

Heritage Interpretation Toolkit

A guide to developing cultural
heritage projects and applying the
Gaelic language

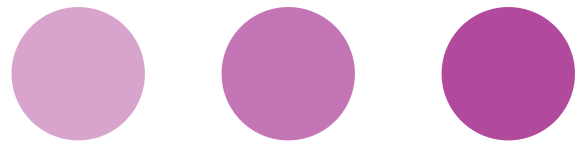
Cairngorms National Park Authority | 2021

Inneal Eadar-Mhìneachadh Dualchais

Stiùireadh air leasachadh pròiseactan
dualchais chultarail agus a' cleachdadh an
cànan Gàidhlig

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh | 2021

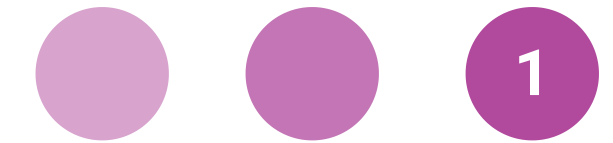
Content



This toolkit looks to provide a simple guide to developing cultural heritage projects in your local area. It also aims to encourage the use of Gaelic and provides some broad advice on effectively applying the language.

Why Use Gaelic?	01	Expert Input	09
Getting Started	02	Applying Gaelic	10
Unsure Where to Begin?	03	Supporting Material	11
Potential Formats	04	Be Creative	12
Plan Ahead	05	Testing and Feedback	13
Research	06	Launch!	14
Local Knowledge	07	The Toolkit at a Glance	15
Collate, Distil, Organise	08	Useful Resources	16

Why Use Gaelic?



The Gaelic language is fundamental to Scotland's identity as a nation. It has deep-rooted connections with the very landscape itself and also plays a crucial role within Scotland's heritage and culture through traditional music, literature, poetry and song.

Utilising Gaelic can enrich your project through unique insights and an added level of engagement, which helps establish a sense of people, culture and place for the audience. For example, Gaelic terms and phrases can be incredibly descriptive, nuanced and evocative for visitors.

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Gaelic can add value... through making a link to a distinctive culture, a spectacular environment and the natural world, providing a unique tourism experience...

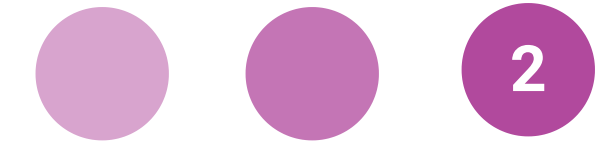
For visitors, the language can provide a way to get deeper into experiencing Scotland, to engage and return to discover more... In an increasingly competitive, global market it is vital that Scotland is able to offer a memorable and unique visitor experience. Gaelic has significant potential to contribute to this...

”

