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**Is the vision of the draft Plan one in which you can share?**

Yes, Faclair na Gàidhlig wholeheartedly shares this vision and will provide a resource to help to shape it. In order to move forward on almost every initiative for Gaelic, the language itself needs a bedrock. That bedrock, for most languages throughout the world, is an accepted, authoritative and historically based dictionary. Scottish Gaelic does not have such a dictionary, and until it has one, all initiatives (educational, technical, cultural) are denied the stability such a resource can bring. This submission is made on behalf of Faclair na Gàidhlig from a lexicographical perspective.

**In the light of your response to the above question, are the proposed sectoral projects essential to the meeting of the action area aims for 2012? If not, why not?**

Yes, they are essential, though very broadly defined. The inclusion of Corpus Development in the fundamental action area of Language Vitality is very welcome. This is an extremely important aspect of language planning and much depends on its success.

**Are the outcomes for the twenty themes and the priorities for tackling them correctly outlined and prioritised? If not, why not?**

**1. Home:** Priority 3 relating to resources is of primary importance. Language resources are all dependent on reliable dictionaries which are in turn dependent on the full historical dictionary. We have seen in English and Scots how much can be achieved. These two languages have world class historical dictionaries with derivative works to meet all needs. **Gaelic deserves no less.**

**2. Community:** An historical dictionary of Gaelic would play an important part in language development within the community and in some cases may lead to the use or reintroduction of less widely known or obsolete words, rather than the creation of new words, which will often be based on English.

**3. Workplace:** The improvement in, and possibly also acquisition of, language skills is very important and it will be a challenge to motivate employers to provide support. Courses require resources. In many cases, a specialist vocabulary will be required. Dictionaries are central to these resources.

**4. Corpus Development:** ‘Promote the development of Gaelic lexicography’ should have a higher priority. It should also specifically refer to historical lexicography which underpins all the other listed priorities. Spelling, grammar, vocabulary and names are all evidenced in the historical dictionary from the earliest records onwards. Such a dictionary will inform policy-making in these aspects of the language.

**5. Gaelic Plans:** This is another area where specialist vocabulary may be required for particular areas of planning. Dictionaries will play a fundamental part in the development of such terminology.

**6. Prestige:** Language resources underpin all these priorities and the historical dictionary is a vital language resource. **Equal respect demands equal resources.** English is well-served by the online Oxford English Dictionary and the many works derived from it. Gaelic merits equal provision.

**7. Awareness:** This theme also requires to be supported by language resources. The historical dictionary gives first hand evidence of the culture and heritage of a language. It is the most reliable means of communicating a language and its culture to others on a global basis. For example, it will provide firsthand information on daily life through the ages. On a broader scale, it will allow identification of the Gaelic/Irish and Gaelic/Scots interfaces and therefore help to identify, and indeed showcase, Scotland's linguistic heritage.

**8. Support:** This important outcome is again underpinned by language learning resources of which the historical dictionary is the most crucial. It enables dictionaries to be produced for all levels of competence. These are an indispensable tool for language use and the improvement of language skills. The historical dictionary is itself the greatest repository for the culture giving a full explanation of every word in the written language and illustrating senses by citations from throughout its history. Thus, it simultaneously describes the culture on a level of detail unmatched by any encyclopaedia.

**10. School Years:** Dictionaries are key resources at every level of education. The historical dictionary provides the authoritative foundation for all others. **The production of accurate Gaelic-medium dictionaries which will be crucial to achieving this outcome will be dependent upon Faclair na Gàidhlig.** A well-resourced education system will attract more students.

**11. Tertiary and Lifelong Learning:** This is an admirable outcome. Broadening it to include continued growth in numbers of those studying Gaelic at university but not entirely through the medium of Gaelic would be worthwhile. Such graduates, some of whom come from other cultures, could make a valuable contribution to the regeneration of Gaelic. The same point as for 10. applies here. **Dictionaries are fundamental resources.** The historical dictionary is a major resource for scholars. With respect to lifelong learning, the need for flexible language learning courses for non-Gaelic

speaking parents who opt to send their children to Gaelic-medium education should be investigated.

