

MG ALBA

Annual Plan 2024-25

1. MG ALBA as a Creator of Value

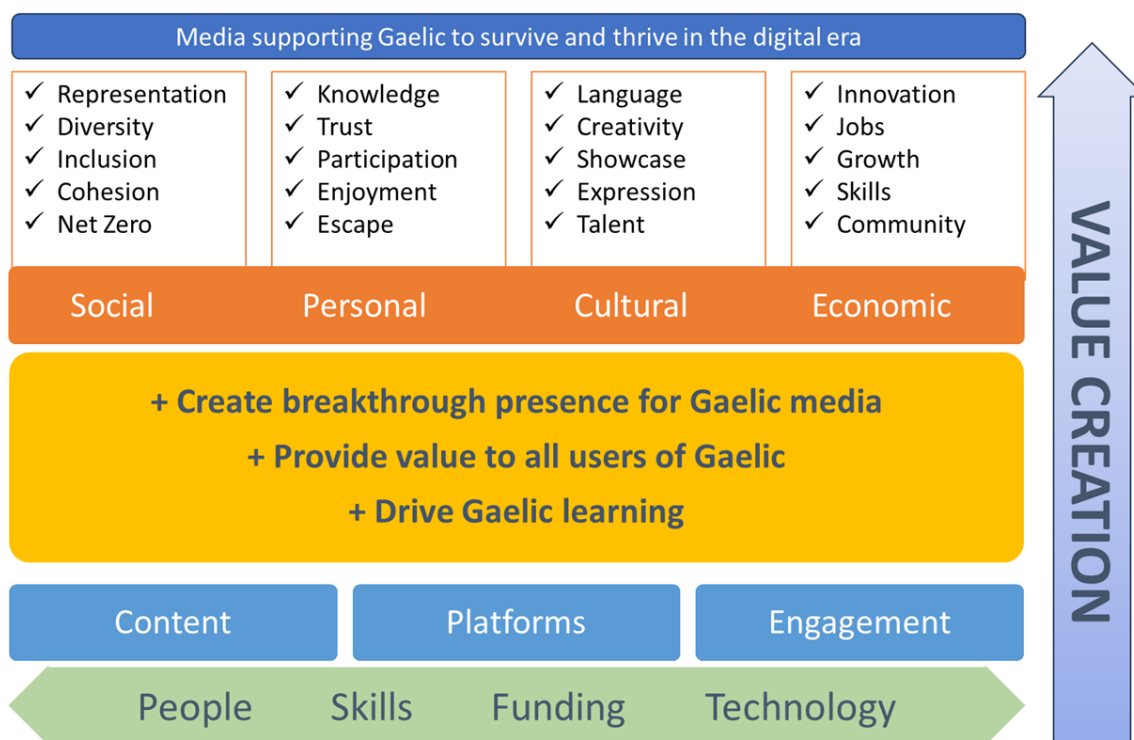
Remit and Purpose

The remit of MG ALBA, as set out in statute, is:

to secure that a wide and diverse range of high quality programmes in Gaelic are broadcast or otherwise transmitted so as to be available to persons in Scotland and elsewhere.

The purpose of MG ALBA, through Gaelic media content, is:

- ✓ to make a major contribution to the visibility, acquisition and usage of the Gaelic language;
- ✓ to create and support sustainable jobs in fragile communities;
- ✓ to bring forward and showcase indigenous talent to the Gaelic community and to the nation; and
- ✓ to create social, personal, cultural and economic value.



Vision

MG ALBA’s Vision, as set out in Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media, is to

- I. **Create breakthrough presence for Gaelic media** in Scotland, the UK and worldwide, drawing people to the Gaelic language through easily accessible, unique Gaelic video content;
- II. **Provide value to all users of Gaelic** by ensuring all segments of the Gaelic linguistic community are served; and
- III. **To drive Gaelic learning**, winning new learners and supporting existing learners and Gaelic ‘returners’ to improve their skills and move through the stages from acquisition to usage.

Context

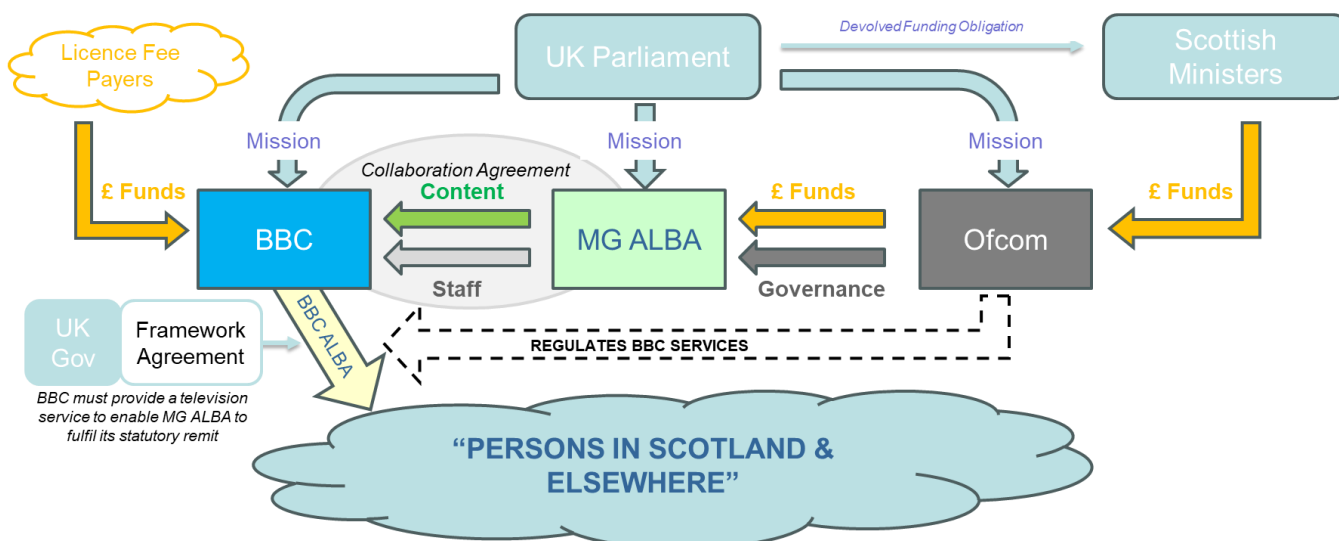
Complexity

There is no statutory provision for Gaelic public service television as there is, for example, for the Irish and Welsh languages. Instead, the UK Government’s Framework Agreement requires the BBC to provide a “mixed genre” television service to support delivery of MG ALBA’s remit.

