

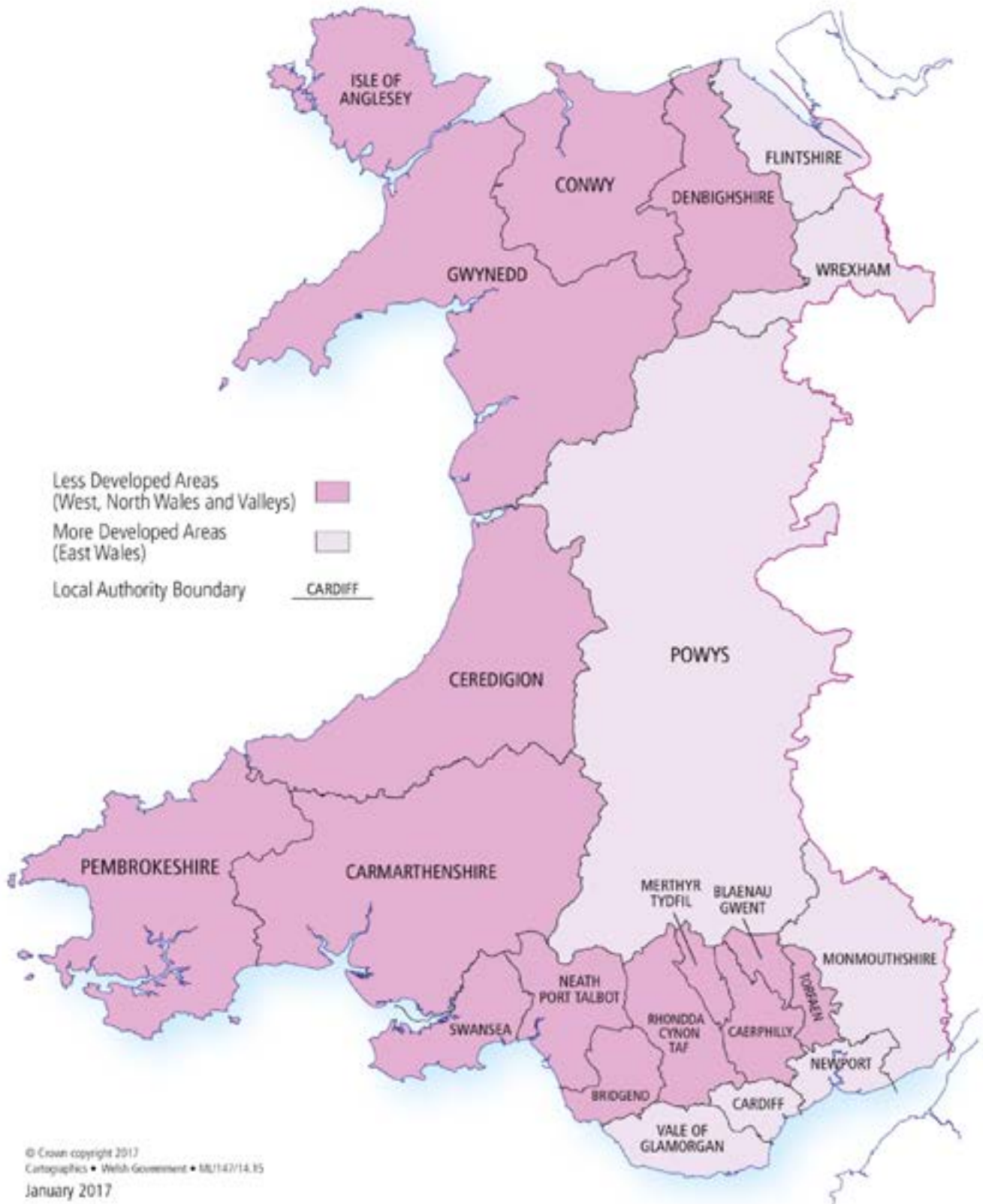


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

West Wales and the Valleys European Regional Development Fund Programme 2014-2020 2019 Annual Implementation Report Summary



European Structural Fund Programme Regions in Wales for 2014-2020



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Introduction

Wales is benefiting from over €2bn of EU funds through four Structural Funds programmes covering the 2014–2020 period.

As part of this, just over €1bn has been allocated to less developed areas through the West Wales and Valleys European Regional Development Fund programme, which aims to drive economic growth by investing in the following priority areas:

Priority	EU budget	Total Budget
Research and Innovation	€302m	€455m
SME Competitiveness	€208m	€333m
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	€171m	€246m
Connectivity and Urban Development	€501m	€763m
Technical Assistance	€24m	€32m
Total	€1,206m	€1,830m

Programme progress

By the end of 2019, the Welsh Government had invested €1,162.3m of EU funds to 103 projects through the European Regional Development Fund driving a total investment of €2,009.7m in West Wales and the Valleys. Key highlights include:

- Over 10,700 jobs created.
- Over 1,750 businesses created and over 6,800 businesses assisted with funding or support.
- Over £43m of research income generated by EU-funded projects.