Visit Scotland, Gaelic Tourism Strategy, p. IV - V

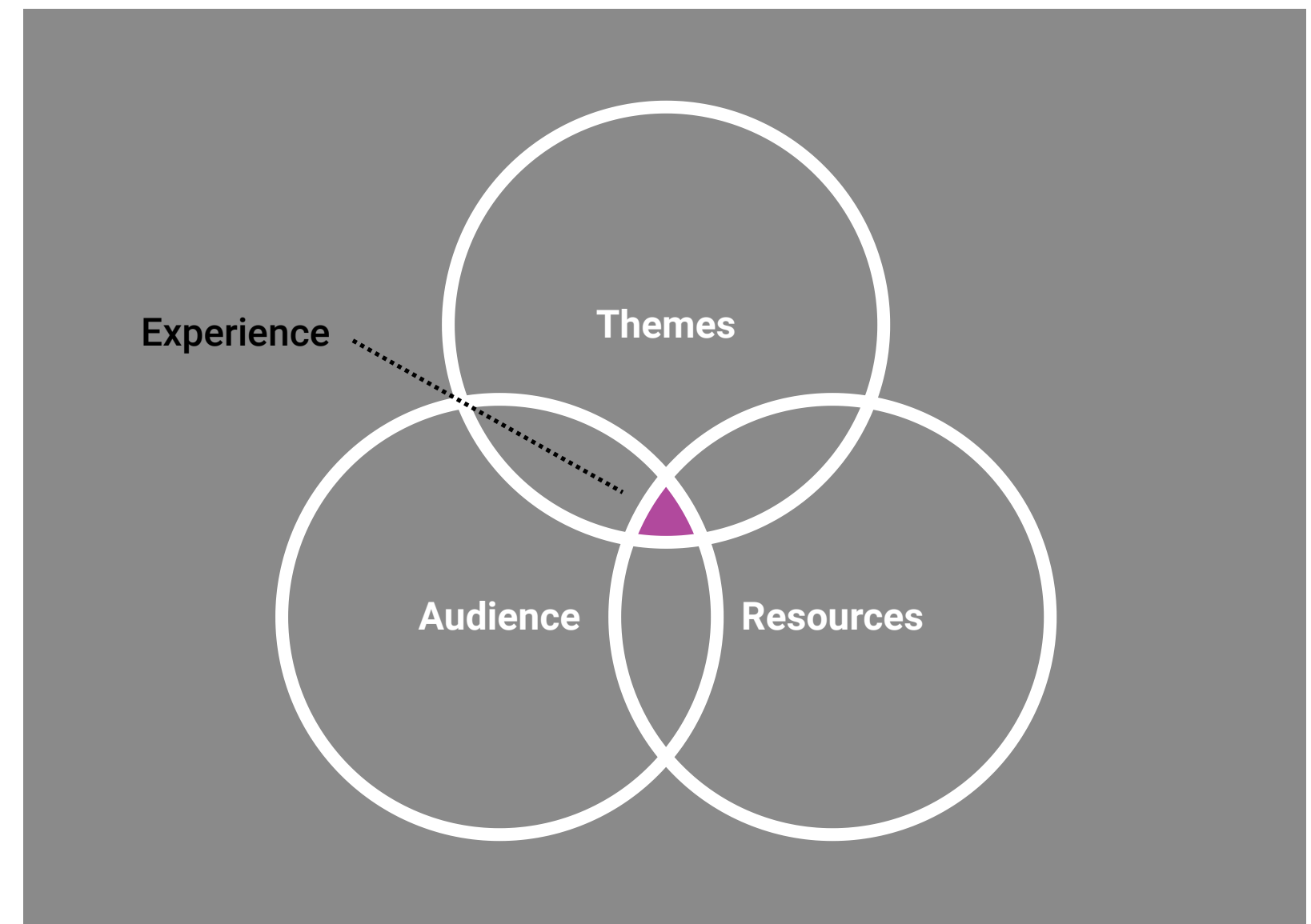


Getting Started



The starting point for your project can take inspiration from a variety of sources. Keep the theme as simple as possible at this stage and then begin expanding upon this with further research as you progress.

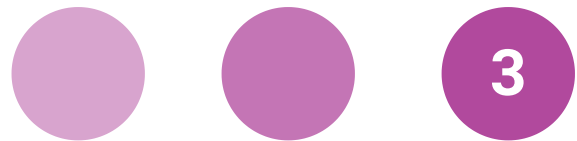
Having decided upon a topic, this will then form the foundations of your project. At this point it is also useful to start considering your target audience and the depth of information you are aiming to provide. Your project may also have certain financial constraints in terms of budget.



For further models see Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Visitor Interpretation (2013), p. 12 - 13



Unsure Where to Begin?

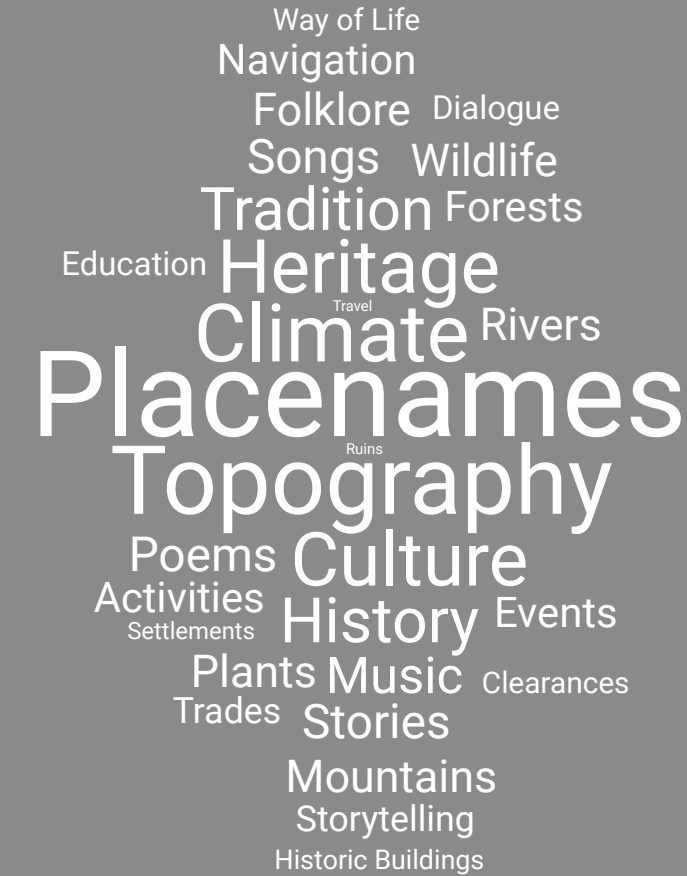


Consider all the areas in which the Gaelic language can be found, as this could provide the inspiration needed to begin your project; heritage sites, placenames, topography, climate, plants and wildlife, folklore, music, song, activities, events...

