



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Strategic Forum for Regional Investment in Wales: OECD project update

Update for the Strategic Forum on the OECD project, October 2021

First published: 11 November 2021

Last updated: 11 November 2021

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Background

Since the completion of the OECD project in December 2020, Welsh Government officials have been working with the OECD to develop a project to support the implementation of some recommendations from the OECD's recently published report '[The Future of Regional Development and Public Investment in Wales](#)'.

We will work with the OECD and all stakeholders to deliver the project building on the trust and strong collaboration which was built during the first project. The new two-year project began in September 2021.

Overview of latest project

There are four key outputs to the latest OECD project:

1. A final regional gaps self-assessment toolkit to guide regional structures in evaluating institutional capacity gaps that can impede effective policy and service delivery.
2. Regional Development Policy and Public Investment Action Plans for Welsh Government and each of Wales' four regional-level bodies.
3. Two "master class" workshops with Welsh Government senior officials and practitioners from OECD countries on two or three specific topics to support regional development policy implementation.

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4. A synthesis report of identified multi-level governance capacity gaps, lessons learned, good practices and planned actions in support of stronger regional development and public investment at the Welsh Government and Welsh regional and local levels.

The project's scope agreed with the OECD is below:

The strategic dimension: vision-setting, planning, cross-sector coordination and integration for regional development policy and public investment

OECD Recommendation: Establish a vision-based, long-term regional development strategy for Wales.

- Work with the Welsh Government departments to support the development of a long-term, cross-government and multi-stakeholder vision for the territory's development that considers, and ideally corrects for, the regionally differentiated impact of COVID-19 as well as expected modifications to public investment funding arising from Brexit. A long-term vision serves as a guide for existing and future policy and planning documents/initiatives relevant to regional development (e.g. Reconstruction and Resilience Mission for Wales and the Economic Action Plan). In essence these policy and planning documents should contribute to realising the vision.

OECD Recommendation: Reinforce the role of the centre of government as a guide and coordinator of regional development and public investment policy.

- Identifying strategy-setting and institutional capability gaps in the Welsh Government and actions that can help address these gaps.
- Work with the Welsh Government to develop plans for the devolution of responsibilities and funding, which would also consider how responsibilities and tasks are currently attributed among levels of government.

OECD Recommendation: Ensure coordination between regional development policy and sector policies with a regional logic and regional goals, and coherence in policy and planning between the national and subnational levels.

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- Working with regions to develop their territories based on regional strengths and needs and alignment with the longer-term national vision.
- Support Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) to identify their implementation gaps, and help them build concrete actions to fill these gaps recognising that CJCs are at different stages in their development and may take different approaches.

The implementation dimension: practices and mechanisms for realising regional development policy and public investment objectives

OECD Recommendation: Strengthen outcomes-based performance measurement for regional development.

- This supports identifying progress in meeting regional development objectives, as well as the need to adjust regional development interventions and determine public investment effectiveness and to build accountability to citizens. (Measurements could incorporate those related to productivity and carbon transition to net-zero objectives or activities.)

OECD Recommendation: Adopt a stakeholder engagement strategy to establish clear engagement definitions and expectations between the Welsh Government and local authorities.

- Support the Welsh Government, regional and local bodies (i.e. relevant sub national stakeholders such as CJCs, local authorities, City and Growth Deal arrangements, etc.) in developing a consensus (or at a minimum an agreement) on what is understood by co-design and co-delivery (i.e. establishing agreed upon definitions).

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