

Media Cymru × PDR × Alacrity Foundation Development Fund 2025

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

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Overview

Media Cymru's aim is to support the growth of Wales's media sector by investing in Research and Development (R&D) to deliver transformative economic and social impacts.

We want to invest in people and companies that can match global competitors in their scale of innovation ambition and skills. The Media Cymru Development Fund enables Wales based individuals and companies to apply for between £10,000 and £50,000 to research and develop innovation-driven products, services and experiences within the media sector.

We would like you to set out a potential challenge, issue or opportunity to explore through a six to twelve month R&D project. You should apply with a summary of the product, service or experience you wish to develop.

You will already have done some initial work into assessing the feasibility of this product, service or experience, as well as its suitability in addressing a particular issue or challenge faced by the media sector.

We are looking for ideas that have long term potential for you or your business beyond the life of the project. By the end of the project, we would like you to have developed a working prototype or minimum viable product as an output from your R&D. We would also like you to have developed a solid business plan, a cashflow forecast and a pitch deck ready for investors.

Your project can focus on one or more of the following:

- New media formats and the development of innovative content
- Advanced media production, including the convergence of virtual production and traditional production
- New and inclusive media business models and production processes
- Net zero and the decarbonisation of the screen sector (projects that respond to the findings of the [Screen New Deal Transformation Plan for Wales](#) are particularly welcome)

- Immersive storytelling through extended reality (XR) technologies, including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR)
- Video game content and production, including convergence with other media
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies as tools for media production
- Placemaking, including cultural and media tourism
- Bilingual and multilingual production
- News and public information
- Music, voice and audio production, including performance and distribution.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive or limiting.

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

- Generic content development (for example, the development of short films, feature films or television pilots that conform to standard genres and storytelling practices)
- General business development, or
- One-off art commissions.

Accessibility

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.

Key Dates

- **3 February 2025** – Applications open
- **28 February 2025** – Applications close at noon: please note, applications will **not** be accepted after this time
- **14 April 2025** – Applicants notified (applicants should note that it can take up to 5 weeks for contracts to be issued)
- **9 June 2025** – Projects begin.

Media Cymru's definition of Research and Development (R&D)

R&D activities are defined as creative and systematic work undertaken to address challenges and to create new or improved products, services, processes or experiences.

In a media context, this could mean exploring, experimenting with or testing new technology such as extended reality, artificial intelligence or virtual production. It could also mean exploring radical, fairer and more planet-friendly ways of working. It could involve testing new methods of producing, distributing and experiencing content, or new ways of reaching audiences and being more sensitive to their needs and demands.

The kind of R&D projects we are looking for are:

- **Novel:** they will be based on original concepts and hypotheses, not obvious ones.
- **Creative:** they will take experimental approaches and generate new findings.

- **Uncertain:** they will begin with a degree of uncertainty about the final outcomes.
- **Systematic:** they will be based on a planned and budgeted approach.
- **Transferable:** they will generate results that can be reproduced to gain wider benefits.

Media Cymru's approach to Content Development

We welcome applications for R&D projects that explore innovative and novel approaches to content development, the creation of new media formats and content production techniques. We do not, however, commission the full development of commercial media content. What this means, in practice, is that the outcome of a Media Cymru R&D content development project is likely to be a prototype, proof of concept, pitch deck, sizzle reel or technical plan, rather than a finished film or immersive experience.

Examples of content development activities that would be eligible for R&D funding from Media Cymru include:

- Exploring and testing the use of new technologies such as AI, advanced media production technologies, or XR technologies.
- New collaborations that span different creative sub-sectors such as television/ film production, gaming and live performance, to create new forms of convergent media content and distribution.
- Innovative approaches to storytelling.
- Knowledge exchange activities, such as focus groups and workshops, designed to uncover new concepts, approaches or perspectives to inform the development of content.
- Audience research that leads to conceptual innovation and/ or the production of content that reaches more diverse or underserved audiences

- Market research that leads to deeper understanding of global markets and the development of strategies for targeted economic growth.

Portfolio approach

We want to fund a variety of projects across different technologies, markets, technological maturities, location and research categories. We call this a portfolio approach.

Following Media Cymru assessment, all fundable applications will be considered by a panel of independent advisors and relevant members of the Media Cymru Delivery Team. The panel will review the applications in line with the Portfolio Criteria and recommend to Media Cymru which projects would make up a balanced portfolio across the programme's four strategic pillars (see below). That recommendation will inform Media Cymru's final decision on funding awards.

