



E-NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018



RET update

The team hit the ground running in 2018, with so much happening across the region to support current delivery, encourage new projects to come forward and consult on what the future might hold.

We started the New Year with the consultation events for the Future of Regional Funding post-brexit that were arranged by WEFO. It was interesting to compare the responses of the different workshop groups covered by the team and also to participate in the WCVA event for the 3rd Sector. We'll be looking forward to the results of the consultation and for more information take a look at WEFOs update [here](#).

Event planning was next on the agenda for us. The first of these events will be taking place just as this e-Newsletter is being distributed. The ESF and Employability event is aimed at all ESF regional and backbone projects as well as Active Inclusion Fund projects that are delivering in the South East. The event will bring everyone together to explore the best ways for projects to collaborate, ensuring the needs of the people accessing support are put first; we'll report on the outcomes in the next edition. We're also facilitating a workshop to help ESF projects consider and get ready for the new data protection rules right at the end of March. 2 other events are in planning and dates can be found in our Upcoming Events section.

With regards to new projects, the recent call from WEFO for Research and Innovation projects has seen the team supporting our WEFO colleagues by engaging with potential project leads and encouraging private sector participation and awareness of the call.

We've also been supporting our Cardiff Capital Region colleagues, feeding into the development of the CCR Employability Plan, reporting on stakeholder engagement and of course continuing with our regional ESF networks and strategic proofing panels.

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Updated WEFO guidance

The Eligibility Rules & Conditions for Support from the European Structural Funds 2014-2020 guidance has been updated, and

version 3.0 is now available on the [WEFO website](#). This amended guidance is not adding any further requirements but only seeking to provide more clarification.

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Valleys Taskforce

In his role as Chair of the Valleys Taskforce the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services will visit three areas across the valleys to discuss his proposals for a "Valleys Landscape Park" with



community stakeholders. The aims for the proposal are to invest in the Valleys' natural and cultural assets, empower local communities, offer outstanding and accessible recreational opportunities, engender community pride in the Valleys and enhance Valleys town centres as vibrant

places, with attractive green spaces, which support local economies.

By implementing the actions set out in the plan the Valleys will become a place where communities are empowered, and the local environment is easily accessible, widely used and at the heart of Valleys life.

These events will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to shape the proposal for the Valleys Landscape Park and to influence decisions around statement sites across the Valleys and local community projects with potential for development.

The dates and venues for the events are included below:

16 April, Dare Valley Country Park, 17:30 – 19:30

26 April, Bedwellty House & Park, 17:30 – 19:30

30 April, Pontardawe Arts Centre, 17:30 – 19:30

If you are interested in attending one of these events please contact the Valleys Taskforce Team at TalkValleys@gov.wales and they will issue an official invitation.

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Employability plan

On 20th March the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning launched the Employability Plan at IKEA Cardiff.

The plan aims to tackle unemployment and economic inactivity and sets out how the Welsh Government will support people to build the skills and confidence to find and stay in work and to ensure employers can find the workforce they require for their businesses to flourish.

The plan identifies four key areas:

- An individualised approach to employability support
- Responsibility of employers to up-skill and support their staff
- Responding to current and projected skills gaps
- Preparing for a radical shift in the world of work

You can view the plan [here](#).

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Brexit and future regional policy

Public engagement events led by the Welsh Government have taken place in North Wales (attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs) and South Wales (attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance) during January to gain stakeholder feedback on ideas and proposals following the launch of the policy

paper on [Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit](#) on 14 December.

The policy paper and the engagement events marked the beginning of a process of engagement and partnership working to develop a consensus on a 'made-in-Wales' approach to regional investment, building on the EU legacy.

We look forward to seeing more information on the results of the consultation in due course.

