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## ARFOR PROGRAMME – Enterprising Communities Guidance

The purpose of ARFOR is:

Opportunities to see and use the Welsh language daily. Support the communities that are Welsh language heartlands to thrive via economic interventions that will also contribute to increasing opportunities to see and use the Welsh language daily

The purpose of Enterprising Communities is:

To develop Welsh Language Spaces that offer a natural environment for people to work and socialise through the medium of Welsh

### What is the Enterprising Communities Fund?

The fund:

- Provides funding to contribute to revenue and capital costs.
- Provides financial support to fund up to 70% of project costs.
- Has support of between £5,000 and £75,000 available.

Targeting commercial, social and collaborative enterprises that aim to retain and increase local wealth in areas considered Welsh language heartlands of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire (ARFOR region).

The fund shall support projects that:

- Create opportunities to innovate and develop new enterprises in line with local resources, landscape and environment.
- Create or enhance modern employment opportunities (e.g., in the fields of media, the digital world, research, professional services).
- Keep wealth in the region (e.g., via areas such as producing and saving energy, supply chains in the foundational sectors).

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## Challenges for the ARFOR region

Successful projects will respond to the challenges set out below that are common across the ARFOR region:

### JOBS

- The general opinion is that the jobs available within the ARFOR Region do not offer sufficient income to enable people to realise their aspirations (both in terms of pay and life-work balance).
- The lack of variety in jobs is a barrier to people and young families staying in or returning to their native communities.
- There is a gap between the skills available and the needs of employers.

### THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- Communities and individuals need to take advantage of the region's unique socio-economic, environmental, cultural and linguistic opportunities and features.
- There is a need to add value to local produce.
- There is a need to take advantage on the foundational and circular economy sectors, by ensuring that more money circulates in the region.
- There is a need to respond to the risks of losing or of being at risk of losing key local resources and services in communities.

### THE WELSH LANGUAGE

- Commercial and social enterprises need to contribute more to increasing the use of the Welsh language in order to add value to their goods / services and maintain a sense of place in the communities of the ARFOR Programme region.
- We will expect applicants to show how they would deliver the following outputs and outcomes of the ARFOR Programme in relation to the Welsh language.
  - Number of new/further development of Welsh language spaces
  - Number of jobs that require bilingual skills
  - Increased use of the Welsh language by the organisation
  - Innovative opportunities to increase the use and number of speakers of the Welsh language

This is an opportunity for you to offer a new way of responding to these challenges.



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## ARFOR Strategic Objectives

**A Specific Budget for supporting enterprises in the ARFOR Programme Region to develop projects that respond to ARFOR's Strategic Objectives:**

- 1. Create opportunities for young people and families (aged  $\leq 35$ ) to stay in or return to their native communities** – and supporting them to succeed locally via enterprise or career development and ensuring a livelihood that achieves their aspirations.
- 2. Create enterprising communities within the Welsh-speaking heartland** – by supporting commercial and community enterprises that aim to retain and increase local wealth by utilising the unique identity and qualities of their areas.
- 3. Maximise the benefit of activity through collaboration** – by establishing a learning mindset, by continuously doing and improving, learning from activity in individual areas and expanding it, tailored to local conditions.
- 4. Strengthening the identity of communities that have a high concentration of Welsh speakers** – by supporting the use and visibility of the Welsh language, promoting a sense of place and local loyalty, as well as increasing awareness of what the region has in common.

## Who is the Enterprising Communities Fund targeting?

The project targets enterprises that are eager to take advantage of the unique identity and qualities that are central to the communities of the ARFOR Region, and/or enterprises that aim to keep and increase local wealth.

The aim of the ARFOR Programme is to support businesses and enterprises from all sectors who aspire to grow and play a leading role in the economic growth of their native communities and the ARFOR Region.

The fund is open to the following:

- Social enterprises, cooperative enterprises and community groups – they must have commercial element to the business and activities must be sustainable after the ARFOR Programme.
- Native businesses that are established and operational in the ARFOR area
- Businesses outside the ARFOR Programme region but that are eager to expand or relocate within the region



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## What can the fund help you to do?

The project will provide financial support to enterprises to overcome the current economic challenges and develop.

The main focus will be on supporting the economy and in so doing, create good jobs\*, supporting the Welsh language (increasing opportunities to use the language), and respond to the needs and aspirations of local people and communities. The focus is not solely on creating growth.

### *\* Definition of Good Jobs*

- Jobs that enable individuals to live in their communities
- Jobs that achieve career and enterprise aspirations
- Jobs that contribute to the prosperity of the local economy
- Salaries that are equal to or above the Living Wage

Here are some examples of possible projects:

- An opportunity to innovate and develop new enterprises in line with local resources, landscape and environment.
- Create or enhance modern employment opportunities (e.g., in the fields of media, the digital world, research, professional services).
- Keep wealth in the region (e.g., via areas such as producing and saving energy, supply chains in the foundational sectors).

And in so doing:

- Develop Welsh Language Spaces that offer a natural environment for people to work and socialise through the medium of Welsh.
- Create opportunities for the Welsh language to thrive, e.g., by creating jobs for Welsh speakers; offering Welsh lessons to staff; increasing the services offered through the medium of Welsh; increasing the visible use of the Welsh language or developing a new brand where Welsh is equally prominent or more prominent than English.

