

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Scottish Language Dictionaries	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001019	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£155,000	£160,556
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<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><b>Comments:</b></p> <p><b>Scottish Language Dictionaries (SLD)</b> cannot easily be compared with other arts organisations. Its work is, at first glance, purely academic and very long term. This, I think, does it a disservice. SLD's work not only captures and quantifies that most elusive of artforms - <i>words</i>, but brings them alive. By engaging with the people of Scotland to survey, quantify and capture their language SLD does, in return, disseminate their findings back through the printed, spoken and online words of its dictionaries, events and websites. Like so many small organisations, the scope and breadth of its work is both astonishing and humbling, and, it is important to stress, <i>national</i> in impact and significance – in common with all SAC-funded literature and language agencies.</p> <p>I would have no question in recommending SLD for continued support, although (with large increases seemingly unlikely for any flexibly funded organisation) it will face some tough choices prioritising which ambitious new projects it can carry out if it does not receive the level of funding requested.</p>		
<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 14/1/08
Print name:	Aly Barr	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 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:

Scottish Language Dictionaries and its application were unanimously considered to be of the highest quality, and of major national significance. Its' scholarly, academic, and lexicographical role places it firmly at the specialist end of the Scots language continuum, but this expertise is the feeder for end results of fundamental importance to the preservation and dissemination of the Scots language at all levels.

The organisation's continuing success in international outreach, especially the major impact of its Scottish Writing Exhibition at the MLA Conference over the past four years (in partnership with ASLS) in furthering the academic status of Scottish Literature in North America, was particularly commended, as was the more formal arrangement for collaboration with the Association for Scottish Literary Studies (ASLS), which has enabled a part-time joint-post with SLD's Project Officer. This move demonstrates the potential for greater co-operation and collaboration between all of the SAC-funded Scots language organisations. The relevance here of the recently-announced audit of the Scots language by Government was recognised.

The severe pressures on staff time were a cause for concern, and it was suggested that effort on national outreach might be lessened through closer co-operation with other language agencies which major in such work.

Scottish Language Dictionaries 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 important to see Scottish Language Dictionaries' application in the context of the transference of funding responsibility for the language organisations from government to the Scottish Arts Council in 1999. It is also important to record that the decision to accord Scottish Language Dictionaries Flexible status at the time of the Strategic Review was for reasons of expediency, as possible changes to policy and structures of support for the Scots language were anticipated, and not because SLD was seen to have a less than nationally strategic and significant role.

Scottish Language Dictionaries cannot easily be compared with other arts organisations, for obvious reasons. Its work is, at first glance, purely academic and very long-term, but its outcomes are fundamental to all departmental and SAC aims and objectives - it engages with the people of Scotland to survey, quantify and capture their language and, in return, disseminates its findings back through the printed, spoken and online words of its dictionaries, events and websites.

It is acknowledged that SLD's application is somewhat unusual in this context, and not an ideal fit

with the criteria for the current FXO funding round. It is equally important to stress that this situation is not of SLD's making, and that it has made a strong application in good faith.

## **1. Fit with FXO criteria:**

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

SLD's expertise is principally academic and specialist in nature.

### **1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:**

The general public at large is the ultimate beneficiary of SLD's highly specialised and long-term work. Public access is being widened through its series of general reader publications on a range of aspects of Scots.

### **1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:**

SLD have high-calibre, committed staff, a prestigious Board representing Scotland's leading academic experts in language, and sound financial and managerial skills.

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

Equal opportunities is fundamental to and inherent in SLD's core remit and work, which is to make the Scots language accessible to all.

### **1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:**

Matched funding requirement met.

## **2. Fit with Departmental priorities:**

Strongly meets both priorities:

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

## **3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:**

Strongly matches aims 2 and 3.

**4.** 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**

SLD will face some tough choices prioritising which ambitious new projects it can carry out if it does not receive the level of funding requested. In common with the other Scots language organisations, support should be conditional on the organisation's co-operation with a further phase of 'synergy talks' between these agencies to address areas of overlap, duplication, potential for streamlining and reconfiguration, and possible opportunities created by the Government audit.

### **1.1 Application rating:**

While the Specialist Advisors' rating is high, I concur with the lead officer's rating of medium.

### **1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:**

This reflects the anomalous situation with this application outlined above, but the rating does **not** reflect the quality or significance of the organisation's work and significance, which are rated high.

**1.3 Strengths of application:**

- Ambition of programme
- Comprehensive and ambitious programme of work
- Specialist skills and expertise of staff and Board
- Expansion of international outreach
- Expansion of publication programme to widen public access to Scots

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:**

- High level of dependency on public funding
- Limited human resources
- Pressure upon staff

**1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:**

The application is ambitious, but this ambition comes at a price.

**1.6 Development areas identified:**

Address areas of overlap with other language organisations to fully exploit opportunities presented by the Scottish Government’s recent spotlight on the Scots language.

**1.7 Recommended level of support:**

To the levels requested: £155,000 (Year 1); £160,556 Year 2).

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

**Comments:**

As the national custodian for the Scots language, geographic comprehensiveness is fundamental in every way to SLD’s remit, responsibility, and work.

**1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?:**

Throughout Scotland and internationally through web and outreach activities..

**1.2 Where will the audience come from?:**

All ages and locations within Scotland. Internationally, work is currently focussed at academic institutions and ex-patriot Scots, mainly in the USA.

<b>Head of Department’s overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Head of Department’s signature:		Date: 15 Feb 2008 Revised: 25 March 2008
Print name:	Dr Gavin Wallace	

<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 and comments. Propose discussions at a senior level between Scottish Government and SAC.		
<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**