



Spark Hospital Innovation Fund

Applicant's Guide

Introduction

The Spark Innovation Programme in collaboration with the Acute Hospitals Division is delighted to introduce the **Hospital Innovation Fund**, an initiative designed to promote innovation in Irish Hospitals by funding senior-led hospital projects. This initiative offers funding from **€20,000 up to a maximum of €60,000**.

Senior healthcare professionals can apply for funding for **novel initiatives** that have the potential to improve the way care is delivered in our public health service.

The initiative will fund projects that:

- Add **value** to your hospital through increased delivery of best practice care, cost savings or increased capacity.
- Demonstrate **new ways** of working
- Encourage **collaboration** within the hospital and between organisations.
- Can be **scaled up** and transferred to other services or other hospitals.
- Show **commitment to innovation** from your hospital or hospital group.

In particular, we are looking for the following features in your project:

- An emphasis on **sustainability** and a commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of healthcare
- Evidence of innovative or **design-thinking**
- Engagement with emerging **technologies**

Applications must be made using our application form by 5pm on the 21st of January 2022.
Please follow the link [here](#).





This initiative is a cross-department, multi-stakeholder initiative made possible by funding from the following bodies:

- Health Service Executive – Acute Operations Division
- Health Service Executive – Office of the Chief Clinical Officer
- National Doctors Training and Planning
- The Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director
- Health and Social Care Professions

Background

As our patient cohort becomes more complex, the Health Service Executive faces increasing challenges in providing high quality care with the limited resources available. Innovation is a core component of any successful organisation. It is critical that the health service supports innovation so that we can continue to provide the Irish population with the highest standard of healthcare.

Following the success of our pilot initiative, “The Consultant’s Innovation fund”, we have decided to scale our initiative and rebrand as “The Hospital Innovation Fund”. This initiative aims to support innovation in the Irish public health service by funding hospital projects led by senior healthcare providers in the hospital setting which have the potential to improve care delivery. Applicants will be able to apply for funding on a once-off basis to implement novel initiatives that will enhance the experience of health service users and providers. These projects will ideally be collaborative, scalable and transferable. Healthcare professionals will be empowered to lead their team to implement creative solutions to problems faced by health service users and healthcare providers, thereby affecting real and meaningful change.

Types of Applications Sought

Applications are sought from Senior Healthcare workers from across all disciplines and public hospitals in Ireland.

Applications should feature some or all of the following characteristics:





1. Impact on the health service

- a. Improved patient experience
- b. Improved healthcare provider experience
- c. More Effective care
- d. Improvements in the quality of care provided
- e. Increased service capacity
- f. Potential to reduce costs and deliver a return on investment
- g. Alignment with corporate strategy

2. Novelty

- a. Projects that introduce a new service/process/device to your hospital
- b. Projects that introduce new and emerging technologies in the delivery of health care
- c. Cycles of testing and iteration are used to optimise the project

3. Collaboration and multidisciplinary input

- a. The initiative involves healthcare professionals from different disciplines and areas
- b. Health service users have been involved in its development
- c. The project involves new or unusual partnerships and collaborations with external bodies/organisations
- d. There are opportunities for shared learning within and outside your organisation
- e. The project breaks down traditional silos

4. Potential for scalability and transferability

- a. The principles underlying your project demonstrate the value of innovation across the health service
- b. The project can be adapted for use in other areas
- c. The pilot project can be scaled up or transferred within your hospital, between hospitals or across the health service

5. Evidence-Base

- a. Clearly demonstrate what evidence will be used before the project commences





- b. Explain the data points which will be used to demonstrate that change has been effected
- c. Identify Key Performance Indicators
- d. Outline how the project will be supported after the funding process has been completed
- e. Create new datasets or evidence sources that can be used for business decisions or that can help the organisation to understand and identify trends

Application Process

Applications must be made using the Hospital Innovation Fund Application Form. Applications should be submitted via our Google Form application. Applications are open from 14th December and will close at 5pm on the 21st of January 2022, please see link [here](#). Spark is aware that the Google form may not be accessible in many HSE hospitals – however it is essential that the form is used to allow for timely processing of the data. A PDF version of the questions is available on request in order for you to prepare in the hospital.

While the application must be led by a senior member of the department, collaboration is highly encouraged. It is anticipated that applicants will apply on behalf of a multidisciplinary team including Doctors, Nurses, Midwives and Health and Social Care Professionals. The involvement of health service users in project design and implementation will also strengthen applications. Input from other organisations is also encouraged. The project lead will be the key point of contact during the application process.

Eligibility

This scheme is open to Irish Public Hospitals only. Commercial State bodies and Section 39 organisations are not eligible to apply for funding.





On receipt of your application, your proposal will be checked for eligibility. Please note that incomplete applications will be rejected without further consideration. There are a number of conditions which must be met for the application to be assessed by the judging panel:

1. The proposed project must be innovative.
2. The timeline described must be practical and feasible.
3. The expected results must be clearly laid out, realistic and measurable.
4. The funding amount sought must be justified and based on a clearly laid out budget.
5. The application must be led by a senior healthcare professional working in an Irish public hospital. The criteria are as follows:
 - a. Doctor – Consultant or above
 - b. Nurse/Midwife – CNM3s, ANP, ADON or higher
 - c. Health & Social Care Professions – Manager and above
6. Signed approval for the project is required from Hospital CEO, Deputy CEO, COO or Operations Manager (to be submitted with initial application).

Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be shortlisted for further consideration. If your application is unsuccessful at this stage, you will be notified.

This initiative is not to be considered a substitute source of funding for certain proposals e.g. funding of a job post, funding of routine equipment, general renovations etc. Where other sources of funding have been identified, The Spark Innovation Programme may consult the parties involved in relation to this scheme to ensure alignment and avoidance of duplication.

Funding

The minimum level of funding available through this fund is €20,000 and the maximum is €60,000. Applications for funding will be expected to deliver significant value to the health service and must provide a strong evidence base to justify this level of investment.

Funding will be allocated based on the potential for the innovation to diffuse throughout the health service, the degree of collaboration involved and the expected impact on patients,





healthcare providers and the health service. Allocated funds must be drawn by September 2022.

Marking Scheme

Eligible projects will be considered by a panel of experts from the funding bodies who will mark your application based on the following assessment criteria:

Criteria	Marks Available
Impact on the health service	25
Novelty	10
Focus on value for money, outcomes and results	25
Collaboration and multidisciplinary input	15
Potential for scalability and transferability	15
Clear breakdown of costs and budget	10

Submissions must receive a score of at least 60 marks to be considered for funding. Applications will be ranked based on the marks awarded by the judging panel. In the event of a tie, projects will be allocated funding at the discretion of the judging panel.

An evaluation report containing feedback will be available on request.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be issued with a letter of offer and a Memorandum of Agreement for completion. As part of this agreement, applicants will be expected to share the results of their project with the Spark Programme and other stakeholders. You must accept the conditions outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement to receive funding. You will be asked to accept the offer two weeks post initial offer.

An interim report will be required by 31st July 2022 outlining milestones and achievements of the project to date.





Projects funded by the Spark Hospital Innovation Fund will be invited to be part of the Spark Innovation Showcase at the Spark Summit and may be considered as an entrant for our Bright Spark Awards.

Further Information

Should you have any further questions regarding the scheme, please contact spark@hse.ie.



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