of Taiwanese students with English proficiency at the high-intermediate level or above is not insubstantial. Indeed, with measures promoted under the Bilingual 2030 policy, it is not an unattainable goal to have our citizens achieve a high English proficiency. Based on the British Council survey, the following approaches could be taken for the Bilingual 2030 policy:

- A.** The survey results show that with their senior high school education, grade 12 students have a solid foundation in English. If their future university departments use English as a medium of instruction (EMI), this will be favorable to our country's cultivation of bilingual professionals. Hence, it is evident that promoting EMI in tertiary education is feasible and necessary.
- B.** In general, students are relatively weak in speaking and writing English. Therefore, implementation strategies should focus on improvement in these two skills. In particular, during the national 12-year compulsory education stage, emphasis should be placed on equipping students with the ability to freely express their thoughts in English.
- C.** In order to narrow gaps between regions, the government must ensure that internet facilities and mobile devices are sufficient for the education needs in remote areas. It is also essential that digital learning capabilities be enhanced, so that high-quality English teaching materials can be transmitted to every school via digital technology, thereby supporting teachers' on-site bilingual teaching and compensating for the lack of resources in remote areas.

## **II. How to proceed?**

To achieve the goal of forging a bilingual 2030, based upon the current status of our grade 9 and grade 12 students' English proficiency and in accordance with the policy's focus areas, government action in the education sphere will emphasize college and senior high school education, supplemented by fostering English proficiency at all stages of schooling. The government will provide teaching materials and assist bilingual teachers through digital learning. Other measures include offering affordable, convenient, and internationally certified English proficiency test options for those wishing to know the progress they have made in their studies.

At the same time, civil service exams and civil servant training will be geared toward raising English-language skills. The initial focus will be on those civil servants whose work is related to international affairs and who must be able to use English in their daily work. Efforts will then be made to gradually raise English proficiency throughout the civil service. Furthermore, in consideration of the fact that this policy has set long-term goals, the government will legislate the establishment of an administrative body to serve as a dedicated agency for working with government departments and the private sector to ensure that the policy, which is critical to develop internationally competitive talent, can be carried out in a systematic and step-by-step manner and will not be discarded halfway due to changes in government personnel.

In summary, the Bilingual 2030 policy, besides continuing to optimize an English-friendly environment for foreigners living and working in Taiwan, will focus on the following six goals: accelerating the development of bilingual higher education; optimizing bilingual conditions in a balanced manner for education at and below the senior high school level; developing digital learning; expanding the

provision of English proficiency test capacities; raising civil servants' English proficiency; and establishing an administrative body dedicated to policy promotion and implementation.

## **(I) Accelerating the development of bilingual higher education**

### **A. Why the need for acceleration?**

From the perspectives of both students and universities, Taiwan must accelerate the development of bilingual higher education before 2030.

Students are faced with rapid globalization and digital technology, as well as intensifying competition with young people from neighboring countries. To secure good jobs and incomes after graduation, future university students in Taiwan will have to be able to keep pace with international developments in their field of expertise, communicate and collaborate with professionals from other countries, and even work in markets worldwide in line with the deployment of Taiwanese industries. All of these challenges will require a high level of English proficiency.

Universities must equip their students with the ability to compete in the global job market and endow Taiwan's youth with a more global perspective to help them understand the world's different cultures and to communicate and interact with people from different backgrounds. All-English instruction is an effective tool for these purposes. Furthermore, faced with Taiwan's low birth rate and the intense global competition in higher education, universities must step up their bilingual efforts and substantially raise the level of internationalization to create better conditions to attract international students and to recruit first-class professors and researchers from overseas.

### **B. Foundations, conditions, and challenges of bilingual higher education**

There are well-established foundations with regard to professors and courses

as well as favorable conditions concerning students' skill levels for speeding up bilingual development of Taiwan's higher education in the next 10 years.

**(A)** Taiwan's higher education has a track record of teaching excellence and boasts top-notch universities. In addition, programs such as the Higher Education Sprout Project, the Yushan Scholar Program, and the flexible salary plan have further injected resources to advance internationalization. Currently, about 19 percent of all full-time faculty—nearly 7,000 teachers—have conducted EMI courses. Meanwhile, EMI courses constitute 4.5 percent of all higher education courses nationwide. A solid foundation thus exists for the further expansion of EMI courses in Taiwan's colleges and universities.

