



# SPARK CONSULTANT INNOVATION FUND

## APPLICANT GUIDE

### Introduction

The Spark Consultant Innovation Fund is a pilot programme which aims to encourage innovation in our hospitals by funding consultant-led projects that will improve our health service.

We are hoping to fund projects that:

- Add value to your hospital through increased delivery of best practice care, cost savings or increased capacity
- Demonstrate new ways of providing care and 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

Applications must be made using the application form and should be submitted to [spark@hse.ie](mailto:spark@hse.ie) by **5pm on the 16th of September.**

*This is a cross-department, multi-stakeholder initiative led by National Doctors Training and Planning, the Health Service Executive Acute Operations Division and the National Quality Improvement Team.*



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service



## 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 key capability of any successful organisation and it is critical that the HSE supports innovation so that we can continue to provide the Irish population with the highest standard of healthcare. Doctors and other healthcare providers working on the front line of healthcare provision are ideally placed to implement creative improvements.

The Spark Consultant Innovation Fund is a pilot initiative which aims to support innovation in the Irish public health service by funding consultant-led projects that have the potential to improve care delivery. Consultants 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 initiatives will ideally be collaborative, scalable and transferable. Consultants 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.

If this pilot project is successful, the Spark Programme aims to scale up the initiative so that senior healthcare providers across all disciplines will be able to apply for Spark Innovation Funding in the future.

## Types of Application Being Sought

Applications are sought from hospital consultants working 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. A more effective service
- 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. Focus on outcomes and results

- a. The current situation in your service/hospital is described
- b. There are clearly defined metrics to measure the impact of the project
- c. The metrics used show how success will be measured
- d. There are opportunities for learning (whether the initiative is successful or not)
- e. Staff engagement is considered

#### 4. Collaboration and multidisciplinary input

- a. The initiative involves healthcare professionals from different disciplines and areas
- b. Health service users have been involved in the initiative
- 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

#### 5. 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

#### 6. Contribution of recipient hospital or other organisations

- a. The recipient hospital or other organisation commits to matching the funding received from the Consultant Innovation Fund
- b. The recipient hospital will commit the staffing resources required to see the project through to completion

## Application Process

Applications must be made using the Consultant Innovation Fund Application Form. Forms should be submitted to [spark@hse.ie](mailto:spark@hse.ie) by 5pm on the 16th of September 2019.

While the application must be led by a hospital consultant, collaboration is highly encouraged. It is anticipated that consultants would apply on behalf of a multidisciplinary team including NCHDs and other healthcare professionals. The involvement of health service users in project design and implementation will also strengthen applications. Input from other organisations is also encouraged. The consultant will be the key point of contact during the application process.

## Funding

The minimum level of funding available through this fund is €5000 and the maximum is €50000.

Applications for funding will be divided into two categories, small-scale projects (€5,000 to €20,000) and large-scale projects (€20,001 to €50,000). Applications for large-scale projects will be expected to deliver significant value to the health service and must provide a strong evidence base to justify this level of investment. While co-funding is strongly encouraged for all submissions, it is expected for large-scale projects.

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 will have to be drawn by December 2019.

## Eligibility

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. Applications for funding of over €20,000 must be co-funded by the recipient hospital.
5. The application must be led by a consultant working in an Irish public hospital.
6. The application must be approved by the hospital CEO.

Applications that do not meet the above requirements will not be shortlisted. If your application is unsuccessful at this stage, you will be notified and will receive an explanation for this decision.

## 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 outcomes and results	25
Collaboration and multidisciplinary input	15
Potential for scalability and transferability	15
Contribution of recipient hospital or other organisations	10

Submissions must receive a score of at least 60 marks to be considered eligible 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 provided to all applicants.

## 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 by a certain date.

Projects funded by the Spark Consultant Innovation Fund will be invited to be part of the Spark Innovation Showcase at the Spark Summit and can be submitted for a Bright Spark award.

## Further Information

Should you have any further questions regarding the scheme, please contact [spark@hse.ie](mailto:spark@hse.ie).