



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

FORM

Initiative to encourage economic co-operation with Oita, Japan

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

First published: 28 September 2022

Last updated: 15 May 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. 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** identifies the need to target important sectors, regions and networks. The Welsh Government has therefore signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oita Prefectural Government of Japan, expressing their sincere desire to strengthen relationships, including through economic exchange.

The MoU identifies five key areas where there is significant opportunity to grow the relationship between Oita and Wales: Arts & Culture; Sport; Academia; Tourism; Food & Drink.

Initiative

This document encourages applications from Welsh-based organisations that have the potential to increase economic co-operation with Oita, Japan. 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 between Wales and Japan.
- Create a range of opportunities in an area of significance for the Welsh economy.
- Involve an important and relevant organisation or network in Oita.
- 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.

You should also consider the outputs and outcomes set out in the Agile Cymru guidance.

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

There are no fixed grant thresholds but, based on experience, 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.

The basis for this funding initiative is economic benefit for Wales, but there is no restriction on the national or regional partners who wish to deliver that benefit.

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 £30,000 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.

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Eligible Costs

Unless explicitly stated in this call, the Agile Cymru guidance applies.

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 project agreed through the application process and written offer of grant. They must be reasonable, verifiable and incurred by the applicant. See the Agile Cymru guidance 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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