**(B)** Domestic and foreign studies indicate that when students' English proficiency reaches CEFR B2 or C (equivalent to high-intermediate or advanced level GEPT), they have the basic proficiency required to take courses fully conducted in English and are not affected by unfamiliarity with the language of instruction in learning professional content. According to a survey conducted by the British Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in 2020-2021, at present 17.1 percent of Taiwan's grade 12 students have reached CEFR B2 level and 4.3 percent are at C level, together making up 21.4 percent of the total number of grade 12 students. In other words, one-fifth of grade 12 students already have the listening and reading abilities (receptive skills) to take courses fully conducted in English. This is a highly favorable condition for pushing forward the bilingual development of higher education.

Nonetheless, challenges remain in Taiwan's endeavor to push bilingual higher education, including the following:

**(A)** Although based on the study mentioned above, one-fifth of Taiwan's grade 12 students have on average already reached CEFR B2 or above, their performance across the four English skills of listening, speaking,

reading, and writing is considerably uneven. In particular, their performance in the two receptive skills of reading and listening is far superior to their performance in the two productive skills of writing and speaking. At present, the percentages of grade 12 students at CEFR B2 level in these four skills are 27.68 percent for listening, 27.32 percent for reading, 19.81 percent for writing, and 8.27 percent for speaking. In other words, although students with a good English level will not have major problems reading English textbooks and listening to English instruction, many of them are likely to encounter difficulties in writing English reports or participating in classroom discussions. The top priority for Taiwanese students is thus to substantially improve their ability to speak and write in English in order to participate in courses conducted entirely in the language.

- (B)** Since the majority of university freshmen will not have had any experience of taking EMI courses in specialized subjects, e.g., mathematics, natural sciences, or social sciences, they will need to first receive coaching in English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) before they start to take EMI courses in university. For example, students in engineering departments should take a preparatory ESAP course for their field of study in their first year, and students in humanities and social sciences departments should take an ESAP course designed for their specific subject in the first year.
- (C)** Although a considerable proportion of university faculty already have the ability to teach EMI courses, and even more of them have the potential to do so, these teachers need a friendly and effective training system and sufficient teaching resources (such as teaching assistants). At the same time, a wide range of support measures are needed, such as incentives, mentoring, teaching evaluation, and administration.
- (D)** Although many universities in Taiwan have been promoting EMI

courses for some time, a proven and effective implementation model must still be developed. How can schools greatly improve university students' English speaking and writing skills in their freshman year? How to enable students to smoothly adapt to all-English learning in their fields of academic specialization? What assistance can be given to teachers to establish or improve all-English teaching skills? How to provide both teachers and students with an all-English teaching and learning environment that, though challenging, still remains friendly and offers a sense of security? All of these issues require beacon bilingual universities and colleges to lead the way in the development of success models, which can then be implemented throughout the higher education sector to jointly overcome challenges.

### **C. Strategies and goals for the promotion of bilingual higher education**

The Ministry of Education has already drawn up the Plan to Bilingualize Learning for Students in Institutions of Higher Education. Over the next 10 years, it will invest resources and assist universities in speeding up bilingualization through the following five strategies:

#### **(A) Developing an effective and successful promotion model through beacon bilingual schools and colleges**

The Ministry of Education will select universities and colleges nationwide that are willing to speed up the implementation of bilingual teaching and that meet specific threshold conditions. In addition to providing subsidies, the Ministry of Education will collaborate with the British Council, which boasts tremendous expertise and experience in promoting all-English teaching throughout the world, to provide consulting services to universities. At the same time, the Ministry of Education will promote cooperation with universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and other countries, and invite international scholars and experts to provide assistance to Taiwanese

universities, so as to ensure that every university can develop an effective model for successfully implementing bilingualization in accordance with its own particular characteristics and favorable conditions. According to the Ministry's plan, three beacon bilingual universities and 18 beacon bilingual colleges will be chosen from well-performing institutions by 2024 and six beacon bilingual universities and 30 beacon bilingual colleges by 2030.