**12. Education Resources:** Teachers in Gaelic-medium education need better resources. Dictionaries are vital resources in education. Referencing skills are essential at all levels of education. They can also be learning aids which are stimulating and fun for all ages, e.g. the OED website ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)) has a Learning Resources section and Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd has its Scuilwab ([www.scuilwab.org.uk](http://www.scuilwab.org.uk)) aimed at schoolchildren but fun for all.

**13. Cultural Activity:** Language is at the very heart of cultural activity. Priority 5 might be expanded to 'Expand the range of Gaelic leisure reading through the promotion of Gaelic writing and translation of works in other languages into Gaelic.' Translation from Gaelic may also attract new learners and open an important route into the language and culture. Again, dictionaries are core resources for writers.

**14. The Arts:** The 'gateway' aspect in priority 5 is very important. Music, in particular, can attract non-Gaels and some will be encouraged to learn more of the language and its culture.

**15. Heritage:** It is important that we understand our heritage correctly; this applies to our material heritage and our written heritage. The historical dictionary helps us to understand both. It is the key to understanding our past and it is the memory of our culture. It is crucial to the reliability of heritage interpretation. It would contribute to the understanding of Gaelic heritage, both in itself, and as a reference work for heritage projects, such as the digitisation of archive material.

**16. Sport & Recreation:** This aspect of culture could be another very important 'gateway' to stimulate interest among non-Gaelic speakers and increase the number of learners.

**17. Print Media:** Promotion through non-Gaelic writing, about Gaelic culture and introducing some Gaelic words would be another important 'gateway'.

**18. Broadcasting Distribution:** This is an admirable outcome with pertinent priorities. Television can also be used to teach the language, e.g. Can Seo, Speaking Our Language. Dictionaries are a valuable support resource for such programmes. Television can also be a useful tool in gathering material for dictionaries, e.g. 'Beul Chainnt' and the recent 'Balderdash and Piffle' series on the OED.

**19. Content Access:** Writing for television should also be promoted. This is another 'gateway' to new learners and so sub-titling is important. Even with the limited amount of Gaelic television currently available, there are people who do not speak the language who watch programmes of good quality with interesting content.

**20. Interactivity:** Dictionaries are now very important electronic resources. The internet is an effective way of bringing such resources into homes. For example, the Scots historical dictionaries are available free ([www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk)). Many more people access DSL than would go to a library to use the 22 printed volumes it is composed of. Faclair na Gàidhlig will be an electronic resource. Websites to aid learners would also be useful and could put learners in touch with each other, regardless of where they are based.

**In the light of your response to the above question, what projects do you view as being essential to implementing these priorities (some examples are offered in Appendix 1)?**

- 1. Home:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be vital in increasing the availability of language-support resources in the home.
- 2. Community:** Language resources, particularly dictionaries, underpin community activities. Faclair na Gàidhlig is therefore an essential project.
- 3. Workplace:** Dictionaries will be central to the improvement of language skills and the creation of specialist vocabulary. Faclair na Gàidhlig is therefore a key project.
- 4. Corpus Development:** Faclair na Gàidhlig lies at the heart of corpus development. **The historical dictionary is the only resource which shows the history of the language and explains it.** Moreover, it is an ongoing resource continually being added to as the language changes. A vital aspect is the illustration of senses by the citations on which they are based. Everything in the historical dictionary is drawn from the evidence. It is a resource in which the language speaks for itself.
- 6. Prestige:** Faclair na Gàidhlig is integral to increasing the prestige of the language.
- 7. Awareness:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be a valuable means of increasing awareness of the language.
- 8. Support:** Faclair na Gàidhlig is an essential project providing support for the language.
- 10. School Years:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will make a vital contribution to the development of children in Gaelic-medium education.
- 11. Tertiary and Lifelong Learning:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will have a fundamental role in the development of tertiary Gaelic-medium education.
- 12. Education Resources:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be a fundamental education resource.
- 13. Cultural Activity:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will make an important contribution to enriching cultural activity.

**15. Heritage:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be a core resource in enabling access to Gaelic language heritage activities.

**17. Print Media:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be an important tool in facilitating an increased presence of Gaelic in the print media. It will inform those wishing to find out more about what they have read. Word-lists and phrase books for tourists derived from the dictionary can also be a first point of access for many experiencing Gaelic for the first time.

