



Draft

Strategic Plan 2011-2013

Colmcille Vision:

- To create a vibrant interactive Gaelic community spanning Ireland and Scotland

Colmcille Mission:

- To celebrate and promote mutual awareness and positive interaction among the Gaelic communities in Ireland and Scotland.

Colmcille Strategic Objectives:

- Celebrate the links between the users of the Gaelic languages (Gaeilge and Gàidhlig) in and between Ireland and Scotland
- Share examples of best practices in and between Ireland and Scotland
- Raising awareness of the shared Gaelic heritage (language and culture) of Ireland and Scotland.

Colmcille Priorities for 2011 to 2013

- Identify and roll out of new strategic projects and partnerships
- Encourage innovative showcase projects which make an impact and reflect the goals of the organisation
- Fostering of goodwill towards the Gaeilge and Gàidhlig languages
- Exploit other sources of funding and resources which support Colmcille's objectives
- Develop and implement a communication strategy as a key enabler in delivering partnership objectives
- Further develop appropriate governance, organisation and management processes to meet the evolving needs of Colmcille over the next three years.

1. Colmille

Colmille, formerly Iomairt Cholm Cille / The Columba Initiative, was launched on the 9th June 1997 by the then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, and by Brian Wilson, the then Scottish Minister of State for Education, Industry and Gaelic. President Robinson spoke of Colmille's role in "creating an island space for ourselves to celebrate what Scotland and Ireland share" and Wilson spoke of his hopes that Colmille would "foster support for the Gaelic language and develop links between Gaelic Scotland and Ireland".

Colmille – now a partnership programme between Foras na Gaeilge, the body charged with the promotion of the Irish language and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the body charged with promoting Gaelic language and culture in Scotland and internationally – continues to support projects which promote the shared linguistic and cultural heritage of Ireland and Scotland and achieves this through funding community-based projects, and organising educational, arts, cultural and promotional initiatives throughout Ireland, North and South, and Scotland.

Despite years of Gàidhlig and Gaeilge language shift to English, the languages continue to survive as living community languages in some traditional Gaidhealtachd/Gaeltacht heartlands and are also in use on a daily basis by many people outside the Gaeltacht in the cities of Glasgow, Inverness, Edinburgh, Derry and Dublin. A total of 92,396 people have some Gaelic language ability in Scotland. According to the last Census 58,652 people can speak Gaelic, with an additional 33,744 having the ability to either read, write or understand the language. According to the last Census figures 1.66 million people in the South of Ireland can speak Gaeilge, whilst 10.4% of residents in Northern Ireland claim to have some knowledge of the language.

The purpose of Colmille is to bring language communities together and promote constructive interaction, and the partnership programme has an enabling role through facilitating a dynamic programme of project development, providing contacts and information and grant-aid. Colmille's work involves raising the mutual awareness of two minority languages; facilitating the use and mutual understanding of both; building of relations with a wide range of stakeholders, broad-based audiences and local language communities. To fulfil its aims, Colmille requires not only a programme of diverse projects, but also the participation of a wide range of communities and organisations.

The strategic aims of the Colmille partnership is monitored by a joint committee made up of three members of the Foras na Gaeilge Board of Directors and two members of the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Board of Directors. This committee meet at least 4 times per year. Colmille employ Development Officers in Scotland and Ireland with administrative support provided at the offices of Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The three Development Officers, based in Gaith Dobhair, Belfast, and Glasgow, collaborate on a range of projects and in their strategic development and delivery. The day to day management of Colmille is supervised by the Co-ordinator and senior officers from Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Constituted community groups, not for profit organisations, voluntary organisations and organisations working in partnership with these groups are all eligible to apply to Colmille for financial support. In exceptional circumstances, individuals or profit-making companies may apply provided that there is a clear benefit to the broader language communities.

The strategic priorities of Colmcille are informed by the language planning principles of Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig relating to Acquisition; Usage; Status; and Corpus

2. Strategic Actions

This plan sets out a three year strategic plan for Colmcille taking account of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. The publication in 2010 of the Dréacht Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010–2030 and Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig – two action plans presented to the respective Governments in Ireland and Scotland to increase the number of people learning and using Gàidhlig and Gaeilge – offer an opportunity for a new strategic focus for Colmcille.

