

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Scottish Sculpture Workshop	
Application Reference number:	G201001021	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£160,000	£160,000
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>Comments: SSW is a residency centre which supports artists in developing their practice and fulfilling their creative potential by providing accommodation, studio space, access to specialist facilities and technical assistance. The artistic vision and leadership is excellent, engaging with national/international artists at different career stages and having an effective selection and programming process. This centre is in a remote rural part of Scotland where it plays a critical role in the Scottish artistic infrastructure and there are no other similar facilities in the area.</p> <p>There is an ongoing engagement with the local community and many partnerships and outreach/educational projects to assist this. In addition SSW has a wide reach because of the reputation of its residency programme and attracts national and international artists. It also presents and supports the development of specific new works through partnering high profile galleries.</p> <p>SSW demonstrates good practice in finance, governance and management through its clear and considered business plan and financial reporting. There is an effective and established working Board and Sub-Groups and a simple staffing structure.</p> <p>SSW has been going through organisational development through the implementation of the 'Plan for Change'. This has introduced a new staffing structure and identified future strategies. The two key issues are restricted staff capacity, which could limit delivering a high quality artistic programme while also progressing plans to improve facilities, and current premises, which need to be developed to support the organisation's ambitions. SSW has requested a 33% uplift in funding which would be necessary to put the proposed development plans in place. Without an uplift in funding SSW will not have the staff capacity to achieve long term plans.</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 31.01.08 Revised: 20.03.08
Print name:	Marianne Greated	

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.

Meets Scottish Arts Council, flexible funding and department aims well.

Artistic vision and leadership – High; Advisors welcomed the clarity of vision/ future plans and strongly endorsed the Director's vision and skills in implementation.

Public engagement – High; Advisors commented that projects are well conceived and meaningfully engage with the community. Website is an example of good practice.

Overall rating – High; Advisors noted that the quality of the plans and the success of their implementation is reliant on a small staff team and that it would be a priority to retain and build skills/ expertise

While the Advisors rated this application a High priority they identified the following as a development need that a plan to resolve accommodation needs must be agreed within the short to medium term.

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

Based in Lumsden in Aberdeenshire the Scottish Sculpture Workshop supports a wide ranging residency programme with a strong national/ international dynamic. Time for research and development of work is highly valued by artists at different stages in their career. The residencies programme is effectively structured to enable the support and promotion of artists from different backgrounds and with different levels of experience. Careful selection and curation has enabled SSW to remain critically engaged with international developments in practice and to support artists whose work is highly regarded. SSW is working effectively with a growing number of partners to ensure wide dissemination and promotion of the outcomes of the residency programme.

Engagement with the public/support for increasing participation/learning

Scottish Sculpture Workshop has established strong local links and has a clear approach to engaging the community in aspects of its programme. The continuing support from Aberdeenshire Council is a sign of the value that is being attached to the organisation's work in this regard. The recent GANGHUT residency is an excellent model of such practice.

In addition to the community programme the staff work closely with the resident artists to ensure that there is a wider public promotion and dissemination of the outcomes of their time at SSW. This was

demonstrated well by the successful showing of Laura Ford's Armour Boys at the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) and by future exhibitions such as that by Nick Evans at Inverleith House.

Good practice in governance and management

The organisation has an effective management structure and achieves good outcomes with a small staff team. The recently appointed Chair has galvanised the Board to address the outstanding issue of longer term accommodation plans. The Board will need to continue to build skills and expertise to support any planned capital development.

Equal Opportunities/widening access

Scottish Sculpture Workshop has a well considered and active policy to ensure inclusion and access for all.

Other income of at least 25%

Budgets indicate this has been addressed.

Fit with Departmental priorities

The Scottish Sculpture Workshop has a clear vision and purpose that meets the Department's aims: to develop opportunities that support artists and to encourage the promotion of nationally and internationally significant work.

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 education.

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: High, this application meets the FXO criteria very well. This rating reflects the assessment of the Officer and the comments received from the Advisors.

Strengths of application: clarity of vision and purpose of the organisation and its business plan; the quality of the proposed programme and evidenced commitment to participation; the strategic importance of centres such as this in supporting research, development and artistic/ international exchange.

Weaknesses of application: small staff team is not in a position to achieve longer term plans; outstanding issues of accommodation will begin to affect the organisation's ambitions to be a centre of excellence.

Potential risks and suggested development areas:

Scottish Sculpture Workshop operates with a small staff team and there is a need for strong Board support / professional development and appropriate remuneration to retain skills and expertise.

Scottish Sculpture Workshop is seeking to resolve plans for Capital development and if these cannot be taken forward effectively it is likely that the situation will start to impact on the quality and ambition of the programme that can be delivered.

Recommended level of support: £150,000 per annum

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Scottish Sculpture Workshop is based in Lumsden in Aberdeenshire where the residency and community programme takes place

The programme supports artists based in Scotland, the rest of the UK and elsewhere.

Dissemination of the outcomes of the programme extend into the UK and elsewhere.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

HIGH

Head of Department's signature:

Date: 15/2/08
Revised: 26/3/08

Print name:

Amanda Catto

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: Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects the competitive funding context. Support of £140,000 annually is proposed.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		High
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. Support of £140,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		High
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		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£140,000

End of Assessment