There is no funding mechanism for BBC ALBA. Scottish Ministers are required by statute to provide appropriate funding to Ofcom for MG ALBA’s purposes and the BBC allocates resource to BBC ALBA according to its own processes. Ofcom exercises governance oversight of MG ALBA and regulatory oversight of BBC services, including output requirements of BBC ALBA in News and Learning genres.

The result is an intricate web of interlinked responsibilities.

BBC ALBA (legal form)

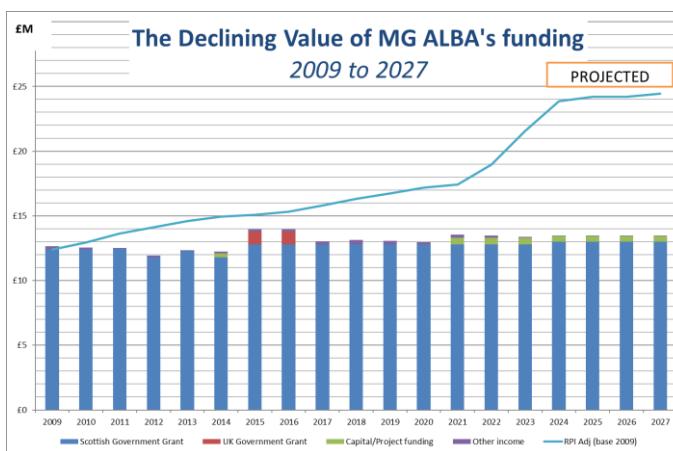


Funding

Since the launch of BBC ALBA in 2008, MG ALBA’s economic value has declined by £11m. Had funding kept pace with inflation, annual funding would stand at £24m (actual £13m).

To offset the effects of this diminution of value, MG ALBA enters into partnership and co-finance arrangements on a regular basis.

The ongoing loss of funding value is a significant challenge.



Risk

MG ALBA recognises a number of significant risk factors.

Loss or diminution of the Gaelic PSB service

Minority language broadcasting faces serious headwinds. Challenges include: (a) global competition for audiences; (b) changing patterns of consumption; (c) proliferation of brands, platforms and content propositions; and (d) the dominance of the digital domain by majority languages.

- The absence of a statutory commitment to a Gaelic PSB service means that its continued existence is dependent on the efficacy of the stakeholder compact.

Funding

Whereas the Welsh, Irish and Basque language services have received significant funding uplifts, MG ALBA's core funding has not increased materially since the launch of BBC ALBA in 2008.

- Innovation, fiscal prudence and partnerships (eg SpeakGaelic) have allowed MG ALBA to maintain and develop our contribution to Gaelic media. However, if the funding outlook is not improved, service levels are at risk of diminishing to a level that is below what is required for a Gaelic PSB. Further, the Gaelic creative media sector will contract and audience, economic, language and cultural outcomes will be compromised.

Multi-year promises, single year funding

Long term supply contracts deliver significant benefits for Gaelic media. They allow for business and career development routes in the independent production sector while delivering value-for-money content to MG ALBA.

- With single year funding and long-term commitments, MG ALBA balances risk and reward. The risk is mitigated by the steadfastness of the Scottish Government's funding commitment over past years and through contractual "material event" arrangements.

Organisational fitness

The fast-changing media environment creates a challenge for organisations whose roots are in linear broadcasting. Can they adapt as quickly as their audiences are evolving? If they are on fixed budgets, can they expand their platforms, formats and brands offer so as meet their consumers where they are, and do so without deserting linear?

- MG ALBA's roots first as a funder and then as partner in a linear television service creates many organisational strengths. But they also challenge us to adopt the hallmarks of an agile and fast-moving digital media organisation. MG ALBA has embarked on a programme of transformation, of culture and systems aimed at ensuring the organisation is fit for the digital future of Gaelic media.

Partnership

MG ALBA's remit is substantially fulfilled through the BBC ALBA joint venture with the BBC. In 2024-25, there will be some reorganisation of priorities and responsibilities which will bring added value and some additional BBC funding to the table.

MG ALBA also works closely with Screen Scotland, making high-impact shared investment into Gaelic drama, feature documentary and drama training.

Close collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) allows us to pool children's short drama and factual output across broadcasters in many different languages, creating value for all and allowing Gaelic voices to be heard in other territories.

Joining with arts and community bodies in the Western Isles, under our Content Creators Partnership (CCP), has allowed us jointly to create a new model of Creative & Digital Media modern apprentice. An important innovation is how the CCP allows the 3 or 4 participants to remain in their home community for most of the time and also work as a cohort with MG ALBA in an 80/20 arrangement. This creates the prospect of highly skilled content creators who are rooted in their heritage and who create new and engaging forms of content for local and national audiences.

