

social  
entrepreneurs  
Ireland



# 2022 APPLICANT GUIDE



#SEIimpact @SEIreland



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# The Impact Programme

Do you have a project/organisation that is tackling a particular social or environmental problem in Ireland? Are you looking to grow your impact? Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's Impact Programme provides a range of supports to social entrepreneurs, such as funding, mentorship, training and learning and access to a network of fellow social entrepreneurs and business experts. The programme aims to support social entrepreneurs and their project/organisation, helping them to become a highly impactful, effective, scalable, and sustainable organisation.

This year, we are looking for up to five social entrepreneur-led projects with the potential to significantly impact the problem that they are addressing in Ireland. The programme runs over nine months starting in the late summer and it will be delivered both in person and online.

Supports are delivered on both a 1:1 and group basis and includes:

## ***1-1 support from programme manager***

Throughout the programme, Impact Awardees work with the programme manager to set and achieve your goals. You will have 1:1 check-in calls every 4-6 weeks to see how you are getting on, to provide additional support and to identify opportunities or discuss challenges you are facing.

## ***Peer support***

As one of five organisations awarded a place on the programme, you will work closely with this group over the course of the nine months. We encourage conversations and connections among yourselves as Awardees for moral support, to share challenges, to share successes and to soundboard.

## ***Funding***

Each Impact Awardee will receive €20,000 in unrestricted funding.

## ***Training & learning***

Impact Awardees will receive additional non-financial support valued at approximately €20,000. Impact Awardees will join an accelerator programme where they will receive mentorship, training, and support, in areas like leadership development, fundraising, governance, strategic planning, and impactful storytelling. Awardees can also receive pro-bono support from partner organisations, ensuring that they receive the best professional services available at no, or low, cost.

## ***A Powerful Community***

Each Impact Awardee will become a member of the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Community – Ireland's largest network of social entrepreneurs. Community workshops, retreats, and events are an opportunity for Alumni to come together to network and learn from each other, receive advice from other social entrepreneurs and hear selected speakers on both personal and professional topics. Through this community, you will receive peer support from experienced social entrepreneurs and expand your network significantly, connecting with the largest community of social entrepreneurs in Ireland.

# What We Are Looking For

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and we are committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of gender identity, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or religion. (Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018)

The Impact programme works with high-potential social entrepreneurs who are ready to move their project/organisation to the next stage. We are looking for:

## ***Social entrepreneur-led projects..***

The person applying must be the main driver and lead decision maker with a project already up and running. You should have an entrepreneurial manner and be open to learning and developing themselves through our Impact Programme. We accept applications from individuals and two-person partnerships. While your project may have more than two founders/leaders, for the purposes of our selection process and programmes only two partners can apply, and both must be the main decision makers. The person/people who make(s) the application should not be making it on anyone else's behalf, rather they are the individual(s) who will engage in the SEI support programme.

## ***A societal challenge..***

There are a lot of problems and issues to be addressed in Ireland so we're looking for social entrepreneurs who can clearly demonstrate why the issue you are addressing is of particular importance. It is also important to share your insight and understanding into the social problem. The societal challenge can be either social or environmental.

## ***A new or better way..***

Your project/organisation should be innovative and not replicating what is already being provided. Instead you should be approaching issues from a different angle, improving on what is already being done or introducing a completely new solution altogether. You should be able to clearly articulate what makes your solution unique.

## ***Mission driven & effective..***

All of our applicants should be leading projects that are primarily focused on the mission of solving a social or environmental problem. We support organisations with any and all legal structures, but you must be in a position to convince us that the social mission is the core driver. You should also be able to provide us with evidence that what you do actually works in addressing the problem you've identified, proving that it has a positive impact.

## ***Desire & potential to scale their impact..***

Our social entrepreneurs always think big, ultimately looking to change the way the issue they are addressing is dealt with in Ireland. Having the desire and potential to scale at some point is a vital piece of information we look for during our review process. Scaling impact can be achieved in various ways, for example scaling the reach of the organisation (geographic, demographic etc.), scaling breadth or depth, or providing a model that can be replicated.

# The Application Process & Eligibility Criteria

Every year we hold an open call for applications which is followed by a selection process to determine the social entrepreneurs we will support that particular year. Our Impact Programme caters for established projects at various stages of development and aims to support social entrepreneurs with the greatest potential to bring about positive change to Ireland's most pressing social and environmental challenges.