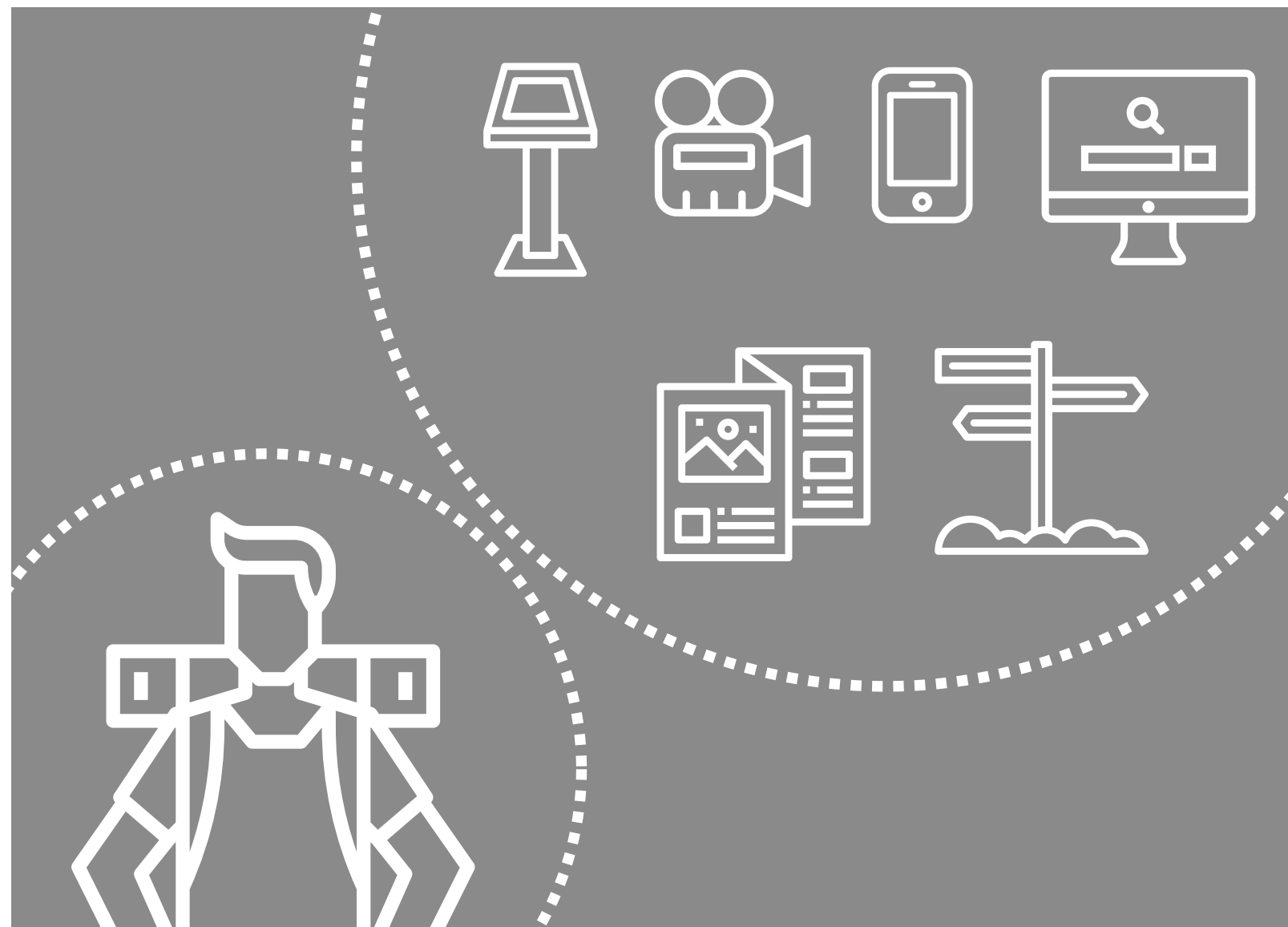
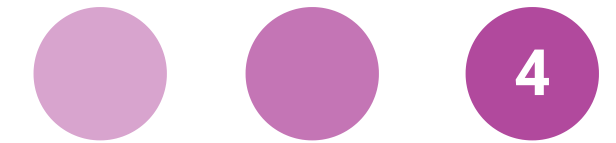
Think also about what you have in your local vicinity; what are you proud of and what would you like to share with others? This could be a local landmark, useful resources, unique characteristics, events, activities or local delicacies etc.



Image: Kenny Lam, Visit Scotland, CNPA



Potential Formats



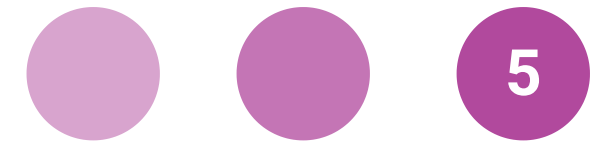
The format of your project will depend on your budget, target audience and the level of information you are looking to provide; consider both digital and physical offerings.

A simple web-page with some well-delivered insights may be perfect for your applications. Alternatively, you might choose to develop an app, video or digital guide.

