



**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.

# Application Questions



## Governance

This section provides us with the key details in relation to how your organisation is currently governed and operating.

- In what year was your project/organisation founded?
- Are you the project/organisation founder (or one of the original founders)?
  - If you selected 'No', please explain why you are making this application, as opposed to the founder so we can better understand your role: *(50 words)*
- Roughly, how many **Full Time Equivalent (FTE)** staff do you currently employ/contract through your project/organisation?
- How many **volunteers** do you currently engage through your project/organisation?
- Roughly, how many **beneficiaries/customers/clients** have engaged with your project/organisation in the past year?
- How much was your **project/organisation's annual income** in the last financial year?
- Has this project/organisation ever been part of, affiliated to, or a subsidiary of another organisation?
  - If you selected 'YES', please provide details about your connection to that organisation here: *(100 words)*
- Regardless of your relationship with any other organisation (subsidiary, special project, etc), are you **the primary decision-maker** on this specific project?
  - If you selected 'NO', please explain: *(100 words)*
- Do you have a Board of Directors?
  - If you have established a Board of Directors, please name the members and their roles here: *(100 words)*
  - If you do not have a Board of Directors, please explain the reasons for this and outline your plans, if any, in relation to establishing one. *(100 words)*
- How do you identify your project/organisation?
- What is the legal status of project/organisation:
- What is the main source of income for your project/organisation?

# Application Questions



## 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 on underrepresented and marginalised people.

- a. What social problem are you trying to solve?** Please Include in response what you believe is the root cause. *(200 words)*
- b. How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it?** *(200 words)*
- c. What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today?** *(200 words)*



## Q2. The Solution

Through our programmes, we support social entrepreneurs who have found new and/or better ways to solve a pressing social or environmental problem. In this section, we want to hear about your solution to tackle the problem you've identified.

- a. Please describe the solution that you have to solve the problem you outlined in question 1.** *(200 words)*
- 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. *(200 words)*
- c. How exactly does your solution address the root cause of the problem?** *(200 words)*



## Q3. The People

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?** Please tell us your connection to this social problem and why you want to tackle it. *(200 words)*
- 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. *(200 words)*
- 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 words)*

# Application Questions



## Q4. The Impact

Your organisation's social impact can be described as the change that your solution creates through its actions i.e. the change that has taken place in the lives of individuals, families, communities and/or the environment as a result of a particular intervention. Typically this change takes place over the long term, for example, improved health, reduction in poverty etc. Organisations may also use short-term indicators to determine whether or not they are performing adequately on a day-to-day basis, for instance, the number of people attending a particular event, website activity, number of users/customers, etc. However, it is important not to confuse these indicators with impact. Applicants should ensure that they are providing SEI with details on both so that we can properly understand the impact your project is having on a deeper and longer-term level.

- a. Who is your key beneficiary and how do they engage with and/or benefit from your solution?** (300 words)
- b. How do you currently measure your impact?** (200 words)
- c. Please demonstrate the impact you have had so far**, looking at indicators, outcomes and impact data (qualitative and quantitative). (300 words)



## 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 words)
- b. Tell us how your organisation's approach to addressing this problem is more impactful or different to what these organisations are already doing.** (200 words)
- c. Who are the key stakeholders necessary to grow your impact and how are you currently engaging with them/planning to engage with them?** (200 words)



## Q6. Growth

Applicants should have the desire, potential and a plan to scale and grow their impact.

- a. What does success look like for your organisation in 2-3 years? Please outline your core goals.** (200 words)
- b. Outline your strategy to achieve your growth plan over the next 2-3 years.** Please outline a high-level plan for each year. (300 words)
- c. What do you need to achieve this strategy?** (200 words)

# Application Questions



## 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?

	Source of income	Value (€) - 2020 fiscal year	Value (€) - 2021 fiscal year	Value (€) - 2022 fiscal year
1		€	€	€
2		€	€	€
3		€	€	€

Add row

### b. What are your key expenses?

	Source of expenditure	Value (€) - 2020 fiscal year	Value (€) - 2021 fiscal year	Value (€) - 2022 fiscal year
1		€	€	€
2		€	€	€
3		€	€	€

Add row

**c. How do you plan to fund your organisation in the future** (aside from a potential Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award)? (200 words)

**d. Please provide us with an overview of your organisation's business model, outlining why this particular structure is the most suitable for your solution.** (200 words)



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