



E-NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017



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RET update

Welcome to our new-look newsletter! You should be able to navigate using the links in the contents box on the right. Please let us know if you have any feedback on the format.

We are also developing our brand new website; the address is at the bottom of the page. It's not yet 'live' but we hope that it will be by the end of the summer. Keep an eye on our twitter account for updates on it, and please follow us for more regional news relating to European funding: [@SEWalesRET](https://twitter.com/SEWalesRET).

Over the last quarter the RET team has been busy supporting WEFO in raising awareness of the funding opportunities that have been open to the region. There have been several calls for proposals in both the ESF and ERDF programmes for West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales. The last calls closed on 30th June. Thank you all for your help in disseminating the information and for engaging with the project development process.

In May we hosted an information event for ESF lead beneficiaries at the Future Inns in Cardiff. Presentations included:

- an update on the City Deal from Richard Crook, skills lead on the Cardiff Capital Region(CCR) Programme Board;
- best practice in procurement;
- top tips for promotion of EU funded projects; and
- guidance on the audit and verification process.

If you'd like a copy of the slides from any of the presentations please contact us. Another event will be held before the end of the year.

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EU transition update

As formal negotiations get underway between UK representatives and their counterparts in the EU there is, an even greater focus on “Brexit” and the possible implications for Wales.

On 15 June the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, launched the policy paper “Brexit and Devolution”.



The paper sets out the Welsh Government’s expectation that powers already devolved to Wales will remain devolved after EU withdrawal unless the UK government specifically legislates to change the

devolution settlement. It follows the White Paper, Securing Wales Future, launched in January, setting out Wales’ priorities for the EU negotiations, including the need to secure the best outcome for Wales in terms of funding to replace EU funds.

The First Minister said: “We further believe that leaving the EU creates the need for a new dynamic among the four governments within the UK. It seems clear that there is much we should do together if we are to move forward coherently in our new circumstances. We propose, and describe in outline, the establishment of a UK Council of Ministers as a way of developing a common future agenda rooted in democratic principles. The aim is to respect all, and threaten none. In this context, the policy document is intended as a constructive contribution to the discussions that are needed to develop a strengthened constitutional framework within the UK, which has devolution at its heart.”

The documents can be found online at www.gov.wales/brexit along with a recording of the First Minister’s speech.

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Valleys Taskforce

Over the past six months the Valleys Taskforce has been meeting, speaking and listening to the people of the South Wales Valleys. We’ve spoken to circa 600 individuals face to face, received over 1,000 responses to the online survey, had 2.2 million Twitter impressions with a reach of 495,000 and established a database to keep those we’ve engaged with informed of the #TalkValleys journey.

The taskforce members experienced how strong the valley communities are, with talent and vision. All the information, comments and ideas are now being analysed and discussed to develop a plan for the Valleys that will be launched soon. Once the plan is finalised the team are really keen to work with communities and

partners to develop and deliver the plan.

If you want to #TalkValleys then find out more on our [webpages](#). You can also find us on Facebook at “Talk Valleys” and Twitter [@WG Communities](#). Alternatively contact us by email at talkvalleys@wales.gsi.gov.uk and subscribe to our newsletter.



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Investment in tourism

As temperatures rise in Wales and the tourism sector responds to the increase in visitor numbers we take a quick look at the ERDF funded Tourism Attractor Destinations scheme and one of the projects within it for the South East Region – The Summit Centre, formerly the Welsh International Climbing Centre, in Nelson, Merthyr Tydfil.

Work started on the new development in March this year thanks in part to £2.3m from EU Funds via Tourism Attractor Destinations. It will create exciting additions to the complex including an outdoor education and residential centre with 100 beds, new gym, outdoor play area, café and meeting rooms.

Rock UK CEO John Heasman has said: “The

local community is at the heart of our vision and the new facilities will complement the existing stunning indoor climbing centre and be available for all to enjoy, transforming young lives in Wales.”

The attraction is expected to be fully open in spring 2018, bringing with it new jobs and more visitors for the area.



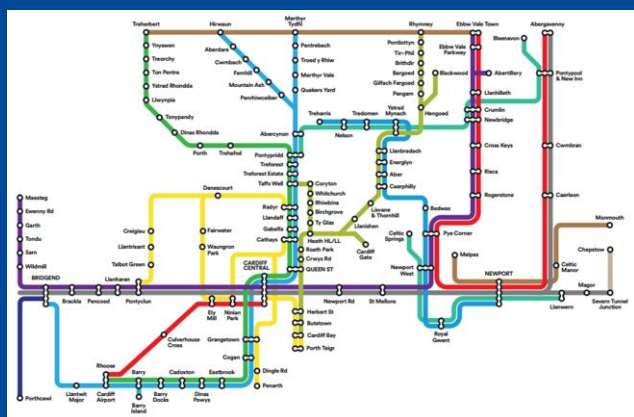
For more information contact Thelma.Jones-Terry@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Moving the Metro forwards

Details are emerging on the plans for the region's new Metro and EU funding will play an important part in realising the scheme.

Transport for Wales (TfW), on behalf of the Welsh Government, is currently procuring an Operator and Development Partner (ODP) to develop and deliver improvements for the Core Valley Lines as well as the wider Wales and Borders Rail service.



We don't know exactly what 'Metro Phase 2' will look like yet as this will depend on which of the four bidders succeeds in winning the

contract but each one has plans to significantly improve transport in south east Wales, providing faster, more frequent and greener services.

Working to a tighter timescale, because of the EU referendum result, the team at TfW are developing an ERDF bid based on vital elements of infrastructure that each of the four bidders will need. This is a Major Project: Welsh Government, WEFO and TfW have been discussing the plans with the EU Commission's appointed advisors with a view to submitting the bid before the end of the year.