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Territorial co-operation programmes

The **Atlantic Area Programme** yesterday launched their second call for project proposals. The call will be open until the 1st June with €43m available across the programme's priorities of innovation, resource efficiency, territorial resilience, and enhancing biodiversity, natural and cultural assets. This is an excellent opportunity for Welsh stakeholders from every sector to become involved in a transnational programme, building a project with experts from across the Atlantic Area to meet common challenges.

If you have a project idea, please get in touch with the UK Contact Point [Guillaume Le-Palud](#) who will be able to help develop your idea, discuss the programme and help with your search for partners.

WEFO will also be arranging workshops for Welsh stakeholders on the call – this will be an opportunity to both learn about the programme and also have 1-2-1 meetings with Guillaume to develop your ideas. There will be one event in Swansea and another in

Liverpool/Manchester during the week commencing 9th April. Further details will be announced soon (follow [@wefowales](#) / [@wefocymru](#)) – if you'd like more information and to be added to our mailing list please contact [Territorial Co-operation Unit](#).

You can find more information on the Atlantic Area programme [website](#).

The **North West Europe Programme** will open their next call for project proposals on the 26th March, closing the 26th April. The call will be open across each of the programme's priorities of innovation, low carbon and resource & materials efficiency. The programme also has a €50m targeted call open for renewable energy projects, closing 31st July.

If you have a project idea or would like to discuss the programme further, please get in touch with the UK Contact Points [Emily Shephard](#) and [Filippo Compagni](#), who will also be able to develop your idea and search for partners.

You can also find more information on the North West Europe [website](#).

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Cardiff Capital Region is driving the City Deal forward

It has been a strong start to the year for the Cardiff Capital Region, with several key developments in the implementation of its City Deal programme.

A strategic business plan has been formally agreed by the Regional Cabinet, made up of the political leaders of all ten local authorities involved. The document, [available online](#), outlines what is needed to achieve the long-term objectives of the City Deal, and details how the £1.2bn 'Wider Investment Fund' will be used over the next five years to drive the actions forward.

The overarching economic objectives of the City Deal are to create 25,000 new jobs and leverage £4billion in private sector investment, and key objectives specified are Prosperity and Opportunity; Inclusion and Equality; and Identity, Culture, Community and Sustainability.

Since January, three development programmes supporting strategic themes of housing, skills, and digital connectivity within the region have already been agreed to drive the City Deal forward: the 'Regional Housing Investment Fund', the 'Skills for the Future Project', and the 'Digital Strategy'. In the Regional Cabinet also agreed in principle to invest £40m in a proposed £180m transport hub at Cardiff Central Station.

The creation of key supporting bodies to the Cabinet has also been completed, with board members appointed to the Economic Growth Partnership (EGP) and for the Business Council.



The EGP, which is chaired by founder partner at Gambit Corporate Finance, Frank Holmes, consists of 13 representatives from businesses, higher education, social enterprise, employment and local government. It will directly advise the Regional Cabinet and is responsible for reviewing the Cardiff Capital Region's economic strategy, making recommendations on how the City Deal is implemented, and advise on investment decisions. It will also have an advocacy role, promoting the region as a prime investment opportunity and visitor location.

The Business Council, which is chaired by Neil Brierley, Operations Director for Wales and South West at Faithful+Gould, is responsible for engaging with all businesses and articulating their needs, providing a strong voice for business to guide both the design and delivery of significant economic development and regeneration activities across the South-East Wales region. Members were drawn from across the entire region and encompass a broad range of business backgrounds and sectors, including representatives from the FSB, IoD, CBI, and South Wales Chamber of Commerce.

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Upcoming events

- Valleys Landscape Park consultation events - 16th, 26th and 30th April (see above)
- ERDF Priority 2 SME competitiveness workshop – 18th April
- ESF information event – 3 May
- Europe Day – 9 May

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Funding opportunity

Rural Business Investment Scheme - Food expression of interest (EOI) window opened on 6 March.

The [Rural Business Investment Scheme - Food](#) (RBISF) is a capital investments scheme to support projects that offer clear and quantifiable benefits to the food and drink industry in Wales. The scheme is open to existing and start up micro & small food

and drink processors and manufacturers throughout Wales.

