

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Framework for the Resource Spending Review

Submission from Bord na Gaidhlig

How clearly does the framework set out the Scottish Government's priorities for the resource spending review?

BnG welcomes Scottish Government's proposal to set out multi-year spending plans for between 2023-24 and 2026-27. We introduced three year funding agreements for our delivery partners in 2019 and have seen benefits from this. For example, increased certainty in financial and activity planning. In contrast, BnG currently receives Grant in Aid from Scottish Government on an annual basis.

At some points in the consultative framework document one of the three priorities is referred to as "To secure a stronger, fairer, greener economy" while at other points the term "economic transformation" is used. It would be clearer if one or the other was used throughout.

Further, Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation has not yet been published. Therefore, its scope is currently unknown.

It appears that Scottish Government's most recent and clearest exposition of a stronger, fairer, greener economy is contained in *A fairer, greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22*. It states, "The Scottish Government is committed to increasing the numbers using and learning Gaelic". This implies that this ambition for Gaelic is part of Scottish Government's vision of a fairer and greener Scotland. Thus, it requires to be resourced appropriately going forward.

The inclusion of Gaelic also has an economic dimension. Scottish Government acknowledge that Gaelic "has great potential as an asset for adding economic ...value"¹. This reflects previous research² that measured the economic value Gaelic brings to Scotland. It found that businesses in the creative industries, tourism, heritage, and food and drink sectors benefit from their use of Gaelic, and that this has the potential to bring significant economic value. It showed that the potential value of Gaelic as an asset could be up to £149 million.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-scottish-governments-draft-gaelic-language-plan-2021-2026/>

² <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/5585/hieplusreportplus2014plusfinalplusonline.pdf>

Dè cho soilleir 's a tha am frèam-obrach a' mìneachadh prìomhachasan Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson an lèirmheis air cosg stòrasan?

Tha BnG a' cur fàilte air a' mholadh bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba gun cuirear an cèill planaichean cosg ioma-bliadhna airson eadar 2023-24 agus 2026-27. Thug sinn fhìn a-steach aontaidhean trì-bliadhna airson nan com-pàirtichean libhrigidh againn ann an 2019, agus tha sinn air buannachd fhaicinn às an seo. Mar eisimpleir, barrachd cinnt a thaobh planadh ghnìomhachdan is ionmhasan. Air a chaochladh, tha BnG an-dràsta a' faighinn tabhartas gus cuideachadh bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba a h-uile bliadhna.

Tha sgrìobhainn an fhrèam-obrach, air a bheilear a' co-chomhairleachadh, aig amannan a' dèanamh iomradh air aon de na trì prìomhachasan mar "Gus eaconamaidh nas treasa, nas cothromaiche is nas uaine a choileanadh", ach aig amannan eile thathar a' cleachdadh a' bhriathair "cruth-atharrachadh eaconamach". Bhiodh e nas soilleire nan robhar a' cleachdadh an aon tionndaidh air feadh an fhrèam-obrach.

A bharrachd air sin, cha deach an Ro-innleachd Nàiseanta air Cruth-atharrachadh Eaconamach fhoillseachadh fhathast le Riaghaltas na h-Alba. Mar sin, tha sinn gun fhios air an raon-ùghdarras aige.

A rèir coltais, gheibhear an cunntas-mìneachaidh as ùire agus as soilleire bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air dè bhiodh eaconamaidh nas treasa, nas cothromaiche is nas uaine a' ciallachadh san sgrìobhainn *Alba nas cothromaiche is nas uaine: Prògram Riaghlaidh 2021-22*: Tha sin ag ràdh: "Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba an geall air cur ris an àireamh de dhaoine a tha a' cleachdadh agus ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig". Tha sin a' ciallachadh gu bheil an t-àrd-amas airson Gàidhlig mar phàirt den lèirsinn aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Alba a tha nas cothromaiche agus nas uaine. Uime sin, feumar cur stòran ris aig ìre fhreagarrach a' dol air adhart.

Le bhith a' gabhail Gàidhlig a-steach, bidh buannachd eaconamach ann cuideachd. Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air aithneachadh gu bheil "comas mòr aig a' Ghàidhlig a bhith a' cur ri luach eaconamach is sòisealta"³. Tha seo a' comharrachadh rannsachadh a rinneadh roimhe ⁴ a bha a' tomhas an luach eaconamaich a tha a' Ghàidhlig a' toirt do dh'Alba. Lorg sin gu bheil gnothachasan sna gnìomhachasan cruthachail, turasachd, dualchas, agus san roinn biadh is deoch a' faighinn buannachd bho bhith a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, agus gu bheil comas aig seo luach eaconamach mòr a libhrigeadh. Sheall e gum faodadh luach na Gàidhlig a bhith suas ri £149 millean. Chithear barrachd fianais air sin ann an rannsachaidhean eile air a' bhuidh shòisealta is eaconamaich a gheibhear bho ghnìomhachasan sònraichte, mar eisimpleir

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-scottish-governments-draft-gaelic-language-plan-2021-2026/>

⁴ <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/5585/hieplusreportplus2014plusfinalplusonline.pdf>

na meadhanan Gàidhlig agus fèilltean Gàidhlig leithid a' Mhòid Nàiseanta Rìoghail.