The most significant breakthrough of the past 3 years has been the creation and launch of SpeakGaelic – a partnership with the Gaelic college Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the BBC, supported by Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig project funding. As part of the project, a standardised progression framework for Gaelic acquisition was created by Aberdeen University; the partners created and delivered classroom, tutor and multiplatform media materials; and Glasgow University signed off on overall cohesion and quality of resources - a remarkable partnership which provides a pathway to the threshold of Gaelic proficiency and is now in its final year of resource production.

Transformation

In 2023, MG ALBA reorganised our business management structure and embarked on a journey of culture change intended to empower post-holders and to create an environment of knowledge-sharing and constructive peer challenge. We introduced an Assurance Framework as part of this process and appointed Champions for Wellbeing, Path to Net Zero, Assurance, Diversity & Inclusion and (still to be appointed) Community.

In 2024-25, we will upgrade our systems, replacing personalised legacy systems for workflow management and assurance with enterprise level software and business intelligence systems.

Citizenship

MG ALBA recognises the need to take strides in how we plan for and deliver our own very high expectations in the areas of Diversity and Inclusion, Path to Net Zero, and creating added value for our Gaelic language and the communities and individuals we serve.

Our priority, as always, will be to serve our audiences with high quality video content, and we will seek to do that in a spirit of value-creation and innovation.

2. Serving Audiences

Strategic Outlook for 2024-25

Audiences – what are our aims, what experiences can we provide, what difference can we make?

Aim

Our aim is to provide our audiences with ambitious and relevant Gaelic language video content on as many platforms as possible.

Vision and Objectives

MG ALBA's Vision is set out in *Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media*. Objectives for 2024-25 are:

- I. INCREASE the impact of Gaelic media to elevate the status of the language;
- II. CONNECT with more Gaelic users to support the vitality of the language; and
- III. DRIVE Gaelic learning media to increase the number of Gaelic speakers.

Approach to Audiences

2024/25 will be a transitional year with an acceleration in shift to digital first publishing.

Live sport, news and events will form the backbone of the linear schedule with appropriate additional/ repurposed digital content adding to overall engagement.

Commissions will be fewer in number but higher in quality. And relationships with suppliers will be more bespoke as fewer funded hours will be available.

A monthly content "*tentpole*" - a live or highly marketable content *moment* - will drive focus, helping us reach audiences more effectively and bringing clarity & structure to our communications and marketing.

MG ALBA's funded content will continue to be delivered to audiences via the partnership with the BBC, on the iPlayer and linear broadcast services.

Cognisant of the significant potential audience beyond those, both in the UK and abroad, we will explore opportunities to reach viewers on other platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. To do so, we will carefully consider our licensing requirements when we acquire content and will always offer our content, even if not first or exclusively, to the BBC.

To bolster audiences on non-linear platforms, we have agreed a plan with the BBC based on a "re-mix" of current resources and some additional BBC value:

- A. **BBC funding** – additional BBC spend across news, young audiences/digital, learning, drama development, and radio enhancements (visualisation) across a period of two to three years.
- B. **MG ALBA funding reallocation** – MG ALBA will move some funding from multi-annual production contracts (volume deals) to bespoke commissioning. This will include a digital-first budget.
- C. **Partnership reallocation** – by 2025, responsibility for versioning children's animations will move from MG ALBA to the BBC, in time allowing MG ALBA to focus spend on other genres.

Audience segmentation

We will use audience intelligence to inform our content investment and platform decisions, including by age, lifestyle, personas, language ability, gender and socio-demographics.

| By age | Approach |
|-------------------|--|
| Children | Digital-first content (rights permitting) plus linear |
| Ages 16-35 | Digital-first and/or digital-only across all genres |
| Ages 35-44 | Digital and linear, depending on the content proposition |
| Ages 44+ | Linear and digital, depending on the content proposition |

Brands

Four brands will continue to evolve to suit audience behaviours and preferences.

| Brand | Approach |
|--------------------|---|
| BBC ALBA | More flexibility to be digital-first on iPlayer or other platforms |
| LearnGaelic | Grow traffic to this one-stop shop for Gaelic learning |
| SpeakGaelic | Online, social, YouTube, iPlayer and Sounds growth, focus on engagement |
| FilmG | Brand evolution and alignment with Government/SQA media literacy aims |

Routes to Audiences - key content genres

| Genre | Approach |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Sport | Live linear and social media (MG ALBA funded) |
| Music & Events | Live linear, social media & YouTube (MG ALBA & BBC funded) |
| News & Current Affairs | Live linear and social media (BBC funded) |
| Factual | Linear & digital-first mix (mainly MG ALBA funded) |
| Factual Entertainment | Linear & digital-first mix (mainly MG ALBA funded) |
| Children | A mix of digital-first iPlayer and linear (moving towards BBC funded) |
| Learning | Linear and digital-first (mainly BBC funded) |
| Drama & Comedy | Digital-first iPlayer and then linear (mainly MG ALBA funded) |
| Short form | Cutting across all genres – digital-only or digital-first (MG ALBA funded) |

Routes to Audiences – the role of the different platforms

Linear is not the automatic “first port of call” for all genres but remains a vital platform.

iPlayer is our BVOD (Broadcaster Video on Demand) streaming service for all our content, and increasingly we will move to an iPlayer-first strategy for most content. The majority of programmes and boxsets will be available longer than 30 days and up to 12 months. We will explore with the BBC whether the iPlayer geo-block can be removed so that our content can reach international audiences (and we will explicitly consider international rights as we acquire content from now on).

Video-sharing (YouTube, Instagram Reels and TikTok) will showcase digital-first, short form content and series, particularly aimed at 16-35 and Gaelic learners as well as helping to drive audiences to iPlayer and linear content through use of promos and clip. We will also explore how YouTube might provide long-form Gaelic content to international audiences.

Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) will act as tools for content discovery and signposting, short Form entertainment and Brand building.

