

Next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme

Your name: Gwenith Price, Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner

Organisation (if applicable): Welsh Language Commissioner

Email / telephone number: lowri.williams@cyg-wlc.cymru

Your address:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Q1. Please answer the following questions for each of the 8 proposed components of the [next phase of Sêr Cymru](#).

Q1a. Would you support inclusion of 'Capacity Building Awards' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

Yes

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Building research capacity in disciplines that affect the Welsh language is essential to contribute to facilitating the implementation of the Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Please see our response to question 12 below for further clarification

Q1b. Would you support inclusion of 'Incoming International Fellowships' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

Yes

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

It would be useful to have an international perspective on research in areas affecting the Welsh language.

Q1c. Would you support inclusion of 'Outgoing International Fellowships' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

Yes

No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

It would be useful to have an international perspective on research in areas affecting the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Commissioner is Chair of the International Association of Language Commissioners ([International Association of Language Commissioners - Home](#)). We would be happy to facilitate links between academics from Wales and members of this Association and would benefit from comparative research of their work or the official/minority language that they support.

Q1d. Would you support inclusion of 'Industry Academia Fellowships' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

Yes

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

It would be useful to have international input and to see the relationship between academia and industry in research in a number of areas that affect the Welsh language. This could contribute to realizing the Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Please see our response to question 12 for further information.

Q1e. Would you support inclusion of 'PhD Studentships' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

Yes

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Building research capacity through doctoral scholarships is important in disciplines that affect the Welsh language, and through the medium of Welsh. This could contribute to realizing the Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Please see our response to question 12 for further information.

Q1f. Would you support inclusion of 'Returning Fellowships' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Please see above

Q1g. Would you support inclusion of 'National Research Networks' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

We believe that there is an obvious place in Wales to establish national research networks relating to the Welsh language. It is also necessary to ensure that networks that are not specifically involved in the Welsh language consider the Welsh language in the context of their work. See our response to question 12 for further explanation.

Q1h. Would you support inclusion of 'Funding for workshops and events' in the next phase of the Sêr Cymru programme?

- Yes
- No

Please explain your response further if you can, including any suggestions for how this element would work best.

Funding for workshops and events related to research on the Welsh language is essential in order to contribute to realizing the vision of the Welsh Government's 2050 Strategy for the Welsh language. Please see our response to question 12 for more information.

Q2. Where would you rank each of the components? Please indicate a ranking number between 1 and 8, where 1 = top priority and 8 = lowest priority.

Please give a different ranking for each element and explain your response further if you can.

Component of new phase	Ranking (1 to 8)
Capacity Building Awards	
Incoming International Fellowships	

Outgoing International Fellowships	
National and International Industry Academia Fellowships	
PhD Studentships	
Returning Fellowships programme	
National Research Networks	
Funding for workshops and events	

Q3. Do you feel there are any components missing from the proposed funding programme?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what you feel is missing further if you can.

No comment

Q4. Would you find it beneficial to have the option to propose a phased project, incorporating a number of components?

Yes

No

Please explain your response further if you can.

No comment

Q5. Do you agree with 'Sêr Cymru National Institute of Advanced Studies (SCNIAS)' or 'Sêr Cymru IV' as the proposed title of the next phase of the programme?

Sêr Cymru National Institute of Advanced Studies (SCNIAS)

Sêr Cymru IV

Please explain your response further if you can.

We would not have any opposition to this.

Q6. Do you agree that a proposed outcome should be enhanced collaboration?

Yes

No

Please explain your response further if you can.

No comment.

Q7. This question is about the proposed broad themes for the new programme, detailed below:

Broad themes:

- life sciences
- health and social care
- low carbon and net zero
- energy
- environment and land use
- marine and fisheries
- biodiversity
- engineering
- tourism, sports, arts

Cross-cutting themes:

- social sciences
- digital
- Welsh language
- wellbeing

Q7a: Where would you rank each of the broad themes? Please indicate a ranking number between 1 and 9 (1 = top priority and 9 = lowest priority). *

Themes	Ranking (1 to 9)
Biodiversity	
Energy	
Engineering	
Environment and land use	
Health and social care	
Life sciences	
Low carbon and net zero	
Marine and fisheries	
Tourism, sports, arts	

Q7b. Do you agree with the cross-cutting themes?

