From initial idea to implementation of the final product, SMARTInnovation can help you drive your business success.
SMARTInnovation – An Integrated Programme of Support

Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas. It enables businesses to compete in a constantly changing world either by developing completely new products and processes and successfully bringing them to market, or by making changes to improve existing products and processes.

Innovation can happen in any sector and in any size of business. It is at the heart of successful businesses making them more productive, more efficient and more competitive.

Welsh Government’s SMARTInnovation programme provides support to businesses in Wales. It is designed to deliver on the priorities in our strategy Innovation Wales, and the European Union’s emphasis on regional specialisation and clustering, laid out in its Horizon 2020 programme.

Advice and specialist support is available to help businesses take their first steps into innovation and R&D. We are able to support SMEs, as well as larger businesses.

Support is available at all stages of the innovation process and, as innovation rarely follows a step-by-step linear sequence, starts at whatever point is most appropriate for your business and continues for as long as you require us to be involved.

SMARTInnovation can help your business to:

- Access funding for business innovation
- Create and commercialise new products and processes
- Increase efficiency in manufacturing through technology and process improvement
- Introduce design for new product development and manufacture
- Identify, protect and exploit your intellectual property (IP).
Building a Bright Future
LML – Laser Micromachining Ltd

Created as a joint-venture company with Bangor University, Laser Micromachining Ltd (LML) in North Wales specialises in providing total solutions for businesses in the development and manufacture of new generations of miniaturised products. This requires it to develop cutting-edge laser machines and processes to cut, drill and machine materials for ultra-small components.

Over the years, the Welsh Government has provided specialist, personalised advice through its innovation programmes, and helped access funding when it was looking to make key strategic investments. These include step-phased financial inputs into the design and development of a new micro-drilling process, followed by a new set of laser machining processes, both derived from innovation funding. Now LML offers a state-of-the-art laser machining facility which is unique to Wales.
SMARTInnovation’s local network of Innovation Specialists can help your business become more innovative. This team of highly experienced specialists has solid and proven industrial experience in Innovation, Design, Manufacturing and Intellectual Property to help your business through the various stages of innovation.

Their impartial advice, guidance and support can help you to create new products and processes. They work with you to identify opportunities for innovation, monitor progress and provide ongoing assistance as you commercialise your ideas.

They can also provide that critical link to universities and other institutions to enable you to invest in R&D opportunities, explore collaboration and commercialise ideas.

**Funding For Innovation**

The Innovation Specialists can help you to access innovation funding as well as other UK and European support.

Innovation funding is available to part fund innovation activity and for all phases of a research and development project. Our Innovation Vouchers enable your business to:

- Procure technical consultancy expertise from the private sector
- Implement new product development or improvements in manufacturing and design
- Collaborate with Universities and Colleges to help solve your technical problems
- Access expert services for Intellectual Property registration
- Help fund capital equipment that supports a technology ‘step-change’ for the business.

Through the research and development funding we can help your company with:

- Technical and Commercial Feasibility – to check the viability of transforming innovative ideas into new products or processes.
- Industrial Research – to undertake practical research to gain new knowledge and develop a basic working model of a new product or process.
- Experimental Development – to implement the results of industrial research and develop a pre-production prototype.
- Exploitation – to assist you with the costs of launching a new product or process on the market.
Cardiff-based Alchemy Expo, a leading pioneer in corporate exhibition display solutions, is set to expand its services worldwide.

As the conference and exhibition display industry becomes more interactive and diverse, Alchemy Expo saw the need to provide a complete solution encompassing both traditional and cutting-edge visual displays. It is now Europe’s largest supplier of a revolutionary interactive display technology. Bespoke stands are created using digital tiles projecting moving images, static designs and interactive, touch-screen displays.

Funding from the Welsh Government enabled a significant investment that has taken Alchemy Expo to the forefront of digital display technology services across Europe.
Design

Design is an integral part of the innovation process. Designing attractive products that really communicate their fitness for purpose can give your business a strong competitive edge. Fundamental soundness of design at an engineering level also helps to solve manufacturing problems, reduce production costs and time and simultaneously builds the reputation of your business and its brands.

SMARTInnovation provides support to help you introduce better design at all stages of product development for both new and existing products. The Innovation Specialists together with experienced and qualified design advisers provide practical advice and guidance to help you maximise design quality and sharpen your competitive edge.

Support covers:
- Existing product ranges and markets
- Design processes and design skills
- Equipment and software
- Eco Design
- Materials selection
- Design for packaging
- Design for manufacture
- Legislative led design

Manufacture

As the face of manufacturing changes and global competition increases, innovation in products, processes and technology is essential. Manufacturers are constantly looking to increase their competitiveness by improving efficiency, raising productivity and developing new ideas.

