

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Solar Bear Ltd	
Application Reference number:	G201001096	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£86,142	£145,683
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>The application is from an organisation which has clearly demonstrated a strong commitment to developing high quality inclusive theatre for wide ranging audiences (particularly teenagers). The work they plan represents their aim of producing work which involves young, emerging performers working alongside more established artists within an inclusive environment. There is a strong focus on creation of new forms of theatre as part of their vision to be inclusive and ground-breaking in their programme.</p> <p>The work is likely to be of a good quality and relevant to young audiences (given track record and plans outlined). Plans are innovative as well as representing the lives of young (marginalised) people. SB has demonstrated that they prioritise partnership working with key people/organisations eg NToS to deliver their aims and open up opportunities for young participants to have quality based artistic experiences. While SB prioritises public engagement, audience/participation figures are relatively low. Having said that they will be working with under-represented groups of people to a high degree.</p> <p>This proposal fits the Drama Department's priority for Children and Young People to a high degree</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 31 January 2008 Revised: 20 March 2008
Print name:	Angela Hogg	

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:

Attendees:

David Taylor, Co-Director of Arts

Specialist Advisors: Stewart Ennis, Tim Licata, David Leddy, Alex Patience, Sandy Maxwell, Stephen Slater, Stephen Stenning and Laura Tyrrell

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of: Solar Bear

Solar Bear is an interesting company and their work is evolving and this is apparent in the application. Their work with young people has been extensive and the developments with working with deaf people are encouraging. This striking out in a new direction is welcome. The work produced is surprising and not what you would expect.

SB is working in a difficult sector with a broad range of people involved. SAs were interested to see what the company would produce in the next 2-3 years and did not consider that this was the right time for it to move to flexible funding.

The SAs thought that SB was very good at inclusive practise, but some felt the artistic programme was not distinctive; it was not clear from the application what areas of theatre the company sat in.

Specialist Advisors overall rating: Low

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:

Solar Bear (SB) is an award winning Glasgow based theatre company which creates multi-disciplinary theatre (incorporating British Sign Language (BSL) into the work) for people of all ages. The company has received project funding from the SAC Drama, Equalities and Lottery Budgets over the last few years for commissioning, creation of work, workshop programmes and capacity building.

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

The company's vision is strong and unique in Scotland. The company has strong artistic leadership as it has led on theatre work for deaf people in Scotland. It provides support to artists who are deaf and has developed tailored approaches to this area of work.

1.2 *Improving your engagement with the public*

The applicant has strong engagement with the public, in particular deaf people and looked-after children. The plans would extend this engagement.

1.3 *Good practice in the governance and management*

The business plan lacks an overarching vision and there is a lack of detail in the planning.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

The applicant is clearly focussed on widening access and achieving high artistic standards for people with disabilities, as that is essentially the company's primary purpose.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Met.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

The proposals fit with Drama priorities in relation to theatre for children.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

The applicant prioritises an inclusive approach to theatre making. They have a strong focus on developing young people as artists (**fulfilling artists' potential**).

They have recently launched a new Deaf Youth Theatre. SB provides workshops across Scotland and has supported in-house apprenticeships. (**increasing participation**) Key achievements include translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into BSL; involvement in the *Arts Across The Curriculum* initiative (**arts at the heart of 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

1.1 Application rating

The Assessing Officer rates the application as medium priority for support. However SAs felt that the organisation was more appropriately sited within project funding and therefore gave it a low rating. I think that the objects and practice of the company are extremely strong - therefore I recommend this as a medium priority.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

As above.

1.3 Strengths of application

The track record of the applicant is good and it has led in an area of work that will increase participation and inclusion.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

There is a lack of detail in relation to the business and managerial aspects of the proposals.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

There is a risk that the company will find it difficult to move on to a more professional basis.

1.6 Development areas identified

Business planning.

1.7 Recommended level of support

£100,000 per annum.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Most of the activity will happen in the home-base city of Glasgow, but over the funding period the company will reach 12 local authority areas. This represents a significant impact in this specialised area.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

David Taylor

Date: 15 February 2008
Revised: 26 March 2008

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: Good overall fit with FXO criteria to merit strong medium priority but relatively lower in comparison to other applications because of the issues identified in the assessment. In a very competitive funding environment with limited funds available, it is not possible to support all strong medium rated applications. Therefore, not recommended for support.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Strong Medium
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.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Strong Medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

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		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	

End of Assessment