

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	TRANSMISSION	
Application Reference number:	G201001025	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£70,000	£70,000
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: Transmission is internationally recognised as one of the most important centres of artist-led activity in the UK and important to the infrastructure of the visual arts sector in Scotland.</p> <p>Its support for emerging artists, ability to retain fresh perspectives and commitment to showing the work of international practitioners ensures Transmission is recognised as a key venue by peers in the UK and elsewhere.</p> <p>The fact that Transmission is managed and staffed by artists working in a voluntary capacity means that some aspects of its work are less developed than might be expected – for example plans to develop audiences. However, it is likely that if the organisation was asked to address these areas it would not be able to unless it changed its structure and moved to a situation where there were paid members of staff. This is not considered appropriate or desirable and explains why I have rated the application High even though there are aspects of the application that could be strengthened.</p>		
<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An established record of strong exhibitions of emerging practice • International recognition • Strong support for artists which fulfils well the Scottish Arts Council and Visual Art Department's priorities • Constant refreshing of ideas and input due to committee nature • Vibrant hub to arts community in Glasgow • Wide range of partnerships nationally and internationally • Former committees continue to support Transmission • Supports credibility of visual arts in Scotland • Helps retention of GSA students and therefore strong artist community in Glasgow • Supports curatorial development • Committee structure has proved very effective and has become a model of good practice across Scotland and UK 		
<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rotating committee structure limits the ability to plan ahead and to take forward strategies in relation to audience development and education. 		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date:31.01.08
Print name:	STEPHEN PALMER	Revised: 20.3.08

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, Kirstie Skinner and Maureen Finn.

The panel commented:

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

Advisors noted that given the nature of Transmission which is led by a voluntary committee whose membership rotates every two years, the application did not provide the detail in the plan evident in other applications it was considering.

Artistic vision and leadership – High; this rating was based on the organisation's track record of presenting innovative work to a high standard and its position as a leading space for experimentation and risk taking.

Public engagement; Low; this rating was based on the fact that Transmission has no paid staff and that it cannot take forward detailed marketing/ audience development plans. However, the Advisors noted the importance of Transmission's programme in supporting artists' creative and professional development and the focus on engaging critically with this audience.

Overall rating – Medium; in agreeing the rating Advisors felt that it fairly reflected the quality of the application. Advisors expressed strong support based on Transmission's previous track record and its strategic importance to the Visual Arts infrastructure.

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

Transmission is an artist led organisation that has established a reputation for innovative programming and being at the forefront of contemporary practice. The programme is driven by the interests and curatorial concerns of a rolling Committee. This enables a fresh and dynamic programme to be maintained. A key aspect of the programme is supporting the work of Scottish based artists at an emergent/ developmental stage in their career. This is through a mix of solo and themed group shows. In addition, nationally and internationally significant artists are selected for key shows.

Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning

Transmission has no paid staff and the Committee works at capacity to develop and deliver the exhibitions programme. There is little scope to develop and implement a full marketing plan but the Committee promotes the work of the gallery effectively through tried and tested means. Educational

activity is geared to supporting the artists' membership and is an important aspect of Transmission's activity. The gallery's Committee structure provides artists with an excellent opportunity to develop curatorial and administrative skills. Transmission is also an invaluable resource for students.

Good practice in governance and management

The Committee structure is effective in supporting the gallery's development and programme plans.

Equal Opportunities/widening access

Transmission adheres to its policies but there is little proactive work given the limited and unpaid nature of staffing.

Other income of at least 25%

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

Fit with Departmental priorities

Transmission meets the Department's aims of developing opportunities that support curators/artists and encouraging 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 and the Department's aims. The rating reflects the fact that there are some areas for development. It is my view that with a limited and voluntary staff team Transmission is not in a position to address these.

Strengths of application: Transmission is a successful model of practice that has inspired other artist led activity across the country; the organisation provides important support to artists, particularly at an early stage in their career; the programme benefits from fresh perspectives; Transmission enjoys a significant reputation in the UK and abroad; the gallery successfully positions the work of Scottish based artists within a programme that has a strong international outlook.

Weaknesses of application: the plan is lacking detail; plans for developing audiences and public engagement are not well developed.

Potential risks and suggested development areas: as noted above, while there are aspects of the plan that could be strengthened I do not feel it is appropriate to ask Transmission to address these given the nature of the management/staffing structure.

Recommended level of support: £70,000

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Transmission is based in Glasgow and supports artists in the city and beyond. As an example of best practice it has inspired other artist led activity in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. The organisation has a significant national/international reputation attracting audiences from Scotland, the UK and elsewhere.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

Amanda Catto

Date: 15/2/08
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 £70,000 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 £70,000 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	£70,000

End of Assessment