

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Scots Music Group	
Application Reference number:	G201001065	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£60,000	£61,500
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 <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: The Scots Music Group was one of the first organisations to offer traditional music tuition to Adults. Their model has been replicated in projects throughout the UK (Glasgow Fiddle Workshop, Folkworks). The application is for a small increase of under £2000 on what they have received for 2007/2008.</p> <p>A summary of the organisations plans for 2009-2011 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase their weekly programme by 5% per year, to include a wider variety of classes available. • To develop a total of 10 performance groups involving students. • Increase the number of performance opportunities in the form of stramashes, Big Seat by the Fire, Tutor Showcases, community concerts, sessions and the end of year concerts • Increase the programme of workshops increasing audiences through existing projects Power of Song, Ceilidh Culture and Ceilidhs. • Developing their merchandise through creating new tunes books and CD's with the repertoire. • Tutor Development through increasing the tutor training events. • Develop the Community Outreach programme with Music and Well-being programmes, 6 placements per year. • Support at least one group per year to become independent of SMG. • Organise one event per year that brings other traditional music organisations together. • Link up with one organisation per year to support a smaller project or national initiative. • The organisation will continue to actively engage their membership in the evaluation, development of resources and programme. • Recording class and performances to create a living archive of the work of SMG which will be launched in 2011. <p>The strengths of the application are the public engagement, the realistic targets set by the organisation, the quality of music tutors on offer, the range of activities, the various levels of engagement available, commitment to equal opportunities. The organisation have managed to retain the social element of traditional music through the various events and session, and managed to avoid becoming just a series of courses.</p> <p>This project is essentially serving the community in the Edinburgh area but the City of Edinburgh Council contributes very little in terms of financial assistance to the organisation (£3000).</p> <p>There are several areas for concern in the business plan; it does not provide clear information on the staff structure, areas of responsibility, and pay scales for staff. It does address governance in terms of how it could be developed. The other omission from the application is the rates of pay for musicians, the organisation say they are committed to paying appropriate rates however there is no mention of</p>		

the Musician Union rates. These issues need to be addressed before this application could be considered for funding.

It does address the SAC's aims and the Music Departments priorities in terms of providing high quality music education and increasing participation in the arts.

Officer's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Lead Officer signature:

Date: 29/1/08

Print name:

Jennifer McGlone

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?

The panel consisted of Murray Buchanan, Paul Bream, Jim Gaitens, Rachel Nelken and Susan Nickalls, with ratings received from Marie Fielding by email.

Comments:

- The panel noted the extensive range of classes on offer in the Scots Music Group's programme, with progressive streams for students. The programme demonstrated access opportunities but they felt that the status of organisation was unclear from the application.
- The panel felt that not enough detail about the staff who run the programme was provided with the application.
- The panel recognised that the organisation's tutor development and training were good.
- The panel was impressed with the elaboration of Scots Music Group's business plan.
- The panel was impressed by the organisation's audience engagement, evidenced by a 16-point audience development plan.
- The panel recognised that whilst the organisation worked well at its current level, it appeared from the application to be somewhat disorganised in its structure and output.

The panel rated the importance of the application in being supported as **Medium**.

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:

The Scots Music Group (SMG) provides tuition in traditional music disciplines which include instrumental, song and dance to adults in Edinburgh. SMG also provide tutor training. SMG is predominantly about training, teaching and education in all facets of traditional music disciplines. SMG sits within our traditional music portfolio and also is strategically strong in education and outreach and of course, in participation. The tutors employed are of high quality and engage in attracting new students through the "come and try" programme.

1. Fit with FXO criteria: In part.

1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists: High quality tutors are engaged but SMG is not a potential market leader as its work is restricted to Edinburgh.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public: Access and participation is good. SMG is setting a 5% per annum expansion target.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management: Detail on board structure is limited and there are concerns on staffing and rates of pay.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access: This is SMG's strongest area.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%: Yes.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities: In the development of traditional music and in the education and outreach portfolio, yes.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims: SMG fully meet the second aim-to increase participation.

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:

Whilst we recognise that the majority of the music tuition SMG provides is of high quality, the strategic importance of the SMG to the music department must be considered alongside the importance of the sustained growth of the traditional music sector as part of our forum sector development stated priority. SMG is based in and only realistically serves Edinburgh whereas input from CEC is extremely low, which questions how SMG is viewed by CEC.

I am concerned that, compared to other priorities within our sector development, especially in traditional music, the level of subsidy for SMG is currently high. I would also maintain that many of the adults having tuition through the auspices of SMG might be able to contribute a higher level of financial input than that currently demanded by SMG. This would in no way discriminate against the many students who are able to access high quality tuition at an acceptable fee level.

The Specialist Adviser's panel also felt that the current level of financial support from the SAC was high and suggested a closer collaboration, if not partnership with other organisations in the sector,

especially the TMSA, might bear fruit. I would also agree with the assessing officer that there is no real detail on the current staffing structures and remuneration levels. I would want to ensure that the tutors were also paid industry standard rates as there is no evidence of that in the business plan.

Essentially, SMG will maintain their current activities and their teaching methodology is sound, but I would question their ability to move forwards in a more creative and innovative way to embrace the significantly changing landscape in traditional and acoustic music, but would assess at medium, largely due to the quality of their tutors. Funding at standstill would be the maximum considered.

1.1 Application rating: Medium

Concerns are expressed in both the assessing officer's report and in the comments from the Specialist Advisors. I share some of those concerns and rate SMG at medium.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating: The core tuition activity is SMG's strength and I see little development beyond that remit.

1.3 Strengths of application: Quality of tuition and open access to it.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications: Their core activity is restricted to one locale and limited.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application: Staff structure and development.

1.6 Development areas identified: Expand workshop activity and performance opportunities.

1.7 Recommended level of support: Standstill (Maximum £52,000).

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place? The programme is currently delivered in Edinburgh.

1.2 Where will the audience come from? SMG run traditional music centred tuition and training for adults in Edinburgh.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 13 February 2008 Revised 25 March 2008
Print name:	Ian Smith	

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