



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Action Plan

International Relations through Public  
Diplomacy and Soft Power 2020-2025



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# Introduction and Context

## Our International Strategy<sup>1</sup>, published in January 2020, sets out our ambitions to:

- Raise Wales' profile on the international stage;
- Grow the economy by increasing exports and attracting inward investment; and
- Establish Wales as a globally responsible nation.

In achieving these aims, our strategy places the people of Wales and our values at its heart. Our people are our greatest ambassadors and storytellers. Our sport teams, our actors, our singers, our students and many other associations and individuals all contribute to our global reputation and tell the story of Wales to the World.

Many of these levers of influence sit outside of government and our strategy recognises that. To realise our ambitions, government cannot work alone, nor should it. Government must work collaboratively with partners – at home and abroad – to amplify Wales' story and raise our profile overseas. Through working with our international, cultural, educational and sporting sectors, we can make Wales more competitive and well known on the global stage and bring benefit to the people of Wales, the world and for future generations.

Soft power is a term often used to refer to international engagement of this kind, a way of building on a country's reputation through culture, sport, diplomacy and positive global contribution that in turn can also help bolster trade and tourism. This is particularly relevant of course in the devolved context, given that we do not have the traditional levers of foreign policy found at nation-state level. Whilst the term is a useful catch all term, it is not without its critics. The Welsh term **cymell tawel** is arguably better and gets to the heart of what we are seeking to do – to **quietly persuade, motivate, influence and attract**. However, in many cases the word power isn't particularly appropriate either. We are dealing in cultural relations, partnerships and globally engaged citizens. These relationships are built on trust and mutual benefit for the purposes of contributing towards local and global good, not power dynamics. Therefore, for the purposes of this plan, we will use the term public diplomacy.

Since publishing our strategy, the world has changed considerably. The COVID-19 crisis has, and will continue to have, a profound effect on us all. It has thrown a spotlight on inequality and global well-being and has shaken world economies, affecting all sectors, including our cultural, tourism, sporting and education sectors. It has required us to think and work differently. The anger felt at the death of George Floyd has also cast a spotlight on inequality, highlighted the need to confront our own history and consider what more we can do to promote equality and diversity. Our commitment to Europe and our European partners remains strong and unchanged, however the UK's departure from the European Union is changing the framework in which we have operated since devolution and we will need to find new ways of engaging with our European neighbours<sup>2</sup>.

There is no doubt that the international landscape is challenging, but history tells us that Wales will adapt as the world changes. It has never been as important to tell our story to the world, to reach out in solidarity to our key partners and strengthen our strategic relationships as we all emerge from an extraordinary time in our history. We are well placed through the values that underpin our strategy and our pioneering Well-being of Future Generations legislation, focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to contribute to the global dialogue as we look to recover, rebuild and reinvent. The challenges we are facing are not unique to Wales – climate change, inequality and COVID-19 are shared global challenges. International collaboration is crucial to work together in addressing these challenges. With limited resources and increasing pressure on budgets, working together will be crucial, and will be the only way we can multiply our efforts and make sense of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

This action plan sets out how we achieve our vision over the next five years. It is part of a suite of actions plans that sit under the International Strategy for Wales, including our Priority Regional Relationships and Networks Action Plan, Diaspora Engagement Action Plan, the Wales and Africa Action Plan and the Export Action Plan. It is through complementary and aligned efforts across all these areas that we can truly make an impact.

<sup>1</sup> International Strategy for Wales: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/international-strategy-for-wales.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The Regional Relationships and Networks Action Plan will outline how we intend to further develop our key European Regional Relationships and Networks

## Our Vision is:

To establish Wales as a globally responsible nation, to make us more competitive and well known and a trusted partner on the global stage to bring benefit to the people of Wales.

## Our Mission is to:

- Solidify existing relationships through establishing strategic partnerships with key partners in Wales to align activities internationally over the next five years – delivering more together.
- Encourage international collaboration with our priority relationships globally, building on existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and Declarations of Intent to deliver on our International Strategy.
- Adapt to the changing COVID-19 context, including supporting innovative ways of engaging internationally through digital activity and a focus on mutuality, well-being and equality.
- Encourage a Team Wales ethos through establishing a governance structure to support the delivery of this action plan.
- Ensure a strategic relationship with the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in the UK and overseas that delivers for the people of Wales.



