

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Democracy Matters</u> <u>Co-chomhairle aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Freagairt Bhòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 Gearran 2024</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Democracy Matters</u> <u>Consultation by the Scottish Government</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Response by Bòrd na Gàidhlig</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 February 2024</b></p>
<p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ cur fàilte air a’ chothrom gus freagairt a chur a-steach dhan cho-chomhairle seo Is e Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ phrìomh bhuidheann phoblach ann an Alba a tha an urra ri a bhith a’ cur air adhart leasachadh na Gàidhlig, a’ gabhail a-steach a bhith a’ toirt comhairle do Mhinistearan na h-Alba air cùisean Gàidhlig.</p> <p>Tha Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005 a’ cur uallach air Bòrd na Gàidhlig Plana Nàiseanta Gàidhlig ullachadh agus a chur a-steach le molaidhean co-cheangailte ri cleachdadh agus adhartachadh na Gàidhlig le fòcas air feumalachdan agus prìomhachasan na Gàidhlig airson a luchd-labhairt, luchd-ionnsachaidh agus luchd-taic.</p> <p>Fon Achd, tha dleastanas air Bòrd na Gàidhlig Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig ullachadh ach tha e an urra ri grunn ùghdarrasan, bhuidhnean agus choimhearsnachdan na h-amasan is targaidhean sa Phlana seo a thoirt air adhart.</p> <p>Is e an lèirsinn anns an Phlana Nàiseanta làithreach airson na Gàidhlig: "leudachadh a ghabhas tomhas san àireimh dhaoine a tha a’ bruidhinn, ag ionnsachadh, a’ cleachdadh agus a’ toirt taic dhan Ghàidhlig. ’S e prìomh amas a’ Phlana "cleachdadh agus ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig a mheudachadh." Tha targaidhean sa Phlana co-cheangailte ris an dachaigh, a’ choimhearsnachd, na gnìomhachasan cruthachail, gnìomhachas agus eaconamaidh, foghlam, ionnsachadh às dèidh ìre na sgoile agus beatha phoblach na h-Alba san fharsaingeachd.</p>	<p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. It is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.</p> <p>The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare and submit a National Gaelic Language Plan with proposals relating to the use and promotion of Gaelic with a focus on the needs and priorities of the Gaelic language for its speakers, learners, and supporters.</p> <p>While the Act requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare the Plan, the responsibility for making progress with the aims and targets within it sits with a number of authorities, organisations, and communities.</p> <p>The Vision of the current National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28<sup>3</sup> is “A measurable increase in the numbers of people speaking, learning, using, and supporting Gaelic”. The Main Aim of the Plan is to “Increase the use and learning of Gaelic”. The Plan includes priorities and targets relating to home, community, creative industries, business and economy, education, post-school learning and Scottish public life generally.</p>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL\\_BnG\\_National\\_Gaelic\\_Language\\_Plan\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL_BnG_National_Gaelic_Language_Plan_ENGLISH.pdf)

Chaidh Bile nan Cànan Albannach a thoirt a-steach dhan Phàrlamaid san t-Samhain 2023. Tha e ag ràdh "gu bheil inbhe oifigeil aig a' Ghàidhlig ann an Alba". Tha na gnìomhan a tha air am buileachadh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig leis an dreachd Bhile "gu bhith air an cur an gnìomh le sùil ri bhith a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheilear a' làimhseachadh na Gàidhlig le spèis co-ionnan ris a' Bheurla".

Bidh am Bile a' stèidheachadh cothrom gus "Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte a chomharrachadh far an urrainnear taic a thoirt seachad a rèir suidheachadh sònraichte a' chànan san sgìre"<sup>1</sup>. Seo raointean far a bheil sgìlean Gàidhlig aig co-dhiù 20% den t-sluagh, no sgìrean far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig air an cleachdadh ann an dòighean sònraichte eile.