Yes

No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Please see your response to question 12 below

Q7c. Do you feel any themes are missing (broad or cross-cutting)?

Yes

No

Please explain your response further if you can.

Please see our response to question 12 below. We believe that the relationship between the broad and cross-cutting themes is unclear. The Welsh language could and should be both broad and cross-cutting themes.

Q8. What mechanisms could we put in place to make Sêr Cymru funding opportunities more attractive and accessible to a diverse range of applicants

No comment.

Q9. Is there anything else you wish to feedback about the proposed funding programme?

Please see our response to question 12 below.

Q10. Which stakeholder group would you consider yourself to represent:

Private sector

Q11: We would like to know your views on the effects that 'next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme' would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Please see our response to question 12 below.

Q12: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy 'next phase of the Sêr Cymru research funding programme' could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the

English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The role of the Welsh Language Commissioner was established as a result of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The principal statutory aim of the Commissioner is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. The Welsh Language Commissioner's vision is to see a Wales where people can live their lives through the medium of Welsh. The Commissioner oversees the compliance of public bodies with the Welsh language standards and works with third sector and private sector bodies to promote their use of the language. We also aim to ensure that the Welsh language is a central consideration in policy and legislation. We also provide advice to various individuals and organisations on the standardised forms of Welsh place-names. The Commissioner also has a specific statutory duty to publish a report every five years outlining the situation of the Welsh language ([The position of the Welsh language 2016-20: 5 Year Report \(welshlanguagecommissioner.wales\)](http://welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)). In order to undertake these activities, we use research about the Welsh language and commission research where possible. But referring to independent academic research about the Welsh language is essential also, as the Commissioner emphasised on page 294 of the 5 year report. We urge you to consider the Commissioner's conclusion in the report that there is a need to fund more independent research on the Welsh language, and the warning about the lack of purposeful funding streams on the Welsh language. Our response to this consultation therefore specifically relates to the impact of the Sêr Cymru funding programme on the Welsh language. Our main interest is to ensure that research on the Welsh language is undertaken across all disciplines and areas which impact opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language and enable people to live their lives through the medium of Welsh.

It is positive that the Welsh language is a cross-cutting theme in the next phase of Sêr Cymru. The Welsh language is also relevant to each of the broad themes proposed. However, it is not clear to us what that means from a practical perspective for the nature of the proposed projects funded by the Sêr Cymru programme and what the difference is between a broad theme and cross-cutting theme. We would argue that the Welsh language is also a broad theme as it covers so many relevant areas. We believe it would be beneficial to explain this difference when developing the programme. It must be ensured that specific research is undertaken with regards to the Welsh language within the broad and cross-cutting areas referred to, and that the Welsh language is not a secondary or consequential consideration for research carried out under the Sêr Cymru programme. To put it simply, far more research is needed about the Welsh language and many of the themes within the programme, including:

- health and social care, well-being, e.g.
 - standardised assessment methods for bilingual speakers with different health conditions, e.g., dementia, mental health, stroke.
 - methods and resources to treat multilingual speakers with different health conditions
 - arrangements for planning and providing care in contexts where care can be provided through the medium of Welsh and multilingually

