

Response (draft) to the consultation on the draft National Plan for Gaelic

<p>Is the Vision of the draft Plan one in which you can share ? YES.</p>
<p>Are the proposed sectoral projects essential to meeting the Action Area aims for 2012 ? The descriptions of Sectoral Projects are too high-level to be truly valuable. What is missing from the draft Plan is a clear view of how the outcomes, priorities and projects might be translated into practice over the timeline of the Plan. This Master Plan or Action Plan, mapping out timescales for key projects and their dependencies, requires to be an early deliverable from the Bòrd. Given the magnitude of the task to revitalise and sustain the language, and the inevitability of budgetary constraints, sensitive prioritisation and planning will be essential.</p>
<p>Are the outcomes for the twenty themes and priorities for tackling them correctly outlined ? In broad terms, yes. See previous comment however, as not all Themes & Outcomes and their individual priorities will be of equal weight. For example, it is clear (and recognised by the Bòrd) that teacher recruitment and training is of critical importance to sustain momentum in the growth of GME. Establishment of a national body for corpus planning, while of real value, would be a long way down the list of <u>overall</u> priorities for action.</p>
<p>What projects do you view as being essential to implementing these priorities ? Refer to previous comments regarding timelines and dependencies. Suggested priorities within each Action Area might be :</p> <p>VITALITY :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A support structure for Gaelic in the homes of GME pupils which meets the needs of fluent-speaking and learner parents <p>STATUS :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion campaign to win “hearts and minds” of senior executives in public bodies of the importance of Gaelic and the opportunities it can bring to their organisation 2. Support for the development of Gaelic Language Plans 3. Promotion campaign targeting fluent speakers to use and share their language and culture experience with others in support of wider awareness raising efforts <p>EDUCATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills audit to identify potential G-M teachers 2. Innovative training approaches for prospective G-M teachers 3. Enhanced support structure for existing G-M teachers 4. Establishment of standard syllabus (including accreditation schemes) and resources to support literacy and language skill development among adult learners and semi-speakers 5. Continued funding support, under the Specific Grant Scheme, for <u>existing</u> initiatives which deliver real value, particularly in small authorities where expenditure cannot be ‘mainstreamed’ due to the absence of economies of scale <p>CULTURE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commissioning of original works and translations of classic writings, primarily for young people 2. Establishment of strong links with arts & heritage bodies to ensure that Gaelic language and culture is properly represented in all appropriate initiatives and activities <p>COMMUNICATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of digital TV channel and expanded use of ICT to support delivery of services to the Gaelic community 2. Support the expansion of Gaelic writing (and writing in English about Gaelic affairs) into commercial and community press

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Are the right organisations identified as being the primary players in implementing the priorities ?

Largely yes, but some clarification is required regarding the terminology used in describing the Primary Players in delivering the Plan Outcomes. In some places the term “public authorities” is used where it clearly includes local authorities. In other instances the term “local authorities” is itself used.

In addition to clarification of the above, local authorities should be mentioned explicitly as Primary Players on pages 14 (in promoting awareness and distributing materials), 28 (in addition to CLAD Review Group), 29 and 38 (“in-house” and L.A.-produced communications)

How do you see your organisation contributing to the success of the National Plan ?

In a variety of ways :

VITALITY

- Distribute publicity materials re. use of Gaelic in the home via Community Centres & schools
- Provide support via classes & events for families
- Promotion of GME services, prior to first enrolment for school
- Bi-lingual signage where appropriate
- Support for community events
- Audit of Gaelic skills among workforce to identify candidates for filling posts where Gaelic may be required/useful

STATUS

- Develop and maintain Gaelic Language Plans and deliver the services described therein
- Positive promotion of the language throughout the L.A. and community
- Inclusion of Gaelic-related information and advice in publications across various sectors e.g. education, libraries, arts, heritage

EDUCATION

- Provide information to parents considering GME, assess demand which would trigger local provision
- Offer increased GME opportunities, subject to appropriate levels of demand and availability of suitable staff and funding
- Opportunity to consider implementation of GLPS (Gaelic Learners in the Primary School)
- Build on existing cross-authority collaborative work to offer progression opportunities for lifelong learners
- Commitment to re-train prospective G-M teachers

CULTURE

- Continue to support the inclusion of Gaelic in planned programmes (e.g. music programme, libraries)

COMMUNICATIONS

- Inclusion of articles promoting awareness of Gaelic-related issues in communications, “in-house” magazines etc.

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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PLAN

- The document is not an “easy read” (either in English or Gaelic), in part due to the format used but also to the high level of language competency expected. A Management Summary and a clear Index of Contents would have been useful. The numbering of paragraphs or sections would improve readability and simplify cross-referencing within the document (e.g. the Introduction refers to “sectoral projects”. You have to look hard to discover what these are - at the foot of pages 13, 19, 25, 31 and 37)
- While clearly directed at a professional audience, there is a need to make the document more “user-friendly” in language and structure to make it accessible to a wider community of interest.
- A key priority for the Bòrd will be improved communication and planning across the wide range of bodies/partners involved in this initiative. There is currently much duplicated or wasteful activity through poor communication.
- In similar vein, the Bòrd needs to foster a greater willingness by organisations to collaborate across traditional boundaries if the language is to prosper. Skills, knowledge and experience are comparatively scarce and need to be shared and developed in support of the national strategy.
- **The statement on page 53 regarding the direction of Specific Grant funding to new initiatives is not new, but threatens the viability of many valuable developments, particularly in smaller authorities. Without such funding, the Bòrd may well find that provision for Gaelic in certain areas of the country regresses rather than progresses**
- The proposal to “top-slice” 10% of grants to Stòrlann seems an anachronism. Funding for this body should be based on the national priorities and proposed development programme for resources. It should be driven by national need, not simply derived by a percentage of each Authority’s grant

Draft Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans

Are you satisfied with the interpretation of equal respect ?

YES.

Are the issues concerning the level of provision on pages 9-10 adequately tackled ?

YES.

Is the advice in each section clear and helpful ?

YES.

Are the suggestions for the content of a Gaelic Language Plan comprehensive enough and appropriate to the requirements of Gaelic development ?

YES.

Are the percentages for the triggering of various policy provisions realistic and appropriate ?

YES – but none would trigger the requirements in our authority

Would the draft Guidance adequately assist in drawing up a Gaelic Language Plan ?

YES.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- This document is much clearer than the draft Plan itself and is likely to prove most helpful in formulating the authority’s Gaelic Language Plan.
- The small number of residents in the authority area overall, and their scattered distribution within the area, mean that none of the percentages quoted on pages 18,19 and 22 would trigger provision of the facilities described. The authority will, nonetheless, consult as widely as possible within the community to assess potential demand for services in Gaelic