



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

East Wales

European Regional Development Fund Programme 2014-2020

2021 Annual Implementation Report Summary



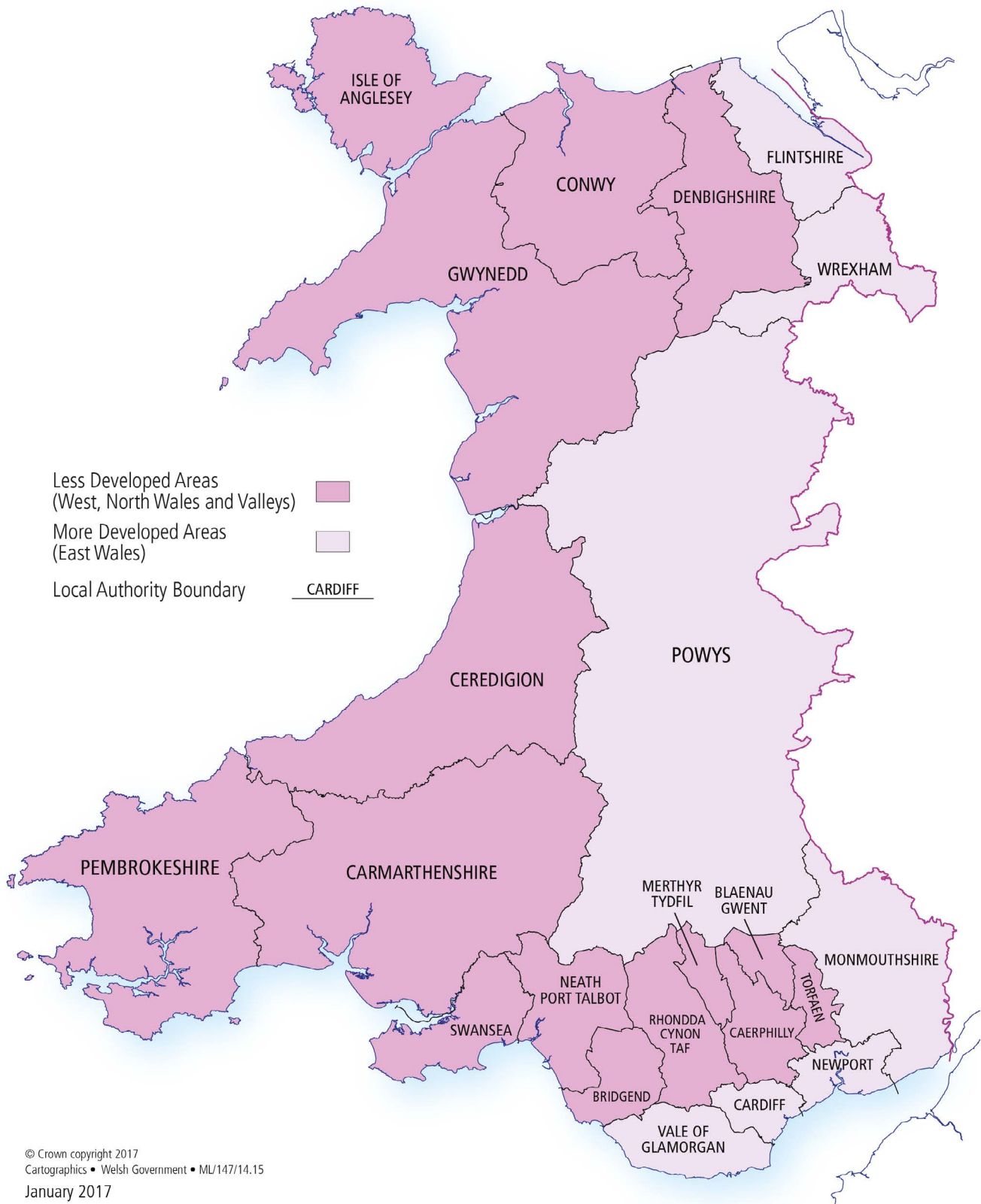
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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Introduction

Wales is benefiting from over **€2bn** of EU funds through four Structural Funds programmes covering the 2014-2020 period.

As part of this, €203m has been allocated to more developed areas through the East Wales European Regional Development Fund, which aims to drive economic growth by investing in the following priority areas:

Priority	EU budget	Total Budget
Research and Innovation	€103m	€207m
SME Competitiveness	€46m	€91m
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	€5m	€9m
Connectivity and Urban Development	€46m	€91m
Technical Assistance	€4m	€8m
Total	€203m	€407m

Programme progress

The programme made good progress in 2021 committing nearly all available funds despite the continued impact of a world-wide Covid-19 pandemic.

By the end of 2021, the Welsh Government had fully committed the EU funds allocation to 40 projects through the European Regional Development Fund in East Wales. Key highlights include:

- Just over 9,300 jobs created.
- Over 1,600 businesses created and over 5,800 businesses assisted with funding or support.
- Over £56m of research income generated by EU-funded projects.

