



**social**  
entrepreneurs  
Ireland

Changing Ireland  
Accelerator

# 2023 APPLICANT GUIDE



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Supporter of the  
Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme

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# The Changing Ireland Accelerator

Are you leading an organisation that tackling a social problem in Ireland in an innovative way? Does your solution support underrepresented and/or marginalised people? Are you ready to scale your organisation? Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's Changing Ireland Accelerator will provide a range of bespoke supports to social entrepreneurs, including direct funding, mentorship, and access to a network of fellow social entrepreneurs and business experts.

This year, we are looking for up to four social entrepreneur-led organisations who are impacting the problem that they are addressing in Ireland and are ready to grow further. The programme aims to support social entrepreneurs who have a proven solution to a social problem to scale their organisation and grow their impact. The programme runs over twelve months starting in June 2023 and closing in June 2024 and it will be delivered both in person and online.

Supports are delivered on both an individual and group basis and depend on the needs of each organisation. They include:



## **Funding**

Each Awardee will receive €60,000 in funding over the course of the programme.



## **Individual support from SEI programme manager**

Awardees work with the programme manager to set and achieve your goals. You will have mentorship sessions every 4-6 weeks to facilitate the provision of support, to identify opportunities and/or tackle challenges you are facing.



## **Mentorship, coaching & consultancy**

You will work with one or more mentors, coaches or consultants from the SEI community in a key areas of need (such as funding, strategy, human resources, communications) on a defined piece of work over the course of the programme. This will be co-designed with you and based on your needs.



## **Peer support**

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

# The Changing Ireland Accelerator



## **A Powerful Community**

Each Awardee will become an Alumni member of the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Community after the accelerator is completed. 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)

## We are looking for:

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

The person applying must be the main driver and lead decision maker with an organisation already in operation and achieving impact. You should have an entrepreneurial mindset and be open to learning and developing through the 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, its root cause and symptoms. The societal challenge can be social and/or environmental.

### ***A new or better solution..***

Your 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 or more impactful than others in existence.

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

All of our applicants should be leading organisations that are focused on the mission of solving a social or environmental problem. We support organisations with 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 and lasting impact.

# What We Are Looking For

## ***Ready and ambitious to scale your impact..***

The social entrepreneurs we support always think big, ultimately looking to change the way the issue they are addressing is dealt with in Ireland. Having the desire and ability to scale strategically is a vital element of this programme. 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.

## ***Supporting people who are under-represented***

Under-represented and underserved communities experience social problems more intensely than anyone else and this is a key focus for the Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme. We are looking for social entrepreneurs who identify as coming from an underrepresented background and/or whose organisation supports people from who are under-represented, underserved, or marginalised.

# The Selection Process

We are holding an open call for applications which is followed by a selection process to determine the social entrepreneurs we will support this year. Our Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme caters for established organisations who have a proven solution to a social problem and are ready to scale. We aim to support social entrepreneurs with the greatest potential to bring about positive change to Ireland's most pressing social and environmental challenges.

## **Before you apply:**

### ***Read all about the Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme & what we are looking for.***

The 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 the information you need about the programme and the type of person(s) and organisations we're looking to support before applying. Please ensure that your application meets the eligibility criteria below:


# The Selection Process

## *Eligibility Criteria*

In order to apply to the Changing Ireland Accelerator, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You are the person (or people in the case of a partnership) leading the organisation – the main driver(s) and decision maker(s).
- You have identified a social or environmental issue and developed a clear solution and business model to solve it.
- Your solution must be new or better than others in existence already in Ireland, and be benefiting people in Ireland.
- The organisation is benefitting underserved and/or underrepresented communities in Ireland.
- You have the ambition to scale and grow the impact of your organisation beyond its current level, and have a plan to do so.
- You are open to and available to take part in the learning and development opportunities provided through the Programme.
- You are willing to work on developing your organisation on a full-time basis (or equivalent if partnership) for the duration of the Programme.
- You have clear and compelling evidence to demonstrate the social impact of the organisation.
- You have been previously successful in raising or generating sufficient income to implement your solution.
- Your organisation is based on the island of Ireland.

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.

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# 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 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 (Tuesday 21st of February 2023 – Tuesday 14th March 2023 ).

You can find all the details you need to enter the application process on our website at [www.socialentrepreneurs.ie](https://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie). If you need support with your application, or if you require an alternative way to apply, please get in touch with us on 01 685 3191 or email [applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie](mailto:applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie)

- **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 assure us that you meet these criteria.

- **Get feedback and advice**

To ensure your application shows the very best of you and your organisation, we highly recommend that you look for 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:

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

After submission, **you will not be able to amend your application**, so please ensure you have reviewed your work carefully before submission.



# Selection Process Timeline

**1**

## **Open Applications (Tuesday 21st of February 2023 – Tuesday 14th March 2023)**

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 21st of February, 2023.

**2**

## **Review of Applications (March)**

When the application window closes, a review of applications will be carried out by the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland team and an external panel of reviewers from the SEI community to shortlist applicants for the next stage.

**3**

## **First round interview (12th/13th April)**

Up to 20 applicants will be invited to a first-round interview in Dublin with a panel of judges.

**4**

## **Final Interview (9th May)**

Following first-round interviews, nine applicants will be invited to submit further information and take part in a final interview in Dublin.

**5**

## **Social Entrepreneurs Selected (May)**

Social Entrepreneurs will be selected and informed by the end of May 2023.

**6**

## **Programme launch (June 2023)**

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

**7**

## **The Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme (June 2023 – June 2024)**

The social entrepreneur takes part in a 12-month support programme.

# How we work with social entrepreneurs

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time to provide a range of resources and opportunities to social entrepreneurs, in a way that works best for each organisation. We are social entrepreneur led – supporting you to achieve the goals of your organisation at a pace and in a way that suits you as much as possible.



## Programme Participation

You get as much out of the programme as you put into it. Therefore engagement throughout the 12 months is important.

If successful you can expect to commit an average of 3-5 days per month to the programme over the course of the 12 months for supports such as 1-1 meetings with your programme manager, meetings with consultants/experts and group and networking events. This time commitment may increase somewhat throughout the programme depending on the level of supports required. Throughout the programme, participating in photocalls, media opportunities and speaking opportunities may be required and involvement in the SEI community is encouraged.



## Reporting and surveys

Awardees are required to submit regular reports as outlined in the Letter of Commitment signed at the outset of the Programme. This includes a pre-programme survey along with an end of programme survey at the end of the programme, which outlines progress made and actions completed against the social entrepreneur's individual development plan. This is essential for us to gather your feedback and improve the programme. The participants may also be required to provide a breakdown of spends of the donation monies.



**Social Entrepreneurs Ireland**

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



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