Analysis of Consultation Responses for the Gaelic and Scots Commitments relative to the Scottish Languages Bill
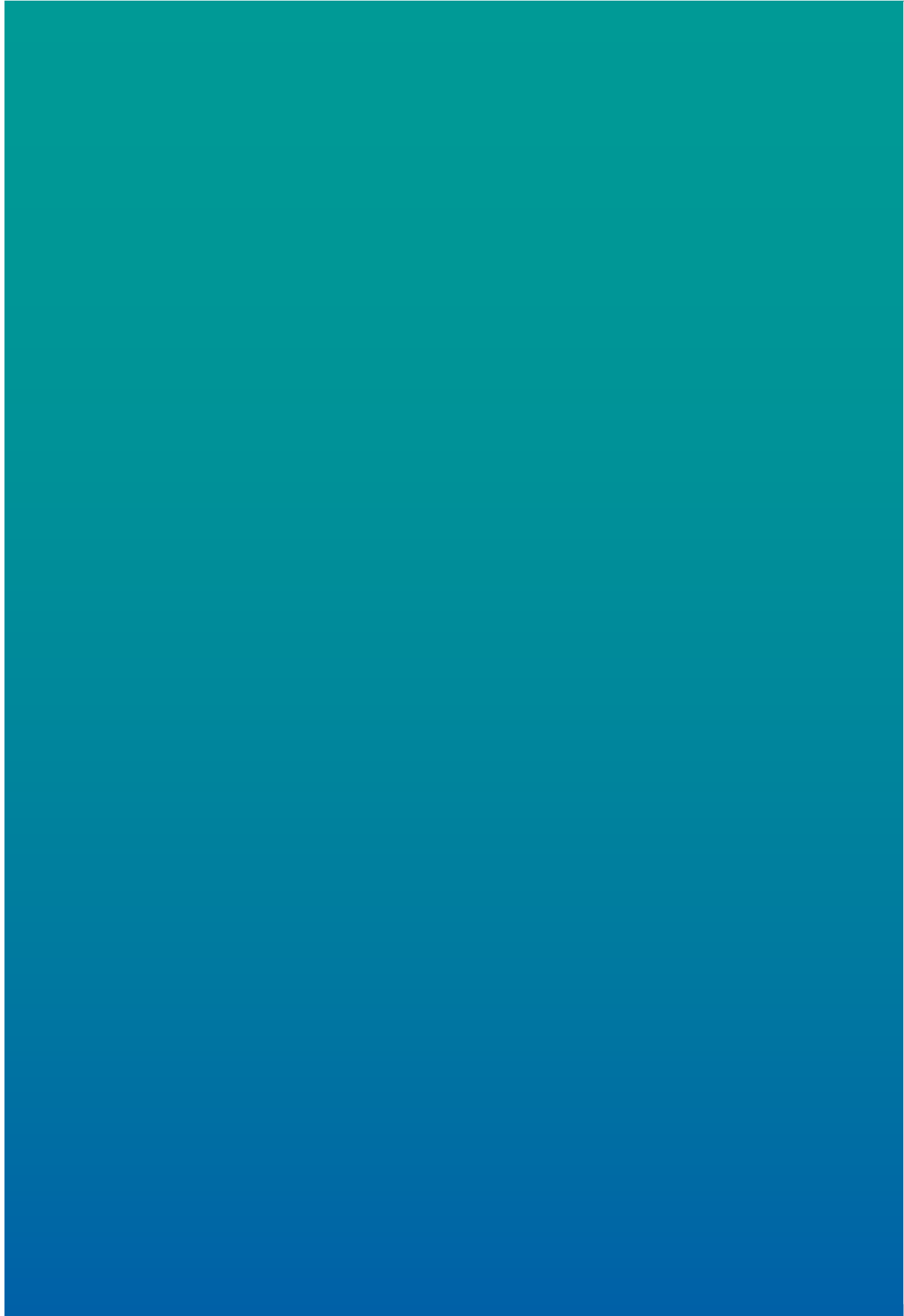
Final Report

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Contents

List of Tables

Executive Summary

Introduction

The report encapsulates findings from the public consultation held between 24 August to 8 December 2022 through the Citizen Space platform and other engagement methods such as email, focus groups and other engagement events. The goal of this consultation is to gauge public views on the promotion of the Gaelic and Scots languages as part of the Scottish Government's commitments.

Main Findings

Gaelic Medium Education

Some prominent themes included an increased need for funding and resources to promote Gaelic Medium Education. Some barriers that hinder the promotion of Gaelic and Gaelic Medium Education include social stigmas attached to the use of Gaelic and inaccessibility to Gaelic educational services. The analysis revealed the following action points regarding Gaelic Medium Education.

Awareness and promotion of Gaelic Medium Education

- Parents should be provided with a legal right to Gaelic Medium Education.

- Information and public awareness campaigns should be used to address the stigmas around the use of Gaelic.

- Multilingualism should be promoted by demonstrating its benefits.

- The new strategy must entail provisions for secondary and tertiary-level Gaelic education.

- Instead of having Gaelic units within English-speaking schools, stand-alone Gaelic educational provision should be developed further to allow for greater accessibility.

- Educational authorities should develop targeted initiatives for adults to enhance their Gaelic learning.

Gaelic Medium Education Curriculum

- Greater involvement from education experts in the development of a national curriculum for Gaelic Medium Education must be considered to ensure that the process is neutral and apolitical.

- The Gaelic curriculum should include all aspects of culture and history to instil a holistic awareness of the language.

Policy, legislation and partnerships

- There should be policy and legislative provision and support for both Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic Learner Education.

- Statutory guidance on Gaelic education must be revised and strengthened. It should incorporate the advice on Gaelic Education from Education Scotland.

- The Scottish Government should collaborate closely with other government departments, local authorities, local schools, community groups, parents, and other stakeholders to ensure that expectations and commitments concerning Gaelic Medium Education are aligned.

- A strategic plan and timetable should be adopted to phase out English Medium education entirely in the Western Isles and other core Gàidhealtachd areas. All remaining English-Medium staff in these areas should be allowed to acquire Gaelic skills if they do not already possess them and contribute to the Gaelic Medium education sector.

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig and a new post of a Language Commissioner must have powers to monitor compliance with the legal duties of local authorities to support and develop Gaelic Medium education and investigate any complaint regarding non-compliance. Local authorities need to be made accountable regarding how National Language strategy and local language plans are implemented and how funds are utilised.

Gàidhealtachd

For the creation of a Gàidhealtachd, respondents believed it should be defined based on Gaelic's historical presence in a specific area. To encourage and support Gaelic speakers, public, economic, and infrastructural support should be provided to enable and normalise the use of the language. The analysis revealed the following action points regarding a Gàidhealtachd.

Defining and preserving aGàidhealtachd

- A Gàidhealtachd should comprise areas with a high number of speakers. It should be geographically defined. However, this should not be at the expense of Gaelic speakers not receiving adequate support outside the Gàidhealtachd. The

authorities should prioritise preserving and promoting Gaelic in the vernacular communities, given the current fragility of the language.

- A combination of national and local planning must be in place to preserve a Gàidhealtachd. These should include regular reviews and clear monitoring metrics to achieve targets and drive change. Public and private organisations must work together to develop and promote a Gàidhealtachd, especially in areas without significant numbers of Gaelic speakers.

Investments for developments in a Gàidhealtachd

- Resourcing and funding need to be well-aligned with local objectives for a Gàidhealtachd. However, funding must also be available to enable councils to support the use of Gaelic in communities without the creation of a Gàidhealtachd and ensure that local authorities not deemed to be a part of a Gàidhealtachd do not feel less supported in their mission to deliver the targets within their Gaelic Language plans. Furthermore, the revitalisation of the Gaelic language and strengthening existing Gaelic communities must be prioritised in Gàidhealtachd related policies.

- For a Gàidhealtachd to be created and strengthened, there must be an investment in economic benefits and employment opportunities for the Gaelic-speakers to remain in these Gaelic-majority areas. Issues like lack of housing,

inaccessible housing prices for young people, and transport and infrastructural support must all be addressed.

