

€1.5m EU investment helps Welsh company fight global infections

The investment will see IMSPEX Diagnostics Ltd, which is based in Abercynon, team up with leading manufacturers and clinical trial specialists in Germany and Ireland and with the University of Warwick and South Wales-based RedKnight Consultancy Ltd.

The €2.4m project aims to develop a rapid, non-invasive device called BreathSpec, which can diagnose bacterial or viral infections through ultra-high sensitivity breath analysis and will help combat the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The funding has been secured through the European Union's largest research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, which supports breakthroughs in science and technology and the development of world-class products and services.

Welcoming the news, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

"I'm delighted IMSPEX has secured this funding, which will enable research and innovation with such exciting potential to take place in Wales over the coming years.

"Through Horizon 2020, Welsh businesses and universities are benefiting from significant investment and opportunities to collaborate with leading organisations across Europe.

"It is vital ongoing access to this programme – and its successors – is retained as part of any new relationship between the UK and EU in the future."

The BreathSpec device will help alleviate the growing problem of anti-microbial resistance by helping to minimise the misuse and overuse of antibiotics through the improved diagnosis of infections.

Santi Dominguez, chief executive of IMSPEX Diagnostics Ltd, said:

"We are very excited by this funding, which will enable our organisation to collaborate with a first-class team and address the major social challenge of anti-microbial resistance with our new device.

"We have a vision of providing primary healthcare with a reliable, fast and simple solution for identifying bacterial or viral infection, optimising patient care and minimising antibiotic consumption.

“As a result of this project, we hope to be able to assist GPs and healthcare providers on a global scale. I congratulate the whole consortium on the success of this bid and would also like to thank the Welsh Government for its support with the bid preparation.”

The investment in IMSPEX follows the publication of new data, which shows Welsh businesses and universities have won €76m of Horizon 2020 funding for research and innovation projects since the EU programme was launched nearly three years ago.

Professor Drakeford added:

“The Welsh Government financially backed IMSPEX’s application for Horizon 2020 funds and we will continue to support Welsh businesses and universities to access this important research and innovation programme and collaborate with leading organisations across Europe and beyond.”

To help increase Wales’ research and innovation opportunities through Horizon 2020 funding, the Welsh Government offers financial support for bid writing and travel costs to Welsh organisations interested in developing Horizon 2020 projects.

For more information about Horizon 2020 and the Welsh Government’s SCoRE Cymru fund email horizon2020@wales.gsi.gov.uk .