



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How often can I apply?

A person can submit multiple ideas as long as the ideas are different.

2. What kind of idea can I submit?

The competition is for people with ideas for solutions to problems in healthcare. All ideas are welcome whether it is for a medical device, an app, a diagnostic, a service, or a process/quality improvement.

3. What stage of development should my idea be at?

The ideas can be at any stage of development. It can be an early stage idea for a solution or it can be something more developed. The main condition is that your idea will address a real problem in healthcare.

4. What are stakeholders?

Stakeholders are those affected by the problem in some way. Patients are the number one stakeholder as the problem normally affects patients in the most direct manner i.e., they are sick and waiting for treatment. The clinical team are stakeholders as the problem affects how they treat patients or perform their daily duties.

Management are stakeholders as the problem may cause a drain on resources or increase waiting times, etc. Those that pay for a solution or product in healthcare are also stakeholders i.e., the budget holders. The cost of the problem to the state affects the government as a stakeholder.

5. Who are the payers?

The patient or the clinical team rarely pay for the solution. It is important to understand the decision makers or payers should be considered as valuable stakeholders.

6. What are the workshops?

Should you be successful to be shortlisted, the workshops are three training sessions with a qualified person to help you develop your idea towards a pitch. The workshops will be both in person and live streamed. The workshops will help you develop the skills required to understand the problem, how it can be addressed, and what is important to the decision makers. How to articulate your idea in a way that shows the value of it to all the stakeholders is a key skill in getting support and funding for your idea.



7. How will the funding be used?

The funding will be used to develop your idea further. The Spark team will work with you on how to develop a plan to maximise the impact of the funding to move your idea towards reality. The various resources available to Spark will be used to enable the development of your idea, e.g. prototype development, training and development, and further funding options.

8. What are the funding arrangements?

Funding must be spent on project development. Funding must be used within 18 months of the award. The responsibility for using funds within the specified time-frame will reside with those allocated funding for project development. The funding provided must be spent as outlined by the applicant. No additional funding requirement or costs will accrue to Spark and all future costs associated with the project will be borne by the applicant.

9. Who can I contact to discuss my idea before I submit my application?

Please contact spark@hse.ie or anyone in Health Innovation Hub.

10. Who can apply?

Anyone employed by the HSE or in the voluntary hospitals.

11. How much detail do I need to have for my application?

At this stage of the competition, you only need to have basic top level information. A comprehensive review on the topic is not needed. Follow the headings on the application form.

12. Can I apply as part of a team?

Yes, you can apply as part of a team.

13. What if I cannot attend a workshop at my nearest hub?

All workshops will be broadcasted in a webinar for any of the successful applicants to view remotely if they cannot attend a workshop.

14. I have no proof that my idea works, can I still enter?

Yes. Figuring out if your idea works is all part of our discovery process.

15. I cannot think of any 'good' ideas, but I still want to enter. What should I do?

If you need inspiration, take a day at work and listen out for people's complaints (aka pain points). Jot them down and begin to think of innovative ways you could solve these issues.

16. Can you give me some of the past applications for inspiration?

No, we cannot share past applications. However, you can see a list of past winners and take inspiration from them on our website.

17. Who owns the idea/ intellectual property?

Please contact Spark for further information. Generally, this is dealt with on a case by case basis.

18. What is in it for me?

All participants will learn the innovation process of developing an idea from concept through to an evidence based value proposition for all stakeholders including clinical teams, patients, management, etc. These learnings are relevant and applicable to all projects, services & process/quality improvements. Participation would be a welcomed addition to any CV or career development plan.

If you cannot find the answer to your question, email us at spark@hse.ie