

# Go ahead for £3.5m Data Innovation Accelerator

The new Data Innovation Accelerator (DIA) has been part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Welsh Government who are joining forces with Cardiff University to develop the project.

Its aim is to transfer data science and analytics knowledge from Cardiff University to Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Wales so they can develop and grow their businesses.

The funding will enable researchers to work on collaborative projects with companies specialising in ICT and cyber security, advanced materials, energy and eco-innovation.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“I am proud that the Welsh Government is supporting this exciting Data Innovation Accelerator which will bridge the link between research and business so that companies on the ground can benefit from some of the innovative and ground breaking research undertaken in Wales.

“The project is very much in line with our Economic Action Plan, which, sets out a clear whole Government approach to supercharging the hi-tech businesses of the future.

“The £1.86m from the ERDF through Welsh Government will help SMEs in Wales to flourish, creating high quality data science jobs and helping to develop exciting new products and services that can be used in Wales and throughout the world.”

Cardiff University’s School of Computer Science and Informatics will be recruiting eight skilled data scientists to kick-start the project this autumn.

DIA co-director Professor Roger Whitaker, College Dean of Research and Professor of Collective Intelligence, said:

“The DIA will help exploit a growing opportunity for greater economic exploitation of data-driven analysis and machine intelligence in businesses, using a targeted approach aligned to sector strengths in Wales, including ICT and cyber security; Advanced Materials; Energy & eco-innovation.”

Fellow DIA co-director, Dr Pete Burnap added:

“The DIA will fill a gap in the current ‘data science eco-system’ in Wales. Schemes exist to support undergraduate qualifications, graduate mentoring, and help bigger businesses buy in expertise. But no provision currently exists to systematically build Data Science awareness, capacity and skills with SMEs in Wales. SMEs do not have the scale of resources available to the public sector or large companies to ‘trial’ new ways of working, or invest in unproven business transformation underpinned by data science. DIA seeks to address this gap.”

The DIA, which expects to launch in November, will be based within the Data Innovation Research Institute at Cardiff University.