**Tha Gàidhlig na cànan nàiseanta a tha ga bruidhinn air feadh na h-Alba..** A rèir Cunntas-sluaigh 2011, bha sgìlean Gàidhlig aig 87,100 daoine (mu 1.7% den àireamh-shluaigh), agus bha comas aig 57,600 dhiubh Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn. Tha mu 50% de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a' fuireach air a' Ghàidhealtachd agus sna h-Eileanan leis tha an còrr a' fuireach sa chòrr de dh'Alba. 'S iad na h-Eileanan Siar, sgìre Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd agus Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid na pàirtean de dh'Alba far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig as treasa sa choimhearsnachd.

**Tha iarrtas a' fàs airson na Gàidhlig agus a cultar** agus airson nam buannachdan foghlaim, eacanomaigeach is sòisealta a tha co-cheangailte riutha.

Mar a tha Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig a' cur an cèill "gheibhear gnìomhachd Ghàidhlig a-nis ann an iomadh roinn leithid foghlam sgoile, foghlam adhartach is àrd-ìre, anns na meadhanan agus craoladh, ann an turasachd, ann am foillseachadh, ann an dualchas, sna h-ealainean agus ann an ionnsachadh inbheach is coimhearsnachd. Tha iad seo ro-chudromach dhan chànan agus cruthaichidh iad cothroman airson cleachdadh na Gàidhlig."

Tha an t-iarrtas airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh follaiseach anns an àrdachadh anabarrach mòr de luchd-cleachdaidh

The draft Scottish Languages Bill<sup>4</sup> was published in November 2023. It states that "the Gaelic language has official status within Scotland". The functions conferred on Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the draft Bill "are to be exercised with a view to ensuring that the Gaelic language is treated with equal respect to the English language".

The draft Bill will "introduce the possibility of Areas of Linguistic Significance to allow for proportionate delivery"<sup>5</sup>. These are areas where at least 20% of its population has Gaelic language skills, or ones where there are other specific uses of Gaelic.

**Gaelic is a national language which is spoken across 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. About 50% of Gaelic speakers live in the Highlands and Islands with the remainder in the rest of Scotland. The Outer Hebrides, Highland and Argyll & Bute are the parts of Scotland where Gaelic retains the greatest community presence.

**There is a growing demand for Gaelic language and culture** with related educational, economic, and social benefits.

As the National Gaelic Language Plan states "Gaelic activity can now be found in many sectors such as school education, further and higher education, in media and broadcasting, in tourism, in publishing, in heritage, in arts and in adult and community learning. These are vital for the language and create opportunities for the use of Gaelic".

The **demand for learning Gaelic** is evident in the huge uptake of the Duolingo language learning

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/scottish-languages-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>



na h-aplacad Duolingo. Tha mu 1.8 millean neach air tòiseachadh air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh air an aplacad bho thòisich an cùrsa bho chionn ceithir bliadhna le 500,000 daoine ga chleachdadh aig an àm seo.. Tha sin na fhàs ann an àireamhan de 17% sa bhliadhna a dh'fhalbh, às dèidh fàs 12% air a' bhliadhna roimhe.

Tha cur air bhog SpeakGaelic san t-Sultain 2021 cuideachd air cur gu mòr ri goireasan do dh'inbhidh a tha ag iarraidh a dhol an sàs sa Ghàidhlig agus an cànan ionnsachadh. Tha mu 400,000 neach-ionnsachaidh air a chleachdadh bho chaidh a chur air bhog.

Fhuair Suirbhidh Beachdan Sòisealta na h-Alba 2021: Beachdan Muinntir na h-Alba air a' Ghàidhlig", a-mach gu bheil:

- An àireamh de dh'Albannaich a tha comasach air beagan Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn air dùblachadh san deich bliadhna mu dheireadh.
- A' Ghàidhlig a' cur ri sunnd le 70% de dh'inbhidh ag ràdh gun robh faireachdainn de choileanadh aca bho bhith ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig.
- A bharrachd air sin, tha 79% de dhaoine am beachd gu bheil Gàidhlig glè chudromach no caran cudromach do dhualchas cultarail na h-Alba.

**Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' cur beachd a-steach dhan cho-chomhairle seo a chionn 's gu bheil sinn airson 's gum bi a' Ghàidhlig fhèin agus coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig air an riochdachadh mar as còir taobh a-staigh buidhnean co-dhùnaidhean ùra a thèid a chruthachadh.**

**C3: Nuair a smaoinicheas sibh air cò a dh'fhaodadh a bhith nam pàirt de bhuidhnean co-dhùnaidh ùra, dè na dòighean as fheàrr gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil iad riochdachail de na coimhearsnachdan aca agus a' neartachadh co-ionannachd?**

Feumar feumalachdan agus cùisean na Gàidhlig aithneachadh agus femuar com-pàirteachadh agus inghabhail a bhith ann a thaobh na Gàidhlig ann an sgìrean far a bheil coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig ann.

Annas a' cho-chomhairle ann am Bile nan Cànan Albannach, bha "beachd làidir ann gum feumadh

app. Some 1.8 million people have started learning Gaelic since the course launched four years ago, with 500,000 people working on it at the present time. That represents growth in numbers of 17% in the last year, following 12% growth in the previous year.

The launch of SpeakGaelic in September 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.

The "Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2021: Public Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland" found that:

- The number of Scots who can speak some Gaelic has doubled in the past decade.
- Gaelic contributes to wellbeing with 70% of adults stating that learning Gaelic gives someone a sense of achievement.
- Some 79% of people think Gaelic is either very or fairly important to Scotland's cultural heritage.

**Bòrd na Gàidhlig are responding to this consultation because we wish to see the interests of the Gaelic language and communities properly represented within new decision-making bodies that are created.**

**Q3. When thinking about who might be part of new decision-making bodies, what are the best ways to ensure they truly reflect their communities and enhance equality?**

There is a need for participation, inclusion and acknowledgement of Gaelic needs and Gaelic matters in areas which have Gaelic communities.

The Scottish Languages Bill consultation elicited a "strong current of opinion (for) the need for



leasachadh na Gàidhlig a bhith air a cho-fhilleadh nas fheàrr le oidhirpean gus dèiligeadh ri cùisean sòisealta is eaconamach eile a tha a' toirt buaidh air coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig<sup>2</sup>.

Tha seo cudromach gus dèanamh cinnteach gun dèiligear ris a' Ghàidhlig le spèis cho-ionann ris a' Bheurla. Bhiodh seo a' tachairt tro bhith a' ceadachadh bheachdan agus/no com-pàirteachadh bho riochdairean aig a' choimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig, gu sònraichte ann an Sgìrean Cànain Sònraichte.

Tha Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig mar-thà ag ràdh "ann an sgìrean dùthchail is eileanach, tha tòrr bhuidhnean coimhearsnachd ann a tha a' cur gu mòr ris a' Ghàidhlig agus ri bhith a' cumail suas nan sgìrean ionadail aca". Tha sin a' gabhail a-steach buidhnean le Planaichean Gàidhlig no coimhearsnachdan a tha a' deasachadh phlanaichean cànain coimhearsnachd stèidhichte air sgìre – m.e. ann an Uibhist.

Tha fàs leantainneach air a bhith anns na lìonraidhean far a bheilear a' brosnachadh agus a' libhrigeadh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig.

Dh'fhaodadh seo a bhith a' ciallachadh gum biodh e coltach gum biodh an dòigh sam biodh ùidhean Gàidhlig air an riochdachadh ann am buidhnean co-dhùnaidh ùra eadar-dhealaichte ann an sgìrean bailteil agus sgìrean dùthchail/eileanach. Ach, 's e a' bhuil a bhiodh ann fhathast a bhith a' toirt taic do sheasmhachd agus cleachdadh na Gàidhlig.

Ann an cuid de sgìrean, dh'fhaodadh com-pàirteachadh a bhith a' gabhail a-steach coinneamhan a bhith air an cumail gu dà chànanach, gearr-chunntasan air an toirt seachad sa Ghàidhlig a bharrachd air a' Bheurla, is msaa.

