

Chinese health and nutraceutical group to open European HQ, R&D and manufacturing centre in Wales

The news was announced today by Economy Secretary Ken Skates who is in China on a trade mission and meeting Acerchem International Chairman Frank Chen, Strategic Director Ms Nancy Wu and Global Vice President Ken Li at a business reception in Shanghai this evening.

Mr Skates said:

“It’s great news that Acerchem International has chosen to set up its European Headquarters in Wales and is to open a manufacturing and Research and Development centre here, creating a significant number of skilled jobs.

“The company has a long standing Research collaboration with Swansea University which clearly illustrates the importance of building international academic links with business and industry.

“This investment, which is supported by the Welsh Government, can only serve to strengthen the ties between our two countries. China is an extremely important market for Wales and our trade mission this week builds on the strong economic and cultural links that have been developed over a number of years.”

The investment by Acerchem International is backed by £600,000 from the Welsh Government and will create 38 highly skilled, well paid jobs, primarily working in R&D. The company plans to establish its R&D facility in the Institute of Life Science at Swansea University.

Acerchem International Chairman Frank Chen said:

“We very much look forward to building up the business in Wales and developing even closer links with Swansea University.

“Support from the Welsh Government helped fast track this project and was vital in bringing it to Wales and we value the support we have had from Welsh Government officials in Shanghai and in Cardiff.

“Opening this new HQ and R&D centre in Wales marks an exciting new development for the group and a great opportunity to develop and grow the business.”

CEO Jeff Jiang founded Acerchem International in Shanghai in 2007 which has grown into a multi million pound business and a leading group in the health and nutraceutical sectors. The company exports to over 40 countries with sales offices in Wales – at the Institute of Life Science, Swansea University – in Japan, the Netherlands and Spain.

Its product range includes nutritional supplements, functional foods and beverages, beauty care and animal nutrition supplements.

The company provides a diversified portfolio of fermented ingredients and has developed a sophisticated extraction and purification business unit using natural ingredients, giving products better absorption and stability.

With an R&D centre in Shanghai, and working alongside Swansea University, it has developed its own formulations which include premix, blends, tablets, soft-gels, and others. It plans to invest significantly in R&D working with Welsh Universities and increase its business with existing customers in Wales that could also lead to additional jobs being created.

[New EU project to help grow the fisheries industry in Wales and Ireland](#)

The funding will enable Bangor University and Ireland's seafood development agency, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, to pilot a research and development programme aimed at improving the productivity and growth of shellfish businesses in both nations.

The Irish Sea Portal Pilot will investigate patterns of movement of shellfish in the Irish Sea to help reduce the costs of locating shellfish seed and help increase the volume of mussels and shellfish available to the industry.

The project is being funded through the EU's Ireland-Wales co-operation programme, which aims to strengthen economic links and stimulate cross-border collaboration in areas including innovation, climate change, cultural and natural resources, heritage and tourism.

Shellfish seed is a resource shared across the Irish Sea, crossing national boundaries. and provides significant economic benefits. The industry is worth around €250m between Wales and Ireland.

The two-year pilot will be developed in partnership with small and medium sized businesses and will also help the industry to tap into resources and expertise at Bangor University and Bord Iascaigh Mhara to support wider opportunities to expand the industry and create new jobs.

Welsh Government Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“We’ve been clear about the benefits of EU cross-border programmes to Wales and this is a very good example of how countries can work together to maximise shared economic opportunities.

“This is a valuable industry to both nations that has the potential to grow further. I’m delighted that over €1m of EU funds is being invested to support that ambition.”

Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, T.D. said:

“The Irish Sea is not only our shared border but also our shared resource. This project is an excellent example of how EU funding can assist the two regions in working together to develop that resource.”

Prof David Thomas, Head of the School of Ocean Sciences and Director of Sêr Cymru National Research Network for Low Carbon, Energy and Environment, commented:

“This project builds on years of expertise in both sustainable fisheries and in shellfish biology at our School of Ocean Sciences. We’re keen to work with partners to support sustainable fisheries which benefit coastal economies, and are delighted to work with our Irish counterparts to increase the important shellfish industry in both countries.”

