



Request for Tender for Research Services

*Independent Evaluation of the Mayo Sustainability
Fund Pilot Programme*

Application deadline for submission of tenders: 30th October 2026



1. Background Information

1.1 About Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation.

Community Foundation Ireland and its donors are on a mission to mobilise strategic philanthropy to advance equality, strengthen communities and protect our nature and environment.

Its mission is supported by three interwoven strategic priorities of; People (securing a fairer future), Place (strengthening communities) and Planet (protecting climate and nature).

The Sunflower Charitable Foundation was established in Ireland in 2021 as a family trust and registered charity.

Its mission is to support the growth of resilient communities and contribute to environmental sustainability in Ireland and overseas.

1.2 Background to the tender

Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation invite proposals from suitably qualified consultants or evaluation teams to undertake an independent evaluation of the Mayo Sustainability Fund Pilot Programme (MSF).

The MSF is a partnership initiative established to strengthen and support the ecosystem of sustainability organisations, projects and community-led action across County Mayo. The Fund was developed following a programme of research and community consultation which identified opportunities to build local capacity, collaboration and long-term sustainability impact.

The Fund commenced grant-making in September 2025 and is operating as a three-year pilot programme. To date, 15 organisations have received funding, with further grants anticipated during the pilot period through both open grant rounds and strategic funding opportunities.

As a place-based funding initiative, the Fund supports organisations and projects that contribute to environmental sustainability, community resilience and positive systems change in County Mayo. Alongside grant-making, it seeks to strengthen the wider sustainability ecosystem through collaboration, learning and collective action.

1.3 Purpose of the Evaluation

Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation are seeking to appoint an experienced evaluator to undertake an independent evaluation of the MSF.

As the programme progresses, we wish to gain a robust understanding of the Fund's effectiveness, impact and future potential. The evaluation should assess the value created for funded organisations, communities and the wider sustainability ecosystem in Mayo, while identifying opportunities to strengthen the programme during the remainder of the pilot period.

The evaluation should provide an evidence-based assessment of what has worked well, what could be improved and what lessons can inform future place-based sustainability funding. It should also consider the extent to which the MSF model represents an effective approach to place-based philanthropy and whether there is evidence to support its continuation, scaling or adaptation in other locations.

The findings will be used by Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation to inform future strategic, operational and funding decisions.

We are looking for an evaluation that provides robust analysis, meaningful learning and practical recommendations that can support future strategic and funding decisions.

1.4 Evaluation Areas

The evaluation should consider the following areas:

- (i) Assess the extent to which the MSF is achieving its intended objectives and outcomes.
- (ii) Evaluate the impact of the Fund on grantee organisations, including organisational capacity, resilience, and ability to deliver on their missions.
- (iii) Assess the contribution of the Fund to strengthening collaboration, partnerships, networks and relationships across Mayo's sustainability ecosystem.
- (iv) Identify intended and unintended outcomes emerging from funded activities at organisational, community and wider network levels.
- (v) Examine the effectiveness of the Fund's design, grant-making approach and support structures.
- (vi) Identify barriers, challenges, unmet needs and opportunities emerging through the pilot programme.
- (vii) Assess the extent to which the Fund is supporting community leadership, participation and locally driven solutions.

(viii) Consider the wider contribution of the Fund to environmental sustainability, community resilience and systems-level change within County Mayo.

(ix) Assess the potential for continuation, replication or scaling of the model and identify the conditions required for future success.

(x) Provide strategic recommendations for the future development and sustainability of the Fund.

1.5 Methodology

Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation welcome proposals that demonstrate a robust and proportionate approach to evidence gathering, analysis and learning. We anticipate that the methodology will draw on both qualitative and quantitative sources and incorporate the perspectives of funded organisations, programme partners and other relevant stakeholders. We are open to proposals that include creative approaches as part of the evaluation methodology, so long as the overall evaluation is underpinned by strong evidence.

We request that methodology to include interviews with donors, grantees, and other local stakeholders.

The successful consultant will be expected to demonstrate how their proposed approach will generate meaningful insights, credible evidence and practical recommendations.

1.6 Outputs

The primary output of this process will be a comprehensive evaluation report presenting the findings, conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation.

The consultant will also be required to produce an executive summary tailored for trustees, donors and external stakeholders, together with a presentation of the findings to Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation.

A mid-point evaluation report will be required during the course of the evaluation. This report should provide an overview of progress to date, emerging findings, and any preliminary recommendations to inform ongoing programme delivery and stakeholder engagement.

The final report should be clear, accessible and easy to navigate, with findings and recommendations presented in a concise and intelligible manner. Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation may draw on key messages from the evaluation to communicate its findings to a range of stakeholders, including donors and grantees.

1.7 Timeframe

The project is expected to commence within one month of the contract award. The contract term will run for two years, concluding in November 2028.

2. Instructions to Tenderers

2.1 Format of tenders

Interested parties should submit a full tender proposal outlining:

- Their understanding of the brief and proposed approach to the evaluation.
- The proposed methodology and rationale.
- Relevant experience and examples of similar evaluations undertaken.
- Details of the proposed project team, including roles and responsibilities.
- Indicative project plan and timeline.
- A detailed budget and associated costs.
- Any added value, innovative approaches or tools that may strengthen the evaluation process.

The proposal should include an indicative timeline for the evaluation, incorporating appropriate opportunities for engagement with Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation, including progress updates, feedback points and review of draft outputs. We recognise that the detailed timeline may evolve once the successful evaluator develops a final evaluation plan that aligns with the implementation timelines of the projects funded through the MSF.

