

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Dub Busters	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001099	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£47,350	£49,750
<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</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>		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<p>Itchy Coo has made a major impact upon Scotland's literary and linguistic culture in a very short space of time, and conspicuously raised the standards for Scots language publishing. Feedback and evaluation confirms that the series is helping to emancipate institutional and public prejudice towards a language which has long-suffered from misrepresentation and negative stereotyping. Evidence of the series' commercial and critical success – Itchy Coo titles have now won three significant literary prizes - demonstrates the significant extent to which it is growing the audience for Scots language material. The organisation has achieved seminal work in making its mark and influencing policy and practice throughout schools, community groups, educationalists, local and national government, in high-profile international arenas, and all of Scotland's national literature and language organisations. Within the political realm it has carried out a critical advocacy role at the highest strategic level. Such are its impact and influence that demand for its services has never been higher.</p> <p>In its own right, the creation of the current series of almost thirty Itchy Coo titles is a significant artistic achievement. Combined with the organisation's extensive advocacy and outreach activities and programme, it is a flagship initiative for Scots whose success has been achieved on very modest resources of £30k per year in project funding.</p>		
<b>Sources: Portfolio of evidence.</b>		
<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>HIGH</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 14/ 01/08
Print name:	Emma Turnbull	Revised 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?

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:

The Advisors commended the exceptionally high quality in creative and educational terms of this initiative, its major national significance, and the 'astonishing' and 'formidable' levels of activity achieved by Itchy Coo. It was noted that there might be implications for creative sustainability over a longer period of time for the two personnel in question, if a suitable infrastructure is not secured, and the application's proposal for the evolution of Itchy Coo into a national agency with a wider role was welcomed as a necessary strategic goal. This was thought to be especially timely in the context of the Government's announcement of an 'audit' of Scots language provision. There was major potential for the organisation's current work to be rolled out nationally into teacher-training, and the overall infrastructure of CPD for teachers. It was noted in particular that there was strong potential for Itchy Coo and the Scots Language Centre to work together more closely.

Based on the evidence of the business plan and proposals to develop new writers using Scots, there was thought to be scope for Itchy Coo to investigate strategic partnerships with SAC and Scottish Book Trust to secure agreed levels of financial and mentoring support specifically for emergent writers in Scots from existing schemes (Live Literature, words@work, Writers' Bursaries), as IC did not, at funding levels currently proposed, have sufficient resource to provide this.

The panel rated Itchy Coo 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:

The impact and reception of Itchy Coo publicly, critically, commercially, and politically at the highest national strategic levels correspond to the Department's and SAC's aims in an exemplary and comprehensive fashion, and do so with a quite remarkable value for public money. The proposals and potential of the application represent a major opportunity to position the Scots language at even higher levels on the transformational artistic, participation, and educational national agendas.

#### 1. Fit with FXO criteria:

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

Demonstrates outstanding artistic vision and leadership at all levels through innovation and critical and commercial success; has set highest standards for the whole sector and emergent writers.

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

Consistently successful in stimulating public interest in, and enthusiasm for, the Scots language and in growing new audiences; has established itself as a major public and political ambassador for the

sector.

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

Has managed slender financial and human resources with considerable skill and rigour.

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

Itchy Coo's raison d'etre is to challenge institutional and public discrimination against the Scots language through imaginative empowerment and increased access, and by deliberately exploiting flexible forms of Scots that avoid obeisance to the historically-entrenched doctrines of 'correct' or 'standard' forms of Scots usage and orthography which have greatly hindered understanding of, and accessibility to, the language.

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

Meets matched funding requirement.

**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:**

Meets all three aims strongly.

- 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**

It is difficult to improve upon the lead officer's observation that Itchy Coo has effected a creative and educational transformation, in a remarkably short space of time, in Scotland's literary and linguistic landscapes by effectively re-inventing Scots-language publishing. It demonstrates strongly Literature's ability to surmount the most complex of barriers, with highly modest investment. The Specialist Advisors' caveat about possible 'burn-out' is noted, but experience of the project to date indicates that there is an exponential relationship between its increasing success and the creativity, flair, and ambition of its architects.

**1.1 Application rating:**

I concur with the lead officer and Specialist Advisors and rate this application as a high priority for support.

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

Consistent evidence of outstanding artistic and educational achievement and impact, and strategic significance.

**1.3 Strengths of application:**

- Artistic vision, innovation, and public engagement
- Track record of quality of work and achievements in education
- Impact and value for money

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:**

Infrastructure of organisation is relatively weak, by its nature.

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

Some risk of burn-out in two writers involved if infrastructural base is not strengthened.

**1.6 Development areas identified:**

Work more strategically with existing agencies to provide more formalised means of support to emergent writers in Scots; consider development of a Board or Advisory Group.

**1.7 Recommended level of support:**

To the level requested: £47,350 (Year 1); £49, 750 (Year 2).

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

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

Programme and activity takes place Scotland-wide.

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

All of Scotland.

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

**HIGH**

Head of Department's signature:

Date: 15 February 2008

Print name:

Dr Gavin Wallace

Revised: 25 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> Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. Fund at the level requested (averaged over 2 years). Support of £48,550 annually is proposed.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		High
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. Support of £48,550 annually is proposed.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		High
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:</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	£48,550 annually