**(B) Using student performance as key indicator**

Student performance will be used as the most important key performance indicator (KPI) for the implementation of bilingualization in higher education, with particular emphasis on two aspects. Firstly, schools must be able to effectively support the training of a considerable proportion of students to enable them to reach CEFR B2 or C level of English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing before taking all-English courses. This will ensure that the students are able to absorb the professional content of such courses. Secondly, schools must establish effective mechanisms to encourage and support a considerable proportion of students to take a certain number of all-English courses among their course credits.

**(C) Achieving targets of “25-20-20” by 2024 and “50-50-50” by 2030**

For beacon bilingual universities and colleges, concrete quantitative indicators are as follows: By 2024, at least 25 percent of all sophomores in the university or college should have reached at least CEFR B2 level English proficiency in listening, speaking, writing, and reading, and at least 20 percent of sophomores and first-year master's degree students in the university or college should have done at least 20 percent of their credits in all-English courses for that academic year (i.e., the “25-20-20” target). By 2030, at least 50 percent of all sophomores in the university or college should have achieved at least CEFR B2 level English

proficiency in listening, speaking, writing, and reading, and at least 50 percent of sophomores and master's degree students in the university or college should have done at least 50 percent of their credits in all-English courses for that academic year (i.e., the “50-50-50” target).

**(D) Setting future directions based on past experience**

In 2020, the Ministry of Education commissioned the British Council to conduct an in-depth survey of the past experiences of 15 domestic universities in implementing bilingual teaching. Based on the results of this survey, the Ministry formulated the directions for its current plan. For example, besides the need to have concrete and feasible implementation strategies, supportive measures, and phased targets, schools must first achieve consensus with all faculty and students on the implementation of bilingual programs. Dedicated units in schools must also be created to oversee implementation. In addition, both students and teachers must be given adequate training and support. Such directions based on a review of past experiences will help ensure that the current plan for the bilingualization of higher education will generate better results than in the past.

**(E) Regional centers and online courses to help students nationwide improve English proficiency**

The Ministry of Education will select certain beacon bilingual universities to serve as regional centers and assist other universities within their region with improving students' English proficiency and implementing all-English teaching. They will also provide online all-English courses for college students throughout Taiwan. It is expected that there will be four such regional centers by 2024, with 124 online all-English courses made available; and six regional centers by 2030, with 558 online courses.

## **(II) Balancing and optimizing bilingual conditions for schools at the senior high school level and below**

The various educational bilingualization strategies at senior high schools and below will neither involve adjusting implementation of the 2019 curriculum guidelines nor infringe on existing curriculum resources. Instead, these strategies will add resources to strengthen the 2019 curriculum, focusing on the development of core competencies. The strategies emphasize that students' learning is not limited to subject knowledge and skills and that attention should also be paid to connecting learning with life. This is exactly the aim of the Bilingual 2030 policy: students not only learn English as an academic subject, but also use English to explore the world and learn about other fields of knowledge.

### **A. The necessity and basis for promoting bilingualization at senior high schools and below from the perspective of international ratings**

The government's efforts are aimed at creating an immersive bilingual learning environment and increasing situations in which students can use English. According to the survey of 5,772 students from 438 junior and senior high schools that was conducted by the British Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in 2020-2021, the percentages of grade 9 students reaching CEFR B1 level or above in English listening and reading were 58.09 percent and 37.85 percent, respectively, while the corresponding percentages for grade 12 students were 67.53 percent and 54.29 percent. This indicates that most of Taiwanese students possess considerable English listening and reading abilities and should be able to correctly interpret classroom instructions in a bilingual setting. Therefore, the government can proceed to implement bilingual teaching as a means of strengthening students' ability to express themselves in English. During the compulsory education stage, the aim should be to establish an immersive bilingual learning environment in all schools.

