

£3.2m EU-backed investment to pioneer cutting edge technology

The scheme, which is led by Swansea University's Centre for Nano Health and Welsh Centre for Printing and Coating and Cardiff University's Institute for Compound Semiconductors, will offer expertise and state-of-the-art facilities to companies developing new or existing technologies, products and processes.

Backed by £1.8m of EU funding, it will provide technical and specialist support to put companies at the forefront of innovation in sectors such as healthcare, semiconductors, packaging and functional printed materials. It will also help up to 20 collaborations get underway to develop new products ready for market.

Announcing the funding, Professor Drakeford said:

"Ensuring Welsh businesses have access to the knowledge and expertise within our highly-acclaimed universities is essential to drive innovation and position Wales on a global platform for success.

"This is another positive example of how the Welsh Government is investing EU funds to boost prosperity and jobs.

"It also highlights the importance of securing replacement funding for these EU funds following Brexit so we can continue to deliver schemes like this, which benefit people and the economy."

Swansea University's lead for the project's semiconductor theme, Dr Matt Elwin, said:

"This project will provide the region's industry with access to 3 state-of-the-art research facilities, which form a unique expert offering that can deliver novel technologies and accelerate new product development.

"We're very excited to work with industry in this field and look forward to growing long-lasting collaborations in the development of relevant technology for next generation products well into the future."

[New Planning Applications Wales website goes live](#)

A new 'Planning Applications Wales' website goes live today and will be the portal for submitting planning applications or associated consents to Local Planning Authorities, replacing the Planning Portal.

The website has been designed to make it quicker and easier for anyone to make a planning application and forms have been simplified. It is designed to meet the needs of users of the Welsh planning system.

To make a planning application, please visit the Welsh Government website [planning pages](#).

Guidance on what types of development can be pursued without the need to apply for planning permission along with further information on permitted development, the planning service and building regulations is available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths:

“Our new Planning Applications Wales website will be the place people will need to go to submit their planning applications from today.

“In designing the new website, we've made sure the service meets the needs of Welsh users. The new website will also make it quicker and simpler for anyone wanting to submit a planning application.”

[Your last chance to have a say on plans to strengthen local government](#)

The Green Paper consultation, launched in March, sets out proposals to explore the possibility of creating larger, stronger councils and sets out for debate, possible options on how this can be achieved – from voluntary mergers, to a phased approach with early adopters merging first, followed by other authorities, to a comprehensive merger programme.

The proposals aim to ensure councils are able to continue to deliver excellent essential services by providing the support, recognition and reward for the crucial role they play in our democracy.

Alun Davies said:

“Wales needs strong, effective, empowered local authorities which can weather continued austerity and build local democratic structures fit for future generations. I do not believe that our local authorities, as currently constituted, can fully play this role; and I am not alone.

“The next steps we are proposing are game-changing. We have the chance to create new structures to which we can devolve additional powers and with which we can protect the roles and jobs of public service workers. Only then can we deliver excellence in public service, and ensure democratic accountability and decision making within those structures is delivered as close to the citizen as possible.”

We have already received many responses to our consultation, from an array of individuals and organisations, but the Cabinet Secretary said he was keen to hear from as wide a section of society as possible.

Alun Davies continued:

“The consultation closes on 12 June and I would urge everyone who, like me, cares about public service and local accountability, to get involved.”

[Llanberis company growth a real success story](#)

DMM Engineering was founded in 1981 to manufacture mountaineering and industrial safety products and at the time had four employees. Since then DMM has experienced steady and sustained growth and now employs more than 190 people with a turnover of over £12.5 million and exports accounting for more than 60% of the company's sales.

The Cabinet Secretary visited DMM yesterday to celebrate the completion of their investment in a state of the art CNC machining facility which is a key part in extending and improving their manufacturing capability.

Welsh Government support has enabled DMM to invest over £2.5 million in plant and buildings in the last five years and seen the workforce grow from 150 to

195 employees.

DMM's C.E.O. Richard Rust said:

“Despite uncertain times, as a Group we are continuing to invest in expanding our factory capacity & capability. The fantastic support we have received from the Welsh Government has enabled us to grow our turnover by more than 25% and, more importantly increase our employment levels and skills.”

DMM continues to grow and each year the percentage of goods manufactured at their Llanberis factory increases. Ten years ago, around 50% of sales were exported to 41 countries, DMM now sell into 55 countries.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“DMM Engineering is a real success story and I am pleased Welsh Government support has enabled the company to grow, make a significant contribution to the local economy and continue to reach out to a worldwide market.

“Our new Economic Action Plan ensures we will support high value manufacturing companies such as DMM who commit to growth, fair work, and up-skilling their work force. It offers a simplified, unified and competitive package of support for companies who commit to our economic contract ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

“A key part of the plan is the approach to developing regional economies such as North West Wales to ensure prosperity falls more evenly across Wales.

“I congratulate DMM on their success to date and wish them well for continued growth going forward.”

All Wales Avian Influenza Prevention Zone to end

The Cabinet Secretary has taken this decision based on an updated veterinary risk assessment conducted by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) which found the risk of incursion from wild birds has reduced from High to Low. Similarly, the risk to poultry is also Low.

The Prevention Zone was introduced on 25 January to mitigate the risk of

infection following three separate findings in England of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N6 in Wild Birds.

In Wales, there has been only one finding in a wild bird this year. There have been no cases of H5N6 avian influenza in poultry in the UK this year and the poultry sector retains its OIE disease free status.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“In January, I took action and declared the whole of Wales an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone in response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N6 findings in England. This was a precautionary measure to minimise the risk of infection to poultry here in Wales.

“We have since been monitoring the situation closely and the latest risk assessment by APHA has concluded that the risk has reduced from High to Low for wild birds and the risk to poultry is also Low.

“Based on this evidence-based veterinary advice I am pleased to announce that the current All Wales Avian Influenza Prevention Zone will come to an end with immediate effect. Whilst this is welcome news it is important to remember avian influenza remains a constant and real threat to our poultry and other captive birds.”

Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Christianne Glossop added:

“I cannot stress enough the need for all keepers of poultry and other captive birds to remain vigilant for signs of the disease and to continue to practice the very highest levels of biosecurity.

“If anyone suspects disease they should contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency immediately. Also, we can all play a part in supporting the ongoing surveillance by reporting any findings of dead wild birds to the GB helpline.

“I would also like to remind all poultry keepers with 50 birds or more they must register their flocks on the Poultry Register and strongly encourage all poultry keepers, including those with fewer than 50 birds, to register. This will ensure they can be contacted immediately, via email or text update, in an avian disease outbreak, enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity and minimise the spread of infection.”

Information on the requirements of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, guidance and latest developments are all available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

To report any findings of dead wild birds please contact the GB helpline on

03459 335577.