Submission from WDA

Agriculture & Rural Development Committee

Review of Rural ICT

Response of the

Welsh Development Agency

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Digital Content

1. **Introduction**

1.1 The WDA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee's invitation to submit comments as part of its inquiry into the provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in rural Wales.

1.2 The Agency has played, and continues to play, a key role in promoting and supporting Wales's transformation to an inclusive Information Society. In particular, the Agency established the Wales Information Society (WIS*) initiative culminating in the WIS Strategy and Action Plan, two of whose key priorities are of special relevance to rural areas:

- achieving a knowledge-based economy in Wales as a means of enhancing the economic and social well being of our country, and
- the availability and affordability of advanced broadband telecommunications services as a prerequisite to a transition to such an economy.

1.3 Our response presents an assessment of the issues faced by rural areas and proposes priorities to enable rural Wales to grasp the opportunities that ICTs can offer. We present recommendations for future actions and, in annex, an overview of ICT-based activities and projects underway at present in rural Wales.

* The Wales Information Society initiative was established in 1996 as part of the European Union's Regional Information Society Initiative (RISI), co-financed by the European Commission under Art.6 ERDF/Art.10 ESF, in which 22 regions sought to develop regional strategies and actions plans for information society development employing a common consultative bottom-up methodology and by means of working together to exchange expertise and experience. The WIS Unit remains a core function within the WDA.

2. **Risks and Opportunities Facing Rural Wales in the Emerging Information Age**

2.1 The Information Society poses risks as well as offering opportunities.

- **The risk** is primarily that of seeing ICT infrastructure and services continue being deployed preferentially where the most profitable customer bases are located. This would exclude many rural citizens and businesses from the Information Society and the New Economy for a long time, and probably aggravate existing economic difficulties.

- **The opportunities**, on the other hand, offer added value since ICTs tends to diminish the constraints linked to time and distance. A certain number of activities can now be located outside traditional production centres and a wide range of public services can be efficiently delivered through ICT to sparsely populated or remote areas.

2.2 The OECD's report on ICT and Rural Development (ICT and Rural Development, OECD 2001) offers a useful framework for assessing the risks and opportunities confronting rural areas which can be used to shape appropriate policy interventions:

2.3 *Economic development*: ICTs can increase the efficiency of SMEs, develop their customer base and open new markets. Bringing new activities to rural areas is just as important, to partially compensate the decline of certain traditional activities, while spreading innovative and entrepreneurial practices. Synergies in ICT strategies can increase the attractiveness of rural areas for inhabitants and investors alike. Thus, businesses in rural Wales need to be able to exploit ICT effectively to be competitive in the digital economy, since it provides them – and their competitors – with efficient access information and supply chains and the potential to develop new products, processes and markets. Effective use of ICT enables established and new enterprises to generate business growth providing jobs and income to local communities. However, if the adoption of ICTs by rural businesses fails to keep pace with that of their urban counterparts, the sustainability of the rural economy will be at greater risk.

2.4 *Social Development*: Societal issues are important since ICT development must be inclusive. Public access points, created to raise awareness and offer appropriate training, should be a focus for public policy. E-government and the on-line delivery of public services are also of particular importance in rural areas - often at a disadvantage today in this respect – since a growing proportion of the interaction between individuals, communities and government now takes place via electronic media. ICTs are also an increasingly important resource in education. Furthermore, ICT has an increasingly important role to play in making public sector services more accessible, more efficient and less fragmented to end users*. Denied equality of access to such services, the digital divide will widen and rural areas will become less attractive places to live and work.

✳ 'Ubiquitous Broadband Infrastructure for Wales', WDA, July 2001

2.5 *Infrastructure Development*: Whilst higher bandwidth services* promise to offer a range of benefits to individuals and businesses alike, a key concern is that the competitive supply of such services has tended to concentrate in the densely populated urban areas of the South East coastal strip leaving the disadvantaged areas of the Valleys and rural Wales relatively underserved. This raises the prospect of a widening 'digital divide', with lack of affordable higher bandwidth services reinforcing economic decline (a vicious circle – see Exhibit 1).

