

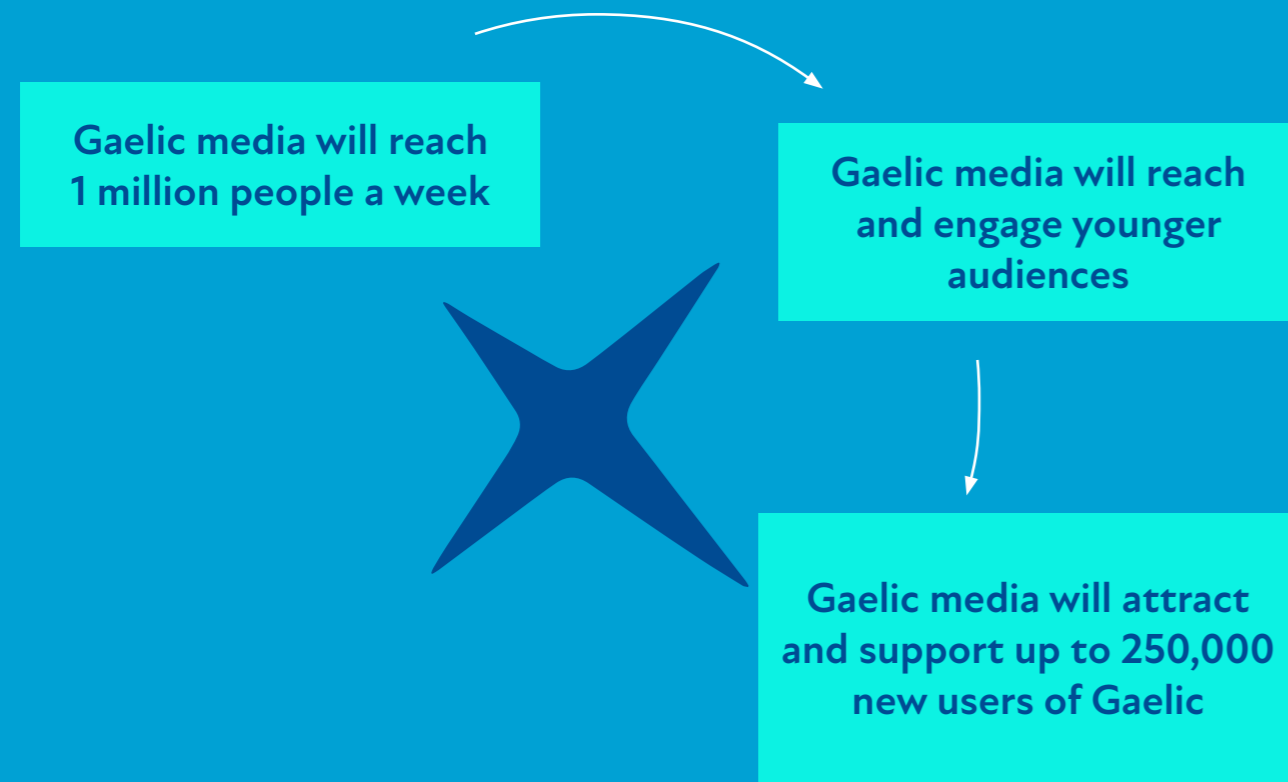


Lèirsinn:

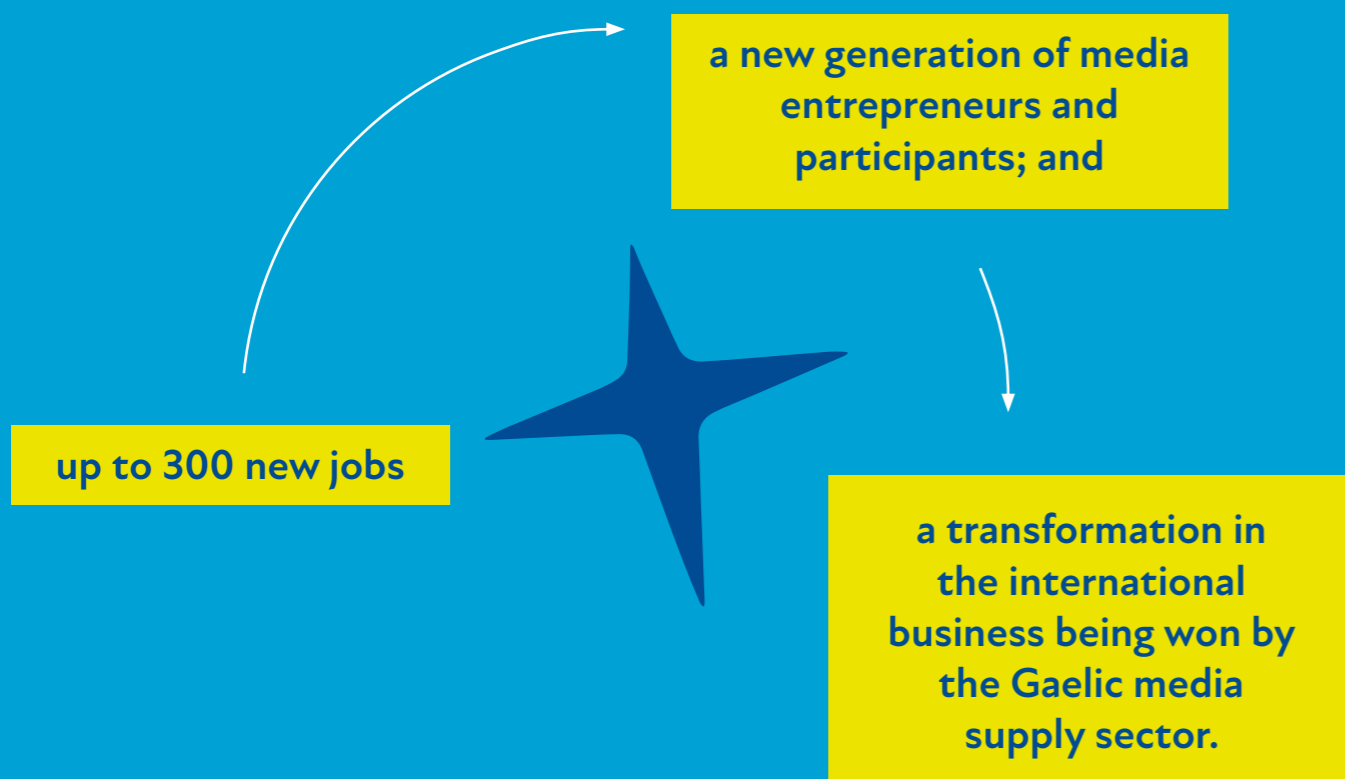
A ROUTE MAP FOR GAELIC MEDIA

2022 - 2027

Statement of intent



This will create:



*Gàidhlig tro na meadhanan,
anns gach àite, airson gach neach*
Gaelic for everyone, wherever you are

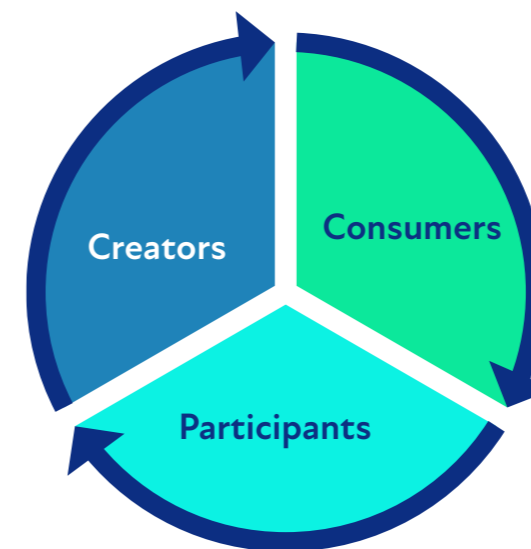
This Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media sets out the critical future role of Gaelic media to:

- create sustainable jobs in Gaelic speaking communities that face depopulation and ageing demographics
- respond to Ofcom’s warning that “Traditional UK broadcasting is unlikely to survive in the online world, unless broadcasting laws and regulation are overhauled and broadcasters speed up their transformation for the digital age”, and
- act as a catalyst of digital economy growth in the aftermath of Covid-19.

