



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme

Our proposals for the next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme.

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Background to the Sêr Cymru programme

The **Sêr Cymru** research funding programme has existed for just under a decade and has facilitated impactful, interdisciplinary research in areas such as life sciences, environment, engineering and Coronavirus (COVID-19).

It has successfully built research capacity and capability in Wales, generating over £191 million in research income. Sêr Cymru II remains operational until the end of June 2023, when our European funding comes to an end.

Details of previous phases of Sêr Cymru

Phase I

The first phase of Sêr Cymru launched in 2012 and focused on increasing capability. It included:

- Research Chairs
- National Research Networks (NRNs)

Phase II

Following the success of phase 1, phase 2 focused on increasing the capacity which included:

- Research Chairs
- Rising Stars
- Fellowships
- Recapturing Talent

Phase II+

This phase also focused on increasing capacity of the programme. It included:

- Accelerator Infrastructure Awards
- Accelerator Strategic Partnership Awards
- National Research Network (NRNs) management costs
- Industrial Fellowships
- Accelerator Capacity Building Awards

Phase III

This phase of Sêr Cymru focused on enhancing competitiveness infrastructure awards and tackling coronavirus (COVID-19).

One of the Welsh Government's 5 priorities for research, development and innovation is to:

“Continue to grow Wales' capacity for excellent research by launching the next phase of Sêr Cymru”. ”

Objective of this consultation

We are now asking for views on proposals for the next phase of Sêr Cymru, which seeks to provide funding opportunities that will enhance research capability and collaboration across Wales.

Overview of proposals

The next stage of the programme is currently entitled the Sêr Cymru National Institute of Advanced Studies (SCNIAS) / Sêr Cymru IV (working titles) and, subject to consultation and approvals, we aim to launch in Autumn/Winter 2022.

This new stage of the programme is proposing 8 components with a potential to fund over 3 financial years, however, with budget restraints, it may not be possible to support all components. Evidence collated from this consultation will help prioritise and refine delivery mechanisms to ensure the continuing success of the programme.

We will be seeking opportunities to ensure all funding calls are attractive and accessible to a diverse range of applicants.

Funding for each element would be predominately from Welsh Government, however we would expect a level of co-funding from the host institution for each of the components.

A level of theming will need to be applied to the programme to prioritise limited funds and facilitate alignment to emerging priorities, however the programme overall will remain flexible and will act in response to changes in policy and other contextual challenges. The calls themselves will likely be more specific to deal with emerging priorities.

The funding available is within the region of just over £10 million over 3 financial years (2022 to 2023; 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025).

The next section outlines the proposed components and consultation questions.

Please note we are intending to launch a separate equipment call in the autumn, subject to Ministerial agreement. Further details will be published on [Sêr Cymru](#).

Proposed themes

The proposed broad, and cross cutting, themes for the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme are as follows:

Broad themes

- life sciences
- health and social care
- low carbon and net zero
- energy
- environment and land use
- marine and fisheries
- biodiversity
- engineering
- tourism, sports, arts

Cross-cutting themes

- social sciences
- digital
- Welsh language
- well-being

Proposed components

The proposed components of the next phase of Sêr Cymru are listed below. See diagram including the components of [previous and proposed phases of Sêr](#)

Cymru.

1. Capacity Building Awards

A flexible strand of funding to support time-limited new researcher positions and enable the programme to build upon the capacity and capability already achieved (for example; Fellowships, 'Rising Stars', Research Chairs or proposals that support the development of Clusters of Excellence in strategic priority areas).

2. Incoming International Fellowships

Funding for outstanding academics or business leaders linked to Universities to visit Wales for a period of up to 2 months to develop collaborations and offer opportunities for the enrichment of research life in Wales.

3. Outgoing International Fellowships

Funding for researchers at all career stages to visit internationally recognised centres and academics for up to 2 months to develop collaborations and international experience.

4. Industry Academia Fellowships

Financial support for National and International Fellowships that sit at the interface of academia and industry, to sharpen the focus of research towards business needs and potential collaboration.

5. PhD Studentships

A dedicated funding stream to help grow research capacity and cover the costs of doctoral training at Universities in Wales.

