

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SUPPORT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The eight winning projects of the €1.6m Social Enterprise Development Fund, who are set to participate on the six-month Accelerator Programme, will also automatically go forward as finalists for the 'Social Enterprise of the Year' at the IPB All Ireland Community & Council Awards in association with LAMA, in Croke Park next February.

The €1.6m fund is delivered by Social Innovation Fund Ireland in partnership with local authorities in Ireland and supported by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Set up to support social enterprise across the country, the fund aims to create measurable social impact that can be scaled nationwide. Following its launch in January 2018, over 100 applicants applied from almost every local authority area in Ireland, with 22 social enterprises proving successful. The awardees are a mixture of urban, town and rural social enterprise projects.

All 22 awardees announced at the official ceremony on 27 July in Vertigo in Cork County Hall, receive a place on the prestigious six-month Accelerator Programme, which is tailored specifically around the needs of social enterprises. Eight of the 22 awardees were also awarded funding of €50,000 each to go towards the continued development of their projects.

The Accelerator Programme provides intensive, expert and bespoke supports for social enterprises to hone their social impact, business skills and accelerate their growth. The programme is also designed to provide the awardees with ongoing peer support and advice so that they develop sustainable social enterprises that continue to have a powerful impact in their communities.

WIDE-RANGING PROJECTS

Among the awardees were: 'My Mind', a project that aims to ensure everyone has quick and easy access to affordable mental health services, 'Sensational Kids', a project that provides nationwide subsidised early intervention services for children who have a special education need and 'Sailing into Wellness', a project that helps people to build their recovery through healthy activity.

Deirdre Mortell, Chief Executive Officer of the Social Innovation Fund Ireland, said: "We believe that we've found amazing organisations that are already creating real change and, with the support of this new fund, will grow and reach more and more people in need of their work. These awardees collectively demonstrate the powerful impact social enterprises can have on



Pictured at the announcement of the winners of the €1.6m Social Enterprise Development Fund at Cork County Hall on 27 July were (l-r): Cork City's Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Thomas Moloney; Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton, TD; James Lyons, Sailing Into Wellness; Cork County Mayor Cllr Patrick Gerard Murphy; Colin Healy, Sailing Into Wellness; Deirdre Mortell CEO Social Innovation Fund of Ireland; Michael Garvey CEO of IPB Insurance and Alf Smiddy, Director SIFI, Cork.

every community across Ireland."

George Jones, Chairman of IPB Insurance, said: "The quality and diversity of fund applications has been impressive, but the successful awardees really stand out as social enterprises that blend innovative thinking and social impact in a way that makes a difference to their local communities.

"Business and leadership development are critical to the success of any fledgling business and the Accelerator Programme will provide real impact in supporting our awardees in continuing to grow their social impact and support job creation within their local communities."

On the day there was further excitement as George Jones announced that the eight social enterprises receiving funding will automatically go forward as finalists for the Social Enterprise of the Year at the IPB All Ireland Community & Council Awards in Croke Park on 9 February 2019.