



How can the Regional Engagement Team help you?

The Swansea Bay Regional Engagement Team (SBRET) is one of four teams set up in Wales to help ensure EU funding proposals meet existing and future opportunities and investments at regional levels.

The SBRET work across the counties of Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea, and across all sectors in the region to ensure the effective participation and success of EU funded investments. SBRET supports the region in the delivery of its **economic regeneration strategy** to improve the prospects of our communities, businesses and economy.

If you are considering applying for EU funding, contact us for guidance on how your project can support regional priorities, to make links to other projects and benefit from case studies and examples of best practice.

If you are already delivering an EU funded project, we would be keen to hear about how your projects is progressing. We could also look to feature some of your good news stories in the next newsletter.



Congratulations to Owain Jones 'Best Individual Achievement – 25+ Award'. Owain's achievement following his referral to Workways+ in 2016, was recognised in the recent WEFO competition launched to celebrate 60 years of the European Social Fund. Read all about Owain's story [here](#).

Workways+ offers training and paid work experience opportunities to long-term unemployed people to help them on their route back to employment. Backed by £7.5 million of EU funds, the scheme will benefit people in Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

Brexit: Securing Wales' Future

The latest in a series of [Securing Wales' Future](#) papers has been launched.

'[Trade Policy: the issues for Wales](#)' sets out Welsh Government's priorities for our future trading relationship with Europe and the rest of the world after we leave the EU.

Prosperity for All: Employability Plan for Wales

WG Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning Eluned Morgan AM launched the new Employability Plan for Wales on Tuesday 20th March. See the plan [here](#).



Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
Partneriaeth Dysgu a Sgiliau Rhanbarthol

South West & Mid Wales

De-Orllewin a Canolbarth Cymru

Knowledge is power therefore the [Regional Learning and Skills Partnership](#) are urging employers and industry experts to help us and have their say on all things skills in the region of South West and Mid Wales.

We are working tirelessly to ensure that the educational offer in the region is fit for purpose to guarantee that you have access to the right skills, in the right place at the right time.

As one of the three Regional Skills Partnerships in Wales we have the power to make recommendations to Welsh Government which could make a real difference for the region and the people learning, living and working here. To do this though, we need evidence to feed into our annual plan!

We hope you'll join us in having a positive impact on an agenda that is important for all of us.

Have your say and influence the changes that need to be made to support and develop your industry by completing this short [survey](#).

The multiple choice questions offer you the opportunity to tell us all the issues that impact on your business. Please complete and be a part of the solution.

Complete the survey [here](#)

Eight of 11 City Deal Business Cases now Submitted for Approval

A number of major projects forming part of the £1.3bn Swansea Bay City Deal investment in South West Wales are expected to be approved in coming months.

Business cases for eight of the 11 City Deal projects across Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot have now been submitted to the UK and Welsh Governments for approval.

This is among the progress that's been made since the Prime Minister signed the City Deal in a visit to Swansea last March. Other progress includes continuing construction of the 'Yr Egin' creative and digital cluster at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David campus in Carmarthen, as well as the submission of an outline planning application for the Life Science and Well-Being Village set for Delta Lakes in Llanelli.

Expected to boost the regional economy by £1.8bn and create 10,000 high-value jobs over the next 15 years, the City Deal includes funding from the UK and Welsh Governments, the public sector and the private sector.

Aimed at revolutionising the way sectors like energy, life sciences, the creative industries and manufacturing are delivered across the Swansea Bay City Region, the City Deal will include major investment in world class digital infrastructure, as well as a Skills and Talent initiative that will give local young people a pathway in schools and colleges to access the jobs that will be opened up. These are the 'golden thread' projects that will underpin all elements of the City Deal.

Cllr Rob Stewart, Lead Leader for the Swansea Bay City Region, said: "Since the City Deal was signed, an exhaustive amount of work has been taking place behind the scenes. This includes the preparation and submission of eight of the 11 project business cases for approval to both governments, with the first sign-offs soon expected.

