

STRATEGIC PLAN
2021–2023

Making Ireland more inclusive, sustainable and equal

**RETHINK
IRELAND** Our
Social
Innovation
Fund





Welcome to Rethink Ireland's 2021–2023 strategic plan

While it feels a little strange to release a strategic plan in the middle of a global pandemic, I can think of no better time to launch our vision for an Ireland that is more inclusive, equal and sustainable because of social innovation.

Since the (former) Taoiseach Enda Kenny first launched Rethink Ireland in 2016, we have worked with the Irish Government, companies, foundations, and trusts to create funds tackling Ireland's most pressing social issues and to support over 200 of the best social innovations in Ireland.

We've supported household names like FoodCloud – helping them achieve their incredible milestone of redistributing 100 million meals which would otherwise have gone to waste – and some smaller organisations that you or may not have heard of, like the Abalobi Fisheries app which uses technology to connect small-scale local fishers with buyers looking for quality fresh fish.

No matter their size or stage of growth, it's been an honour to work with these inspiring innovations, those outside-the-box thinkers who are determined to make a difference. It's through their courage and conviction that we have been inspired to set out our own ambitious objectives for the future.

Over the next three years we have set out to:

- 1 Build a €100 million social innovation fund for Ireland.
- 2 Collaborate with our partners to develop a flourishing ecosystem for Irish social innovations.
- 3 Accelerate the impact of social innovations working in five crucial areas; education, social enterprise, equality, climate justice and health.
- 4 Empower clusters of innovations to amplify their impact and ability to collaborate to contribute to a more equal, sustainable and inclusive Ireland.

As you read through this plan, we hope you will see how social innovation can make Ireland a better place at a time when it is needed most. It is important to remember that we live in a society, not just an economy, and just as investment in innovation is critical to our economic recovery, investment in social innovation is critical to our societal recovery and to building a more sustainable future. We have one chance to do this, let's do it right.

Deirdre Mortell
CEO, Rethink Ireland

About Rethink Ireland

Rethink Ireland (previously Social Innovation Fund Ireland) provides cash grants and business supports to non-profit organisations working in Irish communities across the country. These are the organisations not just thinking differently, but who are putting their ideas into action and building a more inclusive Ireland. We work with companies, families, individuals and foundations who too understand and believe new thinking in Ireland is needed. Every euro they donate to Rethink Ireland is matched by the Irish Government from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Since our first year of operations in 2016, we have created a €65 million social innovation fund. We've partnered with companies, trusts, foundations, families and individuals to create 30 funds tackling issues such as inequality and educational disadvantage to support over 200 social innovations. These innovations have reached 300,000 people and enabled 864 people experiencing disadvantage to progress into employment.

At Rethink Ireland, we define social innovation as the successful delivery of new approaches to meet social needs more effectively and sustainably than those currently available.

Mission, vision & values

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to support the best social innovations so that they can grow and maximise their impact across Ireland.

OUR VISION

Our vision is an Ireland which is more inclusive, equal and sustainable because of social innovation.

OUR VALUES

We work with our hearts and our heads – we value compassion, passion and fun.

We take smart risks and we allow permission to fail because we know that innovation and risk are two sides of the same coin.

We believe that social change is a team sport – we use influence and engagement to build trusted relationships, and we choose to collaborate to achieve our goals.

We demonstrate curiosity and a hunger to learn.

We value bold ideas and bold leadership, and we develop remarkable people.



Strategic goal 1

Build a €100 million social innovation fund for Ireland by 2023

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Our goal is to build a €100 million social innovation fund for Ireland. We do this so we can invest in the best social innovations in Ireland so they maximise their impact and reach more and more people in need of their vital work.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- We will continue to partner with companies, foundations, trusts, families and individuals who wish to use their philanthropy to create funds that tackle our most critical social issues.
- We will continue our partnership with the Department of Rural and Community Development who have committed to match funds raised by us through the Dormant Accounts Fund for the next five years.

- Additionally, we will seek to raise further funds from other sources including from European Funds and from other Government sources.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

While acknowledging that the outlook for fundraising is uncertain as markets are volatile due to Brexit and Covid-19, we remain ambitious with our fundraising targets. Our aim is to raise an annual income of €12 million over the next three years. This will boost the size of ‘Our Social Innovation Fund’ to a cumulative fund of €100 million.