Media Cymru Pillars

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

The Media Cymru programme strategic pillars are:

- [Green](#) - reducing the negative environmental impact of the sector
- [Fair](#) - creating a fair, equal and diverse sector
- [Global](#) - increasing international collaborations
- [Growth](#) - driving growth and productivity through R&D

Eligibility

With all our activity, we are keen to reach the widest audience possible to ensure 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 to address these structural imbalances in the sector. We also hope to inspire transformative and inclusive lines of research and development that will challenge existing ways of producing and thinking.

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

Eligibility criteria:

- Your company or practice is based in Wales
- You have a clearly articulated R&D idea
- You are in the Welsh media industry, or your idea directly benefits the Welsh media industry
- You can dedicate time and effort to complete an R&D project between June 2025 and May 2026
- We will only accept and fund one application per/company/organisation as a project lead

Project support

If successful, participants will benefit from four mandatory sessions (totalling eight hours), plus an optional session (three 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: Ideation and Prototyping

Session four: Findings - Feasibility and next steps

There will also be four mandatory support sessions (totalling eight 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.

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

Subsidy control

A subsidy is where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives an enterprise an economic advantage. Subsidies that are awarded, in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, provide a legitimate way for public funding to support economic activity.

The Media Cymru Development Fund is offered in the form of a cash grant from Cardiff University, of up to £50,000. There are two Subsidy Control routes under which the Media Cymru Development Fund could be issued: **Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA)** or **Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme (RDI SSS)**.

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 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](#), 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.

If this proposed amount exceeds £315,000, you may be eligible for the Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme (RDI SSS). Please contact media.cymru@cardiff.ac.uk for more information and guidance.

Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme

Media Cymru support awarded as a cash grant under the Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme (RDI SSS) is in accordance with Section 10 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. In your application, you will be asked to declare your eligibility for RDI SSS and provide information that establishes how the project, your organisation and the level of funding meet the scheme criteria.

The maximum percentage of RDI SSS grant support Media Cymru can provide depends on the size of the company (as determined under Company Act 2006) and the category of research and development activity your project is proposing to deliver.

Qualifying criteria	Small enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises
Turnover	Not more than £10.2 million	Not more than £36 million
Balance Sheet Total	Not more than £5.1 million	Not more than £18 million
Number of Employees	Not more than 50	Not more than 250

Any companies that do not meet the criteria for small or medium are large companies. Further information is available under the [UK Government Companies House guidance](#).

Categories of research activity

Industrial research is the planned research or critical investigation that is aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes, or services; or that is aimed at bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes, or services.

Experimental development means acquiring, combining, shaping, and using existing scientific, technological, business, and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes, or services.

Level of funding available

	Industrial Research	Experimental Development
Small Enterprises	70% of the eligible costs of the project	45% of the eligible costs of the project
Medium Enterprises	60 % of the eligible costs of the project	35% of the eligible costs of the project
Large Enterprises	50% of the eligible costs of the project	25% of the eligible costs of the project

Eligible costs

Media Cymru will provide you with a budget template to capture your total eligible costs. The maximum grant you can request is limited to the percentage of these costs as identified in the table above. All costs must be incurred as a direct result of the project, limited to those strictly necessary for the project, and incurred between the start and end date of the project.

Under the RDI SSS scheme, the following costs are eligible:

- Staff or personnel costs; researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project.
- Costs of equipment to the extent employed on the project.
- Costs of conducting research and of external consultancy and contractual research or other knowledge assets, including patents bought or licenced from outside sources.
- Project operating costs such as materials, supplies, and similar products.
- Overheads (your methodology or calculating these will need to be reviewed by Media Cymru).

If awarded funding under RDI SSS, we will ask you to evidence the costs that you have incurred when you claim the grant from us. Additional details and guidance on providing this financial information, evidence and retention policies will be provided upon confirmation of eligibility for RDI SSS.

The budget template will ask you to confirm other sources of income for the project. In addition, it will ask you to demonstrate how you will support the balance of project costs not covered by the grant, which is known as your **match funding**. The balance of costs you pay for, less any other sources of income/external funding for the project, is your match-funding contribution met from your own resources. Other income to support the project might include other sources of external funding from other cash investors or public grants.

The value of all public funding used to support the project must not exceed the percentage of the permitted subsidy. In-kind contributions to the project from third parties are not part of your eligible costs or match funding.

A member of our team will be happy to talk to you about your project ideas, fit to scheme requirements and budget queries. Please contact media.cymru@cardiff.ac.uk.

Responsibilities of the applicant

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

The lead applicant is responsible for:

- Acting as the 'contractual lead' or signatory to the Media Cymru Grant Agreement
- Leading, managing and delivering the project in accordance with the agreed proposal and budget
- Claiming and receiving grant funding and keeping appropriate financial records of all expenditure
- Acting as the point of contact for reporting and monitoring on the project, 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 lead 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 the Subsidy Control Act 2022 at the time we confirm you will be awarded funding.