Essentially, the fund is seeking new and innovative projects that respond to the challenges set out above and the strategic objectives of the ARFOR Programme.

See above for the strategic objectives of the ARFOR programme.

**All projects must be completed by the end of December 2024.**



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## Support available

- Funding to contribute to revenue and capital costs.
- Financial support to fund up to 70% of project costs.
- Support packages of between £5,000 and £75,000 are available.
- There is a minimum invoice amount of £250.
- Support to develop and create Welsh language spaces – costs associated with rent, legal costs; decorating costs; furniture and fixings.
- Welsh language Staff Costs – to support the business to grow, develop new business opportunities or offer a new service. There is an expectation for any new jobs funded to continue beyond the end of the ARFOR Programme March 2025.

Any new staff appointed should be Welsh Speakers or commit to learning. It is possible to get financial support for staff training to learn Welsh or to improve their Welsh Language skills.

- Staff costs for a new business or a pre-existing business to develop business and create a new product/service that has been identified.
- Training costs for new staff created through ARFOR Programme support or existing staff to meet the needs of the ARFOR Programme.
- Small-scale equipment.
- Capital costs.
- Each Local Authority has the discretion to accept applications for specialist Vehicles. This is for Vehicles that are going to allow the Business to develop in line with the guidelines for the Programme. We will not fund Vehicles for everyday use.
- It is possible in special circumstances, and at the request of the applicant, for Local Authorities to allow expenditure based on risk



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## The fund cannot finance the following

- Projects that already exist.
- Projects that have been funded by other Welsh Government funds.
- Pure research (the projects will need to be practical ones).
- It is not possible to use UK Levelling Up Fund monies as match-funding for Enterprising Communities, but it can be used to add value to any projects.
- Grants are not considered for cash purchases.
- Items purchased by leasing, hire purchase, finance leases/extended credit arrangements will not be considered for grant funding.
- Items purchased with credit cards are eligible, but the applicant will need to show that the sum paid by the card associated with the item(s) in the grant application has been paid in full before claiming the grant.
- No grant will be offered or paid if the business or applicant is in arrears regarding any payment to any of the local authorities that are involved in the project and its delivery.
- Purchase of Domestic Property and/or Land
- Residential/Domestic Accommodation
- Repair, maintenance work and/or general business running costs
- Equipment or services that need to be purchased in order to conform to Statutory Regulations
- Recoverable VAT
- Purchasing of assets under Hire Purchase (HP), Extended Credit Agreements or Lease agreements

## Expectations

Applicants will need to:



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- Commit to the principles of ARFOR, by signing an agreement of joint principles.
  - Complete a linguistic assessment via the Welsh Language Commissioner's Cynnig Cymraeg (Welsh Offer) scheme.
  - Commit to attending specific webinars e.g., Net Zero; Bilingualism etc
  - Commit to reviewing and increasing the use of the Welsh Language.
  - Commit to offering the Living Wage rates of the Living Wage Foundation.
  - Commit to promoting the ARFOR Programme to acknowledge any financial support and be part of any campaigns for the ARFOR Programme e.g. Bwrlwm ARFOR



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## Outputs

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|---|------------|
| • New enterprises receiving support     | 160        |
| • Current enterprises receiving support | 200        |
| • Investment created                    | £2,250,000 |
| • New product / service secured         | 250        |
| • Jobs created                          | 578        |
| • Jobs safeguarded                      | 178        |
| • Participants in social enterprises    | 100        |
- Development of Welsh Language Spaces that offer a natural environment for people to work and socialise through the medium of Welsh.
  - Create opportunities for the Welsh language to prosper, e.g.,
    - by creating jobs for Welsh speakers,
    - offering Welsh lessons to staff,
    - increasing the services offered through the medium of Welsh,
    - increasing the visible use of the Welsh language or developing a new brand where the Welsh language is equally or more visible than English.

### *Outcomes (mid-term)*

- Enterprises meeting the needs of residents and communities
- Enterprises are rooted in their communities
- Keeping wealth in communities
- Increasing the use of the Welsh language in communities
- Ensuring the prosperity and sustainability of our Welsh Language Communities
- Increase in the quality of jobs within enterprises

### *Effects (long-term)*

- Reduction the wealth gap
- More varied economic foundations
- A more circular economy
- Increase in the vitality of communities
- Increase in the resilience and sustainability of communities
- Rate of Welsh speakers stabilises
- People can live, work and enjoy in the ARFOR Region





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## Applying to the fund

There is no timetable or closing date. The fund shall be open until the budget has been fully allocated.

You must ensure that you have included all of the documentation in the checklist.

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## CHECKLIST – BEFORE SUBMISSION

Tick the following checklist to ensure that all information has been considered when you submit your application.

	Completed Application Form	
	Beneficiaries Form	
	Signed Principles of ARFOR Agreement	
	Proof of Welsh Language Commissioner Language Assessment	
	Business Plan	
	Two years' past accounts (management accounts if available)	
	3 year financial forecast (cash flow and profit and loss)	
	Statutory permissions including planning permission, building regulations (if applicable)	
	Lease agreement (if applicable)	
	Proof of match-funding	
	Acknowledgement of conflict of interest (if applicable)	
	Job description(s) if applicable	