✳   Advanced services require higher bandwidth channels. Bandwidth is a term used to describe the information-carrying capacity of a communication channel. Standard telephone channels *can* be used in conjunction with a modem to transfer information between end user equipment such as PCs. However, higher bandwidth offers users faster access to information and a richer on-line experience in a world in which there is increasing convergence in content and in technologies across broadcasting, publishing and the Internet. As a result, higher bandwidth access dramatically increases the propensity of individuals and businesses to use and offer on-line services and processes; it enables new value-added services that would otherwise not be feasible; and it is a pre-requisite for information-intensive knowledge economy businesses.

2.6 There is, however, the potential for a virtuous circle in which increased awareness of higher bandwidth services leads to increased demand for, and supply of, such services and this, in turn, leads to greater appreciation of the benefits they bring. The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) has therefore been actively engaged in initiatives to stimulate the supply of, and demand for, higher bandwidth access in the economically disadvantaged regions of Wales. Projects such as the Llwybr Pathway Partnership and MARAN have resulted in higher bandwidth access being available to a range of businesses and consumers in areas that would not otherwise have been served by private telecommunications service providers.

2.7 In a European context, it has been widely argued that successful territorial development in the Information Age necessitates:

- Affordable access to a modern, advanced telecommunications *infrastructure* and widespread access to end-user equipment;
- *ICT skills* and competences amongst the population or, at least, the training opportunities through which to acquire them;
- The development and supply of a wide range of ICT *applications and services*, both public and private, which meet user needs (citizens, enterprises and public bodies);
- *Stimulation of demand* (e.g. through awareness-raising and other sensitisation programmes) to encourage take-up of services by businesses and citizens; and
- The development of *digital content*.

3. Actions to ensure that the economy and communities of rural Wales can benefit from Information Age developments

3.1 Rural communities have hitherto been disadvantaged by many factors, but not least by their

peripheral (often remote) locations and low population densities. ICTs offer the promise to overcome the disadvantages of location and distance. But the potential of these technologies alone is not enough to bring about such change. Increasingly, the drive for efficiency in the public sector and the competitive pressures of market forces on the private sector has resulted in an agglomerating effect in which we see a growing concentration of service provision in the larger towns and cities. Bringing the benefits of ICT to rural areas is not an easy matter since such action requires careful strategic planning and a modification of traditional spatial policies - but without expected short-term returns. It would be a mistake to seek advantages in the short- to medium-term. These cannot be expected to materialise quickly and be translated into tangible and positive economic impacts. An ICT project, whether on a regional or local basis, needs to be viewed as an on-going process of learning and development.

3.2 The potential is undeniably there and some achievements substantiate this. However, more proactive and specific policies will be necessary to overcome the handicaps faced by rural Wales and to spark the process. The inevitably scattered and fragmented nature of rural communities calls for more strategic, integrated and partnership-based approaches – seeking to aggregate demand, share resources and expertise, avoid wasteful duplication, and optimise the use of scarce resources. Large-scale, strategic projects will be needed since multiple, uncoordinated, small-scale pilot schemes are unlikely to achieve the necessary impacts. At the same time, however, strategic coordination should not be at the expense of the participation of local businesses and inhabitants.

3.3 **Affordable access** – both to advanced services and to end-user equipment – is perhaps the most fundamental issue facing rural areas:

(a) By comparison with more densely-populated urban and suburban areas, more advanced telecommunication provision in rural areas remains limited and, where available, tends to be prohibitively expensive. Commercial telecommunications operators, seeking the best returns on investment, are naturally drawn to the larger towns and cities where the economies of scale of network development (relative to distances covered) make them more profitable. Indeed, commercial operators thus far appear inclined to the view that provision of advanced services in most rural areas will remain unprofitable for the foreseeable future. Such market failure will be overcome only through public intervention. If communities and enterprises in rural areas are to enjoy equal benefits in the Information Age, provision of higher bandwidth services is essential. Without it, the digital divide will widen and the rural deficit deepen.

(b) At the same time, ownership to end-user equipment through which to gain access to telecommunications networks is relatively low in rural areas. Collective provision in the form of local access centres or electronic village halls, in the short term at least, will be required to ensure that all enterprises (however small) and all citizens (no matter how poor) have equal access to ICT-based services. The ongoing development of e-government (including citizens' services on-line) and the prospect of e-democracy considerably raise the stakes. Without effective action, the rural deficit divide could in time also become a democratic deficit.