In contrast, a more traditional approach, such as printed material or a physical installation, may best suit your needs; panels, plaques, flyers, pamphlets, posters etc. Be creative, perhaps combine both mediums and link to digital elements?



Plan Ahead



Aim to utilise both languages from the outset as this will ensure content is balanced and coherent, where both languages complement each other effectively.

There are a number of levels at which you might include Gaelic. You may choose a lighter approach utilising key terms or phrases. Cultural elements such as songs, poems or stories could also be added. Alternatively, a more in-depth, bilingual option may best suit your intended audience.

Having a strategy will help direct your research and will allow you to make best use of Gaelic within your project.

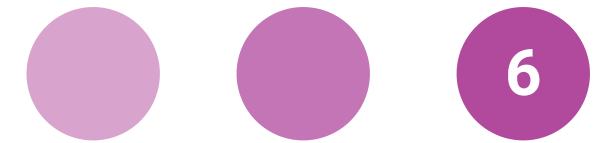


1. Skiers - Image: Angus Findlay
3. Aviemore Sign - Image: Wee Epics

2. Path Sign - Image: Wee Epics
4. Stone Carving - Image: Jacquie Macintyre



Research



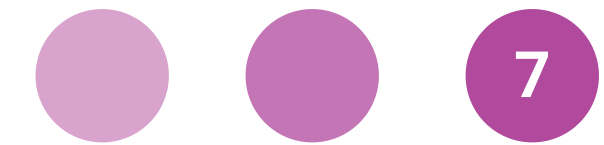
The volume of research required will depend on the target audience and format of your project; how in-depth is your content going to be and who is it for?

Use a variety of sources, both online and offline; local libraries, archive centres, recognised websites, topical books etc. Try not to adopt a linear approach but instead make connections from across different fields.

Depending on the theme, other resources, such as maps, can also be useful tools; be broad in your approach. It is also worth investing in a good Gaelic dictionary to guide you.



Local Knowledge



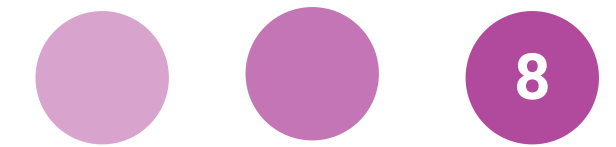
Make use of local knowledge; historians, experts, enthusiasts, groups, clubs, organisations, businesses and older residents. This represents an invaluable resource from which useful insights can be gained.

Active involvement of local communities can also greatly enhance the richness and authenticity of content through shared experiences and knowledge. It also helps build an invested interest and sense of pride in any project.

Consider forming a collaborative group that can support you in the research, development and proofreading process.



