



# **Awards Programme**

## **Applicant Guide 2017**

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## **1 - The Selection Process**

Thank you for your interest in our Awards Programme. Below you will find all the information you need to know about our application and selection process.

### **Before you apply:**

**(i) *Read all about the Awards Programme***

The Awards Programme involves a large amount of commitment from the social entrepreneurs we support. Read this document and review our website to ensure that you know all about it before applying.

**(ii) *Find out what we're looking for***

You can read all about the type of person and projects/organisations we're looking to support through our Awards Programme below and on our website [here](#). Please ensure that your application meets the relevant criteria and descriptions provided. 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.

**(iii) *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. Make sure you save your work regularly to avoid the online form timing out and losing your work.

**(iv) *Get feedback and advice***

In order to ensure your application shows the very best side 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:

1. 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.
2. Send it to somebody who knows nothing about your project. This should ensure that it will be easily understood by the application review team.

## **2 - What We Are Looking For**

Our Awards Programme seeks to support social entrepreneur-led projects that address a societal challenge in a new or better way. Projects that apply to our Awards must be mission driven, effective and have the desire and potential to scale their impact.

### **What that means in more detail:**

#### *We're looking to support social entrepreneur-led projects...*

The person applying must be the main driver and lead decision maker with a project already up and running. They should act in an entrepreneurial manner and be open to learning and developing themselves through our Awards Programme. We accept applications from individuals and two person partnerships.

#### *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 they are addressing is of particular importance. The challenge that their project is addressing can be either social or environmental.

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

The people we support don't simply replicate what is already being provided but instead seek to approach issues from a different angle, improving on what is already being done or introducing a completely new solution altogether. They should be able to clearly articulate what makes their 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. 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 Awardees 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 is a vital aspect of 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.

### **3 - 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 Awards Programme caters for projects at various stages of development, from start-up to scale-up, 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 Awards Programme, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You are the social entrepreneur leading the project - the main driver and decision maker.
- The primary focus of your project is on benefiting people in Ireland.
- You have identified a social or environmental issue and developed a clear business model to solve it.
- Your solution is new or better than others in existence already in Ireland.
- Your project has moved beyond the initial idea stage, with activities up and running that relate directly to the problem you are trying to address.
- You have evidence to illustrate the social mission and impact of your project on your target beneficiaries/audience.
- You have the ambition to scale and grow the impact of your project beyond its current level.
- You should be open to the learning and development opportunities provided through our Awards Programme. This involves a time commitment of on average 3 days per month.
- You are available to attend mandatory Selection Process events: Social Entrepreneurs Bootcamp on 18<sup>th</sup> May and Finalist Day on 19<sup>th</sup> June.
- You are willing 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.*

## **4 - The Awards Programme**

Through our Awards Programme we provide funding, mentoring and a network of support to high-potential social entrepreneurs and their projects. Our Awards Programme supports high potential social entrepreneurs to build a strategy to become a highly impactful, effective, scalable, and sustainable organisation. So, if you have a project that is tackling a particular social or environmental problem in Ireland and are looking to grow your impact, then this is the Programme for you.

***“Without Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, thousands of young people all over this island would have been robbed of a chance to experience Soar and embrace a life lived true to who they are at their essence.”***

**Tony Griffin & Karl Swan, Soar – 2012 Impact Award Winner**

### ***Up to 8 Social Entrepreneurs***

We look for up to 8 social entrepreneur-led projects with the potential to significantly impact the problem that they are addressing in Ireland, and work with them for 9 months.

### ***Funding, Training & Support***

Each Awardee will receive €10,000 in direct unrestricted funding. In addition to this funding, Awardees will join an accelerator programme where they will receive mentorship, training and support, valued in excess of €15,000. This support is provided in areas like leadership development, governance, strategic planning, fundraising, and personal effectiveness. All Awardees of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland can also receive pro-bono support from several partner organisations, ensuring that they receive the best professional services available at no cost. Awardees are provided with access to numerous free/low-cost training courses and workshops to help develop both themselves and their organisations further. As Awardees work with Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, we will explore further funding and bespoke development opportunities, with supports historically ranging from €20,000 to €300,000, in the form of an Impact Partnership.

### ***A Powerful Network***

Each Awardee will become a member of the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Alumni Network – Ireland’s largest network of social entrepreneurs. Alumni Network workshops and events are an opportunity for Alumni to come together to network and learn from each other, receive expert advice from other social entrepreneurs and hear selected guest speakers on both personal and professional topics.

## **5 - What We Expect Of Awardees**

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time and effort to provide a range of resources and opportunities to its Awardees. 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 Alumni Network both during and after the Awards Programme.

### ***Support Programme***

Awardees will be expected to commit an average of 3 days per month to programme over the course of the 9 months. This time commitment will increase during the most intensive period of the programme, from September to December, to approximately 5 days per month.

The programme involves a range of activities such as one-to-one meetings with your Social Entrepreneurs Ireland mentor, 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 Awardee and their project/organisation which should complement, not detract from, the Awardee'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 Award period, which outlines progress made and actions completed against the Awardee's individual development plan. The Awardee may also be required to provide along a financial breakdown of the donation monies.

## **6 - Selection Process Timeline**

### **(i) Open Applications (22<sup>nd</sup> February – 29<sup>th</sup> March)**

Social entrepreneurs from all over Ireland can apply by filling in an online application form.

### **(ii) Roadshows (28<sup>th</sup> February – 7<sup>th</sup> March)**

The SEI team will hold [events](#) around Ireland to provide further information to interested applicants, give social entrepreneurs the opportunity to connect with others in their locality and hear the inspiring stories of previous SEI Award winners, along with providing relevant training to attendees.

### **(iii) Review of Applications (March-April)**

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

### **(iv) Social Entrepreneurs Bootcamp (18<sup>th</sup> May)**

50 shortlisted applicants will attend this full day event, where they will have the opportunity to pitch their project to a panel of judges. Throughout the rest of the event, applicants will have the opportunity to network and connect with fellow social entrepreneurs and take part in inspiring and engaging talks and workshops for social entrepreneurs on a range of topics, such as fundraising, pitching and leadership.

### **(v) Finalist Day (19th June)**

Following Social Entrepreneurs Bootcamp, 16 applicants will be invited to submit further information and take part in our Finalist Day. During this event, applicants will take part in individual interviews, as well as group workshops.

### **(vi) Awardees Selected (July)**

Awardees will be selected and informed by the beginning of July.

### **(vii) Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards Ceremony (4<sup>th</sup> October 2017)**

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland will announce the Awardees at the annual Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards. At this event, Awardees will share their story with key supporters of SEI, funders and members of the media. Prior to the event, Awardees will take part in communications training, and each Awardee will be profiled for the Awards booklet, website, and for various other PR opportunities.

### **(viii) Awards Programme (July 2017 – March 2018)**

Following the Award, the social entrepreneur takes part in 9 month support programme.

## **7 – Application Form Questions**

### **Q1. The Problem**

At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland we look to support social entrepreneurs who are addressing a significant issue or problem in Ireland and can clearly communicate the urgency of this problem.

- a. **What 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.**
- b. **How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it?**
- c. **What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today?**

### **Q2. The Solution**

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

- a. **Please describe the solution that you have developed.**
- b. **What have you done to date to implement this solution? Please include the specific results that you've achieved so far.**
- c. **How does your solution solve the problem and overcome its key obstacles?**

### **Q3. The Impact**

Your organisation's impact can be described as the longer-term difference that your project creates through its actions. Applicants to our Awards Programme 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. **Who is your typical beneficiary/client/service user, and how do they engage with your project? To illustrate your solution, please provide an example of the difference your project has made to one of your beneficiaries/clients/service users.**
- b. **What tangible changes do you anticipate your project making in the longer term? Please draw on external research as appropriate.**
- c. **How do you currently measure your impact?**

### **Q4. The Market**

Knowing the market they operate in is crucial to a social entrepreneur's success. You should know what is currently being done in Ireland to address the problem you have outlined. No matter how unique your solution is, there should be at least one organisation to which you can compare yourself.

- a. **What other organisations are already working to tackle this problem in Ireland?**
- b. **What is your relationship with these organisations e.g. partnership, referral etc.?**
- c. **What distinguishes your project from other organisations already active in this space?**

### **Q5. Growth**

Awards Programme applicants should have the desire and potential to scale and grow their impact. Their projects should have the potential to someday change how the issue they are addressing is dealt with in Ireland.

*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 you and your organisation in 2-3 years? Please outline your goals.**
- b. **What are the key obstacles that you might face in achieving these goals?**
- c. **What do you need now in order to achieve these goals?**

## **Q6. The Business 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 project?**
- b. **What are the key costs currently associated with your project? Please provide a breakdown across programme delivery, fundraising, and general administration costs, if you can.**
- c. **How do you plan to fund your project in the future (aside from a potential Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award)?**

## **Q7. The Team**

At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, we believe that the people behind a project are as important as the social entrepreneur leading it.

- a. **What motivated you to create social change in this area?**
- b. **Why are you the right person to lead this change? Please refer to relevant experience and skill sets, if appropriate.**
- 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.**
- d. **What do you need to do to strengthen your team and support network to achieve your goals?**

## **Q8. Anything Additional to Add?**

In case we have missed something important about your project, this section gives you the opportunity to add any further information that you would like us to know.

*Note: Section 8 is entirely optional for applicants, and there is no requirement to provide links to additional material. Entries that do not include a link will **not** be marked down in any way.*

- a. **Is there a question you wish we had asked?**
- b. **What would your response have been?**
- c. **Link to a video/media coverage/other documentation**

## **8 – Awards Programme FAQs**

### ***I'm interested in applying for the Awards Programme - how do I apply?***

All applications must be submitted online using our online application form. You can find all the details you need to enter the application process [here](#).

### ***What is the closing date for applications?***

Applications must be submitted before 5pm Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2017.

### ***Can I submit a paper version of the application form, or e-mail you a copy of my form?***

No. All applications must be submitted directly online using the online application form.

### ***What happens when I submit an application?***

Once all the applications have been submitted, a thorough review process will take place. For a full breakdown of the review process and associated timelines, please click [here](#).

### ***What will happen if I forget to include something in my application form?***

All required questions in the application form are marked with an asterisk\*. Once you have submitted your application you will not be able to amend it. Please be sure to review your work carefully before you submit it.

### ***Must I meet all of the eligibility criteria to be eligible to apply?***

Yes, you must meet all of the eligibility criteria. For more information on the eligibility criteria for the Awards Programme click [here](#). Alternatively, if you have any questions about eligibility please email [applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie](mailto:applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie).

### ***How long will it take to fill in the Awards application form?***

While everyone will be different, in general we advise that it takes approximately 5-6 hours to complete the application form, depending on the level of detail being provided. Trying to do all of this in one sitting is tough though, so we advise completing the application form in sections, making use of all the time available to complete the form.

### ***Can I meet with somebody in SEI to discuss my application?***

For obvious reasons we unfortunately can't help people when it comes to filling in their applications - although we're happy to clarify anything about the process if it's unclear. What we would recommend however, if you are looking for feedback on your individual application, is to share it with some friends, colleagues and board members, to get their insights into the quality of your answers.

***I've already started my application form, how do I log back in to edit it?***

You'll find a page on the SEI website called [Apply Now](#) – under our Awards section. From there you can click through to login to edit your application.

***Are the Elevator and Impact Awards still available to apply to?***

No. The Awards Programme has replaced both the Elevator and the Impact Awards. The Awards Programme is available to Social Entrepreneurs at various stages of development, from those in the early stages of their projects to those who are more established and are looking to scale their impact.

***How many social entrepreneurs will become Awardees in 2017?***

Up to 8 social entrepreneurs will be selected as Awardees.

***What do I get if my Awards application is successful?***

All Awardees will receive direct unrestricted funding of €10,000 and a support programme from SEI worth in excess of €15,000. Awardees of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland are also entitled to receive a series of pro-bono supports from several partner organisations, ensuring that each of our social entrepreneurs receive the best professional services available at no cost to them or their organisations. Awardees are also provided with access to numerous free/low-cost training courses and workshops to help develop both themselves and their organisations further.

***Do I have to be the originator of the idea or have been directly involved since the beginning of the project?***

No, you don't necessarily have to be the originator of the idea, but you should currently be the main driver and decision maker of the project with the skills to drive it forward. You should be passionate about the work you do and have an entrepreneurial spirit.

***What do you mean by 'Ireland'?***

The term 'Ireland' refers to both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Projects based in Northern Ireland must be able to replicate their model and/or extend their impact to the Republic of Ireland.

***My idea is for a project outside Ireland, am I eligible?***

No. If your project activities only take place outside Ireland and the communities benefiting from your activities are outside Ireland then you are not eligible to apply.

***My project has activities both in Ireland and abroad, am I eligible?***

If a significant proportion of the work you do takes place in Ireland and if you can clearly demonstrate the societal benefit which these activities bring to the communities you work with in Ireland, then you may be eligible to apply, provided you meet the rest of the application criteria.

