

<p>Ath-sgrùdadh air Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean: Co-chomhairle</p> <p>Freagairt bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig</p> <p>02 Dàmhair 2023</p>	<p>National Islands Plan review: Consultation</p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig Response</p> <p>02 October 2023</p>
<p>Ro-ràdh</p> <p>Stèidhichte fo Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005, 's e buidheann poblach neo-roinneil de Riaghaltas na h-Alba a th' ann am Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Is e a' phrìomh bhuidheann ann an Alba air a bheil dleastanas gus leasachadh Gàidhlig a chur air adhart agus gus comhairle a thoirt do Mhinistearan na h-Alba mu chùisean Gàidhlig.</p> <p>'S e amas a' Phlana Cànain Nàiseanta Ghàidhlig 2018-23¹ gun tèid "a' Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh nas trice, le barrachd dhaoine agus ann an raon nas fharsaing de shuidheachaidhean". Bheirear seo gu buil le bhith a' cuimseachadh air:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cur am meud cleachdadh na Gàidhlig. • Cur am meud ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig. • Cur air adhart deagh ìomhaigh den Ghàidhlig. <p>Bheirear an cleachdadh a bharrachd seo den chànan gu bhith, gu ìre, le bhith a' toirt am buil nam buannachdan eacanomaigeach a bhios a' Ghàidhlig a' toirt do dh'Alba. Tachraidh sin tro bhith a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig barrachd mar sho-mhaoin eaconamach. 'S e ar n-amas gum faicear is gun cluinnear a' Ghàidhlig gu làitheil air feadh na h-Alba, air dhòigh 's gun tèid aithneachadh gu farsaing gu bheil i aig cridhe beatha na h-Alba agus na stòras nàiseanta.</p> <p>Thathar a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig air feadh na h-Alba. Tha mu 50% de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a' fuireach sa Ghàidhealtachd agus sna h-Eileanan, agus càch air feadh na dùthcha. A rèir Cunntas-sluaigh 2011, bha sgilean Gàidhlig aig 87,100 daoine (mu 1.7% den àireamh-shluaigh), agus 57,600 dhiubh a b' urrainn Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn. Tha iarrtas a' sìor fhàs airson</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Established under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government. It 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 2018-23⁵ 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"> • Increasing the use of Gaelic. • Increasing the learning of Gaelic. • Promoting a positive image of Gaelic. <p>This greater use of the language will, in part, be achieved through fully realising the social and economic benefits that Gaelic brings to Scotland. Our aim is that Gaelic is seen and heard on a daily basis across Scotland, such that it is widely recognised as an integral part of Scottish life and a national asset.</p> <p>Gaelic is spoken across Scotland. Around 50% of Gaelic speakers live in the Highlands and Islands with the remainder in the rest of the country. 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</p>

