

Media Cymru × PDR × Alacrity Foundation

Seed Fund 2024

Developing innovation-driven products, services and experiences for the media sector

Overview:

Media Cymru's aim is to support the growth of the Cardiff Capital Region's thriving media sector by investing in Research and Development (R&D) to deliver transformative innovation.

We want to invest in people and companies that can match global competitors in their scale of innovation ambition and skills. The Media Cymru Seed Fund enables Wales based individuals and companies to apply for up to £10,000 to Research and Develop (R&D) innovation-driven products, services and experiences within the media sector.

We would like you to set out a potential challenge, issue or opportunity you would like to explore through R&D. At Seed Fund stage we do not expect you to have a finished idea for a product or service in mind, but you do have to have an understanding of the problem you want to address. We are looking for ideas that have long-term potential for you or your business beyond the life of the project with Media Cymru.

By the end of the project, you will have the foundations of a business plan, a financial forecast, and a pitch deck that will enable you to pitch for funding to investors. You may also be eligible to apply for up to £50,000 of Media Cymru Development Funding to take your idea to the next level.

We're particularly interested in areas including but not limited to:

- New media formats and innovative new ways of creating content.
- Virtual production (including the convergence of virtual production and traditional production).
- Immersive storytelling through Extended Reality (XR) technologies, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Mixed Reality (MR)
- Innovation in game content production (including convergence with other media).
- The ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in media and content production.
- Placemaking and cultural / media tourism.
- New and inclusive media business models and production processes.

- Sustainable solutions to the challenges of net zero and the decarbonisation of the screen sector, particularly those that respond to the findings of the recent Screen New Deal Transformation Plan for Wales.
- Bilingual production.
- New approaches to delivering news and public information.

We're also keen to support projects that address some or all of our four strategic pillars: **Green, Fair, Global, Growth**.

The Seed Fund is **not** suitable for:

- Content creation (for example: short films, plays, live music events, feature films and television pilots)
- General business development, or
- One-off art commissions.

If you have any specific requirements that would make the application more accessible to you (such as advice, scribing or reading support) or would like to discuss this application in an alternative format (video or audio formats, audio narration, large font, plain text, or alternative language) please email media.cymru@cardiff.ac.uk or phone 02922 511 434.

Application Deadline: Monday 8 April 2024 noon.

Key Dates:

- **26 February 2024** – Applications open
- **8 April 2024** – Applications close at noon: please note, applications will not be accepted after this time
- **13 May 2024** – Applicants notified (applicants should note that it can take up to 5 weeks for contracts to be issued)
- **17 June 2024** – Projects begin.

Eligibility:

With all our activity we are keen to reach the widest audience possible to make sure we hear the best ideas. We recognise that too often R&D investment circulates around networks which are not representative of our wider community in its social and cultural diversity. We aim to change that pattern and are working within our organisation and in the wider sector to address these structural imbalances. We also hope to inspire transformative and inclusive lines of R&D that will challenge existing ways of producing and thinking.

We welcome applications from different sizes and types of organisation including micro-businesses, sole traders, freelancers and partnerships.

Eligibility criteria:

- You are based in Wales
- You have a Research and Development (R&D) idea
- You are in the media industry or your idea directly benefits the media industry
- You are able to dedicate time and effort to complete a R&D project between 17th June and 7th October 2024.

Project support:

If successful, participants will benefit from three mandatory sessions (totaling six hours), plus an optional session (two hours) with world leading design consultancy and applied research facility [PDR](#). These sessions will be to support you on your innovation journey and are based around established methodology for developing an approach to R&D projects:

Session one: Challenge and plan

Session two: Making sense of research data

Session three: Findings - Feasibility and next steps

There will also be three mandatory support sessions (totalling six hours) from [The Alacrity Foundation](#) providing business development and commercialisation expertise to projects.

Where appropriate, the Media Cymru team will seek to supplement this by drawing on experience from the [Media Cymru Innovation Spaces](#) project, academic partners and exploring the potential for mentoring support from industry leaders.

Projects will also be supported and monitored by a Producer from Media Cymru.

Application assessment criteria

Your application proposals will be assessed in five key areas:

1. Your R&D idea

We want you to clearly explain the opportunity, challenge or gap in the market that you have identified and why you believe that R&D would support your idea.