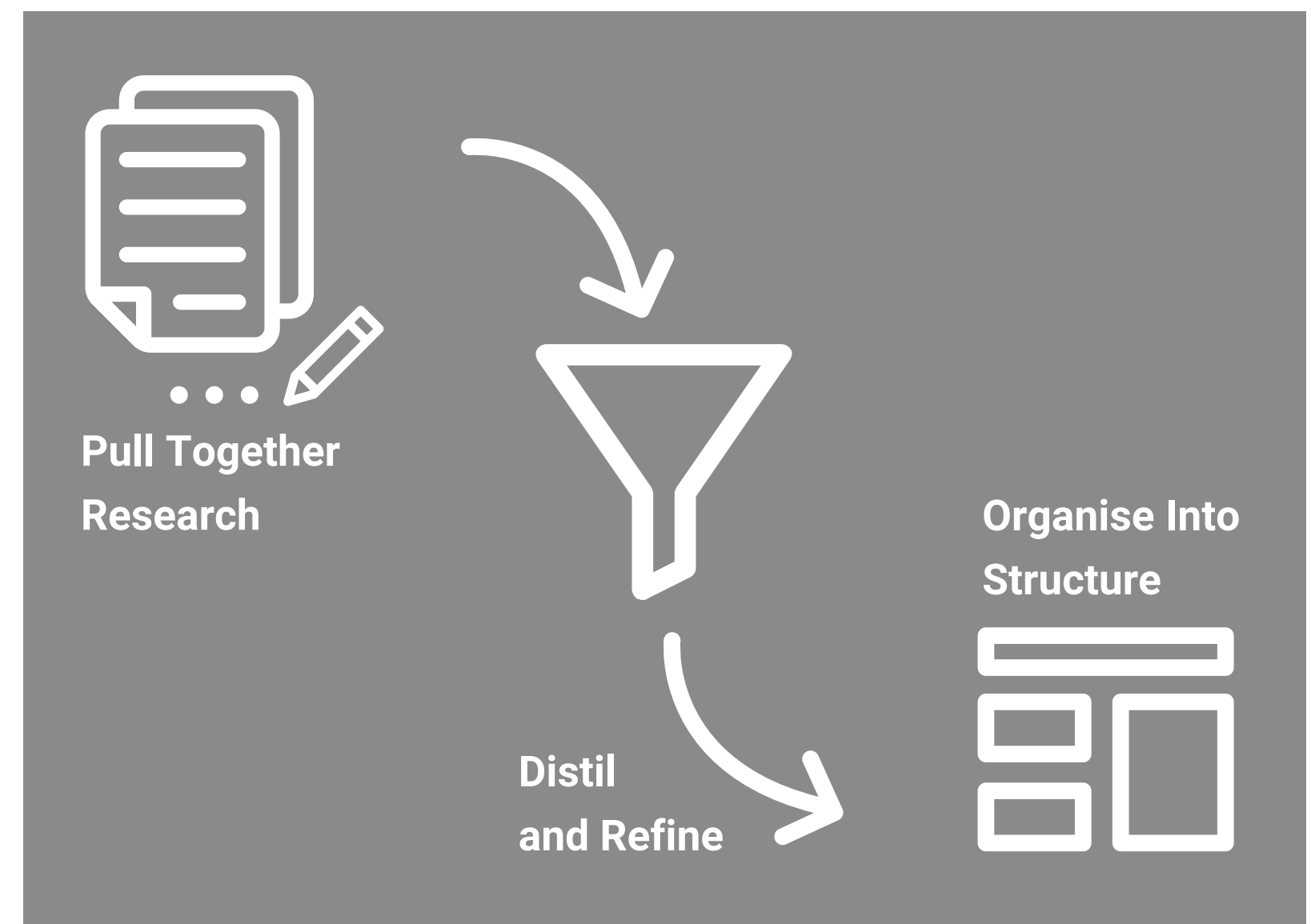
Collate, Distil, Organise



Begin pulling together your research before distilling it down into more concise, manageable chunks. Think about your audience and the key information you want to convey.

At this point it is useful to create an outline of the structure which you want content to follow. Think about the story you wish to tell and the flow of information from start to finish. Then begin populating your template with this in mind.

You may wish to begin with an intro providing a broad flavour of the topic before moving through more detailed, focused sections; these could be defined by events, themes, dates etc.



Expert Input

Depending on the scale and budget of your project, you may wish to consult key professionals who can support in the development, translation or proofreading of material. This will ensure that content is accurate and compelling but will likely incur some cost.

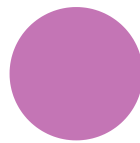
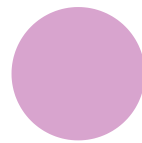
In terms of translation work, do feel encouraged to learn through engagement. However, when it comes to the final outcome, having the input of a native speaker who can aid in the verification of material is recommended. Generally, direct translations are also to be avoided as they may not accurately reflect the true meaning of certain words or phrases.



Shinty panel at the Dell in Kingussie, which uses key Gaelic terms. Credit: Claire Proctor, Hill99 Design Studio