The BBC ALBA Partnership

The BBC and MG ALBA will continue to share responsibilities as follows:

| BBC | MG ALBA |
|---|--|
| - Editorial control | - Content strategy |
| - News and Current Affairs, Education, Children’s, Religion, Events, and some Factual content. Potential contributions towards drama development. | - Funding for commissioning of Drama, Comedy, Factual, Factual Entertainment, Lifestyle, Sport, Music, Arts, Children’s animations and drama |
| - Linear and iPlayer distribution + BBC ALBA website | - All other websites, all social media and video-sharing platforms |
| - Quality control of BBC produced and live content | - Quality control of MG ALBA funded non-live content |
| - Commissioning and content discovery staff, plus contributions from marketing and research | - Commissioning, publishing, business, digital platforms, technical and marketing staff |
| - Scotland wide research data | - Gaelic speech community research data |

Publishing

What does an average week / month look like across all platforms and brands?

There will be at least ONE significant piece of content each month – a “tentpole”. At certain times of the year, there will be more than one – for example, the festive season and the National Mòd week.

These will be a live or highly marketable content moment, high spots such as festivals, concerts, major sporting events, premiers of drama, comedy, and factual high value content. Social media will take advantage of these high spots, creating content around them for multiplatform use, for example bespoke BTS and exclusive interview content with artists and participants.

On a weekly basis, live News and Sport will form the publishing heartbeat of BBC ALBA. News is a daily appointment-to-view for many of the core audience and Sport is the single biggest driver of national audiences. In a typical week, we will publish 12 to 13 hours of new content.

| Genre | Publishing Activity |
|--|--|
| News | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One live bulletin each day c7pm or at 8pm live - Available on iPlayer for 24 hours - Online news site and social media updates as appropriate |
| Sport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once or twice weekly, live on linear and iPlayer - Available on iPlayer for 30 days |
| Factual Entertainment, Lifestyle, Archive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on core audience, typically weekdays following news - Also weekends in 7pm – 9pm time bands - Available on iPlayer for 30 days minimum. - YouTube promos/clips. |
| Factual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First runs on a weekday primetime slot (eg 9pm) - Repeats typically 8:30pm to 10pm - Available on iPlayer for 30 days minimum. - YouTube promos/clips. |
| Music | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Live in weekday afternoons and evenings of Mod week. - Live on event / festival late evenings on linear and on iPlayer. - YouTube and iPlayer collections. - Major social media activity before, around and after |
| Drama | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - iPlayer drop of whole series on day of first linear/iPlayer showing. - Available for 30 days minimum. - Playlists on YouTube. - Major social media activity during linear transmission period. |
| Comedy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-form Playlists on YouTube. - Major social media activity. - iPlayer drop of whole series on day of first live linear/iPlayer showing. - Available for 30 days minimum. |
| Children’s | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linear and iPlayer schedule 5pm to 7pm. - iPlayer retention for 30 days (dependent on licensing). - YouTube collections and playlists. |
| Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linear and iPlayer schedule 7pm weekdays. - iPlayer retention in perpetuity. - YouTube collections and playlists. - International audience development on iPlayer (in discussion) |
| Religion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunday. 30 minutes. Available on iPlayer for 30 days. |

Digital (Engagement & Marketing)

How will we engage with light or non-users and persuade them to become frequent viewers?

Objectives

The key objectives are to grow viewership across digital platforms, particularly in 16-35s and to build brand awareness of SpeakGaelic & BBC ALBA.

Marketing + Content Discovery

Digital, Marketing and Commissioning teams will create a Master Marketing plan for the year, with elements such as:

- ✓ Focus on *tentpoles* and on specific target audiences
- ✓ Bespoke marketing plans and asset briefs, along with producers.
- ✓ Trialling paid social ads, where appropriate.
- ✓ Budget and resources targeted for maximum ROI

MG ALBA's team will work closely with the BBC to identify and implement cross-promotional opportunities on BBC services and will work with producers to ensure that titles are more SEO- and discovery- friendly on iPlayer and YouTube.

MG ALBA's team will also work with producers and graphic design to create high-impact thumbnails to attract audiences on iPlayer and YouTube, and we will investigate the need for in-house resource in the GFX (graphics) domain.

MG ALBA's team will review audience data regularly to steer decisions on commissioning and marketing plans, ensuring agile and flexible decision-making informed by quality data.

Multiplatform approach – making the content work harder

We will move marketing and digital focus upstream into the commissioning process, to determine the best possible marketing strategy and asset delivery plan for each media content project.

Where audience-appropriate - with certain programme brands and events - we will look to create multiplatform assets which deliver value and entertainment as stand-alone assets on digital platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. This will work to reach audiences and build brands, whilst also signposting the long-form programme on streaming service + linear.

The Marketing / Digital team will utilise marketing briefs to ensure all parties are clear on expectations for all marketing assets, ensuring correct resource is allocated to these deliverables. Content calendars and release plans will be structured around definitive deliverables (from brief).

We will work to resource and deliver a BBC ALBA TikTok page to go live by end of 2024.

Bespoke digital first commissioning

With an expectation of increased budget allocation of £350K, we will create a bespoke commissioning strand for digital-first and digital-only content across genres.

- + We will actively seek new production partners and talent to submit ideas to this commissioning process.

- + We intend to create opportunities for emerging on-screen and other creative talent to submit ideas for digital content series, potentially pairing them with production companies experienced in creating digital first and social content.

SpeakGaelic

We will continue to work with existing and emerging talent on bespoke social-first content for SpeakGaelic channels, including building the brand on TikTok and YouTube Shorts.

YouTube

We will extend rights clearances to optimise our archive for international YouTube audiences.

How will we achieve the above goals?

