# Circular Economy Innovation Fund 2024
# Grant Round Criteria
# For Non-Profit Organisations and Social Enterprises

## About Community Foundation Ireland

Community Foundation Ireland and its partners believe in equality for all in thriving communities. We work with individuals, families, corporates and other trusts and foundations, as well as Government, to translate giving in the moment to giving that is strategic, sustainable and impactful. We use our skills and knowledge developed over 24-years to help donors turn aspirations into effective investments.

The Foundation works with partners to achieve solutions for both long-standing and emerging challenges. The work is built upon four pillars: Empowering Generations, Sustainable Futures, Inclusive Communities and Accelerating Change.

Through our many partnerships we are working towards an Ireland where barriers are broken down and communities are empowered to thrive. Working with you, other non-profits and donors we are committed to making this vision a reality.

## About the Fund

The Circular Economy Innovation Fund 2024, previously administered by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), is a collaboration between Community Foundation Ireland and the Government of Ireland.

The purpose of this Fund is to provide financial support to projects that are working on innovative and/or scalable solutions to ensure waste prevention, with the aim of advancing the circular economy in Ireland and raising awareness of the need to transition to a circular economy.

By funding circular economy projects and enterprises, the Fund directly supports the growth of the circular economy in Ireland and provides high-profile examples of best practice.

In 2023, €650,000 was awarded in grants to 13 non-profit organisations, social enterprises and small businesses developing or showcasing models of best practice by incorporating the features of a circular economy.

### Features of a Circular Economy

*A circular economy incorporates the following features:*

- *Eco-design, manufacture and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable, repairable, re-usable and upgradable.*
- *Reduction of waste generation and the presence of hazardous substances in materials and products.*
- *Encouraging remanufacturing, refurbishment, and repurposing of products.*
- *Maximising repairing for re-use, valorisation of residuals, industrial symbiosis and recycling.*
- *Maximising the recovery of EU list of 27 critical raw materials and alleviating reliance of imports.*
- *Encouraging repair and reuse of products / materials.*
- *Encouraging new business models to optimise capacity utilisation and extend useful life of products and assets such as sharing / leasing platforms and take back services.*
- *Encouraging ICT tools to extend the life of products and assets.*
- *Ensuring waste is valued and closing the loop.*

## About the 2024 Grant Round

In 2024, the Fund aims to support regional and national projects developing or showcasing models of best practice focused on waste prevention in the areas of plastic, construction and demolition, food, as well as resources and raw materials.

Waste prevention in these areas can include initiatives addressing any stage of the cycle below: from raw materials to residual waste.

These models of best practice should demonstrate innovative solutions to waste prevention by incorporating features of the circular economy or be scalable and replicable by other groups.

The objectives of this grant round are:
- To support the development or showcasing of models of best practice focused on waste prevention in the four thematic areas.

- To support regional as well as national projects that will have a significant impact on materials or waste streams.
- To encourage innovation within the circular economy space in Ireland.
- To support projects that can be scaled up or replicated across the country.
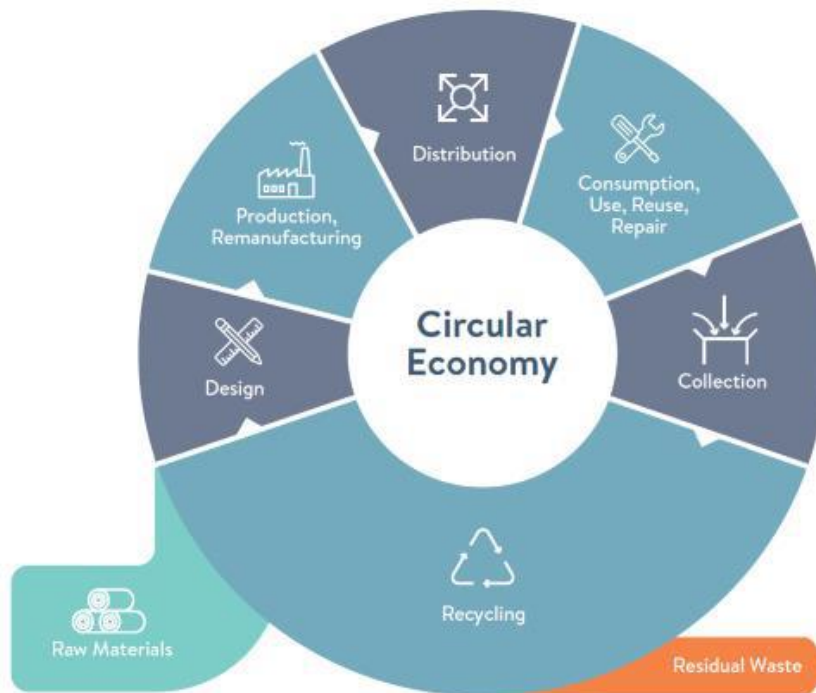