The 2020 Taiwan Assessment of Student Achievement: Longitudinal Study (TASAL) found that socioeconomic status of grade 7 and grade 8 students was associated with their English learning performance but not with their degree of progress. The conclusion is that the impact of socioeconomic status on students' English proficiency has already been formed by grade 7, meaning that strategies aimed at offsetting this impact should start at the elementary school level. Furthermore, looking at students with the same socioeconomic status and the same starting ability, there is a higher rate of progress in English proficiency for those in urban areas than those in remote and other areas, demonstrating that there is an urban-rural gap in teaching efficacy at the junior high school level. For children who live in remote areas and lack resources, there is a greater need for digital means to provide them with online English learning without time limits, so as to help them build language skills that will enhance their future prospects in the job market and make up for their relative lack of education support.

In consideration of the need for proactive investment of resources to offset the learning gap in remote areas, in 2018 the Ministry of Education announced the Act for Education Development of Schools in Remote Areas, creating provisions for a stable supply of teachers to properly staff schools in remote areas. In recent years, the Ministry has also injected significant resources in schools in remote areas to help them overcome deficiencies regarding English education. However, the remote location of such schools means that there is a relative lack of environmental and cultural stimulation in their surroundings, which poses a challenge for students to maintain engagement in English learning. In order to bridge this learning gap, the government must evenly distribute resources to schools to ensure that all children learn English on an equal footing. Therefore, the fair and universal implementation of bilingual education in schools at the senior high school level and below must be

accelerated with the greatest urgency.

Bilingualization in Taiwan's schools at the senior high school level and below will gather pace in the next 10 years. A solid foundation already exists with regard to curriculums, teachers, and students. In terms of teachers and curriculums, a pilot program was launched in schools with immersive English teaching features in the 2018/19 school year, with a total of 85 schools participating. Featuring a team of English and subject teachers, this program has helped schools develop lessons and augment teachers' capabilities. A clear model for implementation has been put in place. As for students, the survey conducted by the British Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Education showed that many students have already reached CEFR B1 level or above in English listening and reading. The implementation of bilingual teaching will build on this basis to enhance their speaking and writing skills.

**B. Strategies and goals for bilingualization at senior high schools and below**

By comprehensively increasing capabilities and narrowing gaps, and through focused cultivation, the government will steadily press ahead with bilingual education at the senior high school level and below over the coming decade. The aim is to generally strengthen students' English proficiency.

**(A) Comprehensively increasing capabilities**

**a. Enhancing students' ability to use English in daily life**

At present, there are about 17,000 Taiwanese English teachers. The focus will be on cultivating these teachers' professional knowledge of oral teaching, increasing the frequency with which students can practice English dialogue, and bolstering students' oral participation in class. Other measures include promoting the teaching of English courses entirely in English; subsidizing bilingual teaching in some fields and subjects; helping science-focused schools develop English courses and activities; building foundations and utilizing diverse

learning methods to expand opportunities for students to use English in learning environments; assisting students in establishing habits of using spoken and written English to obtain domain knowledge and skills; and strengthening students' English listening and speaking skills to raise their English proficiency and build up their ability to compete in the future job market.

By 2024, 60 percent of schools at the senior high school level and below nationwide are expected to adopt all-English teaching in English class, and one in every seven schools is expected to implement bilingual teaching in some fields and subjects. And by 2030, 100 percent of schools at the senior high school level and below nationwide are expected to adopt all-English teaching in English class, and one in every three schools is expected to implement bilingual teaching in some fields and subjects.

**b. Promoting interschool cooperation**

Another strategy is to establish mutually beneficial arrangements between schools at the senior high school level and below in Taiwan and overseas (e.g., the UK, US, and Australia), thereby helping domestic schools form sister-school partnerships with overseas schools. Overseas sister schools can conduct online bilingual teaching for specific courses, while domestic schools can provide online courses in Mandarin to the overseas school. Through such reciprocal exchanges, students will have more opportunities to communicate in English. The goal is for one in every 14 schools nationwide to establish a partnership with a foreign sister school by 2024 and for one in every six schools nationwide to do so by 2030.

