



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Annual Report on the Overseas Network

2021-22

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Overview

Since the opening of the first overseas office in Tokyo in the mid-1980s, the Welsh Government's overseas network has grown to 21 offices across 11 countries today.

Much has changed globally throughout that time and our overseas offices have been vital in helping Wales keep pace with the challenges of ever-changing international markets, promoting Wales' offer to the world now and in the future.

Current Priorities

Each office has a [remit](#) to deliver the aspirations within the [International Strategy](#), launched in January 2020, and its associated [action plans](#). The Strategy sets out our ambitions to:

- Raise Wales' international profile;
- Grow our economy through increased exports and attracting inward investment; and
- Establish Wales as a globally responsible nation.

Each of the international offices applies a differing level of focus to each ambition to reflect the potential return and relevance to the country in which they operate. Each office, however, has a common remit to source inward investment opportunities, identify trade opportunities and build strong diaspora networks within its country. The offices continue to engage and work closely with in-market partners, including the Department for International Trade (DIT), to share intelligence and encourage joint working and collaboration to amplify Welsh strengths and maximise opportunities.

How are we reconnecting with the world post-Covid?

The world continues to face a number of global challenges, including COVID-19. The UK's economy is recovering faster than some but all global economies have been affected by the pandemic and many continue to face significant challenges. Some of our overseas staff have been more adversely impacted by the pandemic than Wales-based staff, yet they have continued to deliver Wales' international priorities. This has included sourcing of PPE, supporting virtual trade missions, maintaining contact with companies in their respective territories and providing vital intelligence on global responses to the pandemic to inform policy here in Wales.

As we recover from the pandemic, the role of the overseas teams will be even more vital in selling Wales to the world. They have undertaken a variety of activities already to deliver Wales’ international ambitions. This has included engaging with international partners and potential investors, supporting virtual trade missions and representing Wales at key global events such as the World Expo and COP26. This activity is driving forward a number of actions within the International Strategy and meets wider Welsh Government priorities, including the Programme for Government.

Office locations



Asia	Europe	North America	Middle East
Beijing	Brussels	Atlanta	Doha
Chongqing	Berlin	Chicago	Dubai
Shanghai	Düsseldorf	New York	
Bangalore	Dublin	San Francisco	
Mumbai	Paris	Washington DC	
New Delhi	London	Montreal	
Tokyo			

Regional Focus

Our network has three regions: Europe, North America and the Middle East and Asia. Each region has a focus tailored to its strengths as outlined in the remits. This section sets out highlights of activity undertaken by each of the regions during 2021-22.

Europe

Our offices adapted their engagement with partners across Europe following the UK's exit from the EU, providing support across the Welsh Government for ongoing issues as a result of the end of the transition phase. They have been proactively engaging European partners to demonstrate Wales remains an active part of Europe. The office in Brussels is involved in the continued impact of EU policy on Wales and the office in Ireland provides support around the impact of the Northern Ireland protocol and border issues. In January 2021, the Welsh Government appointed a Welsh Government Representative on Europe, who works closely with the European offices, and particularly the office in Brussels.

The *Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Action Plan 2021-2025* was signed in March 2021; this is the first year of its delivery, including the inaugural Ireland-Wales Ministerial Forum in Wales in October (see Annex A).

The first "Wales in ..." initiative took place in 2021, with *Wales in Germany 2021*. This covered delivery across all aspects of the International Strategy (see Annex A).

The offices continued to work closely with our regional partners across Europe – in particular Brittany, Basque Country, Flanders and Baden-Württemberg. We updated the Action Plan with Brittany and extended the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Basque Country. We continued discussions with Flanders and Baden-Württemberg on MoUs. A [partnership agreement](#) was signed between Techspark Wales / Tramshed Tech and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (SQY) in France across a range of tech and digital disciplines.

