



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Selection of Multi-Annual Funding Clients
Date:	14 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development ext 3470
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Relevant Background Information

Multi-Annual Funding for Culture and Arts was implemented in 2004 after extensive consultation to inform the process and criteria for assessment. The second round of Multi-Annual Funding for the period 2008-2011 was initiated in July 2007 when organisations who wished to be considered from Multi-Annual Funding were asked to make an expression of interest. An extensive process of advisory consultations was undertaken with organisations to appraise them of the process and to discuss the eligibility and criteria. Twenty one organisations submitted by the deadline of 7 September 2007. These organisations were evaluated against the criteria and recommendations to select 4 new organisations for Multi-Annual Funding (Belfast Exposed, Cinemagic, Northern Visions and Young at Art) were brought before Development Committee in 14 November 2007. The selected organisations were then required to submit a three year programme for funding.

In approving the selection of Multi-Annual Funding clients the Development Committee discussed the possibility of Multi-Annual Funding being offered on an annual basis. The Director of Development indicated that she would submit a report to a future meeting on the establishment of a policy which would enable new organisations to be admitted to the three year Multi-Annual Funding scheme on an annual basis.

Key Principles in Establishing Multi-Annual Funding

The move to Multi-Annual Funding was undertaken after an extensive review process dating back to 2002 when it was discussed as part of the development of the Culture and Arts Plan for 2003-2006. The aim of Multi-Annual Funding was to develop a more strategic approach to funding which enabled longer term relationships with grant clients and embedded a more proactive approach to programme delivery for larger flagship organisations.

It was considered that £30,000 per annum should be the expected minimum grant

awarded to Multi-Annual Funding clients to reflect the additional investment in partnership and as a reflection of the move to a service level agreement.

To allow this to take place it was felt that there needed to be a move away from an overly cumbersome administration process for grant applications and towards an efficient administrative process which facilitated a change of focus towards relationship building and direct liaison over developmental issues, programme and strategic objectives.

Key Issues

There are advantages to providing the flexibility for organisations to apply for funding on a yearly basis as it will respond to rapidly developing organisations and could potentially lead to more Multi-Annual Funding clients being admitted.

In considering this issue, Members should note the balance of funding between Multi-Annual and Annual Funding, whereby currently 63% of financial resources are invested in the existing 14 Multi-Annually Funded organisations.

Grant Review

A review of the Development Department external grant funding process on a Departmental-wide basis has been commissioned and will be making recommendations toward the end of the year. It is therefore recommended that this further review of Multi-Annual funding is considered as an interim measure for this year only, subject to the recommendations arising from the review.

Process

To run a further selection process for Multi-Annual Funding in 2008 it will be necessary to advertise for expressions of interest in early June. Officers generally contact the interested organisations and hold one to one meetings where appropriate to discuss eligibility and selection criteria. The deadline for completed tenders will be mid-August to allow for programme applications to be received for either Annual or Multi-Annual funding by November 2008.

It is suggested that the term of Multi-Annual Funding will be for 2 years in the first instance, to allow for the Departmental grant funding review to be completed, and any findings to be known. Funding would then be awarded for a 2 year period bringing the end of their funding in line with other Multi-Annually Funded organisations. This would ensure that the bulk of administration of Multi-Annual Funding is streamlined and that all of the Multi-Annual clients could be subjected to external evaluation at the same time thus reducing costs.

Timetable

Advertise for expressions of interest	early June 2008
Deadline for expressions of interest	early July 2008
One to one meetings	July – mid August 2008
Deadline for completed tenders	Mid August 2008
Recommendation of multi-annual funding clients to Development Committee	October 2008
Council approval of multi-annual funding clients	November 2008
Programme applications deadline MAF and AF	November 2008

Staffing Resources

The call for expressions of interest in 2007 resulted in 63 organisations responding by the deadline of 24 July. It is estimated that over three weeks of officer time was required to contact all of the interested organisations and hold one to one meetings to discuss eligibility. A further five weeks of officer time was required to assess the 21 tenders received. Further time for feedback meetings with both successful and unsuccessful organisations is also required.

Financial Resources

At present, each of the Multi-Annual Funding clients receives an expected minimum of £30,000. In the 2008/09 year £612,000 (63%) of the available £960,000 is allocated to the 14 Multi-Annual Funding clients. If further Annual Funded clients are selected for Multi-Annual Funding this will result in some of them receiving a considerable uplift in funding to provide for greater developmental opportunity, although this will also have the effect of focusing more resources in the larger organisations.

Therefore, in order to balance the sector's needs in this regard, it is recommended that a limit of two is put on the further number of current Annual Funding clients that are admitted to the Multi-Annual Funding scheme, who would receive the recommended minimum award of £30,000.

If the recommendation were accepted that the number of new Multi-Annual Funding clients be limited to two, subject to performance against the agreed scheme's entry criteria, and the two organisations who scored over 65% in the previous Multi-Annual Funding selection process be admitted to Multi Annual Funding, this would require an additional annual contribution in the region of £30,000 being allocated to the two organisations. This would raise the percentage of funding to Multi-Annual Funding clients to 70% (£672,000) of the existing fund, with 30% of funding available to the other 38 Annual Funding organisations.

Resource Implications

Financial

Resources will be identified within the annual revenue estimates for Annual and Multi-Annual Funding for Culture and Arts, However, Members will need to note the financial implications of increasing funding to Multi-Annual organisations.

Human Resources

Prioritisation of staffing resources against the section's operational requirements will be required to implement this process.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members consider the process outlined above for the admission of further Multi-Annual Funding organisations in 2008 and:

- 1) Approve the promotion of a 2 year Multi-Annual Funding scheme from 2009/10 as outlined above
- 2) Approval to an admission of a maximum of two further clients into the Multi-Annual Funding scheme, subject to full assessment against the agreed scheme entry criteria .
- 3) Agree the timetable as shown, for the promotion and processing of the scheme.