

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Scottish Academy of Asian Arts	
Application Reference number:	G201001087	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£45,000	£45,000
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 <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: SAAA's work has had a strong, if unintended and often unacknowledged impact on both the South Asian communities and the wider Glasgow community and beyond. In the latter case, the annual Glasgow Mela has, for example, become established as one of the many festival offerings in the city. As for the former case, many of the recently formed and arguably better performing organisations from South Asian and even Chinese backgrounds often took their inspiration from SAAA. Yet, while it has been a force for good in this respect, the emergence of some of these organisations, especially the artist-led professional ones are beginning to show up the weaknesses of SAAA. It is writ large in the business plan that SAAA is now playing catch up within the emergent sector, where it once was the only player.</p> <p>The business plan states SAAA's vision and plans for the organisation clearly and passionately, with an explanation of its objectives. And while there are encouraging elements in the artistic programme outlined, the adhoc nature of the programme, the absence of costing and the lack of rigour raise suspicion about the capacity of the organisation to manage and deliver quality work consistently and substantially. I am also deeply concerned about the apparent lack of professionalism or thoroughness in the preparation of the financial elements of both the business plan and the application. Given my knowledge of the organisation, I think this has far less to do with incompetence as with the co-ordinator's lack of authority over long term financial planning and decision making. This issue borders on governance, about which I have serious reservations.</p> <p>While there are some merits in the proposal, such as the shift from heritage-bounded classes to programming and series of new partnerships, I am concerned that the proposal is still significantly of low ambition. Indeed, one of its stronger elements, which is the creation of opportunities for artists of non-white backgrounds and also of creating wider access for participation, is marred by the overall ordinariness of the programming. As suggested earlier, it is a modest proposal that falls below the standard to be expected from an organisation that has been active for over 25 years. In addition, the proposal lacks clarity on important issues such as governance, relationships with potential stakeholders, management, staffing structures, and project budgets.</p> <p>My conclusion therefore is that as the application doesn't fully meet the Flexible funding criteria, this is a low priority for support.</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		Low
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 06 February 2008
Print name:	Femi Folorunso	Revised: 20 March 2008

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 Kirsteen Macdonald, Susan Nickalls, Sita Ramamurthy, Louise Butler, Steve Slater, Alan Riach, Wendy Niblock and Sally Wilson. The panel commented:

The application from the **Scottish Academy of Asian Arts (SAAA)** was a considered application but was limited in the artistic vision through the ideas and programme proposed. Through the application and the business plan, the panel considered that SAAA worked responsively rather than leading with new ideas and approaches. There was recognition that recent productivity, improvement in quality of work and the relationship with partners is positive. The panel recognised that the organisation has been established for a long time but were concerned about the low profile. The panel recognised that this was a modest application and considered this to reflect the lack of artistic ambition within the proposals.

The panel rated this application as a low priority for support.

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:

Scottish Academy of Asian Arts is one of the earliest organisations focusing on culturally diverse arts activity in Scotland. It has a long track record in running classes in classical music, drums and dances (as well as education outreach work in those forms) and regular annual showcasing/concerts. In addition, it holds a partnership agreement with the Glasgow City Council for the organisation and programming of the annual Glasgow Mela. The organisation has been in receipt of project funding from the Scottish Arts Council through the Equalities department.

1. Fit with FXO criteria:

1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists:

SAAA has not adequately demonstrated excellent artistic vision and leadership within the application. The organisation is not currently at the forefront of artistic development and the focus is primarily on a heritage approach to Asian arts.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:

The organisation articulates a commitment to the criteria of public engagement, providing opportunities for a sector of the community often marginalised from arts activity.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:

SAAA is a limited company with charitable status. The Assessing Officer notes that strengthening governance is a critical issue for the organisation which does not appear to have been sufficiently addressed.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access:

SAAA has been a significant influence on the South Asian community, providing access to the arts for this community and creating opportunities for the wider public in Glasgow to experience culturally diverse arts. The organisation demonstrates the commitment to encouraging access to all its work

through its outreach and education programmes.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:

SAAA has met the matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities:

The proposed programme expands across artforms but has not clearly demonstrated the Cross Art form priority for the development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:

SAAA contributes to the Scottish Arts Council's Aim 2; 'to increase participation in the arts'.

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:

1.1 Application rating:

I concur with the Assessing Officer and Specialist Advisors panel and rate this application as a **low** priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

The application does not fully meet the criteria for flexible funding, particularly in excellent artistic vision and leadership.

1.3 Strengths of application

The Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisors panel recognise the influential role that SAAA has had on the development of culturally diverse arts organisations in Scotland. The approach to partnerships was considered a strength of the application and an appropriate development for the organisation.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

The lack of focus within the application and business plan and a responsive rather than artistically driven approach is noted. A number of weaknesses within the application are highlighted in the assessment including issues of governance, relationships with potential stakeholders, management, staffing structures, and project budgets.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

The risks associated with the application include the lack of distinctive artistic direction and the weaknesses in operations and governance identified.

1.6 Development areas identified

As noted above.

1.7 Recommended level of support

Flexible funding is not recommended.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?

Scottish Academy of Asian Arts is based in Glasgow although its programme has a wider geographic reach throughout neighbouring local authority areas (Strathclyde Region).

1.2 Where will the audience come from?

The majority of SAAA's audience is drawn from the city (85% of audiences is referred to in the application)

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

Low

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

Anita Clark

Date: 14 February 2008
Revised: 26 March 2008

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: Weak overall fit with FXO criteria in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		LOW
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.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		LOW
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

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 agrees with the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£

End of Assessment