Colmcille aims through its work to foster understanding of the diverse experience and culture of the Irish and Scottish Gaelic communities, and to encourage debate on common concerns in social, cultural and economic issues with a view to building self-confidence within the Gaelic language communities

The underlying principles of Colmcille are that all its work and grant aided projects:

- have a strong focus on language, and link Scottish and Irish Gaelic
- develop new relationships between communities which speak Scottish Gaelic and communities which speak Irish Gaelic, and enhance the links already existing
- to heighten awareness of the contribution of Gaelic to the cultural identity of both Ireland and Scotland
- promote the learning of Scottish and Irish Gaelic
- applicant organisations must demonstrate a link between their organisation and their project and partners in Ireland for Scottish Organisations or in Scotland for Irish organisations
- project support and funding is conditional on the application having clear and measurable outcomes in relation to their indigenous language.

3.1 Community & Social Development

3.1.1 Context:

It can be argued that without Social, Community and indeed Economic Development of the Gaeilge and Gàidhlig-speaking communities, the cause of language retention, acquisition and development is lost. Colmcille shares the train of thought that by placing more value on, and investing in, the native language and cultural traditions of Scotland and Ireland, that this will result in strengthening cultural identity and sense of place, increasing confidence and lead to population retention, greater entrepreneurial activity, business creation and economic recovery. The role that economic forces and related migration patterns have played in the decline of language over hundreds of years is well documented. Indeed, no language can survive where economic and social factors militate against it, as is argued by some to be the current situation in the marginal and rural areas of Ireland and Scotland. Recent debates on the infrastructures in the Gaeltachd/ Gaidhealtachd regions has led to calls for fresh thinking in order to create sustainable jobs in these areas. There are many community groups and organisations, including community co-operatives working in Scotland and Ireland, who have done much good work in this field, and the recent rise in the number of community buy-outs of land in

Scotland has given an additional impetus to local development. Anecdotal evidence shows a strong desire from community groups to learn from, and exchange experiences with, others working in a different locality.

Colmcille will work closely with the relevant social and community development agencies in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

3.1.2 Actions:

3.1.2.1 **Engage with national and international agencies to explore opportunities on how Colmcille can work effectively to contribute to initiatives in social, community, and economic development.**

Colmcille will explore opportunities for collaborating with relevant Government agencies to stimulate fresh thinking on creating sustainable social and community development projects in the Gaelic speaking communities of Ireland and Scotland, both in rural and urban situations.

Colmcille welcomes dynamic approaches to build close relationships with a wide range of social and community enterprises, to assist them to develop and maintain a language base.

3.1.2.2. **Increase support for Irish and Scottish groups working in social, community and economic development to realise their full potential on a long-term sustainable basis.**

Colmcille will work alongside local groups and organisations, aiming for an improvement in people's quality of life, but also ensuring increased use of the native language. Gàidhlig/Gaeilge communities in Ireland and Scotland offer a diverse range of resources, opportunities and skills and Colmcille's aim is to see every community across the area reach its full potential as a sustainable community while continuing to use and develop their native language.

Colmcille will actively seek out and approach community groups working in this field to encourage innovative applications for collaborative projects.

Colmcille seeks applications from new initiatives which encourage entrepreneurship and economic activity and a sharing of experience among the Gaelic speaking community.

Colmcille will arrange fact finding study visits for individuals, groups and organisations working in language, community, social development and cultural economy. The visits will seek to increase the understanding of initiatives which encourage entrepreneurship and economic activity among the Gaelic speaking community, and look to sharing experience with Ireland/ Scotland.

Colmcille seeks applications from groups and organisations seeking to explore opportunities for enterprise and community development between Ireland and Scotland to the benefit of Gàidhlig / Gaeilge in business, commerce, and communities.

3.2 Education & Lifelong Learning

3.2.1 Context

Scotland and Ireland (North & South), share many of the same challenges in the development and provision of Gaelic-medium education. Whilst these challenges are shaped by their very different educational structures, there is much in common and a valuable platform exists for shared understandings and cooperation among educational organisations in Ireland and Scotland, especially in the resources and training available to teachers. Colmcille has, over the years, supported various second and third level educational projects between Ireland and Scotland. Colmcille has also facilitated a partnership under the banner “Mutual Understandings of Immersion Education in Scotland and Ireland” which developed dialogue at staff and student level between two bodies with responsibility for teacher training for Gaelic-medium schools in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Visits such as these can provide motivation and new insights for a group that can feel isolated.