If all goes to plan, the ODP for the Metro will be announced in January 2018.

As well as benefiting passengers, it is hoped that the Metro will create opportunities for businesses both in the Valleys and Cardiff. It will undoubtedly bring environmental benefits and help address increasing congestion, help people access work and services and should also stimulate regeneration.

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Cardiff Capital Region first funding commitment

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Regional Cabinet has agreed to invest £37.9m towards the development of a Compound Semiconductor industry cluster in SE Wales.

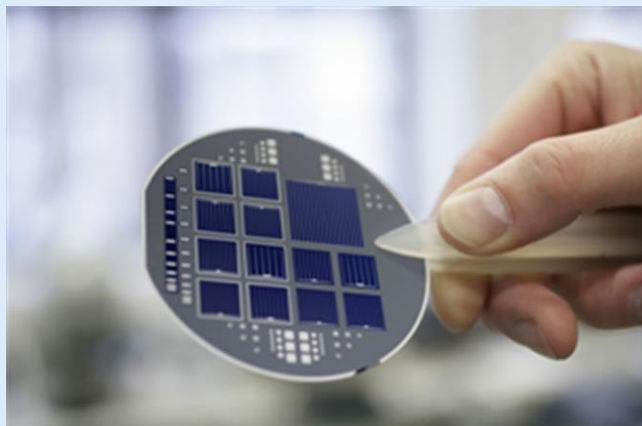
The funding is being made from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal's Wider Investment Fund – and is the first such investment since the £1.2 billion programme was formally signed by the leaders of the ten local authorities in the region on 1 March 2017.

The project is expected to leverage up to £375 million of private sector investment over the next five years, and the creation of up to 2,000 high value, high-tech jobs, with the potential for hundreds more in the wider supply chain and cluster development.

A state-of-the art facility will be constructed in the CCR to house Compound Semiconductor applications development and high volume Compound Semiconductor manufacturing, greatly helping the establishment of the world's first Compound Semiconductor Cluster in the region. Discussions to agree the location of the site are on-going, but Newport is the likely location.

In 2016, Innovate UK – the UK Government's innovation agency – announced it will invest £50m to establish a new Compound Semiconductor Catapult Centre of Excellence in Wales which will now locate in the CCR.

This new Catapult will build on existing investment by Cardiff University, IQE plc, and Welsh Government.



First Minister Carwyn Jones welcomed the deal, saying: "I am delighted our £12m investment has kick-started the creation of the world's first compound semiconductor industry cluster in Newport. This major investment puts Wales at the cutting edge of this exciting technology, which has the ability to change the way we live. As well as boosting Wales' global reputation as a leader in this field, the new site in Newport will form part of Wales' growing hi-tech sector, which is expected to create more than 2,000 well paid, highly skilled jobs. Today's announcement is great news for Wales – and the first of many new exciting projects set to make a real difference to the economy of South East Wales and, ultimately, to people's lives."

For more information visit <http://www.cardiffcapitalregioncitydeal.wales>

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Horizon 2020

The Welsh Government's (WG) 2016 annual Horizon 2020 report is out now. The report sets out the performance of Welsh organisations in accessing Horizon 2020. It examines the progress made on the WG key objectives for the fund up to the end of 2016 and looks forward to upcoming activities. The report can be found [here](#).



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Changes to Active Inclusion Fund



There have been some recent changes to the WCVA's Active Inclusion Fund. Over the past few months WCVA have been busy planning and implementing some changes and improvements to their Active Inclusion Fund. The fund, which is supported by the European Social Fund through Welsh Government, is there to provide funding to organisations that can support people to move closer to the employment market, with the overarching aim of reducing economic inactivity in Wales. However, for the organisations running these projects, it is about so much more than reducing economic inactivity.

It's about making a true difference to people's lives, it's about helping them to realise their potential, it's about bringing hope to people who might otherwise have given up, and it's about instilling confidence and giving people a chance - sometimes even a second chance. [The inspirational story of Helen, Nick, Franco and Amanda whose lives have drastically changed thanks to the intervention and support of the Active Inclusion funded Bounce Back project is testament of this.](#)



The team at WCVA have found that some organisations can find it frustrating at times running a European funded project and cited issues such as rigorous reporting protocols and strict eligibility requirements. Through these difficulties it is important not to lose sight of the real purpose of running these types of projects – and that is to support people in improving their lives and wellbeing. So, WCVA have addressed some of these issues to ensure organisations continue to deliver great projects and ultimately make a difference to hundreds of people's lives in Wales.

What are the changes to the Active Inclusion Fund? Well, to highlight but a few:

- They now offer larger scale projects across multiple counties, even up to a national scale.
- You can apply to work in broader areas as grant rounds are less restrictive and changes mean there are easier participant reporting requirements for projects.
- You can now run a project which combines of engagement activities and work towards qualifications. This could also be for both young people and those over 25 and across East Wales and West Wales and the Valleys.
- Third sector projects across East Wales now benefit from a higher intervention rate.

So if you are a third sector organisation and have shied away from European funding in the past, please consider this new and improved opportunity whilst it is still available.

You can read more about the Active Inclusion Fund and how to apply on their new [webpages on the WCVA website](#).

Alternatively, you can Email the team at activeinclusion@wcva.org.uk or call the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329.

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Europe Day 2017

The 9th May was Europe Day and saw European funded operations across the south East region celebrating, and tweeting their support. Here are just a few of the photos that they shared!



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Upcoming events

- 4 July – ESF Priority 3 network meeting
- 7 September – ESF Priority 1 network meeting
- 19 September – ESF Priority 2 network meeting
- 21 September – LSKIP Skills Summit

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