# Raising the profile of a Globally Responsible Wales

We are certainly not starting from a blank page. Wales has contributed a lot to the world and enjoys a reputation that stretches far beyond its border, thanks to our sporting prowess, our natural beauty, our unique language, culture and heritage and our Welsh values<sup>3</sup>. We have an International Strategy that is clear on its objectives. We want to build on this through this action plan and drive forward the way in which we project ourselves internationally. All the areas identified in this plan are interconnected – public diplomacy often uses a variety of sectors collaboratively to maximise impact, which also supports trade, investment and tourism.

## Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 – The Well-being of Future Generations

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out an ambitious agenda for transforming the world for people, planet and prosperity. We share this ambition in Wales and we are committed to making our contribution to the goals.

Wales is a small country with a big ambition. We want to be considered amongst the world's most globally responsible nations, building on long traditions of internationalism and concern for fairness and a focus on people and planet. Since 2015, our sustainable development legislation has stimulated both action and discussion about how we transform Wales into a more sustainable nation. We established the world's first statutory independent Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to be an advocate for the long term and to support decision-makers in Wales.

Our ground-breaking **Well-being of Future Generations Act** provides the framework for us to tell Wales' story to the world, to promote our ideals, beliefs, values, and our duty to be a globally responsible Wales. To utilise our assets in the spirit of cooperation and partnership working which epitomises the Future Generations agenda.

We are the only nation – so far – to have translated the UN Sustainable Development Goals into law. It is unique to Wales and provides us with an opportunity to engage with governments, regions and organisations globally who are interested in developing similar legislation and approaches. As the world focuses on a #DecadeOfAction towards Agenda 2030, here in Wales we are well-placed to lead the way and learn from others.

Wales is pioneering a well-being approach through the Act and there has already been enormous international interest from countries such as Ireland, Canada, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, Germany and France to international bodies like the UN, the World Bank and the OECD. We want to build on this and promote our well-being approach in our international work. The Act gives us a voice worldwide and, without being complacent, it presents us with an opportunity to lead, which is at the same time a great responsibility.

### Our Actions

#### Short term (2020-21)

- We will agree a shared action plan with the Future Generations Commissioner to align activities internationally, utilising connections at the United Nations and platforms such as the World Expo in Dubai and COP26 to promote and demonstrate how a well-being of future generations approach can help drive positive action on the world's greatest problems.
- We will build on the success of the "Future is now" event held in Berlin earlier this year as part of Wales in Germany 2021.
- We will continue our joint work with Ireland and build on the first visit of representatives of the Future Leaders Academy to Dublin and the ongoing relationship with Ireland's UN Youth representatives. We will build on the Future Generations focus at this year's St David's Day activity in Ireland through continued cooperation and shared commitment to Sustainability, which will be reflected in our joint Statement of Intent with Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> Pg 6 Annex D of the International Strategy <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/international-strategy-for-wales.pdf>

**Medium term (2022-25)**

- We will build on the role the Future Generations Leadership Academy can play in promoting the Well-being of Future Generations Act across the world.
- We will continue to play an active role in the Regions4SD network, sharing and engaging with regional and sub-national governments committed to sustainable development.
- We will continue to play an active role in the Well-being Economy Government Network, sharing Wales experience with other countries to put well-being at the heart of our economy.
- Our international offices will identify opportunities to promote the Well-being of Future Generations Act in countries annually.
- We will put the Future Generations focus at the core of our ongoing engagement with the EU, and its Member States and regions, in Brussels.



## Environmental Sustainability

Wales' commitment to establish itself as a **globally responsible nation** (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/a-globally-responsible-wales-infographic.pdf>) is also evident through its response to the climate emergency – we were the first parliament in the world to declare a climate emergency and we hoped the declaration would trigger a wave of action at home and internationally. Following the declaration, we have accepted the advice of our independent advisory body to increase Wales' 2050 emissions reduction target to 95%. Our latest figures show that we have reduced emissions by 31% against baseline emissions. The challenge of climate change requires everyone to act both locally and internationally.

Wales is a founding signatory to the Under2 MoU, and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs sits on the steering group. The coalition is made up of more than 200 governments who represent over 1.3 billion people and nearly 40% of the global economy. Over the last two-year period, Wales has been a significant member and has shown international leadership and commitment. The Under2 Coalition has provided a strong voice and platform for the collective action of subnational governments.