- ✓ Review and re-structure MG ALBA team, recruiting as appropriate to ensure best skillsets, and committing to significant in-house Learning and Development.
- ✓ Work closely with BBC Content Discovery, Marketing and Research teams to share knowledge, optimise BBC cross-promotion, make best use of branding packages, research data and analytics, respond quickly to trends.
- ✓ Utilise freelancers and external talent where required and as budget allows.
- ✓ Use research data to update our market segmentation for hard-to-reach audiences.
- ✓ Ensure marketing plans and briefings for all media content projects.
- ✓ Create bespoke social media and video-sharing assets.
- ✓ Adopt a digital-first content commissioning strategy.

Content Investment

How will we make content investment decisions to reach our Publishing and Digital goals?

MG ALBA spends around 85% of its available budget on the creation of new Gaelic media audio-visual content.

For 2024-25 the content investment profile, by genre, is broadly similar to the previous year. However, the current economic climate and high rate of production inflation across the industry makes it challenging to maintain content levels on a static budget. This, coupled with a strategic aim to increase content quality and ambition in certain genres, will result in fewer funded hours compared to 2023-24.

| Genre | Spend (£) | | Hours | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Children | 579,500 | 286,167 | 52 | 19 |
| Comedy | 482,500 | 425,000 | 2 | 1.5 |
| Factual | 2,970,139 | 3,309,539 | 90 | 96 |
| Entertainment | 250,000 | 24,750 | 2 | 0.4 |
| Drama | 1,230,504 | 1,131,250 | 3.5 | 2.7 |
| Music & Events | 1,191,600 | 930,000 | 43 | 24 |
| Sport | 2,410,757 | 2,430,794 | 174 | 174 |
| Digital/Short Form | 100,000 | 262,500 | 0.5 | 5 |
| Learning | 25,000 | 25,000 | 9 | 9 |
| Sector Development | - | 50,000 | - | - |
| Total | 9,240,000 | 8,875,000 | 376 | 332 |

Supply Model

MG ALBA employs two main methods for the commissioning of its programme content:

- + Multi-annual production contracts. and
- + Seasonal Commissioning Rounds.

Multi-annual production contracts deliver mutual benefits to both MG ALBA and its suppliers, helping MG ALBA to achieve high volumes of content at a low unit cost and creating stability for the production supply sector and a basis for creative and commercial development.

From July 2024 MG ALBA will enter into a reduced portfolio of new multi-annual production contracts across Factual, Factual Entertainment and Music & Events genres and will move into the second year its previously agreed Sports multi-annual deal.

To ensure audiences continue to choose BBC ALBA content in a highly competitive multiplatform environment the approach to multi-annual production packages will continue to shift from lower cost, high volume, to more emphasis on impact.

The reduced multi-annual portfolio will enable some reallocation of funds into other areas of content commissioning such as seasonal commissioning rounds to provide more flexibility for commissioning of high impact programming.

Seasonal Commissioning Rounds aim to encourage distinctiveness and offer commissions to companies after open competition. In a typical year, two seasonal commissioning rounds take place, but this is dependent on available funding.

Time-sensitive proposals which fall outwith seasonal commissioning will also be considered.

Co-finance

MG ALBA's content strategy includes supporting programme suppliers to seek co-finance from third parties to deliver high quality content which is not otherwise possible on MG ALBA's budgets alone.

Co-finance projects extend the range, quality, and ambition of programming for BBC ALBA and drive growth opportunities for programme suppliers in international territories as well as their own domestic market.

In 2024-25 co-financed projects will primarily be sourced through the seasonal commissioning rounds (and not multi-annual production contracts).

BBC Content Contribution

The BBC content contribution to BBC ALBA will include News & Current Affairs, Children's content, coverage of the annual Royal National Mòd, religious programming and some other programmes.

The BBC will begin to assume responsibility for Children's dubbed animation over an agreed period, meaning that MG ALBA will continue retain some funding obligations in this genre in 2024-25.

BBC and MG ALBA initiatives

In 2024-25, following a review of the BBC ALBA partnership, the BBC and MG ALBA will each invest £200k pa for two years in a place-based initiative aiming to develop and produce younger audience skewed short form content from the Highlands and Islands. The partners will seek 3rd party funding to take the total amount, over 2 years, to £1m.

Skills and Training

How will we support the creative sector and new entrants?

MG ALBA's intention is to financially support initiatives that create unique value for current or future Gaelic content creators who are:

- ✓ Age <18, through our FilmG short film project,
- ✓ In media Further Education, through apprenticeships, work placements and bursaries, and
- ✓ Are already creating content for us, through targeted support for CPD.

The FilmG project creates significant outcomes, one of which is as a CV-builder for emerging content creators. We will maintain our commitment.

Our recurring bursary support for students enrolled onto Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Diploma in Gaelic Media will not be required in 2024-25 as the course is not currently running.

We will engage with projects designed to support writers for feature drama and documentary and seeking as much as 90% financial support from Creative Scotland and the BFI, we will aim to create targeted work placements around (mainly) our proposed drama production for 2024. This could support up to 6 trainees for 6 months.

Having recruited to our Community Content Partnership¹ in 2023-24, we will consolidate a Learning & Development Plan with partners as participants seek to attain relevant qualifications.

As part of our commitment to support our producers, we will continue to match fund in areas of skills and CPD needs.

¹ A traineeship programme for 4 participants, hosted by arts and community bodies in the Western Isles and in which MG ALBA is the employer and arranges for the training, assessment, career development and pastoral support of the participants.

3. Operational Management and Infrastructure

Innovation & Analytics

How will we respond to the urgent need for transformation and efficiency?

Innovation

MG ALBA's strategic aim regarding Innovation is to ensure internal systems and working methods are as efficient as possible. This is a key business goal.

There is compelling evidence that a **4-day week** can, if implemented correctly, increase productivity and enhance outcomes, as well as helping employees gain better work/life balance. See, for the example, the evidence at <https://www.4dayweek.co.uk/>.