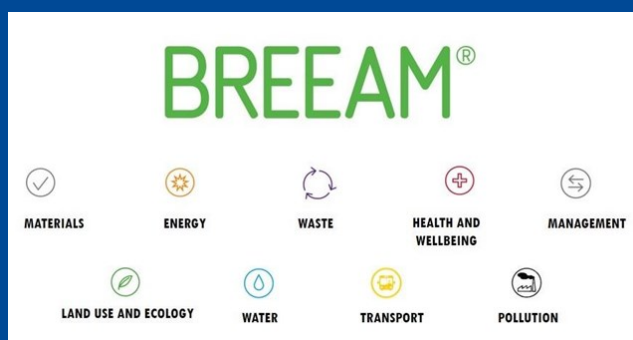
This is a capital investment scheme for food and drink processing or manufacturing activities currently not eligible under the Food Business Investment Scheme.

The maximum grant for an individual investment project is 40% of the total eligible cost with a maximum of £50,000 for any individual investment project.

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BREEAM is changing

This is a message to all those with European funded operations in their portfolios which might require specialist advice on BREEAM Welsh Government requirements. The Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs recently considered and approved changes to BREEAM that took effect from **30th November 2017**.



What is BREEAM?

The Welsh Government is one of only a few Governments in the world to have a legal duty with regard to sustainable development. For non-domestic buildings, the **Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method** “BREEAM” (or equivalent quality assured scheme), is widely used and understood by the construction industry to encourage the design and construction of sustainable buildings. To do this all new buildings promoted or supported must meet minimum sustainable building

standards.

What types of buildings will be required to meet these standards?

Development type	Covered by the policy
New Build Residential	✓
New Build Non-domestic	✓
Change of Use	X
Extensions	X
Refurbishment	X

What does this mean for European Funded Projects?

- Any planning approval in operations obtained **after** 30th November needs to take into consideration this new guidance.
- Any operation which has obtained planning approval **prior** to 30th November needs to use the old BREEAM guidance.

More information is provided by the Welsh Government in the form of statutory guidance which includes information on policy requirements and exceptions. This guidance will be made available as part of the WEFO Cross Cutting Themes guidance from January 2018 and can be found [here](#).

If you require further information contact [WEFO Cross Cutting Themes](#).

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Caerau heat scheme

£6.5m awarded for UK's first large scale mine-water energy project in Caerau

A multi-million-pound initiative to catapult Caerau, near Maesteg, to the cutting edge of the UK's green energy revolution by using water that has filled underground mine workings as a geothermal source of energy has been awarded £6.5m EU funds.

As the underground water in the former Caerau colliery has been naturally heated by the earth, Bridgend County Borough Council is investigating how the heat could be extracted using heat pump technology and a network of pipes to warm around 150 nearby homes.

It will be the first ever large scale mine-water energy scheme to be created in the UK.



Announcing the funding, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said: "Our ambition is for our nation to be a world leader in pioneering low carbon energy. This is a cutting edge model of generating a clean source of renewable energy drawing on the legacy of our coal mining heritage. It will not only attract further investment to the area, but also addresses fuel poverty by cutting energy bills with the potential to be rolled out to Wales and beyond. The scheme will also create jobs both within the initial construction

period and the ongoing supply chain as well as offering training and educational opportunities. This is another of many examples of the positive impact EU Funds are having on our region."

While the initial heat network will involve 150 properties as well as the nearby school and church, there is potential for the scheme to eventually warm up to a thousand local homes.



An exhibition is planned for summer 2018 when findings from the feasibility study will be shared with Caerau residents and anyone else who is interested in the project. Construction work will begin in 2020 with the first homes being connected to the system in winter 2021.

