

Wales broadens its horizons attracting €66m to drive innovation

Speaking at a conference to celebrate Welsh successes in the EU-funded programme, he revealed that Welsh activity in Horizon 2020 had doubled in the last year.

A day after Article 50 was triggered, the Finance Secretary called for continued participation in the programme after the UK leaves the EU – as outlined in the Welsh Government's White Paper Securing Wales's Future.

The Welsh Government's 2016 annual report about Horizon 2020 highlights Wales' performance in the programme including:

- International collaborations doubled to more than 1,000;
- Around a third of Welsh participations in Horizon 2020 projects are as lead co-ordinators;
- Welsh businesses won more than €10m through the programme;
- A higher proportion of private sector participations than the equivalent in the UK;
- Welsh universities performing well, accounting for 63% of total Welsh participations.

This positive trend has continued into 2017, as the latest figures show Welsh organisations have secured €66m of Horizon 2020 funds and the number of Welsh participations has topped 140.

Professor Drakeford said:

“Horizon 2020 provides a real opportunity for businesses and organisations to be at the forefront of research and innovation. The Welsh Government is committed to supporting Welsh participation in this EU programme.

“Our White Paper, Securing Wales' Future, highlights the economic importance of retaining UK access to European research and innovation programmes, and their successors, beyond 2020 to help drive world-class science and innovation and sustainable jobs and growth in Wales.”

At the event, the Finance Secretary met businesses including Wrexham-based Ecodek Ltd and Newport-based SPTS Technologies, learning about their ground-breaking work on Horizon 2020 projects, such as recycling of building materials and filtered waste of water treatment plants to develop new, innovative products and the development of semiconductor technologies in innovative new medical devices.

Professor Drakeford added:

“Today is a celebration of Welsh success in Horizon 2020 and the contribution EU funds are making to driving our knowledge economy. It is vital that we continue to maximise the opportunities that this programme presents and attract further investments which will bring significant benefits to our region.”

Horizon 2020 is open for business – successful applications made while the UK remains part of the EU will be protected by the UK Government’s lifetime expenditure guarantee.

The Welsh Government’s SCoRE Cymru fund provides financial support to help Welsh organisations with travel costs to forge partnerships and to develop Horizon 2020 proposals.