Wales has ambitious plans to move to a low carbon society, improve air quality and reduce waste. Wales already recycles more than anywhere else in the UK and we are within touching distance of being the world's top recycling nation. Our resolve in tackling these issues has only been bolstered, not lessened, by the recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we emerge from the aftermath of this pandemic, we want to do so in a way which leads to a fairer, greener and more prosperous Wales. Wales therefore is well placed to contribute and share our experiences internationally, and to learn from others.

### Our Actions

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will continue to be an active member of the Under2Coalition Steering Group for Europe, the global community of state and regional governments committed to ambitious climate action in line with the Paris Agreement.
- We will continue to engage with our valued stakeholders and citizens as we work to develop and deliver our second Low Carbon Delivery Plan and play a full part in the UN Climate Change Conference, **COP26**.
- Through action outlined in our **Wales and Africa Action Plan** we will help to address the devastating impact that climate change is having on parts of the African continent.
- In response to the climate emergency, we will raise our ambition of our emissions targets, and increase Wales' 2050 emissions reduction target to 95%. We will ask Senedd Cymru to put this into law.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will share our experience and learnings through our existing international networks, through our MoUs and our Declaration of Intent with key partners.
- We will demonstrate to our international partners how we have gone from the worst country in recycling to one of the best in a short amount of time.

## Fairness, Equality and Diversity

Wales is a welcoming nation, one that champions diversity, fairness and equality, with an aspiration to become a Nation of Sanctuary, committed to Human Rights and promoting peace. Wales was the first country in the UK to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as part of its domestic law-making. We are committed to fair trade, fair work and fair play. Equality and Human Rights have always been central to the work of the Welsh Government and our vision for Wales. We believe in fair treatment of every person, especially those who are most marginalised. We work towards a more equal Wales, a country which ensures equity of access to services, tackling inequality and seeking fairer outcomes for all our citizens, now and for future generations. We will champion these values in our international work and at home will recognise our migrant communities' contribution to the well-being of Wales. Earlier this year, we supported the Wales National Youth Movement, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Peace and Goodwill message to reach over 40 countries and 37 million people.

The global reaction to the death of George Floyd and the important issues highlighted by the Black Lives Matters movement reminds us that there is no room for complacency. The worryingly disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people globally has also served to highlight and reinforce inequalities. These intersecting events have reignited calls for action to address racial inequality in Wales (and worldwide). We must do more to promote diversity, tolerance and equality in all that we do, and this includes our work internationally. In March 2020, the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip made a commitment to deliver a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales. The plan will be owned by the whole of Welsh Government; reflecting our commitment to address structural and systemic racism.

We must also confront our own history. The First Minister has asked Gaynor Legall to lead a task and finish group to undertake an audit of Wales' historic monuments and statues, and the names of streets and public buildings. The group will identify those sites and names that are associated with the history of black communities in Wales, and in particular the slave trade.

We will continue our mutually beneficial partnerships with Mbale region in Uganda, and our Fair Trade designation (the first country in the world to receive this designation). We will build on these through our Wales and Africa Action Plan.

Wales is the birthplace of the National Health Service and Wales remains true to the founding values of the NHS – providing high-quality healthcare free at the point of need for all. We share these values and our expertise with others and promote them in our work internationally, including through the cooperation activities between our health sector,

health education sector and sub-Saharan Africa as outlined in our Wales and Africa action plan. Our membership of the Network for European Local and Regional Health Authorities (EUREGHA) enables us to engage in knowledge collaboration and exchange to improve health policy in Europe.

### Our Actions

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will reflect the actions of the **Race Equality Action Plan**, where relevant, in our work internationally.
- We will recognise and celebrate our diverse and vibrant communities in Wales through digital campaigns and events, celebrating days such as Diwali, and underlining our relationships with Bangladesh, Poland and Ireland in particular.
- We will promote our commitment to diversity through encouraging partnerships such as the Welsh Government – Alabama partnership.
- We will work with our key partners to promote our shared values and principles, e.g. International Pride Week, International Peace Day, International Women's Day, Windrush Day and through events in Wales.
- We will explore supporting the Peace Academy of Wales, including how to facilitate connections with other Peace Institutes globally.
- We will, through our **Wales and Africa Action Plan**, promote the concept of a Fair Nation, linking Fair Trade, diversity and inclusion and supporting women's empowerment in Lesotho and Uganda.
- We will commission an independent rapid review of current international health activity and the existing international health infrastructure in Wales. The review will include mapping the role of the Welsh Government and its interface between key organisations involved in international engagement in Wales with a view to developing recommendations to further support the delivery of the International Strategy.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will mark the centenary of the Wales Peace Petition working with partners in Wales and the US in 2023-24.
- We will continue to develop links with the UN through the UK mission, World Bank and UNESCO to help promote our values internationally.