The scheme is a demonstrator project for the UK Government led Smart System and Heat Programme. The total project cost is estimated at approximately £9.4m with a large number of stakeholders including the Welsh Government, UK Government, Wales European Funding Office, Cardiff University, BGS, Kensa, Egnida, SPECIFIC, Carreg Las, Energy Systems Catapult, Natural Resources Wales and The Coal Authority.

For further information, please contact [Ceri Williams](#) or [Michael Jenkins](#) in Bridgend County Borough Council's Sustainable Development Team on 01656 643133.

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ERDF capital investment in our communities

The ERDF Building for the Future programme of investment in town centres was officially launched in Pontypridd on Friday 9th March by Rebecca Evans AM, Cabinet Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

Building for the Future is a pan-Wales project that will assist in the regeneration of town centres by acquiring derelict, under-used land or buildings and redeveloping them to create jobs and growth and enhance the skills set in the area. The aim is that the £110 million programme, of which £38 million will come from the European Regional Development Fund will support business growth, create employment and increase footfall in town centres.



The development in Pontypridd is the first project in the programme to get underway. After being left derelict for a number of years, £7m of EU grant will, as part of a wider funding package, transform the former Taff Vale Shopping Centre in Pontypridd. Instead there will be three new separate buildings housing space for offices and community such as a library and gym. Visiting the site Rebecca Evans said "... Building for the Future will re-energise our town centres and create some bright

opportunities for people and businesses up and down the country. It's great to see this work is already underway in Pontypridd."



Another of the projects within the Building for the Future portfolio is the site of the former Miners' Hospital in Caerphilly and at the tail end of last year this was successful in accessing £713k. Despite the historic building being saved from demolition when the hospital closed, funds are still needed to complete its transformation. It's already being used as a community centre and has around 1500 visitors a month. In a further boost to the profile of the Caerphilly Miners' Centre, as it is now known, HRH Prince Charles paid a visit during his stay in Wales in December. He was met by cheering schoolchildren at the entrance and took a tour of the building with volunteers who are fundraising to help transform the old hospital building. The project manager has kindly provided us with an additional piece on the visit, see below.

ERDF is also supporting the development of new employment sites that will help drive forward economic growth across the Cardiff Capital Region. Funding has now been secured for developments at Ty Du, the Lawns in Caerphilly and Robertstown in Aberdare, helping the region respond to demand for the expansion of industrial and business facilities that offer easy access to local facilities and transport links.

VIP visits to Caerphilly Miners

“Caerphilly Miners is a group of local residents with a common aim of restoring the old Caerphilly Miners’ hospital for the benefit of our community. We are working to breathe new life into the building by delivering services to support well-being and learning.

Our centre opened in 2015. With a team of 60 volunteers and 9 key holders, we currently deliver over 100 hours of activity to over 300 visitors a week. The centre offers literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, language, arts, crafts, and quilting classes, work ready training, Tai chi, yoga and dance. Volunteers organise play activities for babies, crafts for children, meetings of our school ambassadors and youth forum, Elderberries’ social activities, an afternoon cinema club, chair exercises, a choir, musical events, gardening workshops, craft sales and a community cafe. We have run out of space for everything our community needs and our volunteers can offer, which is the basis of our application to regenerate the top two floors of

our building and create a new car park.

A volunteer, who works closely with the Prince of Wales’ Cardiff office, arranged for us to invite The Prince of Wales to visit us. We filled the building 96 people undertaking chair exercises, stay and play, youth forum, crafts, and art classes and we showed HRH the work we hope to do on the building upstairs. He spoke to everyone in the building from 18 months to 89 years, said that this was an excellent and worthwhile project with great potential, and agreed to return to open the whole building if he was still alive! What an amazing day!

We have since enjoyed a visit from Alun Davies, AM Cabinet Minister for Local Government and Public Services in February, which was also enjoyable. We were able to explain how we can contribute to Our Valleys Our Future as well as delivering the Community Facilities Programme key themes.”

Katherine Hughes, Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community



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