

All-Island Female Entrepreneurs Pitching Competition 2024

Guidelines for Applicants

Introduction:

The Pitching contest is designed to support new and fledgling business owners. There will be 6 pitch awards across the 2 categories – so a total of 6 awards, each winning £3,000 or euro equivalent. With a chance to win an additional £2,000 award at our Annual Entrepreneurship event.

Eligibility:

The Pitching competition is open to any woman entrepreneur on the Island of Ireland who meets the following criteria:

- pre-start with an idea
- early start up or trading up to 3 years (but with turnover less than £30k).

You must not have won more than £5,000 from other Pitching contests in the past 12 months. This is applicable from date of application. If you win other pitches between application and pitching date you may still apply. If you apply and are discovered to have won other pitches in excess of £5,000 prior to your application then you will be removed from the competition.

The 2 Categories:

Idea Stage/Pre-revenue – You will be working on your idea. You may have carried out market research or tested the market. You may have attended business start up programmes. You will not yet be “trading” but you may have sold a few products as part of “testing” your business idea. If you have had any sales, they will only be very nominal, and not more than £2000 sales in the past 12 months. You must not have pre-revenue investment from external funders of over £30,000.

Early start-up/ Trading – You will be making or selling a product, providing a business to business or business to consumer service. This category includes technology/software based products such as an app or technology solution. You must not be trading more than 3 years or achieving an annual turnover over £30k.

If you are unsure which category to apply to please email Roisin McDermott to advise on your category choice. roisin@womeninbusinessni.com

Note – *Women in Business reserve the right to allocate you to a different category if they deem you more suitable for that category.*

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Completing the Application:

You are recommended to provide as much detail as relevant. Many of the questions will be scored, so if you don't provide much information, then it can be difficult to award points!

Applications will be scored on any of the following:

- Clarity of idea
- Understanding of customer/s and target market
- How the idea meets a need/serves consumer demand
- How the business makes an impact or has potential to do so
- How the business is innovative/unique in either what they offer, how they do it or how they market it
- Quality of application
- How winning might help the applicant

Key Dates:

- Applications close – Friday 3rd May 4pm
- Shortlisted individuals informed and invited to Pitch week commencing 13th May
- Online pitching centres will take place on 23rd or 24th May 9am to 3pm
- Winners Announced 28th May
- Six winners to attend and pitch at Female Entrepreneurs Conference on Thursday 6th June at Europa Hotel. Winners must be able to attend and pitch to receive their £3k prize and to pitch for additional £2k.

Stage 1 – Apply

- Complete your online application through the Women in Business website. Applications open Tuesday 26th March and close on Friday 3rd May at 4pm.
- Based on the applications, a max of 26 Pitchers will be invited to compete in the 2 categories
- It is essential that you are available for the category timeslot as detailed below
 - Idea Stage/Pre-revenue Thursday 23rd May 9-3pm
 - Early startup/Trading Friday 24th May 9-3pm

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Stage 2 – 26 shortlisted to do an online Pitch

- The initial online pitch will take place with a panel of judges, all pitchers will be allocated a specific time to pitch – there will be no spectators.
- The pitch will last no longer than 2 minutes with a maximum of 3 minutes for questions. The panel will be kept strictly to this time schedule. An alarm will ring after 2 minutes and again after 3 minutes to signal the end of your time.
- The judges will have background information on your business (the application form that you completed). Do not assume they will remember detail about your business as they will not have time on the day to look over your form.
- The judges will score each pitch and the cumulative score will be added. The 6 finalists will be announced on 28th May via social media and they will automatically win £3000 each or euro equivalent (subject to being able to attend the conference in person at the Europa Hotel on 6th June)
- **Scoring Criteria for Pitches**
It is expected that the pitches will be scored by 3 **independent** judges who will award points for any of the following. More information will be provided to those who are shortlisted to pitch.
 - Pitch
 - Innovation
 - Growth potential
 - Use of grant

Stage 3 – Pitching at the All Island Female Entrepreneurs Conference June 6th

- The 6 winners will be invited to pitch in person at the Europa Hotel on Thursday 6th June **at our All-Island Entrepreneurs Conference** at the Europa Hotel Belfast. There is an opportunity to win an additional £2k on the day.
- Finalists will be required to attend the conference.
- The conference will bring together entrepreneurial speakers, masterclasses and workshops.
- The 6 finalists will have complimentary tickets to attend all day of the conference. If you have already purchased a ticket at your own expense (to take advantage of the early bird price!) this can be refunded or we can change the name if you wish to gift it to another entrepreneur.
- The awards are made on the condition that after 6 months, you will inform Women in Business and InterTradelreland of what you have spent the money on and how it has impacted your business. You must also agree to take part in marketing / publicity for Yes You Can and InterTradelreland

Full details of all support is available on the Women in Business [website here](#).

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