3.4 **Developing ICT skills** amongst the population of rural communities is of paramount importance in the Information Age to enable them to

- have equality of access to employment opportunities (enhancing or maintaining their employability),
- contribute to the competitiveness of rural enterprises,
- have access to the growing volume of on-line services, and
- for their participation in social and community development.

Moreover, the availability of a skilled workforce increases the attractiveness of an area since it is an increasingly important criterion for employers in their location decisions.

3.5 Growth in the range of on-line **applications and services** plays an important role in developing a critical mass of users. For as long as services delivered through ICT remain limited, businesses and citizens have limited incentives to make the investments required (in terms of equipment, network access, skills etc) in order to make use of them. The public sector should play a leading role in helping to develop a critical mass of services.

3.6 Alongside efforts to develop the range of ICT applications and services available and promote ICT skills development, there is a need to **stimulate the demand** for ICT through a variety of means. It is important to promote not only the benefits but also the risks associated with the emerging Information Society to ensure that individuals and organisations can make well-informed decisions. The risks to the individual of potential exclusion and unemployment, and for businesses of a growing reduction in their competitiveness, are all too real..

3.7 The basic issue concerning the adoption of ICT by SMEs, particularly in rural sectors such as agriculture, forestry etc., is one of awareness about the potential benefits of these tools. For small firms, having long worked without computers and industry-specific software, or having used computers only for general and unrelated tasks (e.g. accounting, stock inventory), understanding the fundamental changes in business processes does not come readily. Adopting ICTs and making best use of them will be dependent in many cases on access to independent business advice in order to grasp new possibilities in terms of:

- increased internal efficiency, better quality control and response to customer requirements, including improved after-sales service;
- access to timely and accurate information to manage rapid technical change, the increased volatility of demand, and new market opportunities;
- access to specialised counselling and other services tailored to business growth needs;
- openings to new (possibly international) markets.

3.8 The development of **digital content** is important to ensure the availability of relevant information to meet local area/community and business needs. Moreover, the production and maintenance of such local

material (reflecting the area's activities, services, heritage and culture etc.) can help to promote the area to a wider audience and, at the same time, become a source of local employment.

4. **ICT services required by businesses and communities**

4.1 If public bodies, businesses and citizens located in rural Wales are to enjoy equal benefits of the Information Age with their urban counterparts, it will be necessary to ensure that:

- they have access to much the same standard of telecommunications and related services and at comparable prices.
- public access points are available for those who at present cannot afford, or cannot justify, the purchase of the necessary end user equipment.
- advice, guidance and support systems are in place to ensure that effective use can be made of ICT provision.
- ICT applications and services are available to match those available in more urban locations (e.g. on-line services relating to business support, compliance with public administration requirements, health care, education and training etc.). Utilisation of ICT in education is especially important to deliver both direct and indirect benefits to society.

5. **Steps needed to stimulate demand for ICT services and to overcome barriers to growth in demand**

5.1 Some of the principal barriers and constraints to growth of ICT demand in rural areas are:

- **The absence, or inadequate provision, of higher bandwidth services;**
- **The costs of network connection and on-line charges;**
- **Low ownership of end user equipment and perceived high entry costs;**
- **Inadequate awareness of the potential benefits of ICT (and of the risks associated with non-adoption) allied to the paucity of exemplars;**
- **Lack of (even basic) ICT skills in too many cases and of ICT training opportunities.**

5.2 Overcoming these obstacles will require some or all of the following actions:

- Encouraging commercial operators to further develop the telecommunications infrastructure;
- Encouraging greater competition in telecommunications service provision (in many areas there is a sole provider which has a de facto monopoly);
- Engagement (directly) in telecommunications service provision by the public authorities where commercial providers cannot be persuaded to operate;
- Increasing provision of public access points allowing cheap and convenient access to end user equipment and networks;

- A campaign to raise awareness of (a) the opportunities and risks of the Information Society and (b) what is involved in using ICTs (e.g. equipment requirements, costs, forms and costs of network access etc.) and what it can achieve, making good use of demonstrators and exemplars;
- Improved access to ICT training, support and advice.

