

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Publishing Scotland	
Application Reference number:	G201001041	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£270,000	£272,500
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</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>Comments:</p> <p>Publishing Scotland's plans clearly reflect the tensions, demands, and great potential of Scotland's publishing industry at a crucial juncture in the early 21st century. Digitisation, business development, the global market and the changing role of libraries are all covered in an ambitious and far reaching business plan which is wholeheartedly supported by the Literature Department. The business plan also includes much-needed elements of consolidation to the core elements of Publishing Scotland's work, e.g. BooksfromScotland.com, and building on existing work on developing sales of international rights.</p> <p>Publishing Scotland is currently pursuing other funding streams for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural core stock for Scottish libraries (through the Scottish Government) and • A digital development fund (PS would manage this fund of £170.5k and pass it on to Scottish publishers to help them deliver content in new ways). <p>It has provided alternative budgets based on different funding scenarios, which is quite acceptable, but this does make the financial aspects of the assessment challenging. In summary, if Publishing Scotland can convince the Scottish Government of the massive benefits of the libraries initiative (a cultural core stock of Scottish books to be provided through a Scottish website and wholesaler), and the further business/international developments planned for the Scottish publishing industry, then it should be supported at the maximum level possible.</p> <p>Standstill funding would be detrimental to Publishing Scotland at this crucial stage in its development. In the current turbulent waters, the Scottish publishing industry is looking to its trade and development organisation to provide leadership, initiative and stability - all of which are abundantly evidenced in this application.</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 14/1/08 Revised: 20/03/08
Print name:	Aly Barr	

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?

The panel consisted of Dr Tony Bianchi, former Literature Director, Arts Council of Wales; Claire Malcolm, Director, New Writing North (England); and Professor Alan Riach, .Department of Scottish Literature, University of Glasgow.

Comments:

The Advisors were unanimously impressed by the application's powerful evidence of the successful re-structuring and expansion of Publishing Scotland to bring together all the key links in the book production, promotion and supply chains, from training to distribution and rights sales. They were also impressed by its combination of two major aspects of infrastructure, BooksfromScotland.com and Booksource, both of which show good levels of performance. Publishing Scotland has consolidated its position as a major strategic player and driver in the Creative Industries sector in its balance of key national aspects of commerce and cultural development. It is important that Publishing Scotland's work, objectives, and achievements are recognised and valued as long-term in nature.

In this positive context, the Advisors expressed concern about the current uncertainties in terms of a coherent national policy in respect of support for the Creative Industries sector, an urgent priority for which Publishing Scotland itself has lobbied and argued eloquently in high-level national, UK and international political and cultural arenas.

Publishing Scotland is rated by the panel as a 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:

It is difficult to improve on the Advisors' comments above. Publishing Scotland is an essential national strategic body with a remit and structure which are crystal-clear. Publishing Scotland's major roles in the work of the Literature Forum for Scotland, and the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature initiative (of which it is a founder), underline its national significance.

Publishing Scotland's plans clearly reflect the tensions, demands, and great potential of Scotland's publishing industry at a crucial juncture in the early 21st century. Digitisation, business development, the global market and the changing role of libraries are all covered in an ambitious and far reaching business plan which wholeheartedly accord with the Literature Department's strategic priorities, and which meets all SAC aims in an exemplary, coherent, and powerful fashion. The business plan also includes much-needed elements of consolidation to the core elements of Publishing Scotland's work, such as BooksfromScotland.com, and building on existing work on developing sales of international rights.

Publishing Scotland is currently pursuing other funding streams for:

- cultural core-stock for Scottish libraries (Scottish Government) and
- a digital development fund (PS would manage this fund of £170.5k and pass it on to Scottish publishers to help them deliver content in new ways).

With the current political uncertainties, particularly with regard to Creative Industries funding (should Scottish Enterprise continue to have responsibility, or will it pass to Creative Scotland?) Publishing Scotland has had no choice but to leave certain aspects of its projections, not the least of which are budgetary, uncertain. It has provided alternative budgets based on different funding scenarios, which is quite acceptable, but this does make the financial aspects of the assessment challenging. This is a reflection of infrastructural weaknesses in the wider context of national policy which – its respected lobbying and advocacy role notwithstanding – are beyond the organisation's control.

1. Fit with FXO criteria:

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

Consistently demonstrates strong leadership and acumen in the turbulent world of publishing in the 21st century. Supports its members, and by extension their authors, editors and staff, both nationally and internationally.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:

PS has a strong presence within its publishing constituency and at all levels politically. It is, perhaps, not as public-facing an organisation as others funded by SAC, but it no less important because of this: publishing is, by definition, an act of public engagement in its own right.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:

Highly skilled and motivated staff; strong board and management which has steered the organisation through its recent re-structuring and the development of its strong online bookselling presence.

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

PS's Equal Opportunities programme is practically implemented by active participation in the RNIB Right to Read and Talking Books campaign. Its member directory is also available in Braille format. PS also encourages (wherever possible) premises it uses for meetings, training etc to improve their access, equipment and accessibility. Choices of venue are made using these criteria.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:

Meets matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities:

- Meets strongly priority for *enhanced opportunities for writers, publishers, and readership development in national and international contexts*; also meets *development of innovative practice to increase access to and promotion of the Scots language*.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:

Strongly meets all three aims.

- 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

At this crucial juncture in national and global developments in the industry, standstill funding would be detrimental to both the organisation and sector. In the current turbulent waters, the Scottish publishing industry is looking to its trade and development organisation to provide leadership, initiative and stability. All of these are abundantly evidenced in this application.

1.1 Application rating:

I concur with the lead officer and Specialist Advisor and rate this application as a high priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:

In the context of the current challenges and opportunities facing publishing nationally and globally, the Scottish publishing industry is looking to its trade and development organisation to provide leadership, innovation, initiative and stability. All of these are abundantly evidenced in this application.

1.3 Strengths of application:

- Successful restructuring
- Strong alignment with key policy objectives
- Ambitious, far-reaching and innovative plans
- Excellent partnership working
- Highly motivated and skilled staff and Board

1.4 Weaknesses of applications:

No significant weaknesses identified.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:

Some projects dependent on Government funding not yet secured

1.6 Development areas identified:

The nature of the current climate in publishing and creative industries dictates that an organisation such as Publishing Scotland is in a constant state of development.

1.7 Recommended level of support:

To the levels requested: £270,000 (Year 1); £272,500 (Year 2).

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Publishing Scotland is an agency with a national and international remit and responsibility, in common with all funded literature and language agencies, and represents and promotes some 80 publishers throughout the whole of Scotland at home and abroad. It is recognised and respected as a powerful voice at national, UK, and international levels.

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?:

Within Scotland through its members; nationally through its strong presence at trade fairs and the DCMS and internationally through Books from Scotland and trade fairs globally.

1.2 Where will the audience come from?:

Global.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 15 Feb 2008 Revised: 25 March 2008
Print name:	Dr Gavin Wallace	

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. Support of £260,000 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	

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 £260,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		High
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	£260,000

End of Assessment