

## **CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Delegated Authority (Requests £50,001 to £100k)**

### **ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital\Voice & leadership**

**Race On The Agenda**

**Ref: 15923**

**Amount requested: £260,000**

**Adv: Geraldine Page**

**Base: Islington**

**Amount recommended: £85,200**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Purpose of grant request:** A contribution to the core costs of the organisation.

#### **The Applicant**

ROTA is a membership organisation and 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. It also holds a Cornerstone Fund<sup>3</sup> grant on behalf of a partnership of Race Equality Organisations for a programme of media engagement.

#### **Background and detail of proposal**

ROTA seeks core funding towards staff and running costs. The organisation's core services are eligible under your programme for Connecting the Capital, with the vast majority of its work based in London.

As the Corona virus exposes and exacerbates the inequalities within society, the disproportionate impact on BAME communities and the socio-economically disadvantaged communities within education, employment, health, housing and criminal justice has been stark. At the same time the pandemic has had a worrying effect on the income for BAME and race equality charities and their ability to secure grant and other forms of funding. As the population starts to come out of isolation and social distancing the extent of the inequalities will become more apparent. Many community organisations providing vital frontline services to marginalised communities are no longer able to do so under lockdown. ROTA has always worked with grassroots community organisations, building their capacity to have a voice at policy level. Rota is one of two organisations providing the secretariat for the Coalition for Race Equality and has recently organised a joint letter from CORE to the Prime Minister and other leading Government Departments. The letter raises a

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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.

number of issues about the effects of COVID 19 on BAME individuals and communities including funding. When the UK comes out of lockdown frontline organisations will need support more than ever before. ROTA's core work focuses on maintaining and developing its membership network of 1,700 organisations and individuals who shape its services and activities. It engages with leaders and activists in the BAMER and the wider voluntary sector, facilitating conferences and events bringing the voluntary sector and policy-makers in the public sector together, and coordinating a range of projects in various areas of equality policy and practice. In delivering an effective response to race discrimination and racism ROTA works collaboratively with partners and allies in the voluntary sector through networks such as CORE, HEAR and London Plus. Furthermore, it engages with policymakers and service leads in public bodies (e.g. local authorities, GLA, NHS structures, the Race Disparity Unity etc) to highlight issues of inequality and exclusion of BAMER communities in relation to access to services and to develop strategies to address these.

Originally ROTA requested an amount that is higher than allowed for your core grants i.e. up to maximum of 10% of an organisation's annual turnover and tapered in subsequent years. This has been corrected and is reflected in the recommended amount being lower than the original request. Your Officer is also recommending a grant for three years rather than five given the current uncertainty with COVID 19. There will still be the option for ROTA to apply for a further 2 years as a continuation funding.

### **Financial Information**

Unconfirmed income for 2020-21 includes this application to the Trust, which is being recommended at a reduced amount. You will see from the table below that the 2020-21 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, which do not always cover the true full costs of a project and can leave a restricted deficit. 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. The financial forecasts were prepared before the Covid 19 emergency and so like the sector as whole there will be an impact on future income unknown currently. However, your Officer has spoken with the organisation and it has a clear plan to adapt services and use technology to continue its work and networks. This includes developing virtual training modules on the Equalities Act and as part of the Cornerstone Communications Project, which in the future could be a source of income. ROTA will need to raise additional funds from elsewhere, but a grant as advised would provide some leverage. Your support will be vital in the months ahead to help the organisation through uncertain times.

Year end as at 31 March	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	309,011	190,536	255,320
- % of Income confirmed as at 15/4/20	N/A	100%	77%
Expenditure	(315,945)	(223,348)	(290,010)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>(6,934)</b>	<b>(32,812)</b>	<b>(34,690)</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(3,192)	(18,340)	(29,909)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(3,742)	(14,471)	(4,781)
	<b>(6,934)</b>	<b>(32,811)</b>	<b>(34,690)</b>
Total Expenditure	315,945	223,348	290,010
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	76,862	62,391	57,610
No of months of total expenditure	2.9	3.4	2.4
Reserves policy target	78,986	55,837	72,503
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(2,124)	6,554	(14,893)

### Recommendation

ROTA is a leading race equality organisation which has 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.

**£85,200 over 3 years (£30,900, £28,400, £25,900) as contribution towards the core costs of the organisation.**

Approved.....  
Deputy Chief Grants Officer

Date.....