



Sparkfusion 2023

Applicant's Guide

Introduction

The HSE Spark Innovation Programme in collaboration with Healthy Ireland, Our Public Services and Department of Health is delighted to introduce Spark Fusion, an initiative designed to promote innovation across Irish public sector organisations. This initiative offers project support, network opportunities, mentorship and funding amounts from €5,000 up to a maximum of €50,000.

Teams, which include a HSE healthcare service and one or more other public sector organisation(s), may apply for funding for novel initiatives that have the potential to bring forward the vision of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2013–25. This is a vision where everyone in Ireland can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society, and is everyone's responsibility.

The Spark Fusion initiative seeks to fund projects that:

- Show commitment to innovation.
- Demonstrate synergies between healthcare and other public sector staff.
- Demonstrate new ways of working towards better population health.
- Exemplify collaboration across two or more public sector organisations.
- Can be scaled up and/or transferred to other areas around the country.

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.
- Engagement with emerging technologies.
- Steps to tackle health inequalities and social exclusion.
- Evidence of innovative, lean or design-thinking.



Applications must be made using the online application form by 9th of October at 12pm. Please note that incomplete applications and proposals for ineligible items/funding of job posts will not be considered.

This initiative is a cross-department, multi-stakeholder initiative made possible by funding from the Health Service Executive – Office of the Chief Clinical Officer.

Background

As the health status of our population becomes more complex, the nation faces increasing challenges in providing high quality care with the limited resources available. Innovation is a core component of any successful transformation, and an innovative mind-set across public sector organisations will be essential for the challenges that lie ahead.

Spark Fusion builds on the fantastic work already undertaken as part of the Health Ireland Framework 2013 – 2025. Healthy Ireland is a broad set of actions being undertaken by government departments, public sector organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the health risks posed to future generations. The policy is grounded within the understanding of health as a personal, social and economic good that every member of the population has a shared responsibility towards.

It is long understood that many of the factors that determine our health and health outcomes, exist outside the walls of our healthcare settings. Addressing these social determinants of health is a priority for Spark Fusion, therefore, we are encouraging healthcare and other public sector staff to look outside the walls of their institutions and drive true cross-sectoral collaboration towards better population health.

Types of Applications Sought

Applications are sought from teams. Each team should include staff from across disciplines in health and social care in Ireland. Applications should feature some or all of the following characteristics:

1. Impact on the health service

- (a) Improved user/patient/population experience**
- (b) Improved health and social care provider/public sector staff experience**
- (c) More effective/efficient care**
- (d) Improvements in the service provided**
- (e) Increased service capacity**
- (f) Potential to reduce costs and deliver a return on investment**
- (g) Alignment with strategic priorities for Health Ireland**

2. Novelty

- (a) Projects that introduce a new service/process/device
- (b) Projects that introduce new and emerging technologies
- (c) Projects that use an iterative or design process

3. Collaboration and multidisciplinary input

- (a) The initiative involves healthcare professionals and public sector staff from different disciplines and areas.
- (b) Stakeholder engagement from user in development phase.
- (c) The project involves new or unprecedented partnerships and collaborations with external bodies/organisations.
- (d) There are opportunities for shared learning within and outside your organisation(s).
- (e) The project breaks down traditional silos.

4. Potential for scalability and transferability

- (a) The principles underlying your project demonstrate the value of innovation.
- (b) The project can be adapted for use in other areas.
- (c) The pilot project can be scaled up or transferred across the country.

5. Evidence-Based

- (a) Clearly demonstrate what evidence/measures of success 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 and sustained 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 organisations to understand and identify trends.

Application Process

Applications must be made using the Spark Fusion Application Form via the following link. Applications are now open and will close at 12pm on October 9th 2023. A PDF version of the questions is available on request in order for you to prepare in your department but applications must be made through the [online portal](#).

While the application must include a clinical staff member from the HSE, collaboration is essential. It is anticipated that applicants will apply on behalf of a multidisciplinary team including at least one of Doctors, Nurses, Midwives, Health and Social Care Professionals. The involvement of service users in project design and implementation will also strengthen applications. The project lead will be the key point of contact during the application process.

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:

- **The proposed project must be innovative.**
- **The timeline described must be practical and feasible.**
- **The expected results must be clearly laid out, realistic and measurable.**
- **The funding amount sought must be justified and based on a clearly laid out budget.**
- **The application must include one of the following HSE healthcare professionals:**
 - *Doctor: Non Consultant Hospital Doctor or Consultant*
 - *Nurse/Midwife: Any grade*
 - *Health & Social Care Professionals ([see list](#))*
 - *Health Promotion Officers AND/OR Other*
- **The application must include staff from at least one other public sector organisation.**
- **Signed approval for the project is required from managers from all partners.**

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 €5,000 and the maximum is €50,000. Applications for funding will be expected to deliver positive impact on individual, group or population health, 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 country, the degree of collaboration involved and the expected impact on service users.

Marking Scheme

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

Impact on social determinants of health	25
Novelty	15
Focus on Impact – Qualitative/Qualitative	20
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 70 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 **May 2024** outlining milestones and achievements of the project to date. Projects selected by Spark Fusion 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 enquiries regarding the scheme, please contact spark@hse.ie



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www.hse.ie/spark



Spark_Programme



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[linkedin.com/company/hse-spark-innovation-programme](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hse-spark-innovation-programme)