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Thematic area	Question	Answer
A) State Aid		
	1. How can an applicant confirm if a particular funding falls under the De Minimis criteria?	The general rule is that grantees must be notified if funding falls under De Minimis or any other form of State Aid. For grants an applicant has already received, this should be stated in the Grant Agreement and it is the applicant's responsibility to check any Grant Agreements to confirm this. If an ongoing funding call falls under de minimis, this should be stated in the guidelines.
	2. What is State Aid is and does it refer also to philanthropic funding?	State Aid refers to state funding given to "undertakings" which may provide them with an advantage over other undertakings. Such funding is therefore only permissible under certain exemptions, in the case of this programme under the de minimis exemption, which notes that certain amounts would be too small to distort the market. Further information is included in the applicant guidance. Philanthropic funding would generally not be State Aid as it is generally not "State Resources" but it is noted that all De Minimis Aid granted must be notified to recipients as being De Minimis Aid and applicants are therefore advised to check their grant agreements for further clarity.

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	3. Is Community Services Programme (CSP) considered State Aid?	No, CSP is not State Aid and does not count towards de minimis.
	4. Is Dormant Accounts Fund Growing Social Enterprise Funding considered State Aid?	No, this was found not to be State Aid and does not count towards de minimis.
	5. Is Workability funding considered State Aid?	Workability funding does not fall under State Aid.
	6. Is HSE (Health Service Executive) funding for disability service providers considered State Aid?	While this appears unlikely, it is strongly recommended that applicants check any Grant Agreements, as State Aid needs to be clearly noted in such Agreements. The onus is on the applicant to clarify whether or not funding they are in receipt of is considered State Aid.
	7. How is the three year De Minimis period to be applied?	See Applicant guidance (Available on the New Solutions Social Innovation Hub Website) p.17-19 for details.
Application Clinic 1 (18 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. Is this grant De Minimis Funding?	Yes, it is.
	2.	
Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. Could you explain the de Minimis eligibility criterium a bit more. Which types of grants would typically be De Minimis?	Please see section 16 of the Applicant Guidance document available to download on https://www.new-solutions.ie/pilotgrants .

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B) Eligible Costs and evidence requirements		
	1. How many quotes will be required for capital expenditure?	New Solutions Pilot Grants is not a capital funding programme. Generally speaking, capital cost is not eligible, with the exception of small items where these are directly needed for the delivery of the project. More detail on eligible and ineligible expenditure is included in the guidance document and budget template.
	2. What is the minimum grant size?	The minimum grant size is € 70,000 for 24 months.
	3. Do you fund staff positions with this grant?	For an indicative list of eligible and ineligible expenditure, please refer to the applicant guidance p. 19-21 and the budget template available for download at the New Solutions Social Innovation Hub website, as well as the section "What does the fund offer" at the bottom of the website.
Application Clinic 1 (18 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. Can an organisation apply for capital works?	Please refer to the Eligible costs in the applicant guidance p. 19-21 and the budget template information under equipment costs.

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	2. What can the funds be used for, for example, staffing, operating costs etc.	Please refer to the Eligible costs in the applicant guidance p. 19-21 and the budget template information.
	3. I can see the 10% limit on indirect costs. Is there a % ceiling for salaries and pension costs v direct project costs?	There is no ceiling for salaries and pensions. For further questions, please refer to the financial section in the applicant guidance and the value for money principle.
	4. Would it be an issue that for an expenditure item that is a key component of the pilot, which only has one supplier, pose as a blocker. For public procurement, a minimum of 3 vendor quotes are usually required.	Please refer to the procurement regulations. This case is usually covered.
	5.	
Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. What can the money be spent on? Is there a specific list of this?	Yes, you can find the details here https://www.new-solutions.ie/pilotgrants in the section "What does the Fund offer?". You can also view a list in the Applicant Guidance under eligible and ineligible costs.
	2. Does the funding enable employment of a Co-ordinator to manage the project? Can you confirm that existing staff can be funded to work on the pilot so long as they have a contract for the project.	Yes. Please see section 18 of the Applicant Guidance: Direct staff costs are a sub-set of direct programme costs and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and pension costs for staff directly engaged on the New Solutions programme and included in the agreed