## Cultural Diplomacy

Our arts, our culture, and our creativity gives Wales its unique global personality and it is a huge strength in terms of promoting Wales on the world stage. As the first nation to make culture the fourth dimension of sustainable development through our Well-being of Future Generations Act, Wales has much to offer the world. Our collaborative approach to cultural relations, our focus on well-being, and our commitment to nurture tolerance through the arts, and our pioneering Arts in Health work, will be particularly relevant as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our internationally renowned events such as the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, Hay Literary Festival, the Urdd Eisteddfod and Eisteddfod Genedlaethol showcase our creative and vibrant culture and heritage. We have also supported new festivals such as FOCUS Wales and Festival of Voice, providing platforms to bring the world's music industry to Wales and showcase contemporary Welsh work. We have supported our events to innovate and adapt during the pandemic, achieving huge digital reach and impact as a result. Recent examples include 'Hay on WiFi's' 85 broadcasts across 10 days, with over half a million viewers worldwide. We want to continue to support digital innovation and hybrid programmes as we recover from the pandemic and beyond.

Creative Wales, our internal Welsh Government agency launched in January 2020, is responsible for promoting our creative sector in Wales at the grassroots level and internationally. Creative Wales will drive growth across the creative industries, building on existing success and developing new talent and skills, with a mission to position

Wales as one of the best places for creative businesses to thrive. We will support Creative Wales to promote Wales to the world, connecting and showcasing our best creative minds, talent and businesses.

Our creative sector is a huge asset in promoting Wales globally. Our national institutions, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Welsh National Opera, National Dance Company promote Wales' creative strength when touring internationally. Companies such as Hijinx Theatre, NoFit State, Jukebox collective and Race Council Cymru's Black History Wales Arts Programme highlight the vibrant diversity of the sector. Wales has an international reputation as a centre of excellence for production and high-end television drama, with major studios such as Fox, NBC Universal, Netflix and HBO using Wales as a production location. Wales also has established a strong cultural identity, which has been portrayed in such productions as *Hinterland*, *Keeping Faith* and *Hidden*, and in internationally renowned television shows, including *His Dark Materials*, *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock*. International visitors experience the richness of our heritage at our world-renowned Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales sites here in Wales, and through visiting touring exhibitions globally. In 2019, St Fagans National Museum of History made global headlines winning Art Fund Museum of the Year. *Artes Mundi's* biennial exhibition, celebrates artist from across the globe.

We will coordinate our international activities and empower key Welsh organisations, including sport and culture, to help open doors and enter new, difficult-to access markets to amplify the Welsh voice abroad, including supporting, where appropriate, the delivery of our Export Action Plan.



### Our Actions

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will develop strategic partnerships with Wales Arts International and British Council Wales to ensure better alignment of activities internationally, including ensuring cultural presence at Welsh Government-led international activations such as Wales in Germany Year 2021 and World Expo in Dubai 2021-22.
- Where appropriate, we will support partner-led activations, such as Year of Wales at Celtic Connections in 2022, Wales in Venice and Wales in Edinburgh and associated legacy programmes. We will also work with the British Council to ensure that Wales is well represented in its UK in Australia 2021 initiative.
- We will support the delivery of a national virtual event led by BBC Wales in early 2021.
- We will develop a global virtual St David's Day with a range of partners in 2021 and continue to deliver and support Wales Week activities. We will provide resources to the FCDO, British Council and Embassies to promote our messages.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will ensure Welsh representation at key cultural networking events for global audiences such as ISPA, (International Society for Performing Arts) IETM (International network for contemporary performing arts) and Aerowaves.
- We will invite international partners and delegations to experience our culture first-hand, including at our Eisteddfodau and Hay Festival, focussing on the links between culture, well-being, youth and community.
- We will work in partnership with the British Council to encourage Welsh content in British Council Cultural Seasons, particularly when they align with our strategic priorities.
- We will undertake an activity mapping exercise over the next five years to better align and amplify Wales' presence internationally with our partners.
- We will provide Wales' arts and sports organisations with resources to amplify our message. We will build better relationships with key excellent amateur organisations so that they can perform on behalf of our nation when they go abroad.
- We will support the work of Creative Wales internationally across the priority sub-sectors of film and TV; digital and gaming; music; and publishing with the Books Council of Wales.
- We will support Creative Wales to promote Wales' diverse, creative and innovative communities to the world during **Festival 2022**.
- We will through our **Priority Regional Relationships and Networks Action Plan** encourage cultural collaborations between Wales and priority regional relationships.