Failure to harness the potential of Gaelic in the digital era will result in a lost generation and missed opportunity.

This Lèirsinn proposes an entirely new way of thinking about minority language media, joining up audience outcomes with language, economic and cultural outcomes.

“...joining up audience outcomes with language, economic and cultural outcomes.”



- **Consumption** - serving audiences with high-quality content, striving to secure the investment in content required for Gaelic media to connect with younger audiences.
- **Participation** – inviting audiences to “lean forward” into active participation in Gaelic media, learning, usage and culture.
- **Creation** – stimulating the emergence and development of more and more content creators as a catalyst for opportunity, growth, innovation, new businesses, jobs and sustainability.

Digital future

With the required investment, this Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media will deliver on:

- Reaching and engaging younger users of Gaelic
- Driving an increase in usage and learning of Gaelic
- Creating jobs in communities
- Inspiring creativity and talent, and
- Fostering media entrepreneurship through the language.

The Gaelic television service is successful with very young and with older audiences but only reaches 4 in 10 of younger adult users of Gaelic each week. There is an urgent need for Gaelic public service media to connect better with that audience. This can only happen through investment in the right content and delivery on all the platforms used by younger media consumers.

PLATFORMS AND PROMINENCE

A truly digital offering that appeals widely to all generations must be on all platforms used by audiences and must be easy to find.

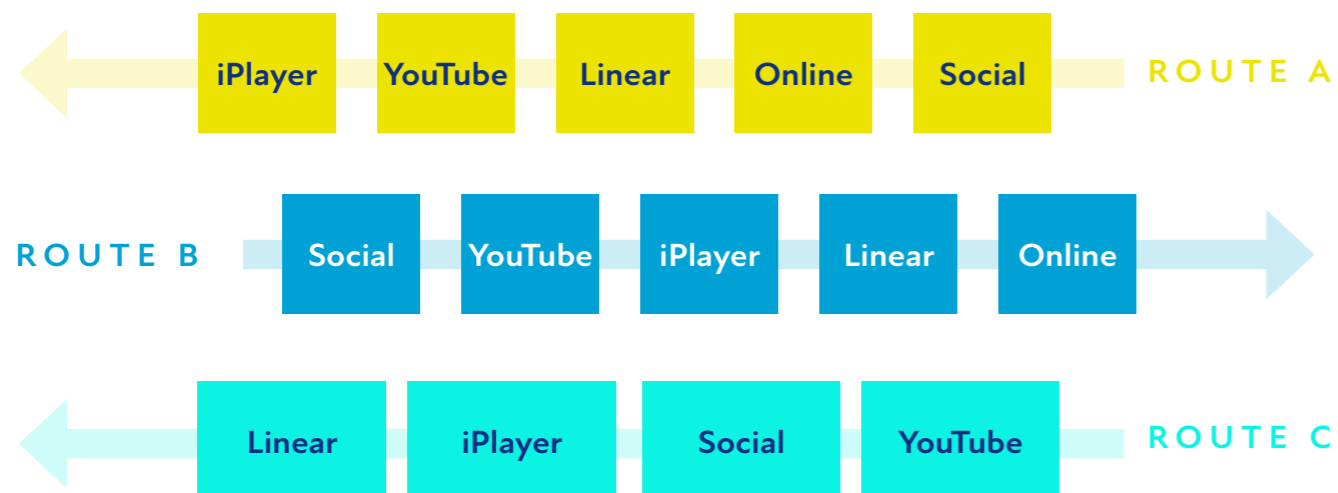
The linear Gaelic television channel is the heartbeat but, without prominence in the fiercely competitive digital media domain that is dominated by English-language content, Gaelic media content will remain undiscovered and unfulfilled. Regulatory provision is required to ensure prominence for Gaelic public service media content.

