

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	NEW MEDIA SCOTLAND	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001011	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£140,000	£145,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
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><b>Comments:</b>            New Media Scotland is a strong organisation that is working at the forefront of digital media and through its national remit is able to forge partnerships across all fields, not just those in Visual Arts. They have a good track record of artists' development and project based activity. Their Poker Club and Alt_W strands are well-regarded and are well attended.</p> <p>The organisation has a strong Audience Development strategy that demonstrates an understanding of audiences and how to develop these into the future. However, the post responsible for this work is project funded and there is limited capacity to develop this role without additional core funding.</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for artists working in New Media with good professional development for artists through a range of programmes which addresses the priority for Scottish Arts Council well.</li> <li>• It is also firmly placed with Visual Art department's priorities of work of national and International significance and support for curatorial and artistic development.</li> <li>• Nationwide remit allows them to work with a wide range of agencies</li> <li>• Interest in New Media is strong and there is potential for development and partnerships by being at the forefront of work particularly in the context of creative Scotland and its work across disciplines.</li> <li>• Small but dedicated staff team although qualities of new Artistic Director are unknown at present</li> <li>• Good partnerships nationally and internationally</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant funding requirements identified to deliver planned programme and services. If funding is not realised there are challenges to the organisation's ability to carry out the scope of the proposed plan</li> <li>• Profile for New Media Scotland needs to be expanded and there are challenges in establishing understanding of what 'New Media' is. This is challenging in terms of public engagement and participation</li> <li>• 'Exhibition/public' projects appear to take up a lot of time and resources that may be more effectively directed to other strands of programme development</li> </ul>		
<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date:31.01.08
Print name:	STEPHEN PALMER	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?

### 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 Scottish Arts Council aims and to an extent the aims of flexible funding and the Visual Arts Department. However, Advisors commented that there was a lack of clarity about the field of “arts and technology” and the organisation’s position in relation to that. There was also a concern that the plan lacked clarity and focus in relation to the activity that was being proposed.

Artistic vision and leadership – Low; Advisors felt there was a lack of clear vision and leadership evident within the plans. There was little sense of priority across different strands of activity and no sense of how New Media Scotland intended to establish its position in the wider world in which it operates. The area of professional development was singled out as one in which New Media Scotland appears to have been successful and where plans are clearly articulated and have potential to be developed further.

Public engagement – Medium; Advisors recognised the commitment to engaging people through different means and agreed that communication with artists appeared to be effective. The plans to develop public programming activity were not felt to be well expressed.

Overall rating – Medium; with a view to encouraging New Media Scotland to focus activity and resources on providing effective support for artists’ continuing professional development.

In agreeing a medium rating the Advisors noted the following development areas:

- To achieve a clarity of vision with a clearer positioning of the organisation within the world around it. A priority in the context of the Visual Arts Department aims would be to focus on artists’ professional development and to be at the forefront of national/ international developments.

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*

NMS has an important role in supporting the creative and professional development of artists with a strong programme that promotes international practice and stimulates debate and discussion at a local level. Events continue to gain the interest/ attention of a growing number of artists and work well with partner organisations such as CCA and DCA. These aspects of the organisation’s work have the potential to be developed further and offer significant opportunity in the current Scottish context.

*Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning*

The wider public aspects of the programme successfully achieve agreed objectives but appear to be time intensive and require a degree of management that can be difficult for an organisation with such a small staff team. Profiling of this work can also be challenging. This is an area that could benefit from more focussed partnership/ collaborative working, with NMS providing artistic/ curatorial expertise to local partners who could offer a higher degree of delivery/ logistical support.

NMS has undertaken a review of marketing and communications activity and has a series of key recommendations that are being acted upon. Its communication to artists and the clarity of what it can do for artists is good. The challenge is to effectively profile the organisation's work with and through partners. This requires sustained resources and careful management.

*Good practice in governance and management*

The Board meets regularly and meetings follow an agreed annual plan to focus time effectively. The Board has contributed significantly to the development of the vision and transition plan and will be supporting the newly appointed Executive Director in establishing their role.

*Equal Opportunities/widening access*

New Media Scotland actively implements its equal opportunities policy, monitoring progress and setting targets where appropriate.

*Other income of at least 25%*

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

*Fit with Departmental priorities*

The programme of New Media Scotland fully meets the Department's aim of supporting artistic and curatorial development and the Department's aim of promoting work that is nationally and internationally significant. Its programme of professional development events provides artists based in Scotland with opportunities to experience the work and ideas of practitioners working at the forefront of arts and technology in the UK and elsewhere.

*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 educational events/activity.

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 but there are concerns about the plan and development needs identified. This rating reflects the assessment of the Officer and the comments received from the Advisors.

*Strengths of application:* the organisation has a track record of delivering good professional development opportunities for artists through a range of programmes; it has established strong national and international networks; staff and Board have a good knowledge of emergent practice in

a fast paced field.

*Weaknesses of application:* lack of clarity in relation to core purpose and vision; lack of focus and priority within the plan; lack of compelling argument to support the increased funding requested; ambitious fundraising targets with significant reliance on Scottish Arts Council funding for core and project activity.

*Potential risks and suggested development areas:* there is a risk that without a more focussed plan the organisation will not be able to achieve its goals. A revised plan that builds on key strengths in supporting artists' professional and creative development may be more achievable, particularly in light of the significant additional resources requested from SAC at this time.

**Recommended level of support:** £80,000 to support a programme primarily focussed on supporting artists' professional development, networking and promotion.

**4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme**

**Comments:**

New Media Scotland is based in Edinburgh with a remit to support artists and activity across Scotland. However, given the nature of its work, New Media Scotland is actively engaged in a range of networks that operate at a national and international level, engaging with artists and audiences from across the world.

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

**MEDIUM**

Head of Department's signature:

Date: 15/2/08

Revised: 26/3/08

Print name:

Amanda Catto

<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> 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.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		Low Medium
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> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		<b>Low Medium</b>
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

<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> The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		<b>REFUSE</b>
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	

**End of Assessment**