

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	MAP	
Application Reference number:	G201001098	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£68,000	£68,000
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: MAP has developed a reputation for critical writing and support for Scottish artists and writers through the past 12 issues of the magazine. It provides a forum for debate and a record of the Scottish art sector. Its sights are set on developing an international market as well as extending readership locally and nationally. While there is an aim to become commercially viable this is not fully supported by detailed plans and budgets. I am also concerned that the model of Map being hosted by partner institutions is untested and that it may present challenges as well as opportunities.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality publication with strong commitment to supporting artists in Scotland and developing new critical writing • Work of artists of national and international significance as well as emerging practice. • Development of visibility at Art Fairs and within Scottish art sector • Advertising at its highest level – though through full-time commitment • Clearly addresses SAC and Visual Arts Priorities • Committed staff who will take on leadership roles with renewed vigour • Strong academic partnership within Duncan of Jordanstone • Provision of internship to support training and magazine production • New 'not-for-profit' structure will hopefully allow for increased investment from funders and support from the sector. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for small staff to commit unpaid time outside of 'normal hours' and the pressure that will come if staff leave or find extra work that is financially viable • Dependency on finding host partners in the future • Lack of clear Sales and Business Growth Strategy • Untested business model 		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Lead Officer signature:		Date:31.01.08 Revised: 20.3.08
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, Kirstie Skinner and Maureen Finn.

The panel commented:

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

Artistic vision and leadership – Medium; Advisors felt there was a clear editorial position that is becoming more confident but that the quality of writing can be inconsistent. The publication needs to consider more clearly its position with regard to the development of new writing and how this is presented. The plan is heavily reliant on the good will of staff and opportunities for professional development/ critical exchange need to be strengthened to ensure strong positioning in the market.

Public engagement – Medium; Advisors acknowledged that readership is increasing and that interest/ credibility in the visual arts sector is building. However, Advisors felt the plan was weak in describing clearly how increases in readership will be achieved. This linked to the need to consider a clearer business development strategy that would develop marketing, retail sales, advertising and subscriptions.

Overall rating – Medium; deemed to be strategically important however plans for sustainable growth need to be developed and more clearly articulated.

In agreeing a medium rating the Advisors identified the following development needs:

- Need to develop a business growth strategy that will lead to an increase in retail sales, sales of advertising and stronger subscriptions base.
- Need for Board members that can support staff in developing a more commercial plan.
- Need for clear leadership to be identified during the transition from the List and opportunities for staff mentoring/ professional development to be established.
- Need to put magazine on a more professional/sustainable footing with staff being paid appropriately for what they do.

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

MAP is a quarterly magazine (with an associated website) which aims to nurture and celebrate the contemporary visual arts in Scotland. It is the only magazine of its kind being published in Scotland and is therefore uniquely placed to promote the range of work being made by artists across Scotland. It presents this work within the context of national and international developments in the visual arts.

In addition it commissions new writing about the visual arts, providing important opportunities for established and newer writers. MAP's coverage of activity in Scotland is good although there is a need to establish a stronger rationale to underpin international partnerships/coverage.

Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning

MAP is an important vehicle for increasing participation and awareness of the contemporary visual arts. A key priority is to establish new initiatives that will develop and broaden the readership. While the plan initially targets a professionally interested/engaged audience there is scope for widening readership beyond this over time.

Good practice in governance and management

The new management model is untested but the structure for governance and reporting seem clear and accountable. There is a need to develop membership of the Board to ensure all aspects of the organisation's development are addressed effectively. There is a reliance on the goodwill of staff and a need for Board support to the team to ensure skills and expertise are used appropriately and effectively.

Equal Opportunities/widening access

MAP is committed to widening access and ensuring full representation through its editorial policy.

Other income of at least 25%

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

Fit with Departmental priorities

MAP is an important platform for the promotion of artists' work from Scotland and therefore meets the Department's aim to: develop opportunities that support artists. Through its coverage it is also well placed to meet the aim of 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 although there are identified development needs.

Strengths of application: clear and effective editorial policy; good breadth of coverage; good support for critical writing; strong platform for artists' work; good achievements in first 3 years.

Weaknesses of application: quality of writing is inconsistent; the lack of a detailed business/sales development strategy raises a concern about long term financial viability.

Potential risks and suggested development areas: risks arise from the lack of a clear business development strategy and an over reliance on the goodwill of staff. The development needs are: to develop a clear strategy for business/ commercial growth; to develop Board membership; to establish a staff development plan with opportunities for staff mentoring/ professional development identified; to ensure staff are paid professionally for the work undertaken;

Recommended level of support: £65,000

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Now based in Dundee, MAP's editorial policy ensures coverage of activity in Scotland, the rest of the UK and elsewhere.

MAP's readership is primarily Scottish based but the magazine is distributed across the UK and has some international visibility.

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: Some fit with FXO criteria but relatively weak in comparison to others, in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Low 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.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Low 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		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	

End of Assessment