2. The R&D activities you would like to do

We define R&D as a systematic process of conducting research as you develop your new product, service or experience. R&D often begins with an identifiable problem, need or opportunity, rather than assuming a solution. The R&D process then allows you to identify how best to address that problem or need. You may have good ideas about how best to do this but expect these to change or evolve as part of the R&D process.

This is your opportunity to outline the areas of work that you would like to explore as part of this project. Be realistic here in terms of what you can achieve in the timeframe with the resource available.

3. Achievability of your proposed timeline

We want you to do an outline plan for your R&D that draws on appropriate expertise and takes into account other commitments on your time that gives us confidence that you are able to deliver within the proposed duration of the project.

Please also consider the **mandatory 12 hours of activity** with PDR and The Alacrity Foundation in your plan.

4. Budget and finances

At this stage we will only be asking for indicative costs - you will be asked to provide a more detailed budget at a later stage if your application is successful, with guidance as needed.

Please consider the work you would like to undertake and who will be conducting this work. You should also note the requirement for the mandatory 12 hours of activity with PDR and The Alacrity Foundation to ensure the time for this is budgeted.

5. Potential impact

a. Economic impact

The economic benefit of your R&D activity may be that:

- It enables the growth of your company (or the creation of a new company)
- It gives you a competitive advantage by increasing your efficiency
- It creates broader economic benefits in the Welsh media sector.

Your response could refer to:

- Amount of spend in Wales
- Reduced costs / increased production efficiency
- Increased use of research infrastructure
- Increased revenue from sales, licensing, or exports
- Creation of a new business model
- Improved quality of products, services and/or experiences
- Increased employment of new staff
- Increased efficiency
- Development of new Intellectual Property (IP)
- Exploitation of existing IP.

The more tangible and ambitious these benefits are, the better a project will score against these criteria.

b. Social and cultural impact

You need to consider the social and cultural impact of your R&D activity. Impacts here may include:

- Enhancing or developing the representation of Welsh culture, language, stories, landscapes
- Reaching underserved or diverse audiences or markets
- Increasing equality of access to the media sector
- Increasing people's levels of wellbeing or quality of life.

c. Environmental impact

You need to consider the environmental impact of your R&D activity. Impacts may include:

- Contribution to net zero targets
- Having a positive environmental impact for you/your company/wider industry
- Increasing audience awareness of the climate emergency.

Subsidy control

A subsidy is where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives that enterprise an economic advantage, meaning that equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms. Subsidies that are awarded in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 provide a legitimate way for public funding to support economic activity.

Media Cymru Seed Fund support is offered as a Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) Subsidy, in the form of a cash grant from Cardiff University and additional support from the Alacrity Foundation and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

If your organisation is not able to meet the eligibility criteria to accept this award as an MFA Subsidy, as further outlined below, please contact us to discuss other options.

Minimal Financial Assistance

Under MFA rules, public authorities can award up to £315,000 of MFA subsidy to an enterprise over an 'applicable period' of three financial years. This 'applicable period' is:

- the elapsed part of the current financial year ending 30 March (i.e., from April) and
- the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

In the application you will be asked to declare your eligibility to receive funding via the MFA route.

To establish your eligibility, we require you to confirm that the addition of our grant funding **plus a further £2,500 of additional support** as outlined in the Project support section below, does not exceed your £315,000 limit for MFA across the 'applicable period' of three financial years.

When assessing the previous assistance that you may have received over the applicable period, please include the following:

- De Minimus Aid
- Small Amounts of Financial Assistance (SAFA) given as Special Drawing Rights (SDR)
- Services of Public Economic Interest (SPEI) Financial Assistance
- Minimal Financial Assistance

Prior award or notification letters from public authorities should clearly state the basis and date of award. If in doubt, you should contact the public authority granting the assistance to confirm its nature. You do not need to include assistance granted on a different basis - for example a grant made under the EU State Aid General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).

When assessing MFA, you must include all organisations in your group structure that operate under 'common control'. Further details on this can be found in Annex 1 of the [Statutory Guidance](#) for the [UK Subsidy Control Act 2022](#), para 15.40-15.46, pp. 174-176.

If you are unsure about your obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, you can find further information in the [Statutory Guidance](#), Chapter 7. You may also wish to review the wider guidance materials available from the [Welsh Government Subsidy Control Unit](#), or take independent legal advice. Cardiff University is unable to advise on individual eligibility or legal obligations.

FAQs:

What scale of funding does Media Cymru offer?