INVESTMENT IN KEY GENRES

To connect with younger audiences, Gaelic media must not only be prominent on the right platforms but must offer more content in the genres that younger audiences consume.

In particular, there is a need for a sustained diet of short-form and long-form drama and comedy, as well as events and learning, in formats that resonate with that audience on the various platforms used by them. This is currently not possible due to financial constraints.

Digital delivery of Gaelic media content will vary by genre and by audience. For example:



A GAELIC DIGITAL MEDIA ECOLOGY

In the Gaelic media universe, the linear Gaelic television channel is more necessary than ever before. It is the daily heartbeat that is also the standard-bearer for excellence and ambition, satisfying audiences, allowing producers to build creative collaborations and incentivising new talent.

It is part of the continuum of Gaelic media experience that now extends in short and long-form beyond broadcasting to online and social media and includes user-generated content. Linear television remains one of the drivers of investment in high-quality content.

Gaelic media demands a long view that includes, at one end, the creation of opportunities for young people and the conditions for media start-ups to thrive, and at the other end, the creation of high-quality content by an experienced, ambitious and innovative creative sector that draws upon a deep pool of talent.

Investment

This *Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media* invites audiences to be participators in Gaelic and creators and innovators of Gaelic media.

This *Lèirsinn* will only be realised with the support of partners: language, economic development and innovation agencies, local authorities, communities, primary, secondary and tertiary education, Government, and the BBC.

This *Lèirsinn's* Statement of Intent will be realised if prominence in the digital domain is achieved and significant new investment is found for Gaelic media in three key areas.

Gaelic media will reach:
1 million people each week

Gaelic media will attract:
250k new users

Gaelic media will create:
300 new jobs

CONTENT FOR DIGITAL AND YOUNG AUDIENCES

- Short-form drama
 - Long and short-form comedy
 - Interactive and learning
 - News for digital and young audiences
- The primary need is for short-form and long-form content that will consistently engage younger Gaelic media consumers on non-linear platforms. This is about quality and quantity as well as being in the places where younger audiences are seeking content.

MEDIA INNOVATION AND GROWTH

- Coding
 - Community content partnerships
 - Incubator interventions
 - Knowledge transfer partnership(s)
 - AI, interactive and immersive media and learning
- The core proposition is for a Media Innovation Cluster which encompasses a series of activities and interventions designed to stimulate media creativity and business innovation.

BUILDING SCALE

- Long-form drama
 - Factual
 - Increasing UK and international collaborations in those genres
 - HD broadcast quality
- Drama and factual genres are, for different reasons, urgently in need of increases in scale. News and current affairs provision also fall into this category. Increase in scale will succeed in reaching new audiences and creating new and innovative collaborations, some with high economic potential.

Success

A new settlement for Gaelic public service media, delivering:

- Sufficiency and certainty of funding, including the investment set out in this *Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media*
- An enhanced digital News and Current Affairs service

- Reaching all users of Gaelic including those who are low consumers of linear television services

- Reaching new audiences in Scotland, the UK and internationally, increasing awareness of and support for Gaelic

Increase the numbers of those learning and improving Gaelic through digital media

- Uptake of Gaelic usage in homes, communities and workplaces

Accelerate the culture of creative participation in Gaelic media

- Confident, creative and bold younger users and creators of Gaelic media

Support Scotland's cultural economy

- Post-Covid recovery for music, arts and events

Establish / develop strategic partnerships

- Joined up, strategic interventions in skills, talent, ecosystem and infrastructure

Act as a catalyst for digital economy growth, creating a Gaelic-centred culture of innovation and entrepreneurship

- Post-covid digital economy growth

- More international screen business

- High impact, innovative, content

- New and sustainable jobs

- Start-ups and Scale-ups

What needs to happen?

