

## **London Schools Excellence Fund Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Additional Questions as at 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013**

#### **Can the organisation and individual in the application for the LSEF not be from a school? Who would be the best candidate to put on the application?**

The lead organisation does not need to be a school. The key issue will be the financial requirements of the GLA – see the appendices in the prospectus and in particular page 22 assessment of turnover. Please consider these criteria in relation to the size of grant you are seeking and turnover of any partnership or company. We anticipate that all operational schools will have sufficient financial size/turnover to enable them to qualify.

#### **Could you please clarify whether we are able to target part or all of a proposal for grant from the LSEF towards 6th form colleges and FE colleges?**

Thanks for your query on sixth form and further education colleges. Both of these types of providers may apply provided that they are working with at least two schools.

#### **If the application is submitted by the local authority is it required to complete Question 6 which asks the applicant to confirm that it is able to provide the following information/documents if it's invited to submit a Full Stage 2 application?**

Local Authorities only need to provide the recent audited accounts and the reason for this is that we need to make sure there are no qualifications or observations made by the Auditors which could be a cause for concern. No other financial testing will be completed on Local Authorities.

#### **Has a deadline for the round 2 grants been set yet? Will the second round of workshops give more information about the application process?**

There is no date as yet for publication of the Round 2 grants. However, we will be looking to publish an update on timescales etc. in May (including dates of Round 2 application workshops).

In the meanwhile please review the published prospectus which will also cover Round 2. The only difference will be the one stage application process, which will be fully explained in the Round 2 application workshops.

### **Questions Asked 17 April 2013 (Stage 1 Application Workshops)**

#### **What is the exact deadline for Stage 1 applications (what time)?**

The deadline for Stage 1 applications on both the 29<sup>th</sup> April & 17 June 2013 is 5pm.

#### **Will you contact schools at Stage 1?**

No, but we may contact at Stage 2.

#### **What proportion of the budget may be allocated to management and administration?**

The GLA does not have a set percentage. Usually we would consider management and administration to be in the region of 5% to 7%. However, the level would be considered in relation to the application activity and tasks involved and other staffing costs.

**If very similar bids are put forward across areas and/or clusters will you broker links between them?**

Yes, we will encourage groups/clusters/networks to work together. This may happen as part of stage 2 or as the activity develops.

**Does the Fund support building teaching excellence in English as an Additional Language to support literacy and attainment in English?**

Yes

**Can training take place outside London e.g. a teacher residential study programme?**

Yes

**With regards to round 1, is 50% of the funding allocated to applications received on 29<sup>th</sup> April and 50% for those received on 17<sup>th</sup> June?**

No funding will not be split between the two deadlines. Bids received on the 29<sup>th</sup> April are not more likely to be funded.

**We are a service that is 'sold' to Local Authorities working in London schools; we are based in an Academy, should we apply as a school?**

No, you will need to apply as an organisation in your own right, e.g. a company limited by guarantee or a registered charity.

**If we have already got contacts from schools to say they want to work with us, do we include this?**

Please include the details of a minimum of two schools in the Stage 1 application form. Further details of engagement of schools will be requested if you are invited to submit a Stage 2 application.

**Can full economic cost be claimed on salaries in the bid?**

Yes.

**Can we submit an application for English subject knowledge @ Key Stage 5 as well as Key Stages 1-3?**

Yes, although your bid must include a minimum of two schools.

**Some questions on the application form can lead to an essay as a reply. Can we add supplementary materials as attachments if they are relevant and helpful?**

Questions on the Stage 1 Application form should be addressed within the text boxes provided; organisations should not exceed these text boxes. We are looking for short and succinct answers, more detail will be requested if you are invited to submit a full stage 2 application.