6. **Steps needed to encourage commercial providers to respond to this demand.**

- 6.1 The tendencies of private telecommunications operators to concentrate development in more densely populated areas ('cherry picking') can be mitigated by a range of actions in which the public authorities will need to play a major role:

- Political pressure (especially on OFTEL) to ensure a level playing field for rural areas – for example, through extension of the definition of the Universal Service Obligation to include higher bandwidth services, or through modification of tariff regulations;
- Encouragement to commercial operators, where market failure can be demonstrated, to install or enhance higher bandwidth services in rural areas through subsidies or other financial means;
- Using subsidies or other financial inducements to open up competition in telecommunications provision in areas where monopoly conditions currently prevail;
- Engagement by public authorities as advanced telecommunications service providers in their own right as a means of stimulating competition or, on social grounds, to ensure provision where none is deemed commercially viable at present;
- Aggregating fragmented, individual (and thus unviable) demand into collective viable demand and organising concerted negotiations with providers on behalf of a wide range of (public and private) users.

7. **Conclusions & Recommendations**

7.1 A range of ICT activities and projects are already underway in rural Wales and the Agency has played an active role as partner in many of these. With a few exceptions (such as the Llwybr Pathways Partnership and the MARAN II proposal), most have been small-scale pilot schemes. The Agency believes that for rural Wales to prosper in the Information Age – becoming more competitive and increasingly sustainable, and avoiding increasing marginalisation and exclusion – it will be necessary to

- Adopt a **strategic**, long-term approach; expecting short-term results and impacts is unrealistic. It will be necessary to change the infrastructure, the culture and the skills of rural communities;
- Establish effective mechanisms for **collective** action through partnership development and broad-based collaborations;
- View the components of a rural ICT strategy (infrastructure and access, skills, supporting supply, stimulating demand, and developing content) as parts of an **integrated and coordinated** whole.

7.2 Without appropriate development of **infrastructure and access** provision, and attention to related end user costs, rural Wales will be considerably disadvantaged in the emerging Information Society. The ability to grasp the benefits in terms of sustainability, attracting inward investment, creating new jobs and maintaining existing employment, making rural areas more attractive in terms of access to better services (such as health and education), and to enhance social inclusion are vitally dependent on narrowing the gap with urban areas in terms of ICT infrastructure and access.

7.3 Of equal importance is the need to ensure that individuals have the necessary **ICT skills** both to engage fully in and benefit from Information Age developments and to ensure that rural businesses (and inward investors) have access to the skills necessary to compete in the New Economy. The development of, and access to, ICT skills training should therefore form a centrepiece of a rural ICT strategy and will, in itself, play an important role in raising awareness and stimulating demand.

7.4 The Agency **recommends** actions that will:

<u>Maximise Structural Funds Programme</u>	• Maximise the potential of the Information Society through opportunities afforded by the Objective 1 & 2 Programmes in rural Wales. • The Agency will publish during October 2001 a set of guidelines that will assist applicants and programme managers of the Objective 1 programme to address the Information Society cross cutting theme.
<u>Infrastructure & Access</u>:	• Promote increased competition in the supply of advanced telecommunications services; • Provide subsidy, in cases of market failure, to encourage operators to make advanced services available; • Mount a political campaign to bring about changes in the regulatory environment to deal with the rural deficit. • Encourage the public authorities, working together, to consider provision of advanced services (e.g. higher bandwidth networks between secondary schools).

- Encourage the public authorities to seek ways to aggregate demand and to engage in joint negotiation and procurement (see, for example, the Policy Action Recommendations of the 'Ubiquitous Broadband Infrastructure for Wales' Report in Exhibit 0.3).

- Foster growth in the provision of conveniently located public access terminals, for business and individual use, at affordable prices.

ICT Skills Development

- Promote the need, at all levels of the rural community especially in the workplace, to engage in ICT skills development.

- Expand provision of ICT Skills Training and encourage employers, in particular, to enhance workplace training.

- Ensure that business entrepreneurs have the skills and access to information and independent guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about the adoption of ICTs in their business processes etc.

- Ensure effective follow-up support for training in the form of appropriate guidance and advice (e.g. in terms of employment opportunities and career development).

- Assess the school's curriculum to ensure that all school leavers have at least basic ICT Skills.

