

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Mischief La Bas	
Application Reference number:	G201001054	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£249,840	£202,630
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:</p> <p>MLB's programme meets the drama department priority of outdoor performance (street arts/site specific) extremely well. The programme of work will build on MLB's success, while developing its practice. Its work is by its very nature accessible and inclusive and offers opportunities for participation, professional development of artists and capacity building of the sector. Engagement with the public is at the core of all its work, as the interactive element means that audiences engage in, and therefore affect, alternative realities and perspectives – they do not spectate but participate. The application meets all of the fund criteria well. MLB's programme has a very wide geographic spread (25 local authority areas) and very high target audience numbers, which given MLB's track record and the nature of the work are achievable. There is potential for international partnership and presentation.</p> <p>The development timescale and scale of finance is typical of how mid/large-scale street arts projects are created. There is a risk that MLB may not secure all of its projected partnership income, specifically for its two larger projects. However, this is mitigated by the timescale of the development of the projects which will enable MLB to develop partnerships, identify markets and secure bookings from programmers and MLB is already in discussion with potential partners for these projects. There is also a demonstrable growth in the understanding of the value and reach of street arts by policy makers and funders and increasing high profile opportunities (eg Olympics and Commonwealth Games) which should help to facilitate partnerships.</p> <p>The business plan clearly articulates MLB's artistic vision and programme plan. It includes an analysis of the unique relationship street arts creates between audiences and performers. MLB has demonstrated an awareness that it needs to develop its organisational capacity to deliver its proposed programme (and has secured project support from SAC in January 2008 to start this process.) It has thorough and realisable plans to develop its staffing structure, management responsibilities, marketing and audience development and changing the organisation into a limited company. Given that MLB has not received revenue funding before it is understandable that there will be development areas. These are to develop further and articulate reporting structures to the Board, Board composition, line management, staff appraisal systems and ensure that an appropriate contingency is built into all projects.</p> <p>Highly recommend support at amounts requested.</p> <p>If support was awarded at a level lower than requested MLB could still deliver (some of) its programme. Depending on the level of award this could adversely affect the scale and impact of its work and outputs.</p>		

Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 30/01/2008 Revised: 20 March 2008
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 Tramway is a Co-producer with Mischief La Bas and therefore Stephen Slater left the room for the discussion of the application to take place.

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of: Mischief La Bas

This was thought to be an interesting company with a clear vision. It was accepted that achieving a coherent critical response was difficult for their kind of work, as critics often did not review street arts.

Artistic vision seemed to promise unique work and evidenced a strong philosophy, and a unique engagement with audiences.

This company was rated as artistically high. The proposed projects, 'Bisch Basch Bosch' and 'Daylight' were thought to be very interesting. There were some reservations about the extent of the '25 Villages' tour and it was thought that, over a two year period, it could be more extensive.

There was some concern about how the company would make the transition from their current operational model to regular funding from SAC. The company's capacity to make that transition was raised as potential issue.

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:

Mischief La-Bas' (MLB) aim is to "gently warp the underlay of the fabric of society." It presents accessible and interactive street arts in public places. The interactive element means that audiences do not spectate but participate (regardless of the scale of work.)

Its objectives are

- to maintain existing activity and increase capacity for bespoke and large-scale work.
- to apply its methods and philosophies to new audiences and contexts as programmers and clients become more adventurous.

- to improve management, marketing and financial systems, in order to effectively manage its expanding activities

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

The proposal is recognised as being imaginative and innovative; the applicant's track record is strong. The company involves a range of artists and can offer opportunities for exposure in other parts of the UK and abroad.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

The nature of the work naturally engages the public as the performances take place in public spaces. Local people are often involved as participants. The numbers of audience members predicts are respectively 52,000 and 78,000 in year one and two.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

The company is currently a partnership and plans are in place to become a limited company in 2008. The applicant acknowledges development needs in company structure, office and financial systems.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

Access is implied in the nature of the work as it takes place in public spaces, but there is little information relating to developing access proactively.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Met.

2. *Fit with Departmental priorities*

Street Arts has been identified as a priority area for Drama in this Flexible Funding round and this application meets the Drama priority extremely well.

3. *Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims*

Meets the aim of developing artists' potential very well and increasing participation extremely well. Does not meet aim of putting arts at the heart of the curriculum.

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

Both the Specialist Advisors and the Assessing Officer rate the application as high.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

Mischief La Bas is one of the few street arts organisations operating in Scotland, despite there being significant opportunities for this kind of work, the demand for which is often met by overseas companies – probably due to a lack of investment and capacity in this country. There are a number of development areas so, while I think the application is strong on vision and potential these development areas would need to be addressed.

1.3 Strengths of application

Excellent vision and potential to grow audiences and reach people not normally involved in the arts. The coming of major national programmes such as the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games argues for an increase in capacity in this area of work.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

Pro-active plans for developing equalities.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

Possible negative impact on the organisation of changes in structure and processes.

1.6 Development areas identified

Company structure, management processes and equalities.

1.7 Recommended level of support

£250,000 in 2009/10 and £200,000 in 2010/11

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

The plans indicate that the company will appear in 25 local authority areas and this is achievable.

Comments:

A wide geographical spread is intended, although c 50% of the audience impact is likely to be in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

High

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

David Taylor

Date: 25 March 2008

Revised: 26 March 2008

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: Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Suggested level of support: £225,000 annually		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Strong 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. Suggested level of support: £225,000 annually.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Strong medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

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	£225,000 annually

End of Assessment