Should you have any queries around managing finances, please contact media.cymru@cardiff.ac.uk and we will be happy to provide guidance.

Ethics and Responsible Innovation

Media Cymru adheres to the highest possible standards when it comes to [research ethics](#). We have some fundamental values that guide our procedures, directly aligned with the main objectives of Media Cymru. Our commitment to high ethical standards also seeks to inform, foster and support the R&D activities planned and developed by our funded projects. Following UKRI's [Responsible Innovation Framework](#), our assessment panels will consider the ethical impact of the proposed R&D project (including potentially unintended consequences). Please ensure that you take ethical considerations into account in your application, particularly when demonstrating the potential economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of the proposed R&D project.

Assessment criteria

Your application proposals will be assessed in five key areas:

1. **Your R&D idea**

We want you to clearly explain the idea for the product, service or experience you would like to develop through this R&D funding. We would also like you to articulate any feasibility work you have completed that would support your proposal.

2. **The R&D activities you would like to undertake**

We define R&D as a creative and 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 16 hours of support from PDR and The Alacrity Foundation in your plan.

4. Budget and finances

For applicants taking the Minimal Financial Assistance subsidy control route (see Subsidy control section), at the application 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.

Applicants taking the Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme route will be required to provide a full budget with an account of their proposed match funding.

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

5. **Foreseen impact**

a. **Economic impact**

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

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

Your response could refer to:

- The target markets for the product, service or experience you wish to create and any other potential markets (domestic, international or both)
- The size of the target markets for the product, service or experience you wish to create
- The long-term financial sustainability of the product, service or experience you will create through your R&D
- Reduced costs / increased production efficiency
- Increased revenue from sales
- Increased revenue from licensing
- Increased revenue from exports
- New business model
- Improved quality of products, services and/or experiences
- Increased employment of other staff
- Development of new intellectual property (IP)
- Exploitation of existing IP.

The more tangible and ambitious these benefits are, the stronger 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:

- 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
- Increasing international awareness of the Welsh media sector and fostering international collaboration.

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.

Your response could refer to:

- 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.

Application questions

Please note all applications must be submitted via the online form on our website: <https://media.cymru/funding/development-fund/>

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

Criteria

- My enterprise (company or freelance) is based in Wales
- I/My company is eligible to receive grant funding awarded under Minimum Financial Assistance. (please see grant funding eligibility criteria)
- I/My company has availability and capacity to work on this project between June 2025 and May 2026.

1. Project title

2. Please introduce us to yourself/company/organisation and the work that you currently undertake (max. 300 words).

3. Please write a summary of the product, service or experience you would like to develop through this R&D project (max. 300 words).

4. Please tell us about any work you have undertaken to assess the feasibility of the idea you would like to develop (max. 300 words).

5. Please tell us about the Research and Development (R&D) activities you would like to undertake during this project and how this will support the development of a product, service or experience (max. 300 words).

6. What is your proposed duration for the project in months?
Your project should last between 9 – 12 months.

7. 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.

8. What is your estimated budget for the R&D phase?

We are offering between £10,000 and £50,000 for this round of funding.

9. Please provide an indication of the kind of costs you are likely to incur in the delivery of your project through 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.

10. 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. 300 words).

Your response could refer to: See 'Application Assessment Criteria: Foreseen impact: Economic impact' above.

11. Please explain how your project will have a positive social and cultural impact (max. 250 words).

See 'Application Assessment Criteria: Foreseen impact: Social and cultural impact' above.

12. Please explain how your project will have a positive environmental impact (max. 250 words).

See 'Application Assessment Criteria: Foreseen impact: Environmental impact' above.

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

<https://media.cymru/funding>

FAQs

What amount of funding does Media Cymru offer?

Media Cymru will provide up to £50,000 development funding towards a 12-month R&D project.

I have applied for Media Cymru Funding previously, can I apply again?

Yes. Any application for Media Cymru funding must address the application assessment criteria and directly answer and evidence the questions in the application form (see above).

Can projects be collaborations between multiple partners?

Yes. We encourage collaborations, but each project application must be led by one person or organisation.

Can my project include additional funding or grants not provided by Media Cymru?

All costs must be clearly defined in your project budget and should be clear which project costs are met using Media Cymru funding. If your project includes additional funding that is not provided by Media Cymru, this should also be clearly specified in your budget. Throughout your project the Media Cymru delivery team will monitor your project budget with you during regular milestone meetings.