

Swansea Bay Regional Engagement Team

Newsletter

Issue 03 (June 2017)



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How can Swansea Bay Regional Engagement Team help you?

The RET are here to support projects in the region and to work with project leads to share good practice between projects.

Why not tell us about some of your good news stories – email us and we can feature your project in the next newsletter.

We are always keen to organise workshops in the region to share new information. If you have any specific areas of interest which you would like us to organise a workshop on please email us – smnicholls@sirgar.gov.uk

Regional Engagement Team Hosts Regional Workshop

The Swansea Bay Regional Engagement Team organised an information workshop for the Swansea Bay Employability Group which consists of representatives from Local Authorities, Further and Higher education institutions and various other organisations interested in the employability agenda.

The workshop provided information on the Welsh Government's Employability Plan for Wales, which will set out how WG aims to reshape employability support for job-ready individuals and those furthest from the labour market. This reshaping hopes to increase employment, increase living standards, reduce skills gaps and reduce variation across Wales.

Members of the group saw this as a great opportunity to discuss the plan, engage directly with the plan developers and the group are looking forward to taking this agenda forward. The group were also able to discuss and share information between each other on how the new programme would work with existing programmes and any issues that could arise.

The next workshop will be held in July, during the session the group will find out more about new projects that are going forward for funding, receive an update on the Employability Plan and Communities First.

Funding available through the Ireland Wales Programme

€9.6m of EU funds are available for cross-border proposals to maximise the potential of Ireland and Wales' natural and cultural assets to help increase visitor numbers to coastal communities.

This priority of the Programme highlights links between the economy and tourism, heritage and the natural environment. It brings together expertise from both nations to meet shared challenges and opportunities from our Irish Sea border.

Proposals will need to incorporate one or more of the following components:

- The establishment or development of a network, co-operation platform, portal or strategy
- The transfer or adoption of knowledge, expertise, technologies or best practice
- The enabling or paving the way for investment in the design, development, testing or delivery of new processes, products, studies or services
- Minor scale investments where there is demonstrable cross-border added value and compliance with the objectives of the Programme

Each project must have at least one Irish and one Welsh partner with a maximum of 6 joint partners.

The deadline to submit a proposal is 5pm on 28th July 2017

For more information please click [here](#)

Sustainable Management Scheme

The Sustainable Management scheme will provide financial support for a range of activities that will improve the management of our natural resources and in doing so contribute to the well-being of our rural communities.

The scheme offers grants to collaborative groups looking to:

- Improve our natural resources e.g. soil, water, woodland and carbon storage
- Improve biodiversity and habitat management, managing uplands and peat management
- Take action to improve access and recreation opportunities
- Increase green infrastructure and urban drainage

The third application window opens on 10th July 2017 and the window closes on 5th September

For more information click [here](#)

SMART Innovation Expert Clinic Sessions

SMART Innovation provides free consultancy support to businesses throughout Wales seeking to improve their competitiveness.

As part of a new package of SMART support backed by EU funds, the Healthcheck is available to SMEs and large organisations from a range of sectors, including general manufacturing, engineering, energy, ICT, digital, food and drink, electronics, medical/healthcare, construction, and financial services.

For more information click [here](#)

Plans for next stage of rollout move ahead - building on Superfast Cymru success

Businesses, homes and communities have an opportunity to take part in a consultation on the next stage of fast broadband rollout in Wales.

The Welsh Government's current Superfast Cymru project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) continues to make good progress. At the end of March 645,000 premises across Wales had been given access to fast fibre as a result of the Programme. BT has confirmed it expects to deliver 30Mbps download speeds to around 690,000 premises before the Programme closes at the end of December 2017.

The consultation will inform the next stage of the rollout to take place in early 2018 in order to reach the final few hard to reach premises. It has identified a list of over 98,000 premises. The rollout will be backed by a public sector budget of around £80m.

For more information click [here](#)

€2.9 million BUCANIER Project

BUCANIER – Building Clusters and Networks in Innovation Enterprise and Research is a new €2.9 million ERDF funded scheme to support small businesses in Ireland and Wales.

The BUCANIER project will see the Institute of Technology Carlow, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Wexford County Council in Ireland and Swansea University and Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire County Councils in Wales join forces to help boost trade and provide specialist support to help small businesses design and develop new products and services. The project will work in key growth sectors of the Welsh and Irish economies, including food and drink, life sciences and renewable energy.

The project will also see the partners offer innovation master-classes, business mentoring and create new networks between Wales and Ireland which are aimed at helping businesses in the same sectors share knowledge, increase cross-border trade and create new jobs.

Currently in the mobilisation phase, BUCANIER starts to deliver in September 2017. Approximately 120 Welsh and Irish businesses are expected to benefit from the BUCANIER project over the next three years. BUCANIER is part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Ireland-Wales cooperation programme, which is helping to strengthen economic links and collaboration between the two countries.

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