*Source: National Waste Prevention Programme*

**Grants between €40,000 and €50,000** will be available for **non-profit organisations, social enterprises** and small businesses *(profit-making organisations with fewer than 50 employees)* working in the area of circular economy or aiming to make their existing work more circular. Grants will support these organisations to transform their current or usual work to bring it more in line with the principles of circular economy, to develop new work, or to scale up existing best practices significantly.

A very limited number of exceptional projects with a high potential may have the opportunity to receive a €100,000 grant.

*Following the review of all submitted applications, some applicants might be contacted regarding the additional funding. Please note that applications at this stage should be for a maximum of €50,000.*

# Applying to this Grant Round

**Thematic Areas**

The grant round is open to applications for projects working on waste prevention in the following thematic areas:

- *Plastic Waste*
- *Construction and Demolition Waste*
- *Food Waste*
- *Resources and Raw Materials Waste (Electrical and electronic equipment, textiles, furniture)*

Applications to this grant round must be aligned to <u>at least one of the thematic areas</u> identified above.

Successful grant applications will exhibit <u>how they will have a significant impact on these material or waste streams.</u>

**Innovation and/or Scalability**

In addition to being aligned to one of the thematic areas, applications should feature <u>one or both</u> of the following elements:

1. *Innovation*

Applications to this grant round should showcase an element of innovation.

These innovative elements can be completely new ideas that have never been seen before. They can also be creative and efficient changes to an existing project / idea that can help it become more circular or reach a larger audience.

For example, innovation can be demonstrated through a pilot project and the funding would support the development of a proof of concept. In an ongoing project, the funding could support the incorporation of innovative elements like new materials, technology, or procedures that would enhance the circularity of the project and ensure waste prevention.

Please ensure you explain how your project shows innovation through your application.

2. *Scalability*

Applications should also be able to demonstrate how their idea / project could be scaled up. This includes demonstrating how viable it would be for other communities or groups to replicate the project.

For example, if the project involves the use of a new material, the application should demonstrate how accessible that material would be for other groups across the country.

This could also include scaling up an existing project that promotes features of a circular economy and thereby raises the profile of the circular economy in Ireland.

Please ensure you explain how your project is scalable through your application.

**Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:**

- Developing new equipment or processes that allow for a reduction in packaging materials.
- Developing technology that encourages reuse of materials that would otherwise enter the waste stream.
- Upskilling people and communities for expertise needed for the circular economy.
- Research to identify innovative and effective waste prevention strategies in a particular area.

*Please refer to the 'Features of a Circular Economy' information box at the beginning of the document for more project ideas.*

Please contact info@foundation.ie if further information is required on this.

## Grant Round Timeline

| | |
|---|---|
| Opening Date for applications: | 19th June |
| Closing Date for applications: | 19th July |
| Grants will be awarded: | End of September 2024 |
| Work should begin: | October 2024 |
| Work should be complete: | By March 2026 |

## Eligibility for Non-Profit Organisations and Social Enterprises

| **Eligible organisations must...** | **Eligible projects...** |
|---|---|
| • Be a non-profit organisation or a social enterprise.<br>Organisations are not required to be a registered charity.<br><br>• Have an annual income of more than €100,000.<br><br>• Have up to date and sufficient governing documents, and annual accounts. | • Must meet the aim and objectives of this grant round.<br><br>• Should be aligned to at least one of the four thematic areas.<br><br>• Can be a new or ongoing piece of work.<br><br>• Must incorporate one or both features – innovation and scalability.<br><br>• Must start in September 2024 and run for a maximum of 12 - 18 months. |