- For a community to thrive, cultural initiatives like supporting traditional/folk music, promoting local Gaelic artists, and developing cultural centres and language festivals should be promoted within a Gàidhealtachd.

Community engagement

- Any changes to policy structures and the allocation of resources need to put Gaelic-speaking and Gaelic learning families and associated communities at the centre of the consultation and development focus. Partnership and networking within local communities would lead to shared local vision and commitment whilst strengthening and maintaining the priorities outlined in the National Gaelic Plan. For example, the local authority areas of Eileanan Siar, Highland, and Argyll and Bute could collaborate with community stakeholders in the various districts of the remaining vernacular Gaelic communities to agree on an operational mechanism to bolster language support and revitalisation within their respective regional localities.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

There were mixed views on the duties, functions, and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Respondents suggested that Bòrd na Gàidhlig requires more funding for its duties. Some stated that the organisation needs to be restructured. A few emphasised the imperative aspect of engaging with communities more to identify the best ways to promote Gaelic. Finally, some respondents were not satisfied with the current operations of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and suggested that it should be disbanded. Keeping in view the aforementioned responses, the following action points could be considered.

Functioning and powers of Bòrd na Gàidhlig

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig must have enhanced statutory powers for it to be able to enforce legal duties regarding Gaelic Medium Education and statutory guidance applicable to local authorities.

- For Bòrd na Gàidhlig and its operations to be effective, it must institute a rigorous monitoring mechanism and robust reporting framework. There is a need for utmost transparency on the work of the Bòrd. The Bòrd must work on collaborative understanding amongst all partners, stakeholders, and communities working towards the strategic objectives.

- Currently, the state of Bòrd na Gàidhlig is such that it has too many duties with too limited funds and resources. More funding and resources are required to sponsor CLD practitioners and other small community organisations to promote the Gaelic language.

Moreover, the effective and efficient implementation of carefully crafted local authority Gaelic Language Plans must be adequately and suitably funded. With a range of functions, it requires funds for promoting community ventures and initiatives and offering advice on Gaelic-related matters to ministers and others, among other responsibilities.

Partnerships and community engagement

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig should work in partnership and collaboration with the Scottish Government, other private and public organisations like MG ALBA and community stakeholders. A representative system needs to be developed at national and regional levels, strengthening community participation concerning community governance, agency, and accountability.

- Gaelic language planning framework should reflect local circumstances and priorities, which can only be achieved through context-specific, locally agreed plans. The approach should be flexible, enabling each public body/local authority to consider and identify its own goals and targets within the broad framework of priorities set for Scotland. Overall, the framework and approach should be less rigid and more pragmatic.

Scots Language

Some respondents felt strongly about establishing a Scots Language Board like Bòrd na Gàidhlig to promote the Scots Language. Respondents also stressed the need for more vital legislation and statutory provisions to promote the language. There was a relative lack of awareness about the work of Scots bodies which, according to respondents, required more visibility and influence. The analysis revealed the following action points.

Recognition of Scots as an official language

- There is a critical need for legal and official recognition of Scots as an official minority language in Scotland through the Scottish Languages Bill. Because there has been a degree of complacency about the Scots language, initiatives to give the language greater visibility should be encouraged. The form of linguistic colonisation that has so far denigrated the language in the social and legal sphere must be addressed through a legislative framework and information campaigns. The linguistic rights of Scots speakers must also be affirmed.

- The Scots bodies and authorities must standardise the Scots language. Any standardised spelling, grammar and dictionary should follow recognisable conventions and historic precedents whilst accommodating all dialects. A standard orthography of the Scots language is essential for raising its status and improving its practicality of communication and education. The

Scottish Government should establish a language planning board of experts to research, discuss and implement an agreed standardised orthography and grammar for the Scots language.

- Scots language must be integrated into the education system of Scotland. Immediate work on the Scots language and accessibility through education would include recognising and certifying fluent Scots speakers and supporting the retention of Scots-speaking teachers at primary and secondary levels throughout Scotland, but especially in the Scots-speaking heartlands. Besides Scots being in Scotland's mainstream education, new programmes should be developed to reach wider audiences. Scottish universities should be supported to ensure that learners can pursue the study of Scots in-depth and at a tertiary level.

Funding and investments for the promotion of Scots

- A consistent cycle of funding is required to develop and promote any projects or policies about promoting Scots language. Any commitment towards the Scots language must be legally supported and adequately funded. The Scottish Government should provide funding for cultural aspects of Scots, including funding for films, opera, broadcasting, media, and other art forms.

- Any promotion of Scots must ensure that it is inclusive and does not entrench negative and exclusionary stereotypes. The approach towards the Scots language must be apolitical.

Community engagement

- There should be more opportunities for engagement within local communities to ensure stakeholder involvement. These opportunities can include introducing community-based projects.

Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents an analysis of the public consultation initiated by the Scottish Government. The consultation process facilitated through Citizen Space explores four significant commitments the Scottish Government has made to promote the Gaelic and Scots languages. These commitments are:

- to establish a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education

- to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd

- to review the structure and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and

- to support the Scots language.

The commitment to a Scottish Languages Bill is the legislative vehicle to enable progress with these commitments where changes require primary legislation. The consultation asked 13 open-ended questions. The consultation remained open from 24 August to 8 December 2022. Respondents included the following; Pre School sector and users, school parents, pupils and staff (across nursery, primary and secondary sectors), staff and students in other educational establishments including the tertiary sector, stakeholder groups (such as trade unions, local government, parent groups, etc.), think tanks and academics active in Gaelic research and Scots, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and organisations which receive funded through Bòrd na Gàidhlig, members of the Gaelic speaking communities in rural and urban areas with views on how the language should be further used and protected, Scots language bodies and other members of the public.

For all consultation questions, some responses were more detailed and descriptive than others. This report explores the qualitative findings for the four commitments and all thirteen questions. A total of 750 responses were received via Citizen Space. In this initial analysis, we provide the figures on the respondent category, number of responses received for each question, most common responses, and descriptive analysis using respondent quotations.

1.2 Methodology

We began our analysis with data cleaning. The responses were gathered from Citizen Space and directly used in the form of an Excel database. We excluded blank, incomplete, or duplicate responses from our database in our first data review.

For the analysis, we exported the database to our analysis tool, Dovetail App and categorised the data using codes for the responses. Responses for each question were carefully reviewed and assigned a code for its meaning. We grouped the codes for each question and reviewed all 750 responses. We have identified the most common themes and less common themes separately. In the qualitative insights section, we used direct quotations from respondents to add more depth for the reader.

To ensure quality control, two researchers from our team cross-checked the responses to ensure that the categories and codes reflected the critical points that a response was reflecting. Finally, we must highlight that we have attempted to conduct this analysis objectively and rigorously. None of the responses mentioned below reflects any of the researchers' opinions. We have remained impartial and unbiased throughout this analysis.

1.3 Report Structure

The analysis below depicts the variations in the answers received from respondents for each question. There was repetition and duplication in some responses for all questions. The descriptions of the findings in Section 2 (Consultation Findings) categorise the responses in the following ways:

- **Most common themes:** These responses have a high frequency of more than or equal to 50. These themes may include a mixture of responses from all questions within the larger thematic categories of Gaelic Medium Education, Gàidhealtachd, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Scots Language.

- **Less common themes:** These responses have a low frequency or were occasionally mentioned. These may range between 1 to 50.

In Section 3, we have included the feedback received on the consultation process and the Citizen Space platform. At the end of the report, graphs included as annexes visually show the frequency of major themes and tags identified during the analysis. For each thematic area, i.e. Gaelic Medium Education, Gàidhealtachd, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Scots Language, graphs demonstrate the frequency of specified tags based on all questions under the respective theme.

1.4 Terms of Reference

The terms, 'Gaelic' and 'Scots', refer to languages spoken in Scotland. For the purpose of this report, Scots is being referred to as 'Scots Language' to ensure linguistic coherence (as taken forward from the consultation form/questions). As highlighted in the introduction above and analysis below, the Scottish Government aims to strengthen both Gaelic and Scots languages in Scotland through the Scottish Languages Bill – with a focus on increasing the number of people learning, speaking and using these languages in Scotland.