## *Eligibility Criteria*

In order to apply to the Impact Programme, you must meet the following criteria:

- You must be aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You must be the social entrepreneur leading the project - the main driver and decision maker.
- The primary focus of your project must be to benefit people in Ireland.
- You have identified a social or environmental issue and developed a clear business model to solve it.
- Your solution must be new or better than others in existence already in Ireland.
- Your project must have moved beyond the initial idea stage, with activities up and running that relate directly to the problem you are trying to address.
- You must have evidence to illustrate the social mission and impact of your project on your target beneficiaries/audience.
- You must have the ambition to scale and grow the impact of your project beyond its current level.
- You are open and keen to engage with the learning and development opportunities provided through our Impact Programme. The Programme will run from August 2022 – April 2023. This involves a time commitment of on average 2 to 4 days per month.
- You are available to attend the mandatory Selection Process events: **Virtual Judging Panel on 13th/14th June 2022** and an in-person **final interview on 29th June 2022**.
- You are willing and able to develop your project on at least a part-time basis for the duration of the programme.

**Note:** Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is not in a position to support research projects, party-political projects, or projects with an explicit religious or faith-based agenda - as opposed to projects that are driven by a personal belief system but are open to all the community.

# The Selection Process

Below you will find all the information you need to know about our application and selection process.

## Before you apply:

### ***1. Read all about the Impact Programme & what we are looking for.***

The Impact Programme involves a significant time commitment from the social entrepreneurs we support. Read this document and review other available information on our website to ensure that you know all about it and the type of person and projects/organisations we're looking to support before applying. Please ensure that your application meets the relevant criteria and descriptions provided.

### ***2. Take time to complete your application***

Be sure to allow enough time to complete your application form. The online system will allow you to save your application and return to it at a later date so you don't have to complete the form in just one sitting. When answering each question in the application form please bear in mind what we are looking for. It is up to you to convince us that you meet these criteria. If you have a problem with your application or a specific question not answered in this guide, you can email [applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie](mailto:applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie) or call 01-685-3469 and we will seek to assist you.

### ***3. Get feedback and advice***

To ensure your application shows the very best of you and your project/organisation, we highly recommend that you seek feedback on your application before you submit it to us. We'd recommend that you send your application to a few different people who will provide you with constructive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the application. At a very minimum you should:

- Send it to somebody who knows your project/organisation well. This will ensure that you include all the most important information about your project/organisation when you apply.
- Send it to somebody who knows nothing about your project. This should ensure that it will be easily understood by the application review team.

# Selection Process Timeline

## **1. Open Applications (22nd of February 2022)**

Social entrepreneurs from all over Ireland can apply by filling in an online application form, found on [www.socialentrepreneurs.ie](http://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie) from the 22nd of February 2022.

## **2. Review of Applications (April/May)**

A review of applications will be carried out by the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland team and an extensive external panel of reviewers to shortlist applicants for the next stage.

## **3. First round interview (13th/14th of June) - Online**

Up to 40 applicants will be invited to a virtual first-round interview with a panel of judges to pitch their solution and answer questions.

## **4. Final Interview (29th June) - In person**

Following first-round interviews, 12 applicants will be invited to submit further information and take part in an in-person final interview.

## **5. Social Entrepreneurs Selected (July)**

Social Entrepreneurs will be selected and informed after the 15th of July 2022.

## **6. Impact Programme Launch (August 2022)**

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland will announce the Impact Awardees through a programme launch, photocall and press release.

## **7. The Impact Programme (August 2022 – April 2023)**

The social entrepreneur takes part in 9-month support programme.

# How to Apply

All applications must be submitted online using our online application form. Please access [socialentrepreneurs.grantplatform.com](https://socialentrepreneurs.grantplatform.com) to login/register and create your application. You can find all the details you need to enter the application process on our website at [www.socialentrepreneurs.ie](https://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie).

You will be asked to create a profile and login details, you can then log into your application at any time during the selection process period (22nd of February to Midnight, 5th of April 2022) . After submission **you will not be able to amend your application**, so please ensure you have reviewed your work carefully before submission.

You will find a [visual guide here](#).

Please check out the **Frequently Asked Questions** section on our website for any queries on the programme or the application process.

If you have a problem with your application or a specific question not answered in this guide, you can email [applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie](mailto:applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie) or call 01-685-3469 and we will seek to assist you.

# What We Expect from the Social Entrepreneurs

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time and effort to provide a range of resources and opportunities to its social entrepreneurs. In return we expect:

- Full personal participation on core programme support elements;
- Open-minded and honest engagement;
- Willingness to participate in group events and share knowledge;
- Active involvement with the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Community both during and after the Impact Programme.
- Reporting and feedback

## *Support Programme*

Awardees will be expected to commit an average of 2-4 days per month to programme over the course of the nine months. This time commitment may increase somewhat during the most intensive period of the programme, from September to March, to approximately 5 days per month.

The programme involves a range of activities such as 1:1 meetings with your SEI consultant the programme manager, meetings and workshops with expert advisors and consultants, group workshops and networking events. Outside of this time you will also be expected to work towards the mutually agreed goals and objectives, all of which should be in line with realising your mission for social impact.

