

£13.5m innovation project is delivering ground breaking results

The Agor IP project brings together academics, clinicians and businesses to pioneer research into cutting-edge technologies and drive commercial success.

Today's launch event in Swansea University will showcase some of the innovative work already underway as a result of the project.

This includes an app developed to help prevent eating disorders, and a simple blood test that could make it easier for GPs to diagnose bowel cancer. Both have been developed in a partnership between Aneurin Bevan Health Board and scientists at Swansea University.

The Agor IP project has been backed by £6.7m from the Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund with additional funding from Swansea University.

Led by Swansea University, the scheme, which began in January 2016 and runs until December 2020, works with the NHS and industrial partners to turn innovative research into new products, processes and services.

Speaking ahead of the event, Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“The Agor IP project is one that is truly worthy of celebration. Projects like the app to prevent eating disorders developed in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board have the potential to drive tangible results and economic benefits.

“The project is adding genuine value to our innovation goals and demonstrating to the world that the Welsh Government is committed to translating academic research into results that benefit the lives of Welsh people and our wider economy. Projects like these are crucial in promoting Wales as a global location of choice for innovation, creativity and technology.”

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“The Agor IP project is full of examples where science and healthcare are working together at the forefront of clinical innovation. I strongly support the NHS working confidently with university and industry partners, linking better health technologies and services to economic growth opportunities in Wales.”

Over the last 12 months Agor IP has supported nearly 100 commercial opportunities, which are attracting significant private sector investment and helping create highly skilled, well paid jobs.

These range from digital tools for university students, early stage medical devices, diagnostics and therapeutics for cancer, clean technology and many collaborations with NHS Wales Health Boards.

[First Minister to announce support for Holyhead Marina](#)

First Minister Carwyn Jones will be visiting Holyhead Marina today [Thursday, 10 May] to announce funding support and thank all those involved in the clean-up operation since Storm Emma.

The Welsh Government is to provide £100,000 to the Isle of Anglesey Council towards the cost of the clean up, and to ensure businesses are able to remain open and attract tourism to the area.

Storm Emma, which hit the north coast of Wales in March, caused severe damage to the marina, as well as resulting in the wreckage of about 75 vessels.

Significant progress has been made to clean up the area since the incident, with an estimated 40 tonnes of polystyrene and 3000 litres of oil recovered from the marina and neighbouring beaches.

This progress has been made possible thanks to the efforts of a multi-agency team involving the Isle of Anglesey Council, NRW, and the Coastguard among others, and the time and dedication shown by local volunteers.

Ahead of his visit the First Minister said:

“This will be my second visit to the marina since the devastation of Storm Emma. From day one agencies and volunteers have worked tirelessly on the clean-up and I saw for myself the dedication and professionalism of those involved. I thank them for all they have done and continue to do.

“We have remained in close contact with the local authority, who have kept us informed of the recovery operation every step of the way.

“I said when I visited in March that we would look at what assistance we could provide to support the tremendous efforts being made to clean up the marina, and to help businesses affected.

"I am hopeful the support I am announcing today can be used by the Council to support those local businesses affected, as well as to further promote tourism here and show potential visitors that Holyhead continues to be 'open for business' .

"I know that this morning Holyhead is welcoming the first cruise ship of the season which is also the inaugural visit of the Viking Sun ship to Holyhead – and to Wales. This is great news for the town and surrounding region, and shows the great potential for the future of the area. The Cruise industry in Wales has seen excellent growth and is up year on year and we look forward to welcoming more than 80 ships to Wales during 2018."

Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, who provided a financial contribution also, said:

"The damage to Holyhead Marina has been disastrous for all the businesses and individuals affected, as well as the significant environmental impact with debris and polystyrene entering the water.

"Thanks to the hard work of all agencies involved, significant progress has been made with the clean-up operation with a great deal of polystyrene and oil recovered. I hope this funding provides some reassurance to the community that every effort continues to be made to restore the marina and its local environment."

Anglesey Council Leader, Councillor Llinos Medi, said:

"Anglesey is deeply reliant on the tourism industry, and we're pleased that the Welsh Government is providing financial assistance which will help minimise the negative impacts on Holyhead, following the destruction caused by Storm Emma.

"There has been tremendous damage caused to the marina and local businesses are suffering, but the impact on our environment and beaches through polystyrene pollution has also been considerable. Thankfully, everyone, from businesses to volunteers, has pulled together to tackle this terrible incident and we are now working towards recovery.

"Support for businesses impacted and the environment, and funding to help us continue to promote Anglesey as a fantastic tourist destination is vital. I'd like to thank the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and Welsh Government colleagues for their support."

Young People into Agriculture scheme open for applications

The Young People into Agriculture scheme will offer start-up aid to high achieving individuals looking to establish a new business or develop an existing business. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate they have the attributes to lead dynamic businesses and drive change in the wider industry.