Consultation Findings

2.1 Gaelic Medium Education

2.1.1 Number of responses

Responses related to views on Gaelic Medium Education covered answers to the following questions. The table depicts the number of responses received for each question.

Questions on Gaelic Medium Education	Number of responses
Q1 – Thinking of barriers, obstacles and solutions – what are the key aspects that should be included in a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education?	612
Q2 – What steps should be taken to support and promote Gaelic education and ensure that any new strategic approach to GME is implemented?	600
Q3 – Are there any other points you would like to make about providing Gaelic Medium and Gaelic learner education in Scottish education?	525

Table 1: Gaelic Medium Education responses

2.1.2 Qualitative insights

This section presents the most common responses that emerged under the category of Gaelic Medium Education during the analysis.

Most common themes

Barriers, obstacles and solutions for a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education

1. Widespread use and promotion of the Gaelic language
2. Wider accessibility and provision of Gaelic educational services
3. More funding and investment in human resources for Gaelic Medium Education
4. Campaigns and community engagement to promote Gaelic Medium Education

Ways to support Gaelic Medium Education

1. Management and accountability for Gaelic Medium Education
2. Investment in teaching resources to increase access and quality of Gaelic Medium Education
3. Information campaigns to make Gaelic more visible
4. Promotion of bilingualism
5. Cultural activities to encourage the use of the Gaelic language

Views about the provision of Gaelic Medium Education in Scottish Education

1. Preservation of Gaelic as part of Scotland's cultural uniqueness
2. Monitoring and accountability of Gaelic Medium Education provision

Table 2: Most common responses for Gaelic Medium Education

Question 1: Thinking of barriers, obstacles and solutions – what are the key aspects that should be included in a new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education?

The following themes stood out as the most common responses regarding barriers, obstacles and solutions given a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education.

Widespread use and promotion of the Gaelic language as an opportunity. A large majority of respondents favour a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education. For a widespread promotion of the Gaelic language, respondents referred to:

- development of public signage in Gaelic in public infrastructure,
- improved teaching curricula in primary and secondary schools,
- development of and easy access to immersion learning, and
- prioritisation of Gaelic as a compulsory subject in Scottish education systems.

Additionally, for more significant progression in Gaelic linguistic abilities, respondents suggested the provision of advanced-level classes along with beginner's classes.

More funding and investment in human resources for Gaelic Medium Education. Two other common barriers to Gaelic Medium Education mentioned were inadequate funding and insufficient human resources (mainly teachers). For teachers, respondents pointed out that lack of sufficient training and qualification in teaching Gaelic hinders the provision of Gaelic Medium Education,

and therefore the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland. In comparison with the number of English speakers and with an ambition to increase Gaelic speakers, a respondent suggested that *'there should be linkages between the Gàidhealtachd framework and efforts to strengthen Gaelic Medium Education. A strategic plan and timetable should be adopted to phase out English Medium Education entirely in the Western Isles and other core Gàidhealtachd areas. All remaining English Medium staff in these areas should be allowed to acquire Gaelic skills if they do not already possess them and contribute to the Gaelic Medium sector'* (Respondent # 428)

Wider accessibility and provision of Gaelic educational services. Respondents who believed strongly about the widespread promotion of Gaelic and related educational services suggested the additional provision of Gaelic educational services to pupils outside of school. This could be in the form of clubs and learning events. Others shared an aspiration to have greater availability of Gaelic Medium Education in every school or at least in Highlands and Islands at nurseries and primary and secondary levels.

Local authorities were seen as responsible parties to emphasise the availability of Gaelic Medium Education locally. For proponents of Gaelic Medium Education, Gaelic should be the default (subject) in major Gaelic communities. Respondents also emphasised how the demand for Gaelic Medium Education outweighed its availability. Lack of accessibility and provision, hence, was one of the most common barriers for most respondents.

Community and cultural initiatives to promote Gaelic Medium Education. Some respondents highlighted that there has often been a severe lack of awareness about the importance of Gaelic as Scotland's traditional language. To encourage local usage and promotion, community engagement should be increased by organising cultural events, including music, dance, and literary festivals, to immerse the population into the Gaelic language. A respondent suggested 'increased resources for Gaelic Medium residential sports camps such as skiing as Gaelic speakers and Gaelic Medium educated children are underrepresented at a national level' (Respondent # 319). Activities and initiatives like these will increase Gaelic's visibility.

> **Question 2: What steps should be taken to support and promote Gaelic education and ensure that any new strategic approach to GME is implemented?**

In addition to references to some of the themes from Question 1, the following themes stood out as the most common responses regarding specific steps to promote Gaelic education.

Stronger management and greater accountability for Gaelic Medium Education. Respondents supporting Gaelic Medium Education believed there is a need for greater transparency and accountability for implementing Gaelic Language Plans. The authorities at the national level must coordinate and join together for better resourcing and staff development. The efforts currently being made are 'fragmented and ineffective' and require better planning. One respondent pointed out that 'proper commitment and investment is required before any new strategy is promoted. The current provision is too fragile for rapid, widespread expansion. Continuous improvement must be nurtured and sustained to form solid foundations to build on in the future (Respondent # 434). Moreover, the government must strengthen the legislation to protect the public's rights to Gaelic education.

Investment in teaching resources to increase access and quality of Gaelic Medium Education. Many respondents emphasised initial teacher training, incentives, and opportunities for teachers to learn Gaelic. According to them, the quality and diversity of the teaching staff can contribute to improvements in the provision of Gaelic Medium Education. Incentives could be provided to ensure teacher retention in the existing workforce and the creation of new teaching staff. Teaching hours and salaries should also be reconsidered in order to encourage people to take more Gaelic teaching roles and to match the cost of living in different areas in Scotland. Respondents also suggested training and recruiting language assistants to add to the quality of Gaelic Medium Education and support for pupils.

Information campaigns to make Gaelic more visible. To support Gaelic Medium Education, respondents suggested that locally organised information campaigns can be a great way to normalise the use of Gaelic in everyday life. These campaigns can target the 'persistent negativity and disinformation surrounding

the language and its teaching' (Respondent # 495). Efforts to raise awareness will enable the public to be more knowledgeable about why Gaelic is critical in preserving the traditional culture of Scotland.

Promotion of bilingualism. Respondents identified that an emphasis on bilingualism could encourage more people to be comfortable with Gaelic as their local language. Bilingual road signs should be available everywhere. Additionally, one respondent pointed out that 'having all children learning in Gaelic, Scots, and English from the outset of their schooling would finally remove the stigma surrounding these languages' (Respondent # 181).

Cultural activities to encourage the use of the Gaelic language. Cultural activities such as community learning opportunities also available for adults can promote Gaelic learning. These activities can include occasions to celebrate minority language festivals, celebrate successful Gaelic artists, and provision of multilingual cultural resources.

> **Question 3: Are there any other points you would like to make about providing Gaelic Medium and Gaelic learner education in Scottish education?**

Under Question 3, respondents re-emphasised themes delineated under Questions 1 and 2. As shown below, respondents shared some new responses regarding providing Gaelic medium education and learning in Scottish education.

Preservation of Gaelic as part of Scotland's cultural uniqueness. Some respondents stressed the importance of Gaelic Medium Education as part of Scottish Education to preserve the culture and history of the country. According to them, in the current system of education, 'the very appropriate emphasis on STEM subjects coupled with the narrowing of choice of subjects at a school level have resulted in fewer students choosing Gaelic (and other non-STEM subjects) at the higher levels' (Respondent # 62). Additionally, some respondents reflected on how independent schools in Scotland do not offer Gaelic as a subject in Scotland. The Scottish authorities should recognise Gaelic at a Nat 5 or higher level and then open up future pathways for employment for Gaelic speakers.

Monitoring and audit of Gaelic Medium Education provision. According to respondents, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be accountable for Gaelic learner education. There needs to be a more straightforward strategy to identify, support and track learners in their journey. Respondents also suggested that this monitoring and audit can be implemented by creating the office of a 'Gaelic Commissioner.' According to them, the Gaelic Commissioner would oversee the national policy implementation at the local level, acting as an ombudsman. They will mediate between the national policy framework and implementation by local authorities.