Tha aithne a' fàs air cho cudromach 's a tha seasmhachd coimhearsnachd ann a bhith a' cumail suas agus ag àrdachadh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig. Tha duilgheadasan a thaobh crìonadh-sluaigh agus leis a' choimhearsnachd a'

Gaelic development to be better integrated with efforts to tackle other social and economic issues affecting Gaelic communities<sup>6</sup>.

This is important in ensuring that the Gaelic language is treated with equal respect to the English language. This would be through allowing input from and/or the participation of representatives of the Gaelic community, particularly in areas of Linguistic Significance.

The National Gaelic Language Plan states that already "In the island and rural areas, there are many community organisations that make a strong contribution to Gaelic and to sustaining their local areas". That includes organisations with Gaelic Language Plans or geographically based community language plans which are being developed - e.g. in Uist.

While "in towns and cities, there has been growth in the networks where Gaelic use is promoted and delivered, whether through arts, sports or leisure events or social gatherings, and this demand is growing".

This could mean that the nature of the inclusion of Gaelic interests within any new decision-making bodies is likely to differ between urban areas and rural/island ones. However, the outcome would be still to support the sustainability and use of the Gaelic language.

Participation could extend in some areas to meetings being held bilingually, minutes provided in Gaelic as well as English, etc.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of community viability in sustaining and increasing the use of the Gaelic language. There are issues of falling and rapidly aging population

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>



fàs nas sine gu luath ann an cuid de na sgìrean far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig as treasa sa choimhearsnachd.

Bidh buidhnean Gàidhlig agus luchd-cleachdaidh a tha air an gabhail a-steach ann am buidhnean co-dhùnaidh ùra nan luchd-tagraidh làidir airson gnìomhan a bheir taic do leasachadh seasmhach. Ann an sgìrean dùthchail agus eileanach bidh iad sin a' gabhail a-steach nithean a bheir buaidh air tàladh agus glèidheadh sluaigh: gu sònraichte taigheadas aig prìs reusanta, obraichean le deagh phàigheadh, agus bun-structair còmhail nas fheàrr. Ann an Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte, bu chòir seo a bhith a' ciallachadh gum bi amalachadh nas fheàrr ann eadar leasachadh na Gàidhlig agus oidhirpean gus aghaidh a chur air ceistean sòisealta is eaconamach eile.

**C14. Dè na seòrsaichean taic a dh'fhaodadh a bhith aig coimhearsnachdan gus comas a thogail, agus ciamar a dh'fhaodadh seo an t-àite aig comhairlean agus buidhnean san roinn phoblaich atharrachadh?**

Gu sònraichte ann an sgìrean dùthchail agus iomallach dh'fhaodadh iad buannachd fhaighinn bho thaic is comhairle bho bhuidhnean coimhearsnachd agus buidhnean san treas roinn a tha ann mar-thà. Tha sin a' gabhail a-steach àireamh, a tha a' sìor fhàs, de dh'oifigearan Gàidhlig anns na sgìrean sin, mòran dhiubh air am maoineachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig, còmhla ri ùghdarrasan ionadail agus Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean.

Tha sinn an dòchas gum bi an fhreagairt seo feumail, agus bhitheamaid toilichte bruidhinn ann am barrachd doimhneachd air puing sònraichte sam bith.

Tha sinn cuideachd toilichte gun robh am pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh ri fhaighinn sa Ghàidhlig.

in some of the areas where Gaelic retains the greatest community presence.

Gaelic organisations and users that are included in new decision-making bodies will be strong advocates for activities which support sustainable development. In rural and island areas these will include aspects that affect population attraction and retention: notably affordable housing, well paid jobs, and improved transport infrastructure. In areas of Linguistic Significance this should mean better integration of Gaelic development with efforts to tackle other social and economic issues.

**Q14. What types of support might communities need to build capacity, and how could this change the role of councils and public sector organisations?**

Particularly in rural and remote areas they could benefit from support and advice from existing community and third sector organisations. That includes the growing number of Gaelic officers in these areas, many of which are funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, along with local authorities and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

We hope that this response is useful, and we would be happy to discuss any specific points in more detail.

We also welcome that the consultation document was made available in Gaelic.

