

Social Innovation Challenge 2024:

Breaking barriers to better health and wellbeing

Updated version – August 2024

Application guidance

This document aims to help you prepare your application for the 2024 edition of the Social Innovation Challenge.

Please read it carefully when drafting your application. It explains the steps you need to take to apply and offers further tips and pointers on each question in the application form.

If you have any questions that have not been answered, you can contact Carmen Paputa-Dutu (Social Innovation Challenge Programme Manager) at carmen@firstport.org.uk or book a 15-min call so that we can offer hands-on support: <https://calendly.com/carmen-firstport/15-min-social-innovation-challenge-query>.

Overview

The Social Innovation Challenge (**SIC**) is a grant-funding and support programme that seeks innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges of our times. The 2024 edition is focused on breaking barriers to better health and wellbeing. As a result, we are looking for an innovative social enterprise solution that addresses the core inequalities related to health and wellbeing in Scotland.

This is an important and complex theme. When we first launched the theme, we wrote a blog to explain some of the issues at play: [Tackling Scotland's deepest inequalities](#). This blog links to several evidence papers from Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government, as well as charity reports. Some of these resources might provide useful evidence which you could use to back-up your application. We suggest you take some time to research the theme and consider how your project addresses core inequalities.

Remember that we are not looking for solutions that are simply delivering health or wellbeing services – instead, we want to see evidence that the proposed projects can create tangible, long-term impact by addressing inequity within those core building blocks of health and wellbeing: housing, education, employment, income, social connectedness, access to green space, nutrition etc. We are also particularly interested in solutions that consider the interconnected nature of these issues and seek to address them in more holistic approaches.

The purpose of your application is to clearly explain your proposed social enterprise solution to the shortlisting panel. In a nutshell, your solution should:

- Provide direct social impact¹ by tackling inequality and improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Generate income by selling products or services to paying customers.

You should also seek to evidence that your solution:

- Contains an element of innovation, either in the way it delivers impact or the way it generates income.
- Will create new learning or offer opportunities to scale or replicate the solution elsewhere.
- Is shaped with clear input from those it seeks to help.
- Does not have a negative impact on the environment.

It is essential that the solution you are applying with is owned by you, your enterprise or your group. We will also need evidence that you have the capacity and ability to take the solution forward **in the next two years (the period covered by the grant)**.

How to apply

The online application form is now available on our Firstport Community portal. This is a straightforward form and it will already contain the information you gave us at Expression of Interest stage. It contains several sections:

- 1) **About you:** Basic information about the main applicant, plus confirmation that you consent to us processing your data and that you meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2) **Developing the idea with another individual or organisation:** Let us know who else you will be working with on this idea.
- 3) **Your idea:** You will be asked for a very short summary of your idea.
- 4) **Organisation details:** If you are already incorporated, we will ask you how your social enterprise is set up. If you are not yet registered, we will ask how you intend to set up your enterprise.
- 5) **Expenditure:** How would you spend the £50,000 grant?
- 6) **Income:** Let us know if you have any other sources of income going into this project, such as other grants, loans or existing trading income.
- 7) **Equal opportunities:** This section will be pre-populated if you already filled it in at Expression of Interest stage.
- 8) **Supporting Documentation:** This is where you upload the following documents:
 - a) SIC Proposal
 - b) SIC Cashflow
 - c) (If applicable) Annual accounts

¹ **Direct social impact:** When a social enterprise provides services or benefits itself for the good of its beneficiaries (this could be individuals, a community, or even the environment) we define this as 'direct social impact'. On the other hand, when a social enterprise provides services to other organisations, who then go on to provide benefits to beneficiaries, this would be defined as 'indirect' social impact.

- 9) Once you have filled in all the previous sections, you are ready to submit your application. **You must click the purple 'Submit' button on this page to send us your application.**

You can save your application form as many times as you like before submitting it, and there is no need to complete it in one go.

To resume an application you have paused, go back to the 'Apply' tab on the portal. Your paused application should be at the bottom of this page, in a box. You can then either resume this draft or start a new application. If you are having issues locating a paused application, please get in touch with us.

You must ensure you submit your application before the deadline.