**c. Advancing digital learning**

The government seeks to provide English learning without

limitations of time or space, including by using artificial intelligence to enhance the interactive functions of the Cool English platform. It also aims to establish English listening and speaking ability testing systems to match real-life scenarios at each stage of learning and offer students free, high-quality English self-learning resources. Also, university students will be recruited to partner with students in remote areas for real-time conversation practice. The goal is for schools to use the Cool English platform to test and assess students' English learning status, so that teachers can employ differentiated instruction accordingly to help students learn more effectively. By 2024, 40 percent of schools at the senior high school level and below nationwide are expected to utilize the Cool English platform to conduct online English tests for assessing students' English listening and speaking skills. By 2030, 100 percent of schools at the senior high school level and below are expected to do so.

**d. Increasing bilingual manpower**

Measures to increase bilingual manpower include educating bilingual teachers, organizing bilingual teaching credit courses for in-service teachers in primary and secondary schools, selecting teachers to take part in overseas short-term training courses, providing all-English teacher training opportunities in Taiwan for English teachers, and expanding programs for the recruitment of foreign English teachers and teaching assistants. By providing teachers with opportunities for advanced study at home and abroad, their professional bilingual teaching skills will be enhanced and their international outlook broadened. Also, by increasing schools' faculty quotas, there will be more opportunities to hire foreign English teachers and set up bilingual experimental classes in senior high schools or implement bilingual teaching in senior high schools and

below. These foreign teachers will work with local English and bilingual teachers to prepare courses. Their presence will also help create an English communication environment that is closer to students' life experience, arousing students' interest in learning English and boosting their motivation for using English to communicate. By 2024, the goal is to have a total of 6,000 Taiwanese bilingual teachers, with one of every five schools nationwide hiring foreign English teachers or part-time foreign English teaching assistants. By 2030, the goal is to have a total of 15,000 Taiwanese bilingual teachers, with all public primary and secondary schools nationwide hiring foreign English teachers or part-time foreign English teaching assistants and with one of every three public senior high schools nationwide employing foreign English teachers.

**(B) Narrowing gaps**

By providing subsidies for mobile devices to all junior high schools and elementary schools in remote areas, the government aims to leverage multimedia teaching resources and equipment and improve the use of digital teaching media by English teachers in these areas to help their students learn English. This will also enable students to borrow mobile devices that they can use after class to log into the Cool English platform established by the Ministry of Education's K-12 Education Administration and use the platform's resources for English self-study. Furthermore, the government will offer funds for university students (including both international and domestic students) to help students in remote areas who lack resources to learn English either via online channels or in person at schools. This will boost students' motivation, help eliminate the urban-rural gap in English learning, and advance the government's policy of caring for rural communities. By 2022, all schools in remote areas nationwide should have mobile devices for

digital English learning.

### **(C) Focused cultivation**

All special municipality and county (city) governments will be requested to encourage all senior high schools under their jurisdiction to establish bilingual experimental classes in accordance with the Senior High School Education Act and the Regulations for Conducting Experimental Education in Senior High Schools. Apart from using English for teaching English classes, and using Mandarin for Mandarin and social science classes, bilingual teaching will be increasingly used for other subjects. This aims to raise students' English listening and speaking skills, foster their ability to use English for learning, and cultivate Taiwan's talent to be at international standards and thereby raise national competitiveness. At the same time, to meet the needs of senior high schools' bilingual experimental classes, training and advanced courses will be held for bilingual teachers to enrich their capabilities. By 2024, one of every eight senior high schools nationwide should have opened bilingual experimental classes, and students in such classes should all reach CEFR B1 level or above in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By 2030, one in every four senior high schools nationwide should have opened bilingual experimental classes, and students in such classes should all reach the CEFR B1 level or above in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

### **(III) Developing digital learning**

In the present digital age, emerging digital technologies and digital learning platforms are critical tools for implementing Taiwan's Bilingual 2030 policy. Digital technology enables English learning resources to be distributed throughout the nation, and particularly to be made available to schools in remote areas, thus narrowing the resource gap between regions. Digital learning can also

assist schools in engaging in transnational bilingual teaching cooperation, such as interschool cooperation on teachers and curriculums, and thus enable our bilingual education to be aligned with international practices.

#### **A. Optimizing hardware environment for digital learning**

To ascertain whether current digital hardware resources are sufficient for the needs of schools at all levels, the government has carried out an inventory of network bandwidth and mobile devices to satisfy future needs through forward-looking infrastructure construction and the continuous purchase of mobile devices for digital learning. Once hardware facilities and equipment required by schools are properly deployed, university students will be able to act as online English learning partners for remote and disadvantaged students.

