

Skills for Tomorrow Fund

What is the Skills for Tomorrow Fund?

Fund Overview

The Skills for Tomorrow Fund is a €1.5 million, 2.5 year fund supported by Deloitte Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG) via the Dormant Accounts fund.

The Skills for Tomorrow Fund aims to support innovative, evidence-based projects that build the capacity of individuals and communities experiencing marginalisation to thrive in the future world of work.

It will fund initiatives that provide practical, accessible and relevant pathways to employment while addressing the root causes of disadvantage and promoting inclusive economic participation.

There are two strands to the fund: one fund supporting youth-focused projects and another strand supporting adult-focused projects.

We see opportunities for social innovations to achieve greater impact by using artificial intelligence to generate operational efficiencies and to embrace data-driven decision making. This fund will also support awardees to explore and optimise their use of artificial intelligence to extend and maximise their impact.

The fund offers a package of cash grants and non-financial supports over 2.5 years for up to five projects, to help them expand and increase their social impact.

This includes:

- A cash grant between €150,000 to €187,500 for each awarded project
- A non-financial supports package per project including:
 - a place on Rethink Ireland's Accelerator Programme
 - bespoke business and capacity-building supports designed in consultation with the successful projects on topics such as strategic planning, maximising your impact, communications, storytelling and fundraising.
- Access to Rethink Ireland's networks.

* The Rethink Ireland Board will decide how much money to award, which may be less than the amount requested. The final amount of the award will depend on how many organisations are selected.

You can apply to Skills for Tomorrow via the [online portal](#) from Monday, 18 May.

You can apply to the Skills for Tomorrow Fund from 18 May to 29 June at 1pm.

Want more information? Join one of our application clinics on **25 May and 8 June**. These one-hour webinars will provide information on fund eligibility and the application process and offer an opportunity to answer any questions you have.

Register for an application clinic here:

Monday, 25 May, 2:30-3:30pm: [Register Here](#)

Monday, 8 June, 2:30-3:30pm: [Register Here](#)

For any questions you may have, please contact skillsfortomorrow@rethinkireland.ie

Accessibility

We have tried to make the application process as accessible as possible, but we understand that there may still be some difficulties for applicants. If you have access needs or are struggling with the application form, please contact skillsfortomorrow@rethinkireland.ie

You will need to download the following document to complete your online application:

[Skills for Tomorrow Fund – Multi-Year Budget Template \(compulsory\)](#)

The following forms may also help you complete your application:

Skills for Tomorrow Fund Application Form (*for reference only*)

[Skills for Tomorrow Fund Webtext \(Downloadable Version\) \(*for reference only*\)](#)

[Skills for Tomorrow Fund Management Accounts Template \(*if you do not already have management accounts*\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Heading: WHO CAN APPLY?

This fund is open to organisations that have a not-for-profit legal form, e.g. a company limited by guarantee, a co-operative, trust, charity, and other voluntary organisations that meet the following criteria:

Eligibility & Criteria

Projects must meet both Rethink Ireland's criteria and the specific criteria for the Skills for Tomorrow Fund, as set out below:

Rethink Ireland Core Criteria

- The project must address a critical social or environmental issue.
- The project must be innovative in an Irish context.
- The project must be based on the island of Ireland and must make its main impact in the Republic of Ireland.
- The project must have potential and a desire to scale or replicate in Ireland (it may also have potential internationally, but this is not a requirement).
- The project must provide evidence that it is up and running, or has been tested at least in a minimal way.
- Applicants must come from an entity that has a not-for-profit legal form, e.g. a company limited by guarantee, a co-operative, trust, charity.

Rethink Ireland defines a not-for-profit as any organisation whose constitution indicates it has public benefit purposes and is neither privately owned nor controlled by the State.

Skills for Tomorrow Criteria

The Skills for Tomorrow fund has two strands. Each strand supports innovative, evidence-based projects that build the capacity of people and communities experiencing disadvantage to thrive in the future world of work.

Each of the two strands has a different focus and different application criteria. The areas of focus are **youth-focused support (Strand 1)** and **adult-focused support (Strand 2)**.

General criteria (applies to all strands)

All projects/organisations applying to the Skills for Tomorrow Fund will meet the following general criteria in addition to the strand-specific criteria outlined further below.

Target Groups:

Projects must primarily serve one or more of the following:

- Long-term unemployed individuals

- Young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs)
- People with disabilities
- Minority ethnic communities and migrants
- Lone parents
- Older workers facing age discrimination
- Residents of designated disadvantaged areas (e.g., socio-economically disadvantaged, rurally isolated)
- People with low educational attainment
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or those in unstable accommodation

Future-Focused Skills: Projects must address skills relevant to future job markets including digital literacy and technology skills appropriate to target group/s, and transferable and soft skills such as problem-solving, communication and adaptability. Incorporate entrepreneurship opportunities where relevant.