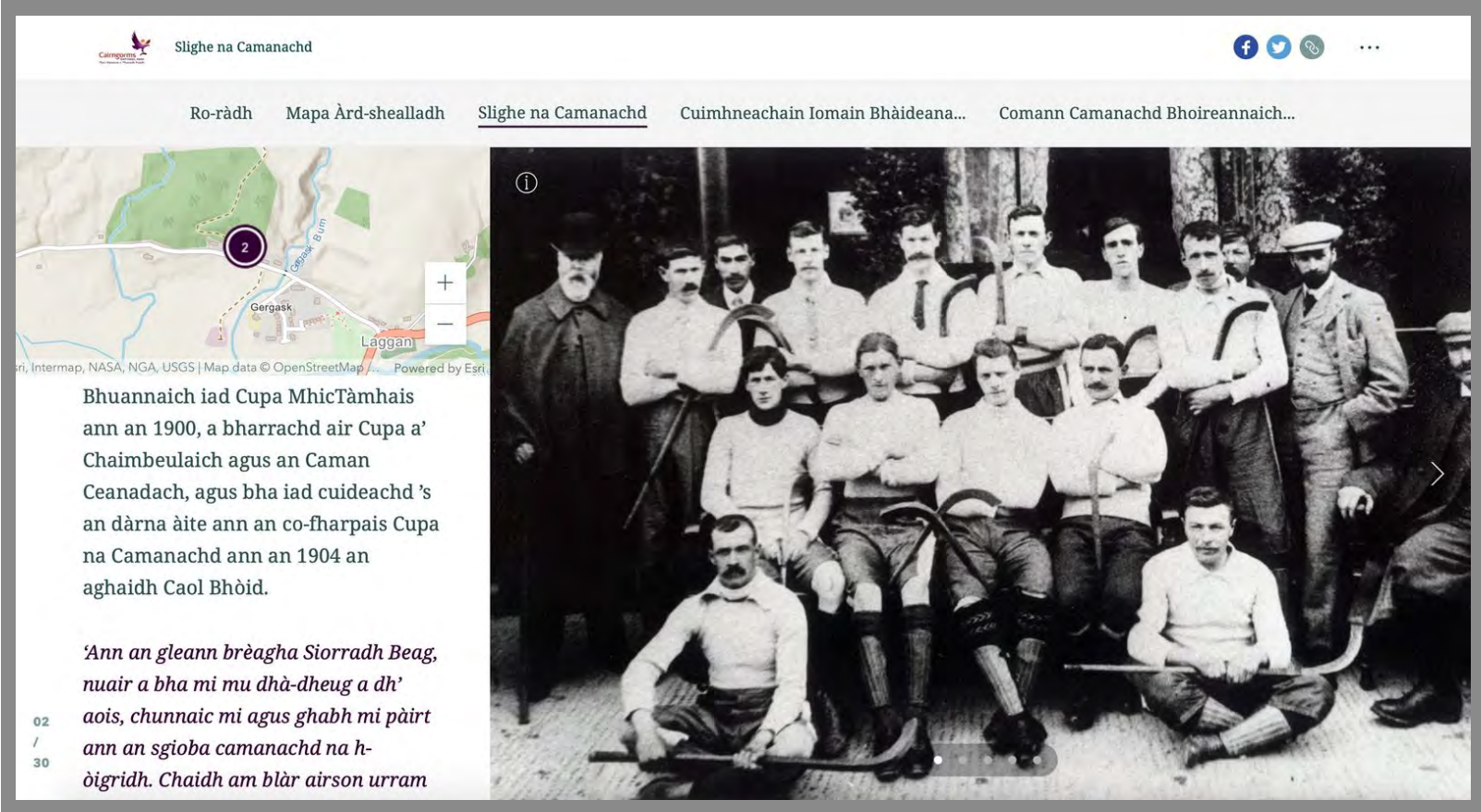
Applying Gaelic



10

Aim to apply Gaelic in a way that is going to add value to your project. When used effectively, Gaelic can be a useful asset in engaging the audience by creating a unique sense of culture, people and place. Try and give equal prominence to both languages, as this will ensure that content is clear, easy to follow and shows equal respect.

Information should also be easily comparable. For bilingual resources, ensure that the organisation and appearance of content draws clear parallels with its translated counterpart. In relation to dedicated resources in each language, aim to apply the same structure and appearance to both versions.



Ga

Slighe na Camanachd

En

The Shinty Trail



Supporting Material

11

The use of strong visuals can greatly enhance the overall impact of your project, where photos, icons, graphics or illustrations can really enliven content and help tell the story.

Video or audio clips could also be utilised. This is particularly effective for Gaelic material, where hearing the language spoken can be incredibly evocative and engaging for an audience.

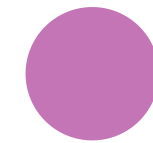
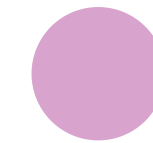
Allow good time in your schedule for gathering supporting material. If you are using other people's work be sure to seek the relevant permission and credit the owner appropriately. Be aware that there may also be some cost involved here.



1. Insh Shinty Team (1892) - Image: The Highland Folk Museum, HLH
2. 'Old Cluny' Macpherson - Image: Am Baile
3. Kingussie vs Newtonmore, The Dell - Image: Fiona Young
4. 1st Clan March - Image: Clan Macpherson Museum Trust



Be Creative



Be creative with the way in which you structure and convey information. Bilingual content, thoughtfully applied, can aid in the audience's comprehension of a particular topic, providing an added element of authenticity, engagement and insight.

Varying the form of written content used can also add further interest; consider using poems, songs, quotes and stories to bring a more personal, human element to your project.

Graphic design is an important tool when it comes to presenting content in a way that is clear, concise and easily digestible, drawing the viewer's attention to key information.

“

**Ni binne glóir mo chamain fhéin
na guth nan eun no cèol nam bàrd;
's ni binne fuaim air bith fo 'n ghrèin
no pòc air ghleus a liathroid àird.**

***More sweet the face of my own stick
than voice of birds or music of bards;
and nothing, under sun, so sweetly sounds as a
smack with skill on a lofty ball.***

”

An Irish shinty verse; one of a number of Gaelic poems used on The Shinty Trail. Source: Dr Hugh Dan MacLennan, *Shinty Dies Hard*, PhD Thesis (Aberdeen, 1998)