- low carbon and Net Zero, energy, the environment and land use, biodiversity, marine life, and fisheries, e.g.
 - the relationship between agriculture, land use, the sea, and Welsh-speaking communities
 - decarbonisation and opportunities to promote the Welsh language in rural areas
 - the Welsh language and the green economy
- tourism, sports, and the arts
 - The impact of tourism on communities and the Welsh language,
 - opportunities for the Welsh language to thrive as a result of sustainable tourism
 - promoting the Welsh language through sports and the arts
 - how sports and the arts can promote the Welsh language
- social sciences
 - There are endless opportunities for research on the Welsh language within the social sciences, including sociolinguistic studies regarding the Welsh language and language planning. See the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy and our comments below regarding this.
 - the contribution of the Welsh language to the Welsh economy, please see section 6 of [The Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods](#), commissioned by the Welsh Government which includes potential areas of future research
 - the impact of the Welsh economy on the viability of the Welsh language, please see section 6 of [The Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods](#), commissioned by the Welsh Government which includes potential areas of future research
 - mainstreaming the Welsh language in economic initiatives, including
 - the Welsh language and the law
 - the Welsh language and the planning system
 - Welsh language teaching methods including immersion education and Welsh for new learners, through technological means and otherwise
 - initiatives to promote the Welsh language in the community, including innovative community developments which also support the Welsh language in the community
 - innovative approaches to workplace planning and Welsh-medium and bilingual workforces
 - lexical research and research into place-names
- Digital
 - Research to facilitate the implementation of the Welsh Government's Welsh language technology and digital media action plan
 - Develop digital technologies to facilitate methods to learn the Welsh language
 - Multilingual technologies to facilitate the use of the Welsh language and other languages
 - Technology to support the provision of services through the medium of Welsh, bilingually and multilingually

- Artificial intelligence and the Welsh language
- Behavioural economic techniques
- Please see the Welsh Government's [Welsh language technology action plan](#) for numerous research activities identified by the Welsh Government.

In essence, the funding programme for Sêr Cymru research should fund projects that are compatible with the Welsh Government's objectives in the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy, which is to reach one million Welsh speakers and increase the number of people who use the language daily by 2050. This would be consistent with the aim of the Strategy – 'In order to be able to measure the effectiveness of our interventions and develop future policy on the basis of evidence, it is essential that we continue to develop our programme of research and evaluation for the Welsh language. We will do this by working in collaboration with research partners in Wales and beyond' (p. 59). The [Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework](#) of the Welsh Government's previous language strategy (A living language: a language for living) also recognized that 'The activity of evaluating the Strategy should not be the preserve of the Welsh Government alone but shared with partners to help ensure the best outcomes for the language' (p.2). This is essential in order to have independent research and guidance at arms length from Government on the implementation of the Strategy. We therefore recommend that you discuss this programme with the Welsh language unit in the Welsh Government. We would recommend that you discuss the programme with the Welsh language unit in the Welsh Government, and the Welsh language research officers in the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services because of their expertise in this area.

The programme should reflect Wales as a bilingual country. Innovative research on the Welsh language in Wales can be shared internationally to promote the use of other languages in a multilingual world. We would be happy to discuss how the International Association of Language Commissioners could act as a forum to contribute to or share relevant research in order to ensure that funded research has an impact. The programme should also fund research through the medium of Welsh in the numerous areas it intends to support, which would be consistent with one of the objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 Strategy – 'We acknowledge that we still need to develop capacity and expertise to conduct research on the Welsh language and through the medium of Welsh' (p. 77). It is crucial that the programme supports and facilitates the requirement for organisations in Wales to comply with Welsh language standards and the intentions of the Welsh Language Measure, and that it does not undermine those intentions. We would be more than happy to discuss how the Commissioner's office could contribute to relevant studies.

We recommend also that you discuss the proposed programme with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol due to its role in promoting the Welsh language in higher education and further education. This includes funding, developing, and training Welsh-medium lecturers and funding both undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships. The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 will lead to the establishment of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research. The Act confirms that the Commission must 'promote.... the carrying out by relevant persons of research and innovation and of activities related to research and

innovation through the medium of Welsh.’ (Part 1, 6(1) (d)). When establishing the Sêr Cymru programme therefore, we believe that this requirement made of the Commission should be addressed, and the programme should be developed accordingly.

Q13: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them: