



The Awards Programme

Applicant Guide 2019

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1 - The Awards Programme

Do you have a project that is tackling a particular social or environmental problem in Ireland and are looking to grow your impact? Through our Awards Programme we provide funding, mentoring and a network of supports to high-potential social entrepreneurs and their project, helping them to build a strategy to become a highly impactful, effective, scalable, and sustainable organisation.

We look for 6 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.

Together with a small group of fellow innovators, you will receive:

Funding

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

Training & Support

In addition to this funding, Awardees will receive support valued at approximately €20,000. 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. They can also receive pro-bono support from partner organisations, ensuring that they receive the best professional services available at no cost.

A Powerful Community

Each Awardee will become a member of the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Community – Ireland's largest network of social entrepreneurs. Community 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. 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.

2 - What We Are Looking For

The Awards programme works with high-potential social entrepreneurs to help them build a strategy for their organisation to become highly impactful, effective, scalable, and sustainable.

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. 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 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 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. 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 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 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.

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 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 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 are open and keen to engage with the *learning and development opportunities* provided through our Awards Programme. The Programme will run from July 2019 – March 2020. This involves a time commitment of on average 2 to 4 days per month.
- You are available to attend the mandatory *Selection Process events*: Social Entrepreneurs Bootcamp on 28th May and a final interview on 18th June.
- 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.*

4 - The Selection Process

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 other available information on 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 in this document. 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.

(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.

Selection Process Timeline

(i) Open Applications (12th February – 19th March)

Social entrepreneurs from all over Ireland can apply by filling in an online application form, found on www.socialentrepreneurs.ie from the 12th February.

(ii) Review of Applications (April)

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.

(iii) Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Bootcamp (28th May)

Up to 40 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.

(iv) Final Interview (18th June)

Following Bootcamp, 12 applicants will be invited to submit further information and take part in a final interview.

(v) Awardees Selected (July)

Awardees will be selected and informed by early July.

(vi) Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards Ceremony (9th October 2019)

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.

(vii) Awards Programme (July 2019 – March 2020)

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

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 Community both during and after the Awards Programme.

Support Programme

Awardees will be expected to commit an average of 2-4 days per month to programme over the course of the 9 months. This time commitment may increase somewhat 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 consultant, 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 – 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 and impact 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 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. 0/150
- b. **How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it?** 0/200
- c. **What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today?** 0/150

Q2. The Solution

Through our Awards 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.** 0/200
- 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. 0/150
- c. **How exactly does your solution directly solve the problem and overcome its key obstacles?** 0/200
- d. **Who is your typical beneficiary/ client/ service user, and how do they engage with your project or access your solution?** 0/150

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. **To help us to understand the potential impact of your solution, please provide an example of the difference your project has made to one of your beneficiaries/ clients/ service users.** 0/150
- b. **What tangible changes do you anticipate your project making in the longer term?** Please draw on external research as appropriate. 0/200
- c. **How do you currently measure your impact?** 0/150

Q4. 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 this existing work.

- a. **What other organisations are already working to tackle this problem in Ireland?** 0/150
- b. **Convince us that your project's approach to addressing this problem is better or different to what these organisations are already doing.** 0/150
- c. **What is the nature of your relationship with these organisations e.g. partnership, referral, and why?** 0/150

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 core goals. 0/200
- b. **What are the key obstacles you may face that could prevent you/your project from achieving these goals?** 0/150
- c. **What do you need now in order to achieve these goals, apart from funding?** 0/200

Q6. 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 project?** Please list all sources of income, in euro value and percentages of total income. 0/250
- b. **Please provide a breakdown of all your expenditures (in euro and percentages) across programme delivery/fundraising/administration/management and other related costs.** 0/200
- c. **How do you plan to fund your project in the future (aside from a potential Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award)?** 0/150

Q7. The People

At Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, we believe that the people behind a project are as important as the project itself. Without the right people to lead the change nothing would be possible. This is why we would like to learn a bit more about you and your team, what motivates and drives you, and how you all work as a team.

- a. **What motivated you to create social change in this specific area?** 0/200

- b. Why are you the right person to lead this change?** Please refer to relevant experience and skill sets, relationship to the problem/population, or anything else that may be relevant. 0/150
- 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. 0/200
- d. What do you need to do to strengthen your team and support network to achieve your goals?** 0/150

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: This question 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?** (optional) 0/30
- b. What would your response have been?** (optional) 0/100
- c. Link to a video/media coverage/other documentation:** (optional)

7 – 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 access the applications portal our website at www.socialentrepreneurs.ie.

What is the closing date for applications?

Applications must be submitted before midnight on Tuesday 19th March 2019.

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. A full breakdown of the review process and associated timelines is listed in this document under Selection Process Timeline.

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

All questions in the application form are required unless marked 'optional'. **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 listed in this document. You will also be asked to fill in the eligibility criteria form in the application ensuring that you are eligible for the programme you are intending to apply for. If you have any specific questions about eligibility criteria, please email us at: 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?

We unfortunately can't help people when it comes to filling in their applications (for obvious reasons) - 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. Our website is also an excellent source of information. If you have a problem with your application or a specific question not answered here, you can email applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie or call 01-685-3191 and we will seek to assist you.

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

Under the **Support** section on our website you can select the **Awards programme**, the 'Apply' button is on the Awards page. From here you can click through to login to edit your application.

How do I ensure that my work is saved?

After you've registered and have entered the applications portal you will be able to start your application. Upon selection of the programme you're applying for, you will need to enter the Application Name and **press 'Save+Next'**. All your work after this **will be automatically saved**. After submission you will not be able to make any changes, so please ensure that you are submitting an application for the programme you intend to apply for.

How many social entrepreneurs will become Awardees this year?

6 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 €20,000 and a support programme from SEI worth approximately €20,000. 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 project is based outside of 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 2-4 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.

My project is up and running – which SEI programme is for me?

If you have started to run activities and meet the remaining criteria for the Awards Programme, then it is for you. If you are in the very early stages and do not meet all criteria for the Awards Programme, The Academy may be more appropriate for your stage of development.

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.

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 re-applying 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, so please ensure you have applied to the programme most suitable for you. The Eligibility Criteria for the Awards programme is listed in this document.

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 for the same project. You can apply as the leader of a different project.

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

We will let you know whether you have been selected to take part in the Awards Bootcamp by the first week of May.

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

The programme will begin in July 2019 and will run until March 2020. You can find more details on this and associated timelines in the Selection Process Timeline in this document.

How is Social Entrepreneurs Ireland funded?

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is funded by a range of private foundations, corporate partners and individuals.