## Cymraeg

The Welsh language and our bilingualism are undoubtedly part of our unique character. We have an inspiring story to tell about how we aim to increase the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050 and to double the daily use of the language through progressive language planning and promotion. We are proud of our Welsh-medium immersion education system that helps create thousands of new Welsh speakers every year. We also see an opportunity for Wales to become a test bed to develop bilingual and multilingual digital technology given that the Welsh language co-exists alongside English, a global language. The story of the Welsh language resonates with nations across the world who are bilingual or multilingual and who – in some cases – face challenges to support the use of indigenous, regional or minority languages within the context of globalisation. Wales can also learn from the experience of other bilingual and multilingual countries.

Providing increased opportunities for our artists to perform in Welsh across the world is a central pillar of our approach. This was the theme of our Mamiaith symposium held in Bethesda last year, which saw Canadian first nation artist, Jeremy Dutcher, perform in his native Maliseet language. Poets like our National Poet, Ifor ap Glyn, have taken poetry in Welsh to Washington DC, Brussels, Dublin and Berlin and 2019 saw the National Eisteddfod's first international partnership with Ireland and the Fidget Feet aerial dance company.



### Our Actions

In addition to the actions outlined below, we will through the opportunities outlined in the other actions in this plan highlight Wales' bilingualism and our proactive support for the use of the Welsh language.

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will engage with UNESCO during its preparations for a decade of indigenous languages from 2022.
- We will disseminate our video introducing the Welsh language to the world to our international offices for their use as part of public diplomacy.
- We will host the international Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) conference in Wales in the summer of 2021.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will play a leading role in championing the interests of minority languages globally, and be an active participant in the UNESCO decade of indigenous languages.
- We will continue through our bilateral agreements with Ireland, Quebec, Brittany and the Basque Country, to share experiences and learnings on language planning.
- We will continue to play a leading role in the work of the international Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity.

## Sports Diplomacy

Sport has the power to unite and excite people in every corner of the globe, to raise the profile of a country almost overnight and help reach new audiences. The British Council Wales Soft Power Barometer report<sup>4</sup> highlighted sport as a particular strength for Wales internationally, and our successes in rugby, football, taekwondo, cycling and swimming, amongst other disciplines have helped boost our international standing and reputation. Wales is in a unique position as a small nation with a large sporting footprint, one of only a few small nations competing in high profile global tournaments, offering an opportunity for public diplomacy.

The Welsh Rugby Union's (WRU) community engagement in the years leading up to the Rugby World Cup in autumn 2019 ensured an incredible welcome and enthusiasm for Wales during the tournament. A large and successful Welsh Government trade mission travelled out to Japan, including 17 businesses from Wales' technology and digital, creative, healthcare and advanced manufacturing sectors to strengthen economic ties. The Welsh Government also hosted a programme of events in Tokyo, including Tŷ Cymru, the Wales Dome, showcasing Wales' diverse culture, and also supported events in other regions of Japan that had so warmly welcomed the Welsh team and people. Through deploying a Team Wales approach, we were able to provide a platform for other organisations and individuals to promote Wales like we have never done before, to show the world that that we are ambitious, forward-thinking and want to remain globally connected. We will continue to utilise the platform of major sporting events to promote Wales over the coming years.

### Our Actions

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will work on developing a MoU between Wales and Japan to cement the legacy of the 2019 Rugby World Cup, and use the Olympics/ Paralympics as a platform to raise further the profile of Wales in Japan.
- We will partner with the Football Association Wales (FAW) to make the most of opportunities to showcase Wales in the lead up to and during Euro 2021.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will utilise the Commonwealth Games 2022 and, if Wales qualify, the Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 to promote Wales, working with relevant partners to deliver this activity.
- We will look to promote Wales during the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and Olympics /Paralympics 2024, both of which will be held in France.
- We will work with our Major Events team and sector lead bodies to attract international sporting, as well as business and cultural events to Wales.
- We will convene stakeholders to promote international sporting events to maximise resources and impact.
- We will encourage and develop further collaborations between sports and arts at key events.

