

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Ankur Arts Productions Ltd	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001103	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£100,000	£100,000
<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  <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>  Ankur Arts Productions is a young company committed to transforming participation, performance and attendance within the BME community in the arts. They have achieved considerable success in engaging this community particularly through their outreach work.</p> <p>The company's priority for 2009 – 11 is to create and produce professional productions for the mainstream arts sector using BME artists in addition to further developing their outreach work which includes drama, music, writing, film and video.</p> <p>The artistic plans are clearly defined, interesting and ambitious, working across different artforms.</p> <p>Jaine Lumsden comments that AAP would benefit from the stability of flexible funding which would allow them to build on their success of delivering participatory work and supporting emerging BME practitioners. AAP's programme of professional work is high risk and she agrees with AAP's analysis that to mainstream BME work requires more input to the professional sector, but is not convinced from the information available that they will be able to produce high quality work.</p> <p>While the expenditure is reasonable for their proposed programme from 2009 – 11 it is dependant on a high risk strategy of fundraising, with around 70% of the budget to be raised from public and 'other' funding sources, none of which is yet approved.</p> <p>AAP currently employs 3 fulltime staff and the Business Plan outlines proposals to employ a further full time member of staff plus 2 additional p/t staff. However if the necessary funding is not secured, this will have a major impact on their staffing proposals and subsequent work capacities.</p> <p>In addition, much of the work in 2009 – 11 is based around film and video work which appears to be dependant on a grant from SAC's Capital department to purchase the equipment. Likewise the proposed 2008/09 professional production is reliant on a grant from the Drama department's over-subscribed touring and production fund.</p> <p>This organisation is developing good and interesting work within the BME community and is still in an early stage of its development. The main elements of AAP's work to date have been in increasing participation and audiences for the arts within the BME community and the professional development of emergent BME practitioners. Prioritising the professional work of the organisation is a valid next strand in AAP's ongoing development and it will support development among emerging BME artists and move to fulfilling the organisation's ambition to be part of mainstream professional arts activities in Scotland.</p>		

However, while the organisation has obvious ambition for the future, the plans outline a major shift to professional working without a great deal of a track record or positive assessment around the quality of the proposed work. AAP would benefit from some level of Flexible Funding to further develop work across all three strands, perhaps over a longer timescale giving the organisation more support and confidence before fully engaging in mainstream arts activity.

I am not confident that AAP has the capacity at present to raise the levels of funding that form the basis of the programme and staffing levels for 2009 – 11. In addition there are no fall back plans should the organisation not secure that level of projected income.

In summary, the application meets the criteria of strong artistic vision and a commitment to engaging with the public. The Governance of the organisation looks good, the management appears satisfactory and there is a full commitment to equal opportunities across all aspects of the company's work. As outlined above I have concerns about the budget and the high risk strategy for income raising on which most of the future working is dependant

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date:06.02.08 Revised: 20.03.08
Print name:	Kate Craik	

**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 Kirsteen Macdonald, Susan Nickalls, Sita Ramamurthy, Louise Butler, Steve Slater, Alan Riach, Wendy Niblock and Sally Wilson.

The panel commented that Ankur Arts' vision is broad, international and intercultural. In the context of other work undertaken in the UK with the BME community, their work is non-traditional or 'issue'-based which was welcomed. **Ankur Arts** appear to be on an energetic and exciting journey and from the application, a curiosity and playfulness came across. The application demonstrates strong choices in their artistic collaborations. Their aspirations are strong but also practical and there is strong cross artform collaboration and community engagement. The notion of cross artform practice has been captured very well. The company is looking at a wider area than Glasgow and this was seen as positive. The business plan appeared well-appraised. However, the panel considered that there was a lack of clarity in their self-assessment for example, statistics were not given and claims were not always evidence-based.

The panel rated this application as 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:**

Ankur Arts is a young company, established in 2004 and has been supported to date through a range of Scottish Arts Council project funding including Cultural Diversity.

*1. Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

Ankur Arts strongly articulates a commitment to *artistic leadership* and I believe that the company has the potential to make a significant contribution to the arts sector in Scotland and to raise the aspirations of artists from BME community.

*1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:*

Ankur Arts meets the criteria of *public engagement*, providing opportunities for a sector of the community often marginalised from arts activity. The company is committed to transforming participation, performance and attendance within the BME community in the arts and has achieved considerable success in this, particularly within their outreach work.

*1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:*

Ankur Arts is a limited company with charitable status. There is an active board which represents a strong mix of skills. AAP is a small and developing company currently and operates well within this context but if successful in achieving flexible funding should aim to strengthen its infrastructure.

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

AAP's vision is to extend opportunities in the arts to communities who do not usually access the arts and they work strategically to promote and ensure equality. The company have an Equal Opportunities and Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy which extends to all aspects of the company's working and engagement.

*1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:*

Ankur Arts has met the matched funding requirement.

*2. Fit with Departmental priorities:*

In the application and business plan Ankur Arts demonstrates a commitment to the *development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries*, in strong alignment with the Cross Art Form priority for Flexible funding.

*3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:*

Ankur Arts contributes significantly to the Scottish Arts Council's Aims 1 and 2; '*to support artists to fulfil their creative and business potential*' and '*to increase participation in the arts*'.

**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 the application as **medium** priority for support.

*1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:*

I concur with the Assessing Officer and the Special Advisors panel on the strong artistic leadership being demonstrated by Ankur Arts in this application. Ankur Arts has achieved much on limited resources and organisational infrastructure. The organisation does have some development areas, as highlighted by the Assessing Officer in the assessment, particularly in relation to the fundraising strategy and the significant expansion in the work proposed. My rating reflects this.

**1.3 Strengths of application:**

- meets the criteria for Flexible funding and the cross arts priority
- imaginative, dynamic and distinctive approach to developing culturally diverse arts activity.

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:**

- High fundraising targets, including from Scottish Arts Council project funds which may not be achievable.
- Proposed staffing infrastructure may not be most appropriate.

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

There is a high risk strategy for income raising on which most of the future work as outlined in the application, is dependant., The plans outline a major shift to professional working and the organisation has had a variable track record in this work to date.

**1.6 Development areas identified:**

Development areas include financial planning and organisational development. If supported I would recommend a facilitated mentoring programme for the Director in 2008/09 in preparation for becoming a Flexibly funded organisation and that the budgets and programme are revised to focus delivery.

**1.7 Recommended level of support:**

Flexible funding would enable Ankur Arts to consolidate and develop its work. I recommend funding at the level of £100,000 in 2009/10.

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

**Comments:**

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

Ankur Arts is based in Glasgow where the majority of its proposed activities will take place. In the application they note that activity will also take place in Edinburgh and Dundee.

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

Ankur Arts has not identified in the application where they anticipate their audience coming from.

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

**MEDIUM**

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

Anita Clark

Date: 13 February 2008  
Revised 26 March 2008

<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> Good overall fit with FXO criteria. Fund at the level requested. Suggested level of support: £100,000 annually.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		Strong 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. Suggested level of support: £100,000 annually.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		Strong medium
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>APPROVE</b>
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£100,000 annually

End of Assessment