6. Returning Fellowships

A flexible funding stream designed to encourage retention and capture talent in Wales by supporting post-doctoral researchers returning from a period of absence.

7. National Research Networks

Provide support to establish or support existing networks between academics and associated organisations and industries across Wales in specific themed areas of expertise.

8. Funding for workshops and events

An opportunity to submit proposals to run dedicated workshops and/or symposia in an area of relevance to researchers in their institution and across Wales.

Consultation questions

Question 1: Please answer the following questions for each of the 8 proposed components of the next phase of Sêr Cymru detailed above.

Question 1a: Would you support inclusion of ‘Capacity Building Awards’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1b: Would you support inclusion of ‘Incoming International Fellowships’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1c: Would you support inclusion of ‘Outgoing International Fellowships’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1d: Would you support inclusion of ‘Industry Academia Fellowships’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1e: Would you support inclusion of ‘PhD Studentships’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1f: Would you support inclusion of ‘Returning Fellowships’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1g: Would you support inclusion of ‘National Research Networks’ in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 1h: Would you support inclusion of 'Funding for workshops and events' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Question 2: Where would you rank each of the components?

Please indicate a ranking number between 1 and 8, where 1 = top priority and 8 = lowest priority.

Please give a different ranking for each element, and explain your response further if you can..

- Capacity Building Awards
- Incoming International Fellowships
- Outgoing International Fellowships
- National and International Industry Academia Fellowships
- PhD Studentships
- Returning Fellowships programme
- National Research Networks
- Funding for workshops and events

Question 3: Do you feel there are any components missing from the proposed funding programme?

- Yes
- No

If yes please explain what you feel is missing further if you can.

Question 4: Would you find it beneficial to have the option to propose a phased project, incorporating a number of components?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 5: Do you agree with 'Sêr Cymru National Institute of Advanced Studies (SCNIAS)' or 'Sêr Cymru IV' as the proposed title of the next phase of the programme?

- Sêr Cymru National Institute of Advanced Studies (SCNIAS)
- Sêr Cymru IV

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 6: Do you agree that a proposed outcome should be enhanced collaboration?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 7: This question is about the proposed broad themes for the new programme detailed below:

Broad themes:

- life sciences
- health and social care
- low carbon and net zero
- energy
- environment and land use
- marine and fisheries
- biodiversity
- engineering
- tourism, sports, arts

Cross-cutting themes:

- social sciences
- digital
- Welsh language
- well-being

**Question 7a: Where would you rank each of the broad themes?
Please indicate a ranking number between 1 and 9 (1 = top priority
and 9 = lowest priority)**

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 7b: Do you agree with the cross-cutting themes?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 7c: Do you feel any themes are missing (broad or cross-cutting)?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Question 8: What mechanisms could we put in place to make Sêr Cymru funding opportunities more attractive and accessible to a diverse range of applicants?

Question 9: Is there anything else you wish to feedback about the proposed funding programme?

Question 10: Which stakeholder group would you consider yourself to represent

- Citizen
- Community group
- Private Sector
- Public Sector

- Research organisations / academic institutions
- Third Sector
- Other (please specify)

Question 11: We would like to know your views on the effects that the next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Question 12: Please also explain how you believe the proposed plan for the next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and, no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 13: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

How to respond

The closing date for responses is 18 October 2022.

This consultation is a shorter, 8 week consultation, rather than the 12 weeks usually recommended. This is deemed appropriate, timely and in public interest to move at pace with the ongoing changes relating to research funding at a UK level and because the key stakeholders form a relatively specific group.

You can respond in any of the following ways:

- complete our online form
- download our online response form and email to: sercymru@gov.wales
- download and print our online response form and post to:

Sêr Cymru Consultation
Welsh Government Office for Science
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company).

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Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

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Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a

report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please [tell us](#).

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

E-mail: data.protectionofficer@gov.wales

Information Commissioner's Office

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113

Website: ico.org.uk

Further information and related documents

Number: WG45529

For further information:

Sêr Cymru Consultation
Welsh Government Office for Science
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

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