***I am not living in Ireland, can I apply?***

No. The Awards Programme is only open to social entrepreneurs living in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

***Why must an idea or project you support be ‘new or better’?***

Ireland still suffers from a number of entrenched social problems. At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland we believe new and improved thinking is needed. However, these types of ideas often struggle to garner support, particularly in the early stages of their development. Therefore, through our Awards Programme we support projects that tackle these issues from a different angle, improving on what is already being done or introducing a completely new solution altogether.

***If I am selected, how much time must I commit to the Awards Programme?***

The Awards Programme is tailored to meet the needs of the individual social entrepreneur, with the programme structure agreed at the beginning of the Award. The time commitment for each Awardee will be slightly different, but on average 3 days per month. During the most intensive period of the Award (September-December) it could increase to approximately 5 days per month. It's important to note that the Programme will require significant input from the Awardee.

***If I am selected to receive an Award, why must I commit to participating in the Awards Programmes?***

The support structure is at the heart of the Award. It comprises both funding and a tailored support programme designed to help social entrepreneurs to maximise their impact and accelerate their development. Awardees must commit to participating fully in the programme to gain the benefits it offers.

***What sectors or project areas do you support?***

We are not limited to any specific sector or area to support, and are open to supporting projects in any sector, once the potential for societal change can be demonstrated. In the past we have supported projects in a wide range of areas including education and learning, children and young people, older people, mental health, people with disabilities, the environment, community development and new communities.

***At what stage of development should my project be to be eligible to apply to the Awards Programme?***

The Awards Programme caters to social entrepreneur-led projects at various stages of development, from early stage to growth. Your project must have moved beyond the idea/conceptual stage, with activities up and running that relate directly to the problem you are trying to address. We are looking for projects with the desire and potential to scale beyond their current reach and impact.

***How can the Award be spent?***

The financial support provided by Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is unrestricted. While there are some broad constraints to how the unrestricted funding is spent (for example we will not fund illegal activities) we consider the Awardee to be the person best suited to decide how their project can benefit from the financial support. The unrestricted funding may be used, for example, to fund the salary of the social entrepreneur or specific initiatives. Personal expenses incurred while working on the project may also be covered by the unrestricted funding.

***What are the reporting requirements for Awardees?***

Awardees are required to submit reports throughout the period of their Award, along with a summary report at the end of the Award period. This report outlines progress made and actions completed against the Awardee's project plan, along with a financial breakdown of the donation monies.

***What types of organisations do you support (charities, social enterprises, for-profits)?***

We support social enterprises and charitable organisations, of any governance structure (e.g. limited by guarantee, limited by shares etc.) Through our Awards Programme we also support early-stage organisations that have yet to decide which legal structure is most advantageous to their social mission. While we support organisations structured as both 'not for profit' and 'for profit', we only support social entrepreneur-led organisations that can convince us that their social mission is at the core of what they do, regardless of their legal structure.

***How do I know if I am a social enterprise?***

The Government commissioned Forfás report defines social enterprise as “an enterprise that trades for a social/societal purpose, where at least part of its income is earned from its trading activity, is separate from government, and where the surplus is primarily reinvested in the social objective”. From SEI's perspective you can be considered a social enterprise if most, if not all, of your income is planned to be generated from trading activities and where most, if not all, of any profits you make are reinvested back into the social mission.

***Can I apply to other funds and the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards Programme?***

Yes, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland realises how tough it can be to raise the necessary funds for a project, particularly in the early stages of development. As a

result, we have no issue with applications being made to other funding opportunities that may arise.

***I have previously applied for an Award from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, can I re-apply?***

Yes. However, we would only recommend reapplying if your project or idea has made significant progress since you last applied for an Award.

***Can I apply to the Academy and the Awards programme?***

No. You can only apply to the programme that is most relevant to your project's stage of development. Click [here](#) for more information on the eligibility criteria for each programme.

***I am a past recipient of support from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland - can I apply to the Awards Programme?***

No. You are not eligible to become an Awardee again. If you are interested in becoming an Impact Partner, you can express your interest to us from May 2017.

***I have submitted my Awards application. When will I know whether I have been successful?***

We will let you know whether you have been successful in reaching the second stage of our application process by mid-May 2017. The complete timeline for the awards process is available [here](#).

***If my application is successful, when will the Awards Programme begin?***

The programme will begin in July 2017.

***How is Social Entrepreneurs Ireland funded?***

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is funded by a range of private foundations, corporate partners and individuals. For more information, please visit our [Partners page](#).