<sup>4</sup> [https://wales.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/wales\\_soft\\_power\\_barometer\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://wales.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/wales_soft_power_barometer_2018_0.pdf)

## Education and Youth

The Government has a central role to play in providing the right framework for the next generation of researchers, innovators, artists, sportsmen and women and people who can take forward a Wales that is even more globally responsible. The development of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and the Welsh Baccalaureate “Global Challenge” present us with an enormous opportunity to ensure that our pupils develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; a world where the voices of our future generations are valued and promoted. Professor Charlotte Williams OBE has been appointed to lead a new working group to advise on and improve the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and experiences across all parts of the school curriculum. Through our membership of the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory, we also contribute to the global dialogue on advancing the values of equity, excellence, well-being, inclusion, democracy and human rights of students globally. Through this platform, we share Wales’ good practice and learn from other countries.

International students at Welsh Universities and Colleges enrich our cultural diversity and are key contributors to our export economy. The impact of COVID-19 on our international student recruitment remains uncertain but we remain committed to encouraging international students to study in Wales. We will continue to support the work of Global Wales to promote Wales as a study destination internationally.

Global Wales/Welsh Government partnerships with the prestigious Fulbright, Gilman, and Chevening international scholarship programmes fund the mobility of students and researchers between Wales, the US, Vietnam, and India with the aim of developing long-term educational links. Our Seren programme – a collaboration between state schools, colleges, universities, alumni, local authorities, Welsh Government and third sector organisations – provides invaluable international opportunities for Welsh students. The Global Wales Discover initiative also provides funding for Welsh universities to deliver short-term mobility opportunities for Welsh undergraduate students to work, study or volunteer in another country. The Global Wales Research Mobility Fund supports the mobility of researchers between universities in Wales and international countries to facilitate research opportunities to build upon and enhance Wales’ growing international reputation.

All these programmes and initiatives are building bridges between countries, connecting our young people internationally and creating connections and experiences that will be long lasting. We want to build on this by supporting more networks and initiatives that give a voice to our young people internationally.

### Our Actions

#### Short Term (2020-21)

- We will support Future Generations Future Leaders network activity internationally at the UN Youth Forum in New York and One Young World Summit in Munich in 2021.
- We will support Global Wales’ (the Welsh Universities global partnership group) post COVID-19 marketing messages utilising our networks internationally, including the fact that there are more business start-ups from universities in Wales compared to other parts of the UK.
- We will ensure youth play a central part of our major events – e.g. Wales in Germany, World Expo and COP26.
- We will attend and participate in Atlantic Rim Collaboratory Summit to continue exchanging good practice and learn from other members.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- Where possible, we will collaborate on joint events and initiatives with Global Wales in priority countries, focusing on North America, India and Vietnam.
- We will support the Urdd’s work internationally through a strategic partnership.
- We will encourage Youth Parliament international links and facilitate introductions internationally.
- We will engage with alumni internationally through a **Diaspora Engagement Action Plan** in partnership with Welsh universities.
- We will continue to provide our young people with the opportunities to gain international experience through the Seren network and Global Wales Discover, and provide opportunities for young people from the US, Vietnam, India, and the EU to study in Wales through scholarships such as Gilman, Fulbright, Chevening and the Global Wales Postgraduate Scholarship Programme.

### Science, Research and Innovation (Science Diplomacy)

The pursuit of knowledge has transcended cultures, peoples and politics across the globe for millennia. Our universities are globally connected institutions, at the forefront of international collaboration and bring in a significant amount of overseas revenue. Through a focus on equity and excellence and world-leading research, our universities are helping change people's lives and societies for the better. Global Wales' work with Vietnam to develop its educational infrastructure through training opportunities, research, collaboration and academic exchanges is one of many examples of this.

Our 'Protecting Research and Innovation after EU Exit' publication highlighted the impressive impact and international reach that the Welsh research base has made since devolution; including the significant contribution it has made to growing Wales' innovation performance in Europe. We are now the most efficient of the UK countries at converting relatively small levels of funding into highly regarded research. In 2016, we obtained the highest international collaboration share across all UK constituent countries, with nearly 70% of its publications involving co-authors from beyond Wales. Wales has been successful in receiving competitive funding from the European Horizon 2020 programme which has supported over 2,820 collaborative links between Wales and 70 other countries. Welsh organisations are involved in Horizon 2020 projects worth over 1.4 billion euros.

