

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust	
Application Reference number:	G201001089	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£75,000	£75,000
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>Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust (STDT) was set up in 1995 to research, conserve, foster and promote all of Scotland's dance traditions. Its mission statement has been modified slightly since then to reflect the organisation's development and now states ' STDT is a National umbrella organisation that promotes and improves the number of opportunities for dancers to perform, for audiences to enjoy and people to participate in traditional dance across all age ranges.</p> <p>STDT is requesting standstill funding, but note in their business plan 5% increase would be helpful to the organisation.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STDT delivering participation Scotland-wide • Strong leadership from Artistic Director and Board • Good management structure • Strong partnerships with local authorities developed • Meets criteria listed for this fund and Dance Department priority for development of Scottish traditional dance • Consolidating programme of work proposed • FCO states high value for money and medium risk <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reserves of the company are weak • Additional funding identified from Scottish Arts Council which is not guaranteed • Staff fully stretched delivering programme, so limited flexibility to deal with illness, etc • No contingency if funds from Scottish Arts Council not achieved or at lower level than requested and no contingencies within budget • Marketing of the company needs improved. STDT would benefit from investing in better quality equipment and training in editing to improve this material. • Clarification of staff appraisal process <p>Potential threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If STDT becomes more involved in capital the development, some of the programme might need to be reduced, or consolidated. • A significant increase in funding from local authorities is projected (double that achieved in 05/06), which could lead to a gap in funding if not achieved. • Impact of key staff changes <p>Fit with FXO criteria: 1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists – met STDT aims to establish the Speirs Centre as a hub for traditional dance throughout the central region.</p>		

The proposed programme consolidates the organisation current activities, building on partnerships and extending the education and lifelong learning programme. It also identifies developing international links.

2 Improving your engagement with the public – met

Through its new premises, STDT has raised its profile in the central belt.

3 Good practice in the governance and management – met

This is demonstrated within the business plan.

4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access – met

STDT shows a good understanding of equalities in their business plan and runs classes for children with disabilities.

5 Raising other income at least 25% - met

Dance priority - support and development of Scottish traditional dance – met

STDT raises the profile of traditional dance within Scotland through arranging informal performances and workshops. Through the work of its dance artists, it develops Scottish dance within the local communities.

As this is the only organisation meeting the dance department’s priority of supporting traditional dance, this would be high strategic importance. However, because of the developmental areas and areas of concern in the budget, this is rated medium.

Officer’s overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 8/1/08 Revised: 20/3/08
Print name:	Susan Hay	

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 panel of dance specialist advisors who considered this application involved Dawn Hartley, Ian Spink, Lucy Mason and David Williams. The panel commented:

They recognised the importance of **Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust** as the umbrella body for traditional dance, in the wider dance infrastructure in Scotland, however the application and business did not demonstrate a clear focus or plan for their successful future development. The panel recognised that the resource centre is a very interesting development for Scotland, however it is an application with a lack of strategic approach and clarity of purpose.

The panel rated this application as low 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:

Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust was established in 1995 as the national organisation for the promotion, research and support of all Scotland's dance traditions. The organisation was core funded and then since April 2007 has been in receipt of flexible funding, recognising its role in encouraging participation in traditional dance.

1. Fit with FXO criteria:

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

The criteria of artistic excellence driving the organisation is less evident in their application and business plan. However, as the only organisation providing the overview within traditional dance in Scotland, STDT plays a strategically important leadership role in developing a diverse dance culture in Scotland.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

STDT articulates a strong commitment to the Flexible Funding criteria of public engagement, providing opportunities within traditional dance.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

STDT is a limited company with charitable status. There is a clear management and reporting structure in place and the board meets regularly. STDT has been working with the Scottish Arts Council's Quality Framework.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

STDT has an Equal Opportunities policy in place and is working to implement this. Some of the organisation's activities are specifically targeted on children with disabilities to widen access to traditional dance.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

STDT has met the matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

Recognising the need to support a diverse dance culture, the Dance department set a Flexible funding priority to 'support the development of traditional dance'. The application from SDTD was the only application which meets this criteria.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

SDTD contributes to the Scottish Arts Council's Aim 2: 'to increase participation in the arts' and Aim 3: 'to place the arts at the heart of learning'.

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:

I concur with the Assessing Officer and rate this application as medium priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:

I recognise the strategic importance of STDT in the development of traditional dance, however there

are weaknesses within the application and, as the panel members commented, their future plans lack focus. This is reflected in my rating.

1.3 Strengths of application:

- fulfilling an important strategic role within the dance sector as the only umbrella body for the development of traditional dance
- meets the criteria for Flexible funding and the priority established by the Dance department
- the development of the national traditional dance archive and resource centre and exciting initiative which has the potential to have a major impact on Scotland's culture. This are still at a relatively early stage of development and STDT is working closely with Clackmannanshire Council and Museum on this.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications:

- Lack of strategic focus in future plans.
- Financial reserves of the company are weak and there are ambitious projections of other income, including additional project funding from SAC which maybe unrealistic.
- Marketing plans and delivery are weak

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

If STDT becomes more involved in the capital development this may have an impact on the ability to deliver core programme. A significant increase in funding from local authorities is projected (double that achieved in 05/06), this may be unrealistic.

1.6 Development areas identified

Overall, my assessment is that the organisation is trying to do too much and because of this, does not always achieve the highest quality in their work. There is need to consolidate their programme and improve their marketing. I recommend that as conditions of funding, streamlined plans are sought and that a more detailed case for the Archive is developed.

1.7 Recommended level of support

I recommend support at the current level of £75,000 per year.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?

STDT is based in Clackmannanshire and is working with the local authority on the development of a resource centre for traditional dance. Although a strong proportion of the organisation's activities take place in Clackmannanshire, its programme does have a wider geographic impact and a further 12 local authorities have been identified in their application.

1.2 Where will the audience come from?

STDT identifies 40% of their audience from Clackmannanshire reflecting where the majority of the activity is planned, with the rest of audiences reflecting the geographic spread of activity.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Head of Department's signature:		Date:12 February 2008 Revised: 26 March 2008
Print name:	Anita Clark	

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 and specifically the comments from Specialist Advisors who recognise the importance of STDT as the umbrella body for traditional dance, however the application demonstrated lack of clarity and strategic approach. We recommend that the Head of Dance explores this in the wider strategic context of dance in Scotland and the voluntary sector.		
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