We have extended the deadline by 24hours to **1pm on 5 September 2024.**

How your information will be used

- **Sections 1-6 and section 8** will be used by the shortlisting panel to score your application and see whether it is eligible and suitable for including in the shortlist. As this is a very competitive programme, only the strongest applications (up to 3) will be shortlisted. Shortlisted applications will then be invited to pitch to the award panel.
 - If you choose to have your application shared with our partners at Ventures Lab, they will only receive the information you provide in sections 3-6 and section 8. This means they will not get your contact details, address or equal opportunities data. If they decide you may be eligible for their support, they will let us know and we will facilitate an introduction.
- **Section 7** (Equal opportunities) will only be used for statistical and monitoring purposes. This information will not be used for assessment.

Information required in the online form

Section 1: About you

This is where you fill out some basic details for the lead contact for this application.

If you have any accessibility requirements, please let us know. Firstport endeavour to make the assessment process as accessible as possible, so it's important for us to know if and how we can help.

We will also ask you to confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria, that you are happy with how we will use your information and that you understand what will happen next.

We also give you the option of having your application shared with our partners at [The Ventures Lab](#). If you consent to this, they will assess your application to see if you might be eligible for one of their [support pathways](#). This essentially means that another support organisation will be able to see your application without additional effort for you.

Section 2: Developing the idea with another individual or organisation

We will ask you for an alternative contact involved in the project. The reason we are asking for two contacts is to ensure that we have more than one way of getting in touch, should one of you be unavailable.

If you are just starting out, the alternative contact can be someone who will be involved in the enterprise that you intend to set up (either as a board member or a staff member). Please make sure you have their consent before sharing their details with us.

Section 3: Your idea

If you don't have a name for the proposed enterprise/solution, that's fine – **just put your first name, last name and year of birth** in this box. *Please don't use standard text such as 'N/A' or 'don't know yet'.*

Keep your idea summary short and factual. Try to present a clear picture of what you would like your enterprise to accomplish. The following points should be covered:

- What challenge your solution addresses
- What services/products it will offer
- How it will generate income
- How it will generate social impact

If your idea is shortlisted, we will use this summary to promote your project in a blog announcing the SIC shortlist. You should only include information which you would be happy for us to share more widely.

Sector: Your solution may work across sectors, but there should be a main sector which fits the solution in the drop-down list. If there isn't, please select the closest fit.

Beneficiary location: Some solutions are carried out in one specific local region; others work across a wider area. If your project will not be restricted to a specific place, please select 'Scotland Wide'.

Primary social impact: Your solution may also be delivering impact against several categories, so please select the closest fit.

Section 4: Organisation details

For the SIC, we don't expect you to have already set up a company or charity to carry out your project. However, if you have, please let us know the legal structure and the charity/company number if applicable. You can find this number on [OSCR](#) (charities) or [Companies House](#) (companies).

Although we don't expect you to have established an organisation before applying to the SIC, please remember that the grant can only be released to incorporated social enterprises operating in Scotland. What this means is that if you are not yet incorporated and you win the challenge award, we will support you through the incorporation process before we pay

out the award. If you would like more information about this, please contact us to discuss it further.

Section 5: Expenditure

This request will form the basis of your award if you are successful and should be for no more than £50,000 in total. What we are looking for here is a clear breakdown of costs to be covered by this grant.

The SIC grant is £50,000, to be spent over 24 months.

Eligible costs: The SIC grant can be used for most start-up and development costs. The kind of costs we can cover are wide-ranging. Typical examples include:

- Legal fees for setting up a legal entity for the enterprise, and/or registration as a charity or community interest company.
- Intellectual property or trademark applications.
- Research and development.
 - Salaries, which must abide by Living Wage and Fair Work First standards. We are unlikely to consider a budget request which allocates the entire grant to one individual's salary. Instead, we want to see that the grant request reflects a mature understanding of business needs.
- Rent.
- Website, branding, logo design.
- Marketing materials and stationery.
- Insurance.
- Key equipment or digital infrastructure necessary for the delivery of services.
 - Only laptops to a maximum of £600 can be funded, if you can demonstrate that it is an essential need. If you require a higher specification laptop for design work or other similar purposes, a contribution to the cost of the laptop may be considered eligible, up to a maximum of £600.

Costs we cannot cover (ineligible items)

- Consultancy work on business plans, market research or feasibility studies. If you need support with any of these aspects, our business support colleagues can provide further advice and assistance.
- Overseas travel.
- Long term training or academic qualifications.
- Expenses already incurred and paid for.