It is our intention to implement a pilot 4-day working week programme during 24/25 which will be intrinsically bound in with systems innovation and cultural transformation. If successful, this would be rolled out across the whole organisation, subject to necessary governance and funder process.

To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Ensure we are using the most up-to-date and appropriate workflows and technologies, including automation and Artificial Intelligence.
- ✓ Stop any redundant or unnecessary processes.
- ✓ Deploy workplace management software to all staff.
- ✓ Consult with and involve staff all the way, including to identify hidden 'pain points' in working methods, and to ensure all actions benefit staff.
- ✓ Identify and monitor KPIs to ensure efforts are contributing towards strategic aims.

We will also consult with **external service design agencies** to explore whether more radical, transformative changes within the organisation are required.

Analytics

Data Analytics is the practice of turning raw data into actionable insights to inform data driven decision making. To meet the challenge of delivering a good service in a climate of limited funding and increasingly fragmented audiences, data analytics will be crucial.

Data Governance

Across all its activities, MG ALBA has access to an almost overwhelming abundance of data available to it, which will require proper governance to ensure it can be fully taken advantage of.

To do this we will:

- ✓ Automate data collection as far as possible, and
- ✓ Create a central data repository.

Data Analysis

In order that collected data can be more easily analysed and insights shared within the organisation, we will:

- ✓ Deploy a BI (Business Intelligence) software solution:
 - Software which connects directly to data sources for analysis and visualisation.
 - Creates reports and interactive dashboards that are sharable within organisation.
 - Recurring reports can be automated
 - Ad hoc reports are easier to generate

- ✓ Formalise a 'data analysis life cycle' (the process of going from data to decision) to ensure effort is focused and as effective as possible:
 - Ask: identify business problem or question
 - Prepare: collect or generate the data required for analysis
 - Process: clean and transform the data ready for analysis
 - Analyse: examine the data to extract insights
 - Share: communication of actionable insights within organisation
 - Act: organisation implements actions

User data

MG ALBA will continue to commission panel-based research about the viewing habits and attitudes of the Gaelic speech community. This research, which comes from the weekly diaries of some 500 people, gives us detailed information about content reach, viewership durations and appreciation levels. We will also have a mix of moderated focus groups and self-record video diaries giving us enhanced insight into key areas of research as we seek to understand our audience/s better. Key areas will include perceived genre gaps/barriers to accessing BBC ALBA, news and non-linear consumption patterns.

MG ALBA will also continue to capture platform specific data and use their analytics tools.

Taken together, all those data are used to create a picture of media consumption and engagement by our target audiences. In the year, we will work to create as holistic as possible a picture of individual

Technology, IT, Estate & Business Continuity

Technology

How will our media content management technology support our business?

MG ALBA's technology strategy is committed to ensuring digital delivery of content to all publishing platforms in the most effective way.

As broadcast viewing trends continue to move away from linear and towards video-on-demand, along with a rapidly increasing trend in viewership of short-form content on social media and video-sharing platforms, we will implement cost-effective highly automated workstreams to maximise efficiency and to increase reliability in our content management processes.

IT

How will our IT support our business?

In the upcoming year, cybersecurity will remain paramount, with a proactive approach to threat detection and mitigation.

The IT strategy aims to align seamlessly with the dynamic landscape of technological advancements and evolving business needs, focused on driving innovation, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring robust cybersecurity measures.

We will optimise collaboration and communication tools to support remote and hybrid work models.

User needs will be reassessed as legacy devices purchased for home working during the pandemic may not now be suitable for tasks as we continue our return to the office.

A review of current network equipment will take place with a view to creating the most secure working environment possible.

Estate

What are our Estate requirements?

MG ALBA is lead tenant of Seaforth House and the Creative Industries Media Centre (formerly two separate buildings but now conjoined) in Stornoway. A substantial portion is sub-leased to the BBC and both desk and office space is subleased or licensed to creative or Gaelic bodies. MG ALBA is responsible for repairs and upkeep to the building.

We intend to maintain those arrangements in 2024-25.

MG ALBA will focus on creating an energy efficient workplace to align with modern working practices. Funding permitting, we will employ effective design principles to create a comfortable and effective workplace contributing to the ability to move towards a 4-day working week. The workplace will incorporate improved spaces for private calls, wellbeing and coaching.

As part of our drive towards net zero we will consider, and if appropriate, seek funding for:

- ✓ a multi-purpose EV to replace the existing diesel vehicles.

- ✓ Introducing renewable energy sources to reduce the reliance on grid electricity, for example, looking at the feasibility of installing on-site wind / solar to provide >60% of technical power requirements.
- ✓ Upgrades to the building to increase energy efficiency by reducing heat loss (eg replace windows).

Business continuity, Health & Safety & Risk Management

MG ALBA's plan to ensure a smooth continuation of business functions and operations in the event of unexpected business interruptions will be enhanced by a succession plan for all critical posts. This will not only provide clarity for the eventuality of key roles being vacated unexpectedly but also drive a developmental plan for potential future post-holders, thus enhancing MG ALBA's capacity and resilience. A Business Continuity test will provide external independent assurance.

The Health & Safety Handbook will continue to form a part of MG ALBA's staff training plan. We have a well-established methodology in place to assess risk and mitigate incidents which threaten the reliable running of MG ALBA's operations and a staff risk group helps to ensure that risk management is a matter for all staff.

Governance, Assurance, Financial Management & Reporting,

How will we achieve value for money in the deployment of our financial resources and how will we provide assurance to our Board and Stakeholders?

MG ALBA has a well-established financial management cycle, which includes annual budget planning, monthly management accounts, quarterly reporting packs for the Board, Ofcom and Scottish Government and a robust year-end audit and annual report process led by the Audit Committee.