The proposal should include an indicative timeline for the evaluation, incorporating appropriate opportunities for engagement with Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation, including progress updates, feedback points and review of draft outputs. We recognise that the detailed timeline may evolve once the successful evaluator develops a final evaluation plan that aligns with the implementation timelines of the projects funded through the MSF.

Following assessment of written submissions, a shortlist of may be made and in that case a presentation and participate in an interview with representatives of Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation.



2.2 Compliant tenders

Tenderers should read this document in full to better ensure compliance, and Community Foundation Ireland reserves the right to reject a tender as non-compliant. Tenderers are required to:

- Submit all documentation which this Request for Tender (RFT) requires
- Conform and comply with all instructions set out in this RFT
- Submit the tenderers statement required in the submission form
- Not alter this RFT in any way

2.3 Submission of tenders and application deadline

Completed application must use the provided application form and be sent by email to Ailbhe McEntee (amcentee@foundation.ie) with subject line “Mayo Sustainability Fund Evaluation”.

Completed application forms must be received no later than **30th of October 2026**.

Application forms for the tender can be accessed [here](#).

3. Queries and clarifications

All queries with respect to this RFT must be directed to amcentee@foundation.ie. Community Foundation Ireland reserves the right to update, amend or cancel the information contained in this document and/or to extend the tender deadline. Participants will be informed of any such amendment, extension or clarification by email.

4. Tender evaluation and award of contract

4.1 Award of contract criteria

A contract will be awarded out of a total of 100 marks, based on the tenderers ability to deliver the required service in accordance with the following criteria:

Tenders will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting (%)
Demonstrated understanding of the brief and evaluation requirements	15

Quality and appropriateness of the proposed methodology	35
Relevant experience and expertise of the consultant or evaluation team	20
Ability to deliver practical, actionable findings and recommendations	20
Value for money and overall cost effectiveness	10
Total	100

Following evaluation of written submissions, shortlisted tenderers will be required to make a presentation to the Selection Committee. The presentation will form part of the overall evaluation process and will be used to clarify and further assess proposals against the award criteria set out above. Further details on the presentation requirements will be provided to shortlisted tenderers.

4.2 Contractual rights

This RFT does not constitute an offer or a commitment to enter into a contract. Until a formal written contract has been executed by or on behalf of Community Foundation Ireland, no contractual rights will exist. The tenderer may be required to outline and discuss the research proposal to Community Foundation Ireland staff or other stakeholders.

4.3 Payments

- All prices quoted must be quoted in euro (€)
- All prices quoted must be inclusive of VAT, with the applied VAT rate, indicated
- All prices quoted must be valid for at least three months following the tender deadline
- Payments will be made on foot of appropriate invoices submitted, with invoicing arrangements agreed after the award of contract
- Incorrect invoices will be returned for correction with subsequent effects on date of payment

4.4 Taxation

For the term of any contract issued, successful tenderers shall be in compliance with all domestic and EU tax laws. Tax clearance, reference and other tax registration numbers may be required prior to the award of any contract.

4.5 Subcontractors

Where a tenderer is relying on the capacity of other persons or entities for fulfilling any of the award criteria, if requested by Community Foundation Ireland, the tenderer must provide

satisfactory proof that the persons or entities being used have the necessary expertise to fulfil the award criteria.

5. Terms and conditions

5.1 Liability and warranty

Community Foundation Ireland does not accept any liability or provide any express or implied warranty in respect of any such information contained in this RFT, and tenderers must form their own conclusions about the solution needed to meet the requirements set out.

5.2 Data protection

Applicants are required to comply with the requirements of data protection legislation and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All data will be processed in accordance with GDPR and relevant data protection law.

5.3 Costs

All costs and expenses incurred by tenderers relating to their participation in this RFT shall be borne by the tenderers exclusively.

5.4 Confidentiality

All documentation, data, statistics and information furnished by Community Foundation Ireland to tenderers during the course of this RFT: shall be treated as confidential; are furnished for the sole purpose of replying to this RFT only; may not be used, communicated, reproduced or published for any other purpose without the prior written permission of Community Foundation Ireland; and must be returned immediately to Community Foundation Ireland upon cancellation or completion of this RFT if so requested.

5.5 Publicity

No publicity regarding this RFT or any contract pursuant to this RFT is permitted unless Community Foundation Ireland has given its prior consent to the relevant communication.

5.6 Ownership

Unless otherwise agreed, ownership of any reports, material or output produced relating to any contract awarded as a result of this RFT rests with Community Foundation Ireland and the Sunflower Charitable Foundation.

5.7 Copyright



Copyright of any reports, material or output produced shall rest with and be assigned to Community Foundation Ireland. Community Foundation Ireland and Sunflower Charitable Foundation shall have the right to publish, or not as the case may be, and to disseminate any reports, material or output, without further reference to the tenderer. The tenderer will not be entitled to further payment if this occurs. The tenderer and the individual researchers will be entitled to be credited with the work that they have done on this project in any publication.

5.8 Registrable interest

Any registrable interest involving any tenderer or subcontractor must be fully disclosed in the tender or, in the event of this information only coming to the notice of the tenderer or subcontractor after the submission of a tender, must be communicated to Community Foundation Ireland.

5.9 Anti-competitive

Price collusion or any other anti-competitive behaviour is a criminal offence under the Competition Act 2002.

5.10 Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a tenderer, subcontractor or individual employee or agent of a tenderer or subcontractor must be fully disclosed to Community Foundation Ireland as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is or becomes apparent.

5.11 Insurance

The successful tenderer shall be required to hold for the term of the contract the appropriate level of insurance cover in order to carry out work associated with this project.