



NPT INNOVATION EXCHANGE

Business & Innovation Support

29/04/2022 | 1:00 - 3:00PM | Online

Event Overview

[View the event recording here](#)

Join businesses from the construction, digital, technology, engineering and manufacturing sectors in Neath Port Talbot, to discuss the benefits, challenges and opportunities relating to collaboration.

This session we will be looking at business and innovation support and joining us for this discussion will be:

- **Business Diagnostic Programme** - Alison Lavelle, TownSq & Adil Pirmohamedn Neath Port Talbot Council
- **SMART Innovation** - Simon Ripton, Innovation Specialist, Welsh Government
- **InnovateUK EDGE** - Stephen O'leary, Innovation and Growth Specialist & Rod Howells, Partner Manager
- **Project Metal** - Khalil Khan, Project Manager, Swansea University
- **Smart Partnerships & KTPs** - Jess Hughes, Business Engagement Officer, Swansea University
- **UWTSD** - Richard Morgan, SMART Digital Accelerator & David Osmundsen, Centre of Batch Manufacturing

This event will also include an open discussion with local firms about collaborating for business growth in Neath Port Talbot. Contact Helen Bowden for more information, to suggest themes and topics, and to register your interest, by emailing helen@4theRegion.org.uk

We are looking to get feedback from businesses on the forum and events. This forms feedback to the UK Government meeting next week. Could you email your feedback via email a.pirmohamed@npt.gov.uk or business@npt.gov.uk

Alison Lavelle, TownSq Spaces, Business Diagnostic Programme

Based in Caerphilly, [TownSq Spaces](#) is working closely with Adil at Neath Port Talbot Council to offer free support to Neath Port Talbot-based businesses in the innovation, engineering and manufacturing sectors. Businesses can access from 15 hours of free 1:1 support in finance, operations, HR, marketing and more.

- Businesses of all sizes based in NPT can
- Register your interest at npt@townsq.co.uk

Richard Morgan, UWTSD, SMART Digital Accelerator Programme

[SMART Digital Accelerator](#) is a team of industry expert advisers who work with manufacturers in Wales to help them identify the right technology to boost their bottom line. The project is funded by the Welsh Government, delivered by University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) and supported by the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre Cymru (AMRC Cymru).

SMART Digital Accelerator provides a bespoke approach to work with businesses in the following areas:

- Digital simulation, automation, data collection and processing, connectivity, visualisation tools and connected intelligent processes.
- SMART has funding to work with 40 companies in Wales, with funding for 10 to deploy digital technologies within the company.
- Get in touch with the team at: accelerator@uwtsd.ac.uk

David Odmunsen, UWTSD, Centre for Batch Manufacture

[CBM](#) is an industry focused advanced research, new product development, and batch manufacturing facility. Established in 2014 by UWTSD, CBM is a core component of the SA1 Swansea Waterfront development.

CBM's applied research is centred on the application of advanced technologies to manufacturing processes across a wide range of sectors including automotive, aerospace and medical engineering.

- For more information, get in touch with the team at enquiries@cbmwales.co.uk

Simon Ripton, SMART Innovation

[SMART Innovation](#) is a programme lead by the Welsh Government and funded by EU money with the single aim of helping Welsh businesses do better by being more innovative. The programme is delivered by experts in the form of engineers, scientists, industrialists and intellectual property specialists.

The successor of the SMARTCymru programme is under development and more information will be available later in the year. SMARTCymru supports Welsh businesses to develop, implement and commercialise new products, processes and services.

So far we have supported over 450 Welsh businesses to carry out over 650 projects, creating and building on their capability to innovate.

Rod Howells, InnovateUK EDGE

[Innovate UK EDGE](#) is the UK innovation agency's resource for innovative SMEs from any sector who are ambitious to grow further and scale up. It is a publicly-funded service available to all high potential small to medium sized innovation-driven companies.