Research and Innovation

EU funds are supporting world-class research programmes at Welsh universities, major R&D collaborations between academia and industry, and helping Welsh businesses develop new products and services across a range of sectors. Highlights from 2019 include:

- Bangor University secured £3.9m to create a Digital Signal Processing (DSP) Centre of Excellence which will enable highly specialised research and innovation in 5G technology.
- Swansea University secured £4m to create a Legal Innovation Lab which will help develop advances in legal technology in partnership with international law firms, security agencies, professional and trade bodies, technology and social media companies.
- Cardiff University secured £2.9m for its FLEXISApp project to support scientific researchers, the public sector, SMEs and industrial specialists to develop fully scaleable technology for low carbon energy systems.



The Legal Innovation Lab will be based at the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law at Swansea University



SME Competitiveness

Small and medium sized businesses, including start-ups and social enterprises, are benefiting from a range of funding and business support through a suite of EU-funded Business Wales initiatives and the Wales Business Fund. Highlights from 2019 include:

- The Wales Co-operative Centre secured £3m for to help establish 200 new social businesses over the next three years through the Social Business Wales New Start initiative.
- The Wales Business Fund invested £145.2m in SMEs across the West Wales and Valleys region.
- EU-funded Business Wales services supported over 5,600 businesses in the West Wales and Valleys region.



Maggie Ogunbanwo set up Maggie's Exotic Foods with support through Business Wales



Medical Connections Ltd completed a management buy-out with Development Bank of Wales' funding through the Wales Business Fund



'HaverHub, based in Haverfordwest, which provides live events and activities for local people and visitors, received advice and guidance through Social Business Wales.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

EU funds are supporting projects to improve energy efficiency in low-income homes, small-scale renewable energy initiatives, and supporting the development of a leading marine energy industry in Wales. Highlights from 2019 include:

- Swansea-based Marine Power Systems secured £12.8m for the next stage of its ground-breaking WaveSub project – an underwater device capable of generating clean, affordable and reliable energy.
- Minesto secured £12.6m for the next stage of the Deep Green project which involves underwater kites generating energy from tidal streams off the coast of Anglesey.



Marine Power Systems' WaveSub project aims to generate clean energy from ocean waves



Connectivity and Urban Development

EU funds are supporting investment in major transport projects, including the upgrading of roads and railway stations, the development of new employment sites across Wales and investing in key visitor attractions to drive growth in the tourism industry. Highlights from 2019 include:

- £2.6m was invested in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to develop 30,000 sq ft of new business premises on the former Coed Ely colliery site.
- Social landlord Tai Ceredigion secured £1.1m to develop a purpose-built 1,250 sq ft enterprise hub offering high quality office space to local small businesses and charities.
- £1.5m EU funds was secured by Conwy County Borough Council to develop the Tre Morfa Enterprise Park, Parc Caer Seion commercial premises in Conwy.



New commercial units at the Penmaen Road site in Conwy will be built on 2.4 hectares of land close to the A55



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is developing new business premises on the former Coed Ely colliery and coking site

Success stories

Aberystwyth University Innovation and Enterprise Campus

In October, two state-of-the-art research centres were formally opened as part of an event to mark the completion of Phase 1 of the Aberystwyth University's new Innovation and Enterprise Campus.

Backed by £20m from the European Regional Development Fund, the Campus provides world-leading facilities and expertise for the biotechnology, agri-tech, and food and drink sectors.

Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University said: "This marks an important milestone for the Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus and for the University's Gogerddan campus which for seventy years has established itself as a World renowned centre of excellence for plant breeding.

"The economy of mid and west Wales faces significant challenges and I'm delighted to see two important facilities take their place at the heart of this new development; the Seed Biobank providing a vital genetic library as we develop new crop varieties that will thrive in a changing climate, and BEACON, which offers ways of making new and exciting industrial products that are kinder to the environment.

These and the opportunities for greater collaboration between scientists and industrial collaborators at this exciting new facility are hugely important for the future of the rural economy."

The second phase of the Campus will house an Advanced Analysis Centre, a Future Food Centre and an Innovation Hub, providing an environment for business and academic collaboration to flourish. It is scheduled to be completed and fully operational by the summer of 2020.



Aberystwyth University has received EU funding to create a new state-of-the-art Innovation Campus

Marine Energy Test Area (META)

In September, the Marine Energy Test Area (META) in Pembrokeshire, West Wales, was officially opened for business.

Backed by £1.2m of EU funds, META includes zones for research and development and a network of seabed areas where marine energy developers can deploy and test their technology. The project is helping to develop Pembrokeshire as a world-class centre for marine energy development, fabrication, testing and deployment.

Joseph Kidd, Operations and Development Manager for META, said: "This comes as a culmination of two years of hard work and we are delighted to officially say that we are open for business. The purpose of META is to reduce the time, cost and risks faced by marine energy developers to accelerate development in the sector, and this growth has never been more critical.

"We are facing a climate emergency and marine energy will play a significant role in reaching our 2050 net-zero emission targets. Public support for the sector is also at an all-time high and so we cannot wait to start welcoming our first customers and getting kit into the water."



The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum has received EU funding to create a test area for developers in the Milford Haven Waterway