

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving London's Environment**Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming****Adv: Sandra Davidson****Amount requested: £144,810****Base: Hackney****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £144,800****The Charity**

Sustain is an alliance of around 100 organisations working to improve the health and welfare of people, animals and environment through the adoption of practices. Its members are as diverse as farmers and food writers, caterers and community food growing projects; and they benefit through sharing experiences and knowledge of their work. Success stories include the Children's Food Campaign (currently funded by the British Heart Foundation) calling for improved food standards and food education in schools; and its lead on the Sustainable Fish City campaign for towns and cities to buy, serve, eat and promote only sustainable fish.

The Application

This application seeks support over three years to develop London Grows, targeting individuals across London with an interest in learning about biodiversity and wildlife-friendly food growing, whilst also improving health and well-being. This will be achieved through a programme of training, volunteer brokerage and capacity building for London's community growing sector, to ensure the opportunities and the benefits it delivers are maintained beyond the project's lifetime. Specifically, the application requests funding for the salary and associated costs of developing this project.

The Recommendation

The charity successfully developed Capital Growth, the UK's largest food growing network, with over 2,000 green space members, each with an average of 20 volunteers who play an essential role in maintaining the gardens. The proposed project has been developed as a result of feedback received from a number of community groups, schools and individuals and which demonstrated the huge opportunities which exist within community food growing projects for people to gain skills, knowledge of the natural environment and to improve their health.

£144,800 over three years (£49,980; £54,900; £39,920) for 2dpw of the Project Officer's salary; 2dpw of the Project Support Officer's salary (2dpw); plus related costs of the London Grows Project.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
10/01/2013	£49,920 over 17 months (£36,050; £13,870) for the salary of a part time Project Officer (2 days p.w.) and running costs to develop Capital Growth's food growing network.
17/02/2011	£90,000 over two years (2 x £45,000) towards a project working to reduce harmful pesticide use across London.

Background and detail of proposal

Sustain and Garden Organic's recent publication on the benefits of gardening and food growing for health and well-being, found that food growing delivered particular health benefits, including improved quality of life for people with dementia, healthy weight and reduced stress and depression <http://www.sustainweb.org/growinghealth/>. It is anticipated that London Grows will engage and support over 2,000 individuals by 2018. Whilst the project will target individuals, it will also support small food-growing projects which will provide on-going opportunities for volunteers once they have been trained. The work will be delivered by two existing part-time members of staff, overseen by the Programme Manager. London Grows will run six high profile activity days across at least 20 food-growing sites involving over 1,500 volunteers.

Sustain has an excellent track record of implementing and running innovative local, regional and national projects. It has engaged thousands of volunteers through its work, including Capital Growth and the Big Dig.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year is £1,209,964, of which £750,665 (62%) had been confirmed by July 2015. The charity advised that the decrease in income and expenditure between 2013/14 and 2015/16 was partly due to a reduction in the amounts received and passed on as grants on behalf of the Big Lottery, other charitable agencies and local authorities. Also a number of projects funded by the Big Lottery's Local Food Fund also came to an end.

The charity advised that the cost of generating funds is low as the majority of its income is from charitable activities. The figure shown below is based on a percentage of the management team's time spent on fundraising activities.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts	2014/15 Forecast	2015/16 Current Year Budget
Income and Expenditure			
Income	£ 1,506,706	£ 1,158,987	£ 1,209,964
Expenditure	1,528,357	1,139,308	1,184,993
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	19,386	12,742	8,993
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(41,037)	6,936	15,978
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(21,651)	19,678	24,971
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	1.4%	1.7%	2.1%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	10,354 (0.7%)	-	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	486,108	498,850	507,843
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.8	5.3	5.1
Reserves Policy target	764,179	569,654	592,497
How many months' worth of expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(278,071)	(70,804)	(84,654)