Organisations and projects that don't fit these criteria will not be considered for funding.

| Ineligible Organisations include… | Ineligible projects include… |
|---|---|
| • Non-profit organisations or social enterprises with an annual income of less than €100,000.<br><br>• Schools<br><br>• Sports organisations<br><br>• Statutory bodies<br><br>• Animal welfare organisations<br><br>• Proposals from individuals | • Ongoing core costs such as insurance, rent, bills etc.<br><br>• Projects that do not feature an element of innovation or scalability.<br><br>• Projects not aligned to atleast one of the thematic areas.<br><br>• Religious or political activities.<br><br>• Projects that have already happened or any activities that will happen before the grants are awarded.<br><br>• Projects taking place outside of the Republic of Ireland. |

Ineligible organisations and projects will not be successful, so please do not apply.

## Additional Notes:

- Projects may be to continue a current programme or to start a new one.
- Proposals to this fund can include the proportion of staff time costs specifically related to the project. This also includes new staff salaries required to increase service provision.
- Applications can include equipment or furniture that is relevant to the project.
- Developing or constructing a new building or buying a building or land is not eligible.

## Priorities for this grant round

We anticipate that this will be a very competitive grant round so proposals that show the unique value of their project will be prioritised, this includes the following:

- Projects that have a strongly justified need based on research or feedback.
- Projects that articulate their strong and significant impact on material and waste streams in the areas of plastic, construction and demolition, food, and resources and raw materials.
- Projects that have the potential to be sustained beyond the life of this grant.

## Funding Available:

- Organisations can apply for funds between **€40,000 and €50,000** which should be spent down in 12 – 18 months. Budgets must be detailed and realistic. If the total cost of the

project exceeds the grant amount, applicants will need to detail how they would raise the gap.

- Only one application per organisation will be accepted.
- For organisations with branch networks, where each branch falls under the one constitution, the application must be submitted by the head office of the organisation.

## Governance Documents:

All organisations will be required to upload digital copies of the following governance documents. This needs to be done through the Grants Portal by updating the organisation's profile. For more information, please refer to the Grantee FAQs.

- **Company Certificate of Incorporation or equivalent**
- **The Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association.**
  - o This must show the mission statement or main objects of the organisation, how any donations will be used, the winding up clause, and details of the appointment of the Board of Directors.
  - o This document must be signed.

- **A bank account statement header**
  - o This statement header must clearly show the Account Name, BIC and IBAN.
  - o Please blank out any transactions, as this is purely to verify the account to pay the grant into.
  - o If your organisation has a credit union account, you must supply an IBAN for your specific account. We are unable to accept applications without a unique account IBAN.

- **List of Board Members and identification**
  - o This should clearly show the current list of Trustees/Directors/Committee members and their roles.
  - o The document should also mention the length of time each member has served on the Board.
  - o Additionally, all applicants must provide proof of identity for two Trustees/ Directors/ Committee Members, plus proof of address for one of the two Trustee/ Director/ Committee Members.

- **Tax Clearance Certificate**
  (This is required when the grant amount is above €30,000)

- **The organisation's annual accounts for the last two years**
  - o Annual accounts should include unabridged financial statements for the two years, or where relevant, a monthly profit and loss for the year.
  - o Organisations with an annual income of less than €100,000 should provide a Profit and Loss account for the year.

- o Organisations with an annual income of more than €100,000 must provide audited annual accounts.
- o Accounts should be from the two previous financial years and must be signed.

**If you do not submit the correct governance documents, your application will not be considered for funding.**

## Reporting requirements

All grantees will be required to submit Progress and Outcome Reports during the project. Progress reports will be due at the end of April 2025 and Outcome reports will be due in October 2025 or March 2026 (depending on the length of the project).

## How to apply

The Fund is open for applications on **19th June 2024** and will close at **4pm on the 19th of July 2024.**

All applications must meet the criteria above, any organisation or project that does not meet the eligibility criteria will not be successful in this grant round.

**To apply to the Grant Round, please read the instructions in the Application Guide here.**

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

It is recommended that you read our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as well as the Application Guide before starting your grant application.

Should you have any further questions, please contact the Grants Team at info@foundation.ie
Please note that due to the high number of enquiries we may not be able to respond to queries immediately.