

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FINDINGS AND PyC RESPONSE 2021

Recommendation	Board Response
<p>Reasons for the lower percentage of MF Business applications being approved should be explored with a view to increasing the percentage approved in future years.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that the percentage of business applicants supported is low. We have seen a round on round increase in the number of MFB applications. Often, these are speculative and have had little or no contact with staff team prior to submitting proposal. We do not want to stifle creativity and entrepreneurship, but the staff team will be proactive to ensure all applicants discuss proposal and those that are not supportable at present will be advised before time spent on application. We want to work to drive up quality of applications that are considered by Board but there will always be a finite fund available in each MF round. We work to give feedback and often see applicants return with stronger proposals in subsequent rounds. We will also monitor and record how many micro fund business applications deemed supportable have gone on to fail. The fund do not want to support poor quality business applications simply to level up successful applications.</p>
<p>Options for potentially ‘levelling’ out the level of investment being made across the area of benefit should be explored.</p>	<p>It has always been an aim of the fund to distribute funding equally across area of benefit over the lifetime of the fund whilst acknowledging the very different areas and population numbers. Levelling though is also about perception rather than measurement as vastly differing results can be arrived at depending on the criteria applied, as shown within the report regarding totals of projects/funds giving a totally different perspective than per-capita spend/investment. The Board have sought further clarity in how levelling up within the report is intended – if looking on a per capita basis, PyC feel the fund is achieving this, however we are committed to supporting projects in a fair and equitable way above and beyond the geographical divide.</p>
<p>The reason why a significant proportion of jobs created by the MFB fund are being lost should be explored. Alongside this, the potential to update the definition being used to differentiate between ‘fixed term’ and ‘permanent’ jobs created should be explored.</p>	<p>We will work with Wavehill to agree definition of fixed term / permanent / jobs created / jobs safeguarded and apply this to all monitoring. This should provide more accurate data at next evaluation. As a fund we often fund fixed term posts that allow organisations or businesses time to deliver projects or develop income generation to sustain posts themselves. We will carry out review of jobs supported through MF (Business and Community) and consider what learning we can take from that and actions to improve. We will also record and monitor jobs created post funding due to success of initial PyC investment. It is worth noting that COVID pandemic will have meant many companies and organisations have closed or lost staff.</p>
<p>The separate scoring of Micro Fund applications by Board members and staff should be compared for a round of applications to assess how many decisions would have been different if only assessed by members of staff.</p>	<p>The staff assessments and decisions made by MF Sub Panel Directors are more and more aligned with each round and this demonstrates a consistency in approach of staff and Board that we have worked hard to achieve. We acknowledge that very little changes when Board make final decisions. However, PyC Board and staff have discussed this at length and firmly believe that there must remain a segregation of duties and do not support this recommendation. This protects staff relationships with communities and applicants and protects Directors who are responsible for distribution of the fund. PyC will consider options for community involvement at this stage.</p>
<p>The potential to use the refresh of the Prospectus as a basis for developing a set of principles or values (rather than a strategy or business plan) that the used to guide how the Fund is utilised should be explored.</p>	<p>PyC see the Prospectus refresh as an opportunity to: revisit strategic aims of PyC / re-engage with communities in a variety of methods to ensure real penetration and assess impact and delivery to date. From this, we will develop a plan for the next 5 years that aligns with opportunities identified by communities. This will neither be a list or simply a set of values and principles but a real working document that details strategic direction.</p>