



The National Trust
for Scotland

The Big Lottery Fund
1st Floor, 33 Bothwell Street
Glasgow
G2 6NL

29 September 2004

Dear Sir/Madam

BIG LOTTERY FUND CONSULTATION

Thank you for consulting the National Trust for Scotland on the mission and values of the newly-formed Big Lottery Fund (BLF). The Trust responded to the National Lottery consultation held in 2003 entitled the 'Decision Document' and in its response, the Trust supported the proposal to set up a new 'Community' distributor and the emphasis that was to be placed on involving the public and encouraging innovation and transformation.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Trust intends only to make general remarks in response to the consultation document, as the questionnaire asks for comments on previous experience of the Community Fund or the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which the Trust does not have. Providing examples of the previous work of the two funds concerned would have been helpful in setting the context for this consultation, and the document itself might have benefited from some content reflecting the experience gained by the operators of the Community and NOF Funds.

Mission and Values

The stated emphasis on tackling 'disadvantage' needs to be much more clearly explained. The document does not define disadvantage but makes continuous reference to it.

- Fairness – the value of fairness, ensuring equal access to funding, is generally supported but question 2 in the questionnaire asks for ideas on how funding for the voluntary and community sector should be prioritised. This 'weighted' approach to funding seems to contradict the principle of fairness to some extent and this needs to be acknowledged and resolved in the final strategic plan.
- Accessibility – easier access to funding is strongly supported. Removing barriers between funds should be a key advantage to the BLF. More advice for smaller groups on form-filling and a simplified application process would help to improve accessibility. The funder should be more aware of the multiple benefits to communities of projects and therefore the difficulty in categorising a project to 'fit' the funding programme. The interaction of people with their environment is crucial to the work of the Trust, but flexibility is required to allow a project that benefits both the environment and the community to be successful without having to focus on only one area of benefit. It is hoped that the broader remit of the BLF will enable this to happen.

- Strategic Focus – in order to promote long term change and sustainable development, grants that ensure future maintenance of large capital projects should be made available. Without funding provision for upkeep, initial benefits might be lost over time. Funding the infrastructure of a project, such as staffing and equipment, is also crucial to long term success. Sustainable development should be an integral part of the project assessment process.
- Involving People – there should be some acknowledgement within the strategic plan that a ‘community’ can be a local group, but it can also represent a community of interest. Using existing networks to communicate the work of the BLF will apply to both these types of ‘community’. The geography of Scotland also needs to be recognised when addressing the issue of involving people, given the significant population in remote areas. The public might realise the range of projects that the BLF is funding if funded projects were required to ‘report back’ on the project through local media or open days.
- Innovation – building on experience gained from programmes run in the past and encouraging feedback from grant applicants will help to improve performance and achieve the stated mission of the BLF.
- Additional to Government – there should be a very clear criterion laid down for BLF funding which demonstrates that the projects being supported are ‘adding value’ to government activities and not subsidising what should be government-funded activity.

National and Transformational Programmes

Prioritising the funding available under national and transformational programmes, especially projects of national significance, should pay particular attention to any existing national strategy on an area of interest. A national strategy is not dependent on or driven by local communities and any proposals should reflect the wider communities of interest that exist in society.

Big Lottery Fund Committees

Members of the BLF committee in Scotland should have relevant Scottish-based experience, whether through living or working in Scotland. Members should sit on the committee as individuals rather than as representatives of their sector, but recruitment of members should ensure a wide range of experience is brought into the committee.

I hope that the above comments are useful. The Trust is content for this response to be made publicly available - please let me know if my colleagues or I could provide further information or clarification. Please keep me informed as to the outcome of this consultation.

Yours sincerely

John Mayhew
Head of Policy and Planning



The National Trust for Scotland

The National Trust for Scotland is the conservation charity which protects and promotes Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy.

The Trust's statutory purposes, as laid down in its Acts of Parliament, can be paraphrased as:

- To ensure the permanent conservation, through ownership or other means, of nationally important land, buildings and collections
- To enable people to visit and enjoy the Trust's properties, to see and experience them in ways which are consistent with their conservation
- To influence and persuade others by example to share and support the Trust's aims and work

The Trust is Scotland's largest voluntary conservation organisation, with some 266,000 members and 490 permanent staff. It owns or manages 128 properties, including almost 76,000 hectares of countryside. The Trust cares on behalf of the nation for a great diversity of properties, including mountains, coastlines, islands, woodlands, battlefields and historic sites, gardens, castles, mansions and cottages. Those properties where numbers are recorded welcome around 1.6 million visitors each year, and hundreds of thousands more visit its countryside properties unrecorded.