Our internationally recognised Sêr Cymru programme was set up in 2012 to help build a strong and dynamic science base that supports the economic and national development of Wales. Since then, the more than £100m investment has built up a considerable momentum. By 2019, Sêr Cymru had supported three National Research Networks, 11 research chairs and over 120 fellows (early-mid career researchers). These competitive fellowships were awarded to researchers from 29 countries. These fellowships are not only supporting researchers new to Wales, they have also enabled British researchers to return to the UK after undertaking roles overseas. In early 2020, the next tranche of funding was allocated to support industrial fellowships, infrastructure awards and several strategic partnership awards.

Our universities also continue to play an important role in our response to the pandemic with institutions' students, staff and facilities making important contributions in research, healthcare capacity building, community support and many other activities. As part of the Sêr Cymru programme we launched the £1.3 million COVID-19 call in June of this year. Many of the successful applicants will be working with collaborators around the world – highlighting the importance of international learning to tackle shared global challenges.

Our international standing in research and higher education is a position that is of utmost importance today as the sector faces the many challenges presented by Brexit and COVID-19. It is also an integral part of our national brand and a catalyst for securing strong international partnerships in future.

#### Our Actions Short Term (2020-21)

- We will continue, through our Priority Regional Relationships and Networks Action Plan, to encourage innovation and collaboration, through initiatives such as a joint call for projects with the Government of Québec and through a new Cyber and Tech MoU with the Government of Flanders.
- We will through the chairing of the 2020 Vanguard Initiative, continue to encourage collaborative projects, promoting take-up of key enabling technologies.
- We will continue, through our international network and partners, to share learnings on COVID-19 to aid our recovery.
- We will showcase our Universities world leading research capabilities at World Expo in Dubai 2021-22.
- Through our joint Statement of Intent with Ireland, we will launch the inaugural St David's Day and St Patrick's Day lectures in Ireland and Wales.

#### Medium Term (2022-25)

- We will produce resources to demonstrate the impact of Welsh research, illustrating the success of our universities output.
- We will continue the Sêr Cymru programme until March 2023 and explore ways to continue the programme beyond 2023 (end of ERDF funding period) with continued international focus in relevant areas.
- Our international network will continue to support our universities through facilitating international introductions and encourage partnerships globally.

# Communications and Branding

## Government Communications

In the short term, as we recover from COVID-19, Welsh Government-led digital communications will be central to the delivery of all of our action plans. Each plan will be supported by a programme of digital activity designed to communicate our values, goals and ambitions, using our international offices and working with our partners to engage with our key markets. Central to this activity will be at least three annual campaigns focused around milestone events such as St David's Day, and thematic government-led communications campaigns reflecting the three pillars of the International Strategy – creativity, sustainability and technology. In addition to the annual campaigns, we will be responsive to opportunities that arise, and work in partnership where relevant to share Welsh Government's international message.

## Cymru Wales Brand

In order for our international engagement to be effective, it is also important that together with our partners, we continue to leverage our nation brand and voice to tell Wales' story on the world stage. The Cymru Wales brand, developed over the last five years, ensures a disciplined, unifying and coherent approach to building Wales' image as a contemporary and inspiring place to visit, work, invest and study. The brand strategy reflects the fact that a country's reputation is influenced by a wide range of factors; the quality of our sporting successes, culture, creativity, produce and welcome all have a part to play in shaping perceptions of Wales and ultimately our wider reputation and performance. Our objectives through all our brand and communications work is to:

- Elevate our status
- Surprise and inspire
- Change perceptions
- Do good things
- Be unmistakably Wales

The brand also aims to portray that Wales is a country that is authentic, creative and alive with innovation and future opportunity. The brand is inclusive and promotes Wales in the round and has been embraced by the Welsh Government, as well as by outside bodies and the private sector. The brand is also used to promote Wales within specific sectors – by Visit Wales, Trade and Invest Wales, Food and Drink Wales, Study in Wales, Creative Wales and most recently by the Cultural sector.

The brand has a strong sense of place but is also contemporary and cutting-edge – using our heritage to propel our image forward. The brand identity is based on a 'Draig' logo, the font we use to tell our story is influenced by medieval Welsh manuscripts, and colour palettes are inspired by the Welsh landscape. Most of our marketing campaigns executed through the brand carry the 'This is Wales' message – which acts as a statement of confidence in what we are, and our ambitions for the future. We will continue to deliver Cymru Wales marketing campaigns to raise Wales' profile in key markets. We will also work closely with our partners, providing them with a range of tools and creative assets so that they can work with us to help share Wales' story.