- [Get in touch with Innovate UK Edge via their website.](#)

Khalil Khan, Swansea University, Project Metal

[Project Metal](#) provides training to the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing industry, offering a wide range of short courses. Courses are typically aimed at undergraduate level and mainly consist of 10 credit modules, consistent with 1 standard university module.

- [Courses can be found here.](#)

Jess Hughes, Swansea University, SMART Partnerships & KTPs

[Smart Partnerships \(SPs\) and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships \(KTPs\)](#) are part-funded government programmes aimed at boosting organisational performance and productivity through collaboration with UK Universities.

They are 3-way partnerships which cover businesses and organisations, along with an associate (graduate/ post graduate person) and a University to work on a specific project within the organisation.

General Comments

How can innovation be supported in your organisation? What does innovation mean in your business and what barriers and challenges are there to overcome?

- For any business considering innovation, it's key to do a full business study.
- "If you're not innovative in your approach to business, you risk losing out."
- "So many support schemes being offered can be overwhelming for small businesses."
- "I have a lot of local companies that come to me and they have innovative projects but engaging with and helping these companies can take up a lot of time. A method of road mapping that can be handed over to people at different stages of development would be beneficial."
- A useful resource has been a Welsh Government-run forum for businesses, where advice is compiled into a series of monthly forums. Building an on-going relationship with a contact from these support schemes can be useful.
- Directors and senior management need to be aware and acknowledge that innovation needs to be intrinsically linked to the organisation. The earlier this conversation is made, the sooner it can be built into business planning.
- Why are we innovating? We need to do it with reason and a purpose that makes sense, especially for future generations.
- How are the innovation programs being embedded with Sustainability; i.e., allowing innovation campaigns/support initiatives to have positive environmental and social impacts?
- I see that sustainability is now a cornerstone of any innovation development.
- I'm keen to find out what opportunities there are to highlight and embed the social and environmental impact while allowing innovation within businesses.
- Meanings for innovation may stand for the circular economy, for the environment and for sustainability.
- Innovation is a term we should use interchangeably with social and environmental issues.
- So exciting to hear all of the opportunities available. Innovation without design is like rice without curry. If you don't have designers on board, you miss 50% of the magic.

Represented Organisations

- **AJB Business Solutions** - Andrew Beer
- **BazCreative** - Lee Bazalgette
- **DWJ Wealth Management** - Danni Watts-Jones
- **Ebbah Sustainovation Ltd** - Ennock Ebbah
- **Envases UK Limited** - Stuart Drury
- **Hexigone** - Patrick Dodds
- **HypeBound** - Gareth Evans
- **Griffiths Group** - Gareth Thomas
- **ION Leadership** - Adam Fairbank
- **Innovate UK Edge** - Stephen O'Leary, Rod Howells
- **NPT Council** - Steve Grey, Adil Pirmohamed, Claire Roach, Sarah Fowler
- **MeeCreative** - Liam Mee
- **Rhino Doors** - Matt Richards
- **RLSP** - Peredur Emlyn
- **R-TECH Materials** - Dave Mumford
- **Swansea University, Project Metal** - Khalil Khan
- **TownSq** - Alison Lavelle
- **UWTSD** - Lisa Lucas
- **UWTSD, SMART Digital Accelerator** - Richard Morgan

Links, References & Resources

- [4theRegion - NPT Innovation Exchange Project Page](#)
- [Business Wales - SMART Innovation](#)
- [Eventbrite - NPT Innovation Exchange Events](#)
- [Innovate UK EDGE](#)
- [MADE Cymru - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT WITH INNOVATION MANAGEMENT](#)
- [TownSq Spaces](#)
- [Swansea University - Project Metal](#)
- [Swansea University - SPs & KTPs](#)
- [UWTSD - SMART Digital Accelerator](#)
- [UWTSD - Centre for Advanced Batch Manufacture](#)

Upcoming Meetings - Dates for your diary

Wed 4th May	1pm-3pm	Funding for Skills & Training	In Person
Wed 18th May	1pm-3pm	Manufacturing & Supply Chain Opportunities	Zoom