"On a project by project basis, we can start drawing down the City Deal investment that's been secured once individual business case approvals are in place

"Comprehensive work is also taking place to finalise the business cases that have yet to be submitted for approval."

The City Deal will be overseen by a Joint Committee, made up of Leaders from participating councils, health boards and universities.

Paving the way for the body to be formally established, a Joint Committee Agreement report that will outline principles of working is expected to be considered by all four regional councils in coming months.

An Economic Strategy Board (ESB) for the City Deal will also soon be established to maximise the impact of the City Deal by engaging with businesses across the City Region. A private sector chairman of the ESB will be appointed imminently.



Business and Social Enterprise Support – Working Together for Cohesive Regional Delivery

The Swansea Bay Regional Engagement Team hosted a successful information and networking event '*Business and Social Enterprise Support – Working Together for Cohesive Regional Delivery*' on February 15th in the Mercure Hotel Swansea.



To start the day, more than 60 attendees were given the opportunity to 'have their say' on Welsh Government's policy paper - **Regional investment in Wales after Brexit**. This paper and consultation is the first step in the process of designing a new approach to regional economic development and investment in Wales. It forms one in a series of *Securing Wales' Future* papers setting out the vision for Wales once we have left the EU.

Presentations from 'Be the Spark' Initiative, Regional Skills and Learning Partnership, Swansea Bay City Deal, Local Authorities and Further Education Colleges from the region as well as the suite of Business Wales operations ensured that by the end of the day the attendees had the opportunity to hear about the wide range of business and social enterprise support available in the region.

Presentations from the day are available [here](#).



Young people in South West Wales to benefit from major EU investment

Around 2,000 young people from across South West Wales are set to benefit from a new skills programme backed by £4m of EU funds.

Led by Pembrokeshire County Council, and delivered by local authorities across the region, the Cam Nesa initiative will provide intensive support to out-of-work 16-24 year olds who face significant challenges in securing employment.

Young people in Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot will benefit from the scheme.

The investment will fund a range of support including mentoring and counselling, and courses to improve basic and personal skills, self-esteem and digital literacy.

The three-year programme will also provide opportunities to achieve vocational qualifications and take part in work experience and job taster sessions.

Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford announced the funding for Cam Nesa as part of a wider £26m EU-backed investment to help young people across Wales into work.

Speaking at an event in Swansea to mark the impact of EU funds in Wales and the 60th anniversary of the European Social Fund, Mark Drakeford, said: "I am delighted we have so far invested £193m EU funds to help our young people unlock their potential and improve their career prospects.

"These projects are further examples of the importance of Wales receiving replacement funding from the UK Government post-Brexit so that we can provide much needed opportunities for young people and help them secure a prosperous future."

Cam Nesa is a £5.7m initiative that will also be funded by the participating local authorities in South West Wales.

Cllr Paul Miller, Cabinet Member for Economy, Tourism, Leisure and Culture in Pembrokeshire, said: "We are delighted to welcome further EU funding for this important and exciting project.

"The funding will allow us to invest in extra levels of support for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in our society, giving them the opportunity to both improve their skills and their employment prospects. This investment is good news for Pembrokeshire and for the region."



Helen Ross (right), Pembrokeshire County Council's European officer, with Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford



Skills for Industry

The Skills for Industry European Social Fund (ESF) project aims to develop the skill levels of employed individuals, including self-employed participants with no formal qualifications and those with qualifications up to and including Level 7.

The project aims to assist progression by supporting training that ensures work placed learning provision meets the needs of employers and individual workers.

The project also addresses key skills gaps in the labour market which can support economic growth and individual progression and, therefore, ensures that skills remain current and the needs of employers are met.

Alex, a participant on the Skills for Industry ESF project, had already completed his Level 2 qualifications in Health and Social Care and was keen to progress further so he enrolled at Gower College Swansea to attain a Level 3 Diploma. Not only did this increase his skills level within the workplace, it also resulted in better care for his clients, increased performance and specialist knowledge, and optimum returns from the employer's investment.