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		<p>budget of the grant agreement. Direct staff costs shall be eligible if they are in line with the beneficiary's usual remuneration practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs include employers' PRSI Salary scales should be commensurate with current scales within the relevant sector. All funded projects must clearly demonstrate that staff costs are directly linked to the delivery of the New Solutions funded project.
	<p>3. Can I clarify that this is a non capital fund, so no purchase of specific equipment allowed?</p>	<p>Please see section 19 Ineligible costs in the Applicant Guidance available to download from: https://www.new-solutions.ie/pilotgrants and the budget template (equipment section). This is not a capital funding grant.</p>
C) Eligibility questions		
	<p>1. Does my proposed project fall under the category "pilot grant", which is the only type of project funded with this grant?</p>	<p>For definition of a pilot grant, please refer to the applicant guidance p. 8+9 (Available on the New Solutions Social Innovation Hub Website) and the FAQ Section on the Website under "Can I apply for this funding even though I am still at ideation stage?" for definitions of pilot projects.</p>
	<p>2. Would there be a regional spread consideration in the awarding of grants?</p>	<p>The regional spread would be considered in the evaluation in terms of representation across the country.</p>
	<p>3. How are the projects scored?</p>	<p>Please refer to applicant guidance p. 22-23 for scoring criteria.</p>

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	4. What is the definition of disadvantaged groups for the social inclusion themes?	Please refer to application form and the applicant guidance p. 29 for definitions of disadvantaged groups.
	5. Would it be an issue if a social innovation works under three key critical issues but only one of these aligns with a social innovation theme?	This would not be an issue and that there is no difference in marks based on whether one or more of the themes are being addressed. The important point is to demonstrate clearly that at least one is met and how this is evidenced.
	6. Is my organisation eligible for the pilot grants?	Please refer to the eligibility criteria under "Who can apply?" in the applicant guidance p. 10+11 (Available on the New Solutions Social Innovation Hub Website) and the FAQ available on the Website.
	7. Is my project eligible for the pilot grants/Does my project meet the eligibility criteria?	Please refer to the applicant guidance p.9+10 for Fund Objective and Social Inclusion Themes and the New Solutions Social Innovation Hub Website under FAQs on the website under "Eligibility & Criteria".
Application Clinic 1 (18 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. If you received funding from the Community Climate Action Programme previously for capital items such as solar panels etc, does that exclude you from applying?	Please refer to the eligibility & criteria "Further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements" on the website
	2. If you have received previous grant funding can you still apply? Are there any restrictions around this?	Please refer to the eligibility & criteria "Further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements" on the website

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	3. If a programme that has been successfully piloted and sustained by a university in another country (e.g., the United States) is adapted and co-developed for pilot implementation in Ireland, would this be considered eligible?	Please refer to the eligibility criteria "Core Criteria". It must be innovative in an Irish context to fulfil this eligibility criterion.
	4. Just to clarify, statement regarding previous grant funding, I presume that it refers to the specific pilot project itself. So if organisation has applied for grants for another/different project, that does not preclude applying for this?	Please refer to the eligibility&criteria "Further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements" on the website
	5. If you have applied for a grant, but no response to date, can you still apply?	Please refer to the eligibility& criteria "Further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements". If you receive another grant, you will have to notify us, as double-funding is not possible.
	6. Can you still apply if you are a start-up nonprofit sole trader?	Please refer to "Which applicants cannot apply" on the New Solutions Pilot Grants Website.
	7. If the organisation is already in a pilot phase of a new initiative, can they make an application for funding to support the ongoing costs of that, and to expand the pilot group, or does it have to be a new initiative that the organisation has not already started piloting?	Please refer to the pilot definitions and stage 3 of the Social Innovation Development curve. It has to be a new solution that will be tested.
	8. Should there be a proposal submitted already to apply for the pilot Stage?	Please refer to the webinar, the pilot definition and the social innovation development curve.
	9. is a ltd company automatically classed as commercial, if it is profit for purpose?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" section on the website and in the webinar slides/application documents

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Thematic area	Question	Answer
		and the linked definitions of profit for purpose.
	10. Do you have to be a registered charity.	Please refer to the section "Who can apply?" on the website and in the application documents.
	11. If an organisation has received previous funding from another source for a pilot, can they apply for this funding stream?	Please refer to the eligibility criteria "Further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements".
	12. If my org has applied for another Rethink Grant and are awarded does this impact the process of this application?	This is not a Rethink Ireland Fund, but a New Solutions Social Innovation Fund Grant. Therefore, this does not impact the process of application. The criteria for the pilot grants need to be met.
	13. If you are a charity and your proposal is to set up a social enterprise does that enterprise need to be set up at application stage?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" section on the website. The legal form criteria must be met/confirmed by 31 May 2026.
	14. We have already developed a feasibility pilot, could this fund be used to now implement the pilot nationally	Please refer to the pilot definitions and stage 3 of the Social Innovation Development curve. A nationwide rollout is more likely stage 4 or 5.
	15. We got Leader funding 4yrs ago and want to expand our project- can we apply?	Please refer to the pilot definition on the website, the Social Innovation development curve and the section eligibility & criteria on the website.
	16. If you are a volunteer group do you have to become a CLG to get funding	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" section on the website. The legal form criteria need to be met by 31 May 2026
	17. just to clarify, does prior preparatory work or small-scale testing of elements of an idea affect	Please refer to the further New Solutions Pilot Grants Requirements on the Website.

