

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	THE COMMON GUILD	
Application Reference number:	G201001045	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£115,00	£125,000
Officer's recommendation		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The Common Guild has quickly established itself as an important force for the Visual Arts in Scotland. It has strong ambitions and contacts with artists and curators of national and international significance, which are important for the development of the organisation and programme. Overall Common Guild could act as a catalyst for exciting work that raises the profile of work in and from Scotland. Within Glasgow there is no other publicly funded visual arts organisation working at this level and Common Guild could provide an important move on from the emerging artists' platform.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International programme • Strong support network through Board and Advisory Committee • Fits well with Scottish Arts Council criteria for flexible funding and the agreed priorities of the Visual Arts Department • Great deal of opportunity within local context • Detours programme has speakers of national and international significance that will add to the debate and support within visual arts sector • Excellent partnerships with national and international organisations • Ambitious programme • Ability to work across media and act as agency • Strong director with established track record • Clear Business Plan with identified areas of work and audiences <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively new organisation and in many ways untested • Small staff team that are at capacity and plans to carry out ambitious programme reliant on securing increased funding from Scottish Arts Council • Lack of a clear Audience Development Plan leaves organisation open to risk of not achieving objectives in relation to public engagement. 		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		Medium
Lead Officer signature:		Date:31.01.08 Revised: 20.03.08
Print name:	STEPHEN PALMER	

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

Comments:

The Specialist Advisors panel that considered this application included Alastair Snow, Helen Monaghan, Stephen Beddoe and Maureen Finn.

The panel commented:

Meets Scottish Arts Council, flexible funding and department aims well.

Artistic vision and leadership – High; Advisors welcomed the ambitions to develop a national and international programme and believe those involved have skills and expertise to deliver this.

Public engagement – Low; on the basis that there was not adequate information on which to judge although Advisors acknowledged the organisation's commitment to this area.

Overall rating – Medium; ambitions welcome however, model is to an extent untested and there is a need to clarify plans for audience development/ marketing and to develop evaluation plans. It would also be recommended that the organisation makes it a priority to diversify the funding base over the next two years.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

Fit with FXO criteria

Vision and leadership/role within sector/support to artists

The Common Guild articulates a clear vision and artistic direction through its plan. Exhibitions are complemented by a strong programme of discussion/talks events that will introduce new perspectives and experiences, helping to raise ambition and broaden horizons. The proposed programme will bring nationally and internationally significant artists to Scotland and add a new dynamic to the infrastructure for the visual arts in Glasgow and beyond.

Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning

The proposed programme of publicly sited work is well considered and would create a significant opportunity for new and ambitious commissions that should engage members of the community in a meaningful and collaborative way. Exhibitions will be marketed widely and supporting material and paid exhibition guides will support audiences to engage with the work.

The Detours programme aims to include people, beyond those currently working in the visual arts, in debate and discussion. The publicly sited programme offers an excellent opportunity to engage with members of communities in a collaborative way.

All of the above are being developed to reach a wide audience but the plan would benefit from a more developed marketing/ audience development strategy to support the objectives that have been established.

Good practice in governance and management

The Board appears to be effective, with a strong overview of practice and the expertise to support development of the programme and the organisation. There is a small staff team that the organisation hopes it can build in order to realise its goals.

Equal Opportunities/widening access

The Common Guild is committed to widening access and increasing participation. The application would have benefited from more detailed plans in relation to audience development to demonstrate how issues of equality of opportunity will be proactively addressed.

Other income of at least 25%

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

Fit with Departmental priorities

The Common Guild has established a strong artistic vision that will enable the realisation of ambitious and distinctive projects. In addition the proposed Detours programme provides a much needed focal point for critical debate that will support artists and curators in Scotland to develop professional networks and extend their knowledge/ understanding. The proposed programme and track record of those involved in the organisation meets the Department's aims: to develop opportunities that support curators/artists and to encourage the promotion of nationally and internationally significant work.

Fit with Scottish Arts Council's Aims

As described above the organisation meets the aims of SAC in supporting artists, increasing participation and furthering opportunities in the arts through education.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments

Application Rating: Medium, this application meets the FXO criteria the Department's priorities This rating reflects the assessment of the Officer and the comments received from the Advisors.

Strengths of application: the organisation is well placed to provide a distinctive programme that will make a significant contribution to the development of the visual arts in Glasgow and beyond; the vision of the organisation is clear and ambitious; plans to support curatorial development and critical debate are well considered.

Weaknesses of application: the Common Guild is a relatively young organisation that needs to build capacity in order to deliver on the ambitions outlined; the organisation needs to strengthen/detail its plans for public engagement.

Potential risks and suggested development areas:

The risks attached to the plan are as follows:

The Common Guild needs to build capacity in order to effectively deliver the ambitions outlined in the plan. The success of future plans is, to an extent, reliant on additional funding to build the team. Without additional resources it is difficult to see how Common Guild can deliver the ambition and quality of the planned programme.

The Common Guild needs to successfully build a diverse funding base to support its ambitions into the longer term.

The Common Guild needs to develop clear plans for marketing and audience development to ensure that its programmes are effective in meetings stated objectives.

Recommended level of support: £120,000

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

The Common Guild's main programme of activity will be based in Glasgow and is expected to attract audiences from within the city, the rest of Scotland/the UK and international.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Head of Department's signature:

Date: 15/2/08

Print name:

Amanda Catto

Revised: 26/3/08

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Support of £100,000 annually is proposed.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Strong Medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £100,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Strong Medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£100,000

End of Assessment