Colmcille will work closely with the relevant educational bodies in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives, and create a new generation of Gàidhlig and Gaeilge speakers..

3.2.2 Priorities

3.2.2.1 Promote sharing of best practices in language immersion teaching and early years education.

Colmcille will organise an event that brings together teachers and training institutes in Ireland and Scotland to provide a platform for shared understanding and cooperation between those involved in language teaching.

Colmcille seeks applications from educational institutes for initiatives which offer opportunities for the learning and sharing of best practices in language immersion teaching and early year’s education.

Colmcille welcomes applications for initiatives which offer opportunities to study continuity between the different levels of language schooling, particularly from pre school to primary level and from primary to secondary

3.2.2.2 Promotion of shared teaching and training resources

Colmcille seeks applications for initiatives which lead to the development and sharing of learning and teaching resources between Ireland and Scotland

Colmcille welcomes applications from collaborative projects producing educational resources in Gàidhlig and Gaeilge

Colmcille welcomes applications for funding the production and publication of new educational material in Irish and Scottish Gaelic

Colmcille welcomes applications for collaborative projects producing educational books in Gàidhlig and Gaeilge

3.2.2.3 Support for initiatives which brings together young Gaelic speakers from Ireland and Scotland

Colmcille welcomes applications from schools and colleges for exchange visits where there is an emphasis on building long term relationships between the organisations, as well as raising awareness of the shared Gaelic heritage – language and culture – of Ireland (North & South) and Scotland.

3.3 The Arts & Heritage

3.3.1 Context

Arts & Heritage initiatives have a key role in re-imagining communities and identity, in communication, in exploration of the experience of both community and individual. They provide a focus for Gaelic communities. They represent minority language communities to themselves and to a larger audiences, national and international, as can be seen in the success of *An Leabhar Mòr*, and the programmes associated with it. Arts & Heritage projects also enable Irish and Scottish Gaelic communities to engage with each other and provide a motivation for contact, vehicles for communication, and a broad platform of disciplines and events. The range of genre, audiences, disciplines and locations provides flexibility and a range of solutions which would not be available in many areas outside this field of work. The Gaelic arts can be directed to a majority language audience, where they can raise the visibility of Gaelic and contribute to the role of Irish and Scottish Gaelic in society.

Colmcille will work closely with the relevant arts and community organisations in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

3.3.2 Priorities

3.3.2.1 Promoting collaboration between the Gaelic arts & heritage in Ireland and Scotland as a source of innovation, learning and excellence

Colmcille seeks applications from arts organisations for a major new showcase performance initiative celebrating the shared heritage of Ireland and Scotland.

Colmcille is open to applications for an inspired project for public display, including but not confined to, Irish and Scottish Gaelic poetry and prose. Celebrating the rich Gaelic literary tradition and writing talent in Ireland and Scotland we seek imaginative projects which will lead to displaying works by writers of all ages in public, whether on public transport, public buildings, recreation facilities or public venues.

3.3.2.2 Using the arts & heritage to build relationships and community links between Gaelic Ireland and Scotland

Colmcille will support and promote the sharing of learning between arts and heritage organisations in Ireland and Scotland, and welcomes applications to support original projects in the field of dance, drama, theatre in education, or live performance

Colmcille will provide bursaries so that artists can have a residency at a community-based festivals or events and seeks applications from both artists or venues.

Colmille seeks applications for innovative projects which support local initiatives and partnerships linking communities.

3.3.2.3 Building new audiences for Scottish Gaelic arts and heritage in Ireland and Irish Gaelic in Scotland incorporating language learning and awareness of each other's variety of Gaelic.

Colmille is open to applications from festivals and events which build new audiences for Scottish Gaelic arts in Ireland and Irish Gaelic in Scotland by incorporating language learning and awareness of each other's Gaelic.

Colmille seeks applications for an exhibition which will have a touring life of at least three years, and provide a focus to articulate and communicate a simple mission for Colmille's involvement in the arts.

3.3.2.4 Supporting the acquisition and use of language among young people through the creative arts

Colmille seeks applications for a commission to produce a theatre in education project involving partnership between one Irish and one Scottish company

Colmille is encouraging applications for arts projects which create opportunities for young people from Ireland and Scotland to come together and gain an understanding of the shared Gaelic heritage – language and culture – of Ireland and Scotland.

