

Gaisce - The President's Award

Invitation to Tender

MAY 2026

Closing date for receipt of tender: 8th June 2026

Return tender to: alex@gaisce.ie

1. INTRODUCTION

Gaisce is inviting tenders from suitably qualified consultants (individuals and/or organisations) to assist the Council in conducting a governance review.

About Gaisce - The President's Award

Gaisce - The President's Award is Ireland's National Youth Award. It is a direct challenge from the President of Ireland, Catherine Connolly, to encourage young people to realise their potential through a proven Positive Youth Development Programme that provides structure, support, and certification for non-formal learning experiences for young people aged 14 to 25. The Award inspires young people to flourish through challenge, engage with their communities, build self-belief and skills, embrace adventure and wellbeing, and be recognised for their achievements.

The Gaisce programme has three progressive Award Levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold. At each level, young people shape their own journey by choosing and undertaking activities across four Challenge Areas: Personal Skill, Community Involvement, Physical Recreation and an Adventure Journey, with each Award level requiring a greater level of time and commitment. At Gold level, participants must also complete a Residential and submit a reflective Portfolio as part of the Award requirements. Rooted in a self-directed non-competitive ethos, participants set goals that matter to them and proceed at a level of challenge appropriate to each individual. The Gaisce programme is delivered nationally by President's Award Leaders (PALs) in Gaisce Award Partner (GAP) organisations including secondary schools, third level institutions, second-chance and further education services, youth services, disability organisations, sporting organisations, uniformed organisations, youth justice, prison and probation services, organisations working with young refugees and asylum seekers, and more.

Gaisce - The President's Award was established in 1985 to mark the UN's International Year of Youth and was launched in Áras an Uachtaráin by President, Dr. Patrick J. Hillery, Gaisce's founding patron. Since then, the patronage has passed from President to President, reflecting a shared and enduring commitment to recognising and supporting young people.

In 1999, aligned with the commitments of the Good Friday Agreement, the Joint Award Initiative (JAI) was established. The JAI is a unique partnership between Gaisce - The President's Award and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which offers young people in Northern Ireland a choice of certification for their Award achievement - they can choose to receive a Gaisce - The President's Award, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold Award levels.

The Gaisce Award is recognised as a valuable non-formal education certification in Ireland and in more than 130 countries through our partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

2. CONTEXT

Gaisce is governed by a 15-member board of directors (Gaisce Council). The Gaisce Council is appointed by the Minister of Education and Youth and by the terms of the organisation's Constitution. There are two nominating bodies to Gaisce Council:

- The **President of Ireland** nominates two members,
- The **Department of the Taoiseach** nominates one member.

Although not a state body, as an 'entity under the aegis of the Department', all other appointments are made through a process undertaken by the Department that mirrors the Guidelines for Appointments to State Boards (2014).

Members are appointed for a term of 3 years and may be reappointed for a second term.

The Gaisce Council endeavours to follow best practice in its Governance to ensure that the organisation achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way.

- The Governance handbook documents the legal obligations of the Council as Directors and Trustees as well as the processes that the organisation has in place to meet good practice standards.
- Trustees' induction process, as outlined in the Council Handbook, includes meetings between the new Council member and the Chair and CEO and receipt of an induction pack which outlines Trustees legal duties and responsibilities, including segregation of duties.
- The Council has currently established four Sub-committees, namely, Governance; Finance, Audit and Risk; Human Resources and Remuneration; and a Joint Award sub-committee.
- A minimum of 5 Council meetings and an Annual General Meeting are held each year. In addition, in 2025 an 'away day' was held to allow for deeper strategic focus.
- A comprehensive corporate Risk Register is a standing agenda item at every Council meeting.
- The Gaisce Council is committed to adhering to the principles of the Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code and ensuring that compliance with the code is maintained at all times.

- Maintenance of Gaisce's Triple Lock status (awarded by the Charities Institute of Ireland) for upholding the highest standards in transparent reporting, ethical fundraising and strong governance structures.

