



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

FORM

Initiative to encourage economic co-operation across and around the Irish Sea space (Agile Cymru)

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

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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 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**.

The Irish Sea space is considered to be the geographical space defined by the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea and North Channel. It is also influenced by the nations and regions around that space, i.e. Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Northern Ireland, North West England, South West England and the Isle of Man. There will also be existing economic geographies and bilateral relationships that will influence activity. 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.

The Irish Sea Framework identifies three broad priority areas for co-operation: Sustainable Blue Economy, Innovation Strengths and Communities & Culture – see the **guide to the Framework** for more detail.

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Initiative

This document encourages applications from organisations operating in Wales that have the potential to increase economic co-operation across and around the Irish Sea space. There is a focus on expenditure claimed by the end of March 2024.

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

- Support and build strategic relations in the Irish Sea space, reflecting the aims of the Irish Sea Framework.
- Create a range of opportunities in an area of significance for the Welsh economy.
- Directly address one or more of the Irish Sea Framework priority areas.
- Involve an important and relevant organisation or network outside Wales, including the leverage of their resources where possible.
- Transfer international knowledge to Wales for impact on Welsh policy priorities.
- Build on existing activity with the potential to grow.
- Have a clear pathway to bringing in other funding, or another route to ongoing, sustainable economic activity.

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

There are no fixed grant thresholds but based on experience the following is a guide:

- For small projects, such as travel, engagement and consultancy, applicants should bear in mind that up to £5,000 per application may be considered reasonable.
- For more strategic projects, such as forming networks, feasibility studies and pilot projects involving significant staff-time and materials, applicants should

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bear in mind that up to £40,000 per application may be considered reasonable. Strategic in the context of this initiative is expected to reflect the building of capacity in the 'coalition of the willing' in one or more of the priority areas set out in the Irish Sea Framework.

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

The budget allocated for this initiative is up to £150,000 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 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

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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 and 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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