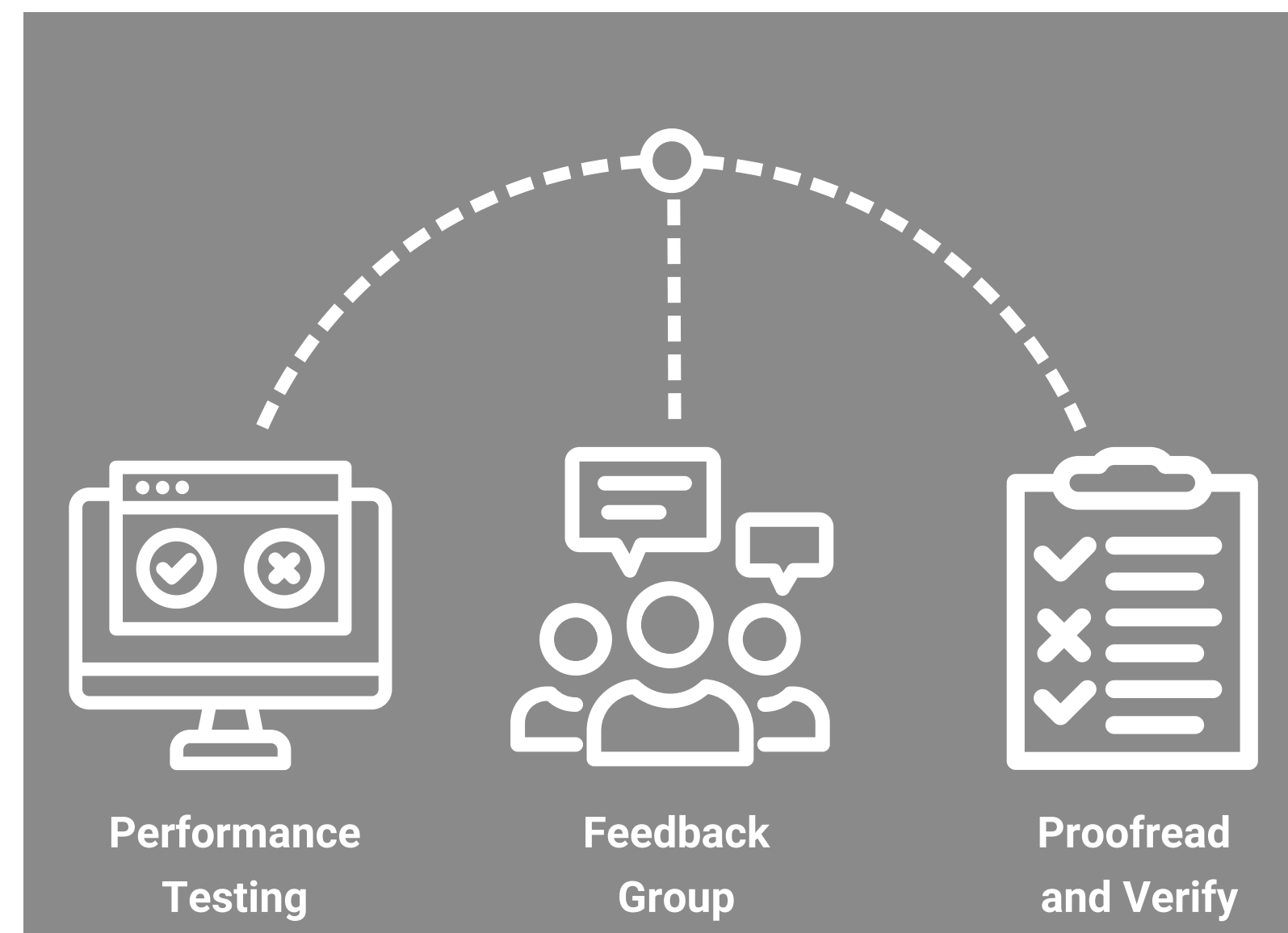


Testing and Feedback

Once you have a first draft of your project ready to share, form a testing group to proofread material and provide feedback on the accessibility, clarity and impact of content.

This could comprise all those who have supported the project to date, as well as key experts. It is also advisable to consult a native speaker regarding any Gaelic content.

If your project is digitally based, you should also test the performance and usability of your resource. Testing should be an iterative process of refinement until you are satisfied the project is ready to share with a broader audience.



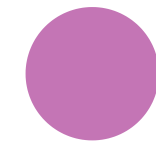
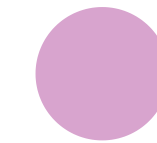
Launch!



Make people aware of your work so that it can be shared and enjoyed widely by others! There are a variety of ways to do this, from a social media posting to a more traditional poster or community event. Choose the approach that best suits your project. Perhaps utilise a variety of mediums to spread the word?

The launch also need not mark the end of your project. Continue to monitor response to your work and look to gain feedback so that you might continue to refine and improve your resource. If your project is online based, perhaps consider long-term maintenance and upkeep as well.

The Toolkit at a Glance...



- Plan ahead and aim to utilise both languages from the outset.
- Consider your target audience, their ability and the level of information you are looking to provide.
- Use a variety of research tools and sources - make use of local knowledge and involve the community.
- Think about the story you wish to tell and create a plan or template for content to follow.
- Consider bringing onboard key professionals or experts where relevant.
- Employ the services of a native speaker to proofread material - generally avoid direct translations.
- Aim to give equal prominence and respect to both languages - ensure that content is easily comparable.
- Be creative with the way you convey and structure bilingual content.
- Use visual media, artwork and graphic design to enliven content and help tell the story.
- Seek the relevant permission and credit the owner appropriately when using other people's work.
- Vary the form of written content used – why not include poems, songs, quotes or stories?
- Before launch, form a testing group to proofread material and provide feedback.