- Identify specific ICT Skills shortages and develop schemes to attract these into rural areas (e.g. graduate training schemes).

Support for ICT Supply

- Promote adoption of ICTs (e.g. e-Commerce) amongst rural enterprises through awareness-raising, training, independent business counselling and financial incentives (loan schemes, interest-free loans etc.)

- Stimulate the start-up and growth of indigenous ICT supply enterprises (e.g. through the establishment of ICT incubator centres, clustering schemes etc.).

- Encourage and support growth in the development and availability of relevant on-line services, especially by the public sector (in health, education and administration).

- Foster and support the development of partnerships and collaborative arrangements (alliances) within the ICT supply sector with a view to developing new services.

Stimulating ICT Demand

- Support ICT awareness-raising campaigns.

- Encourage the identification and dissemination of good practice (including the development demonstrators and identification and analysis of exemplars).

- Support for the creation or further development of community, local and area partnerships through which latent demand can be identified and expressed.

- Encourage and support community and social groups to assess their needs collectively and to specify and develop projects to meet such needs.

Digital Content

- Promote and support indigenous development of local information and knowledge in digital formats (e.g. through web site development) with a focus on rural society, heritage and culture.

Exhibit 0.3

Policy action recommendations [Source: Ubiquitous Broadband Infrastructure for Wales]

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ANNEX A Summary of WDA/WIS Projects/Initiatives active in rural Wales

Project	Description	Partners	Coverage	WIS Role/Fit with Action Plan
Wales smE-Business	ICT Awareness Raising & Independent Advice for SMEs (10,500 in awareness-raising phase and 1,500 in 1:1 phase)	• WIS/WDA = £2.0 m • ERDF = £1.5 m. • SME contributions = £1.4 m.	All Wales	• Management • Delivery Transforming Welsh Business No. 5

SME*web*Wales	Support for SMEs wishing to communicate over the Internet – loan of computer communications equipment, on-line technical support, training for staff via Distance Learning courses, assistance with web site design, Internet marketing & use of e-commerce.	• Carmarthenshire College • Clog Powys • Coleg Menai • WIS/WDA	Rural Wales	• Sponsorship • Steering Group member Transforming Welsh Business No. 5
Young Enterprise E-Business Programme	E-Commerce competition through Young Enterprise Scheme. All secondary & special needs schools being provided with a free PC	• WIS/WDA • Young Enterprise Wales	All Wales	• Initiator • Management • Full Funding Transforming Education & Training – No. 11
@TEB/TMB	Accreditation Programme for independent ICT Business Advisers	• WIS/WDA • Council of Welsh TECs • Menter a Busines • Cardiff Chamber of Commerce • CBI • BT • University of Glamorgan • University of Cardiff • Business Connect • National Assembly for Wales	All Wales	• Management Committee • Significant Funder Transforming Welsh Businesses – No.1
Network of ICT Support Centres	Centres to deliver ICT support to local c. 3,500 SMEs	• WIS/WDA • Business Connect Management Board • Business Connect Consortia • National Assembly for Wales	All Wales	• Management Board • Primary Funder Transforming Welsh Businesses No. 2

Telecommunications Services Development	Baseline review of Telecomms infrastructure in Wales, proposals for infrastructure enhancement where required	• WIS/WDA	All Wales	• Initiator • Management • Full Funding Transforming Public Services – No. 10

Project	**Description**	**Partners**	**Coverage**	**WIS Role/Fit with Action Plans**
Llwybr Pathway Strand 6	Provision of broadband communications infrastructure in rural Wales, upgrading of exchanges	• WIS/WDA • Llwybr Pathway • ERDF • BT	Rural Wales	• Initiator • Management • Primary Funder Trans Pub Serv. - No. 10
Sgrin	Development & promotion of Welsh New Media Sector	• WIS/WDA • BBC Wales • S4C • TAC • CBDC • Wales Film Council	All Wales	• Partner • Board member • Funding
North Wales Multimedia Sector	Study to investigate the establishment of a multi-sectoral multi-media cluster in North Wales	• WIS/WDA • N Wales Economic Forum • N Wales Media Group • Gwynedd Co. Council • TAC	North Wales	• Sponsor/Partner • Match Funder
EuroEcom	Development of Internet Shopping Malls, exchange of best practice between partner regions (Motor Regions)	• WIS/WDA • COPCA (Barcelona) • ERAI (Rhone Alpes) • Zetesis (Lombardy)	All Wales	• European Partner • Management of Wales elements • Match Funding Transforming Welsh Businesses – No. 4
Best of Rural Wales	E-Commerce solution (database, hardware, software, payment clearance facility) for micro enterprises in Rural Wales	• Mentor Mon • Llwybr Pathway • WDA/WIS • ERDF	Rural Wales	• Sponsor/Partner • Match-funding Transforming Welsh Businesses – No. 4

