

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	X Factor Dance Company	
Application Reference number:	G201001017	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£160,000	£164,800
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</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>		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The X-Factor Dance Company was formed in 1990 by artistic director Alan Greig. X Factor is still developing as a company, although in receipt of core funding for six years. The company has suffered from many staff changes, which have disrupted the company's management, impacting on its targets. The company has recently appointed a new manager and chair who seem to be providing good support to the Artistic Director. X Factor is seeking 23% increase in funding mainly to support increasing staff costs.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic Director challenging his practice and looking to develop new working practices • X Factor has strong links with the tertiary colleges • X Factor has become more ambitious in its programme over the last two years • Strong Board support • Works with high quality artists • Financially stable, but with limited reserves • Programme reaching 17 areas of Scotland and possibly internationally <p>X Factor has a reasonable track record of artistic achievement 55% of artistic evaluations good or excellent</p> <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear within the application what the artistic projects will be, or who the proposed collaborators are • Unclear on the on-going involvement of the named dancers to the company's projects • The company has set highly ambitious targets for performance numbers and audience figures (not reflective of historic figures 285% increase in attendances proposed) • Limited reserves • Fundraising targets never achieved – currently showing less income generated than agreed to for 08/09 (10% instead of 25%) • No SMART objectives within the Marketing section, so the plan would need to be developed <p>Flexible funding criteria:</p> <p>1. Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists – met in part While the company is more aspirational in its aims, the programme is not sufficiently detailed to make a rigorous comment on its artistic vision.</p> <p>2. Improving your engagement with the public – met The business plan provides clear approach to improving this. The company's commitment to education</p>		

reflects its wish to engage with the public.

3. Good practice in the governance and management – met

X Factor has a new Chair and Manager, who are both experienced and pro-active in developing the company.

4. Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access – met

X Factor regularly works with dancers with disabilities. It's current show is with an integrated company.

5. Raising other income at least 25% - met

Dance priority - developing choreographic practice, production and touring – met in part

There is little information within the application to inform as to what the choreographic developments might be.

The lack of detail provided on the artistic programme does not strongly demonstrate excellence in artistic leadership. It would therefore be a lower priority for support compared to other applications.

Officer's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Lead Officer signature:

Date: 10 December 2007

Updated: 20 March 2008

Print name:

Susan Hay

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 panel of dance specialist advisors who considered this application included Dawn Hartley, Ian Spink, Lucy Mason and David Williams. The panel commented:

The panel were disappointed in the application from the **X-Factor Dance Company**, in that it provides little information on the company's artistic plans and collaborations. From their experience of X-Factor performances, the panel considered X Factor to have a variable artistic track record and commented that the previous work had not always delivered to its potential or achieved the quality of choreography that would be desired. The panel recognised the strength of the company's educational/community work and the commitment to this.

The panel rated the application as low 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:

X-Factor Dance Company is the vehicle for the choreography of Artistic Director, Alan Grieg. In recent years, the company has broadened to include the commissioning of other choreographers to create new work which have formed double bills with Grieg's own choreography. The company was a core funded organisation and since April 2007 has been Flexible funded.

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

The lack of artistic clarity in the application and the company's track record does not demonstrate strongly that it meets the FXO criteria of 'artistic excellence and leadership'.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

X-Factor demonstrates a commitment to engaging the public through its touring and commitment to education.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

X-Factor is a limited company with charitable status. There is clear understanding of business practice demonstrated within the business plan and the company is working with the Scottish Arts Council's Quality Framework.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

Within the application it states that X Factor Dance works within the Social model of disability and in the last three years X Factor has demonstrated a commitment to widening access mainly through community and education projects and involvement of disabled dancers.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

X-Factor Dance Company has met the matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

The application meets the dance department's priority of 'the development of choreographic practice, production and touring' but again the application does not demonstrate how this will be achieved as clearly as other competing applications.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

X-Factor Dance Company's vision and proposed plan of work contribute most significantly to Scottish Arts Council's Aims 1 and 2: 'to support artists to fulfil their artistic 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

In the context of a high competition for flexible funding, it is my assessment that X-Factor is a low priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

I concur with the concerns raised by the Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisors over the lack of artistic plans in the application. These comments resonate with the feedback given to the company during the Strategic Review and it is disappointing that this has not been addressed.

1.3 Strengths of application

- company has a commitment to education work and strong links with the tertiary colleges
- X-Factor has been more ambitious in its programme over the past year and the application states the Artistic Director's desire to develop new working practices.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

- lack of detail on the artistic plans and the collaborators that would be engaged
- weak articulation of the creative drive developing the company's work

- highly ambitious targets for performance numbers and audience figures which are not reflective of previous achievement;
- track record in achieving fundraising targets weak
- plans for marketing and audience development require strengthening

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

There are significant fundraising targets within the application but X-Factor's track record in this area has been weak.

1.6 Development areas identified

The most significant area identified for X-Factor is the development of the company's artistic vision reflected in the lack of detail in the artistic plans within the application.

1.7 Recommended level of support

Given the high level of competition for flexible funding, I am not recommending support for X-Factor Dance Company

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?

X-Factor Dance Company is based in Edinburgh but it has a wider geographic impact through its touring programme and education activities. In the application they state that they will work in a further 16 local authority areas.

1.2 Where will the audience come from?

X-Factor has not indicated in the application their anticipated audience reach.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		LOW
Head of Department's signature:		Date: 12 February 2008 Updated:26 March 2008
Print name:	Anita Clark	

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: Weak overall fit with FXO criteria in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		LOW
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		LOW
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 agrees with the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£

End of Assessment