3. THE BRIEF / OUTLINE OF PROPOSED WORK

The organisation is seeking tenders from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to facilitate a review of the Gaisce Council. The review will include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- **Council composition:** An assessment of the Council's make-up in terms of skills, experience, leadership, knowledge, and awareness of directors' duties. This will also consider the appropriate number of Council members.
- **Decision-making and workflow:** An exploration of how the Council makes decisions (both formal and informal) and how work is progressed. This should provide insight into underlying processes and identify opportunities for greater transparency, engagement, and shared understanding among members.
- **Purpose and effectiveness of meetings:** A review of the role and effectiveness of Council and sub-committee meetings, including whether they are purposeful, well-structured, and support effective decision-making and progress.
- **Council dynamics, engagement, and review practices:** An evaluation of the effectiveness of Council dynamics, including the extent to which members feel able to contribute, challenge, and engage in discussions, and how differing perspectives are managed. This will also include a review of existing internal review practices.

The successful candidate(s) will have the ability to think critically, possess excellent research and engagement skills, have sectoral experience, tried and tested methodologies and a willingness to challenge the status quo and assumptions.

The output of this work will be a comprehensive internal governance evaluation and a final report for Gaisce - The President's Award. The report will provide clear, actionable recommendations to support the Council in achieving and sustaining the highest standards of governance. It will be grounded in an assessment of the organisation's internal and external context, including its resources, operating environment, and emerging trends and challenges.

The author will present the final report and its recommendations to Council.

4. TIMELINE

Ideally we would like this completed by end of 2026 however this is negotiable. We estimate this work should take circa four days and anticipate this to be a largely desk-based project.

5. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

To be included in the Tender
Interested parties should include:

- Description of experience in relation to similar projects or contracts.
- Description of proposed approach, methodology and actions.
- Timetable of deliverables (e.g. schedule of actions)
- Detailed cost (incl. VAT) breakdown as per process, timelines and outputs, including all costs associated with the work.
- List of previous clients for whom similar work has been delivered.
- Brief CV of personnel/principals who will be involved.

(Gaisce - The President's Award shall not accept any responsibility for expenses or loss incurred in the preparation of a tender)

6. SELECTION CRITERIA

Gaisce - The President's Award is seeking to identify the most suitable 3rd party to assist the Council in conducting a governance evaluation to facilitate the Council in achieving the highest standards of governance. Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of the completeness of the proposal and tender documentation and stated ability to meet the requirements specified in this document. The following criteria will be utilised to assess applications:

Criteria	Weight
Understanding of the Brief	20%
Relevant knowledge, expertise and experience (in nonprofit sector an advantage)	20%
Content and quality of proposed plan and methodology	35%
Fee proposal	25%
TOTAL	100%

The lowest price offer will not necessarily secure the contract. Each complete submission will be scored on the basis of the information supplied in accordance with the above criteria and weighting. Minimum scoring requirement per criterion is 50%. Applicants may be invited to present or provide further information on their bid prior to selection. An invitation to interview is not an indication that a contract has been awarded.

7. TERMS

Payment schedule with the successful tenderer will be agreed prior to the commencement of the work. Before the contract is awarded, the successful tenderer will be required to produce a Tax Clearance Certificate and evidence of profession indemnity valid for the duration of the contract.

8. OWNERSHIP

Gaisce - The President's Award will retain ownership of any research, materials and/or documentation resulting from the development of the governance evaluation. All research, materials and/or documentation must be returned to Gaisce upon request or in the event that the contract is terminated. No part of the research, materials and/or documentation may be used without the prior consent of Gaisce.

9. HOW TO APPLY

Those wishing to be considered should submit a proposal (max 2 pages, preferably in PDF format) to: alex@gaisce.ie by COB on the date specified at the top of this tender document.

Queries to: alex@gaisce.ie

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Registered Charity Number: 20020903
Company Number: 251020