Statutory provision for Gaelic Public Service Media (PSM)

There is a critical need for Gaelic public service media (PSM) to be recognised in statute and to have Public Service Broadcaster (PSB) status in its own right.

There is no statutory provision for Gaelic media other than the obligation on MG ALBA to provide audiences with a wide range of Gaelic content, which is enabled by a non-statutory agreement with the BBC, for the duration of the current Royal Charter, to offer a television service to allow MG ALBA to fulfil its remit. (See *BBC Framework Agreement*¹.)

In relation to Gaelic, and by comparison with provisions made for broadcasting in Welsh, statute is silent on the requirement for a Gaelic service, silent on its PSB status, silent on its overall funding and silent on the obligations of the BBC.

The legislative framework is dated and inadequate. It needs to be fully renewed.

“ There is a critical need for Gaelic public service media (PSM) to be recognised in statute and to have Public Service Broadcaster (PSB) status in its own right. ”



A new investment accord for Gaelic media

There is an urgency for Gaelic media to serve all its audiences on all platforms. And there is an opportunity for Gaelic media to grow its role as a catalyst for participation in Gaelic and growth in the creative digital economy.

The provision of PSM in indigenous minority languages needs to be adequately funded. The current level of provision for Gaelic media is below the minimum required to engage successfully with all its intended audiences.

This *Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media* makes the case for greater investment on the basis that it will create a return in terms of wider public value. Securing this investment by way of core funding will create the best chance of sustainable fulfilment of those aims.

A new agreement between the BBC and MG ALBA

The BBC has committed, in its *Across the UK Strategy*², to “modernise the BBC/MG ALBA partnership which delivers BBC ALBA to reflect the digital landscape better and support new talent development.”

A new agreement for Gaelic public service media, which adequately funds and strengthens BBC ALBA, BBC Radio nan Gàidheal and all other media outputs, is needed to increase the volume, reach and impact of Gaelic media content as well as to optimise the role of media and technology innovation in language learning and usage.

“ Gaelic media draws deeply from the well of talent in Gaelic-speaking communities: it must be rooted in them, empowered by them and useful to them. ”

Partnerships

Collaboration has been the natural way for Gaelic communities for generations. Collaboration and teamwork have delivered the Gaelic media we have today, and this should be built on to achieve common aims and help Gaelic to flourish.

Gaelic media depends on partnering with the BBC, the Screen Scotland partners (Creative Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council), our academic partners, local authorities, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, organisations with Gaelic plans and all Gaelic bodies and communities.

Communities

Gaelic media draws deeply from the well of talent in Gaelic-speaking communities: it must be rooted in them, empowered by them and useful to them.

This *Lèirsinn* sets out a vision which will support the development of skills and talent within communities and foster media entrepreneurship, and therefore jobs, in the places where Gaelic is spoken. Content partnerships and Gaelic media participation in creative clusters have the potential to empower content creators and innovators in the communities where they live, and to put in place the foundations for the creative and business future of Gaelic public service media.

¹www.gov.uk/government/publications/bbc-charter-and-framework-agreement

²the-bbc-across-the-uk.pdf

MG ALBA's four pillars

INSPIRATION

MG ALBA, through bold and contemporary Gaelic media content, will inspire our core audiences, our young people, new users of the language and many more to be active participants in Gaelic media, language, and culture. We will continually inspire our partners, audiences, content creators and stakeholders to invest in this media journey with us. The rewards will make it worthwhile for all!

INNOVATION

MG ALBA will embed innovation in the fabric of our organisation, driving us forward in areas of investment, technology, skills development, and partnership. We'll embrace new methods of working, seizing opportunities and reacting positively to change.

INVESTMENT

MG ALBA will continue to seek the investment Gaelic media needs to serve our audiences. We will invest our energy and ambition in seeking to secure the best outcomes for Gaelic media, to ensure it will survive and thrive in an intensely competitive digital media world.

EXCELLENCE

MG ALBA will continue to focus on our journey to excellence. We demonstrate and promote excellence in all our work – because Gaelic audiences should expect no less.

MG ALBA's values