##### **(A) Network bandwidth**

All schools at the senior high school level and below will have their bandwidth upgraded from 300 Mbps to 1 Gbps in 2021. With network construction further speeded up under the Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program 2.0, there will be sufficient bandwidth to meet the digital learning needs at all school levels.

##### **(B) Individual learning equipment**

The Ministry of Education has already provided mobile devices for individual learning and will continue making further purchases through 2025. With the addition of IT classrooms and smart learning classrooms, there will be sufficient resources to satisfy digital learning needs.

#### **B. Promoting public-private collaboration to develop teaching materials and maximizing their effects**

With regard to digital teaching materials, the Ministry of Education has already set up the Cool English and Yincai Adaptive Learning online teaching platforms. In the future, the Ministry will collaborate with organizations of the private sector, such as Junyi Academy, to develop online courses and teacher empowerment training models.

Also, through Creative Commons (CC) licensing, the Ministry's digital course content can be shared with private nonprofit platforms, thereby expanding the promotion of online learning and deepening the learning effects.

In addition, the EDU Cloud e-learning website has set up OpenID accounts that currently provide teachers and students with free use of 43 public and private education and learning platforms. In the future, new platforms will be added and further negotiations will be held on the licensing of high-quality courses of domestic and foreign platforms.

**C. Accelerating the establishment of sister-school partnerships to jointly implement online teaching**

International interschool cooperation will be expanded under the framework of existing MOUs on education cooperation.

(A) The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local governments, and overseas institutions will help cultivate the establishment of sister-school partnerships for schools at the senior high school level and below. Through coordination between teachers of such sister schools, bilingual teaching of formal courses will be gradually implemented. Related regulations will also be reviewed with the aim of enabling online courses taught in cooperation with sister schools to be recognized for school credits.

(B) Universities and colleges will cooperate with teachers of sister schools or dual-degree partner schools in the UK, the US, and Australia to launch EMI online courses.

**D. Establishing credit recognition mechanisms**

A senior high school credit recognition mechanism will be established to encourage teachers and students to use online learning resources. In the higher education sector, universities will be encouraged to set regulations for

including overseas online courses in internal credit recognition and related incentives, and to include relevant course certificates as a review item for admission applications and allow credit waivers for pre-university courses.

#### **(IV) Expanding provision of affordable English proficiency tests**

Fair and reliable English proficiency tests are an important tool for assessing the English-language skills of both individuals and groups of individuals. Such tests will also serve as critical reference when assessing outcomes of the Bilingual policy by 2030. In the future, the government will diversify and expand domestic English testing capacity and provide more affordable and convenient tests. It will also explore the possibility of offering subsidies to ease the burden on disadvantaged groups.

##### **A. Diverse provision of tests to meet different needs**

**(A)** Domestic and foreign language proficiency testing institutions have already developed a wide range of assessments for various needs. People can choose from among a number of tests that serve different purposes, such as for studying abroad or for assessing English skill level. At present, the various English proficiency tests developed by foreign institutions are relatively expensive. In the future, the government will continue to engage with these institutions to achieve a cooperative model that can offer prices and testing frequency more in line with people's expectations.

**(B)** Current prices of international language proficiency tests are quite high for people who simply want to assess their English skill level and the results of their studies. Taiwan's own GEPT English proficiency test, developed by the Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) with support from the Ministry of Education, employs differentiated levels of testing. Elementary, intermediate, and high-intermediate levels are the most popular, and related fees are comparatively low, approximately

half to one-third of those of foreign tests. Empirical studies have compared it to CEFR and found that GEPT has gained recognition from nearly 100 foreign universities. The GEPT should be able to provide Taiwanese people with a more affordable way to ascertain their English proficiency and compare their level to international standards. Under the Bilingual 2030 policy, the government will seek to cooperate with the GEPT in increasing test venues, raising test frequency, and expanding international recognition.