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

⁵ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BnG-NGLP-18-23.pdf>

<p>cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig le buannachdan foghlaim, eaconamach is sòisealta co-cheangailte riutha.</p> <p>Tha Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig (FtMG) a’ leudachadh air feadh na h-Alba. Tha e a-nis ri fhaighinn ann an còrr is dàrna leth nan 32 ùghdarrasan ionadail ann an Alba. Thòisich Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an 1985 le 14 sgoilearan sa bhun-sgoil. A-nis tha còrr is 5,600 sgoilear san roinn thar foghlaim Thràth-bhliadhnaichean, Bun-sgoile is Àrd-sgoile. Gus coinneachadh ri fàs leantainneach san iarrtas bidh feum air tasgadh ann an sgoiltean agus tidsearan.</p> <p>Tha an t-iarrtas airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh follaiseach san àrdachadh mhòr de dhaoine a tha a’ gabhail ris an app/làrach-lìn ionnsachadh cànan Duolingo. Tha mu 1.5 millean neach air tòiseachadh air Gàidhlig na h-Alba ionnsachadh air an app bho thòisich an cùrsa o chionn trì bliadhna. Tha a’ mhòr-chuid (71%) bho thaobh a-muigh na RA, le 36% anns na Stàitean Aonaichte a-mhàin.</p> <p>Tha cur air bhog goireas craolaidh agus teagaisg air-loidhne SpeakGaelic san t-Sultain 2021 cuideachd air cur gu mòr ri goireasan do dh’inbich a tha airson a dhol an sàs sa Ghàidhlig agus an cànan ionnsachadh.</p> <p>Fhuair “Suirbhidh Beachdan Sòisealta na h-Alba 2021: Beachdan Poball na h-Alba air a’ Ghàidhlig”², gu bheil, an coimeas ri 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A’ cho-chuid a tha ag ràdh gun urrainn dhaibh co-dhiù corra fhacal Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn air dùblachadh bho 15% gu 30%. • Gu bheil a’ cho-chuid a tha ag ràdh gun tuig iad co-dhiù beagan Gàidhlig air a dhol am meud bho 25% gu 41%. <p>A bharrachd air sin, tha 79% de dhaoine a’ smaointinn gu bheil a’ Ghàidhlig an dàrna cuid cudromach no glè chudromach do dhualchas cultarach na h-Alba.</p> <p>Lorg suirbhidh de dhaoine òga (iadsan eadar 11 agus 26 bliadhna a dh’aois)³ gun robh trian (33%) den luchd-fhreagairt ag ràdh gu robh iad ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig ann an dòigh air choreigin. Thuirt tuilleadh air leth (59%) den luchd-fhreagairt</p>	<p>Gaelic language and culture with related educational, economic, and social benefits.</p> <p>Gaelic Medium Education is expanding across Scotland. It is now available in over half of Scotland’s 32 local authorities. Gaelic Medium Education 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. Meeting continuing growth in demand will require investment in schools and teachers.</p> <p>The demand for learning Gaelic is evident in the huge uptake of the Duolingo language learning app/website. Some 1.5 million people have started learning Gaelic on the app since the course launched over three years ago. The majority (71%) are from outside the UK, with 36% in the United States alone.</p> <p>The launch of SpeakGaelic in October 2021 has also greatly contributed to resources for adults who want to engage with and learn the language. It has seen around 400,000 learners since its launch.</p> <p>The “Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2021: Public Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland”⁶ found that since 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion who say they can speak at least the odd word of Gaelic has doubled from 15% to 30%. • The proportion who say they can understand at least a little Gaelic has increased from 25% to 41%. <p>Further, 79% of people think Gaelic is either very or fairly important to Scotland’s cultural heritage.</p> <p>A survey of young people (those aged between 11 and 26 years)⁷ found that one third (33%) of respondents stated that were learning Gaelic in some form. More than half (59%) of the respondents who</p>
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² <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/03.SSA-2021-Public-attitudes-to-Gaelic-in-Scotland-Main-report.pdf>

³ <https://youngscot.net/ysobservatory/a-bhith-an-sas-le-ghaidhlig-air-loidhne-engaging-with-gaelic-online>

⁶ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/03.SSA-2021-Public-attitudes-to-Gaelic-in-Scotland-Main-report.pdf>

⁷ <https://youngscot.net/ysobservatory/a-bhith-an-sas-le-ghaidhlig-air-loidhne-engaging-with-gaelic-online>



aig nach robh a' Gàidhlig gun robh ùidh aca ann a bhith ag ionnsachadh a' chàin. Cuideachd, 72% den luchd-fhreagairt gu lèir a' meas cultar is dualchas na Gàidhlig mar rud luachmhor no fìor-luachmhor.

Freagairt

Tha e gu math cuideachail Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean a bhith ann. Tha sinn a' cur fàilte gu sònraichte air an aithris gu bheil "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 mhaireannachd is sheasmhachd na Gàidhlig ann an Alba".