Less common themes
Below are other responses mentioned across the three questions regarding Gaelic Medium Education.

Social stigmas around the Gaelic language. Respondents' unwillingness to engage in Gaelic has been affected by the social stigmas attached to the use of the language. They reported a lack of confidence in speaking the language, especially among young people.

Revised legislative framework. Respondents identified the need to develop a national Gaelic language policy that recognises the importance of Gaelic and provides a framework for its integration into local authority policies. This new framework should emphasise 1) pre-school and early Gaelic learning, 2) Gaelic-medium primary and secondary education, 3) Gaelic education at the tertiary level including college, vocational and university education, and 4) Gaelic as a second language.

Strong leadership to enable better management of local authorities. Respondents suggested an emphasis on strengthening leadership and management that 1) holds local authorities accountable for fulfilling Gaelic language plans, 2) appoints officials that are knowledgeable of and empathetic to Gaelic, and 3) stays connected with local authorities to support them in a coordinated, unfragmented manner.

Information campaigns to publicise Gaelic. A clear campaign to spread information about Gaelic, the benefits and the availability of opportunities open to all.

Multilingualism. According to respondents, multilingualism should be promoted at an official and public level. The benefits of bilingualism should be publicised and associated with Gaelic Medium Education.

Restrictions to Gaelic Medium Education. A few respondents suggested that Gaelic Medium Education should not be rolled out across Scotland.

Changes in the curriculum. The resources available as part of the Gaelic curriculum should be thoroughly reviewed. There should be a separate curriculum for Gaelic Medium Education.

Secondary-level education. There is a need for greater provision of Gaelic education at a secondary level. The secondary curriculum is seen as essential to the development of Gaelic Medium Education.

Tertiary-level education. The authorities should invest in tertiary-level Gaelic education. Doing so would allow a more coordinated approach between schools and universities to promote careers rooted in Gaelic or the use of Gaelic.

Gaelic Learner Education. Respondents believed that any developments related to Gaelic Learners would play an important role in promoting the Gaelic language. Focusing on Gaelic Medium Education should not minimise investments in Gaelic Learner Education. According to respondents, opportunities and available provisions to be involved in Gaelic Learner Education may spark interest and enthusiasm among people who may not want to attend a fully immersive Gaelic Medium Education.

Apolitical approach towards Gaelic Medium Education. According to a respondent, politicians should not have a say in decisions regarding the national curriculum. Education experts must be fully involved in these decisions.

2.2 Gàidhealtachd

2.2.1 Number of responses

Responses related to views on a Gàidhealtachd covered answers to the following questions. The table depicts the number of responses received for each question.

Questions on Gàidhealtachd	Number of responses
Q4 – Do you have views on what measures should be in place to support Gaelic speakers in areas with significant numbers of speakers?	556
Q5 – Do you have views on how such areas should be defined?	476
Q6 – How would you balance the commitment to put measures in place in areas with significant Gaelic speakers with the principle that Gaelic should be a national language for all of Scotland?	526
Q7 – Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd and the associated commitments related to Gaelic use in the family and community?	396

Table 3: Number of responses for Gàidhealtachd

2.2.2 Qualitative insights

Most common themes

Measures to support Gaelic speakers in areas with significant numbers of speakers

1. Developments in a Gàidhealtachd
2. Any measures should be restricted to a Gàidhealtachd only

Defining areas with Gaelic speakers

1. Geographical definition based on the historical presence of the language
2. No definition is necessary since Gaelic speakers live across Scotland
3. A flexible definition for Gàidhealtachd is required.

4. Defining a Gàidhealtachd is unnecessary
5. Community consultations are required

Balancing the commitment to put measures in place in areas where there are significant Gaelic speakers with the principle that Gaelic should be a national language for all of Scotland

1. Public, infrastructural and economic support for a Gàidhealtachd at the local level
2. All of Scotland should be a Gàidhealtachd with Gaelic as the national language
3. Scotland is a bilingual nation with English and Gaelic as official languages
4. Gaelic should not be a national language of Scotland

Views about the commitment to explore the creation of a Gàidhealtachd and the associated commitments related to Gaelic use in the family and community

1. Innovative initiatives such as toys, books, and the use of digital technology (Alexa) for the promotion of Gaelic
2. The creation of a Gàidhealtachd may cause communal divisions.

Table 4: Most common responses for Gàidhealtachd

Question 4: Do you have views on what measures should be in place to support Gaelic speakers in areas with significant numbers of speakers?

Developments in a Gàidhealtachd.
Respondents shared that the government should allocate more funds to support Gaelic speakers, specifically within the areas with significant numbers of speakers. Economic and infrastructural measures should be put in place to support Gaelic speakers in a Gàidhealtachd. Respondents expressed that language policies are related to socioeconomic policies. According to them, without the socio-economic support for fragile communities, language transmission in a Gàidhealtachd will continue to lose new generations of Gaelic speakers. As one respondent pointed out, economic measures could help to stem the flow of young Gaelic speakers who often leave Gaelic areas. These measures may include providing affordable housing and employment opportunities. Local tourism should also be improved, enabling a continued preferential provision of jobs for local Gaelic speakers or those with Gaelic qualifications (Nat5 and Higher).

Some respondents also encouraged using cultural initiatives such as Gaelic language clubs, which allow both old and young community members to engage and connect. Moreover, the integration of Gaelic into everyday life is likely to support Gaelic speakers. Respondents also suggested having Gaelic available as a language on self-serving machines in supermarkets and organising Gaelic Medium clubs and activities such as Gaelic knitting groups as other initiatives. In terms of media, radio and TV programmes and print literature would also help promote the use of Gaelic among the local communities and empower local speakers. Moreover, councils, the NHS, and the public sector should take the necessary steps to offer all their services in Gaelic.

Any measures should be restricted to a Gàidhealtachd only. According to respondents, areas with significant Gaelic speakers include the Highlands and Islands and the Western Isles. In Gàidhealtachd regions, Gaelic should be the primary language in all statutory and public service provisions. A respondent suggested that *'the measures should be developed and promoted only in areas where Gaelic has been historically spoken, but not in the Northern Isles where their dialect should be retained'* (Respondent # 172). Another respondent suggested that Gàidhealtachd areas should be the priority, wherein a focus on Gaelic communities and their cohesion is imperative. Any investment or measures for a Gàidhealtachd should be meticulously

directed because, as one respondent stated, *the proportion of Gaelic speakers is reducing, and incoming families and individuals are mostly English-speaking with no real reason they should speak Gaelic* (Respondent # 511). Some respondents felt that any measures in the country's central belt would be misguided and a waste of public resources.

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Question 5: Do you have views on how such areas should be defined?

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A geographical definition based on the historical presence of the language. Most respondents favour defining areas with Gaelic speakers as those areas with many speakers. These include areas where Gaelic was historically present but, as one respondent put it, *'systematically eroded by certain political groups/those in power'* (Respondent # 431). The definition, however, should not be restrictive and should also focus on areas where there is a potential for future growth.

No definition is necessary since Gaelic speakers live across Scotland. Another common opinion among respondents regarding defining areas with Gaelic speakers was that there should be no definition in terms of geography. One of respondents stated that *'language loyalty in the cities is crucial to the vitality and enjoyment of a language'* (Respondent # 296). The language must remain accessible everywhere. The role of media and digital technology has assisted in keeping the language accessible and available across different regions in Scotland. Another respondent shared a similar view,

stating that since *'online resources can be accessed anywhere, creating a defined Gàidhealtachd area would be a retrograde step'* (Respondent # 471).

A flexible definition for Gàidhealtachd is required. A small segment of respondents believed that a flexible definition of Gàidhealtachd would ensure that support of the language within a Gàidhealtachd does not deter any support afforded to communities outside a Gàidhealtachd. A flexible approach allows for the widespread promotion of Gaelic outside a Gàidhealtachd, opening opportunities for expanding the Gàidhealtachd region. It would also include online communities to be part of a Gàidhealtachd.

Defining areas with Gaelic speakers as unnecessary. A substantial number of respondents considered the agenda of defining areas with Gaelic speakers as futile. This idea was motivated by Gaelic's relative insignificance compared to English or the precedence of other policy/development issues for those living in Scotland. Directing funds for the promotion of Gaelic as a national language was seen as part of a political agenda by respondents.