#### **B. Providing subsidies to disadvantaged groups to take tests**

To ensure that disadvantaged individuals still have opportunities to take English proficiency tests, the government will look into the possibility of subsidizing those who meet certain criteria to take domestic or foreign tests. This will ensure that testing fees do not pose an excessively high burden on people and that English proficiency tests can become a basic service for citizens to help them evaluate their English skills and discover opportunities for further improvement.

#### **(V) Raising civil servants' English proficiency**

The goal of the Bilingual 2030 policy is to ensure that Taiwanese citizens generally possess a basic or good command of the English language. Strengthening the English proficiency requirements for civil servants can serve a dual purpose. Firstly, doing so may provide greater impetus to implement the policy. Secondly, given the increasing internationalization of government affairs and the growing frequency of cross-border cooperation and exchanges at all levels of government, strengthening the English proficiency of civil servants is an essential task.

Through examinations and training, priority will be given to raising the English proficiency of civil servants who handle foreign affairs. At the same time, all civil

servants will be encouraged to make use of English training courses, digital resources, and other channels to improve their English and advance their career development.

#### **A. Currently employed civil servants**

For currently employed civil servants, the government will continue to improve English learning resources, organize English conversation and speaking workshops to enhance basic English communication skills, and provide English communication training to those handling international affairs, along with other means to improve civil servants' English proficiency. In addition, the Civil Service Protection and Training Commission and the National Academy of Civil Service will design all mandatory training of civil servants with scenario-based training exercises to match the particular needs of their work, and publish the very first *Practical English for Civil Servants* textbook, so as to create an English learning environment. Furthermore, professional English courses will be included in practicum training for new recruits from various examinations; English courses for globalization and weekend workshop will be held for all civil servants to enhance their English proficiency; and overseas studies will be arranged for selected people who show significant potential to broaden their international outlook.

#### **B. Newly recruited civil servants**

With Taiwan becoming more and more international and its global status and importance both rising, we see a trend of growing international exchange as well as increasing demand for English public service. The modern day government officials should be equipped with a sufficient level of foreign language proficiency and a global vision to seize the opportunity to connect with their foreign counterparts, and to enhance the overall government efficiency. Civil servants are the foundation of modern governance, and to enhance their English proficiency from bottom up, newly recruited civil servants will be a good beginning point.

Having reviewed all current civil service examinations with English listed as a test component, it shows that both written (for general and professional subjects) and oral exams include an English test, and an English proficiency test certificate can be required. More specifically, English is tested in general subjects for all except for the physically and mentally disabled, and it is also tested in certain professional subjects on a need basis. To effectively enhance the English proficiency of newly recruited civil servants, and to carry through the Bilingual 2030 policy, besides working closely with hiring institutes on revising the exam methodology, the government has administered a questionnaire on civil service exam participants who have taken English proficiency tests, and carefully considered different levels of all exams, education qualification criteria, and extent of foreign affair each subject handling, to determine the plan of promoting civil servants' English proficiency in a gradual manner. The recent decisions include "Raising English percentage in the total score of the general subjects" and "Adding the English proficiency test certificate as a qualification criterion"; however, the two do not apply to the special examinations for the physically and mentally disabled as well as indigenous peoples as protection measures to the less advantaged. The details of the plan are as follows:

(A) "Raising English percentage in the total score of the general subjects" as the main approach

The level 2 and 3 of Senior Civil Service Examination as well as level 3 of Special Civil Service Examination for local governments are the major pathways to becoming mid-level civil servants, who constitute as the main labor force in government agencies. However, English only takes up 4 to 5% of the total score of the written test for general subjects, which is lower than that of Elementary and Junior Examinations. The percentage will thus be raised to above 8% to enhance the English

proficiency of mid-level civil servants, in the hope to build a solid language foundation for exam takers through a test-oriented approach.

