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RESPONSE TO THE CULTURAL COMMISSION

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I would mainly like to endorse what my colleagues have said about the importance of language in any cultural assessment, and in particular to emphasise the vital role of dictionaries in language policy. A historical dictionary is one of the most important elements in the development of means to encourage and protect a language. Scots is fortunate in having decades of data collection and lexicography behind it. Gaelic has a longer road to travel, but both are now in an excellent position to move forward, not least because of:

1) modern computer technology, which provides means of improving methods, especially by facilitating dissemination of material at a much earlier stage in a long project than was formerly possible;

2) much greater cooperation between Scots and Gaelic lexicographers, especially in the development of sophisticated electronic systems;

3) availability of skilled staff (who may have to turn to other things if funding is not forthcoming),

We hope that the dictionaries can be seen in the wider context of Scottish culture and means found to allow these important projects to develop as they should (and as they do in other countries).

*Iseabail Macleod*