Further community consultations are required. A few respondents believed that defining areas with Gaelic speakers for policy should be based on consultations with local communities. Respondents suggested that this definition needs to be grounded in research, particularly concerning the education model in Wales for the Welsh language.

Status of Gaelic as a national language of Scotland. Some respondents – for differing reasons – were dubious of Gaelic's status as a national language of Scotland. Among those who were generally supportive of efforts to sustain the language, there was occasionally a view that national policies shouldn't be prioritised over measures which could address the needs of the language at a local level. Conversely, other respondents felt that, given the economic climate and other national priorities, Gaelic must not be a priority and stated that most people in Scotland are not interested in Gaelic.

All of Scotland should be a Gàidhealtachd with Gaelic as a national language. Some respondents shared their interest in Gaelic as a national language of Scotland. Suggesting that there must be no geographical limitations to a Gàidhealtachd, they believed that the use of the language should be equally encouraged in areas with low numbers of speakers. A respondent shared their enthusiasm through this emphatic comment: *'I think Gaelic is an important part of the national identity, even though it was only spoken in the Highlands and Islands in recent history. Reviving the language and creating an identity separate from English (if that is a desired result) language is an incredible unifying tool'* (Respondent # 430).

Public, infrastructural, and economic support for a Gàidhealtachd at the local level. For those who believed in the intentions behind creating and promoting a Gàidhealtachd, Gaelic speakers need access to benefits, incentives, and overall recognition for the language to survive through its speakers. This support would imply greater language visibility through infrastructural signage and public services.

Scotland is a bilingual nation with English and Gaelic as official languages. Some respondents believed in a more balanced approach to using multiple languages in Scotland. For them, there should be equal opportunities for all English, Scots, and Gaelic speakers. Reinstating Scotland as a bilingual nation would require all children to learn Gaelic, Scots, and English from the onset of their education. It would help remove any stigmas attached to the use of any language and foster wider cultural acceptance of all languages.

Innovative initiatives for the promotion of Gaelic. Respondents suggested employing innovative strategies to promote Gaelic. These include inventing or adapting toys and digital technologies like Alexa that integrate Gaelic as a language. By adding an element of 'learn through play', children will likely immerse themselves more in the language in their early years.

The creation of a Gàidhealtachd may cause division. The aspect of division has been a recurring theme in some of the responses provided above. Some respondents believed that it is incumbent upon the government to promote Gaelic in ways that are not divisive. They added that drawing lines and designating some areas of Scotland as an official Gàidhealtachd would proclaim Gaelic speakers living in these areas as more authentic and vital than Gaelic speakers living elsewhere in Scotland. According to respondents, any creation of a Gàidhealtachd through policy must be grounded in actual evidence and consultation with traditional Gaelic-speaking communities themselves. Failure to do so may lead to an imposition of an identity to which Gaelic speakers may not want to attach themselves.

Less common themes

Below are other responses mentioned across the four questions regarding a Gàidhealtachd.

Community Initiatives. Respondents stressed that community events or cultural activities could be a good way for extra-curricular Gaelic engagements. Greater funding and resources should be deployed for community-led initiatives to encourage the use and growth of Gaelic.

Highlands and Islands as a Gàidhealtachd. Highlands and Islands were identified as the main Gàidhealtachd areas. According to respondents, Gaelic Medium Education should be instituted as default within these regions.

Tier system. A few respondents highlighted that a tiered system for interventions might be useful in promoting Gaelic based on the number of speakers in a specific area. Different levels of Gaelic in regions will require different initiatives. For example, Tier 1 denotes areas where Gaelic is currently spoken (Outer Isles, Skye), and Tier 2 denotes areas where Gaelic was spoken traditionally but is not commonly spoken (Argyll, Highlands, and Islands). Tier 3 would include areas where relatively few people speak the language (Central Belt – Aberdeenshire, Lothian, and Southern Uplands).

A Gàidhealtachd already exists. There were differing viewpoints on the introduction of a Gàidhealtachd. Respondents stated that Scotland already had a Gàidhealtachd due to this term being used in Scottish Gaelic as a direct reference to the region of the Highlands. Others felt that the Gàidhealtachd existed wherever Gaelic speakers were to be found. Some respondents were hostile to the idea of a Gàidhealtachd being defined outside of the language's modern day heartlands such as the Western Isles. Others still felt that defining a Gàidhealtachd would weaken the language's claims to national status and exclude speakers based elsewhere in Scotland.

Current investment is adequate. Respondents mentioned that current investment in Gaelic is more than adequate.

2.3 Bòrd na Gàidhlig

2.3.1 Number of responses

Responses related to views on Bòrd na Gàidhlig covered answers to the following questions. The table depicts the number of responses received for each question.

Questions on Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Number of responses
Q8 – Do you have any views on the current duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any suggestions of how these could operate more effectively or efficiently?	451
Q9 – Do you have any views on structural changes at Bòrd na Gàidhlig which could strengthen the promotion of and support for Gaelic in Scotland?	390
Q10 – Are there any further points you would like to make about reviewing the functions and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which seeks to ensure Scotland has the most effective leadership body and network of organisations for promoting Gaelic?	343

Table 5: Number of responses for Bòrd na Gàidhlig

2.3.2 Qualitative insights

Most common themes

Views on the current duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and suggestions

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig requires more funding for the effective operation
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be more visible and efficient in promoting Gaelic
3. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be restructured as an organisation with more legal powers
4. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should engage with communities more

Views on structural changes at Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should have more influence in decisions regarding the promotion of Gaelic
2. A culture of accountability for language plans should be instilled within the organisation

Views on review of the functions and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig

1. Working with significant organisations, including councils, universities, and charities, to update Gaelic Language Plans
2. Commission more research on the effectiveness of other language planning bodies for best practices

Table 6: Most common responses for Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Question 8: Do you have any views on the current duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any suggestions for how these could operate more effectively or efficiently?

Bòrd na Gàidhlig requires more funding for effective operation. Respondents identified how Bòrd na Gàidhlig required more funding and resources to effectively implement the promotion of Gaelic education, community events, extra-curricular activities, and provision of public services with an active integration of Gaelic. Some stated that the budget allocated for Bòrd na Gàidhlig means it is challenging to achieve the expected outcomes and duties.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be more visible and efficient in promoting Gaelic. Respondents pointed out that they were unaware of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and that a *'wider explanation of the current setup is overdue to the wider non-Gaelic speaking populations'* (Respondent # 493). They were borrowing an example from Wales; one respondent reflected on the appointment of a Language Commissioner responsible for mitigating the misinformation that spreads regarding a language. They will also ensure adherence to any legislation on the use and promotion of Gaelic. The current language planning system, with no effective enforcement measures, is too *'weak'*.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be restructured as an organisation with more legal powers. Apart from limited funding and invisibility that pose difficulties to the operations of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, inadequate legal powers and influences also affect Bòrd na Gàidhlig's

credibility, according to respondents. Respondents believed that one of the main issues faced in Gaelic language planning is the lack of legal powers that Bòrd na Gàidhlig has to hold organisations or local authorities to account for the use and promotion of the Gaelic language. Moreover, the government should strengthen the enforcement powers of Bòrd na Gàidhlig for any language plans. Respondents understood Bòrd na Gàidhlig as merely an advisory organisation with no real power to implement change.

Other respondents expressed satisfaction with the current structure and duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. They commented that the organisation provides professional advice and support on all issues relating to Gaelic to Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Government, and national and regional agencies, as well as support for Gaelic communities.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should engage with communities more. A need for Bòrd na Gàidhlig's greater engagement with the local Gaelic communities was one of the most significant themes for this question. Respondents stated that while they recognised Bòrd na Gàidhlig's work, they were dissatisfied with how little engagement there is with the Gaelic communities. One respondent stated that *'ensuring that Bòrd na Gàidhlig is near the significant Gaelic speaking communities is important'* (Respondent # 184). According to respondents, the lived, generational experiences concerning the language and culture, in general, are invaluable and may provide valuable insights for the

further promotion of Gaelic. Respondents also stressed the need for further public consultation with Gaelic-speaking communities to ensure they are properly listened to.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should have more influence in decisions regarding the promotion of Gaelic. Bòrd na Gàidhlig should have greater powers to intervene in education matters. Local authorities should consult Bòrd na Gàidhlig when contemplating structural or institutional changes in the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education. According to respondents, Bòrd na Gàidhlig works well within its remits but fails to ensure the implementation of Gaelic Language Plans and policies. More power and influence can be exerted by employing community development officers to oversee the implementation.