Holistic approach: Projects must address multiple barriers to employment (i.e. not just skills gaps) and include wraparound supports such as wellbeing support or childcare.

Stakeholder engagement: Projects must show evidence of key stakeholder consultation and engagement in project design and delivery.

Sustainability: Projects must be designed for sustainability beyond the funding period and demonstrate potential for scaling successful interventions.

Strand-specific criteria

Strand 1 – Youth focused Support (0-18 years):

- Provide age-appropriate career guidance and mentorship.
- Address specific barriers faced by young people (e.g. confidence, digital skills).
- Include work experience placements and internship opportunities where possible.
- Connect with youth-serving organisations and schools.

Strand 2 – Adult focused Support (18+ years):

- Demonstrate innovative approaches to skills development and employment support.
- Draw on research, evidence and best practice in adult education and workforce development.
- Demonstrate meaningful partnerships with employers, training providers and community organisations.
- Provide career guidance and job placement support.

Advantageous Criteria

Artificial Intelligence: Projects are motivated to explore how they can optimise their use of artificial intelligence to extend and maximise their impact.

Which projects cannot apply?

- Projects where research is the primary activity
- Projects seeking funding for capital assets (such as buildings, vans or equipment)
- Projects promoting or aligned with a political party
- Projects that only accept participants of a particular faith or religious denomination
- Projects focused on animal welfare
- Projects based outside the Republic of Ireland
- Projects led by people under 18 years of age
- Projects that are an idea (only) and that have not yet started

Which applicants cannot apply?

- Applicants under 18 years of age
- Commercial companies, sole traders and individuals
- Any staff member from Rethink Ireland, Deloitte and the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG) and their family members. Family members include siblings, parents, spouses or civil partners or children.
- Individuals
- Statutory or public bodies, companies limited by shares and organisations that are state bodies or agencies that are not registered charities
- Any consultant currently working with Rethink Ireland

If my organisation has previously been in receipt of an award from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?

Yes. If you have previously been funded by Rethink Ireland, you can still apply. Previous awardees must be able to demonstrate they have performed well on a previous programme and capture in the application form how the new funding being applied for is a logical continuation from the original investment, fitting the new fund criteria in particular.

If my organisation/project is currently in receipt of an award from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?

Projects on one of our funds that have cash grant payments remaining before the commencement of the new fund programme are not eligible to apply.

Organisations on one of our funds that have cash grant payments remaining before the commencement of the new fund programme are still eligible to apply with a different project and different project lead.

Is this just for large-scale, national organisations?

No, it is not, and indeed we welcome applications from organisations of all sizes once it is a not-for-profit organisation with a legal form (see criteria above).

Can I apply for this funding even though I am still at the ideation stage?

Unfortunately no, this fund needs to see proof that the project is up and running or at least has been tested and shown results in some way.

Can organisations make multiple applications?

Yes, there is nothing stopping your organisation from making more than one application for separate projects. However, due to the competitive nature of this fund and its selection process, it is very unlikely that we will fund more than one project from any organisation. We encourage organisations to submit one strong application rather than multiple applications.

If my organisation is funded by a government/state agency (HSE, TULSA etc) are we eligible?

Yes, you can apply if you are in receipt of funding from a government or state agency. However, if more than 50 per cent of your board is nominated by the government, your organisation is ineligible for funding.

Is it possible for organisations to collaborate in an application (e.g. a community development organisation and an educational provider)?

They can but one organisation is required to take the lead. Please note that if your application is successful, the lead applicant will be required to sign a contract and fulfil all legal obligations associated with the project's performance. Please always refer to the eligibility criteria to ensure that your project is eligible for funding.

Heading: WHAT DOES THE FUND OFFER?

- Cash grants of €150,000 to €187,500 across 2.5 years
- A non-financial supports package
- A place on our capacity-building programme
- Project performance management

What can cash grants be spent on?

The cash grant must be spent on the project that won the award and must be ring-fenced for work you are undertaking. The specific use of the cash grant will be agreed between Rethink Ireland and the awardee.

The funding may be used to cover operations/staff costs but you must be able to demonstrate in your application how this is facilitating you to run the project that you are applying for. Cash grants may not be used to pay off debts or for capital items such as renovations, or for vehicles, land, buildings or large equipment.

What non-financial supports will be provided to successful applicants?

Rethink Ireland's non-financial supports have been called our 'secret sauce' that help projects to really develop their capacity and sustainability, in addition to the benefit of the cash supports. Non-financial supports will include:

1. Each awardee's project lead and potentially other relevant staff will take part in the **fund's capacity-building programme**. The programme will consist of a series of interactive training workshops on topics such as strategy development, measuring and maximising your impact, communications and storytelling, diversity and inclusion, and fundraising.
2. Awardees will also get some **bespoke 1:1 business and capacity building supports** from expert business/non-profit consultants in areas such as impact management, theory of change and strategy development. Supports will be designed in consultation with the successful projects.
3. Awardees will also get access to Rethink Ireland's networks and have the opportunity to develop networks and contacts with the other awardees of the fund which are often very valuable in the longer term.

