

**MEETING: 28/01/2016**

**Ref: 13021**

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector**

**Race On The Agenda**

**Adv: Jenny Field**

**Base: Islington**

**Amount requested: £112,659**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: £112,700**

**The Charity**

Race on the Agenda (ROTA) was established in 1984. It is one of the UK's leading social policy think-tanks focusing on issues that affect people from BME communities. It aims to build the capacity and strengthen the voice of BME organisations through increased civic engagement and participation in society.

**The Application**

You have supported ROTA's work in enabling the sector to understand the Equalities Act 2010, their responsibilities under the Act and how the Act can be used to support those with whom they work with two grants over a total of three years. You are requested to fund the continuation of this work for a further two years. ROTA would like to build on the success of the last three years by continuing to provide specialist training to help organisations to improve their equality monitoring and evaluation as well as continuing training in how to use the Public Sector Equality Duty. It also proposes to continue to broker pro bono support to organisations wishing to use the Public Sector Equality Duty around representation on equality issues. In addition, it is proposed to develop case studies and a range of web-based support and training to complement the training courses.

**The Recommendation**

ROTA has a reputation for providing high quality services and it is an important provider of infrastructure support in London. It is consulted widely by central government, notably the Home Office and the Department for Education, as well as regionally, for example by the GLA and London Councils.

The Equalities Act is a significant piece of legislation and it is important that the voluntary sector understand its implications for them. The proposed programme fits well within the localism agenda of encouraging local people to take more responsibility for their communities.

Whilst three years is the maximum period that you will usually fund a particular project or activity, your policies allow you to consider funding work for a further two years where it is of strategic importance to London. To date, you have treated capacity building support as fulfilling this criterion. A grant is advised:

***£112,700 over two further years (£55,600; £55,100) 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.***

## **Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
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.
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.

## **Background and detail of proposal**

During the past year, 98 organisations have been trained in equality monitoring and evaluation in line with the Equality Act 2010 and 92 organisations have been trained in using the Act to hold public authorities to account. All the courses have been oversubscribed with a waiting list. In order to cascade the training, ROTA has provided Train the Trainer training to 15 organisations and would propose to do more of this if further funding is approved. During last year it delivered a seminar on the latest case law with respect to the Act, in partnership with Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors which it would like to do more of over the coming two years.

A practical example of how ROTA has supported a voluntary organisation to use the Act is an organisation with a 35 lease of a church hall which allowed them to hire out the premises to other community groups. The vicar complained that the hall had been let to a Muslim group, objecting that it should not be let to other faith groups. The organisation had been unsuccessful in obtaining free legal advice about the matter, but following ROTA training, it was able to identify that this was unlawful and was able to settle the matter with the vicar without resorting to costly legal action.

## **Financial Information**

Forecast income for the current year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is £198,121 which has all been confirmed.

The reduction in ROTA's projected income of £61,233 (24%) for 2015/16 compared with the previous year is mainly due to its grant from the Big Lottery Fund being lower than in the previous year. The charity advises that its forecast deficit of £56,569 on unrestricted funds is planned, although ROTA's trustees recognise that this will leave their free reserves considerably below the target figure as shown in the table below. ROTA advises that it will endeavour to reduce this deficit in the current year and build unrestricted reserves through funding applications (including partnership bids with other voluntary organisations) and by increasing its income derived through training and consultancy. The charity is also seeking to reduce expenditure this financial year in order to keep as much of its free reserves as possible going into 2016/17. It is downsizing its premises at the end of January 2016 and has negotiated a reduction in some salary costs which it can and will implement if necessary.

ROTA's cost of generating funds appears low but is expected to rise given its increased work on grant applications.

<b>Year end at 31 March</b>	<b>2014/15 Audited Accounts</b>	<b>2015/16 Current Year Forecast</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	259,354	198,121
Expenditure	283,576	254,690
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(21,129)	(56,569)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(3,093)	0
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>(24,222)</b>	<b>(56,569)</b>
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(9.3%)	(28.6%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	£9,247 (3.6%)	9,500 (4.8%)
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	96,474	39,905
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.1	1.9
Reserves Policy target	£70,894 - £141,788	£63,673 - £127,345
How many months' worth of expenditure	3 - 6	3 - 6
Free reserves over/(under) target	25,580 - 45,314	(23,768) - (87,440)