

National Early Years Access Initiative

Guidance Notes For Expression of Interest Application

The Initiative

The National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) is a collaborative partnership between The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Mount Street Club Trustees, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA), Early Years Education Policy Unit, Department of Education and Skills, and Pobal. The Initiative will fund a **maximum of 13** innovative local inter-agency demonstration projects that will be comprised of 5 activity areas:

- The promotion and dissemination of quality improvements through the use of *Síolta*, *The National Framework for Early Childhood Education*, and *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*;
- Upskilling the early childhood care and education workforce;
- Fostering improved health/ learning and school readiness outcomes among young children;
- Developing parent's skills and improved parenting support;
- Demonstrating a continuum of services for the 'whole child' linking and integrating the child, family, local services and the community.

Level of Funding

The selected local demonstration projects will be funded for a maximum of three-years from the beginning of 2011 to the end of 2013. Consortia may apply for funding for the entire duration of the NEYAI i.e. a 3 year funding period. Projects that can be completed within a shorter timeframe are also eligible to apply.

Funding for year 2 and year 3 will be subject to satisfactory reviews of progress at defined intervals.

The total budget available for disbursement to successful local level projects is €3,567,700 - there will be variations in the funding allocated to consortia.

Eligibility

The NEYAI is a targeted intervention and the eligibility of certain geographical areas is a condition of philanthropic and statutory funding. In addition to the established 11 Children's Services Committees (CSCs) specific inclusion and investment in Dublin environs and Cork city is stipulated. Therefore the following areas **only** are eligible to apply to the NEYAI:

Dublin City	Carlow
South Dublin	Kerry
Fingal	Louth
Donegal	Kildare
Limerick City	Cork City
Longford/Westmeath	Meath

- Applicant groups will be expected to work in a consortium;
- The lead organisation in the consortium must be located within the CSC geographical area but the consortium may have external partners;
- It is anticipated that there will be a minimum of one expression of interest from each eligible applicant area;
- Because of the strong inter-agency focus of the NEYAI, applications **will only be accepted from consortia** consisting of two or more organisations;
- Expressions of interest must demonstrate how the process to establish consortia at local level was inclusive and transparent.

In relation to membership of consortia, the following groups and organisations are considered to be eligible members:

- Children's Services Committees (CSCs);
- City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs);
- Partnerships and Integrated Local Development Companies (ILDCs);
- Early childhood care and education providers including schools;
- Educational providers e.g. colleges, training institutions etc;
- National Voluntary Childcare organisations;
- Voluntary and community groups/organisations e.g. Family Resource Centres;
- The involvement of other consortium members will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It is envisaged that CSC's/Partnerships & ILDC's /CCC's will:

1. Act as an information conduit in respect of the Initiative;
2. Have a role in supporting the engagement of local groups in forming consortia and in submitting expressions of interest;
3. Be part of the application process along with other groups in their CSC area.

The above groups will not have a vetting/appraisal role.

Lead Organisations

Applicant groups will be expected to work in consortia. As part of the initial process of putting together the expression of interest, consortium groups should **agree on a lead partner/organisation** who will assume overall contractual responsibility for the project. This partner will have overall legal, governance and financial responsibility and will be directly accountable to Pobal for all aspects of the implementation of the NEYAI.

Selection Process

Consortia are invited to put together an 'Expression of Interest' Application (EOIs) for submission to Pobal. This will be a competitive process and following submission of EOIs a screening and selection process will take place, resulting in a number of consortia progressing to the full application stage of the Initiative. Ongoing support will be made available to applicants throughout the application process including the 'expressions of interest' phase, by the Appraisal & Development Working Group.

Full applications will be submitted in November for appraisal.

EOI APPLICATION SELECTION CRITERIA

EOI Applications to the NEYAI will be assessed against the following criteria:

Applicant Eligibility

- The NEYAI is a targeted intervention and the eligibility of certain areas is a condition of philanthropic and statutory funding.

Project Alignment with NEYAI

- The vision, overall aims and objectives of the project and how it links to one or more activity areas of the Initiative must be evident;
- Projects should be designed to reflect various aspects of the Síolta and *Aistear* frameworks and tailored to local needs.

Capacity of Applicant

- The experience and track record of consortium members in undertaking the type of project being presented to the NEYAI;
- The capacity of the lead organisation to fulfil the financial, management, contractual and governance requirements of the NEYAI and the reporting accountability arrangements of the NEYAI;

Collaboration and Partnership

- EOI applications must be submitted through a consortium with a nominated lead partner;
- The inter-agency nature of the consortium and the inclusion and participation of a broad range of relevant stakeholders in the EOI process will be assessed;
- The consortium/lead organisation's ability/experience of working in collaborative ways will be considered.

Targeting and Target Groups

- The primary target population is 0-6 year old children and families residing in socio-economically disadvantaged areas;
- The consortium members' proven track record/previous experience of tackling socio-economic disadvantage within these areas for children 0-6, their families and communities will be considered;
- The project must aim to improve services and supports to children aged 0-6 years, to their families, to local communities and service providers working with children and families.

Influencing Policy and Mainstreaming

- The potential role of the proposed project to influence policy and practice at the national and/or local level over a short to medium term and beyond the duration of the project
- Willingness and capacity to participate in a robust learning and evaluation process.

Application and Assessment Process

The application and assessment process for the NEYAI will take place between July 2010 and November 2010. From the perspective of applicant consortia there will be two significant tasks in this five month period:

- Completion of Expression of Interest form by **6th September 2010**

- Completion of full detailed application to the NEYAI in November 2010.

In more particular terms, the following information and support activities will take place between July 2010 and November 2010:

Timeline	Milestones
15 th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing and networking workshop • Call for Expression of Interest (EOIs)
6 th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for submission of EOIs
Mid-September to early November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening of EOIs • Selection of potential applicants for progression to full application stage • Communication of decisions to applicant groups for progression to full application stage • Identification of supports required by applicant groups • Commencement of supports to applicant groups
November to mid-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of full applications • Commencement of appraisal process • Recommendations to the NEYAI Steering Group and to Pobal
Mid-December to January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of funding decisions to all applicants and commencement of contractual process with successful applicants

Confidentiality

Pobal and the applicant will undertake to preserve the confidentiality of any document, information, data or other material communicated to them in whatever medium, including electronically and orally, in confidence, disclosure of which could harm the other party.

However, Pobal wishes to remind applicants that the information supplied on any 'Expression of Interest' and or application form may be made available on request, in accordance with Pobal's obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 1998.

You are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by you in making an 'Expression of Interest' under the NEYAI, should not be disclosed because of sensitivity. If this is the case, you should, when providing the information, identify it and specify the reasons for its sensitivity. Pobal will consult with you about such sensitive information before making a decision on any FOI request received by Pobal.