



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Initiative to reignite important Horizon Europe relationships and networks (Agile Cymru)

Open to applications now but with a focus on expenditure claimed by the end of March 2024.

First published: 22 November 2023

Last updated: 22 November 2023

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Background

The Welsh Government's **Programme for Government** stresses the importance of giving Wales the strongest possible presence on the World stage and commits to '*closer economic and research ties with the EU*'. Co-operation activity with other nations and regions adds value to economic development in Wales by enabling partners to scale up activity, achieve critical mass and increase profile. Joint working provides scope to exchange ideas and best practice, to extend innovation and competitiveness and to tackle key issues which transcend borders. We want an "Agile Cymru" that looks outward to existing and future UK, European and international partners, to maximise shared opportunities and address our shared challenges.

The Welsh Government's **International Strategy** and **Action Plan for Priority Regional Relationships and Networks** identify the need to target important sectors, regions and networks. The Welsh Government also has a number of Memoranda of Understanding or equivalent strategic agreements with priority regional partners.

The Irish Sea Framework guides and influences actions aimed at increasing economic co-operation across and around the Irish Sea space. It provides strategic direction in the short term and a pathway to medium term goals. The Framework is informal, flexible and will evolve, but it will complement all relevant policies, strategies and programmes, including the Welsh Government's **International Strategy**, the **Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Action Plan** and the **2021-2027 Interreg programmes**.

Running until 2027 with a budget of around €100 billion, **Horizon Europe** is the largest ever transnational programme supporting research and innovation. It provides a major opportunity for Wales to remain active and influential as an international partner, increasing our attractiveness to talent and the effectiveness of our research. The Welsh Government encourages Wales-based

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researchers and innovators to develop applications, and for organisations around Europe to take advantage of the **UK's Associate Country status** in order to work with Wales' leading scientists, businesses, public sector and civil society.

However, the significant delay in reaching associate country status has led to uncertainty and the weakening of relationships and networks. There is a clear need to reignite our important Horizon Europe relationships and networks.

Initiative

This document encourages applications from Welsh-based organisations that want to develop new or renew existing relationships with European stakeholders and networks with a view to bidding into Horizon Europe; there is a focus on expenditure claimed by the end of March 2024. The funding available is additional to the ongoing support available from **SCoRE Cymru**.

A strong application will reflect the strategic context set out above and:

- Support and build strategic relations with important EU nations and regions such as Ireland, the Basque Country (Euskadi), Baden Württemberg, Brittany, Flanders, Catalonia and Galicia.
- Involve an important and relevant organisation or network within the EU.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of Horizon Europe in Wales and stimulate participation in international research and innovation.
- Build on existing activity with the potential to grow.
- Have a clear pathway to a competitive bid for Horizon Europe funding.

All applications will need to demonstrate viability and value for money.

There are no fixed grant thresholds, but based on experience for small projects,

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such as travel, engagement and consultancy, applicants should bear in mind that up to £5,000 per application may be considered reasonable.

Applicants can submit projects that build relations with one or more of the named nations/regions or to support one or more potential bids to Horizon Europe; there is no need to submit multiple applications. The basis for this funding initiative is economic benefit for Wales, but there is no restriction on the potential partners who wish to deliver that benefit. However, at least one European partner per application would be expected.

This initiative can support up to 100% of eligible costs where justified but encourages the leverage of other funding wherever possible.

The budget allocated for this initiative is up to £50,000 but we will take into account other commitments and underspends at the time of decision. If demand exceeds available funds, a 'reserve list' will be used and applicants will be encouraged to indicate if their activity could take place after March 2024.

Eligible costs

Unless explicitly stated in this call, [Agile Cymru rules and procedures](#) apply.

The expenditure can include the activity of non-Welsh partners, provided the costs claimed are incurred by the Welsh partner and represent added value. However, we advise contacting the Welsh Government's [Agile Cymru Team](#) at an early stage in the development of your proposal to ensure compliance.

The grant must be defrayed and claimed before 31 March 2024. Where later, annual or long-term activity is foreseen, the relevant activity may be placed on the 'reserve list' for future consideration but there is no guarantee of support.

To avoid unintended consequences and inflexibility, we do not specify a closed

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list of eligible costs, but costs must be necessary for the promotion, implementation and dissemination of the projects agreed through the application process and written offer of grant. They must be reasonable, verifiable and incurred by the applicant. See the Agile Cymru rules and procedures for more details. We also advise that you focus on larger items of expenditure with a robust evidence trail in order to simplify the claim process.

Costs incurred before the date of approval are ineligible unless the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team confirms otherwise in writing.

Submission of applications

We are open to applications now. Applicants are advised to discuss their proposals with the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team before submitting them, email: AgileCymru@gov.wales.

Applications will be judged on their fit with the aims of this initiative and Welsh Government will have the final decision. We may seek the advice of relevant specialist and policy colleagues in Wales or in relevant nations/regions. Eligible applications will be dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis but there will be limited opportunity for further clarification. Applications that are not considered strong as defined in this document may be placed on the 'reserve list' to allow opportunities for other applications. Welsh Government will also take a portfolio approach in order to manage the balance of risk and range of outcomes; this may affect the budget available and the type of projects supported. Applicants are therefore encouraged to engage at an early stage with the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team to ensure that the strengths of their proposal are understood.

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