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Tyfu Cymru Annual Evaluation Report

Year 2 (2020)

February 2021

Key Findings and Recommendations



Key findings and recommendations

1.1 Key findings

- Supported businesses have been very satisfied with the project with 51 per cent reporting it had met their expectations and a further 44 per cent stating it had exceeded them.
- 2,514 hours of training support was delivered to individuals and organisations up to the end of November 2020 including 1,083 hours delivered in 2020.
- 201 businesses have received support, representing 47 per cent of the identified sector, whilst 376 individuals have received training support to date and a further 1,001 participants supported.
- Training support has been targeted at priority groups with five per cent of supported businesses receiving >100 hours of support each, whilst at the other end of the spectrum 32 per cent of supported businesses received <5 hours of support.
- Over 90 per cent of surveyed participants rated the various training provisions as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 18 networks have now been established, up from 11 in 2019.
- Overall, participants were very positive about the networking aspect with 42 per cent reporting it as 'excellent' and an additional 50 per cent reporting it as 'good'.
- The Knowledge Hub was launched in November 2019 to provide market intelligence to businesses.
- 26 per cent of the participants surveyed in 2020 reported they had accessed market intelligence and advice from the project with 94 per cent indicating it had been 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 96 per cent of survey respondents were satisfied with the way the project had adapted to the pandemic and some benefits were highlighted with regards to the new delivery model e.g. 96 per cent indicated the support had become more accessible
- However, most participants also indicated that in-person delivery, where possible, is their preference.
- 32 per cent cited poorer networking as one of the disadvantages of the new, virtual delivery model.
- Tyfu Cymru has been very active in the strategic leadership aspect of the project having led on four surveys and research studies concerning various aspects of the horticulture sector in Wales and informing policy development through its formal and informal communications with WG.
- Five of the project's six KPI targets have been exceeded less than halfway through project delivery, some significantly e.g. 503 per cent of the 'Participants in training' target.
- Most participants reported several soft outcomes, including: 74 per cent reporting they were more confident and ambitious, 70 per cent had developed new technical horticulture skills and 59 per cent developed general business skills, whilst 55 per cent had improved business practices and 51 per cent had become more productive.
- Survey evidence suggests that the project has generated growth for supported businesses, with respondents attributing growth in employment and turnover to Tyfu Cymru. Based on these data, we calculate a cautious estimate of a net growth in

employees of 8.5 and net growth in turnover of £3.2m as a result of the project. This is an equivalent to a return of £2.25 for every £1 spent.

1.2 Conclusions and recommendations

The delivery of Tyfu Cymru in its first two years has undoubtedly been a success with all but one KPI exceeded and, generally, stakeholders and participants have been extremely positive. The volume of training support provided, with more businesses receiving support in 2020 than 2019 and a high level of training hours recorded, should be considered a significant achievement particularly given the turbulence created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The speed at which the project was able to completely change its delivery model, with a shift from in-person to virtual delivery, has also clearly been a significant success and characterises the project's nimble and flexible approach. This new delivery model has also highlighted several benefits, particularly for a sector that can be very hard to reach. Equally, most participants do still prefer in-person delivery and there are some aspects such as networking and engagement with facilitators which have been difficult to replicate virtually.

Recommendation 1: Once restrictions are lifted; the project should consider a blended model with opportunities to engage virtually and in-person. In-person sessions could be recorded live and hosted on the Knowledge Hub to ensure participants can have the best of both worlds.

Each aspect of the core delivery to participants was very well received with the Knowledge Hub also becoming a far more prominent feature in 2020. In addition, the strategic delivery and leadership shown by the project has clearly gained traction in Year 2. Partners acknowledged Tyfu Cymru as providing the lead whilst the project has also ensured that other projects can feed into their communications with WG.

The relationship with WG has been strong where the project is relied upon to provide industry insights and there have been tangible examples where the project has influenced decision-making. However, although there has been good engagement with policy leads, particularly during the pandemic, some stakeholders suggested that there should be a more formal agreement and/or recognition of Tyfu Cymru's role with regards to sector representation.

Recommendation 2: Consider the possibility of developing a more formalised relationship with WG.

Evidence from our research suggests that the project has been very successful in generating outcomes for businesses, including enabling businesses to grow. The project has sought to prioritise businesses with the greatest potential for growth having categorised each business into four priority groups. However, it was acknowledged that this process could be strengthened by having a clearer outline of the type of support different businesses can access. This would enable the project to build on the work it's already doing with regards to targeting support for high-growth potential businesses.

Recommendation 3: Continue to prioritise high-growth potential businesses with the more intensive support and engagement. Develop a framework outlining the range of support available to each priority group.

There could also be more robust processes in place for other aspects of business engagement and this is something the project is actively pursuing by acquiring a CRM system. There was also a suggestion that the Business Review process could be better utilised as a measurement tool by improving the quality of the data collected.

Recommendation 4: Consider improvements to business engagement practices through more structured action planning, reviewing, and recording progress, particularly for the priority groups. A CRM system will help to facilitate this process.

Recommendation 5: The Business Review could be better utilised as a measurement tool by ensuring it is completed at least upon entry (to capture the baseline) and completion in order to track growth and distance travelled. Additionally, the questions on business size would need to be adjusted to collect more precise turnover and employment information.

Whilst the project has delivered more than most could have expected for existing growers, activity around growing the sector through diversification within agriculture has been more limited.

Recommendation 6: The project should place greater emphasis and provide leadership on new entrants into horticulture over the next year, including by pursuing the collaboration with NFU to support farmers who are open to diversification.

Building on the work Tyfu Cymru has already delivered in generating growth and providing strategic leadership for the sector, the project should explore options to maintain delivery beyond the current funding period. This would provide continuity for the sector and ensure longer-term strategic goals around growth, increasing horticulture's role within agriculture, exploiting opportunities around diversification and the increased understanding of land capability in Wales, can be met. The project should also consider the possibility of accessing funding to enhance existing delivery e.g. greater investment in high-growth potential businesses and/or facilitating mentoring for aspiring growers from the larger, more established horticulture businesses in Wales.

Recommendation 7: Explore funding options to enhance and/or elongate delivery to ensure greater continuity and delivering ambitious, strategic goals.

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