

Invest-to-Save Fund – aim, eligibility and assessment criteria

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of the Invest-to-Save Fund (the Fund) is to support the delivery of public sector improvement projects that will result in significant cash-releasing efficiency savings whilst ensuring effective citizen-centred services. The Fund is a key driver in supporting the Welsh Government's efficiency agenda.

1.2 Pump-prime funding is available to assist transformation and change in the public sector through the proposed introduction of new and/or proven ways of working as well as innovation.

Fund objectives:

- deliver improved public services in line with the Welsh Government's public service efficiency and wider improvement agenda;
- transform the operational efficiency of public services and generate significant cash-releasing efficiency savings;
- encourage stronger collaboration across organisations and administrative boundaries where this leads to measurable benefits in public service delivery; and,
- promote dissemination of lessons learnt and best practice arising from projects.

2. Available Funding

2.1 Contributions of up to 75% of eligible implementation project costs are available. Investments of £200,000 or higher can be considered where a project has the potential to stimulate significant cash-releasing efficiency benefits.

2.2 Investments are provided on a discretionary basis and will typically cover revenue costs associated with the implementation of projects. However, the Fund might also be able to assist with limited capital costs in some circumstances.

2.3 Projects are required to repay the investment to the Welsh Government when the project delivers expected benefits. The exact terms of this repayment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The aim of requiring the repayment is to ensure that funding for future projects is maintained Beyond

3. Eligible applicants

3.1 Bids are welcome from Welsh Government funded public service organisations including local authorities, Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies; NHS bodies, post-16 education institutions, voluntary bodies in receipt of 3-year funding from the Welsh Government or umbrella groups representing any of these. Partnerships may also include voluntary and community groups and other bodies. Bids from other strategic partnerships can be considered.

3.2 Collaborative bids involving more than one Welsh Government funded body are encouraged. The Government's Collaborative Footprint enables and supports joint working and should be regarded as the starting point for consideration of collaborative projects across service and geographical boundaries. Non-collaborative, single body proposals can be considered, however, any such proposal would need to be able to demonstrate that benefits will be delivered at a significant scale and the proposal has scope for wider replication.

4. Eligible project bids

4.1 We will invest in strategic projects that lead to significant cash-releasing efficiency savings, whilst sustaining or enhancing citizen-centred public services. Specifically, projects that support the Welsh Government's public service efficiency and wider improvement agenda i.e., implementation of recommendations arising from the Simpson Review of local government services, the Front Line Resources Review, the Vivian Thomas Review, social services reform, the NHS's five-year strategic plan, the Digital Wales Strategy and the ICT Strategy for the Public Sector in Wales. For example, projects that:

- improve the way public services procure and commission goods and services and manage the market;
- transform business processes;
- make better use of the public estate and shared approaches to construction;
- reduce the costs of corporate functions and routine business through shared services and other collaborative approaches to organisational effectiveness;
- maximise efficiency through the introduction or enhancement of ICT as a delivery mechanism:
 - for providing Digital On-Line Services to citizens;
 - that supports information sharing for collaborative working;
 - that streamlines administrative and management processes;
 - that achieves economies of scale by demonstrating the potential to provide scalable all-Wales solutions;

- to encourage the Digital Wales agenda (informing, educating and providing technology access to citizens); and

- redesign services so that they are more effective by encouraging the development of innovative collaboration across organisations.

4.2 Greatest focus will be given to projects that utilise proven approaches, where success in delivering significant benefits previously is well evidenced.

4.3 The Fund is not intended to:

- support non-strategic, low-value investments (<£200,000);
- substitute existing funding streams;
- support pure research and development in technology; or
- meet on-going revenue needs.

5. Assessment criteria

5.1 Projects are assessed against the extent to which:

- they further the Welsh Government's strategic priorities for public sector improvement;
- they deliver efficiencies (in particular the value and timing of cash-releasing efficiency savings), with an underpinning principle of 'protecting front line services';
- they are compatible with a commitment to groups particularly vulnerable during recession and their service needs;
- they put services on a more sustainable footing in the medium and longer term, so that they are stronger post economic downturn; and
- projects might additionally achieve multiplier effects in the wider economy.

5.2 A delivery assessment is undertaken for each project, using the following core criteria:

- clarity of a project's aim and forecast benefits and linkages to clear target outcomes, standards and measures;
- the extent of commitment to the project, including senior level buy-in;
- degree of project's strategic fit for organisations in that it matches their vision and values;
- the extent to which the project integrates with existing operational and business policies, plans and processes;
- the extent to which the proposal fits with partners' change programmes /improvement initiatives;
- evidence that the proposal will work (promotes proven way of working);

- the degree of risk associated with taking the project forward and arrangements for managing such risk;
- the adequacy of arrangements for managing the project; and
- the arrangements proposed for monitoring and subsequently evaluating the project and change programme (including citizen (service user) feedback).

5.3 There is also financial criteria, including consideration of:

- the proposed repayment period;
- the rate-of-return on investment; and
- the additionality case for funding.