Wales engages in various European networks sharing our interests and values and providing forums for dialogue and information sharing. This year, these included:

- Vanguard Initiative Innovation network (40 regions from 14 European countries):
 - Strengthening collaborative innovation
 - Raising the profile of Wales' research and innovation expertise and assets

- Engaging EU institutions, supporting our ability to analyse impact of EU policy on Wales
- Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR):
 - General Assembly and Conference on the Future of Europe Declaration
 - Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) around feasibility of an Atlantic Macro Region
- European health networks such as EUREGHA, particularly relevant given COVID-19

Europe continues to be our largest export market, including Germany, France and Ireland. During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including trade missions to Europe from Wales, such as a trade visit to Dublin under the Welsh Government's New Exporter Programme in March, the World Nuclear Exhibition (France) and Medica (Germany).

Europe is also a major donor for inward investment where our investment related focus is aligned to the sectors identified within the International Strategy, along with those that add real value to the Welsh economy, including renewable energy and advanced engineering in countries where there are strong links with Wales. For example, the France office has focussed on cyber, tech and compound semiconductors to develop trade and investment opportunities and used tech as a vehicle for public diplomacy. As part of this work, there was strong Welsh presence at the Forum Internationale Cyber in Lille and at European Cyber Week in Brittany, with Welsh speakers at the Women in Cyber event.

The Europe offices worked with the Welsh Government's Innovation team on international innovation cooperation and Wales' innovation profile, supported by our membership of European innovation networks such as the [Vanguard Initiative](#), [ERRIN](#) and [CRIQUE](#). Cooperation activities have helped lay the groundwork for potential consortium funding with strong connections to trade and investment activity. We have enhanced innovation cooperation with the Basque Country in the context of our MoU, with a focus on marine energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

Discussions in the Vanguard Initiative have led to more detailed engagement with eMobil (e-mobility agency) in Baden-Württemberg. Clwstwr is working with Minalogic in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes to facilitate R&I focussed trade and invest opportunities.

Taith has been warmly received by stakeholders across Europe and the offices have promoted it to a wide range of EU institutional, Member State and regional stakeholders. In March, the Brussels team hosted an event on Taith and European education mobility policy, with 15 panellists from European mobility organisations.

All offices used St David's Day to promote Wales. The [First Minister visited Brussels](#) to take part in a programme of events. In Paris, a reception at the UK Ambassador's residence celebrated Wales/France links. A dinner at the UK Ambassador's residence in Dublin with key Irish stakeholders celebrated Wales/Ireland links and all offices engaged in the Welsh Government's Random Acts of Welshness campaign.

North America

Following Wales in Germany 2021, the North America region has been promoting Wales' relationship with Canada through the second of our themed years - Wales in Canada 2022 - with reciprocal celebrations by the Canadian High Commission in its [Canada Goes Cymru](#) initiative. There are plans for a third Wales-Quebec Call for Proposals in 2022, including in research and development.

In the US, the region supported the Urdd to promote the peace message during its [visit to Alabama](#) through meetings with influential people in the civil rights movement. The trip showcased Welsh talent and enabled the region to host events for the business and diaspora community to further strengthen the Alabama-Wales link. The region's relationship with UN agencies resulted in the [peace message](#) being supported by UN Women and Penderyn was promoted at a UN Ambassador's club.

The region is an active member of business associations such as [BABA](#). Around COP26, the region jointly hosted an event on carbon reduction with BABA in Philadelphia [with a speaker from the Future Generations Commissioner's office](#) and facilitated ministerial meetings with the Québec government at COP26.

During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including supporting virtual export missions to Canada and the East of the USA and trade missions to Game Developers Conference and the Canadian Nuclear Association Conference.

Securing new food and drink export wins is a priority and the region has been working with partners to [secure market access](#) for lamb into the United States. We have also promoted Welsh products by showcasing them at our events and working with DIT to get more Welsh products in front of Canadian buyers through tasting boxes, including as part of trade missions to North America from Wales.

Investment focus across North America is aligned to key sectors in the International Strategy but with the addition of country-specific priorities taking account of regional strengths and opportunities. In Canada, this includes the nuclear and renewable energy sectors where there are strong links between the clusters in Wales and the target market. Creative industries were supported by sponsoring [FOCUS Wales in SXSW](#), the [premiere of a Welsh language film](#) in Los Angeles and BreakOut West in Canada.