## **Additional questions as at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**The format of the application is RTF and quite horrible to fill out. Was that on purpose?**

Some individuals are experiencing problems downloading or saving changes to the Stage 1 Application Form. We are working closely with our IT department to find a solution for this. If you are experiencing difficulties downloading or saving changes to the application form please send an email to the Education Programme Team and we will forward an alternative format. [educationprogramme@london.gov.uk](mailto:educationprogramme@london.gov.uk)

**Section 5 of the LSEF Prospectus it would appear that we may be precluded from submitting a bid ourselves as the list of who can apply does not include private sector education service providers - could you confirm whether my interpretation is correct?**

Private sector education services are not precluded from applying. However, the application will need to involve schools (as in Section 5 - 5.3). We are encouraging organisations and schools to work together and collaborate to draw in existing expertise to schools.

## **Questions Asked 27 March 2013 (Launch event)**

**Can additional funding or match-funding contribute to sustainability?**

Yes, any additional funding you can bring to the project can contribute towards the plan for sustainability. The additional funding can contribute to the project after the London Schools Excellence Fund or at the same time.

**Can the application cover more than one subject area?**

Yes, the application can cover more than one subject area, or be separate applications.

**How soon can I put in my application?**

The application process is open from the date of the launch (27 March 2013). The first deadline for applications is 29 April 2013 and the second deadline is 17 June 2013.

**How can schools and other organisations be supported to link-up and develop joint applications?**

School-to-school partnerships are encouraged. Schools can contact other schools via local authority school improvement teams and through school improvement groups like London Leadership Strategy <http://londonleadershipstrategy.com/>

In addition a LinkedIn group has been set-up – search on London Schools Excellence Fund – and the GLA is part of the group.

**What is the process between Stage 1 and Stage 2 applications?**

The Stage 1 application process is a short form which collects some basic information about the applicant and the project. The application is then assessed against the core criteria. For Stage 2 applicants will receive some feedback from the LSEF's Expert Advisory Group and be asked to provide more information on the budget, project and evaluation plans.

**Will the Fund reach a wide variety of schools across London?**

We are keen to encourage applications from a wide range of schools working across London. We are looking to identify parts of London or particular schools where there may be low take up of particular subjects, for example languages or separate sciences, and identify ways to encourage these schools into the Fund either as applicants or participants in a funded project.

**Will the Fund support a music focused application?**

The Fund Prospectus sets out the priority across different subjects on page 8. The Fund may make a small number of grants, which could include music, to subjects which are not either priority subjects, or EBacc subjects.

**The time frame for applications is very tight – can details and partners be finalised at Stage 2?**

Yes, further details on partners and schools to take part in your project can be finalised at Stage 2. At Stage 1 you need to present the project, the evidence base and details of at least two schools who will take part (not all the schools).

### **Will the Fund cover projects supporting young people's skill development, confidence building, and other non-academic skills?**

The Fund is focused on teachers, teaching and subject based knowledge. The GLA is funding other projects which focus on young people and non-academic skills for example the Leadership Clubs and the Mayor's Mentoring Programme.

### **What types of evaluation will the GLA undertake?**

The GLA is developing the evaluation framework now but anticipate that all projects will undertake a self-evaluation. Larger projects will undertake an external evaluation. Evaluation will be specific to the size and scale of the project. Further information will be available for applicants at Stage 2.

## **Frequently Asked Questions 27 March 2013 (prepared before the launch)**

### **Eligibility of Activities**

#### **Which subject areas will the Fund cover?**

The Fund will prioritise as follows:

1. Four main subject areas: English, mathematics, separate sciences: biology, chemistry, physics, plus modern and ancient languages.
2. EBacc subjects not covered above; history and geography.
3. The Fund may also, in exceptional cases, fund activity which supports teacher subject knowledge and teaching of other subjects.

#### **What are the EBacc subjects?**

Further details about the EBacc and subjects are on the [Department for Education website: www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/englishbac/a0075980/ebacc-contents-faqs](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/englishbac/a0075980/ebacc-contents-faqs)

#### **Can you explain more about the knowledge led approach?**

Important characteristics of knowledge-led education include:

- A focus on helping students to acquire valuable knowledge, enabling them to see beyond their everyday experiences, to think about and to engage with the wider world in new ways.
- Subject content that is logically and coherently sequenced composed of successive 'building blocks' that may be concrete or abstract, facts and theory. Teaching is organised in a way that makes subject content interesting to understand and aids long-term memory retention.
- Structured opportunities for learners to 'put their knowledge to work', building critical thinking skills, such as reasoning, making judgements and decisions and problem solving.
- A focus on building understanding of the subject's academic discipline, with its own particular rules, tools of inquiry, historical development and theoretical logic.
- Helping young people to develop a passion for subjects; teaching which unlocks the richness and challenge at the heart of each subject.