The support of the Skills for Industry project enabled Alex to increase his confidence within his work role, progress to the higher level qualification and learn to adapt and embrace change.

Skills for Industry funding played a large part in enabling Alex to develop in his role and to continue improving his skills whilst remaining an essential part of his organisation. As a direct result of Skill for Industry funding, he has achieved a Level 5 Advanced Practice qualification which has allowed for significant progression within his role.

Alex is now working towards his TAQA (Teaching and Learning) qualification, all the time growing in confidence and gaining new skills to enable him to have a better understanding of his role and the sector in which he works. In addition, he will have the opportunity to pursue additional career paths within the organisation and pass on his knowledge and skills to other employees.

Alex has worked hard through all levels - from starting off at Level 2 with limited skills and knowledge to having completed a Level 5 in advanced practice. This has been a considerable personal achievement and Alex can now use his knowledge and skills to manage a team of staff and ensure the smooth operation and management of his workplace.

Atlantic Area Programme

The Atlantic Area second call for project proposals is now open until the 1st June. This is a one-step call for projects, worth over €40m across each of the programme priority areas – innovation, resource efficiency, territorial risks, and biodiversity (including natural and cultural assets).

To find out more, register now to attend the **Atlantic Area Info Day at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea on Friday 13th April**. This event is open to all UK stakeholders interested in applying to the programme, networking or are in the process of forming a partnership. The UK National Contact Point, Guillaume Le Palud, will provide information on the second call and there will also be an opportunity to book a one-to-one meeting with Guillaume to discuss and develop your project idea.

The event will start at 10:00, with lunch and refreshments provided. You can register your attendance today [here](#)!

For more information on the Atlantic Area Programme and the second call, visit www.atlanticarea.eu and follow @wefowales on Twitter.

North West Europe Programme

Next call for project proposals

Targeted call for Renewable Energy projects

The North West Europe Programme's next call will open at the end of March and **close the 26th April**. This is a **two-step call** for proposals in the areas of innovation, low carbon, and resource & materials efficiency.

The programme also has a targeted call open, worth €50m, for renewable energy projects, open until the **31st July**. You can find more information on the targeted call [here](#).

You can find information on both calls on the programme [website](#) which again has a wealth of information on project ideas and support. The UK has two Contact Points working on this programme – Emily Shephard and Filippo Compagni (contact details [here](#)), both of whom are always happy to help and discuss your project ideas.

Next Steps

Together with the UK Contact Points, the Territorial Cooperation Unit are currently organising workshops across the UK which will provide in-depth information to potential project partners and help with applying to both programmes – we will inform you once these details have been finalised.

To keep up with any developments, please follow the WEFO Twitter account: @wefowales / @wefocymru as well as the programmes: @AtlanticArea and @INTERREG_NW

Erasmus+

2018 Erasmus+ funding call now open

€2.7 billion of European funding available for education, training, youth and sport projects - more than ever before.

For more information click [here](#)

At over €70bn Horizon 2020 is the largest ever EU research and innovation programme.

It is enabling Welsh organisations to be at the forefront of international research and innovation and to collaborate across Europe and the world.

Horizon 2020 is open for business, with successful applications made whilst the UK is part of the EU protected by the UK government's lifetime expenditure guarantee.

Welsh organisations have secured just over €83m of Horizon 2020 funding since the start of the programme. This has involved 191 participations and 2000 international collaborations.

Full details can be found on **Horizon 2020**, including information on the various work programmes.

The Welsh Government's Horizon 2020 Unit is available to support all Welsh organisations applying or considering applying for research and innovation funding from the EU.

Click [here](#) for more information

Creative Europe

The Creative Europe programme aims to support the European audiovisual, cultural and creative sector.

The different funding schemes encourage the audiovisual, cultural and creative players to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills needed in the digital age.

For more information and open calls click [here](#)

Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP)

This programme is funded by the European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and by the Welsh Government.