Tha e gu math feumail gu bheil iomradh ga thoirt air a' Ghàidhlig taobh a-staigh a' mhòr-chuid de dh'Amasan Roinnleachdail a' Phlana an àite a bhith air a dhèiligeadh rithe mar chùis leatha fhèin. Tha seo air slighe a thoirt do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig pàirt a ghabhail - agus ìomhaigh na Gàidhlig a thogail - ann am buidhnean leithid Co-chruinneachadh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean, Com-pàirteachas Eaconamach Roinneil na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean, agus Fòram Comhairleachaidh Cunradh nan Eilean.

Tha e cuideachd gu math feumail gu bheil gealltanasan sònraichte tron Phlana gus taic a chumail ri daoine fa leth, coimhearsnachdan, is buidhnean ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach le Gàidhlig, ann a bhith a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig. Tha Gàidhlig na cothrom agus na maoin, ach tha feum ann cuideachd air dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil an cànan air a chumail suas agus a' fàs. Tha e fìor mhath gu bheil am Plana a' toirt bun-stèidh airson an dà eileamaid seo, mar sin a' cuideachadh gus buaidhean a chur am meud.

Tha am Plana luachmhor ann a bhith a' toirt stiùireadh do bhuidhnean a thaobh beachdachadh air buaidhean nam poileasaidhean aca air coimhearsnachdan eileanach.

Tha e cudromach gu bheil am Plana a th' ann an-dràsta ag aithneachadh nan dùbhlann mu choinneimh coimhearsnachdan nan eilean a bheir buaidh air an seasmhachd agus, ann an eileanan le luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig, seasmhachd a' chàin. Am measg nan dùbhlann tha a bhith a' toirt seachad prìomh bun-structair leithid còmhdhail is taigheadas. Tha seo a' freagairt air a' Phlana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2018-23 a th' ann an-dràsta a tha a' comharrachadh gu sònraichte na diofar sheòrsaichean de choimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig, an fheadhainn sna h-eileanan nam measg.

could *not* speak Gaelic stated that they were interested in learning the language. Also, 72% of all respondents rated Gaelic culture and heritage as quite or very valuable.

Response

Having a National Islands Plan is very helpful. We particularly welcome its statement that "the 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".

It is very useful that Gaelic is referred to within most of the Plan's Strategic Objectives rather than being treated as a stand-alone issue. This has provided an avenue for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to participate - and raise the profile of Gaelic - in organisations such as the Convention of the Highlands and Islands, Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership and the Islands Deal Advisory Forum.

It is also very useful that the Plan contains specific commitments throughout to supporting individuals, communities, and organisations in Gaelic speaking island communities in their use of Gaelic. Gaelic is an opportunity and an asset but there is also a need to ensure that the language is sustained and growing. It is very good that the Plan provides a basis for both of these elements, thus helping to maximise impacts.

More widely the Plan is valuable in giving organisations guidance in considering the impacts of their policies on island communities.

Importantly, the current Plan acknowledges the challenges in the islands communities that affect their sustainability and, in islands with Gaelic speakers, the sustainability of the language. The challenges include providing key infrastructure such as transport and housing. This fits with the current 2018-23 National Gaelic Language Plan which specifically highlights the different kinds of Gaelic communities including those in the islands.



Tha dèanadas de phàirtean an lìonra aiseig CalMac air buaidh a thoirt air taigheadasan is gnìomhachasan luchd-còmhnaidh, ag adhbharachadh buaidhean mòra air an eaconamaidh. Tha seo air toirt air cuid de luchd-còmhnaidh nan eilean beachdachadh mun comas aca a bhith a' fuireach ann is bith-beò a chosnadh san àm ri teachd. Tha seo a' bagairt air seasmhachd nan coimhearsnachdan seo agus, far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn, comas-obrachaidh a' chàinain sam àm ri teachd.

Bho chionn tràth ann an 2022 tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air faraidhean bus a thoirt seachad an-asgaidh do dhaoine fo aois 22. Ach, cha deach seo a leudachadh gu faraidhean aiseig an-asgaidh. Mar thoradh air, faodaidh gu bheil daoine òga a tha a' fuireach ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach fo ana-cothrom, far am feum iad aiseagan a chleachdadh gus cothroman a ruigsinn seach còmhndhail rathaid a-mhàin.

