

Innovation Capacity Development Fund 2019-20

Impact on Economic Growth: case study template

Institution:	Aberystwyth University
Element of RWIF strategy supported (select from drop down list):	Cross cutting
Vision for Research and Innovation Pillars (select those that apply):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration
Title of case study / project / initiative:	GRRaIN (Growth, Rural Resilience and Innovation Network): Supporting business growth and resilience across Mid-Wales
<p>Summary description: (max 150 words) [Briefly describe the project, including any public, third sector or business partnerships involved]</p> <p>Through the support of funding linked to AU's RWIF Strategy, GRRaIN was established in 2020 to collate rural enterprise activities from Aberystwyth Business School, ABERINNOVATION, Institute of Biology, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) Distance Learning and the Careers Service (supplying Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy support on behalf of the Welsh Government). Providing a platform and strategy for promoting business and public engagement with AU research and rural enterprise activities.</p> <p>Unlike generic entrepreneurship hubs, Aberystwyth's GRRaIN has the distinction of catering for rural based and rural focussed enterprises and research, and student, graduate and staff start-ups. GRRaIN aims to support rural start-ups and businesses, engage with local/regional Business Networks, help host and establish new networks, and improve the economic growth and resilience of business across Mid-Wales and beyond. It will do this by facilitating knowledge exchange (KE) and collaboration between AU and rural organisations and businesses, both within Wales and further afield.</p>	
<p>Project / initiative impact: (max 200 words) [Describe the economic impact of this project, including insights gained, and positive outcomes (whether planned or unforeseen); provide context in terms of the Vision for R&I pillars noted above]</p>	

Set up in 2020 GRRaIN, established an internal advisory group, recruited an administrator and created a website and social media presence.

AU researchers were commissioned by the Police & Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys and Welsh Police to develop a rural crime survey for Wales. The survey, scheduled for November 2021, will engage individuals and organisations across Wales, and help to inform police resources and strategies. GRRaIN also sponsored a £500 rural enterprise prize in the annual InvEnterPrize competition, organised by AU's Careers Service and supported by Big Ideas Wales. The winners, Ride Dyfi, have made significant strides with their business to support mountain-biking tourism in North-East Wales, and plan to expand UK-wide, and globally. AU also collaborated with eight partner universities for a BBSRC application for £829651.20 for a National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise focused on Geographical Indications of Origin or Protected Food Names, KE in the food sector. Although unsuccessful groundwork was laid for future collaborations and applications.

GRRaIN will establish relationships with organisations across Wales, and the UK, including Menter a Busnes, the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICER) in England, the Scottish Royal University College (SRUC), the Police, the Farmers Union of Wales (FUW) and the National Farmers Union (NFU).

Future activity: (max 150 words)

[Is the project now sustainable, or are there plans for continuing support, increased scale, or growth through follow-on projects – if so how will these be funded?]

Supported by a further RWIF funding in 2021/22, future funding is anticipated as part of AU's Rural Futures Hub. GRRaIN's launch event, planned for October 2021, aims to include Farming Unions, Welsh Government, Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers, and Hybu Cig Cymru. GRRaIN will facilitate KE, collaboration and innovation for rural entrepreneurship in Wales and beyond:

- Showcasing AU research including that of the Centre for Local and Regional Enterprise (CLARE) and the Centre for Responsible Societies (CRiSis). The PGCert in Change Leadership, delivered through Menter a Busnes, will also benefit from GRRaIN's networks.
- Promoting further engagement with AberInnovation, a £40.5m investment in translational research facilities to support companies to collaborate with academic experts to develop innovative products and services in the Agri-sciences.
- Developing training, technical briefings, and KE for research findings and industry needs.
- Also supporting those setting up new rural, and rural based business and social enterprises.

<p>Quote(s) e.g. from external business partners(s), graduates / students: (around 60 words) [This case study will be provided to Welsh Government as evidence of the economic impact of this additional RWIF support, and there is potential for HEFCW to publish it. Please provide a quote that helps demonstrate the impact of engagement]</p> <p>“I look forward to working with Aberystwyth University to produce the first all Wales Rural & Wildlife Crime survey. It’s vitally important that we are able to listen to the public of Wales and what is impactful and important to them. This survey will ... help us to improve the rural policing that they [the public] deserve here in Wales.” (Rob Taylor QPM, Wales Rural & Wildlife Crime Coordinator, Police Liaison Unit, Welsh Government, 21 September 2021)</p>	
<p>Contacts: (website; contact name; email; phone)</p>	<p>Wyn Morris dmm@aber.ac.uk 01970 622513</p>

<p>How did the activity help support the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals (select those that apply):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A prosperous Wales <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A resilient Wales <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A healthier Wales <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A more equal Wales <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Wales of cohesive communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A globally responsible Wales
<p>[Briefly outline how the project helped support the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015]</p> <p>GRRaIN aligns with the Well-being Act and contributes to its’ goals as it supports resilience and sustainable development, as laid out in the Act, for rural enterprises, by supporting rural start-ups and businesses which will support and increase economic growth, resilience and prosperity within Wales whilst, also supporting the well-being of rural communities. GRRaIN meets the above goals:</p> <p>A prosperous Wales – supporting the development of entrepreneurial activities in rural-areas in Wales GRRaIN aims to support economic growth and a prosperous Wales.</p> <p>A resilient Wales – supporting KE activities and the development of innovative strategies and practical solutions by rural and rural based businesses GRRaIN will help to create and support a resilient Wales.</p>	

A healthier Wales – supporting the development, resilience and growth of rural enterprises will support the health and wellbeing of communities in Wales.

A more-equal Wales – by helping support rural enterprises GRRaIN will address one of the key challenges facing rural communities under the Welsh Government's National Development Framework, 2020-204, which will support the development of a more equal Wales.

A Wales of cohesive communities – supporting rural enterprises and their resilience and economic growth will also help to support the creation of cohesive communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – supporting Welsh rural enterprises through both languages will help to support and promote a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

A globally responsible Wales – GRRaIN will contribute to resilience, sustainability, growth, and well-being across Wales and further afield, including globally.