#### **Can the activity include pupils outside the 5 to 18 age range?**

The primary focus of the Fund is teachers of pupils aged 5-18 years old. We would be willing to consider projects for teachers of pupils outside this age range in some cases, but we would expect each project to have a measurable impact on teachers of pupils within the 5-18 age range.

**Can the Fund be used for specific cohorts of pupils?**

Yes, the Fund can be used to support teacher subject knowledge and subject teaching to teach specific cohorts or target groups of pupils.

**What types of activities will be funded?**

The Fund will support teacher professional development based on some evidence and evaluation of impact. This may be a project which has already been undertaken in one or two schools and is now ready to be tried in other schools. Alternatively it could be a project which has already been more tested and has some evaluation, undertaken either in the UK or elsewhere.

**Does the Fund cover capital and revenue costs?**

The Fund is for revenue costs only; for example training, teacher costs, teacher cover, materials.

**Can the Fund be used for teacher cover?**

Yes, the Fund can be used for teacher cover but you will need to explain your proposals for long term sustainability.

**Can the Fund include after-school or out of school activities or school transition?**

Yes, the Fund can cover these types of activities provided they also meet the aims, priorities and core requirements as set out in the prospectus with the main focus on teachers' subject knowledge.

**Can the fund be used for direct pupil interventions?**

The application must include a substantial element of teacher professional development to ensure sustainability beyond the lifetime of the funding, but the project activity can also include direct pupil interventions as a component.

**Can the activity take place during the school holidays?**

Yes.

**Do you fund teacher CPD costs or bursaries to further qualifications?**

Yes, but the CDP/further qualification must be part of a school or department improvement plan. The Fund will not make payments to an individual.

**Will the Fund cover project management costs?**

Yes, the Fund will cover costs associated with delivery for example staff to undertake co-ordination and management, particularly when working across a number of schools and establishing network activities.

**Eligibility of Partners****Who can apply?**

Organisations applying can be schools, businesses or charities, or other not for profit organisations. Organisations do not need to be London-based, but the schools must be within one of the 32 London Boroughs, or the City of London. We particularly welcome projects that can be rolled out across a number of schools, boroughs or pan-London.

**My project is delivered in partnership/by a contractor, is this allowed?**

Yes. The Fund particularly welcomes projects that are delivered in partnership although grants will be paid to a single accountable lead organisation.

### **How many schools and pupils should the activity cover?**

A minimum of two schools need to be included. Projects covering a small number of schools are likely to be funded by Round 2 grants round £30k to £75k. This is a one stage process for smaller amounts of funding. Projects requiring larger amounts of funding £75k to £500k (per year) would be expected to cover more schools.

### **Can the activity include schools outside London?**

The Fund will only cover schools in London. You will need additional funding from elsewhere for any non-London schools in your project.

## **Evidence and Evaluation**

### **Will all the evaluation be done by the GLA?**

All funded projects will be expected to undertake their own evaluation and use this information to complete the GLA self-evaluation report. In addition external evaluation will be undertaken for projects and this will be discussed with projects at the stage 2 application. The type of evaluation undertaken will depend on the scale, scope and size of the project and what evidence already exists in relation to the intervention.

### **My project is new, so I cannot yet prove that it will work – will I be at a disadvantage?**

Projects must demonstrate that their model or a similar approach is already working successfully elsewhere, with some evidence. For example, it may be a project that has worked overseas, or has been developed and tested in a small pilot within a London school. The Round 2 grant has a lower level of funding £30k to £75k to enable London schools to further test out activity.

### **What outcomes are required?**

The project will need to demonstrate how investment in teachers and teaching will lead to improved attainment for pupils or group/s of pupils. The application will need to demonstrate the hypothesis and evidence for that outcome.