Multilingual Web-Site Project	Translation of Web-Sites for SMEs to E-trade in Europe	• UW Swansea • WIS/WDA • ESF	All Wales	• Sponsor/Partner • Match Funder Transforming Welsh Businesses - No. 4
ASPECT **(Analysis of Spatial Planning and Emerging Communication Technologies)**	An INTERREG IIC regional partnership investigation of the actual and potential impact of ICT applications on spatial planning & development	• WIS/WDA • Nord Pas de Calais (France) • Kent County Council • Northern Infomatics • South West Regional Authority Ireland • Mid West Region,Ireland	All Wales	• European Partner • Management of Wales elements • Match Funding Transforming Wales – No.2
International Space School Educational Trust (ISSET)	Development of Web Site & CDROM aimed at using NASA images to boost educational material for science curriculum, & sponsorship of competitions to increase ICT training	• ISSET • Stanwell School, Penarth • NASA, Houston, Texas • Barclays Bank	All-Wales	• Match Funding • Sponsorship Transforming Education & Training – No.4

Project	Description	Partners	Coverage	WIS Role/Fit with Action Plans
Community Resource Information Society Programme (CRISP) **- Phase 1**	A number of separate community-based initiatives are being supported to explore innovative uses of ICT for community development, and to develop best practices.	To date, 8 different community initiatives across Wales: • Welsh Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) • E-Gower Project • Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations • Glyncorrwg Ponds Project • Computers in the Community • Caia Park Community Centre,Wrexham	All-Wales	• Match Funding • Sponsorship • Co-ordination of projects Transforming Public Services – No. 5

Project	Description	Partners	Coverage	WIS Role/Fit with Action Plans
		• Sheneeka Community Centre, Bangor • Gurnos Community Workshops, Merthyr		
All-Wales Passenger Transport Information System	Development of Call Centre & Internet-based passenger transport information system	• Private Bus Operators (Cardiff Buses, Arriva Cymru, Stagecoach Red & White, First Cymru, Newport Transport • Unitary Authorities (represented by Caerphilly CBC, WLGA, Pembrokeshire CC, Conwy Council, Neath Port Talbot CBC • National Assembly for Wales • Confed'n of Passenger Transport • DETR • Cardiff Railway Company • Sula Systems • Welsh Consumer Council • Wales Tourist Board • WIS/WDA	All-Wales	• Match Funding • Sponsorship Transforming Wales – No. 8
e-Health (Caring for the Heart of Wales Programme)	Collaborative to develop the use of ICT in mainstream health service delivery in rural areas and in supporting health professionals who provide that care.	• WIS/WDA • Institute of Rural Health • Welsh Focal Institute	Rural Wales	• Match Funding • Sponsorship Transforming Wales – No. 6
Project	**Description**	**Partners**	**Coverage**	**WIS Role/Fit with Action Plans**

On-Line Access to Digital Material About Wales	An initiative aimed at *inter alia* the creation of a portal for structured access to information about Wales. Such an 'Electronic Gateway to Wales' (past, present & future) would focus on the identification, validation and sign-posting of relevant existing web sites.	A wide range of Partners has been involved in preliminary meetings/discussions, e.g. ● National Library of Wales ● National Museums & Galleries of Wales ● Council of Welsh Museums ● UW Swansea ● UW Bangor ● CWLIS ● National Assembly ● WLGA ● WTB ● NOF Wales ● Several unitary authorities – Powys CC, Bridgend CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Neath Port Talbot, Wrexham BC, Ynys Mon ● BBC Wales ● Digital College ● Ufl ● NEWI ● ICC Ltd	All-Wales	● Not yet determined Transforming Wales – No. 5 & No. 9
FUTURES Project **(Further Use of Telematics Underpinning Regional Education Strategies)**	Development of an on-line learning Centre – Support for first phase of Project (i.e. training for staff and completion of CYNNAL web site)	CYNNAL WIS/WDA	North Wales initially	● Partner/Sponsor ● Match funding Transforming Education & Training - No.5