The region attended various other conferences to highlight Wales as an inward investment location including showpiece fintech and compound semiconductor conferences, key life sciences conferences, World Trade Days, scaleup events and regular lead generation meetings.

The North America region worked with Swansea University on the [Hillary Rodham Clinton Global Challenges Summit](#). 300m people were made aware of the Summit, with [a tweet about the Summit](#) being the most “liked” of any tweet within Welsh Government that week.

The region worked with a diaspora organisation to secure [new scholarships](#) for students from North America to study in Wales. As part of Wales in Canada, Canada is now one of Global Wales’ priority countries, meaning scholarships are now available to Canadian students.

The region sponsored the North America Festival of Wales and held [sessions](#) about the work of the Welsh Government as well as diaspora events such as:

- The Welsh Society of Philadelphia’s St David’s Day reception
- [Celtic Classic](#), the largest free Celtic festival in the USA
- Alumni events to identify more Welsh diaspora in the USA and Canada and [worked with Welsh Universities](#) on such events.

The region collaborated with Wrexham AFC, S4C and FX/Disney+ to celebrate St David’s Day in Los Angeles with Rob McElhenney as guest of honour. A significant proportion of the guests came from the creative industries enabling discussions on inward investment opportunities. The event appeared across Welsh and US media and was the [highest ‘liked’ tweet](#) in the international network this year (3.7k engagement).

In New York City, events brought [diaspora and business together](#) with live Welsh language music. A separate event promoted Welsh whisky to 40 UN ambassadors. In Chicago, celebrations brought diaspora, business and academia from the Mid-West together [along with a delegation from Cardiff University](#). In Washington DC, as part of the “Random Acts of Welshness” campaign, Welsh cakes were given to stakeholders and a [breakfast with the Friends of Wales Caucus](#).

In Canada, St David’s Day provided the perfect opportunity to physically launch the Wales in Canada 2022 initiative at the High Commission in Ottawa, following a virtual launch in January due to COVID-19 restrictions. The events raised awareness of Wales in Canada amongst the diplomatic corps in Ottawa, connected with key contacts for Wales in Canada, and promoted Welsh products. Following the event, the UK government has decided to add one of the popular Welsh products for use at its events.

Middle East and Asia

The teams across the Middle East and Asia have a wide remit. During 2021-22, they have focussed on activity ranging from the delivery of the Welsh Government's programme at the World Expo in Dubai (see Annex A), forging strong educational links in India and China and extensive legacy work following the 2019 Rugby World Cup, which resulted in the signing of a [Memorandum of Understanding with the Oita Prefecture in Japan](#) in March. The MoU is the culmination of three years of activity in Japan to formalise links between Wales and Oita.

The region has continued to forge stronger relationships with partner regions and countries this year. Teams across the region have worked directly with stakeholders in Wales, from universities and colleges to sporting groups, cultural groups, and business networks to facilitate international connections.

The region has secured new partnerships, including [signing a wide-ranging MoU with the Oita Prefecture in Japan](#) on collaborative working across sport, art and culture, academia, tourism and the food and drink sector and education-focussed MoUs signed in India and China between academic institutions.

The teams in the Middle East and Asia continue to have a strong focus on trade and investment. The region has provided export support to Welsh businesses and delivered virtual market-preparedness webinars and direct support through physical trade missions in the life sciences, food and drink, tech and cyber sectors. During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including as part of virtual export market visits to India and Qatar and a physical trade mission to the UAE/Abu Dhabi.

As well as investment focus being aligned to the International Strategy, country-specific priorities take account of regional strengths and opportunities in tech, renewable energy, and the life science sectors.

The offices have delivered many virtual online activities during the year, including highlighting opportunities in the Indian life sciences sector illustrated by the success of Indian vaccine producer Wockhardt in Wrexham through to offshore energy opportunities with port authorities and the Welsh supply chain in Japan.