The following RDP scheme windows for funding are now open:

Co-operative Forest Planning Scheme

Encouraging planning for the creation of broadleaved and conifer woodland, and contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the Environmental and Rural Affairs Monitoring and Modelling Programme (ERAMMP).

By providing financial support for a range of activities that will support this goal and therefore:

- improve the management of our natural resources
- contribute to the well-being of our rural communities.

The Co-operative Forest Planning Scheme aims to support proposals seeking to facilitate, develop or establish new collaborations and activities and to help potential new collaborations develop project proposals.

For more information click [here](#)

Co-operation and Supply Chain Development

The Co-operation and Supply Chain Development scheme (C&SCDS) is designed to help make new things happen. It will provide support for a broad range of matters and for all aspects of a project, from the initial stages through to delivery and into dissemination and evaluation. The scheme cannot support joint activities which are already taking place but can support an existing group in undertaking a new joint project.

The scheme aims to support the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies in the agriculture, forestry and food sectors.

For more information click [here](#)

Farm Business Grant

The Farm Business Grant (FBG) scheme is a capital grant support package, designed to help farmers in Wales improve the economic and environmental performance of their agricultural holding.

More information can be found [here](#)

Timber Business Investment Scheme

The Timber Business Investment scheme provides funding for capital investments that add value to forests by enabling woodland management activities, timber harvesting and/or timber processing.

More information can be found [here](#)

Rural Business Investment Scheme - Food

The Rural Business Investment Scheme - FOOD (RBISF) is a capital investments scheme to support projects that offer clear and quantifiable benefits to the food and drink industry in Wales. The scheme is open to existing and start up micro & small food and drink processor's and manufacturers throughout Wales.

This is a capital investment scheme for food and drink processing or manufacturing activities currently not eligible under the Food Business Investment Scheme.

The maximum grant for an individual investment project is 40% of the total eligible cost with a maximum of £50,000 for any individual investment project.

More information can be found [here](#)

Glastir Woodland Creation

Glastir Woodland Creation provides financial support for new planting. Financial support is also available for planting trees in areas that continue to be grazed as part of an Agroforestry system i.e. combining agriculture and forestry.

More information can be found [here](#)

West Wales Rivers Trust awarded £37,045 LEADER funding



Grŵp Cefn Gwlad – the Local Action Group (LAG) for Carmarthenshire have recently provided funding to West Wales Rivers Trust. This is funded through the LEADER programme, which is part of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, funded by the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The money was awarded to undertake an innovative pilot project to investigate a novel method of restoring streams that are affected by acidification.

Acidification affects many of the upland streams draining the Cambrian Mountains in Carmarthenshire particularly those that have extensive conifer plantations in their catchments. This project involves the Doethie tributary of the Tywi where limestone granules will be used to correct the acidity and restore river ecology including fish populations.

The project will help to restore fish populations which will help to improve the rural economy of Carmarthenshire due to the envisaged contribution to angling and angling tourism. Improvements in biodiversity are also anticipated in restored river ecosystems. During the 2 year pilot continuous monitoring of the water quality will take place with findings shared with other likeminded Trusts.



The exciting Tywi Valley Path project has received a funding boost of £128,000

The money will go towards developing part of the route in Abergwili as well as a parking area.

The grant has been awarded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The council will provide match-funding of £32,000 towards constructing this section of the path which follows part of the old road and will link to the internal paths of the Bishop's Palace Gardens.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths AM said: "I am pleased to be able to support the Tywi Valley Path and it is great to see this project begin to take shape. The path will of benefit to both local people wishing to enjoy the outdoors, enhance the rural community and boost tourism to the area."

The scenic Tywi Valley Path will follow the route of the former Carmarthen and Llandeilo railway line as much as possible, and is expected to boost tourism and the local economy, as well as encourage active and sustainable travel.

The path is expected to attract around 20,000 visitors a year when complete, and generate between £860,000 and £2million a year in the local economy.

Contact Us

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