What is expected of awardees?

The project lead will be expected to take part in the 30-month capacity-building programme, which includes attending approximately six workshops and spending time working 1:1 with a business/strategy consultant. Project leads will be expected to allocate time towards working on the awarded project and agreed goals as per their project budget.

Heading: HOW DO WE APPLY?

What is involved in completing the application form?

The application form asks you for information about:

- Your project and organisation
- The problem your project tackles
- What makes your project different from others
- Who it benefits
- How your project meets the fund conditions
- How you test or evaluate how well your project is doing
- Referees
- Other details
- It also asks you to send us financial documents (listed below) and a short video about your project (this is optional).

What kind of video do we need to submit? (Optional)

Don't worry – you don't need to produce a high quality or expensive video. You can use a smartphone or tablet. We just want to hear you telling the story of your project in 2 - 3 mins max. Please tell us:

- Who you are
- Why you are applying for the award
- The problem/issue your project is trying to solve
- How you will do that
- How your solution is innovative or creative

You can then upload your video to a video uploading platform such as YouTube or Vimeo and insert the URL link in the application form.

What financial information do we need to submit with our application?

1. The documents you need to complete depend on whether you are applying in relation to a project within an organisation or you are applying as an organisation as a whole:
 - If applying for a project within a larger organisation, the project's management accounts and the organisation's most recent audited/full accounts are needed.
 - If applying for an organisation as a whole, the most recent audited/full accounts are needed.
2. All applicants must outline how they intend to use the funds from Rethink Ireland if successful and upload a proposed budget. A spreadsheet template is provided in the relevant section of the application form.

How do we upload our project budget (planned income and expenditure)?

In the relevant section of the application form you will be provided with a link to a budget template in Excel. Please click on the link provided and DOWNLOAD this document to your computer. Then fill in your financial information and save the document with your project's name and upload it in the relevant section of the application form.

What happens after we submit our application?

1. Applications will go through a rigorous selection process (for more information see below).
2. Interviews will take place online from the 24 - 28 August (if you are invited to an interview, you will be informed in early August).
3. Successful applicants will be informed in November 2026.
4. The cash grants will be delivered in four instalments over the course of the 2.5 year implementation period and are tied to agreed performance milestones.
5. The capacity building programme will run for approximately 2.5 years from January 2027 to June 2029.

6. The capacity building programme supports will be designed in consultation with the awardees and reflect organisational/project needs.
7. The fund will close in June 2029.

How does the selection process work?

The selection process is very rigorous and consists of a number of stages:

- Stage 1 – Open call for applications 18 May 2026
- Stage 2 – Internal and external reviews of all applications in July and early August
- Stage 3 – Interviews for shortlisted applicants in **24 - 28 August**
- Stage 4 – Due Diligence/Governance checks on shortlisted applicants
- Stage 5 – Final decision by Rethink Ireland board in early November

Who will decide who wins the awards?

All applications will be reviewed thoroughly through a rigorous process. The Board of Rethink Ireland will make the final decision on successful applicants and the number and value of the final awards given.

How do applicants find out where they are in the selection process?

We will contact all applicants by email to let them know whether or not they have been shortlisted and invited to interview. Interviews will be conducted via online video link. When final decisions have been made on the successful applicants, we will contact all shortlisted applicants by phone or email to let them know whether they have been successful.

Heading: TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE FUND

By applying for the fund, you agree to the following terms and conditions.

- You are 18 years of age or older.
- You have given full and truthful information, both verbal and written, at all stages of the application and selection process.
- You are eligible to apply. This means that your organisation meets the criteria for Rethink Ireland and fund specific criteria as described.
- You have the right to apply. This means that you hold the necessary rights to carry out the project.
- By sending in your application, you accept these terms and conditions and our Privacy Statement. If you do not comply with these terms and conditions, you may be disqualified and may have to return any award granted.
- Rethink Ireland will hold the personal details which you submitted with your application form. We will only share this information with the third parties administering the application and selection process unless we agree otherwise with you. Please see our Privacy Statement for full details.
- The awardees must take part in publicity about the grant. Rethink Ireland reserves the right to publish the names of organisations that are successful in their applications.

- If you decline an award or if the award is taken back because you did not comply with the terms and conditions, the Directors may select an alternative awardee.
- Rethink Ireland reserves the right to disqualify any entrant, to change the terms and conditions without notice, or to cancel the application process at any stage.
- Rethink Ireland staff (excluding board members) and donor/s, their family members and consultants currently working with Rethink Ireland are not eligible to apply. Family members include siblings, parents, spouses or civil partners or children.
