

**Enterprise and Business Committee Inquiry into EU funding opportunities 2014-2020
A response from CITB Cymru Wales**

1. CITB Cymru Wales welcomes the opportunity to input to the Enterprise and Business Committee's inquiry into EU funding opportunities 2014-2020. European Union funding initiatives have the potential to have a transformative impact in Wales, particularly when opportunities for added value are maximised.
2. Investment in infrastructure, such as proposals set out within the TEN-T strategy, has the potential to deliver substantial change to communities through investment in jobs, skills and training. The designation of the current project to dual the A465 between Tredegar and Brynmawr as the first National Skills Academy for Construction in Wales demonstrates clearly how investment in infrastructure, construction and engineering can be translated into investment in individuals, and the regeneration of communities.
3. A joined-up approach and forward planning by the Welsh Government to integrate European Union funding opportunities with existing Welsh Government initiatives, such as the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan, will allow for a simple translation of European funding into jobs and training opportunities in Wales' construction sector, providing a clear agenda for the industry.
4. Support for SMEs through COSME, including a reduction in burdensome regulations and increased access to finance, are a welcome move. With SMEs making up the backbone of the construction sector in Wales, appropriate communication is vital in making SMEs aware of the new resources and opportunities available to them. As such, the implementation of any new relevant funding programme in Wales should be communicated clearly and proactively to SMEs by the Welsh Government, so that they can be accessed by smaller construction firms as well as larger companies.
5. New funding opportunities should be accompanied by, and co-ordinated with, reforms to the procurement system in Wales, to allow maximum community benefits to be exploited within the boundaries of existing European regulations, and maximise opportunities for apprenticeships and training.
6. CITB Cymru Wales is the largest representative body of construction employers in Wales, with over 4,000 construction companies are actively involved in our network, including through our Regional Construction Fora in South East, South West and North Wales. We are working to maximise opportunities for skills, training and development within the Welsh construction sector, and to provide the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to support economic recovery through construction in Wales.