With offices returning to in person activities, the teams have represented Wales in key sector exhibitions including promoting the semiconductor sector at Asia's leading show in Tokyo and the Welsh food and drink sector in China.

All offices across the region have continued to reach out and build the Welsh diaspora network; teams in China and India have focused on Welsh alumni and building academic connections. All teams have delivered physical activities to develop the diaspora network and, in Dubai, the team delivered a series of events utilising our appointed envoy and Future Generation Commissioner's visits to secure new relationships.

The education sector is key to the Middle East and Asia markets and the region has provided direct support to many Welsh universities and colleges to progress international ambitions on student recruitment and research collaborations. The offices have supported Welsh academic institutions to develop MoUs with partners in Qatar, China and India. The team in India has supported the [delivery of the medical exchange programme](#) between the Welsh medical schools in Cardiff and Swansea and medical colleges in Mumbai; whilst, in China, the network supported Cardiff and the University of South Wales to secure partnership agreements with Zhengzhou University, Henan University of Technology and Luoyang Institute of Science and Innovation.

St David's Day was an opportunity to build new relationships and reconnect with businesses and key stakeholders across the region. All of the offices worked directly with [UK Ambassadors](#) and Consul Generals in their respective countries who supported and amplified key Welsh messages during the national day and hosted activities at the official residences. The teams in China and [India](#) held a range of events, from a touch rugby match in Chongqing with Welsh alumni, through to [business roundtables in Mumbai](#) attended by existing and potential investors.

The team in Dubai held a series of activities targeted at different groups at the World Expo, which celebrated the business and cultural strengths of Wales featuring live performances and a keynote speech by the Minister for Economy who was visiting Expo as part of a wider Middle East programme; the first overseas Ministerial visit in more than two years.

Wales Ireland Joint Statement

On St David’s Day 2021, the First Minister signed the Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan with Simon Coveney TD, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

This sets out our commitment to deepen cooperation between Wales and Ireland from now until 2025 and how we intend to build on the strong and positive history of age-old connections and deep cultural understanding.

The Statement is ambitious but crucially important as Wales looks to strengthen relationships with its European neighbours following the UK’s departure from the European Union. It focusses on six areas of cooperation for which the Welsh Government has devolved responsibility:

- 1. Political and Official Engagement
- 2. Climate and Sustainability
- 3. Trade and Tourism
- 4. Education and Research
- 5. Culture, Language and Heritage
- 6. Communities, Diaspora and Sport

Ministerial Forum

A key commitment within the Statement is to hold an annual Ireland Wales Ministerial Forum. The First Minister hosted the inaugural forum in Cardiff on 22 October 2022. Cabinet colleagues in attendance were the Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS; the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffith MS and the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS.



The Irish Ministerial delegation was led by Minister Coveney, accompanied by the Minister of State for Trade Promotion and Digital Services, Robert Troy TD with the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD joining virtually.

The Forum had an overarching theme of green recovery, with substantive discussions around:

- Bilateral relations and major political developments
- Trade promotion & economic development
- Energy and climate action

Discussions on energy and climate action focused on the importance of renewable energy and the potential opportunities for cooperation. We continue to explore this, particularly around the economic development of the Celtic Sea.

The Forum provided a wider opportunity to engage with key stakeholders such as the National Museum of Wales, where the First Minister hosted invited guests including members of the Future Generations Leadership Academy and the Future Generations Commissioner. Building on a range of work already delivered in Ireland to promote the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, this provided a platform to update Irish Ministers on the progress of the Act, an overview of the advocacy priorities of young people in Wales for COP26 and a discussion on how to engage future generations using the Statement.

Discussions around trade promotion and economic development focused on the North Wales trade corridor. In March 2022, the Welsh Government's Dublin office, in partnership with the Guinness Enterprise Centre, was pleased to welcome a delegation of companies from Menai Science Parc on a trade visit to Dublin. The visit was funded through the newly established SCoRE Cymru bilateral Wales-Ireland fund.