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	eligibility, if the structured pilot itself has not yet been formally implemented, tested or funded.	
	18. Are LTD profit for purpose social enterprises eligible to apply?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" section on the website and the linked definition in the trading-for-impact strategy
	19. My question is If we as an organisation are not at pilot stage (we would be much further) but the project we would be putting forward is the pilot of a new programme would this new project/programme we are putting forward be eligible?	Please refer to the pilot definition and the social innovation development curve and the applicant guidance. The grants are for funding projects, not organisations.
	20. I have a small Ltd company, just me, providing wellbeing talks, workshops and programmes to community groups and organisations. I've been working on a new way of delivering the content to a wider audience, making it accessible to harder-to-reach and disadvantaged groups. Does this fit the criteria?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" and Eligibility & criteria sections on the website.
	21. is a ltd company ruled out, if it is profit for purpose is that ok?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" section on the website and the linked definition in the trading-for-impact strategy
	22. 2 related questions please. We have existing CSP funding - would a new "Pilot"/ a new service/Project have to be applied for this funding? I assume cannot be used towards existing shortfall in funding of projects?	Please refer to the Eligibility & criteria section on the website and the definition of pilot and the social innovation development curve.
	23. I'm wondering about the target audience. Our project is a community wide intervention, does it have to be in a deprived area?	Please refer to the eligibility & criteria section on the website.

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Thematic area	Question	Answer
	24. If an organisation exists now for 5 years but does not have any employees yet. All volunteers. Can it be still considered pilot stage? It is a new innovative idea for Ireland just needs to extra support to take it to the next level?	Please refer to the pilot definition and the social innovation development curve. If the project is running for 5 years, it is most likely not in testing stage anymore.
	25. Do salary costs have to be for new hires or can current staff (who are not covered by other grants) time be funded by the grant	Please refer to the list of eligible expenditure in the applicant guidance.
	26. If we start it before the grant does it make us ineligible	Yes.
	27. if 1/2 board members of an organization are involved in the program (full-time) could they be paid for their time?	This depends on your organisations's constitution. Please note the list of eligible expenditure in the applicant guidance for further details on salaries and the definition of pilot, the social innovation development curve and the eligibility&criteria section on the website for further eligibility criteria
	28. If the project idea is new but within an established programme?	Please refer to the pilot definition and the social innovation development curve.
	29. I would just like it clarified that there is no lower age exclusion for target groups. Our pilot would be aimed for at-risk young people aged 13-18.	Young people should be interpreted as those under 30
	30. We received funding for our proposal to co-design our project which included trying out some workshops in collaboration with stakeholders, are we eligible to apply for funding to pilot it now	Please refer to the eligibility&Criteria section on the website and the pilot definition and social innovation development curve.
	31. If you have a not-for-profit organisation, operational for 7 years, volunteer run but need	Please refer to the pilot definition and the social innovation development curve and the "Who can apply?" section on the

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	to move to next phase now, is that eligible? Funding is required to become sustainable.	website. You appear to need funding for stage 4.
	32. Can a profit for purpose be registered as a ltd company?	Please contact the Companies Registration Office (the CRO) and/or refer to your Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and clarify which legal form is best for your purpose.
	33. What if you're still in the process of doing a re-feasibility study for the project?	If the project has already been tested, it's not at stage 3 of the social innovation development curve. If it is a different project, it might be a pilot.
	34. Is it acceptable for us to have a CLG (Company Limited by Guarantee) to meet the Legal Entity requirements? Does it have to be a CLG with non-profit status?	Please refer to the "Who can apply?" and Eligibility & criteria sections on the website. If you are applying for your status, please be mindful that non-profit registration takes much longer than setting up as CLG and that the legal form criteria must be met by 31 May 2026.
	35. We have received former funding for a staff position to get the pilot up and running. Are we eligible for the pilot grants?	Please refer to the eligibility & criteria on the website. The grant is not for sustaining existing projects, only new projects.
	36. Could a Sports Club apply for funding towards a capital project (upgrading of infrastructure) if it could be shown to be of benefit to one or more of the disadvantaged groups that have been identified?	No. Pilot Grants are for not for projects that are primarily capital work. They are for testing new social innovations.

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	37. As a member of the LDCN, can our Local Development Company apply for the Pilot Grant directly as lead participant?	Yes, this is no exclusion criterion.
	38. Are Pobal CSP (Community Service Programme) Eligible to apply?	Pilot projects are typically at the early stages in the organisation's development. CSP organisations are usually long-established community businesses. Applicants in receipt of CSP funding could be considered in receipt of duplicate funding.
	39. Does the requirement for the project to be innovative relate to the content/concept alone or also the methodology? i.e. if we deliver educational programmes through tried and tested methods, but the content has not been provided/available before does this qualify?	This depends. If a new methodology addresses a gap that is existent in existing methodologies, that might be considered innovative. If the methodology is established and the content was not available before and the content addresses a real gap, it might also be innovative.
	40. If for example, I'm using sport as a means to integrate 2 groups, if I have run this before in another place, but only with one of the groups, would this be eligible?	If the new solution is a new concept and not just a replication from the first project, it might count as pilot. A clear distinction of concepts would be needed to be considered as eligible.
	41. Does 'sport' (theme 4) include physical activities for which there is no National Governing Body accredited with Sport Ireland?	The Sport Ireland ESF+ Action "Sport 4 Empowerment" (S4E) that implements socially innovative programmes, using sport and physical activity, to foster social inclusion and enhance the wellbeing, education, and economic prospects of people at risk of social exclusion.

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Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	<p>1. I had a small 5k grant from Rethink when I completed the Accelerated Mentorship programme - does this disqualify us from this fund?</p>	<p>This is not a Rethink Ireland Fund, but a New Solutions Social Innovation Fund Grant. Therefore, this does not impact the process of application. The criteria for the pilot grants need to be met (this pilot project has not received funding - see eligibility & criteria on the website)</p>
	<p>2. What if you're registered as a sole trader but your business has a social impact focus on employment and young people?</p>	<p>Your organisation must meet the eligibility in section 10 of the Applicant Guidance. Please download from https://www.new-solutions.ie/pilotgrants. Please also refer to "Which applicants cannot apply" on the website and the supporting documents.</p>
	<p>3. Can an organisation submit more than one application? For example a local authority submitting applications from the Sports Dept and another from the arts office?</p>	<p>Yes they can, but due to the competitive nature of the grant, it is unlikely that both projects will be given a grant.</p>
	<p>4. Can local development companies apply?</p>	<p>Yes. They can.</p>
	<p>5. When you say Pilot initiatives have not received grant funding within the last 12 months, from whom are you talking about here?</p>	<p>Generally speaking, anyone. This fund is to trial a new idea or solution, so if you have received previous grant funding for the pilot, it is most likely already up and running. The exceptions to this are stated in the Eligibility & criteria section on the website: Feasibility studies, research or preparatory work is an exception.</p>

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	6. Can one still apply if the project has been carried out successfully in a different country and we would like to apply for the grant to roll out to Ireland?	The pilot grant must be innovative in an Irish context. If it was never tested in Ireland before, this criterion is met.
	7. Explain organisation eligibility please you said non-profit NGO-but have all organisations either to be registered as a company or charity?	Please refer to the Who can apply section on the website. All organisations must have one of the eligible legal forms by 31 May 2026.
	8. Can you clarify this response please: 'This is not a Rethink Ireland Fund, but a New Solutions Social Innovation Fund Grant. Therefore, this does not impact the process of application. The criteria for the pilot grants need to be met.	New Solutions Hub is a consortium project and is separate to Rethink Ireland-only funds. Please read more about us on: https://www.new-solutions.ie The criteria for the pilot grants need to be met (this pilot project has not received funding - see eligibility & criteria on the website).
	9. So, it's if the Pilot has received "any" funding, regardless of the source of the funding? Is that correct?	Correct. Please refer to eligibility & Criteria on the website. Exceptions are: feasibility studies, preparatory work or research.
	10. Must the organization be registered in Ireland?	Yes, the organisation must be based and have its impact in the Republic of Ireland. Please refer to core criteria under eligibility&Criteria.
	11. What status dose the projects have to be at to be considered	If by status you mean which stage, the projects must be in stage 3, pilot stage. A new solutions that has never been tested or trialled before.
	12. Will there be an opportunity to apply again next year?	No, this is a on-off funding opportunity.

