



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

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TASGLANN NAN EILEAN SIAR – HEBRIDEAN ARCHIVES

PROJECT PLAN

JULY 2010 – March 2013

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1 Background

Tasglann nan Eilean Siar has been established with funding from the European Regional Development Fund and the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The project is staffed by a Project Manager who is an experienced Archivist and a Project Assistant. Additional funding from Comunn na Gaidhlig's graduate scheme is helping to fund the position of a Gaelic-speaking Archives Assistant.

The archives team are based in Stornoway library. The Tasglann will work on a 'Hub and Spoke' model with Hebridean Archives as the Hub. The project team will operate across the whole of the Western Isles, creating spokes within Comhairle libraries and offices and forging links and partnerships with the Comainn Eachdraidh, businesses, charities, clubs, societies and individuals who hold archival records.

A holistic overview of the archival records of the Western Isles will be developed, opening up access to these historically important documents whilst preserving their regional distribution and local importance through the spoke system.

2 Project Steering Group

The project will be overseen by a Steering Group comprising of stakeholders from the Comhairle, Comainn Eachdraidh, Comunn na Gaidhlig, museums and libraries, business and enterprise, the UHI, Lews Castle College and other interested parties.

The group, who will meet around three times a year, will play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the project. Their role will be to:

- ensure stakeholder engagement in the project
- approve and monitor the project plan
- offer advice, help and contacts in order to implement the project plan
- ensure that the project meets its stated aims and objectives.

3 Project Objectives

The objectives of the Tasglann nan Eilean Siar are set out in the successful funding bid that was submitted to the ERDF. These objectives are to:

- develop policies and procedures for the Hebridean Archives service
- identify and collect information on the archival collections held throughout the Outer Hebrides and make this information available through a range of mechanisms, including a bilingual website
- raise awareness of the richness of the archive collections in the Outer Hebrides at a local, national and international level
- assist partners with projects and initiatives that convert existing materials onto permanent record
- increase access to Comhairle and other archives by raising awareness, responding to information requests and supervising access to archive material

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- provide advice, guidance and training on archives collection, handling, storing and preservation
- identify records pertaining to the Outer Hebrides which are held elsewhere, and investigate the possibility of transferring to the Outer Hebrides
- arrange exhibitions, conferences, talks and visits in relation to local records, or work in partnership to facilitate this
- work with Lews Castle College UHI and the education department to support the development of teaching materials
- assist communities to develop projects and funding bids in relation to their archives
- offer advice and training to businesses and communities in relation to attracting and supporting ancestral tourism and research visits.
- work with partners to identify infrastructure opportunities for archival collections.

4 Project Goals

The ERDF bid stated the project will develop an archive service for the Western Isles. This will result in the following specified outputs.

- 5 marketing publications
- 10 cultural and heritage organisations receiving advice and support
- 5 public sector partners receiving advice and support
- 200 enquiries dealt with
- 100 individuals receiving training
- 100 researchers being assisted to access archives
- 4 conferences held
- 4 exhibitions held
- 4 education packs
- 1 website
- 50 businesses receiving advice
- Evidence of increased profile of, and economic activity within, the Outer Hebrides in relation to ancestral tourism, genealogical and other research activity.

These outputs have been used as the key milestones in developing the project plan.

5 Constraints

It is envisaged that the development of the Tasglann will elicit the deposit of archival records from within the Comhairle and also from community groups, businesses, and individuals. Currently, archival records are held between the library and museum services of the Comhairle, both of whose storage is at capacity. This could constrain the deposit of material that may otherwise be at risk of destruction or damage through inappropriate storage. This in turn inhibits public access to those important records.

It is envisaged that the development of the Lews Castle complex with dedicated archival storage will aid this situation in the long-term.

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A delay in the anticipated start dates of the project team has required the stages in project delivery as outlined on page 8 of the ERDF application to be altered.

Stage	Original date	New date	Notes
Project team appointed	April 2010	April / May / September 2010	Started 21 June 2010. Graduate trainee to be appointed September 2010.
Steering Group formed	May 2010	August 2010	First meeting probably Sept.
Project Plan finalised	May 2010	August / September 2010	Draft finished for presentation to Steering group.
Policies and procedures	April-June 2010	July-September 2010	Period reviews to take place.
Advice & training programme devised	June-August 2010	July-October 2010	The first conference will feed into the development of the programme.
Collecting & cataloguing information	From July 2010	From August 2010	Basic information is already being gathered to prioritise future work.
Advice & Training	From September 2010	December 2010	
Website launched	January 2011	January 2011	An initial site should launch earlier with staged development proceeding in line with communications strategy.
Marketing activity / Events	January 2011	Autumn 2010	It is hoped to have the first event in autumn to bring the Commain Eachdraidh together and feed information gained into the project plan.
Provision of contact point / advice to researchers / enquiries	January 2011	January 2011	Enquiries are already being answered but a full service will be launched in January.

6 Project Approach

6.1 Roles & Responsibilities

The project team consists of the Project Manager, a Project Assistant and an Archives Assistant (Graduate Trainee).

The Project Manager provides the day-to-day management of the project, devising and implementing the project plan. As a professional archivist, the Project Manager will develop the policies, procedures and the strategic vision of the Tasglann and lead in forging partnerships with the projects stakeholders and training. Managing the Project Assistant and Archives Assistant, he will ensure they are trained in the skills appropriate for them to fulfil their roles in the project.

The Project Assistant will support the efficient operation of the project, providing administrative and financial management support. Additionally, they will help in the development of the project website, assisting researchers in the searchroom and through answering enquiries, and helping with marketing and exhibitions.