It is important to note that any time spent on the programme will be directly related to relevant programme activities for the participant and their project/organisation which should complement, not detract from, the social entrepreneur's own strategic objectives.

## *Reporting*

Awardees are required to submit regular reports as agreed, along with an annual summary report at the end of the Impact programme, which outlines progress made and actions completed against the social entrepreneur's individual development plan. Awardees may also be required to provide along a financial breakdown of the donation monies.

# Application Form Questions

## Problem & Solution

### Q1. The Problem

At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland we look to support social entrepreneurs who have an insight into a particular social problem in Ireland and who can clearly communicate the urgency and effect of this problem.

**Note:** In this section, please **do not** provide any details about the work that you are doing or how you are addressing this problem. Please **just focus on describing the problem itself**. Please draw on any relevant examples or research to support your answer.

- a. **What social problem are you trying to solve?** Please include in your response the scale of the problem, e.g. number of people affected by this problem in Ireland (200)
- b. **How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it?** (200)
- c. **What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today?** (150)

### Q2. The Solution

Through our Impact Programme, we support social entrepreneurs who have found new and/ or better ways to solve a pressing social or environmental problem.

- a. **Please describe the solution that you have developed.** (200)
- b. **What have you done to date to implement this solution?** Please be as specific as possible on the results that you've achieved so far. (150)
- c. **How exactly does your solution directly solve the problem and address the key obstacles you outlined in Q.1.?** (200)
- d. **Who is your typical beneficiary/ client/ service user, and how do they engage with your organisation?** (150)

# Application Form Questions

## The People

### Q3. The Social Entrepreneur

At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, we primarily support the leader of the organisation as we believe that significant change starts with the vision of the social entrepreneur. The team around that individual is also key to drive that change forward. We would like to know more about you – what motivates and drives you – along with the team around you.

- a. What is motivating you as an individual to create social change in this specific area?** (200)
- b. Based on your experience to date, why are you the right person to lead this change?** Please include information about any relevant experience and abilities you have. (250)
- c. Who is assisting you in your work, and how exactly do they do so?** Please make specific reference to staff, board members, volunteers, mentors, wider supporters etc. (200)

### Q4. The Impact

Your organisation's impact can be described as the longer-term difference that your organisation creates through its actions. Applicants should have a clear understanding of the difference they are making, and be able to provide Social Entrepreneurs Ireland with evidence and examples to show that the particular solution they are implementing is impactful.

- a. To help us to understand the potential impact of your solution, please provide an example of the difference your organisation has made to one of your beneficiaries/ clients/ service users.** (150)
- b. How is your organisation currently making a difference to the social problem you are tackling?** Please draw on the practical work you are doing and feedback you have received as well as external research if appropriate. (200)
- c. How do you currently measure your impact?** (150)

**Note:** As opposed to solely outlining how you track your indicators of impact, e.g. social media followers, number of clients etc., we are primarily interested in how you are measuring the deeper difference you are making in people's lives.

# Application Form Questions

## The Strategy

### Q5. The Market

Knowing the market you operate in is crucial to a social entrepreneur's success. You should know what is currently being done in Ireland and internationally to address the problem you have outlined and how your solution complements or interacts with this existing work.

- a. **What other organisations are already working to tackle this problem in Ireland, what is the nature of your relationship with these organisations (e.g. collaboration, partnership, referral) and why?** (300)
- b. **Convince us that your organisation's approach to addressing this problem is better or different to what these organisations are already doing.** (150)

### Q6. Growth

Applicants should have the desire and potential to scale and grow their impact in the future. Note: Scaling can take many forms; for example, service and/or product expansion, increase in locations and geographical footprint, boosting staff numbers/capacity to deliver current offerings, system change, or providing a model that can be replicated.

- a. **What does success look like for your organisation in 2-3 years?** Please outline your core goals. (200)
- b. **What are the key obstacles you may face that could prevent your organisation from achieving these goals?** Please include any challenges presented by the impact of the CV19 Pandemic here also. (250)
- c. **What do you need now in order to achieve these goals, apart from funding?** (200)

### Q7. The Financial Model

Social entrepreneurs should have clarity on how their business operates financially and be able to clearly articulate what their business model is.

- a. **How do you currently fund your organisation?** Please list all sources of income, in euro value and percentages of total income. (250)
- b. **What are your key expenses?** Please list all sources of expenditure, in euro value and percentages of total expenditure. (250)
- c. **How do you plan to fund your organisation in the future (aside from a potential Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award)?** (150)



**Social Entrepreneurs Ireland**

[socialentrepreneurs.ie](http://socialentrepreneurs.ie)

