

Press release: Techniquest set to receive £3m in UK Government funding to develop STEM hub

- £13 million to be invested in six science centres across the UK to help bring the wonders of science to people around the country
- Techniquest in Cardiff Bay will receive £3m to develop a STEM hub, diversifying its audiences by housing innovative new content.
- The successful Science Centres in Scotland, Wales and England will also use the funding to develop sustainable business models to ensure continued success for years to come

Six science Centres across the UK today received a £13 million injection of funding to help attract thousands of new visitors.

Catalyst in Widnes, Dundee Science Centre, Eureka! Mersey, Glasgow Science Centre, The National Space Centre in Leicester, and Techniquest in Cardiff will all receive new funding after presenting exciting plans to connect with audiences and communities who don't currently visit science centres or engage with learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The funding will help each centre create new learning activities to help reach audiences, improve their facilities and develop sustainable business models.

In Wales, The Science Capital will see a transformation of Techniquest, extending it into a contemporary STEM hub, and diversifying its audiences. It will house innovative new content, developed with businesses and academics at the forefront of STEM in Wales and supported by a programme of community co-production, highlighting the role STEM technologies shape the future of our society.

The new funding will be delivered through the Inspiring Science Fund, a joint initiative by Wellcome and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Inspiring Science Fund aims to support underserved and underrepresented audiences, delivering science learning and engagement opportunities that are accessible to all through Science Centres around the country.

Visiting Techniquest in Wales, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's funding announcement is a welcome boost to many science centres across the UK, and I can't think of a worthier recipient than Techniquest in Cardiff Bay.

The centre is home to many fond memories of children and adults in

South Wales and further afield, who were perhaps taking an interest in science and technology for the first time. This funding will allow Techniquest to leap forward in developing cutting edge STEM technology, attracting some of Wales' sharpest science minds to take a lead role in developing our future society.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

We want to bring the wonders of science to as wide an audience as possible and that's why it is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy. Today's investment will help inspire people from across the country to learn about the truly amazing benefits that science and technology has on all our lives.

Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture & Society, Wellcome, said:

At Wellcome we focus on people, and our public engagement activity is about helping everyone to play their own role in improving health. The Inspiring Science Fund enables science centres across the country to bring science, health and research closer to public. We're looking forward to seeing how the successful centres develop and how they use this funding to involve ever more people in science in a way that is relevant and useful to their own lives.

Lesley Kirkpatrick, CEO of Techniquest said:

We are over the moon to be awarded this funding and are grateful to BEIS and Wellcome for believing in our ambitions. It is the culmination of over a year and a half of hard work from our talented team, who are extremely passionate about this next phase in our evolution.

It means that our plans to expand our science discovery centre and extend our offering to make science accessible to all, can progress in earnest giving our charity a new lease of life, while ensuring a sustainable and long-term future in Wales.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Inspiring Science Fund

The Inspiring Science Fund is co-funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Wellcome. BEIS' role will transfer to UK Research and Innovation in 2018. The scheme supports science centres to

rethink what they do and what they offer to the public. The aims of the fund are to revitalise the offer of existing science centres through capital development, such as new exhibition spaces and learning centres, and the opportunity to develop meaningful engagement with underserved and underrepresented audiences. This opportunity to refresh how science centres are operating will lead to more sustainable business models, and contribute to science centre sector development through shared learning.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy and climate change. The Department is responsible for: developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business; ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean; ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation; and tackling climate change. The Inspiring Science Fund administration will soon transfer to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Wellcome

Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We're a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations, and spark debate.

UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the new funding organisation for research and innovation in the UK, will succeed BEIS as co-funder of the Inspiring Science Fund later in 2018. UKRI brings together the seven UK research councils, Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England, working closely with its partner organisations in the devolved administrations.