MG ALBA utilises an Assurance Framework which is overseen by the Assurance Framework Champion. The Assurance Framework examines ten (10) areas of business risk (for example, achieving value-for-money, minimising the risk of fraud, avoiding cyber intrusions) against which evidence is placed at:

- ✓ The first line of defence – from those who are operationally responsible;
- ✓ The second line of defence – from management and board review processes; and
- ✓ The third line of defence – from independent 3rd party audit, review or testing.

MG ALBA also has a Procurement Champion to ensure compliance with law and best practice.

Corporate Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

How will we ensure good internal communications and high levels of stakeholder support?

MG ALBA will operate a staff intranet and staff chat forum to ensure colleagues are well informed and are able to contribute informally to the wellbeing and cohesion of the workforce.

We will survey staff on a regular basis to track staff satisfaction and engagement indices.

The MG ALBA website and LinkedIn accounts will be used to engage with the stakeholder and business community, and social media accounts will seek to drive wider and more informal engagement with the company.

A quarterly results video will be shared with staff, board and key stakeholders.

Communications priorities will include: (a) ensuring staff are consulted and feel involved in decisions that may affect them, such as systems innovation, strategic direction, staff movements etc, and (b) increasing stakeholder engagement in issues of importance to Gaelic media.

Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

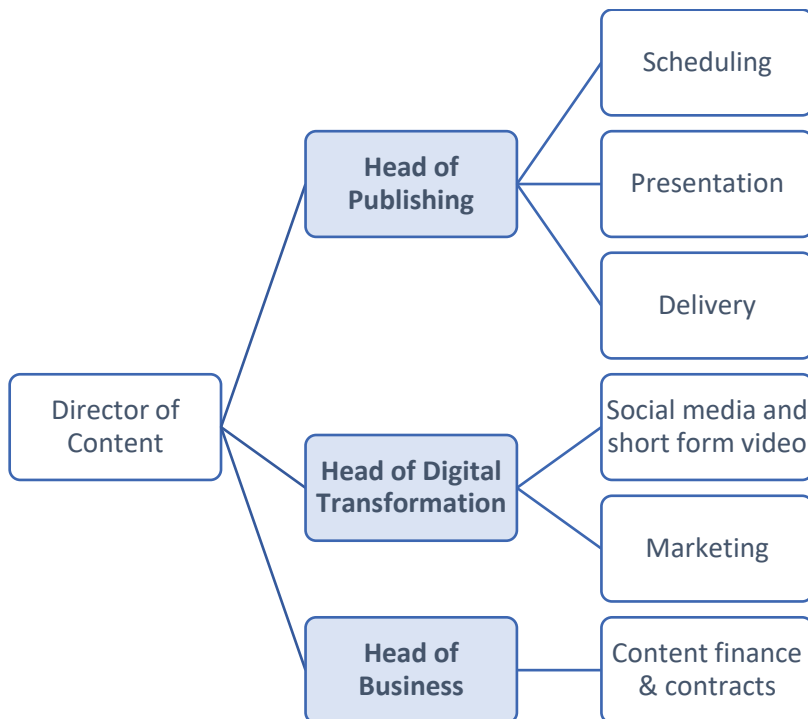
How will MG ALBA ensure that it is diverse and inclusive, supporting the wellbeing of staff, board and all we work with?

MG ALBA will undertake an assessment of (a) how inclusive and diverse we are at present and (b) how accessible our websites are. We will use benchmark data, plus staff survey data on tracking indices, to chart progress, and we will take advantage of partner expertise (for example, from the broadcasting community) to inform our development. This will include upgrading our recruitment policy and practices if required. This will be led by our Diversity & Inclusion Champion.

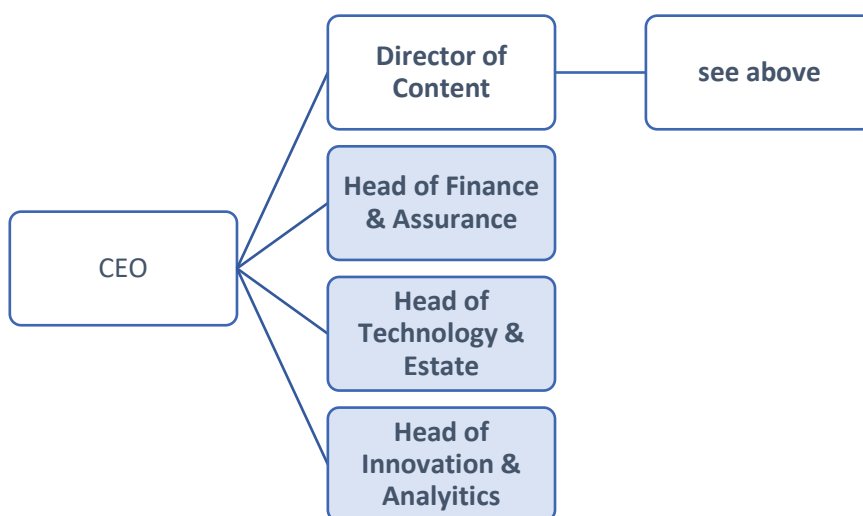
MG ALBA's Wellbeing Champion ensures the delivery of a suite of wellbeing initiatives.

4. Workforce

In the course of 2023-24, we reorganised our audience-facing team into three groupings under the leadership of the Director of Content:



To facilitate the transformation, we also created a Head of Innovation & Analytics role as well as Heads of Finance & Assurance and Technology & Estate.



Transition

MG ALBA needs to be confident of meeting the fast-changing demands of digital media.

In step with reorganisation we are already progressing:

- ✓ A company Learning & Development plan
- ✓ Goal-oriented performance management for all colleagues, cascading MG ALBA's Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to teams and individuals
- ✓ Enabling a culture of responsibility, ambition and accountability
- ✓ Assessing skills and personnel need.

