

<p><b>Co-chomhairle air Ath-leasachadh an Fhearainn ann an Nàisean Net Zero</b></p> <p><b>Freagairt Bhòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p><b>25 Dàmhair 2022</b></p>	<p><b>Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation Consultation</b></p> <p><b>Response by Bòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p><b>25 October 2022</b></p>
<p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ cur fàilte air a’ chothrom freagairt a thoirt don cho-chomhairle seo. Tha a’ Ghàidhlig na pàirt bhunaiteach de dhualchas chorpóra is neo-bheantainn, fèin-aithne nàiseanta agus beatha chultarach na h-Alba. Tha sinne airson dèanamh cinnteach gum bi a' Ghàidhlig seasmhach san àm ri teachd ann an raointean dùthchail agus ann am bailtean na h-Alba.</p> <p><b>Mu Bhòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p>Chaidh Bòrd na Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh fo Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005, agus is e a' phrìomh bhuidheann phoblach ann an Alba a tha an urra ri a bhith a’ cur air adhart leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus a bhith a’ toirt comhairle do Mhinistearan na h-Alba air cùisean Gàidhlig</p> <p>‘S e amas a' Phlana Cànain Nàiseanta Ghàidhlig 2018- 23 gun tèid “a’ Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh nas trice, le barrachd dhaoine ann am barrachd shuidheachaidhean”.</p> <p>Nithear seo le bhith a' cuimseachadh air:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cur ri cleachdadh na Gàidhlig.</li> <li>• Cur ri ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig.</li> <li>• Brosnachadh ìomhaigh fhàbharach dhen Ghàidhlig.</li> </ul> <p>Thèid cur ri cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, gu ìre, tro bhith a’ coileanadh nam buannachdan eaconamach a tha aig a’ Ghàidhlig do Alba. Tachraidh sin tro bhith a’ cleachdadh na Gàidhlig barrachd mar sho-mhaoin eaconamach.</p> <p><b>Fàs ann an Iarrtas airson na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p>Tha Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn air feadh na h-Alba. Tha mu 50%</p>	<p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes the opportunity to submit a response to this consultation. Gaelic is an intrinsic part of Scotland's physical and intangible heritage, national identity, and cultural life. We seek to ensure that Gaelic has a sustainable future in rural and urban Scotland.</p> <p><b>About Bòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p>Established under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development and providing advice to the Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.</p> <p>The aim of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 is “that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations”. This will be achieved by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the use of Gaelic.</li> <li>• Increasing the learning of Gaelic.</li> <li>• Promoting a positive image of Gaelic.</li> </ul> <p>This greater use of the language will, in part, be achieved through realising the economic benefits that Gaelic brings to Scotland. That will be through increased use of Gaelic as an economic asset.</p> <p><b>A Growing Demand for Gaelic</b></p> <p>Gaelic is spoken across Scotland. About 50% of</p>

de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a' fuireach air a' Ghàidhealtachd is na h-Eileanan agus càch sa chòrr de dh'Alba. Ann an Cunntas-sluaigh 2011 bha comas air choreigin sa Ghàidhlig aig 87,100 neach ann an Alba (mu 1.7% den t-sluagh), agus bha 57,600 dhiubh sin nan luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig. Tha iarrtas a' sìor fhàs airson cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig le buannachdan foghlaim, eaconamach is sòisealta co-cheangailte riutha.

Tha an t-iarrtas airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh follaiseach anns an àrdachadh mòr a tha a' gabhail ris an app/làrach-lìn ionnsachadh cànan Duolingo air a bheil ceudan de mhiltean de dhaoine ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba agus air feadh na cruinne. Tha cur air bhog SpeakGaelic san t-Sultain 2021 cuideachd air cur gu mòr ri goireasan do inbhich a tha airson a dhol an sàs sa Ghàidhlig agus an cànan ionnsachadh.

Tha Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FMG) a' leudachadh air feadh na dùthcha. Tha e a-nis ri fhaighinn ann an còrr is dàrna leth nan 32 Ùghdarrasan Ionadail ann an Alba. Thòisich FMG ann an 1985 le 14 sgoilearan bun-sgoile. Tha a-nis còrr is 5,600 sgoilear san roinn thar foghlam Tràth-bhliadhnaichean, Bun-sgoil agus Àrd-sgoil.

## Dùbhlain

Tha feum air freagairt iomlan do na dùbhlain a tha ro choimhearsnachdan dùthchail le Gàidhlig air a' Ghàidhealtachd is na h-Eileanan. Bidh pàirt chudromach aig cothrom air fearann agus cleachdadh fearainn ann an seo. Tha taigheadas iomchaidh agus deagh obraichean, a chumas agus a tharraingeads daoine, deatamach do sheasmhachd nan coimhearsnachdan sin a' gabhail a-steach an cultar, an cànan agus an dòigh-beatha.