Developing the People's Network	Sponsorship/support for consortium, led by the Library & Information Services Council (LISC) Wales, preparing a bid for NOF funding to develop the potential People's Network infrastructure to support Lifelong Learning	LISC University of Wales Aberystwyth CWLIS	All Wales	• Sponsorship • Match funding Transforming Wales – No. 9
WIRED Project **(Web-based Information Resource on Drugs)**	Sponsorship/support for the development of a Web-Based education & information service aimed at improving the prevention and treatment of drug & alcohol abuse (especially in the work place)	UW Swansea WIS/WDA National Assembly for Wales Advisory Committee on Misuse of Drugs Iechyd Morgannwg Health Weslh Drug & Alcohol Unit BBC Wales Cardiff Community Drug Team	All Wales	• Partner/Sponsor • Match funding Transforming Wales – No. 7
Project	**Description**	**Partners**	**Coverage**	**WIS Role/Fit with Action Plans**
Business Development Bursaries	Sponsorship/support for business development bursaries in the North Wales Media/Multimedia Sector	Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru (TAC) WIS/WDA Private Sector	North Wales	• Sponsorship
Bore da Gymru Project/ Teledu Telesgop	Match Funding for Llwybr Strand 5 project, for development of interactive television programme for rural communities	Teledu Telesgop cyf Llwybr.Pathway WIS/WDA	Rural Wales	• Sponsor • Match Funder
PowysWeb Impact Study	Sponsorship of benchmarking study to review the effectiveness of the PowysWeb Project in stimulating the adoption of the Internet by SMEs, its economic impact, & progress towards e-busines/e-commerce	Powys CC WIS/WDA Llwybr.Pathway	Rural Wales	• Sponsorship Transforming Welsh Businesses - No. 4

DTI/Romtech SME Survey	Sponsorship of extended Welsh survey as part of annual DTI-backed survey of ICT use in SMEs	DTI Romtech WIS/WDA	All Wales	• Sponsorship Transforming Wales - No.2
Welsh Focal Insitute	Sponsorship of development of a Welsh Focal Institute (Research centre for health informatics), including development of a web site.	Centre for Health Information WIS/WDA	All Wales	• Sponsorship Transforming Wales - No. 6
Encyclopaedia of Wales	Assistance with the development of an electronic (Internet/CD-ROM) version of the Encyclopaedia of Wales, which is currently under development	Various	All Wales	• Sponsorship Transforming Education & Training - No. 1
Llwybr.Pathway Project	Support for Rural Wales Information Society Project	Various	Rural Wales	• Sponsorship/Partner
Mobile ICT Awareness-Raising / Training Facility (IF0042)	Use of mobile conference centre/ trailer to carry out an intensive, all Wales ICT awareness-raising and training campaign	To be determined	All Wales	• Initiator • Management • Delivery Transforming Wales - No. 4
WAPWales	Public access pilot project to demonstrate WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) services to the Wales business sector	SWIG UW Swansea NTL Sparkling Armada Clemdale Associates WIS/WDA	All Wales	• Sponsorship • Results dissemination
Small Towns & Villages (STV) Initiative	ICT awareness raising for SMEs via Local Delivery Teams, plus grants for ICT equipment for SMEs	Local Authorities WIS/WDA	North Wales	• Sponsorship
MARAN	Multi-Agency Rural Area Network for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion & Powys	Local Authorities Llwybr Pathyway WIS/WDA	Rural Wales	• Guidance • Sponsorship
Opportunite Wales	E-Commerce Support Programme for SMEs	BT, HSBC, University of Glamorgan, eCIC, ELWa, Princes Trust, RNID, WIS/WDA	Objective One Area	• Match funder • Management Board

Streaming Wales	Web-based project using audio & video to deliver historical and tourist information on Wales	Artsmagic Ltd, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Wales Tourist Board, WIS/WDA	Objective One Area	• Match funder • Management Board