

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Aros (Isle of Skye) Ltd	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001090	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£25,000	£25,750
<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>  Aros are a key provider of cultural provision within the community of Skye. The organisations does have a good track record and the applications ambition to develop into a Gaelic centre of excellence and furthering its educational work are relevant.</p> <p><b>Strengths;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some evidence of partnership working (although role descriptions limited)</li> <li>• Working in two policy areas Gaelic arts Education</li> <li>• Area limited in provision</li> <li>• Staff experienced</li> <li>• Evidence of some engagement with local community and reasonable audience development</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgets confusing and lacking detail</li> <li>• Lack of detail in programming</li> <li>• Unconvinced of artistic vision as a result</li> <li>• Application is not up to scratch overall with a significant lack of detail, aims and objectives for flexible funding status</li> <li>• Meets FXO criteria only partially</li> <li>• Weak business plan</li> <li>• Limited Equal opportunities policy</li> </ul> <p>The application is lacking a fair amount of detail with regards to programming detail, the educational plans and budgets. There are also relevant partnerships that should be forged with other key organisations in the Gaelic sector (Sabhal Mor, the Gaelic college) in order to realise its ambition of becoming a Gaelic centre of excellence. However, the organisation has a track record and is operating in an area in need of support with cultural provision. It is also recommended that there is engagement with YMI on future music education programmes.</p> <p>An overall rating of medium has been arrived at in recognition of the organisations track record and the rural community which it serves, but generally the application is let down significantly by a lack of detail in artistic programming and vision and by unbalanced and confusing budgets. Due to the missing artistic programming detail and outlined vision for the 09-11 period, it is unclear from the application exactly how well the application fits to the FXO criteria.</p>		
<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 30 January 2008
Print name:	Caroline Winn	Date: 20 March 2008

## 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 comments:

Although the panel recognised **Aros (Isle of Skye )Ltd's** track record, the artistic vision articulated is not as strong as they might have expected. There is a lack of clarity in the application as to Aros's role and focus and how it is balancing artistic development with its function as a tourist facility and its education resource. The panel would have expected to see more artistic aspiration. The panel recognise the geographic importance of Aros. The application demonstrated some understanding of audience data and reporting but this could be strengthened and is acknowledged within the application.

The panel rated this application as medium 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:

Aros is a cross art form venue based in Portree founded in 1993. The venue includes a theatre 'Talla Shomhairle' which programmes across the performing arts. It is a significant arts and cultural resource for the area and does have the potential to play a key role in Gaelic arts development. However, it is disappointing that the approach to partnership working with other cultural organisations in Skye is not demonstrated more effectively within the application.

#### 1. Fit with FXO criteria:

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

The application from Aros does not sufficiently demonstrate excellence in *artistic leadership*.

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

The application meets the criteria of *public engagement*, providing audiences with opportunities in the performing arts in a remote, rural area.

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

Aros is a limited company. The assessing officer raises concerns about the business plan and financial planning.

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

Aros has an Equal Opportunities policy in place but this focuses on recruitment procedures and it does not appear to be fully comprehensive.

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

Aros has met the matched funding requirement.

### *2. Fit with Departmental priorities*

The proposed programme expands across the performing arts but has not clearly demonstrated the Cross Art form priority for the development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries.

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

Aros contributes to the Scottish Arts Council's Aim 2; '*to increase participation in the arts*'. It also contributes to Aim 3; '*to place learning at the heart of learning*' through the proposed partnership with Portree High School, although this appears as separate activity rather than being integrated within the artistic vision of the organisation.

**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 the Special Advisors panel and rate the application as **medium** priority for support.

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

The rating reflects the lack of clarity and information in this application, particularly in relation to the artistic strategy of the organisation.

##### *1.3 Strengths of application:*

- Evidence of some engagement with local community and reasonable audience development
- Providing opportunities in an area with limited provision.

##### *1.4 Weaknesses of applications:*

- Artistic vision not articulated strongly and only partially meets flexible funding criteria
- Inaccuracies in budgeting
- Lack of clarity in business plan.

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

Lack of detail across business plan and artistic programme raises a high number of risks.

##### *1.6 Development areas identified:*

Artistic and financial planning.

##### *1.7 Recommended level of support*

Given the high level of competition for flexible funding, I am not recommending support for Aros Ltd.

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

**Comments:**

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

Aros is based in the Isle of Skye in the Highlands and all the proposed work takes place in this location.

*1.2 Where will the audience come from?*

Aros anticipates that the majority of their audiences comes from Skye but identifies that 37% will come from throughout and outwith Scotland.

**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> 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>		LOW MEDIUM
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

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

**End of Assessment**