

NEW SOLUTIONS SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB

Programme Overview & Applicant Guide

Introduction

The New Solutions Lab is a national initiative designed to support individuals and groups to develop, refine, and test innovative solutions to social challenges. It forms part of the wider New Solutions initiative aimed at strengthening Ireland's social innovation ecosystem.

Aims of the Lab

- Enable participants to explore and define social problems
- Support the development of practical, testable solutions
- Build skills in social innovation and problem-solving
- Foster peer learning and collaboration
- Connect participants to further supports and opportunities

Who Should Apply

The Lab is open to individuals, groups, and organisations. It is particularly suited to early-stage social innovators, those with lived experience of a social issue, community activists, and students. No prior experience or fully developed idea is required.

Programme Structure

The Lab consists of 8 workshops delivered fortnightly, using a blended model of online and in-person sessions. The programme will commence in late-September or October 2026.

Indicative Content

- Introduction to Social Innovation
- Problem Definition and Stakeholder Mapping



- Systems Thinking
- Theory of Change
- Participatory Design
- Testing and Piloting
- Pitching and Storytelling
- Evaluation and Impact Measurement

Participant Benefits

Participants will develop a testable idea, gain practical skills, receive expert feedback, and connect with peers. There is also an opportunity to apply for a seed grant of up to €5,000, which will be awarded to a small number of participants on a competitive basis.

Eligibility

Applicants do not need a developed idea or prior experience but must demonstrate a willingness to engage fully in the programme. Applicants must be resident in the Republic of Ireland.

Time Commitment

Participants are expected to attend all workshops and engage in between-session work to progress their ideas.

Key Dates

Application deadline: 12 July 2026

Programme start: Late-September/October 2026

Cost

Participation is fully funded and free of charge.

Partners

The New Solutions Lab, as part of the New Solutions Social Innovation Fund, is being delivered by a consortium comprising Local Development Companies Network, Rethink Ireland, Dublin City University, The Wheel, Údarás na Gaeltachta, and Western Development Commission.

How to Apply

To apply to participate in the Lab, please click on the link below or visit www.new-solutions.ie and navigate to the page for the New Solutions LAB.

<https://www.new-solutions.ie/social-innovation-lab>

The deadline for applications is 11.59pm on 12th July 2026.

Further Information

For further information, please contact lab@new-solutions.ie or contact Philip O'Donnell on 083 0268306.