



Welsh Government's Innovation Strategy for Wales

Briefing paper and influencing opportunity

August 2022

Introduction

Welsh Government has launched a consultation on its new [Innovation Strategy For Wales \(ISFW\)](#).

The ISFW's stated vision is 'to foster a vibrant innovation culture in a stronger, fairer, greener Wales'.

It's mission is 'to create an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognizes the limits of the global environment and uses resources effectively and proportionately; and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing fair work'.

The seven wellbeing goals will direct the agenda of the ISFW and guide actions for 'government, businesses, the third sector, academia and citizens to deliver achievable, ambitious goals in a wellbeing economy'. The ISFW follows on from the 2013 document, *Innovation Wales*.

The ISFW is intended to operate within UK Government's own Innovation Strategy and UK Research and Development Roadmap.

Why is this important for the voluntary sector?

The sector is involved in a great many areas of work outlined in the ISFW. For example, the ISFW is underpinned by priorities set out in the Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales plan, which included:

- giving everyone under 25 the offer of work, education, training, or self-employment
- tackling economic inequality
- promoting Fair Work
- supporting people with a long-term health condition to work:
- raising skill and qualification levels, and the mobility of the workforce

The voluntary sector does invaluable work in all these areas. Although the ISFW focuses primarily on the private and public sectors, the voluntary sector must be given the opportunity to show that it is as innovative, if not more, than other sectors, and be able to bid for funding where appropriate. WEFO calculate that over £500m was invested in research and development in Wales in the last round of EU funding.

Now that EU funding has ended, the sector must be aware of future funding opportunities in the area of innovation.

Success of the ISFW will be measured against a large variety of criteria. Particularly crucially for voluntary sector organisations operating in health and social care, these include

- Improved patient/citizen outcomes
- Improved patient/citizen experience

The ISFW discusses in detail the ‘mission for innovation’ in health and social care. It cites the importance of the voluntary sector, and that it will target ‘new and different’ ways of working’ and ‘better support the adoption of innovation at scale’. There is far more detail in the ISFW than can fit in a briefing paper. Please take a look at the [full document](#).

Other criteria of particular importance to the sector include

- Reduced use of raw materials
- Increased leverage of UK Government funding streams into Wales
- New enterprises/jobs
- Improved resource efficiency

Much of the ISFW is devoted to tackling climate change, including potential innovations in the transport system, and the importance of the circular economy, digital working and changes to procurement. Growing the resilience of Wales is also a central theme, as are equality and diversity, and cohesive communities.

As noted earlier, it is impossible for this briefing paper to include the level of detail within the full ISFW. You can read the full thing [here](#).

The consultation

Welsh Government are now consulting on the ISFW. WCVA will be responding to this consultation and would like to hear from as many sector voices as possible for inclusion in our response. The voluntary sector is vital to the success of otherwise of the ISFW. The more voices we hear, the more influential our response can be, and this is an important policy for us to influence.

To gather the sector’s views, we have developed a survey based around the consultation. [You can find it here](#). Please take a look.

Note that it is not necessary to answer all the questions; feel free to answer as many or as few as you like.

This survey will close on Friday 16 September 2022.

Please contact WCVA Policy Officer, David Cook, on dcook@wcva.cymru, with any questions.