Tha siubhal air aiseag an-asgaidh deatamach gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil co-ionannachd ann eadar daoine òga sna h-eileanan agus an co-aoisean air tìr-mòr. Tha mòran de na cuairtean sin airson cothrom fhaighinn air obair, seirbheisean agus cothroman eile nach eil rim faighinn san eilean aca fhèin.

Tha am Plana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2018-23 ag ràdh:

"Feumaidh coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig dùthchail is eileanach ath-ùrachadh ann an dòigh a chumas agus a bhios tarraingeach do dh' òigridh. Bidh fuasglaidhean innleachdach a dhìth.... (a' gabhail a-steach)...cothroman fhaighinn air ceanglaichean còmhndhail cunbhalach aig prìs reusanta".

Mura tèid aghaidh a chur air cosgaisean faradh aiseig do dhaoine òga, cha bhi eileanan far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn cho tarraingeach an taca ri àiteachan air tìr-mòr. Mar sin, tha e a' toirt buaidh air seasmhachd nan coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig eileanach san àm ri teachd. Bheir seo droch bhuaidh air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, chan ann a-mhàin sna h-eileanan fo bhuaidh ach ann an Alba air fad cuideachd.

Dh'ainmich Còmhndhail Alba anmoch ann an 2021 gum biodh an cùis mu dheidhinn faraidhean aiseig an-asgaidh do dhaoine fo aois 22 air a ghabhail a-steach sa bheachdachadh air Plana Ceangailteachd nan Eilean aig Còmhndhail Alba agus an Ath-bhreithneachadh air Faraidhean Cothromach. Tha sinn a' dèanamh fiughair ris an fhoillseachadh seo far am biodh dùil againn gum bithear a' dèiligeadh ris an neo-ionannachd a th' ann an-dràsta de dh'fharaidhean aiseig an taca ri faraidhean bus.

The performance of parts of the CalMac ferry network has affected resident households and businesses, leading to significant economic effects. It has led some island residents to seriously question their future ability to remain there and earn a livelihood. This threatens the sustainability of these communities and, where Gaelic is spoken, the future viability of the language.

Scottish Government have provided free bus fares for under 22s since early 2022. However, this was not extended to free ferry fares. As a result, young people living in island communities are disadvantaged where they have to use ferries and not just road transport to access opportunities.

Free ferry travel is essential to ensure parity between island dwelling young people and their mainland peers. Many of these trips are to access employment, services and other opportunities which are not available on their own island.

The 2018-23 National Gaelic Language Plan states that:

"Gaelic-speaking island and rural communities must be re-energised in a way that will retain and attract young people. This will require innovative solutions... (including)...access to affordable and reliable transport links".

Failure to address ferry fare costs for young people will make Gaelic speaking islands less attractive compared to mainland areas. Thus, it affects the future viability of Gaelic speaking island communities. This will have a negative impact on the use of the Gaelic language not only in the affected islands but also in Scotland as a whole.

Transport Scotland announced in late 2021 that the issue of free ferry fares for under 22s would be included in the considerations for Transport Scotland's Islands Connectivity Plan and the Fair Fares Review. We look forward to the publication of the latter where we would expect the current disparity of treatment of ferry fares compared to bus fares to be addressed.



B' e briseadh-dùil a bh' ann nach robh Gàidhlig ann mar chùis a bheachdachadh mu dheidhinn taobh a-staigh an stiùiridh thùsail airson Measaidhean air a' Bhuaidh air Coimhearsnachdan Eileanan (ICIAan). Mar sin chuir sinn fàilte air ion-ghabhail na Gàidhlig san stiùireadh ath-sgrùdaichte ann an 2022. Tha e ag ràdh gum bu chòir do bhuidhnean, ann a bhith a' dèanamh ICIA, na leanas a ghabhail os làimh:

“A thaobh nam poileasaidhean, ro-innleachdan agus seirbheisean agaibh am b' urrainn dhuibh a dhèanamh soilleir san ICIA agaibh dè a' bhuaidh a bhios ann air a' Ghàidhlig ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach, ma tha gin ann, an taca ri sgìrean eile (a' gabhail a-steach coimhearsnachdan eileanach eile)”

Ach, tha coltas caochlaideach air doimhneachd is tuairisgeulachadh nan ICIAan a tha sinn air fhaicinn. Ann an cuid dhiubh sin a chaidh a chrìochnachadh an dèidh ath-sgrùdadh an stiùiridh, chan eil a' bhuaidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann air a' Ghàidhlig air a ghabhail a-steach. Mar eisimpleir, cha do dhèilig an ICIA Sgìrean Fìor-ghlèidhte aig Muir ris a' bhuaidh a bhiodh ann air daoine agus Gàidhlig. An àite sin, cha do mhìnich e ach na gnìomhan a leigeadh leotha tachairt anns na HPMAn.

Tha feum air barrachd soilleireachd air an t-slat-tomhais riatanach ris am bu chòir ICIA coinneachadh; agus dè bu chòir tachairt mura tèid seo a choileanadh. Bu chòir beachdachadh a bhith fiù 's ann am “measaidhean sgrionaidh ann am pàirt” air a' bhuaidh air a' Ghàidhlig far a bheil coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig am measg nan eilean a thathar a' measadh.

Tha sinn den bheachd gum bu chòir gach amas ro-innleachdail sa Phlana an-dràsta a bhith air an cumail ann am **Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean san àm ri teachd no plana ath-sgrùdaichte**.

Tha feum air dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil na geallaidhean air an stiùireadh le agus a rèir nan geallaidhean sa Phlana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2023-28 a tha ri thighinn.

Bu chòir cothroman timcheall air cultar, eaconamaidh agus foghlam a bhith sa Phlana mar a chaidh aithneachadh ann an *Cothroman Eaconamach is Sòisealta airson na Gàidhlig - Aithisg do Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Ionmhais agus na h-Eaconamaidh*⁴.

It was disappointing that Gaelic was not included as an issue to be considered within the original guidance for Islands Communities Impact Assessments (ICIAs). We therefore welcomed the inclusion of Gaelic in the revised guidance in 2022. It states that in undertaking an ICIA organisations should undertake the following:

“With reference to your policies, strategies and services could you make clear in your ICIA what the impact is on the Gaelic language in island communities, if any, compared to other areas (including other island communities)”

However, the depth and coverage of the ICIAs we have seen appears variable. A number of those completed since the guidance was revised do not include the potential impacts on Gaelic. For example, the Highly Protected Marine Areas ICIA did not address the impacts on people and Gaelic. Rather, it simply set out the actions that would be allowed to take place in the HPMAs.

Greater clarity is needed on the required standard that an ICIA should meet; and what should happen if this is not met. Even what are termed “partial screening assessments” should include consideration of the impacts on Gaelic where the islands covered include Gaelic speaking communities.

In a **future or revised National Islands Plan** we consider that all of the current Plan's strategic objectives should be retained.

There is a need to ensure that its commitments are informed by and aligned with the commitments in the forthcoming National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28.

The Plan should include opportunities around culture, economy and education identified in *Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic - Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy*⁸.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy/documents/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy/documents/>



Tha sinn a' cur fàilte air a' ghealltanas ri comharran a leasachadh a bhios iomchaidh do gach Amas Ro-innleachdail mar a chaidh a mhìneachadh sa Mhapa Slighe Buileachaidh Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean 2023.