3.4 Learning Resources

3.4.1 Context

The publication of the Dréacht Straiteis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010–2030 and Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig – two action plans in Ireland and Scotland respectively to increase the number of people learning and using Gàidhlig and Gaeilge – offer an opportunity for a new strategic focus for Colmille. Both the Dréacht Straiteis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010–2030 and Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig puts in place strategies to accelerate the growth in the number of Gaelic speakers. Key to encouraging the learning of Gaelic is that positive attitudes towards the language must be fostered and Colmille has an important role to play in helping deliver for both strategies.

Colmille will work closely with the relevant organisations and bodies in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

3.4.2 Priorities

3.4.2.1 Be innovative in our approach to Learning Resources

Colmille will support innovation at any level of language acquisition which can then be developed to more effectively deliver Language Learning. This will include liaison with academic bodies and individuals who can devise more effective strategies for a successful outcome in Teaching and Learning.

Colmille will encourage applications from organisations to develop Mobile Phone Applications for Gàidhlig and Gaeilge learning.

Colmcille is seeking proposals for toys, computer programmes and games that promote the learning or usage of Gàidhlig and Gaeilge especially amongst young people.

3.4.2.2 Create opportunities to participate in Learning Initiatives.

Colmcille welcomes communication from organisations wishing to devise workable and productive language schemes which will have clear and measurable outcomes in relation to mutual language acquisition and retention.

3.5 Young People

3.5.1 Context

Colmcille aims to celebrate friendship and connections between Ireland and Scotland's young people by encouraging, facilitating and organising events which raise an awareness of each others languages, culture and traditions. Colmcille is always open to new proposals for partnerships which brings young people into contact with other Gaelic-speaking peers from Ireland and Scotland, and especially welcomes projects which can demonstrate plans for long term relationships.

Colmcille will work closely with the relevant youth, language, and educational bodies in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives for young people.

3.5.2 Priorities

3.5.2.1 Bringing together young people from Ireland and Scotland to raise their awareness of the shared Gaelic heritage

Colmcille will look to support projects and gatherings which create long-term contacts and friendships between young people from Ireland and Scotland, especially partnerships which aim to assist young people increase their confidence in using Gaelic as well as an appreciation of the links between the language and culture of Scotland and Ireland.

Colmcille welcomes applications from schools and colleges for exchange visits where there is an emphasis on building long term relationships between the organisations, as well as raising awareness of the shared Gaelic heritage – language and culture – of Ireland and Scotland.

Colmcille welcomes applications from groups for youth exchanges that introduce young people to their Celtic neighbours in an effort to broaden their personal experience of the Gaelic languages. Preference will be given to projects which can demonstrate a desire to create opportunities for an all-Gaelic environment and increasing the confidence of the young people in using the language.

Colmcille welcomes applications from youth groups for Irish/Scottish activity based activity events in sport, music and arts, where they can demonstrate use of the Gàidhlig and/or Gàeilge language as central to the activity.

3.6 Publishing

3.6.1 Context

Colmille has produced a number of publications in partnership with other organisations, notably those associated with the Leabhar Mòr and Amra Choluim Chille exhibitions. It has also sponsored a number of publications which have added to awareness of language communities, including Joseph Murphy's *At the Edge – Walking the Atlantic Coast of Ireland and Scotland*, and *Language and Economic Development*. Of all the publications the Leabhar Mòr has had the largest impact at a national level and internationally. However map, *Tír Cholmille*, has been sought after, and has proved very effective in raising awareness of the connections in Gaelic world of Ireland and Scotland. It contributes to the brand of Colmille, and communicates its aims in a graphic form. There is a strong argument for publications which comprise or include iconic images, which communicate the Colmille aims visually, and which are desirable in themselves.

Colmille will work closely with the relevant publishing organisations in developing a programme of activities in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

3.6.2 Priorities

3.6.2.1 Partnerships for product development and promotion.

Colmille welcomes approaches for new synergies in Scottish Irish publications.

Colmille seeks possibilities for new imprints being shared by publishers in Ireland and Scotland which provide advantages in financing, marketing and distribution of books of a common Irish and Scottish Gaelic interest.

Colmille welcomes applications for iconic projects which develop new ways of representing Gaelic Ireland and Scotland

Colmille welcomes applications for collaborative projects producing e-books in Gàidhlig and Gaeilge

3.6.2.2 Support joint publication initiatives

Colmille welcomes approaches for funding new publications for all age groups where it can be clearly demonstrated that the publication will add to awareness of language communities