Does the framework properly reflect the current economic and political context?

The consultative framework document notes that “the impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt acutely by many individuals, businesses and communities across Scotland” and that “the impacts of the pandemic have been, and continue to be, felt unequally”.

In the current context the document should acknowledge that these factors have a geographical dimension. The impacts of the pandemic on islands and other parts of the Highlands and Islands have been set out in a number of reports and other documents⁵. These have pointed to the:

- General economic fragility of many islands and remote areas.
- Relatively high share of businesses in sectors disproportionately affected by the pandemic - which have been significant employers. For example in tourism, the arts and entertainment.
- Relatively high levels of self-employment, where Government support has been lower than for companies and their employees.
- Greater dependence on employment in micro/small enterprises. They have fewer financial and other resources to cope with a downturn in demand.

These factors will have led to more significant pandemic impacts in the islands and more remote mainland areas. They are likely to take longer to recover than other parts of Scotland.

In the 2011 Census the 28 individual islands in Highland, Argyll and Bute and the Outer Hebrides had a total population of around 45,000 aged 3 years or above. Of these around 22,000 (48%) had some skills in Gaelic. That is, vastly above the Scottish average (1.7%).

In 12 of the islands the proportion of residents with Gaelic skills was over 40%. These were largely within the Outer Hebrides (10), plus Raasay and Tiree. In addition, the figure for Skye was only slightly less (37%). Overall, these west coast islands account for less than 1% of the Scottish population aged 3 years or above - but contain one quarter (25%) of Scottish residents with some Gaelic skills. **Therefore, the Gaelic language is not only important to these islands, but these islands' sustainability is**

⁵ For example: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-through-covid-lens-survey-results/documents/>; <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/9646/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-highlands-and-islands.pdf>;

https://archive2021.parliament.scot/S5_Rural/REC_S5_20_IB_41.pdf;

https://archive2021.parliament.scot/S5_Rural/RECC_COMHAIRLE_NAN_EILEAN_SIAR.pdf

essential to the continued sustainability and growth of the Gaelic language and culture.

As Scottish Government's National Islands Plan states: "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". The economic challenges facing these communities needs to be fully recognised in future policies and funding.

A bheil am frèam-obrach a' comharrachadh a' cho-theacsa eaconamaich is phoilitigich a th' ann an-dràsta ann an dòigh iomchaidh?

Tha sgrìobhainn an fhrèam-obrach, air a bheilear a' co-chomhairleachadh, a' toirt fa-near gu bheil "COVID-19 a' cumail air a' toirt buaidh mhòr air mòran dhaoine, gnothachasan agus coimhearsnachdan air feadh Alba" agus gu bheil "buaidhean a' ghalair mhòr-sgaoilte air a bhith, agus tha fhathast, air am fulang gu neo-chothromach".

Sa cho-theacsa làithreach, bu chòir gu bheil an sgrìobhainn ag aithneachadh gu bheil adhbharan ceangailte ri cruinn-eòlas aig na bun-chùisean seo. Chaidh na buaidhean a tha air a bhith aig a' ghalar mhòr-sgaoilte air eileanan agus air pàirtean eile den Ghàidhealtachd's na h-Eileanan a chur an cèill ann an grunn aithisgean is sgrìobhainnean eile⁶. Thug iad seo an aire:

- Brisgeachd eaconamach iomadh eilein is sgìre dùthchail san fharsaingeachd.
- Gun robh, an coimeas ri sgìrean eile, ìre àrd de ghnothachasan ann an raointean eaconamach a dh'fhuiling buaidh mhì-chuimseach bhon ghalar mhòr-sgaoilte - gnothachasan a bha nam fastaichean cudromach. Mar eisimpleir, ann an turasachd, na h-ealainean agus dibhearsain.
- Gun robh, an coimeas ri sgìrean eile, ìre àrd de fhèin-fhastadh, ris nach robh an Riaghaltas a' toirt uiread de thaic an taca ri companaidhean is an luchd-cosnaidh aca.
- Barrachd eisimeil air fastadh ann an iomairtean beaga is meanbh-iomairtean. Chan eil uiread de stòrasan ionmhasail is eile aca airson dèiligeadh ri lùghdachadh ann an iarrtas.