Tha seo ri fhaicinn sa Phlana Cànan Nàiseanta Ghàidhlig 2018-2023<sup>1</sup>. 'S e an t-àrd amas aige "gun tèid a' Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh nas trice le barrachd dhaoine agus ann am barrachd shuidheachaidhean". Tha e a' dol air adhart a ràdh gu bheil "cùisean eile a' toirt buaidh air an amas seo". Tha iad sin a' gabhail a-steach cùisean eaconamach

Gaelic speakers live in the Highlands and Islands with the remainder in the rest of Scotland. At the 2011 Census 87,100 people in Scotland had Gaelic skills (around 1.7% of the population), of which 57,600 were Gaelic speakers. There is a growing demand for Gaelic language and culture with related educational, economic, and social benefits.

The demand for learning Gaelic is evident in the huge uptake for the Duolingo language learning app/website which has hundreds of thousands of people learning Gaelic in Scotland and across the globe. The launch of SpeakGaelic in September 2021 has also greatly contributed to resources for adults who want to engage with and learn the language.

Gaelic medium Education (GME) is expanding across the country. It is now available in over half of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities. GME began in 1985 with 14 primary pupils. There are now more than 5,600 pupils in the sector across Early Years, Primary and Secondary education.

## Challenges

The challenges being faced by Gàidhlig-speaking rural communities in the Highlands and Islands require a holistic response. The availability and use of land will play a significant part in this. Adequate housing and good jobs, that retain and attract people, are key to the sustainability of these communities including their culture, language, and way of life.

This is reflected in the current National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023<sup>6</sup>. It has an overall aim - that Gàidhlig "is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations". It goes on to state that "other issues impact on this aim". These include economic and infrastructural

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BnG-NGLP-18-23-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BnG-NGLP-18-23-1.pdf>



agus bun-structair agus tha am Plana ag ràdh “nì sinn cinnteach gun toirear fa-near don bhuaidh a th’ aca air a’ Ghàidhlig agus gun tèid dèiligeadh ri sin.”.

Chaidh tòrr a ràdh mu èiginn na Gàidhlig anns na coimhearsnachdan dùthchasach aice sna h-eileanan agus air Ghàidhealtachd. Chan e a-mhàin cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig a tha ann an èiginn. Tha dùbhlain mhòra mu choinneamh nan coimhearsnachdan tro chrìonadh sluaigh agus an neo-sheasmhachd shòisealta is eaconamach a thig mar thoradh air sin.

Ma tha a’ Ghàidhlig gu bhith beò, agus a’ soirbheachadh, anns na coimhearsnachdan traidiseanta aice feumaidh na coimhearsnachdan fhèin soirbheachadh. Tha seo air aithneachadh ann am Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba<sup>2</sup>:

“tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba ag aithneachadh cho cudromach ’s a tha a’ Ghàidhlig do dh’iomadh coimhearsnachd eileanach, agus cho cudromach ’s a tha na coimhearsnachdan eileanach far a bheil Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn do sheasmhachd na Gàidhlig ann an Alba.”

**Tha prìomh phàirt aig fearann, uachdarain an fhearainn ann an seo.**

Tha e na phrionnsapal ann an Aithris làithreach Chòirichean is Dleastanasan an Fhearainn<sup>3</sup> gum bu chòir “còirichean, dleastanasan agus poileasaidhean poblach fearainn a bhith ag adhartachadh, a’ coileanadh agus a’ toirt spèis do chòraichean daonna iomchaidh a thaobh fearann”. Bu chòir beachdachadh air taic don Ghàidhlig mar phàirt de dh’uallach sealbh fearainn. Tha sin air sgàth gu bheil bunait chànanach aig còraichean daonna seach dìreach cultar.

Tha seann cheangal ann eadar fearann agus daoine ann an coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig, tric ga chur an cèill san

issues and the Plan notes that “we will ensure their impact on Gàidhlig is recognised and addressed”.

Much has been said about the Gàidhlig crisis in its vernacular communities in the islands and Highlands. It is not just the Gàidhlig language and culture that are in crisis. The communities themselves are facing major challenges through significant depopulation and subsequent social and economic instability.

If Gàidhlig is to survive, and thrive, in its traditional communities then the communities themselves need to thrive. This is recognised in Scottish Government’s National Islands Plan<sup>7</sup>:

“Scottish Government recognises the importance of the Gaelic language to many island communities, and the importance of the Gaelic speaking island communities to the survival and sustainability of Gaelic in Scotland”.

**Land, and the owners of the land, have a key part to play in this.**

A principle of the current Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement<sup>8</sup> is that “land rights, responsibilities and public policies should promote, fulfil and respect relevant human rights in relation to land”. Support for Gàidhlig should be considered as part of the responsibility of land ownership. That is because human rights have a linguistic basis rather than simply a cultural one.

