

NextWave National Women Founders Accelerator - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why should I apply for this programme?

A: NextWave is a high-impact accelerator designed specifically for early-stage women founders seeking pre-seed or seed investment. It offers structured learning, sector-specific mentorship, peer connection, and direct engagement with Enterprise Ireland's Startup team. Participants will validate ideas, refine their business narrative, and build momentum toward being investor readiness. The programme also includes access to a powerful network, and post-programme engagement.

Q: What makes this programme unique?

A: NextWave is designed specifically for early-stage women founders who are serious about reaching investor readiness. It offers:

Deeply Tailored Support

- Anchor Mentorship from local experts who understand your context.
- WaveMaker Mentorship matched to your sector and growth stage.
- Funders-in-Residence offering direct investor feedback and guidance.

Unique Format & Flexibility

- Combines immersive in-person Surge Sessions with flexible virtual Ebb & Flow Tracks, making it accessible and founder-friendly.
- Includes peer accountability groups (Wave Circles & Tide Pools) to build trust and momentum.

Focus on Visibility & Investor Engagement

- Founders receive media coaching and create investor-facing assets through the Story Swell Studio.
- Participate in Investor Tide Tables - round-robin meetings with active investors.

Strategic Enterprise Ireland Backing

- Direct engagement with the EI startup team.
- Post-programme signposting and engagement

Q: What does tailored support mean?

A: Individual support refers to tailored guidance and resources provided to each founder throughout the programme. This includes Anchor Mentorship (local, high-trust guidance), WaveMaker Mentorship (sector-specific expertise), Funders-in-Residence (investors offering feedback and encouragement), EI Navigation Support, and Story Swell Studio (media coaching and investor-facing

narrative development). Founders also receive ongoing signposting to relevant supports such as PSSF, HPSU, and Going for Growth.

Q: What is included in the programme?

A: The 10-week hybrid programme includes:

- Surge Sessions: In-person, high-energy workshops
- Ebb & Flow Tracks: Flexible virtual learning sessions
- Anchor & WaveMaker Mentoring: One-on-one tailored mentorship
- Wave Circles & Tide Pools: Peer learning and accountability groups
- Core Themes: Investor readiness, product-market fit, business model validation, financials, marketing, legal readiness, technology planning, mindset and leadership
- Special Features: Keynotes, fireside chats, site visits, investor roundtables, storytelling sessions, strategic advisory
- Post-programme: Post-programme signposting and engagement

Q: Is there any associated funding with the programme?

A: The NextWave Programme is a capability-building initiative and does not include direct funding. However, participants' travel expenses for in-person Surge Days will be covered.

Q: Can existing clients of Enterprise Ireland apply for the NextWave programme?

A: Early-stage startup companies who are Enterprise Ireland clients are eligible to apply for the NextWave. The programme is also open to non-Enterprise Ireland clients at pre-seed to seed stage.

Q: Can a company apply if it has previously received PSSF funding?

A: Companies who have previously received Enterprise Ireland's Pre-Seed Start Fund (PSSF) support can apply for the NextWave programme.

Q: Do I need an Enterprise Ireland Client Adviser to apply?

A: No, you do not need an Enterprise Ireland Client Adviser to apply. NextWave is open to all applicants and is designed to accelerate the growth of early-stage start-up companies in Ireland and build momentum toward investor readiness.

Q: What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

A: If an application is not successful, the BICs will notify the applicant in writing and provide feedback and information on other relevant company development supports.

Q. What are the real-world pathways to growth through the programme?

NextWave is designed to support founders in progressing toward Enterprise Ireland's key funding pathways:

- Pre-Seed Start Fund (PSSF): Provides early-stage start-ups with up to €100,000 in the form of a convertible loan note, helping them reach key commercial and technical milestones required to attract future seed funding.
- High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) supports: Designed for innovative start-ups with the potential to scale internationally, HPSU supports include equity investment, access to Enterprise Ireland's international office network and national networks, and post-investment growth supports to accelerate global expansion.

These supports are complemented by mentoring, investor engagement, and signposting throughout and beyond the programme.

Q: Can a co-founder, who is a man, participate on the programme together with his woman co-founder?

A: Yes, as long as it is alongside and not instead of the woman founder. There are a few elements of the programme where it will make more sense for the woman co-founder to be involved without the man co-founder.

Startups & National Enterprise Hub Department

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