

Rolling Call for SMART Partnerships



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Rolling Call for applications

SMART Partnerships offers financial support to innovative collaboration projects that require a range of expertise to help businesses grow, improve productivity and increase competitiveness.

The aim of SMART Partnerships is to support collaborative projects, with a clear focus to increase the capacity and capabilities of Welsh businesses to develop R&D activities by linking them with Research Organisations and an associate, to work on a specific project to develop new products, processes and services in alignment with Smart Specialisation.

It is offered to Welsh businesses and Welsh Research organisations. The project must demonstrate it is an effective collaboration and will deliver positive Welsh economic and Well-being of Future Generations impacts.

Funding will support 50% of the total eligible project costs. The business partner shall provide the remaining balance of the total eligible projects costs. The funding will be awarded to the research organisation.

Duration of projects: 6-12 months

Contract research and provision of research services are not eligible.

For further information please contact your Research Development Manager

South East Wales - Julie Cunnington-Hill - Julie.Cunnington@gov.wales

South West Wales - Terry Stubbs - terry.stubbs@gov.wales

North and Mid Wales - Samantha Williams – samantha.williams@gov.wales

Notes for guidance

All applications and queries must be submitted to Natalie Crawley via email natalie.crawley@gov.wales

You will need to show that public sector funding is required for your project to happen. If you start the project before any formal approval is given the project will be deemed ineligible.

You are advised to engage with your dedicated Research Development Manager to ensure that your potential project ideas align with this call.

Aims of SMART Partnerships

- Facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology with regard to R&D and the spread of technical and business skills
- Stimulate and enhance business relevant R&D and training undertaken by the knowledge base.
- Provide company-based training for partners to enhance their R&D, business and specialist skills.

The appointed associate will be based within the business to develop and implement the project. They will meet with their academic/research supervisor within the research organisation on a regular basis to progress the project. During the time that the associate is working on the project, new R&D knowledge and skills will be developed and transferred to existing company staff members, thus embedding the new capabilities company-wide.

SMART Partnerships will work closely with the Welsh Government SMART suite of operations to ensure that all partners involved are aware of the continued support to further develop and exploit any identified commercial opportunities.

Businesses will be able to identify opportunities for R&D projects and develop new scientific and technical knowledge resulting in development and commercialisation of innovative products, processes and services. It is also expected that businesses will exploit the results of the R&D through further avenues of support.

Funding partnership projects between research organisations and businesses, reduces financial and technical risk and encourages knowledge exchange, supply chain development and parallel working on complex challenges. The funding will also assist in building capability and capacity within businesses.

What is a Collaborative Project?

Collaborative R&D encourages businesses and researchers to work together on innovative projects in strategically important areas of science, engineering and technology. It is from this that successful new products, processes and services can emerge, contributing to business and economic growth.

Who can apply?

The application, jointly developed by all parties, must be submitted by a Welsh Research Organisation and a Welsh business.

To be eligible for consideration for funding, all applications must clearly evidence and demonstrate:

- The lead partner is a Welsh Research Organisation
- The project needs to be business driven with the Wales based business clearly demonstrating the capacity and resource to exploit the outcomes of the project. Non Welsh businesses can be considered in exceptional cases. All projects must demonstrate a clear and positive impact and benefits to the Welsh economy
- Strategic relevance to the business and a level of innovation
- Stimulating and challenging for the academic team
- Intellectually challenging for the associate.

What are the conditions of funding and what can it be used for?

Conditions

The funding for these projects is part-funded by the Welsh Government.

Funding will support 50% of the total eligible project costs. The business partner shall provide the remaining balance of the total eligible projects costs. The match funding from the business can be in cash or in-kind. The funding will be awarded to the research organisation.

All activities shall be solely for the purpose of the project; shall be conducted at the minimum cost to achieve the intended results; shall not duplicate or displace existing support packages and shall comply with State Aid and European Regulations.

The funding can be used for projects minimum 6 to maximum 12 months in duration.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs for projects include direct costs relating to:

- Associate employment costs
- Associate development
- Travel and subsistence (UK only)
- Equipment, consumables (non capital)
- Knowledge Base supervisor

The recruitment of the associate Options:

- The associate is formally employed by the Research Organisation. The decision on who to appoint rests with the business and Research Organisation.
- The associate can already be employed at the business with their salary costs being used as a contribution to the business's match funding to the project. It must be clear in the application that the person will be dedicated to working on the project.

Requirements for the associate:

The associate should be qualified with a qualification(s) and experience that matches the project delivery requirements (minimum BTEC, Diploma level 3)

The associate must be recruited and the project started within 3 months of the Grant offer letter being issued.

The Application process

It is advised to contact your dedicated Research Development Manager, who will discuss your project and scope out the requirements and eligibility for the call.

How will the application be appraised?

The application will be appraised against the following criteria:

Impact

- Demonstrate a significant opportunity to impact on the business/organisations economic and Well-being of Future Generations impacts.
- The opportunity to increase the capacity and capabilities within the business/organisation to develop R&D activities

Innovation

- Businesses must be able to identify opportunities for R&D projects and develop new scientific and technical knowledge resulting in development and commercialisation of innovative products, processes and services.

Challenge

- Challenges the practices of the business/organisation partner and the market(s) it operates within
- Must be stimulating and challenging for the academic team allowing them to translate research into commercial capability. Results in significant development of the Research Organisations commercially relevant case study material, and has the potential to demonstrate impact to boost its research and teaching programmes
- Intellectually challenging for the associate which provides a clear career opportunity for them.

Cohesiveness

- A company with a strategic ambition to grow but unable to achieve this due to internal lack of knowledge
- A Knowledge Base with the appropriate knowledge
- An Associate with appropriate knowledge and qualifications to work on the project to develop new R&D knowledge and skills and transfer to existing company staff members, thus embedding the new capabilities company-wide.
- A realistic project plan that demonstrates how the knowledge will be transferred with specific outputs and thought given to embed ongoing capability once the project has come to an end that can be seen to link to the business case.

Application Guidelines

The full application guidelines are available to view on the Expertise Wales website <https://businesswales.gov.wales/expertisewales/> in the Support and Funding section of the site and from your Research Development Manager.