**(B)** “Adding the English proficiency test certificate as a qualification criterion” as the supplementary approach

a. The level 1 of Senior Civil Service Examination is the pathway to becoming senior-ranking civil servants, and the exam takers must be a doctorate degree holder which indicates a good level of English ability. The recruited personnel starts from rank 9 or higher, which requires higher education qualification and expects the recruited to perform tasks of higher importance. Many of such positions are within R&D departments, therefore a global vision and English ability would be necessary for ideal candidates to perform research work. As a consequence, it is considered as a priority to include a B1 level (mid-level) English proficiency certificate as a requirement for above mentioned exam takers.

b. Among the Junior, Senior, and Special Examinations, certain categories such as Overseas Community Affairs Administration, International Cultural and Educational Affairs Administration, Press Release, Tourism Administration, International Economic and Commercial Personnel, Diplomatic Administrative Personnel, Immigration Administrative Personnel, and Foreign Affairs Police Personnel are heavily involved with international affairs, therefore English communication ability is indispensable. Therefore the requirement of an English proficiency test certificate of such exams will be implemented with priority, and the level of the certificate will be determined based on work requirement. In addition, the Special Examination for Consular and Diplomatic Personnel, the main channel of recruiting diplomatic manpower, will add an “English Group 2” to attract talents who are capable of English communication

and handling foreign affairs, as a response to the urgent demand from domestic and overseas governmental agencies amid the ever-evolving international situation. All exam questions will be asked and answered in English, except for the two subjects, Chinese and Comprehensive Legal and Political Literacy.

With the effort and investment in bilingual education continuing, and the availability and affordability of English proficiency tests increasing, we will see Taiwanese people's English capabilities enhancing, and the English proficiency test becomes a standard requirement for fresh job seekers, then we can review the civil servant examination step by step – the percentage that English makes up in the exam can be expanded, and the requirement can be raised on a need basis; moreover, the government can look at the feasibility of “Replacing the English Test in Civil Servant Examinations with Commercial English Proficiency Tests,” reducing the exam preparation loading and allowing exam takers to focus on professional subjects instead.

### **C. Sound preparation to meet language needs in civil service careers**

Civil servants have permanent tenure. During their careers, their positions will continue to rise and they may switch to other fields or agencies. Not needing to use English when they first enter the civil service does not mean that they will not need to use it later on. Changes must also be made to the current situation in which only a few staff members in each government agency have the English proficiency to take on certain tasks. Insufficient English proficiency should not restrict civil servants' work scope.

In fact, even if civil servants work in agencies that generally are not associated with foreign affairs, they might still need to use English for tasks such as going on overseas business trips, receiving foreign guests, attending international

conferences, serving foreigners in Taiwan, learning about overseas systems, and studying other countries' policies and systems. The frequency and importance of such tasks will only increase in the future, and past work models are no longer sufficient to serve as reference. Basic English proficiency, like digital literacy, will become a basic skill of civil servants.

**(VI) Administrative body dedicated to policy promotion and implementation**

The Bilingual 2030 policy needs long-term investments and efforts to produce results. The policy is very broad and involves many different aspects, requiring policymakers to understand the needs of numerous stakeholders and communicate with them to reach consensus. Therefore, in order to ensure that each stage can be implemented as planned, a Bilingual Policy Development Center will be established in the form of an administrative body dedicated to the policy's promotion and implementation. Operating on a sound legal basis, this center will serve as a safeguard against any personnel changes in government. Budgets passed through parliament will ensure that its funding sources will not be affected.

The objective of establishing the Bilingual Policy Development Center is neither to replace the functions of existing administrative agencies nor to compete with private enterprises; instead, it will provide auxiliary support systems and enhance the quality of English education and training in existing administrative and educational systems. In areas where private for-profit and nonprofit organizations are unable to provide services, the center will improve the bilingual environment in remote communities and provide more flexible and more complete services. At the same time, it will cooperate with private organizations to help optimize their operational capabilities and competitiveness.

The Bilingual Policy Development Center will assist with the horizontal integration of measures relating to education, examinations, and training across

related government agencies. It will also provide these agencies with vertical specialized services ranging from policy research to policy execution and consolidate international cooperation efforts under the policy, so as to enhance the overall outcomes of its implementation.

### **III. Conclusion**

In view of growing internationalization, the government, through long-term implementation of the Bilingual 2030 policy, must help Taiwan's young people increase their competitiveness and bilingual capabilities and keep pace with global trends. Taiwan can thereby attract more multinational corporations and push its own industries to connect to the world, creating a more prosperous future for coming generations.