A culture of accountability for language plans should be instilled within the organisation. This accountability can take the form of soliciting participation from as many different organisations as possible for Gaelic's ultimate support and development. Due to a perceived lack of accountability and ineffective planning and implementation, there was a view among some respondents that Bòrd na Gàidhlig had undergone 'massive reputational damage', causing distrust amongst the Gaelic communities.

To ensure the effective implementation of Language Plans and related operations, respondents suggested splitting the Bòrd's current functions between at least two bodies for language promotion, regulation, and enforcement. Respondents shared that it might be wiser to identify community actors to support the work of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. They reflected on the example of the Doric Board in Scotland's North-East, which acts as a local agent, distributing funds from national sources to grassroots actors. Such a decentralised mechanism can ensure community ownership over Gaelic initiatives.

Overall, respondents agreed on more organisational transparency of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which is crucial in building the trust of the Gaelic communities. Bòrd na Gàidhlig must circulate information from official discussions, create connections with other authorities, and make funding accessible for community initiatives.

They work with major organisations, including councils, universities, and charities, to update Gaelic Language Plans. A few responses accentuated the need for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to collaborate with other organisations for a more efficient promotion of Gaelic and implementation

of Gaelic Language Plans. It was perceived that their work is in silos, hindering them from effectively fulfilling their duties. One respondent wrote that *'a greater emphasis on partnership working and bringing many more public agencies [and even private organisations] on board to work alongside any Gaelic development agency would be suitable for now'* (Respondent # 380).

Commission more research on the effectiveness of other language planning bodies for best practices. Respondents suggested that studies should be commissioned to explore the work and effectiveness of other language planning bodies worldwide. These research insights will be invaluable in developing a language policy that may work best in the case of Gaelic. Interestingly, a respondent identified how the example closest to home, the use of Gaelic in Ireland, may not be the best example to refer to. According to them, the research shows that Irish medium education attainment in terms of Irish language skills is lower in the Gaeltacht areas than in other areas in Ireland.

Less common themes

Below are other responses mentioned across the three questions regarding Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Lack of awareness regarding the functions and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Respondents identified the need for greater clarity on the roles and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Satisfaction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Some respondents demonstrated their satisfaction with the work being led and supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. According to one respondent, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been more public-facing, open, and engaged concerning its work for the Gaelic language.

Dissatisfaction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. A few respondents expressed that the Gaelic community has low trust towards Bòrd na Gàidhlig. They were of the view that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should lose their remit to promote Gaelic Education since their plans for the promotion of Gaelic have not led to any significant outcomes

Staff at Bòrd na Gàidhlig. According to two respondents, staff at Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be young Gaelic speakers who can contribute to implementing Gaelic Language Plans ambitiously and effectively.

Negative views about Gaelic Medium Education, Gàidhealtachd and Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Some respondents expressed negative opinions around the promotion of Gaelic and related aspects of Gaelic Medium Education, development of a Gàidhealtachd and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Following are the themes that were captured in the analysis.

Gaelic is insignificant for most people living in Scotland. Respondents shared that any investment in promoting the Gaelic language is futile because people in Scotland do not use the language as much. Any steps taken should be restricted to Gaelic-majority areas. One respondent expressed their concern

by suggesting to *'prioritise learning where the language is still spoken – Western Isles, Highlands, Glasgow, Edinburgh. We are struggling to fund other basic services, and having Gaelic taught in, for instance, [named local authority] is pointless, in my opinion'* (Respondent # 281).

Redundancy of any support for Gaelic speakers. Many respondents held strong views about the redundancy of efforts to promote the Gaelic language. They felt that the funds can be better invested in other priority areas within the education system.

Redundancy of Gaelic Medium Education. The lack of belief in Gaelic Medium Education was a common response. In the view of some respondents, an emphasis on normalising Gaelic Medium Education resonates with creating divisions in the country. Moreover, they were of the view that the government should spend resources allocated for Gaelic Medium Education on other national priorities such as English-medium education and healthcare. One respondent shared their views by noting how the promotion of Gaelic may not be helpful for young people, as *'the priority within education is to provide young people [with] employability skills, whether that is sufficient academic qualifications to gain entry into further education or higher education or soft skills, cannot see how Gaelic assists this in any way'* (Respondent # 20).

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be disbanded as it wastes public resources. A significant number of respondents highlighted that Gaelic as a language should not be imposed on the people of Scotland. They were of the view that investments should be instead spent on enabling children and youth to be more proficient in English. One respondent stated that *'children are missing out on life opportunities because of the failure to ensure basics such as reading and writing English'* (Respondent # 57).

2.4 Scots Language

2.4.1 Number of responses

Responses related to views on Scots language covered answers to the following questions. The table depicts the number of responses received for each question.

Questions on Scots language	Number of responses
Q11 – Thinking of the work of the critical Scots bodies as referred to in the paper – What are your views on the work of the Scots bodies? How would you strengthen and add to the work of these bodies?	445
Q12 – What are your views on the next steps that should be taken to support the Scots language?	489
Q13 – Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to support the Scots language?	424

Table 7: Number of responses for the Scots language

2.4.2 Qualitative insights

Most common themes

Views on the work of Scots bodies

1. Social stigmas around the use of Scots should be debunked
2. Lack of Scots educational services
3. More funding and legislative power to support Scots

Next steps to support the Scots language

1. Scots language should be used in mainstream media and day-to-day life
2. Greater visibility for Scots with more resources at hand

Views on a commitment to support Scots language

1. More vital legislation and statutory provisions are required to support the Scots Language
2. There is an insufficient commitment to the Scots Language in the Bill

Table 8: Most common responses for the Scots language

Social stigmas around the use of Scots should be debunked. For the language to prosper, the language should be promoted in a similar way to Gaelic. Respondents believed that the Scots language is still a language of their ancestors' history and inheritance. Any stigmas or ideas around the inferiority of Scots about English should be debunked. Respondents highlighted how Scots language speakers have always been framed as less educated and worthy than English language speakers. They suggested that there is a need to further how standardising Scots as a language can add to its legitimacy and make learning the language more streamlined, preserving the idiosyncrasies of the different Scots dialects and cultures.

Lack of Scots educational services. It was stated that the language had lost its essence and credibility due to inadequate educational provision through Scots. Respondents suggested that the educational authorities should introduce and promote a range of free and paid-for curricula with various forms of accreditation and recognition. Respondents also brought attention to the need for a Scottish Languages Bill.

More funding and resources to support the Scots Language. As identified in the previous theme, many respondents believed that

the Scots language should be supported with more funding. A few ideas suggested by respondents include the appointment of Local Education Authority advisors for indigenous languages to ensure these policies for language promotion are acted upon, language awareness training for all teachers in Scotland, the establishment of an umbrella body such as a Scots Language Board that could serve as a repository of information, a link to specialists and proposals, and implementing agency for the delivery of any legislation or Scots language policy.

Scots language should be used in mainstream media and day-to-day life. Respondents suggested that official documents and publications should be in the Scots language. Regarding educational provision in Scots, integration of the language in school and university curriculums and Introduction of national exams and educational services/courses in the Scots language should be considered a priority. Scots language must be normalised in public, administrative, and professional contexts. Moreover, respondents also felt strongly about the promotion of Scots in media, social media, and news broadcasting through the normalisation of its use and the creation of information campaigns to clarify any misinformation that revolves around the use of the Scots language. Furthermore, a respondent advised that regional Scots Language centres can be established, which

will act as bases for a network of Scots coordinators who work with schools and businesses in the area, helping deliver local change.