There is a longstanding connection between land and people in Gaelic speaking communities,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-of-land-rights-and-responsibilities-statement-a-consultation/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-of-land-rights-and-responsibilities-statement-a-consultation/>



abairt, ‘An Tìr, an Cànan, ’s na Daoine’. Tha Gàidheal a rugadh an Glaschu – Paul Meighan-Chiblow aig Oilthigh McGill, Montreal, Canada ga mhìneachadh gu snasail: “Tha cànanan dùthchasach agus an dùthaich mar an ceudna. Tha grunn ìrean san dàimh cho-bhuannachdail seo: inntinneil, faireachail, spioradail, corporra. Tha an dàimh cuideachd a’ dol nas fhaide gu bhith na sheòrsa de dh’uallach airson an fhearainn agus bith-beò sheasmhach. Mar eisimpleir, ’s e fìor sheann fhacal a th’ ann an Dùthchas, a tha doirbh eadar-theangachadh gu aon fhacal no bun-bheachd sa Bheurla. Bheir faclair Gàidhlig seachad cuid de mhìneachaidhean, leithid ceangal breith, dùthaich oighreachail, neo ceangal ri àite. Tha dùthchas na phàirt bhunaiteach de shealladh saoghail na Gàidhlig agus a’ cur cuideam air cothromachadh eag-eòlasach am measg gach neach-còmhnaidh agus rud, daonnda agus barrachd air daonnda.”<sup>4</sup>

Bu chòir toirt air uachdarain ann an sgìrean Ùghdarrasan Ionadail Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd, Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid, agus Comhairle nan Eilean Siar gu sònraichte a dhol an sàs gus an coimhearsnachdan a leasachadh gu sòisealta, gu h-eaconamach agus gu cultarail. Bidh sin a’ gabhail a-steach taic agus brosnachadh a thoirt do leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus an cultar co-cheangailte rithe a dh’fhaodadh a bhith air a shònrachadh ann an am Planaichean Riaghladh Fearainn.

Bu chòir iarraidh air uachdarain phrìobhaideach agus coimhearsnachd air fearann thar meud sònraichte co-chomhairle a chumail ri Bòrd na Gàidhlig le sùil ri ro-innleachd/plana Gàidhlig saor-thoileach a leasachadh agus a libhrigeadh. Bu chòir seo a dhèanamh mus fhaodar fearann a cheannach.

Gus am pròiseas seo a bhrosnachadh, tha sinn cuideachd a’ toirt taic do bharrachd iomadachd ann an seilbh fearainn. Gu sònraichte, sealbh coimhearsnachd – a chuidicheas gus coinneachadh nas fheàrr ri miannan ionadail agus feuman coimhearsnachd. Thèid an ceangal

often expressed as ‘An Tìr, an Cànan, ’s na Daoine’ - ‘the land, the language and the people’. Glasgow born Gael - Paul Meighan-Chiblow of McGill University, Montreal, Canada sums it up well: “Indigenous languages and the land are one and the same. This symbiotic relationship encompasses so many levels: the mental, emotional, the spiritual, the physical. The relationship also goes beyond into some form of responsibility to the land and to living sustainably. For example, Dùthchas is a very old Gàidhlig word, which is difficult to translate into one word or reduced concept in English. A Gàidhlig dictionary will give some definitions, such as birth tie, hereditary homeland, or connection to place. Dùthchas is an intrinsic part of the Gaelic worldview and stresses an ecological balance among all inhabitants and entities, human and more than human.”<sup>9</sup>

Landowners in the Local Authority areas of Highland Council, Argyll & Bute Council, and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in particular should be compelled to act to develop their communities socially, economically, and culturally. That will include supporting and encouraging the development of Gàidhlig and related culture which could be set out in Land Management Plans.

Private and community landowners of land over a certain size should be required to consult with Bòrd na Gàidhlig with the view to developing and delivering a voluntary Gaelic language strategy/plan. This should be done before land can be purchased.

To encourage this process, we also support greater diversity of land ownership. In particular, community ownership-which can help to better meet local aspirations and identified community need. The intrinsic connection between land and

<sup>4</sup> Chiblow, S., & Meighan, P. J. (2022). Language is land, land is language: The importance of Indigenous languages. *Human Geography*, 15(2), 206–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786211022899>

<sup>9</sup> Chiblow, S., & Meighan, P. J. (2022). Language is land, land is language: The importance of Indigenous languages. *Human Geography*, 15(2), 206–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786211022899>



<p>bunaiteach eadar fearann agus coimhearsnachd a neartachadh tro leasachaidhean fearann coimhearsnachd.</p> <p>Feumaidh Measadh Buaidh Coimhearsnachd Eilein (ICIA) a bhith an cois a' Bhile Ath-leasachadh Fearainn a tha ri thighinn. A' nochdadh stiùireadh ùr Riaghaltas na h-Alba<sup>5</sup>, feumaidh sin a bhith a' gabhail a-steach buaidh a' Bhile air a' Ghàidhlig ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach an coimeas ri sgìrean eile (a' gabhail a-steach coimhearsnachdan eileanach eile).</p>	<p>community will be strengthened through community land developments.</p> <p>The subsequent Land Reform Bill will need to be accompanied by an Islands Community Impact Assessment (ICIA). Reflecting recently refreshed Scottish Government guidance<sup>10</sup>, that will need to include the Bill's impact on the Gàidhlig language in island communities compared to other areas (including other island communities).</p>
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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit-2/documents/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit-2/documents/>