Through our government-led and Cymru Wales brand communications, we will convey that we are a country with a strong sense of defining values, based on the principles of the well-being of future generations and a sense of sustainable, responsible living.

# Governance and Working with Others

In developing the International Strategy, we consulted widely with almost 600 partners and stakeholders. In delivery, we are eager to see this engagement continue through a formal governance structure for our main partners and stakeholders.

We will focus activity on working with the priority relationships<sup>5</sup> outlined in our strategy, as well as utilising platforms provided by global/international events such as World Expo Dubai 2021-22 and COP26. We will also strengthen engagement with the diplomatic corps in London and explore collaborative working/joint projects, such as the recent Québec–Wales joint call for projects.

Our network of international offices will play a key part in delivery. We will also work closely with the UK government and the British Council to influence and leverage their international networks and when appropriate, collaborate on joint events and initiatives to maximise the opportunities for Wales.



## Our Actions

- We will hold two meetings a year to ensure we are coordinating our activities across Welsh Government and with other organisations working abroad, including education, civil society, sports and cultural organisations.
- We will convene Stakeholder Working Groups around specific events such as Wales in Germany 2021, World Expo Dubai 2021-22 and COP26.
- We will continue to encourage cultural, research and educational collaborations and exchange through our existing Memorandum of Understanding and Declaration of Intent. We will publish a new joint statement and action plan with Ireland in autumn 2020.
- We will, where appropriate, work in partnership with UK Government departments and the British Council to help deliver this action plan and promote Wales' distinct and diverse assets.
- We will further strengthen our relationships with the diplomatic corps in London, and the Consul Generals and Honorary Consuls in Wales, focusing on our key strategic relationships.
- We will ensure that our international offices incorporate this plan into their Business Planning, focusing on the areas in this plan where they will add most value in their respective geographies.

<sup>5</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/international-strategy-for-wales.pdf> See Annex B

# Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluating the impact of public diplomacy is difficult. International engagement of this kind is often long-term in nature, leveraging influence over time, which depends on effective relationship building.

At UK level it is possible to track international influence through indexes developed by Portland, Elcano, and others. There is less research done at Devolved Administration or regional level. The British Council Wales Soft Power Barometer<sup>6</sup> has compared Wales' performance with other regional and devolved Governments.

We have recently participated in the Anholt GfK index with the results expected in the autumn. These indices are useful in setting the international context in which we are working and the strength of our influence and reputation. They do not necessarily tell us about the impact of a country or government's activity/intervention. Global events can impact perception of a country both positively (sporting success for example) and negatively which would be much more impactful than any government intervention/activation.

Return on Influence is increasingly being used to track the impact of international activity/intervention, in addition to the traditional Return on Investment. Relevant metrics can include social media reactions and follow up surveys of those attending an event, number of collaborations generated, or evidence of a positive change following an event or activity.

## Our Actions

- We will build Return on Influence metrics into our evaluations of key events and activity internationally (e.g. World Expo Dubai 2021-22 and Wales in Germany 2021).
- We will evaluate the results of the Anholt survey and consider how we can use surveys to track Wales' ranking relative to other countries, over the next five years.
- We will evaluate our actions against the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and undertake an integrated impact assessment for all our action plans.

<sup>6</sup> [https://wales.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/wales\\_soft\\_power\\_barometer\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://wales.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/wales_soft_power_barometer_2018_0.pdf)

# Conclusion

COVID-19 will have a significant impact on our ability to undertake international activity in our usual way for some time to come. We will need to remain agile and innovative in the months ahead. This plan is a live document that will adapt to the evolving international context.

Some of our greatest challenges are shared challenges – and COVID-19 is no exception. Now is not the time for looking inwards. Now is the time to be reaching out in solidarity with our international friends, to continue building bridges and mutually beneficial partnerships. We have continued to look outwards, to learn from our friends internationally and to offer help to others throughout the pandemic, and our determination to share in the global community remains as strong as ever.

By working together, in partnership with our global businesses and entrepreneurs, our performers and artists, our higher education institutions/universities, our researchers, our alumni, our sportsmen and women, our future leaders, aid workers and civil society we can ensure that Wales' voice remains strong and confident. All of these elements are stronger when they are together, they are mutually reinforcing and help amplify Wales as a place to invest, study and visit. Together they tell the story of a creative, contemporary and high-quality country, proud of who we are and evolving for the future. Together, they ensure that Wales' strong history of internationalism continues, and together they bring benefit back to the people of Wales and the world today and for future generations.