Cloughjordan Community Farm
Innovate Together Fund Awardee

Strategic goal 2

Collaborate with our partners to develop a flourishing ecosystem for Irish social innovations

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

We believe that social change is a team sport and we can't do our work alone. And we acknowledge the fact that the funds available for the entire social innovation sector in Ireland are exponentially greater than those that will ever be donated to Rethink Ireland.

Collaboration with our partners and other key stakeholders in the philanthropic and social innovation sector will be critical to achieving success and to building the Ireland we all want to live and work in.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- We will lead and contribute to efforts to develop policies and practices that stimulate philanthropy and social innovation.
- We will partner with Irish and European partners to apply to the European Commission for the establishment of a National Competence centre for social innovation in Ireland.
- We will collaborate with key stakeholders to commission research to advance the ecosystem for social innovation including the exploration of new financial instruments, mechanisms and markets.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- We will be a voice for social innovation in Ireland and Europe.
- We aim to establish a National Competence centre on social innovation in Ireland with our partners by 2022.
- We aim to be contributing to the development of an emerging social impact investment sector by 2023.
- We aim to develop Ireland's first Social Outcome Fund, based on European models & learning by 2023.

We Make Good
SED Fund Awardee



Strategic goal 3

Accelerate the social impact of social innovations working in five crucial areas; education, social enterprise, equality, climate justice and health

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

We want to dramatically accelerate the impact and improve ‘the investment readiness’ of all the organisations we support so they can go on to make a real dent in Ireland’s most pressing social issues, often those which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. We will focus investments in education, social enterprise, equality, climate justice and health.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- We will continue to partner with Government alongside companies, individuals, foundations, trusts, families and individuals who wish to use their philanthropy to create funds that tackle issues across these five areas.
- We will continue our work with Awardees and constantly develop our programmes and refine our impact frameworks.



Sailing Into Wellness
SED Fund Awardee



Inishowen Rivers Trust
Innovate Together Fund Awardee

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- We aim to advance the learning of 70,000 people over the course of three years.
- We aim to involve at least 35,000 people in evidence based mental health programmes over the course of two years, setting new targets in 2022.
- We aim to create Ireland's first significant climate justice fund by 2022.
- We aim to support all social enterprises in our programmes to achieve a 20% increase in their traded income during the lifetime of the investment.

Strategic goal 4

Empower clusters of innovations to amplify their impact and ability to collaborate to contribute to a more equal, sustainable and inclusive Ireland

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

While we continue to fund the best innovations that support people across our five issues of focus, we believe in the importance of building and empowering coalitions of projects to break down barriers and contribute to the elimination of these issues altogether.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- We will develop strategic clusters in the areas of education, social enterprise, and equality followed a little later by climate justice.

- We will build coalitions of social innovations to co-create and drive specific change agendas in these areas, focused on policy, practice, funding, public education or other tools of change.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

We aim for evidence of ‘real’ change in our selected strategic clusters, influencing the ecosystem in ways that make a concrete difference to people’s lives in Ireland, and contributing to our vision that Ireland is a more equal, inclusive, and sustainable place because of social innovation.



Musician Loah at the launch
of our Equality Fund

Our 10-year vision

**Ireland becomes
a more equal,
inclusive and
sustainable place
due to social
innovation**

EDUCATION

- More students progress along education framework across their lifespan
- More people experiencing disadvantage progress into employment
- More people are lifted out of poverty, often bringing their families with them
- Ireland becomes a learning society

CLIMATE JUSTICE

- More people informed about impact of climate change and mitigation
- More land and water areas protected and enhanced
- More people buying sustainable local food
- Ireland develops a thriving circular economy

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

- More social enterprises are starting, scaling and becoming more sustainable in Ireland
- More consumers buy from social enterprises, contributing to their community, society and circular economy
- More people access services from social enterprises, accessing them faster than public services and at more affordable rates than private services
- More social enterprises employ people who are considered ‘far from the labour market’

EQUALITY

- Marginalised communities are better equipped to advocate for themselves, contributing to policy change
- Civil society is better equipped to tackle rise of racism and discrimination in Ireland
- Ireland begins to build a culture of equality

HEALTH

- More people develop and maintain good mental health practises
- Less people experience serious mental health problems in their lifetime
- Less people are held back from contributing to society due to serious mental health issues
- More lives are saved