Under this call Media Cymru will provide up to £10,000 towards a three to five-month phase of R&D around your idea.

What expectations does Media Cymru have about applicants?

While we encourage collaborations, each project application must be led by one person/organisation. Depending on organisational type, the applicant must be legally entitled to work in the UK or be a UK-registered business or charity.

Responsibilities of the applicant:

- To be the 'contractual lead' or signatory to the Media Cymru Grant Agreement
- To lead, manage and deliver the project in accordance with the agreed proposal and budget
- To claim and receive grant funding, keeping appropriate financial records of all expenditure
- To be the point of contact for reporting and monitoring on the project to Media Cymru, liaising regularly with a dedicated Media Cymru team member.

Where the project is collaborative, and includes other Co-applicants, the applicant will also be responsible for:

- Putting in place any necessary sub-contracting or collaboration agreements with Co-applicants
- Distributing funding to Co-applicants in accordance with the agreed project budget.

The applicant will be required to provide assurance that they have a business bank account, can manage the cash flow requirements of their projects, and have appropriate financial processes in place to deliver projects in accordance with our funding terms and conditions.

Where a project is formed of a consortium of organisations, all collaborating organisations (or 'Co-applicants') must be named in the project proposal.

We will perform 'due diligence' checks on organisations as part of our project feasibility assessments. Outcomes are considered against the scale of funds requested and the duration of project activities. The applicant and Co-applicants must be willing to submit supporting documents on request.

Any applicant must be eligible to receive funding in line with current subsidy control measures at the time we confirm you will be awarded funding.

Should you have any queries around managing finance and/or subsidy control measures please contact media.cymru@cardiff.ac.uk and we will be happy to provide guidance.

Application questions:

Please note all applications must be submitted via the online form on our website:
www.media.cymru/innovation-pipeline

Should you wish to prepare your answers offline, the key application questions are*:

Criteria

- My enterprise (company or freelance) is based in Wales.
- My company is eligible to receive grant funding awarded under Minimum Financial Assistance. (please see grant funding eligibility criteria). Please get in touch to discuss alternative options if you are not eligible to receive funding under Minimum Financial Assistance.
- My company has availability and capacity to work on this project between June and October 2024.

R&D Project Details

- Project Title
- Please provide a short description of your project. This may be used by our comms team to announce successful projects. (max 50 words)
- Please write a summary of the opportunity, challenge or gap in the market you would like to explore through your Seed Fund project. (max. 250 words)
- Please tell us about the Research and Development (R&D) activities you would like to undertake during this project and how this supports the opportunity, challenge or gap in the market you have identified. (max. 300 words)
- What is your proposed duration for the project in months? (in months)
Choose 3, 4 or 5 months.
- Please demonstrate how your R&D project activities are achievable in the timeframe you have proposed.
It is important that you demonstrate a clear and achievable timescale for key deliverables. You may wish to use key dates and project milestones to answer this question.
- What is your estimated budget for the R&D phase?
We are offering funding of up to £10,000 for the R&D phase.
- Please provide an indication of the kind of costs you are likely to incur during the R&D phase. This budget is provisional. You will be asked to provide a more detailed budget at a later stage if your application is successful, with guidance as needed.
- Please explain how your R&D project might have a positive economic impact. This can include the impact for you, your company or the sector. (max. 100 words).
Your response could refer to:
 - Amount of spend in Wales
 - Reduced costs or increased production efficiency
 - Increased use of research infrastructure
 - Increased revenue from sales
 - Increased revenue from licensing
 - Increased revenue from exports
 - New business model
 - Improved quality of products, services and experiences

- Increased employment of other staff
- Reduced employment (due to efficiencies)
- Development of new Intellectual Property (IP)
- Exploitation of existing IP.

- Please explain how your project will have a positive social and cultural impact. (max. 100 words)

You may discuss outcomes such as:

- Enhancing or developing the representation of Welsh culture, language, stories or landscapes
- Increasing diversity of, and access to, the sector
- Reaching new, underserved, and diverse audiences or markets
- Improving people's quality of life
- Other social or cultural benefits.

- Please explain how your project will have a positive environmental impact. (max. 100 words)

You may discuss outcomes such as:

- Reduced environmental impact on your company and the sector as a result of this work
- Lowering emissions
- Reduced transport use
- Reducing or repurposing materials
- More energy-efficient processes.

*To view the full application, please visit the online form on our website:

www.media.cymru/innovation-pipeline