



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

FORM, DOCUMENT

Initiative to support strategic engagement with Horizon Europe (Agile Cymru)

Open to applications now, with a focus on activity and expenditure claimed before the end of March 2025.

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Background

The Welsh Government's **Programme for Government** stresses the importance of giving Wales the strongest possible presence on the world stage and commits to 'closer economic and research ties with the EU'.

Co-operating with other nations and regions will help to:

- Increase the profile of Wales on the world stage
- Grow the Welsh economy
- Position Wales as a globally responsible nation.

Joint working provides opportunities to exchange ideas, identify areas of best practice, extend innovation and competitiveness, and address key issues which transcend borders. We want "an Agile Cymru" that looks outward to existing and future UK, European and international partners; to maximise shared opportunities and address shared challenges.

Horizon Europe provides a major opportunity for Welsh researchers and innovators to collaborate with the best in the world, attract global talent and carry out cutting-edge science and innovation for the benefit of society.

Now that the UK is eligible for EU funds from Horizon Europe, there is an urgent need to rebuild trust and play an active role in Horizon Europe networks, and to extend awareness of the programme to all communities with potential to contribute. There is a range of travel grants and seed funding to support this, from **Innovate UK**, **Innovate UK Edge**, the **Wales Innovation Network** and the **British Academy**, and this support ecosystem continues to evolve. The Welsh Government has identified a need to focus its support on structured, strategic connections that can extend the benefit of UK association to entire sectors and clusters around Wales. In doing so, it will prioritise gaps in the support ecosystem.

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Initiative

This initiative encourages applications from “umbrella” organisations, or organisations that can represent a thematic community in Wales. Opportunities in Horizon Europe are vast and complex, as well as highly competitive. Specialists with knowledge of their sectors are able to identify specific opportunities and barriers and engage with the relevant UK and EU actors, but often lack the time. The aim is to provide additional “bandwidth” for Welsh clusters to mobilise and integrate with relevant European networks.

The objective is to increase the quality, number and size of Welsh participations in Horizon Europe projects in a systematic way. Projects must work towards making a measurable impact on applications to the 2025 work programmes.

Successful applicants will demonstrate a track record of international collaboration or a strategic objective to engage in Horizon Europe over a period of years. Applicants should be ready to represent and disseminate to a range of organisations in areas of Welsh specialism.

Supported projects will link with leading international partners and identify mutual research interests/strengths aligned with Horizon Europe opportunities. Activities to create a sustainable pipeline of applications could include:

- Developing applications for Horizon Europe in 2025
- Identifying the most promising applicants in a specific sector in Wales
- Researching the relevant consortia, partnerships and associations in Europe
- Attending events, meetings, and building contacts in areas of specialism
- Initiating collaboration
- Disseminating to a wider cluster
- Identifying the cluster’s barriers to taking part and addressing these, eg private sector participation, early career researchers, gender balance, coordination experience.

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Themes within the Welsh Government's **Innovation Strategy** will be a priority, where they overlap with Horizon Europe's strategic direction.

A strong application will reflect the strategic context set out in this document and:

- Create a number of bids to Horizon Europe
- Overcome immediate barriers to more and higher quality applications
- Have access to credible Horizon Europe applicants with the necessary scientific excellence (or disruptive innovation) and link to impact (e.g. industrial, policy)
- Represent a cluster or other thematic community in Wales
- Drive international engagement in priority themes
- Develop and advance a plan to engage with significant partnerships/networks in Horizon Europe

All applications will need to demonstrate viability and value for money. We would also expect an appropriate contribution to relevant Agile Cymru **outputs and outcomes**.

The initiative has a budget of £50,000. We expect to fund 4 to 6 projects, offering a grant contribution per project of approximately £10,000 at up to 100% of eligible costs, but Welsh Government may prioritise applications that leverage other funding.

Where the money available is insufficient to address all the opportunities/issues identified, a short plan for future action should be created as an output. There is no guarantee of follow-on funding, but projects should generate ideas for action in case opportunities arise.

If your proposal involves other co-operation with nations or regions and/or a less specific focus on Horizon Europe then you should consider the other support available under Agile Cymru. The Welsh Government will also continue to

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support targeted training and the development of individual bids to Horizon Europe where it can, please get in touch with the Horizon Europe Unit if your proposal is of that nature: HorizonEurope@gov.wales.

Eligible costs

Unless explicitly stated in this call, [Agile Cymru rules and procedures](#) apply.

The expenditure can include the activity of non-Welsh partners, provided the costs claimed are incurred by the Welsh partner and value for money can be demonstrated. However, we advise contacting the Welsh Government's [Agile Cymru Team](#) at an early stage in the development of your proposal to ensure compliance.

We will not support activity or expenditure after 31 March 2025.

To avoid unintended consequences and inflexibility, we do not specify a closed list of eligible costs, but costs must be necessary for the promotion, implementation and dissemination of the projects agreed through the application process and written offer of grant. They must be reasonable, verifiable and incurred by the applicant. See the Agile Cymru rules and procedures for more details. We also advise that you focus on larger items of expenditure with a robust evidence trail to simplify the claim process.

Costs incurred before the date of approval are ineligible unless the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team confirms otherwise in writing.

Submission of applications

We are open to applications now. If your proposal is not 'strong' as defined

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above, please contact the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team before submitting an application. Otherwise, complete the application form and send it to the Welsh Government's Agile Cymru Team at AgileCymru@gov.wales.

Applications will be judged on their fit with the aims of this initiative and Welsh Government will have the final decision. This decision may include offering a lower level of grant than requested. We may seek the advice of relevant specialist and policy colleagues in Wales or in relevant nations/regions. Eligible applications will be dealt with on a **'first come, first served'** basis but there will be limited opportunity for further clarification and applications that are not considered 'strong' as defined in this document may be placed on a **'reserve list'** to allow opportunities for other applications. Welsh Government will also take a portfolio approach in order to manage the balance of risk and range of outcomes. This will include considering the spread of activities across themes, geography and sectors where it will strengthen the overall outcomes of this initiative. We may therefore place applications on the 'reserve list' in order to manage portfolio considerations, or for budgetary reasons.

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