### **What if I don't have capacity to meet some of these evaluation requirements?**

The GLA will provide evaluation support to all successful applicants. We will be appointing evaluators to oversee evaluation activity in relation to this programme. Further, all evaluation outputs will be shared with Project Oracle (our Children's, Youth and Education Evidence Hub). This initiative will also offer generic training and support on evaluation. More information can be found here – [www.project-oracle.com](http://www.project-oracle.com).

## **The application and selection process**

### **Can I submit more than one application/if I am not funded initially can I apply again?**

Yes. We may turn down an application but in some cases provide feedback and encourage you to apply again in a later round.

### **Will the Mayor require anything in return?**

No, the Fund grants are treated as conditional gifts, the conditions of which will vary depending on the funded project. Funding will be granted on the GLA's funding terms, which require all organisations funded by the GLA to submit regular progress reports, and a report at the end of the funding arrangements. A copy of the GLA's grant funding agreement is on the website. Funded activities will also be invited to share their learning with other schools through, for example, network and collaboration events. Grant recipients will be expected to acknowledge

the funding from the Mayor of London and Department for Education in any publicity or marketing material – guidelines will be made available to all grant recipients.

**Is this the only opportunity I will get to apply for funding?**

The Fund will operate to July 2015, but we will allocate all the funds by early 2014. We are encouraging all applicants to put their applications in as soon as possible. Applications received in April/May/June will be able to begin their projects early in the next academic year.

**What is the average size of an LSEF grant?**

The GLA is looking to fund projects in a range of sizes. The small grants round will fund projects of a minimum of £30,000 up to a maximum of £75,000 and the main fund will fund projects from £75,000 - £500,000 per year.

**How will payments be made?**

Payments will be linked to achievement of agreed milestones, your quarterly reports and quarterly grant claim. For smaller organisations there is some discretion for payments at the start of the project linked to initial start-up costs.

**Is additional funding required? Can the additional be in-kind support?**

If you are able to bring additional funding to the project; from your own resources, in-kind, or from another funder please show this in the application. There is no minimum requirement however, please show in your application how the project is supported by the school with any additional funding or in-kind support you have e.g. teacher time or use of school premises.

Yes, some level of additional funding is required, there is no minimum or maximum amount but you need to show how the project is supported by the school with any additional funding or in-kind support you have e.g. teacher time or use of school premises.

**What is the average length of an LSEF grant?**

There is no standard LSEF grant length. The GLA recognises that the length of projects will vary and some will require development phase and intervention period to be effective, however others can start delivery straight away and have some very short term outcomes or outputs. Funding is only available until the end of July 2015.

**Do you offer more than funding support?**

You can expect the GLA to be engaged with your project and to help develop and evaluate it for maximum impact (particularly for schools applying directly to the Fund). The extent of the non-financial support we offer will vary depending on the nature of the project and the organisation running it.

**What are the governance arrangements and who decides if funding is approved?**

All decisions are made by the Mayor following recommendations from a GLA Award Panel and advice from the Expert Advisory Group.

**Who else is the GLA working with on the Fund and the Mayor's Education Programme?**

The GLA has been developing these initiatives in dialogue with the main school improvement networks in London, boroughs, teaching schools, academy chains, specialist subject programmes, cultural and arts sector organisations, Ofsted, DfE, teaching unions and associations.

**When does the money need to be spent by?**

Successful applicants will agree specific timescales for their own project but activity should be completed by July 2015 and final grant payments would be completed by September/October 2015.

**Do I need to provide financial information about my organisation?**

Yes, for further details see the information on Due Diligence in an appendix at the end of the prospectus.

**How can I find out more about Round 2 or Round 3?**

Further details about the Round 2 funding will be available in June 2013 and the priorities for Round 3 in Autumn 2013. You can register your interest in advance by emailing the education programme delivery team and for any other queries. You can contact the GLA education programme delivery team at: [educationprogramme@london.gov.uk](mailto:educationprogramme@london.gov.uk)