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Thematic area	Question	Answer
D) Timelines		
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
Application Clinic 1 (18 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. If successful, when could we begin the project? Could we start in the summer or would we need to wait until October 2026 to receive the funding?	You will have to wait until October to receive the funding.
	2. Will there be a new offering in 2027 or is this a one-off funding stream ?	This is a one-off funding stream.
Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1.	
E) System-related questions		
	1. I cannot register in the funding portal, is it down?	Most likely you have applied for rethink Ireland funding before and would need to sign-in. If you have forgotten your password, please follow the forgot my password

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		instructions or contact us for a reset-link.
	2.	
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	1.	
Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. Are those interviews via Zoom?	Yes.
	2. On trying to Sign Up on the Rethink How to Apply for Funding web site, I get the following error message - "URL No Longer Exists" "You have attempted to reach a URL that no longer exists on salesforce.com."	Please use the "apply now" link from the New Solutions Pilot Grants website. If it still doesn't work, please send us a screenshot of the error message to pilotgrants@new-solutions.ie and we will try to assist.
	3. Once I click on "Sign Up" I get the URL No Longer Exists alert	Please use the "apply now" link from the New Solutions Pilot Grants website. If it still doesn't work, please send us a screenshot of the error message to pilotgrants@new-solutions.ie and we will try to assist.
	4.	
	5.	
F) Other		
	1. Will there be an ISL interpreter available for the Application Clinics?	Unfortunately not, but closed captions are available in Zoom and the Webinar Slides/FAQswill be shared with participants after the clinic.

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	2. Can you provide any assistance to neurodivergent persons?	We will try to accommodate individual accessibility needs if they are directed to us.
	3. Can you provide the documents available on the homepage in a word version?	Unfortunately, the documents are only available in the format you can find on the homepage, if you need another format, you will need to copy and paste the information in a word document.
Application Clinic 1 (18 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. Can an Organisation submit more than one/two different proposal(s)?	Yes, they can.
	2. Will the slides be available after the presentation or only the recording?	Both will be available. All information presented in the webinar can also be found on the New Solutions Pilot Grants Website.
	3. What are the scoring criteria?	Please refer to the applicant guidance p. 22 - 24.
	4. The HP Deprivation Hub is geographic, what other statistical evidence is acceptable? Published peer reviewed studies?	The more credible the provided evidence is, the better. Published peer reviewed studies are fine.
	5. How is 'young' defined, in terms of the 3rd Thematic Objective?	Young people should be interpreted as those under 30
	6. Does the application or any documents on the application require Board sign off?	This depends on your internal authority matrix.
	7. The webinar on 25 th Feb is it similar to this or a different discussion.	It will be the same presentation but the questions might differ. They will be made available to all in this document though.

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Thematic area	Question	Answer
	8. Is there an overall word count? How many words roughly per question in section 2 ? Thanks	Please refer to the application form.
	9. Is there a limit on how many partners are allowed for co-design? Or any restrictions on who can be a co-designer?	No. The co-design should be done with relevant stakeholders.
	10. Can you put up the email address again please	All relevant information can be found on the New Solutions website and in the webinar slides.
	11. Will there be a replay of this emailed out? Losing coverage here.	A recording of the webinar and the slides will be sent to all registered participants. The Webinar next week will have the same presentation.
Application Clinic 2 (25 February 2026) NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST, more FAQs will follow with the next updates		
	1. The value for money needs to be explained more.	"In Circular 13/2014 200/4/72, as referenced in the application form, Value for money is described as: Be in a position to provide evidence on: effective use of funds, value achieved in the application of funds, avoidance of waste and extravagance"
	2. How many applicants are expected to be shortlisted? Is there a single call for the 40 awardees or will there be a second call in the lifetime of this fund?	A maximum of 80 applicants will be shortlisted and there will not be a second call.
	3. Are there common weaknesses you see in applications that we should be mindful to avoid?	Please refer to the Tips for writing great applications slides of the presentation.

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	4. How many organisations will be funded? Is there a target split between sport and the other priorities?	We aim to have a minimum of 40 projects. There is no split for categories or themes.
	5. Will this pilot scheme be the foundation for some form of core funding in the future for projects that are successful?	Follow-on funding for Pilots is not planned at this time.
	6. Regarding the I&E spreadsheet form as part of the application. Is the income and expenditure information required here for the whole organisation or specific to the project proposed?	The whole organisation. Please see section 17 of the Applicant Guidance available to download from https://www.new-solutions.ie/pilotgrants
	7. Will the slides be sent afterwards?	"Both will be available. All information presented in the webinar can also be found on the New Solutions Pilot Grants Website".