Section 6: Income

We will also ask you to let us know if you have secured or are applying for any other sources of funding to support your project. This is so that we can better understand the context for your project and its development stage.

Minimum Financial Assistance Threshold: The Social Innovation Challenge grant is funded by the Scottish Government and as such we need to check that we are not awarding funding that will give an unfair advantage to an individual business. If you have any concerns about this, or if you have received significant amounts of public funding in the last few years, please get in touch with us before submitting your application.

Section 7: Equal opportunities

We only use equal opportunities information for statistical purposes, and it will not form part of your application assessment. If you would prefer not to answer any questions, please leave those fields blank.

Section 8: Supporting documentation

Here you will be asked to upload the two documents that will form the main part of your application: the completed SIC Proposal form and your Cashflow projections document. Our shortlisting panel will primarily look at these two documents to understand how well your idea meets the SIC brief. There is further guidance on how to fill in these two documents.

If you are an established organisation, we also ask that you provide your latest annual accounts. This will be used to better understand your current financial position and how the SIC grant fits in. Please only provide these in a PDF format.

You should now be ready to submit! You can take a moment to go over your answers using the 'Previous' button at the bottom, or you can send us your application straight away.

If you are ready to submit, click the **Submit** button at the bottom right of the final page. You will receive a confirmation email to let you know we have your application and will be in touch in due course.

Please note: we are unable to contact applicants about incomplete applications or missing documents ahead of the assessment process. It is your responsibility to ensure you submit a complete application, with all the required supporting documents. Incomplete applications will be ineligible.

The extended deadline for applications is 1pm on Thursday 5 September. If you're having issues submitting your application, please email us at info@firstport.org.uk or give us a call on 0131 564 0331.

What happens next?

You should receive an email confirming we have received your application. You will also be able to see a copy of your application on the Firstport Communities portal. If you are not able to see this, please contact us and we will send you a copy by email.

The application will then go through our initial assessment process, where it will be assessed by our shortlisting panel.

If your application is not shortlisted, we will notify you by email and provide you with feedback as to why it wasn't shortlisted. If we feel that your solution has potential, we will encourage you to work with our business support team to address the feedback with a view to submitting a further application to an alternative fund. Where possible, we will always try to suggest other avenues of support.

If your application is shortlisted, we will invite you to attend two preparatory sessions between 1-22 October 2024: **Practice Your Pitch** and **Cashflow Challenge**. Both sessions will take place over Microsoft Teams.

Support sessions:

- **Practice Your Pitch** is a session with a Relationship Manager where you can review your proposed pitch, ask questions about the format of the panel and pitching process, and review any questions you may receive from the panel about the pitch and business plan.
- **Cashflow Challenge** is a session with a Business Advisor to review and improve your cashflow projections, as well as review any questions you may receive from the panel about the finances of the enterprise.

The aim of both sessions is to make the pitching experience less daunting by making you as prepared as possible. If you have questions or concerns, both the Relationship Manager and Business Advisor will be happy to address them.

Pitching documents:

If you are shortlisted, we will ask you to prepare a 3-page '**Pitch and summary**' document based on your application. This will be shared with the Award Panel, alongside your **Cashflow projections**.

Pitching to the award panel:

The Pitch will be online on a designated date during the week beginning 28 October or 4 November. The date will be announced shortly and you should make sure that you are available on this date. Again, if you have accessibility requirements, please let us know.

The pitch will take no longer than 45 minutes in total. You will speak about your solution (10 minutes), followed by questions from the judging panel (35 minutes) about your idea and your cashflow projections.

This year, the Social Innovation Challenge winner will be announced at the [Social Enterprise Awards Scotland](#) ceremony in the Scottish Parliament, hosted by Paul Sweeney MSP for Glasgow (Region) in the evening of 7 November 2024.

Any Questions?

If you have any queries at all or would like to speak to us before submitting an application, please give us a call on 0131 564 0331. Good luck!

Data protection

Firstport is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal data.

We will keep the information provided within your application on file for a period of seven years. It will be permanently deleted after the publication of Firstport annual accounts. This is for accounting purposes and in line with HMRC requirements.

Submitting an application to the Social Innovation Competition is acknowledgement that you understand and accept our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set out in our Privacy Policy.