**18. Broadcasting Distribution:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be an important support resource for a Gaelic digital service.

**20. Interactivity:** Faclair na Gàidhlig will be provide an indispensable resource in the use of ICT in promoting Gaelic and its culture.

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

Faclair na Gàidhlig should be considered as a primary player in the implementation of Priorities 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18 and 20.

**If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you see yourselves contributing to the success of the National Plan?**

In the long term, Faclair na Gàidhlig will be a central resource in implementing the National Plan and promoting the Gaelic language and culture. The Plan shows that resources for the language are of primary importance. There is no more important resource a language can possess than its historical dictionary. It is authoritative, definitive and informative providing the history of every word in the written language and a clear understanding of the culture. The historical dictionary itself may be consulted by comparatively few but, through its derivative dictionaries, it reaches all who access the language. There can be few, if any, English speakers in the world who have not benefited directly or indirectly from the Oxford English Dictionary either by consulting it or one of its derivatives or by being taught or advised by another who has. Planned derivative dictionaries include printed one volume bilingual dictionaries for learners, monolingual dictionaries for schools and for native speakers, and lists of specialist vocabulary. These materials will greatly assist realisation of the outcomes of the National Plan.

In the short term, the next stage of Faclair na Gàidhlig is being planned. This will be a fully-searchable full-text corpus of key works in Gaelic which will be a useful resource in education and many aspects of research. It will be of benefit in many aspects of the National Plan.

Both the corpus and, subsequently, the dictionary will have a valuable knowledge transfer dimension. This will have implications for the National Plan and beyond. The project will function as a focal point for the language in Scotland, working closely with national and local government and other

relevant bodies on policy-making. Obvious practical examples are orthographic policy based on evidence from the language, the compilation of specialist terminology in accordance with Gaelic idiom, and signage. This will be a two-way relationship with changes in language use being considered and respected. Engagement with stakeholders in education and heritage will also be a priority.

**Do you have any other comments on the draft National Plan which you would like to submit?**

The plan is wide-ranging and far-reaching. In order to achieve its goals, the language will have to be well-supported financially and well-resourced. There is much to learn from countries such as Finland where several languages are well-supported by a languages institute with dictionaries at its core; Wales where the Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru is regarded as a key part of promoting the language and culture; and Ireland where Foras na Gaeilge has a statutory remit for lexicography. The plan presents an excellent opportunity to achieve something similar for Gaelic.

**National Gaelic Education Strategy**

The National Gaelic Education Strategy lays down the desiderata for the future regeneration and continued growth of Gaelic. What is less clear is how these goals will be achieved. In most action areas, Faclair na Gàidhlig will be an effective bridge which will provide a route from key task to impact. It will provide the language with a resource comparable to those of English and Scots and increase the prestige of Gaelic on a global level. It will facilitate access to the language, its history, literature and culture, serving as a gateway to the past which will point the way to the future. It will provide vocabulary, and evidence the Gaelic idiom, particularly for special purposes where terminology is required. It will play a key role in aiding improvement in language and literacy skills.

It is in Education and Corpus Development that Faclair na Gàidhlig will be most indispensable. A properly-funded dictionary enterprise will produce small affordable Gaelic-English, English-Gaelic and monolingual Gaelic dictionaries as soon as Faclair na Gàidhlig is produced for the modern period. These will be fundamental resources for Gaelic-medium education and lifelong learning. Faclair na Gàidhlig itself will be a primary resource for tertiary education and all those researching into Gaelic, its people, its history and its literature. Corpus Development will be enabled by the existence of Faclair na Gàidhlig which will provide the evidence for policy-making on spelling, grammar, vocabulary and naming issues. It will also facilitate the creation of new terminology from the perspective of the language and its idiom as opposed to the perspective of English. It is difficult to see how Corpus Development can be progressed in any effective way without the existence of this project and its root materials.

The Steering Committee for Faclair na Gàidhlig which is composed of representatives from mainstream tertiary education, teacher education and

Gaelic-medium education should be listed as a provider and facilitator in several action areas. The resource it aims to produce will be necessary to sustain Gaelic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I agree for my views to be made public ✓