Bidh na bun-chùisean seo air buaidhean nas susbaintich adhbharachadh sna h-eileanan agus sna sgìrean iomallaiche air tìr-mòr. Is dòcha gun toir iad nas

3 Mar eisimpleir: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-through-covid-lens-survey-results/documents/>; <https://www.hie.co.uk/media/9646/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-highlands-and-islands.pdf>;

https://archive2021.parliament.scot/S5_Rural/REC_S5_20_IB_41.pdf;

https://archive2021.parliament.scot/S5_Rural/RECC_COMHAIRLE_NAN_EILEAN_SIAR.pdf

fhaide mus faic iad feabhas eaconamach an coimeas ri sgìrean eile de dh'Alba.

Ann an Cunntas-sluaigh 2011, bha sluaigh iomlan de mu 45,000 neach a bha 3 bliadhna a dh'aois no nas sine sna 28 eileanan fa leth ann an sgìrean Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd, Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid agus Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Bha sgìlean Gàidhlig aig mu 22,000 (48%) aca. Tha seo fada nas àirde na an ìre chuibheasach airson Alba (1.7%).

Ann an 12 de na h-eileanan, bha sgìlean Gàidhlig aig còrr is 40% den luchd-chòmhnaidh. Bha a' mhòr-chuid aca taobh a-staigh nan Eileanan Siar (10), agus cuideachd Ratharsair agus Tiriodh. A thuilleadh air sin, bha an àireamh airson an Eilean Sgitheanaich dìreach rud beag na b' ìsle (37%).

Gu h-iomlan, tha na h-eileanan seo air a' chosta an iar a' dèanamh suas nas lugha na 1% de shluaigh na h-Alba a tha 3 bliadhna a dh'aois no nas sine - ach tha barrachd air cairteal (25%) de luchd-còmhnaidh na h-Alba aig a bheil sgìlean Gàidhlig a' fuireach annta. **Mar sin, chan ann a-mhàin gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig cudromach do na h-eileanan seo ach gu bheil seasmhachd nan eileanan riatanach airson seasmhachd agus fàs leantainneach na Gàidhlig.**

Mar a tha Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba ag ràdh: "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". Feumaidh na dùbhlain eaconamach ris am bi na coimhearsnachdan seo a' toirt aghaidh a bhith air aithneachadh gu tur ann am poileasaidhean agus ann am maoinachadh san àm ri teachd.

How does the framework approach cross-cutting issues, long-term challenges such as demographic trends, and preventative approaches?

Changing demographics have affected many islands and remote parts of Scotland for a considerable length of time - and to a greater degree than elsewhere in Scotland. That includes communities where Gaelic has remained relatively strong.

These communities are already very aware that, as the consultative framework document notes, "A decline in the working age population slows economic growth" and "Poor health and complex care needs are more present in an older population". It is estimated⁷ that while Scotland's working age population was virtually unchanged between 2011 and 2020, in the Outer Hebrides it fell by approaching 10% in the same period.

Again, the document should acknowledge the geographical dimension of changing demographics in Scotland. This has implications for island communities' sustainability and in the case of the Outer Hebrides in particular

⁷ NRS Scotland Mid-Year Population Estimates (age 16-64)

the future sustainability of Gaelic language and culture in what is considered a Gaelic heartland.

Ciamar a tha am frèam-obrach a' dèiligeadh ri cùisean a ghearras tarsainn, dùbhlain fad-ùine leithid gluasadan sluagh-thomhais agus ceuman anaclaidh?

Tha atharrachaidhean sluagh-thomhais air buaidh a thoirt air mòran eileanan is sgìrean iomallach ann an Alba airson ùine mhòr - agus gu ìre na bu mhotha na ann an àitichean eile ann an Alba. Tha sin a' gabhail a-steach coimhearsnachdan far a bheil Gàidhlig fhathast cuimseach làidir.

Tha na coimhearsnachdan seo mothachail mar-thà, mar a thathar a' toirt fa-near ann an sgrìobhainn an fhrèam-obrach, air a bheilear a' co-chomhairleachadh, gum bi “crìonadh ann an àireimh-shluaigh de dh'aois comasach air obair a' slaodachadh fàs eaconamachd” agus gu bheil “droch shlàinte agus feumalachdan cùraim iom-fhillte nas buailtich am measg dhaoine nas sine”. Thathar a' measadh,⁸ fhad 's a bha an àireamh-shluaigh ann an Alba de dh'aois comasach air obair cha mhòr gun atharrachadh eadar 2011 agus 2020, sna h-Eileanan Siar thuit i le faisg air 10% rè na h-ùine sin. A-rithist, bu chòir gu bheil an sgrìobhainn ag aithneachadh nan adhbharan ceangailte ri cruinn-eòlas ann an atharrachaidhean sluagh-thomhais ann an Alba. Tha impleachdan aig seo airson seasmhachd nan coimhearsnachdan eileanach agus, airson nan Eileanan Siar, seasmhach cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig ann an sgìre a thathar a' meas mar teis-mheadhan na Gàidhealtachd.

⁸ Clàran Nàiseanta na h-Alba Tuairmsean leth-bhliadhnail air àireimh-shluaigh (aois 16-64)