Image: CNPA



Useful Resources

16



Image: CNPA

Online Resources

- [Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba](#): *'Place-Names of Scotland' for Gaelic place-names database.*
- [Am Baile](#): *for digital archive material; images, videos, documents, maps and audio files.*
- [CNPA Gaelic Place-Names Map](#): *for key Gaelic place-names in the Cairngorms National Park.*
- [Dictionary of Gaelic Nature Words](#)
- [Gaelic in the Landscape](#): *search 'Gaelic in the Landscape' for digital booklets on Gaelic place-names in different regions of Scotland.*
- [Heritage Paths](#): *for route maps and insightful information on Scotland's historic paths network.*
- [Fèisean nan Gàidheal](#): *for Gaelic and traditional music-based events, workshops and resources. See also 'Gaelic Learning' materials, which covers key words and phrases with accompanying audio files.*



Useful Resources

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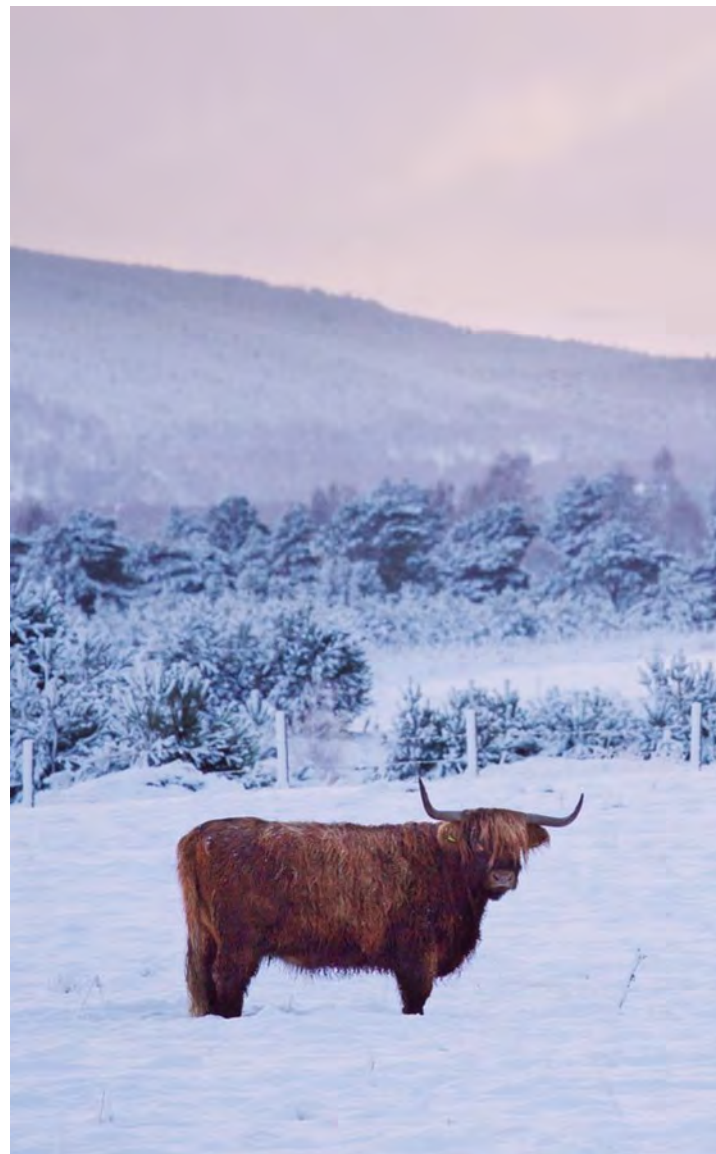


Image: CNPA

- Learn Gaelic: for accessible Gaelic learning resources at all levels.
- Literary Landscapes: for the history of Gaelic, Scots, Doric and Norse place-names in Scotland's National Parks.
- Plantlife Wild Plants Keys: search 'Cairngorms' for digital booklets covering the various species of plants found in the Cairngorms' mountains and forests (including some key Gaelic terminology).
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig: for useful research material.
- Walk Highlands: for route maps and information, but also for audio recordings on the Gaelic pronunciation of topographic features and place-names.



Useful Resources

18



Image: CNPA

Reports, Papers and Guides

- [A Sense of Place, James Carter: *An interpretation planning handbook*.](#)
- [Bòrd na Gàidhlig, National Gaelic Language Plan \(2018-23\).](#)
- [Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Presentation of Gaelic in Visitor Interpretation \(2013\).](#)
- [Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Using Scots Gaelic in Heritage Interpretation, James Carter](#)
- [Highlands and Islands Enterprises, *Ar-stòras: The Economic and Social Value of Gaelic as an Asset*](#)
- [Visit Scotland, Gaelic Tourism Strategy.](#)

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