Recruitment

To increase our agility, develop our funding and partnership capacity and make further inroads into digital audiences we intend to recruit a mix of permanent, fixed term and part-time posts:

- Director of Partnership & Development;
- Assistant Commissioner
- Digital Content Strategist
- Creative
- Graphics and Design Creative
- Modern Apprentice in Digital Marketing
- Media Assets Technician

Succession Plan for Critical Positions

The Business Continuity Plan ensures that sudden and unplanned absences do not cause business disruption. The Succession Plan ensures that when critical posts fall vacant that there are credible internal or external candidates.

The Business Continuity Plan equips nominated post holders to step in when there are sudden and unplanned absences. Many of these deputies will be succession candidates should the relevant posts fall vacant.

Company Learning & Development Plan

Learning & Development is an indispensable part of the company's plan for transformation, with all staff asked to spend at least 35 hours each year in formal or informal learning activities.

Performance Management

The company's Objectives and Key Results are cascaded to the Heads. MG ALBA, from 1 April 2024, will use *Lattice* software to support performance management in an easy-to-use but highly effective way.

Pay policy

MG ALBA proposes in 2024-25 to increase pay scales by an average of 3.2%.

5. Performance management and reporting

MG ALBA has 8 high level OKRs (Objectives & Key Results) for 2024-25.

Objective

INCREASE the impact of Gaelic media to elevate the status of the language

Key Results

- Increase content views from 1m to 4m each month
- Increase ALBA brand awareness in Scotland from 75% to 80%
- Achieve 6 prestigious Awards
- Obtain baseline data for International reach

Objective

CONNECT with more Gaelic users to support the vitality of the language

Key Results

- Reach 80% of Gaelic users each week with our content
- On digital platforms, restore weekly 16-44 content reach to 2015 level 60% (from 30%)
- 3 hours per week average viewing time by Gaelic users
- Gaelic user score of 8/10 for content appreciation

Objective

DRIVE Gaelic learning media to increase the number of Gaelic speakers

Key Results

- Reach 1m people each year with our learning content
- 1m learning content views or impressions monthly
- 50k learning engagements monthly
- Obtain baseline data for Gaelic learner numbers and for national brand awareness

Objective

CREATE high levels of social and economic return to boost jobs and businesses in Gaelic speaking communities

Key Results

- Achieve skills spend of £250k in Highlands and Islands
- Support 10 traineeships in Highlands and Islands
- Maintain or improve Gross Value Added impact of £1.34 for every £1 spent
- Obtain baseline data for production-related jobs in Highlands and Islands

Objective

INCREASE 3rd party investment in MG ALBA projects to create added value for audiences

Key Results

- Increase on-screen 3rd party value from £1.2m to £3m
- Publish at least 2 hours of content from European pooling collaborations
- £250k of 3rd party investment into our skills initiatives
- On-screen value of £4 for every £1 invested by MG in co-financed content

Objective

DEVELOP further our assurance practices to enhance our accountability and good management

Key Results

- Empower budget holders and provide real time budget data
- Achieve forecast to within 10%
- Timely, accurate and useful financial reporting
- Implement an Internal Audit programme as set out in the Assurance Framework

Objective

TRANSFORM our organisation to be fit for its digital future

Key Results

- Review workflow systems; choose and implement an enterprise management system
- Create a culture of learning, all staff spending at least 35 hours pa on training
- Complete a 4-day week pilot and make proposals
- Embed new organisational structure as evidenced by feedback

Objective

BE a good corporate citizen to support colleagues, enhance our sustainability and live our Values

Key Results

- Obtain baseline data for staff wellbeing and Employer Net Promoter score
- Publish a Path to Net Zero plan and implement initial steps
- Undertake a Diversity and Inclusion audit and implement agreed recommendations
- Renew our brand identity and values, setting in motion training and awareness

Monitoring

Progress will be measured and report on monthly and quarterly, using automated data capture, analytics and visualisation to the greatest extent possible. Some survey data will be used.

6. Financial Plan

Budget for 2024/25

| MG ALBA Budget | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Change |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Income | 13,419 | 13,754 | 335 |
| | | | 0 |
| Commissioned Content | 9,240 | 8,875 | (365) |
| Other Rights, Licences & Repeats | 575 | 600 | 25 |
| Graphics & Idents | 83 | 90 | 7 |
| Promotions | 57 | 84 | 27 |
| Audience Research | 115 | 130 | 15 |
| National Library of Scotland | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Multi-platform operating costs | 74 | 72 | (2) |
| Digital Participation | 430 | 280 | (150) |
| Total Content | 10,624 | 10,180 | (444) |
| | | | 0 |
| Industry Training | 154 | 325 | 171 |
| Strategic Priorities | 250 | 250 | 0 |
| Stakeholder Engagement & Communications | 73 | 71 | (2) |
| Consultancy, Audit & Legal | 116 | 143 | 27 |
| Facilities | 621 | 612 | (9) |
| IT Costs | 98 | 114 | 16 |
| Staff & Board Salaries | 2,056 | 2,223 | 167 |
| Training & Development | 24 | 36 | 12 |
| Travel & Subsistence | 59 | 75 | 16 |
| Sundry Costs | 56 | 48 | (8) |
| Taxation | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Total Expenditure | 14,133 | 14,081 | (52) |
| | | | |
| Surplus / (Deficit) | (714) | (327) | 387 |

Commentary

Previous year funding was higher in part due to a large opening bank balance.

Current year funding benefits from a training support from Screen Scotland and BFI.

The apparent reduction in Digital Participation is due to the capitalisation of £202k of SpeakGaelic investment (website and social media content, including inhouse salaries and some external costs).

7. Appendices (not for publication)

- Forecast Income and Balance Sheet statements
- Staff Structure Chart