Forward Look

In 2022-23 the Welsh Government team in Ireland will deliver:

- A follow up visit to Wales by Irish Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD.
- The inaugural Ireland Wales lecture series in Dublin, as committed to in the joint action plan.

- A learning exchange to Ireland for members of the Future Generations Leadership Academy.
- A series of business development activities on key sectors, creative industries, renewable energy and ongoing support for new exporters.
- Support for the second Ministerial Forum in autumn (taking place in Ireland).

Dubai World Expo 2020

1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022

Through its official partnership with the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, the Welsh Government was able to showcase the best of Wales on a global stage and contribute to all three ambitions of Wales' International Strategy.

Our programme of activity at Expo focused on areas where Wales is world leading, with creativity, sustainability, science, and technology as overarching themes.

The Middle East team secured strong Welsh representation throughout the UK programme for the duration of Expo whilst delivering tailored Welsh messages and themes on focused Wales days. Welsh businesses, sector organisations, academic leaders and stakeholders from across Wales utilised the Expo platform to further their outreach and international ambitions. Welsh representatives from academia and industry secured participation in the wider UK Programme.

The UK Pavilion attracted approximately 1.1 million visitors.

Key visitors from Wales

- Welsh Government Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS
- Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe



These visits provided an invaluable opportunity to engage key UAE stakeholders in person, including the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs, UAE Minister State for Government Development and the Future, a Sovereign Wealth Fund, MASDAR (a renewable energy and sustainability developer), and the Dubai Future Foundation.

Expo provided a platform for Wales to forge new relationships with target countries and regions and further strengthen Welsh Government's priority international relationships with [Canada](#), Ireland, and [Baden-Württemberg](#) by linking up with events being held at their respective Expo Pavilions.

Welsh Government Business Programme

The programme targeted collaborative partnerships in research, investment and exports including two hybrid events:

- Life Sciences and Healthcare Summit promoted the sector in Wales and the relationship between government, academia, and industry.
- Future Mobility Technology Summit promoted Wales' compound semiconductor, cyber security and fintech clusters. The Minister for Economy gave a keynote speech at the event.

Food and drink exports promotional activity included:

- A showcase representing 10 companies and promoting Wales' sustainable brand values.
- A dinner prepared by Welsh Chef, "Lambassador" Chris Roberts, hosted by the Minister for Economy and supported by Hybu Cig Cymru and Lobster Pot promoted Welsh Lamb, seafood, yoghurt, cheese, honey, water, spirits and non-alcoholic drinks.

Export Market Visit:

- Nine technology-focused Welsh exporters visited the UAE and engaged with Abu Dhabi's Hub 71 and Dubai's Fintech Hive.

Welsh Government Cultural Programme

- The Welsh National Opera (WNO) held outreach workshops for schoolchildren.
- Welsh diaspora attended a networking reception to celebrate Dydd Miwsig Cymru.
- Bilingual performances by Welsh folk singer-songwriter, Eve Goodman and Welsh of the West End attracted crowds at the UK Pavilion and across the Expo site.

Expo Programme

- The UK Pavilion hosted three “[World Majlis Series](#)” events featuring panellists from Wales:
 - Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe.
 - Professor Yacine Rezgui, Building Research Establishment (BRE) Centre, Cardiff University.
 - Dr Alex George, UK Youth Mental Health Ambassador.
- [The first Emirati opera, “Al Wasl”](#), commissioned by Expo, was produced and performed in collaboration with the WNO.

Social Media

Wales in Middle East & North Africa LinkedIn followers increased by 212% and @Walesinmena Twitter followers increased by 17%.

LinkedIn	
Engagement	5.8k
Page Clicks	25k
Page Reach	115k
Post Impressions	210k
Page Impressions	211k

Twitter	
Tweets	543
Engagement	2.4k
Traffic	2.3k

Outcomes

The outcomes from Wales' participation in Expo 2020 will be ongoing and realised directly in international trade and potential investment opportunities. Many will be realised in the coming months and years by the Welsh organisations and stakeholders who were able to reach international audiences and establish new connections.