Taobh a-staigh a' Phlana, bu chòir do chùisean/dùbhlain Foghlaim airson eileanan a ghabhail a-steach:

- Dìth àrainnean 3-18.
- Iomraidhean a bharrachd air cho cudromach 's a tha ionnsachadh aig astar is ionnsachadh didseatach agus a' coileanadh an aon so-ruigsinneachd mar a th' aig mòran coimhearsnachdan air tìr-mòr, a' gabhail a-steach leud-bann is teicneòlas airson solarachadh leithid e-sgoil.
- Cuideam nas motha air dùbhlain leithid gu bheilear den bheachd gur iad Nàiseanta 5 is Àrd-ìre na teisteanais as cudromaiche fhad 's a dh'fhaodadh bacadh a bhith air sgoiltean eileanach leis nas urrainn dhaibh a thoirt seachad; agus gu bheil na ceumannan adhartais gu dreuchdain cho sònraichte ann an cuid de dh'eileanan 's gum feum cuid thidsearan fàgail a dh'obair air tìr-mòr.
- A' soilleireachadh nam buaidhean de stiùireadh ùr a thathar a' leasachadh airson Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

A-rithist, chuireadh sinn cuideam air a' cheangal eadar staid na h-eaconamaidh, deamografaigs agus bun-structair ann an coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig agus slàinte a' chànan annta - gu sònraichte ann an àiteachan far an robh a' Gàidhlig làidir gu traidiseanta. Feumaidh Gàidhlig soirbheachail eaconamaidh agus sluagh a tha soirbheachail.

Bu chòir cuideam nas làidire a bhith san ath Phlana air na ceanglaichean eadar cùisean bun-structar agus seasmhachd/leasachadh coimhearsnachd. Gu sònraichte, solarachadh/prìsean taigheadais, seasmhachd seirbhisean còmhhdail agus ceangailteachd didsiotach.

Bidh Plana Ceangailteachd nan Eilean aig Còmhhdail Alba a' dèiligeadh ri seasmhachd seirbhisean aiseig, comas, tricead agus prìsean ruigsinneach - agus ceanglaichean stèidhichte. Bheir e buaidh mhòr air na tha san amharc do choimhearsnachdan eileanach san àm ri teachd. Tha sin a' gabhail a-steach coimhearsnachdan sa bheil luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig agus mar sin bidh buaidh aig Plana Ceangailteachd nan Eilean air na tha san amharc don chànan.

We welcome the commitment to develop indicators applicable to each Strategic Objective as set out in the National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2023.

Education issues/challenges for islands within the Plan should include:

- Lack of 3-18 campuses.
- More references to the importance of distance and digital learning and achieving the same access enjoyed by many mainland communities, including bandwidth and technology for provision such as e-sgoil.
- Greater emphasis on challenges such as National 5's and Highers being seen as the most important qualifications while island schools can be limited by what they can offer; and the very specific career progression pathways in some islands leading some teachers to leave to work on the mainland.
- Highlighting the implications of new guidance being developed for Gaelic Medium Education.

We would again highlight the link between the state of the economy, demographic trends and infrastructure in Gaelic speaking communities and the health of the language in them -particularly in areas where Gaelic has been traditionally strong. A thriving Gaelic language requires a thriving economy and population.

The next Plan should have a stronger emphasis on the links between infrastructural issues and community sustainability/development. In particular, housing provision/affordability, resilience of transport services and digital connectivity.

Transport Scotland's Islands Connectivity Plan will address issues such as ferry service resilience, capacity, frequency, and affordability - and fixed links. It will significantly influence the future prospects of the island communities. That includes communities with Gaelic speakers and thus the Islands Connectivity Plan will have a significant impact on the prospects for the language.



Tha e cudromach taigheadas gu leòr agus aig prìsean reusanta a bhith ann gus daoine de dh'aois-obrach a chumail is a tharraing ann. Tha e riatanach gus am faod luchd-còmhnaidh nan eilean obair fhaighinn ann an gnìomhachasan an ama ri teachd leithid gaoth aig muir, lùth agus eaconamaidh na mara, cho math ri ann am feadhainn traidiseanta leithid togail agus foghlam.

Tha sinn an dòchas gu bheil an fhreagairt againn cuideachail agus taiceil.

Sufficient and affordable housing is key to retaining and attracting people of working age. It is required so island residents can take up jobs in the industries of the future such as offshore wind, energy, and the marine economy, as well as in more traditional ones like construction and education.

We hope that our response is helpful and constructive.

