

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

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| Applicant name: | Vanishing Point | |
| Application Reference number: | G201001001 | |
| Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2) | £200,000 | £200,000 |
| 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: VP's artistic vision is clear and the programme of work will develop its practice and artistic ambition. Its work is distinctive and going by the company's and proposed creative team's track record the programme will be of high quality. VP has a demonstrable commitment to engaging audiences through creating work which entertains and engages with the modern world and the proposed development and expansion of its education work will help to achieve this.</p> <p>The application meets all of the fund criteria and its education programme meets the drama department priority of creating work for children and young people to some extent.</p> <p>VP has a commitment to increasing its Scottish audiences and activities will take place in ten Scottish local authority areas, including the Highlands, Fife, Ayrshire and major cities, with 8% taking place in the UK outside Scotland. The target audiences and performances are achievable (going on its track record.)</p> <p>The business plans demonstrates a thorough approach to forward planning the artistic programme and its practical delivery including strategies, action plans and SWOT analyses for marketing and audience development, education, financial and staffing/operations. The budgets and staffing levels are realistically set and reflect proposed activity.</p> <p>VP has a good track record of working in partnership and proposes to develop this. However it is difficult to unpick projected support (cash and in-kind) from partners. Although the Equal Opportunities Policy thoroughly covers staff, dealings with the public and partners, it could be developed further to cover accessibility to performances.</p> <p>Highly recommend support at an increased level, though not at the amount requested (see below.) This will enable VP to increase its level of productions to 1.5 productions p/a. If a significantly lesser amount than requested is awarded this could adversely affect VP's ability to deliver the planned programme.</p> <p>NB Flexible funding is not sought for international activity as such, only to pay the international producer's fee. Although this post would help VP to exploit international opportunities this is not a criteria for flexible funding and given an over-subscribed budget I would not recommend supporting this element. If VP did not receive additional funds for this it might be possible for it to develop a different financial model for its international work which would mean all international activities were self-supporting. It is unclear exactly what the fee is, but from calculations on budget information (Q18) and current rates it is likely in the range of £10,000.</p> | | |

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| Officer's overall priority recommendation | | HIGH |
| Lead Officer signature: | | Date:30/01/2008 Revised: 20/03/08 |
| Print name: | Jaine Lumsden | |

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:

Attendees:

David Taylor, Co-Director of Arts

Specialist Advisors: Stewart Ennis, Tim Licata, David Leddy, Alex Patience, Sandy Maxwell, Stephen Slater, Stephen Stenning and Laura Tyrrell

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of: Vanishing Point

The application demonstrated a clear vision, a good artistic programme and the previous quality of programme is good and good partnerships

No significant weaknesses were identified.

Specialist Advisors overall rating: High

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:

Vanishing Point (VP) is an established Glasgow-based company that produces consistently high quality and engaging work that focuses on the live event to create an experience that is visceral and entertaining. The work has a distinctive physical, visual style, often with a surreal twist. It is characterised by excellent integration of all elements (design, movement, text, music and lighting.) It uses a collective creation process where all artists (director, performers, and dramaturg, set and lighting designers, composers) are involved from the work's inception. The creative team plays and experiments with ideas, often over a course of months, to develop the core of a production. The freedom of this creative process allows VP to fully develop, explore and experiment and is essential to the company's ethos.

VP's aims and objectives are

- to create imaginative and ambitious new theatre of the highest quality which excites, entertains and engages with the modern world
- to increase participation in the arts by presenting work to as wide an audience as possible and through its education programme
- to present work in Scotland and internationally
- to develop the artform of theatre through a collaborative, innovative creation process and to develop the skills of theatre artists in a range of disciplines
- to support emergent artists
- to collaborate with partners and promoters within the UK and internationally to create work

shows which realise its vision

- to challenge itself to work with the best artists in the world

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

The applicant produces consistently high quality and engaging work. It uses a collective creation process where all artists (director, performers, and dramaturge, set and lighting designers, composers) are involved from the work's inception. The creative team plays and experiments with ideas, often over a course of months, to develop the core of a production. There is therefore good artistic leadership and a track record of quality work.

VP established key partnerships with national and international organisations to help it deliver its work. These include the British Council, National Theatre of Scotland (NTS), The Tron, BAC and The Lyric Hammersmith. It toured to over 50 theatres, including English and international venues (including Kosovo, Macedonia, London, Manchester and Liverpool). This supports artists by having their work exposed outside of Scotland.

VP also runs the Shared Resources project: an initiative where VP mentor and develop artists/companies, now in its third phase, which started in 2004. The companies are capacity built, which enables them to operate more effectively and ultimately to concentrate more time on creating work. This activity also provides valuable support to artists.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

It has established relationships with venues and promoters across Scotland and worked in conjunction with them to develop audiences for its work. The plans to develop its education and outreach programme are likely to help to increase audience engagement.

Marketing plans are considered strong by the assessing officer

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

The organisation is well managed and governed.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

There is little detail in relation to this. There is room for development.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Met

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

No particular fit with departmental priorities.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

Fits extremely well with fulfilling artist potential and a good fit with increasing participation. The number of attendances proposed (11,000) is in the middle to upper range of proposals from touring companies in this round.

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
High

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating
Both the assessing officer and The Specialist Advisors were very positive about the artistic achievements and plans of this company and gave it high ratings.
I concur, based on strengths and weaknesses, below.

1.3 Strengths of application
Very strong artistic track record and exciting plans. Good support for artists in a practical (resource project) and in international exposure for their work.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications
No significant weaknesses

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application
No significant risks

1.6 Development areas identified
Actions to increase equality of access.

1.7 Recommended level of support
£200,000 pa

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

The application states that 10 local authority areas would be visited. There is little engagement south of the Central Belt.

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| Head of Department's overall priority recommendation | | HIGH |
| Head of Department's signature: | | Date: 15 Feb 2008 Revised: 26 March 2008 |
| Print name: | David Taylor | |

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| 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: Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Support of £160,000 annually is proposed. | | |
| Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation | | High |
| Chair of Meeting signature: | | Date: 2 April 2008 |
| Print name: | Iain Munro | |

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| 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 £160,000 annually is proposed. | | |
| Directors recommendations to Joint Board | | High |
| Acting Chief Executive signature: | Jim Tough | Date: 10 April 2008 |

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| 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 | £160,000 |

End of Assessment