Research and Innovation

EU funds are supporting world-class research programmes at Welsh universities, major R&D collaborations between academia and industry, and helping Welsh businesses develop new products and services across a range of sectors. As we are reaching the final stages of the programmes, whilst there have been no new approvals, a number of extensions to existing projects have been agreed including just over £1m for Cardiff University's East Wales Flexis operation. Other highlights from 2021 include:

- In April, the Cardiff University's Centre for AI Robotics and Human Machine Systems (IROHMS), backed by £1.8m EU funds, launched their new simulation lab as part of a virtual event. As a key component of IROHMS, the lab will enable research into how humans interact with technology - ranging from robots and automated vehicles to virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and cyber-physical systems.
- In July, the Magnetic Materials and Applications (MAGMA) project, also led by Cardiff University and backed by over £1m EU funds, successfully held a virtual launch event with delegates from countries including Germany, India, the USA, Brazil, Japan, Denmark and Belgium. Followed by the opening of their newly refurbished state-of-the-art facilities in August, focussed on processing, characterisation, manufacturing and recycling of specialist magnetic materials to underpin the green economy.



IROHMS Virtual Lab



Magnetic Materials and Applications (MAGMA)



Magnetic Materials and Applications (MAGMA)

SME Competitiveness

Small and medium sized businesses, including start-ups and social enterprises, are benefiting from a range of funding and business support through a suite of EU-funded Business Wales initiatives and the Wales Business Fund. Highlights from 2021 include:

- The Wales Business Fund invested almost £219m in SMEs across the East Wales region.
- EU-funded Business Wales services supported over 4,800 businesses in the East Wales region.



Business Wales – ESM Crew



Wales Business Fund – PHG Consulting Cardiff



Business Wales – Wonderwool Bursary Award

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

In East Wales, EU funds supported the Welsh Government's Arbed project to create energy efficiency improvements within households in fuel poverty. As part of the project, homes were improved through a range of energy efficiency measures. The operation closed in November 2021.

Despite the challenges of operating within Covid 19 restrictions, Arbed was able to improve the energy ratings of around 2,546 properties by March 2021, with an average household reduction in energy bills of £330.



Solar panels installed through the Welsh Government's Arbed scheme

Connectivity and Urban Development

In East Wales, EU funds are supporting the development of the South Wales Metro – a new transport system that will provide faster, more frequent and joined-up services using trains, buses and light rail.

Despite the impact of the pandemic restrictions on the overall development of the Metro, design works are progressing well on the four operations in East Wales which involve a number of station improvements including capacity enhancements at Cardiff Queen Street and improvements to services into Cardiff Bay.



South Wales Metro (artist impression)

Success stories

Social Business Growth Fund – East Wales

With financial support from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action's Social Business Growth Fund (SBGF), non-profit CUBE (Community United Barry 4 Everyone) has opened 'The Gallery', a community café and event space in Barry,

The EU funded SBGF supports social businesses in Wales, enabling them to grow and create job opportunities.

Formed just as the first lockdown hit in Wales in 2020, CUBE, a collective of 28 local people, has been delivering vital services to the community throughout the coronavirus crisis, providing a lifeline to the community in Barry during the pandemic.

Launched on the 18th of October 2021, 'The Gallery' provides a much-needed base of operation for the project as well as helping to generate income,

offering a modern location for events. A separate café provides a community space to help tackle loneliness, where people can pop in for a chat and a coffee, or pay for a 'suspended coffee' for someone in need.

Janet (name changed to protect identity) who was struggling during lockdown with her child's behaviour, turned to CUBE for help.

Janet said 'I am so thankful for the support I received from CUBE. Not only has my child had amazing support but my home is happier and calmer.'

The new venue will allow CUBE to continue to make a difference for families and individuals living with or affected by mental health, suicide, grief and loss, domestic abuse and substances allowing them to better deliver their services for the community.



CUBE Gallery

Accelerate

Accelerate Wales, led by Life Sciences Hub Wales helps companies and innovators in Wales to realise their ideas, offering academic expertise, and the latest facilities, enabling their products to be adopted in health and care environments.

The Cerebra Innovation Centre, a collaboration between University of Wales Trinity Saint David's ATiC project, a partner in Accelerate and Cerebra have developed a tennis ball shooter for Harry Flynn, who has Athetoid Cerebral Palsy and is reliant on his wheelchair just to get around, to help him bond with his assistance dog Addi.

Addi has been with Harry for over two years and has become a big part of Harry's life, helping open doors and turning on light switches but most importantly being

a constant friend, encouraging Harry to go outdoors, which he had never previously liked doing.

The team at the Innovation Centre took a Nerf tennis shooter, adapted it with 3D printed parts, designed a bracket so it could sit nicely on Harry's wheelchair frame and altered the launcher's firing mechanism, so that all Harry had to do was lightly press it to release the ball.

Harry's mum, Hilary said, "Harry so wanted to play fetch with Addi, who just loves to run after a ball. Sadly, though, Harry doesn't have the strength or coordination to be able to throw. He loved being outside with Addi but you could see the disappointment on his face each time we went for a walk. I was so pleased, though, when I came across Cerebra and their wonderful Innovation Centre."



Accelerate - Harry and Addi