The Innovation Specialists together with specialist manufacturing advisers have hands-on experience of today’s manufacturing processes and can provide practical help, advice and guidance to ensure your business’s growth ambitions align with your capabilities. They can help you procure expertise from private sector consultancy or Universities and Colleges, as well as provide financial support through Innovation Vouchers.

Support covers:
- Lean manufacturing
- Productivity and on-time delivery
- Value stream mapping
- Operations management
- Equipment effectiveness
- Improved space utilisation
- Scrap defect reduction
- Lead time reduction
- Identification of new equipment to help transform operational effectiveness
Getting to Market Faster
Splice-Cast Limited

Splice-Cast Ltd. in Powys, designs and manufactures plastic injection moulded products with a focus on the medical device industry, offering customers a complete service from product development and tooling to high quality manufacturing and production. Established in 2000, Splice-Cast Ltd. combines 28 years of experience and insight into precision plastic injection moulding with successful research and development at its facility in Newtown. Recent growth highlighted an opportunity to increase its product offering and gain access to a larger market share of the medical consumables industry.

In support of this development, the Welsh Government has provided successive tranches of innovation funding, as well as access to industry advice, support and marketing of the products. This has enabled Splice-Cast Ltd. to expand and bring the products to market faster, as a result gaining commercial interest from several international medical consumable companies through the offer of its own patented range of medical devices, Ultraspec®.
New Product Development (NPD)

New products are the lifeblood of successful businesses. Yet with resources stretched to cover immediate business and concern over the technical and commercial risks associated with new product development, many businesses are deterred from longer-term R&D.

SMARTInnovation can help your business to overcome these obstacles. With extensive ‘hands-on’ industry experience, we provide impartial advice and guidance on new product development, greatly enhancing your chances of success and saving you time and money.

Support includes:

- Helping your business adopt a structured approach to innovation and R&D
- Facilitating collaboration with other businesses or academics
- Assisting you to address Intellectual Property issues related to NPD
- Guiding you towards appropriate funding
- Consideration of the most appropriate routes to market, with introductions to potential funders.

Intellectual Property (IP)

Every business owns some form of IP, whether it is the artistic design, the technology or the branding of your product or process. Too few businesses know how to protect these intellectual assets and fail to exploit the value they represent.

We can help you improve your knowledge of IP, ensure you identify and protect your IP and harness its contribution to your business success.

Support includes:

- Basic IP information and access to books, leaflets and online training modules from third parties
- Help searching patent and other IP databases
- Answers on basic queries regarding patents, trademarks, copyright, design and licensing
- Help in formulating an IP strategy
- Funding towards patent filing and trademark applications or the costs of formulating licence agreements.
Breaking Through Innovation Barriers
General Dynamics EDGE®

The Welsh Government’s approach to Open Innovation enables small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to contribute expertise and ideas, access new markets and truly punch above their weight.

One business that recognises the value of SMEs in the innovation challenge is General Dynamics UK. A research and development partnership between the Welsh Government and General Dynamics UK aims to increase the commercialisation of R&D combining the expertise of General Dynamics UK, Welsh universities and small and medium-sized businesses.

At their Oakdale facility in South Wales, the company has created EDGE UK®, a state-of-the-art environment where SMEs can use facilities, expertise and contacts to help them develop their potential. Projects are undertaken in a fully collaborative manner resulting in a win-win situation for General Dynamics UK, the SMEs and customers.
Commercialisation and Open Innovation

Commercialising new products and processes and actually getting them to market is a vital part of the innovation journey. The options and opportunities are expanding as larger companies increasingly engage in Open Innovation, looking outside their organisations for new ideas to exploit. Considering your route to market at an early stage of an innovation project can enhance your prospects for success.

SMARTInnovation can support businesses at this crucial stage by providing market intelligence, showcasing opportunities, making commercial and investment connections, and enabling and supporting collaboration on research and development projects.

The Innovation team links businesses – both large and small – with investors and others to explore opportunities for commercially-focused projects.

We work with businesses that are developing new products, technologies and processes. They are provided with up-to-the-minute market intelligence to help them develop new products which better meet the needs of the market.

Businesses are connected with investors, potential customers and commercial partners, introducing them to a range of exciting and innovative products, technologies and processes being developed in Wales.
From initial idea to implementation of the final product, SMARTInnovation can help you drive your business success. The Innovation Specialists can identify how your business can become more innovative. As well as access to funding for business innovation, advice and support are available to help you:

- Create and commercialise new products and processes
- Increase efficiency in manufacturing through technology and process improvement
- Introduce design for new product development and manufacture
- Identify, protect and exploit your intellectual property.

To discuss your innovation needs and find out how your business can benefit from this support please call Business Wales on 03000 6 03000 or visit business.wales.gov.uk

The advice we offer is available to businesses in Wales and eligibility criteria will apply. Support and advice is also available on Equality and Diversity and Environmental Sustainability.