

Discernment in Common and Apostolic Planning (DICAP)

Manresa, Dublin (Ireland), 7th (evening)-15th (morning) May 2026

1. Why This Formation? Goal & Purpose

As church-related institutions evolve and operate in complex environments, apostolic leadership calls for new approaches beyond technical competence, which demand a profound grounding in mission, discernment, and genuine collaboration. The recent Synod on Synodality (2024) emphasises the importance of discernment as a fundamental process for authentic participation and shared decision-making within the Church. The final report calls for “listening to the Spirit in our communities” and “enacting synodality through a culture of discernment, participation, and shared responsibility” (Synod Final Report, 2024).

In the light of this context, this DICAP programme seeks to support leaders who aspire to accompany their communities in navigating these complexities while remaining deeply connected to their mission and values. Our aim is to foster a capacity for discernment that enables groups and organisations to respond faithfully to the promptings of the Spirit amid change.

2. Who Is It For?

This formation is designed for 30 participants who actively lead or animate groups within the Church, religious congregations, pastoral teams, community groups and organisations, diocesan services, or those with experience in group facilitation seeking to deepen their capacity for communal discernment and apostolic planning.

Participants should meet the following criteria:

- active in a leading role /position within a group;
- be motivated and available to lead DICAP processes within their contexts, and put the formation into practice;
- committed to participating fully in all components of the programme, including the residential workshop in Dublin, and two online follow-up sessions;
- possess a good proficiency in English;
- have an ongoing spiritual practice (e.g., retreats, spiritual direction, journaling...);
- preferably have some experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius and/or ‘Conversation in the Spirit’.

3. What to Expect?

3. a Format & Dates

The formation includes a 7-day in-person residential experience at Manresa, Dublin, scheduled from the evening of 7th May (18:00) to the morning of 15th May (9:00), followed by two online webinars later in the year. This blended approach supports the integration of learning, peer accountability, and contextual application, fostering a community of practice.

3. b Pedagogy & Way of Proceeding

The programme’s pedagogy is participatory and experiential, emphasising ‘**learning by doing**’, through prayer, reflection, sharing, and practical exercises. It seeks to offer a blend of input & theoretical models, real-life examples, and tools to enhance participants’ capacity to facilitate groups in discernment.

Rooted in **Ignatian spirituality** and aligned with the vision of synodality initiated by Pope Francis, the formation invites participants to adopt an appreciative contemplative stance, listening attentively to their contexts and the movements of the Spirit. They will **engage in personal and communal discernment exercises** focused on concrete issues relevant to their contexts.

The facilitators are from diverse multilingual and cultural backgrounds and will accompany the group throughout the learning journey, **holding space** for the conversation and discernment. This

process of accompaniment is grounded in **mutual learning**, where facilitators and participants are fellow explorers sharing wisdom and experience within a supportive community of practice.

3. c Main Outcomes

Participants can expect to develop and strengthen their:

- capacity for discernment, contextual awareness, and co-responsibility, hence strengthening their apostolic leadership;
- capacity to listen in a synodal way and facilitate discernment spaces within their groups;
- awareness of group dynamics and spiritual movements and the work of grace in their communal development;
- insights on roles, responsibilities and authority within a group;
- capacity to read signs of the times and shape responses aligned with God's active grace;
- competence in decision-making rooted in discernment and apostolic planning and insights on how to support implementation (communication, evaluation, ...);
- capacity for designing and facilitating an apostolic planning process in their local contexts.

In addition to the above, participants will gain practical tools and frameworks (toolkit and resources) that they can make available in their own contexts following the formation. Further details, including the detailed agenda, will be shared nearer the time of the workshop.

4. Formation Fee

The cost of the formation is €800.

In the case of financial difficulties, please don't hesitate to contact us.

5. The Team

The formation will be facilitated by Franck Janin SJ, Françoise Uylenbroeck, Sandra Chaoul, Bruno Standaert & Moira McDowall RLR, who are members of 'Esdac'. 'Esdac' is French for 'Spiritual Exercises for Apostolic Discernment in Common', an international association promoting and encouraging communal discernment through the Ignatian Exercises.

6. Registration

To express your interest in the formation and to register, please click on and complete the Google form [\[HERE\]](#).

The deadline for registration is **15th December 2025**.

A confirmation email will be sent shortly afterwards with all further information and payment details.

If you have any questions about any of the above, please don't hesitate to contact Moira McDowall at moiramcdlr@gmail.com.