Greater visibility for Scots bodies with more resources at hand. One of the ways to increase the visibility of Scots bodies and their work is to fund networking, and information-sharing sessions wherein different bodies gather to share good practices and systematically draw on the expertise from within the Scots Language professional community. Respondents identified how the Scots bodies tend to work in silos and in areas that are not usually accessible to many people working outside the academic and cultural circles. To break the silos, more collaborative, community-driven approaches are instrumental.

> **Question 13: Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to support the Scots language?**

More vital legislation and statutory provisions are required to support the Scots Language. Respondents stated that any actions taken regarding the Scottish Languages Bill must be long-term, flexible, and appropriate to support the Scots Language. To support these actions, the Bill should establish a statutory body, such as a Scots Language Board, responsible for developing a long-term strategic approach or vision for Scots language policy. A respondent noted that such a measure is likely to '*bring existing Scots bodies under*

its umbrella to work towards a common strategy, thus encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation and active outreach to the public' (Respondent # 170).

There is an insufficient commitment to the Scots Language in the Bill. The aspirations for the promotion of Scots should match the actions required. In building a coherent, sustainable, and realistic environment for the support, protection, and development of Scots across all domains, the Scottish Language Bills should facilitate practical steps to improve the outlook for both Scots and Gaelic. The approach to Scots must be more ambitious. According to respondents, it must begin with outlawing discrimination based on speaking Scots. Denigrating Scots as 'slang' is related to high rates of unemployment or underemployment in Scots-speaking areas. To tackle this, the government must exhibit a commitment like that for Gaelic. The approach must be coordinated with more resources.

Less common themes

Below are other responses mentioned across the three questions regarding the Scots Language.

Visibility of Scots bodies. The work of the Scots bodies can be strengthened by focusing on their public visibility. The visibility can also be enhanced by creating a Scots Board that shares parity with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in a legal sense.

Recognition of Scots bodies. Respondents expressed their satisfaction with the work undertaken by Scots bodies, which benefits

people who can or wish to communicate in Scots. The role of Scots bodies is crucial in raising awareness and promoting the use of the Scots language, culture, and education.

Community Engagement. Respondents identified a greater need for the Scots bodies to engage with communities that speak the Scots language through consultations or funding projects for localised community projects for families, schools, and young people.

Partnerships and collaborations. Respondent organisations specified that they welcome the opportunity to work closely with Scots bodies to implement plans to promote the language. These partnerships would expand the reach and bring Scots to new audiences.

Defining Scots is essential for its promotion. Like Gaelic, Scots requires a standard form of orthography.[1] There needs to be agreed-upon orthography and grammatical standards for official purposes.

Strategy for Scots. A strategic approach to Scots and its promotion must include a unifying vision and long-term mission. There should be more opportunities to collaborate and expand the reach for a more significant impact. Learning must be drawn from the experience of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and legislative developments in Wales and Ireland.

Lack of knowledge about Scots bodies. Some respondents were unaware of any Scots bodies, which affected their ability to comment on their work.

Negative views about Scots Language

Some respondents expressed strong views about the redundancy of any government efforts in the promotion of the Scots language. Below are the responses shared by respondents.

Work on the promotion of the Scots language should not be a priority. Many respondents discredited Scots bodies' efforts by calling it a 'politically driven initiative' or 'an unnecessary, misguided step'. A respondent also highlighted that since 'there *is an existing vibrant Scots community who maintain the language and culture without any need for government support. Any attempt to "codify" this and regulate it will strangle it with just a few vested interests getting the benefit'* (Respondent # 358). Respondents spoke against the politicisation of the Scots language.

Moreover, respondents favoured retracting funding and resources from government objectives of promoting the Scots language. Such a viewpoint was grounded in a perception that, unlike English and Gaelic, the Scots language does not hold a significant status as an official language in Scotland. It is understood as an English *dialect* more than a language itself.

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1 Orthography refers to the 'standardized system of writing (or script) for a particular language about how letters are used to express sounds and words, as well as including rules for spelling words'. For more information, refer to Hopkins (2019).

2.5 Cross-cutting themes

Best practices in language promotion. A few respondents suggested that reviewing best practices in language promotion may assist in designing a strategic approach that may benefit the communities it targets. Respondents referred to Éire (Ireland) as having their Gaeltacht(s). It provides an excellent example of how the concept has been successfully developed and applied within their contexts. A respondent also suggested Wales as a good example. Wales has managed to preserve their language without any impacts on 'trade and connections to the world'. The Welsh Government successfully developed a 10-year Welsh in Education Workforce Plan that encourages education providers to teach through the Medium of Welsh. Promoting Gaelic and Scots languages requires strong statutory provisions like Wales have done with Welsh. Another example shared is that of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC). A respondent specifically mentioned that it was due to legal rights afforded to parents and their overall empowerment and engagement within the process that led to forms of Basque medium education becoming a norm for the large majority of students in the BAC.

Relative significance for Gaelic and Scots Languages. There were two responses regarding the theme of relative significance for Gaelic and Scots languages. Some respondents were of the view that both languages are equally significant. Any statutory provisions and legislations made for Gaelic must also be extended to the Scots language. Respondents recognised that Scots has been undermined and is treated even worse than Gaelic among the Scottish communities. This is about the social stigmas attached to the languages that denigrate it in comparison to English and deter them from being considered Scotland's official languages. A few respondents believed that the Scots language should not be entirely overlooked in Gaelic heartlands. The other segment of respondents suggested that given the limited nature of resources, an agenda for splitting resources between the two could result in benefitting none. They believed that when compared, Gaelic should be given more importance as an official language of Scotland.

Further research and consultations. Another important theme that emerged in responses to more than one question was the need for further research and community consultations. Respondents suggested that the relevant authorities should commission more research to explore parental attitudes to GME to measure the short-term and medium-term potential for providing Gaelic Medium Education.

They also emphasised that the community is an essential stakeholder in this process. It is necessary to listen to their plans. From an institutional point of view, further exploration in the form of more consultation exercises should be undertaken to determine what resources would be most relevant and impactful for the provision and promotion of Gaelic and Scots languages. For Scots, respondents also suggested that information-sharing sessions could help draw on good practices and expertise from within the community in a systematic way.

Feedback on the Consultation Process

3.1 Number of Responses

Responses to feedback on the consultation process covered answers to the following questions. The table depicts the number of responses received for each question.

Questions	Number of responses
How satisfied were you with this consultation?	671
How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?	654

Table 9: Number of responses on the consultation process

3.2 Insights

3.2.1 Satisfaction with the consultation

Responses	Total	Per cent
Very dissatisfied	86	11.47%
Slightly dissatisfied	53	7.07%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	179	23.87%
Slightly satisfied	140	18.67%
Very satisfied	213	28.40%
Not Answered	79	10.53%

Table 10: Level of satisfaction with the consultation process

Some insights gathered on the feedback regarding the consultation process include:

a) Incorporating information related to the consultation questions was helpful in the context.

b) For some respondents, the questions were broad and open-minded. For others, the questions seemed vague and 'not worded in a particularly inspiring manner'.

c) Questions in the consultation are leading. They assume that the Gaelic language should be promoted rather than addressing the issue from a neutral stance.

d) There was a lack of understanding of the importance of the Scots language in the consultation.

e) For some respondents, the questions presumed the value of the initiatives and made the questions leading. The consultation only sought affirmation of the initiatives.

f) A few respondents expressed their satisfaction with the consultation events.

g) There should be separate consultations in other languages. One respondent shared, *'I can reply in Gaelic, but the questions are in English. I would reply in Gaelic if the questions were in Gaelic. If you were to ask about Gàidhealtachd areas in Gaelic, you would get a different answer because Gàidhealtachd has a deeper cultural resonance when you understand the language. It would not be linked in one's mind to officialdom as the idea of this Gàidhealtachd area is in English'.*

3.2.2 Satisfaction with the Citizen Space platform

Responses	Total	Per cent
Very dissatisfied	52	6.93%
Slightly dissatisfied	23	3.07%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	175	23.33%
Slightly satisfied	147	19.60%
Very satisfied	257	34.27%
Not answered	96	12.80%

Table 11: Level of satisfaction with the Citizen Space platform

Some insights gathered on the feedback regarding the use of the Citizen Space platform for the consultation process include:

a) For most of respondents, the platform was straightforward to navigate.

b) For some respondents, the platform seems designed to give biased answers.

c) For a few respondents, the navigation arrows must be placed at the top of the page.