The scheme, agreed as part of the Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru, will support 150 farmers and will develop participants' leadership skills.

Eligible applicants must be aged under 40 on 1 April 2018. Expressions of interest must be submitted by 12 June and there will be only one application window.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“Supporting the next generation of farmers is a key priority for me and this is even more important as we prepare to leave the European Union.

“This scheme will provide young people with the support they need to enter the industry and gain the skills needed to develop resilient and sustainable businesses. I urge young people to take the opportunity to put themselves forward and apply for the scheme.

“To complement this important scheme, I established a Young People in Agriculture Forum and met with the members last week to hear their views and talk to them about the development opportunities the Forum would provide for them. The Forum will help us further develop a long term relationship with young people who aspire to be the future senior leaders of the agriculture industry in Wales.

“Now is the time to prepare for the challenges Brexit brings. As a Government, we are working hard to support the industry to prepare and build resilience. This scheme and Young Persons Forum will help the next generation of farmers put their businesses and the wider industry in the strongest position to thrive in a post-Brexit world.”

Extra £22.5m EU funds to boost skills on Europe Day

This extra help, which is being announced on Europe Day, will ensure almost 8,000 people receive support and training.

The projects to benefit from EU funding include Inspire2Work, Trac 11-24, Achieve through Work Experience and Agile Nation II.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“I am delighted to see EU funds being invested in projects to support people to gain the skills they need to achieve their potential.

“Wales has benefited hugely from EU funding programmes for 20 years and these projects highlight the importance of Wales receiving replacement funding from the UK government once the UK leaves the EU.”

David Blaney, chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, said:

“We are pleased the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience scheme has been recognised with further investment through the European Social Fund.

“By focusing on students whose backgrounds mean they have traditionally been more disadvantaged in the jobs market, the scheme – through work experience opportunities and up-skilling – has already shown positive outcomes for participants.

“We look forward to seeing more students referred to the scheme and taking advantage of a range of work experience opportunities with local employers, which will further improve employment prospects and reduce the risk of disenfranchisement.”

The new funding announced today is in addition to more than £650m of EU funds, which have been invested in training and work in Wales – more than £200m of which has supported young people.

Stop playing politics with Brexit” – First Minister Carwyn Jones

To mark Europe Day, the First Minister will address an event at the European Commission in Cardiff. It will be the last time the European Commission Office in Wales hosts an event to celebrate Europe Day, which has taken place in the capital for the past 42 years.

The First Minister will talk about the bonds that have developed between Wales and the EU over the last half century and look ahead to a positive relationship with our European partners over the next 50 years. He will say:

“Not more than 70 years ago, Europe emerged from one of the most bloody conflicts the world has ever seen. What grew out of the wreckage of war was a new resolve and political will that the next generation would not have to endure the bloodshed and sacrifice of the last.

“That period of stability has endured and, while there are many reasons for that, perhaps most important of all has been political will. A will shown through new partnerships and economic union – including the EU – which has made our lives more peaceful, prosperous and stable than they have ever been.

“In 2016 the UK decided to leave the EU and, as a government, we have played our part in the national debate about our future outside those political structures.

“Just recently we were able to agree with the UK government a sensible and rational position to protect devolved powers after we leave the EU. We’ve taken flack for that, negotiating as we have done with a government of a different political stripe, but we’ve done it because it’s the right thing for Wales and our economy.

“There are arguments that we are yet to win and we will not give up on them. But, Europe Day is about something more. As important as the position papers, constitutional arrangements and trading borders are, what we are debating as we leave the EU is something much more fundamental. It is about the kind of country that we want to leave to our children.

“Just as the generation after 1945 made tough political choices to forge a new future, I believe that a choice of similar magnitude faces us now. There is more that unites us than divides us. Europe is, to borrow a famous phrase, more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are a continent wanting, fundamentally, the same things; peace, prosperity and a better tomorrow.

“And that’s my simple message on Europe Day 2018. We are leaving

the European Union, but we are not leaving Europe. I believe that the UK can choose this opportunity to re-engineer our relationship with our European partners in a way that safeguards common bonds and, in doing so, help us make real our ambition of a kinder, fairer politics.

“By putting in place a deal to leave the EU that maintains the ability for business to trade freely with its European partners for the good of both. A deal that enshrines the rights of young people to travel, to work and to study freely with Europeans like them. By putting in place a deal that continues to invest and build fairness into the regional periphery of Europe that can tackle the injustices of deindustrialisation and economic injustice.

“I am, therefore, challenging every political party in Wales and the UK to put politics aside and see Brexit through a wider lens. Let us work together in a new spirit of partnership to build a more positive relationship with our European partners over the next twelve months and achieve a settlement which the next generation can be proud of.”