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The Gaelic-speaking graduate trainee Archives Assistant is still to be recruited but will play a crucial role in working with stakeholders. They will work closely with the Project Manager on a day-to-day basis in order to acquire core archivist skills. However, a large proportion of time will be spent in locations across the Western Isles in order to increase physical access to records held by the Comhairle through its libraries and museum service, and increase access to records and archives held by community partners.

6.2 Project Management

In order to strategically manage the large number of project objectives and outputs identified in the ERDF bid and to evaluate progress, a project Gantt chart has been developed (see Appendix A).

The Project Manager and Assistant started on 21 June 2010. To allow for initial orientation the project plan starts in the second quarter of the financial year, July 2010.

The project plan will develop over the opening months of the project, especially in relation to sections A2: Identify and collect information on archival holdings throughout the Outer Hebrides and A4: Assisting partners with projects and initiatives that convert existing materials onto permanent record. It is a priority of the project team in the initial stages of the project to visit stakeholders to identify what such projects could be and prioritise the projects time appropriately.

6.3 Budget

The project budget is managed by the Project Manager. A break-down of the budget is provided in Appendix B.

It is envisaged that the budget distribution will be reassessed by the Project Manager in Autumn 2010.

6.4 Initial priorities

The initial priorities identified by the Project Manager within the first 6 months are to:

- establish the Steering Group
- recruit the Project Assistant (Graduate Trainee)
- devise and agree the project plan with the Steering Group
- meet with the Comainn Eachdraidh and other key stakeholders to identify priorities and potential training
- train project staff in core skills
- devise the archival policies and procedures that will underpin the developing service
- devise the training programme following consultation
- implement a communications strategy, including the use of Web 2.0 technologies.

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6.5 Project Milestones

The following sets out the project milestone drawn from the Project Objectives as detailed in the EDRF application.

Year 1	Steering group established Project plan agreed Policy & procedure completed Training and Communications strategy completed Website and blog established Projects partner priorities identified 1 marketing publication 1 public partner receiving advice and assistance 2 cultural partners assisted 20 individuals trained 1 conference event held 1 exhibition held 14 businesses receiving advice 66 enquiries answered 33 researchers aided to access archives
Year 2	2 marketing publications 2 public partner receiving advice and assistance 4 cultural partners assisted 40 individuals trained 2 conferences event held 1-2 exhibition(s) held 2 education packs 18 businesses receiving advice 66 enquiries answered 33 researchers aided to access archives
Year 3	2 marketing publications 2 public partner receiving advice and assistance 4 cultural partners assisted 40 individuals trained 2 conferences event held 1-2 exhibition(s) held 2 education packs 18 businesses receiving advice 66 enquiries answered 33 researchers aided to access archives

6.6 Communications

The project will devise a bilingual communications strategy that will ensure that all stakeholders and as wide a spectrum of the public as possible can be informed about its progress.

Central to this will be the projects reporting structures and a bilingual website. More informal means of communication using Web 2.0 technology such as a project blog, Twitter feed, Flickr account and Facebook pages will also be

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investigated as a means of reaching more disparate audiences, including younger generations and the Western Isles Diaspora.

6.7 Gaelic language

Tasglann nan Eilean Siar celebrates the Gaelic culture and heritage and will document the existence, location and content of Gaelic archives. Significant oral history archives are held across the islands in Gaelic along with manuscript material.

Key to the project is the appointment of a Gaelic speaking Archives Assistant to help record and interpret these records.

Additionally, project outputs will be presented bilingually where appropriate, including the project website, blog and marketing materials.

The project will also go under its Gaelic name, Tasglann nan Eilean Siar, rather than Hebridean Archives.

6.8 Evaluation

The project will be externally monitored by its funders: the Comhairle, ERDF and the Comunn na Gaidhlig who all require periodic reports.

The quality of the developing archive service as a whole will be evaluated by the project team using the Scottish Council on Archives Quality Framework self-assessment tool (currently in draft) which will result in an annual action plan highlighting improvements to be made.¹

The project milestone will allow for ongoing evaluation regarding our progress. Additionally, qualitative and quantitative data on the impacts of the project outputs will be gathered using techniques such as surveys, evaluation questionnaires and statistic monitoring.

7 Risk Management

A separate risk register will be maintained by the project team. This will be presented to the project steering group to help monitor project development and manage risks.

¹ Scottish Council on Archives, *Taking a Closer Look at Archives and Records Management Services: A Quality Improvement Framework for Archives and Records Management Services in Scotland* (first draft, 2009). Available at <http://www.scoarch.org.uk/>

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8 Related projects

The Project Manager will play a key role in the development of the HLF Lews Castle bid being progressed by the Comhairle to create a museum, archive and commercial enterprise within the Lews Castle building.

It is envisaged that the expertise of the Project Team will be called upon in supporting roles by both the Comhairle and external partners in developing and implementing appropriate projects and initiatives. These may include:

- the redevelopment of Stornoway Town Hall
- the development of the St Kilda Centre
- the Year of Island Culture 2011
- continuation and development of Hebridean Connections
- other Comainn Eachdraidh projects.

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Appendix A: Project Gantt chart

See attached Microsoft Excel file.

Appendix B: Project budget

The project budget is derived from three separate funders.

	Contribution
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£181,478
Comunn na Gaidhlig	£8,500
European Regional Development Fund	£155,435
Total	£345,413

The budget allocation by financial year (April-Mar) is as follows.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Staff costs	£96,251	£102,227	£74,808	£273,286
Staff travel	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£15,000
Website	£9,333	£9,333	£9,333	£28,000
Marketing and training	£5,209	£5,209	£5,209	£15,627
Resources	£5,000	£2,500	£2,500	£10,000
Equipment costs	£1,167	£1,167	£1,167	£3,500
Total				£345,413

The budget distribution will be reappraised in Autumn 2010 as the project establishes itself and a clearer picture of spending becomes apparent.