

**MEETING 21/03/2019**

**Ref: 15327**

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Cornerstone Fund**

**Race On The Agenda**

**Adv: Jenny Field**

**Amount requested: £257,100**

**Base: Islington**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: £257,100**

**The Partnership**

This proposal is led by Race on the Agenda (ROTA) in partnership with Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) and the Runnymede Trust. Both ROTA and BTEG are well known to the Trust and both organisations currently hold grants from the Trust in their own right. The Runnymede Trust has not applied for a grant from the Trust since 2002.

The three partners propose to work closely with other race-equality organisations which are brought together under the auspices of the Coalition for Race Equality (CORE), as well as wider voluntary sector networks in London, including London Plus, the new umbrella body for London's civil society.

**The Lead Organisation**

ROTA is a leading social policy think tank on issues that affect Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) communities. It also aims to strengthen the voice of BAMER communities through increased civic engagement and participation in society. ROTA achieves this by working with BAMER communities and the BAMER sector and by informing, influencing and increasing the awareness of decision makers, policy makers and stakeholders in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

ROTA has been actively involved in the development and implementation of The Way Ahead<sup>1</sup> and was a recipient of funding from your Bridge Fund<sup>2</sup> with two grants of £50,000 and £25,000 respectively.

**The Proposal**

This partnership is one of 11 organisations that went through the first stage of the Cornerstone Fund<sup>3</sup>. It was awarded a development grant of £19,400 in order to work up its second stage application, the subject of the proposal before you today.

It is proposed to address the communications and media needs of BAMER organisations in London. By working with corporate and charitable communications and media organisations, and with individual journalists and communications practitioners, the three partners wish to develop communication and media

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<sup>1</sup> The Way Ahead is a collaboration which aims to improve, and secure the future of, civil society support by putting London's communities at the heart of what we do.

<sup>2</sup> The Bridge Fund was a 'pot' of £1m which you established to enable organisations previously funded by London Councils to remain engaged with The Way Ahead.

<sup>3</sup> The Cornerstone Fund is the Anniversary Infrastructure Support programme of £3m originally which you have developed in partnership with a cross-sectoral advisory group and in consultation with the voluntary sector in London.

strategies in order to improve their effectiveness in communicating race equality-focussed messages, policies and positions, as well as influencing policy at the central, regional and local levels.

The partnership used the development grant to undertake a three-month pilot which included detailed discussions with 14 race equality-focused and BAMER-led organisations regarding their communication needs the outcomes of which have informed the proposal before you. The proposal has also been developed in consultation with organisations such as The Media Trust, Media Diversified and IMiX Communications, the communications agency that links organisations working on migration, integration and refugee issues in the UK and the media.

With a focus on grassroots groups, it is proposed to work with two cohorts of 18 organisations annually to deliver a package of communications and media support, meaning that approximately 100 organisations will benefit over the three years of the project. In addition, one-to-one and specific support will be provided to a further 100 individual organisations over the three years to assist with their communications and media engagement. Other proposed outputs include:

- A supported alumni group bringing together current and former participants in the training programme.
- Assistance to organisations which have big set pieces planned (e.g. reports or surveys) by bringing the sector and other supportive bodies behind the piece of work.
- Supporting smaller and less well-resourced organisations to enable them to use data and evidence more effectively in their advocacy and campaigning work.
- A mentoring service, matching staff, board members and volunteers of grassroots organisations to press and communications practitioners (mentors) from across the voluntary, public and private sectors.
- Half-yearly conferences and events focusing on issues of common interest at key times in London's events calendar (e.g. local elections, mayoral hustings, major consultation exercises).

It is proposed to employ a Communications Co-ordinator to oversee the project over the three years who will be directly employed by ROTA as the lead partner. S/he will spend two days per week at ROTA and one day at each of the other two partners. The remaining day will be allocated to external visits, networking and off-site project activities.

The project will be overseen by a reference group comprising the chief officers of the three partners, project participants, and mentors and practitioners.

### **Cornerstone Outcomes**

This proposal will aim to meet the following 'headline' outcomes of the Cornerstone Fund Outcomes Framework:

- **Voice and Influence:** Londoners are able to campaign effectively. Londoners have increased voice and influence.
- **Capacity and Capability:** Community and voluntary groups are effectively supported to deliver their mission and goals. Improved use of civil society assets and resources.

## Financial Information

Unconfirmed income for 2019-20 includes this application to the Cornerstone Fund. ROTA's latest independently examined accounts do not include the cost of raising funds. This has been raised with the organisation which says that this will be included in the 2018-19 accounts.

You will see from the table below that the 2019-20 budget shows that free reserves will be below the target of three months of total expenditure. The overwhelming majority of ROTA's funding is in the form of restricted grants and it finds it challenging to bring in unrestricted income. However, the trustees are aware of the need to maintain reserves at the target level by, for example, by making savings on overheads when possible and by increasing opportunities for earned income such as through the provision of training and/or consultancy.

Year end as at 31st March	2017-18 Examined	2018-19	2019-20
	Accounts	Forecast	Budget
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	318476	259168	376605
- % of income confirmed as at 19/02/2019		99%	31%
Expenditure	-269396	-314632	-376084
Total surplus/(deficit)	49080	-55464	521
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	42839	-51440	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	6241	-4024	521
	49080	-55464	521
Annual expenditure	269,396	314632	376084
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	80478	76454	76975
No of months of total expenditure	3.6	2.9	2.5
Reserves policy target	67349	78658	94021
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	13129	-2204	-17046

- **Data and Intelligence:** Improved access to and use of data and intelligence by all stakeholders informs service design and policy-making.
- **Collaboration:** Improved collaboration between organisations and across sectors that deliver real change to systems."

### **The Recommendation**

The three partners are leading race equality organisations which between them have considerable reach. This project is very timely given the current climate and this project aims to amplify the voice of the BAMER sector and increase its influence.

**£257,100 over three years (£93,100; £82,00; £82,000) towards a programme of communications and media support services benefitting approximately 200 BAMER organisations.**

### **Funding History**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
07/09/2018	£19,400 towards a Project Manager, associated overheads and workshops and events of a pilot seeking to address the communication and media support needs of BAMER organisations in London. (Cornerstone Fund development grant).
14/03/2018	£25,000 towards the CEO's salary to enable ROTA to remain actively engaged with The Way Ahead. (Bridge Fund Grant).
11/05/2017	£50,000 over one year towards a salary and operational costs. The grant is to be spent over a minimum 10 month period to support the organisation's involvement in The Way Ahead and is subject to a review after 6 months. (Bridge Fund grant).
28/01/2016	£112,700 over two further years (£55,600; £57,100) for the salary of a f/t Project Officer and related costs of a project providing training, capacity-building, advice and information to London's voluntary sector. (Investing in Londoners).
19/06/2014	£55,000 over one year towards the full-time salary and associated running costs of a Specialist Project Officer providing training, capacity building support and advice and information on the Equalities Act 2010. Release of the grant is subject to receipt of a satisfactory monitoring report for year 2 of the current grant.
31/05/2012	£100,000 over two years (2 x £50,000) towards the full-time salary and associated running costs of a Project Officer providing training, capacity building support and advice and information on the Equalities Act 2010.