



Collaborative Covid-19 R&D Grant – Cotton Mouton Diagnostics Ltd

Welsh Government innovation funding enables Cardiff based diagnostics company to develop a rapid viral antigen test.



The new battery-powered, portable instrument developed by CMD.

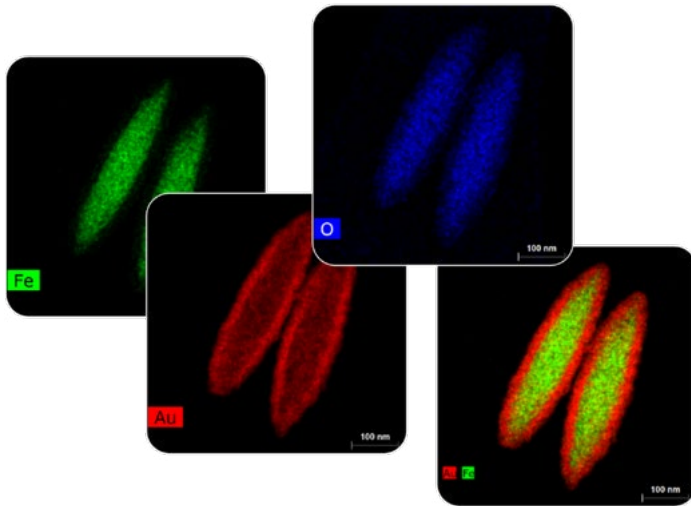
Welsh Government's Collaborative Covid-19 R&D Grant offered financial support for businesses looking to work together to drive forward new technological advances in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This support helps to increase the capacity and capabilities of Welsh businesses to develop and commercialise a product or technology by facilitating collaboration on a specific project.

A Cardiff-based company, Cotton Mouton Diagnostics (CMD), is one such success story having developed a portable version of their diagnostic platform along with a Covid-19 test following a funded collaboration with design consultancy One-Nine Design.

CMD have been working with the Welsh Government Innovation team since 2014, but in direct response to the pandemic they received a collaborative Covid-19 R&D Grant

of up to £130,000 for the project entitled Rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2 Antigen at point-of-care using an easily portable analyser.

This project has enabled them to accelerate the development of the SARS-CoV-2 test, along with a portable instrument that allows the detection of coronavirus antigens, providing rapid, real time results of infection status. While CMD had already developed a laboratory-based instrument, the pandemic highlighted the critical need for a rapid point-of-care diagnostic that is able to test for active infection outside of central laboratory settings. The funding from the Welsh Government Innovation programme enabled CMD to fashion the test into a battery powered portable device that can detect coronavirus antigens in a person's saliva in less than ten minutes.



CMD's technology is based on a magneto-optical sensing system, which uses tiny magnetic rods to interrogate samples for markers of interest.

While the prototype is still in the testing and clinical validation phases, the company are hoping that in the next year the system will be deployed in multiple sectors, from airports and hotels to community pharmacies, mobile testing centres and large-scale events, taking the pressure off centralised lab systems and NHS services.

When the pandemic hit, CMD had to close their site for three months and furlough their staff due to the uncertainty for the business. Speaking about how the Covid-19 R&D Grant benefited the company, Co-Founder Dr Jenna Bowen said: "The financial support we received from the Welsh Government grant kick-started the development of the SARS-CoV-2 test and allowed us to bring people back into the lab with a focused project to work on, which provided some much-needed security."

"The funding has been hugely valuable to the growth of the business, not only did it secure jobs within the company but more recently we've started recruiting more people. The new skills and expertise being bought into the business will have long lasting benefits beyond just the immediate SARS-CoV-2 project."

Dr Jenna Bowen, Co-Founder and Senior Executive Officer, Cotton Mouton Diagnostics Ltd

In addition to the project allowing CMD to expand their workforce and offering as a business, the development of the SARS-CoV-2 test is another marker of Wales' strong life science sector, in line with the Government's Economic Action Plan that seeks to back growth businesses of the future and the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which aims to create a more prosperous Wales.

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Prosperity for All: economic action plan is the Welsh Government's national strategy. Find out more about the funding and support available from the Welsh Government:

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