

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 21st January 2021

Social Enterprises called on to apply to €400,000 fund to address Ireland's greatest social challenges

- **The Social Enterprise Development is a €3.2 Million Fund running from 2018-2022**
- **€400,000 in cash grants will be made available as well as additional business supports**
- **Rethink Ireland CEO calls social enterprises 'critical' to a just social and economic recovery from Covid-19 pandemic**

€400,000 in funding is being made available to social enterprises to help lead the post-Covid economic and social recovery through [Rethink Ireland's](#) Social Enterprise Development Fund 2021 which was officially launched today (21.01.2021). The objective of the fund is to find and back the best social enterprises in Ireland by making cash grants and strategic business support available to Awardees.

Social enterprises are businesses that work primarily to improve the lives of people. Their core objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact. Like other businesses, Social enterprises pursue their objectives by trading in goods and services on an ongoing basis. However, surpluses generated by social enterprises are re-invested into achieving their core social objectives.

The Social Enterprise Development Fund was created by Rethink Ireland in 2018 in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Since the Fund's foundation in 2018, the Fund has supported 40 social enterprises with cash grants and business supports and further 38 through their Genesis & Accelerator Programmes. It has enabled social enterprises to support 681 people to access employment, (the majority of whom are from minority groups) and mobilise 2430 volunteers. Previous social enterprises include:

1. Turn2me: Turn2me provides a safe, anonymous and confidential space to anyone aged 12 plus in Ireland seeking support with their mental health and wellbeing 24/7.
2. CyberSafeIreland: CyberSafeIreland empowers children, parents and teachers to navigate the online world safely and responsibly.
3. Grow Remote: Grow Remote's mission to enable people to work, live and participate locally by making remote employment both visible and accessible in their communities.

Commenting today, **Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien TD**, said: "The Social Enterprise Development Fund plays an important role in supporting social enterprises who are making a positive difference to their communities. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we have all been reminded of the importance of strong communities. The Social Enterprise Development Fund 2021 will help to grow Ireland's strong and vibrant social enterprise sector."

CEO of Rethink Ireland Deirdre Mortell, said: "Rethink Ireland is delighted to open applications for the Social Enterprise Development Fund for 2021. Social enterprises are at the heart of addressing Ireland's greatest social challenges and strengthening communities. We believe they are playing a vital role in this pandemic and will play an even more critical role as we recover from the crisis. "

“social enterprises employ people who would typically be considered far from the labour market, produce ethical and sustainable products and / or provide vital local services at more affordable rates than the private sector. They can and will contribute to a just economic, social and sustainable recovery and we are calling on social enterprises across Ireland to apply to our fund.”

“George Jones, Chairman & Group Non Executive Director IPB Insurance said, ‘We are delighted to support Rethink Ireland and our Local Authority Members for the fourth year of the combined €3.2m Social Enterprise Development Fund. This initiative aims to provide critical support to the very best social enterprises across Ireland. Last year we were thrilled to support a social enterprise in every local authority area in the country for the first time and we are again encouraging social enterprises in every county to apply to this year’s Fund’. (SIGNED OFF)

The 2021 Fund will be open for applications from 21st January until the 5th of March 2021. Further details are available on <https://rethinkireland.ie/>

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Rethink Ireland (previously Social Innovation Fund Ireland) provides cash grants and business support to charities and social enterprises working in Irish communities across the country. These are the organisations not just thinking differently, but who are putting their ideas into practice and building a more inclusive Ireland. We work with companies, families, individuals and foundations who understand new thinking in Ireland is needed. Every euro they donate to Rethink Ireland is matched by the Irish Government from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Since our first year of operations in 2016, we have created a €65 million social innovation fund. We’ve partnered with companies, trusts, foundations, families and individuals to create 30 funds tackling issues such as inequality and educational disadvantage to support over 200 social innovations. These innovations have reached 300,000 people and enabled 864 people experiencing disadvantage to progress into employment
www.rethinkireland.ie

Who can apply to the Social Enterprise Development Fund?

The applicant must be a social enterprise with a not-for-profit legal form. Social enterprises are defined as organisations that:

- Have a clear social mission and make a social impact
- Generate income from goods or services
- Reinvest any surplus into achieving their mission
- Are separate from government or state agencies.

What is a social enterprise?

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About IPB Insurance:

Founded in 1926, IPB Insurance is a wholly Irish-owned company and is the only indigenous mutual insurer in the Irish market. IPB is one of the largest liability insurers in the State specialising in providing tailored insurance solutions to its local authority and Education and Training Board Members as well as serving social housing, health, recreational and public service and utility sectors. An experienced underwriter of major liability, property and motor fleet risks, IPB Insurance insures some of the largest risks in the State in the public and semi-state sectors.

About the Department of Rural and Community Development

The Department of Rural and Community Development was established in 2017 to provide a renewed and consolidated focus on rural and community development in Ireland. The consolidation into a new Department of both policy and supports in respect of community and rural development provides the means for a greater focus on creating vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities. The Department has responsibility for ensuring arrangements for strong oversight of the charities sector through facilitating the Charities Regulatory Authority in carrying-out its independent statutory role. In July, 2019 the Department also published Ireland's first National Policy on Social Enterprise. The Policy is the Government's framework to develop the sector in the years ahead both in terms of scale and impact.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/>

The Genesis Programme will provide support to social enterprises who do not receive a cash grant.