As well as raising the profile of Wales and promoting Wales as a globally responsible nation, two major outcomes are return visits to Wales in May 2022 by the UAE Minister for Foreign Trade and a Sovereign Wealth Fund. These are crucial to strengthening our trade and investment relationships with the UAE.

Wales in Germany 2021

The ‘Wales in...’ themed years are designed to strengthen the relationship between Wales and the partner country and use the themes set out in the International Strategy to provide a strategic focus to our activity. They are about building connections.

[Wales in Germany 2021](#) (WiG2021) was the first of our themed years. Much of the activity was delivered under strict COVID-19 restrictions, either in Wales or in Germany, with many physical events moving to a virtual platform.

Raising the Profile of Wales

The following public diplomacy activity was undertaken across the year:

- Two-day Wales Literature Seminar on language and diversity organised by British Council Wales/Germany, Literature Wales and Literaturhaus Stuttgart.
- Wales Arts International new partnership with British Council Germany – Fonds Soziokultur – which supports community-based arts projects in deprived areas.
- National Museum Wales visited Berlin and forged a new partnership with the National History Museum and the Humboldt Forum.
- Cardiff/Bremen University Alliance held three events.
- Osnabrück and Literature Wales online theatre, literature, and music exchange.



- Four online community and diaspora events:
 - German Community in Wales Launch event
 - Diaspora in Germany
 - Welsh food and drink 'Cook-Along'
 - Green Journey through Wales

Overall, we reached over 40,000 contacts, including contacts from Wales' 26 twin towns in Germany.

Trade & Investment

The initiative provided a platform for developing economic links:

- New relationships with 18 German companies and 15 who have operations in Wales and added additional value by brokering other relationships in Wales.
- Lead generation digital campaign to target key business sectors such as cyber security, compound semiconductors and food and drink. This was complemented by a PR campaign reaching over 1,050,000 contacts.
- Digital compound semiconductor PR campaign reached over 1,760,000 contacts, social campaign reached 385,000 contacts, 120,300 engagements.
- Supporting the setting up and launch of British Chamber of Commerce in Germany's new Wales-Midlands Alliance.
- Supported 56 Welsh companies looking to export to Germany.
- Facilitated 14 cluster network exchanges between Wales and Germany.
- Clwster Creadigol signed a partnership with creative agency, MFG Baden-Württemberg.

Globally Responsible Nation

The themed year also demonstrated Wales' commitment to global responsibility:

- Wales' Future Generations Commissioner met UK-German Connection. Discussions on a youth exchange with Wales Democracy Box and B-W Youth Councillors in 2022.
- Future Generations Commissioner's Office attendance at the One Young World Conference.

- Future Generations Young Leader filmed with the UK Ambassador to Germany, discussing climate change for a pre-COP26/One Young World Germany campaign. The film was promoted digitally with a campaign by FCDO on Google/social networks achieving wider impact.
- Introduced Academi Heddwch to the German Peace Research Organisation and German Peace Town Osnabrück.
- Connected the Urdd with UK-German Connection who promoted its annual peace message.

Regional Relationship with Baden-Württemberg

Meetings were held throughout the year between Welsh Ministers, the State Chancellery / Ministries of Baden-Württemberg. The initiative was the platform for discussions on a Shared Statement between Wales and Baden-Württemberg to cover areas such as: political relationships; trade and entrepreneurship; science and innovation; civic/youth mobility; climate and sustainability.

Relationship with German Embassy

We strengthened our relationship with the German Embassy through a series of activities throughout the year. This included:

- Virtual and physical visits to Wales by the German Ambassador to the UK.
- New relationships with bilateral agencies such as the UK-German Connection (youth mobility).
- Discussions around Taith.
- Introductions to the Urdd and the Future Generations Commissioner.

As a direct result of the Wales in Germany 2021 initiative, the German Embassy has committed to launching its flagship 'UK German Recruitment Fair' in Wales in 2022 – the first time the project will be held outside London in its 10-year history.