Concluding Remarks

The analysis above speaks to public opinions on the four commitments which were put in place by the Scottish Government to further the promotion of Gaelic and Scots languages. There is a mix of opinions on different aspects of Gaelic Medium Education, Gàidhealtachd, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Scots Language. Some recurring themes that stood out were the social stigmas attached to the use of Gaelic and Scots in day-to-day lives, the need for more significant funding and resources for the promotion of the two languages, and stronger statutory provisions and legislation, especially for Scots. On the other side of the spectrum, some respondents shared strong views about the redundancy of any policies or funding for the promotion of Gaelic and Scots, emphasising how any political focus on these languages will lead to social divisions within the country. Conclusively, the responses present a combination of positive and negative views on the Scottish Government's commitment to promoting Gaelic and Scots languages, with solid recommendations on how to proceed with the four commitments as reflected above.

Annex

Gaelic Medium Education

The table below depicts the frequency of tags and coding applied when analysing responses for Gaelic Medium Education.

Tag	Frequency
Widespread use and promotion	326
Redundancy	236
Funding and resources	205
Accessibility for and of Gaelic education provision	125
Community and cultural activities	59
Revised strategic plan/legislation	53
Strong management/leadership	43
Information campaign	43
Institutional barriers and solutions	37
Multilingualism	34
Social barriers and solutions	26
Restriction to community	24
Changes in curriculum	23
Partnerships and collaborations	23
Monitoring and accountability	23
Opportunity for adults	21
Statutory rights and guidance	17
Community engagement	15
Secondary-level provision	15
Legal right to GME	11
GME Journey	10
No comment	6
Tertiary level of GME	4
Immersion opportunities	3
Gaelic Learner Education	3
Visibility for Gaelic	3
Apolitical approach required	2
Business incentives	2
Policy and processes	2
Innovative Learning	2

Gàidhealtachd

The table below depicts the frequency of tags and coding applied when analysing responses for Gàidhealtachd.

Tag	Frequency
Creation and promotion of Gàidhealtachd	200
Areas with high number of speakers	194
Redundancy of Gàidhealtachd	93
No definition	56
Government management	53
Incentives/services in Gàidhealtachd	39
Flexible definition	33
Funding for Gàidhealtachd	29
Division	29
Community initiatives for language promotion	27
Promotion of Gaelic	24
Highlands and Islands	23
Community engagement for Gàidhealtachd	19
More research	14
Policy and legislation for Gàidhealtachd	13
Access to public services	10
Support from the government	10
Incentives and benefits for Gàidhealtachd	9
Areas with a smaller number of Gaelic speakers	7
Tier System	6
Gàidhealtachd already exists	3
No comment	3
Accountability	3
Government agenda	3
Current measures are sufficient	2

Bòrd na Gàidhlig
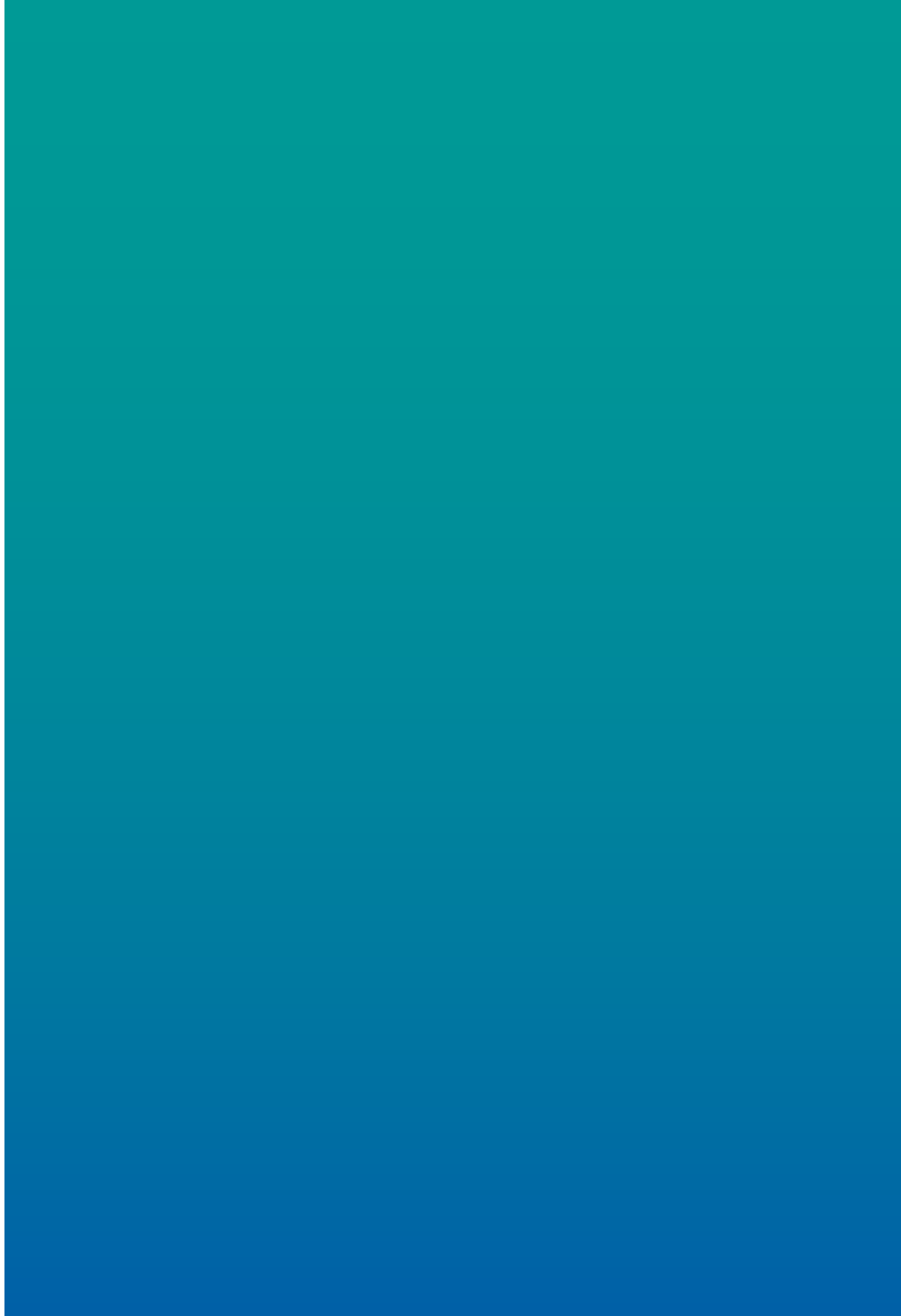
The table below depicts the frequency of tags and coding applied when analysing responses for Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Tag	Frequency
Structural improvements	128
Lack of public demand	96
Community engagement and consultations	60
Visibility and influence of Bòrd na Gàidhlig	60
Funding for Bòrd na Gàidhlig	47
Resources for Bòrd na Gàidhlig	32
Statutory powers	26
Partnerships and collaborations	23
Waste of public resources	20
Accountability and transparency	17
Flexible/decentralised approach	17
No comment	16
Satisfaction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig	8
Lack of awareness of Bòrd na Gàidhlig	7
Recognition of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.	6
Dissatisfaction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig	3
Staff at Bòrd na Gàidhlig	2
Strong leadership	2

Scots Language

The table below depicts the frequency of tags and coding applied when analysing responses for Scots Language.

Tag	Frequency
Redundancy/waste of public resources	328
Greater use and promotion	314
Funding and Resources	133
Legislation	76
No opinion	48
Addressing misinformation	46
Accessibility through education	38
Official and legal recognition	35
Public recognition and support	28
Visibility of Scots bodies	26
Community engagement	14
Partnerships and collaborations	13
Defining Scots is important	13
Scots already well-recognised	11
Accountability	10
Division	7
Strategy for Scots Bodies	4
Apolitical approach	3
Dissatisfaction with Scots Bodies	2
Lack of knowledge about Scots	2
Opportunities for adults	1