Three quarters of a million pounds for Little Haven flood alleviation scheme

The village of Little Haven, in Pembrokeshire, has been regularly affected by both fluvial and tidal flooding, with the most recent event in January 2015.

The flooding is caused by shingle building up and blocking a stream from flowing out under a road bridge onto the beach. Severe storms also cause flooding with water flowing over the existing sea defences.

The funding being announced today by the Welsh Government will contribute 85% towards the cost of construction of the flood alleviation scheme, a grant

value of £729,348 towards the total cost of £858,057.

The Little Haven flood alleviation scheme will include:

- placing shingle in front of the existing defences to alleviate any overtopping,
- installing a short length of box culvert to extend the outfall down the beach beyond the shingle bank,
- raising the current sea defences,
- replacing lost shingle, restoring the profile of the beach.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“I am pleased to confirm the Welsh Government will provide nearly three quarters of a million pounds of funding to help protect Little Haven from flooding. This will provide reassurance to all those who live and work in, or visit this popular village.

“This financial year we are committed to investing almost £55million in flood risk management to reduce risk to homes and businesses across Wales and we are delivering on our promise.”

Pembrokeshire County Council is providing the remaining 15 per cent of the funding. Its Cabinet Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services, Huw George, welcomed the Welsh Government’s announcement. He added:

“We are pleased that we will now be able to proceed with this scheme in order to address the flooding concerns of a number of Little Haven residents.”

[Applications now open for the Welsh Enterprise Zone Business Rates Scheme](#)

The scheme focuses on small and medium sized enterprises that are demonstrating business growth, new starts or businesses that are increasing the size of their full time workforce.

Consideration will also be given to other business activity related to sectors, increased productivity and innovation/R&D.

Applications for the 2016/17 financial year can be made until **Friday, 31st March 2017**.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

“This latest round of the Enterprise Zone Rates Scheme has the potential to make a real difference to businesses, helping to significantly cut their rates bills which in turn can improve cash flow and enable companies to make investments in their growing businesses.

“We first launched the scheme in 2012 and between 2012 -2016 around £9million has been offered to more than 200 eligible businesses located in seven of our Enterprise Zones, with the offer extended to Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone following its designation last year.”

For more information about the Scheme, businesses can ring the Business Wales helpline on freephone 03000 6 03000 or contact the EZBRS team at EZBRS@wales.gsi.gov.uk for an application form.

Green Light for Porthcawl Maritime Centre

The £5.5 million Porthcawl Maritime Centre is part of the Welsh Government's wider Tourism Attractor Destination programme which aims to create 11 must visit destinations across Wales.

Also, backed with funds from the Big Lottery, the Welsh Government as well as private and third sector funds, the Maritime Centre is the first phase of the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus programme which aims to transform Porthcawl into a high quality signature destination within Wales that will attract new visitors to the area.

The development has the potential to accommodate 55 jobs as well as supporting jobs during the construction phase, providing employment opportunities for local people.

The Minister said:

“The coast is the county's Unique Selling Point and the reason why most visitors come to the area. But to attract more visitors to the area we need to provide more exemplary facilities and services for residents and visitors. Porthcawl Maritime Centre will fulfil this need by providing an exciting and innovative 'year round' family centred attraction right on the waterfront.

“Our aim through the Tourism Attractor Destination programme is to focus efforts and investment on key projects in each region so we have a real impact on Wales’ profile in this globally competitive market.

“The Seaquest Coastal Science and Discovery Centre is a very exciting project which will inspire young people to engage with science and consider careers in science. Congratulations to everybody who has been involved in bringing the project to this point and I wish you all the very best for the delivery phase.”

Welcoming the decision, Mike Clarke, Chairman of Porthcawl Harbourside CIC said:

“It is impossible to fully describe how excited and proud the Porthcawl Harbourside CIC team are to receive the go-ahead for this project. This huge vote of confidence in our team and in the community of Porthcawl is tremendous. We believe this is possibly the biggest community-conceived and led tourism project in the UK, and we are now able to tender for the construction and get started.”

Construction on the Maritime Centre is expected to begin in mid-2017. Over the next five years, the Tourism Attractor Destinations programme will see more than £85 million of EU, Welsh Government, Private and Charitable funds invested in tourism projects across Wales.