

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G2001001046	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£225,000	£250,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<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><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>DGAA is an arts development agency based in Dumfries and serving the whole region. It was established 23 years ago and has grown into a significant arts development organisation which delivers a range of programmes including literature, music and public art, as well as helping local community arts organisations to develop, and, supporting rural venues to programme theatre and music.</p> <p>At the time of writing DGAA has a significant deficit and owes DGC £198K in salary payments. DGAA has drawn up proposals to repay DGC over the next two years which DGC has accepted, but, only on condition that Scottish Arts Council continues to flexibly fund DGAA (£50K outstanding on this year's grant and £200K in 2008/2009).</p> <p>DGAA has sent us documentation to demonstrate how they propose addressing their current financial position however this is not convincing and therefore we have requested additional paperwork. In view of current financial concerns I am not able to recommend funding at this time.</p> <p>I would however recommend that Scottish Arts Council remains committed to supporting arts development in the South West of Scotland and I would also suggest that DGAA's portfolio includes some very important elements (eg the Literature Development programme) which I believe Scottish Arts Council would wish to continue to support.</p> <p>In the context of an uncertain future I would recommend this proposal is a low priority for support but that the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen Joint Board considers earmarking support for initiatives in Dumfries and Galloway for the period 2008-2011.</p>		
<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>LOW</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 31 January 2008 Updated: 20 March 2008
Print name:	Gillian Shaw	

## 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:

This application from **Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association (DGAA)** is strong with a wide range of activities taking place, for example Burnsong, Gaelforce and the Poetry Doubles event. The panel recognised that the money would be well spent in an area of low arts provision. The applicant articulated a sense of responsibility for the community and a strong sense of environmental concerns. The organisation goes about its business very quietly and there is a strong sense of partnership working. There is also a strong commitment to Audience Development. They have clearly defined aspirations and are both inward and outward looking. The panel considered it to be important for Dumfries and Galloway to have organisation driving the artistic development in the area. The panel rated this application as high 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:

DGAA is an arts development agency based in Dumfries and serving the whole region. It was established 23 years ago and has grown into a significant arts development agency which delivers a range of programmes including literature, music and public art, as well as supporting local community arts organisations and programming within rural venues. It is the major arts provider within an area of low level of arts provision. It was previously a core funded organisation, and since April 2007 has been in receipt of flexible funding. In addition, DGAA was awarded Advancement funding in July 2007 but this was subject to a number of conditions to be addressed, so has not yet moved forward.

#### 1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

DGAA demonstrates a leadership role within the arts in Dumfries and Galloway, an area with limited arts infrastructure and provision, and plays an active role in supporting artists in the area.

##### 1.2 *Improving your engagement with the public:*

DGAA encourages public engagement in the arts as demonstrated through their work in audience development and is supporting rural arts promoters.

##### 1.3 *Good practice in the governance and management:*

The current financial viability of DGAA raises serious concerns about the governance and management of the organisation.

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

Equalities is considered within the application, focusing on key issues within the area such as geographic isolation, immigration and ageing population.

*1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:*

DGAA has met the matched funding requirement.

*2. Fit with Departmental priorities:*

The proposed programme expands across a number of 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:*

DGAA's vision and proposed plan of work contribute across the Scottish Arts Council's aims, most significantly to 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 in rating this application as **low** priority for support.

The Special Advisors panel were asked to focus their comments on applicants' artistic leadership and public engagement. They did not have access to the full information on DGAA's financial position, however did note concern about references to financial deficit in the business plan. The Assessing Officer is the lead officer for the organisation and brings to the assessment process further and more up to date information than was available through the application and business plan.

*1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:*

The current financial position of DGAA is a significant deficit (circa £150k) and robust plans to address this have yet to be agreed. The Director retired from the organisation in December on 2007, and the board have currently put recruitment on hold until they are in a more stable position. My rating reflects this weak position.

*1.3 Strengths of application:*

- Key agency driving artistic development
- Wide programme of arts activities
- Commitment to community engagement and widening access to the arts

*1.4 Weaknesses of applications:*

- Financially insecure with significant deficit
- Concerns regarding the governance and management of organisation

*1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:*

The current financial position of DGAA and the concerns this raises about the governance and management of the organisation make this a high risk application.

*1.6 Development areas identified:*

The most significant area of development is to establish financial security and a robust operating model for the organisation.

*1.7 Recommended level of support:*

Given the current financial position of DGAA, it is not possible to recommend Flexible funding. I would however, concur with the Assessing Officer's recommendation that the Scottish Arts Council

should remain committed to supporting arts development in Dumfries and Galloway. The recommendation to the Joint Board is to earmark support for initiatives in Dumfries and Galloway for the period 2008-2011 and for officers to work closely with DGAA and Dumfries and Galloway Council to put in place a suitable plan.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

**Comments:**

*1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?*

DGAA's activities take place throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

*1.2 Where will the audience come from?*

In the application DGAA states that the programme attracts audiences from neighbouring areas including South Lanarkshire, East and South Ayrshires, the Scottish Borders and Cumbria.

**Head of Department's overall priority recommendation**

**LOW**

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

Anita Clark

Date: 13 February 2008

Updated: 26 March 2008

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Given the current serious financial position of DGAA, not recommended for support but there is a need to consider a strategic way forward to ensure future provision in the area.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		LOW
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agreed with Stage 3 recommendation. Consideration should be given by the Joint Board to consider future strategic provision outwith the FXO process.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		LOW
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

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