

GCRE invites supply chain partners to meet the buyer

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The Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) is inviting prospective supply chain partners and suppliers to meet the buyer and find out more about contracts expected to be worth in the region of £250 million.

Details of the market engagement event have been published on the Welsh Government's procurement portal [Sell2Wales](#). The event will take place on Wednesday 2 November at 1.30pm at City Hall, Cardiff. Registration details can be found [here](#).

A formal procurement process (or processes) for the major infrastructure project is expected to commence early next year. This may potentially include works associated with passive rail systems (including but not limited to permanent way, overhead line electrification, civils works etc), active rail systems (including but not limited to signalling, SCADA, power and telecoms), fencing, depot and buildings related requirements along with the bulk purchase of materials.

Kelly Warburton, chief commercial officer for GCRE said: "This is an invitation to those interested in being part of the wider team that will deliver this transformational project. We're beginning early consultation with prospective suppliers about the opportunities, to discuss current thinking and set out our plans to

deliver a modern and dynamic test facility for international rail innovation with leading-edge research and development facilities.

“GCRE has the potential to transform the railway industry in the UK and we want the supply chain to be part of this with a real focus on collaboration and a genuine sense of partnership. From local contractors to major tier one industry partners, there will be plenty of opportunities to engage and be part of our journey. Beginning the discussions now will help suppliers to introduce themselves to our team and understand the opportunities available.”

Those interested in attending the Meet the Buyer event with GCRE on 2 November should register [here](#).

GCRE is a major infrastructure project that will provide state-of-the-art rolling stock testing, infrastructure testing and storage and maintenance for the UK and international rail industry.

Currently a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government (SPV), GCRE was established in 2021 with an initial commitment of £50 million. The UK Government is expected to confirm a further £8m for research and development along with capital funding of £20m. An investment prospectus to attract private funding for the project is also in development ready for launch in the autumn of 2022.

Spanning the former Nant Helen opencast site and Onllwyn Washery in Neath Port Talbot and Powys, South Wales, it will feature the UK’s first net zero railway and become the ‘one stop shop’ for railway innovation, from research and development, through testing, verification and certification, to applied innovation on mainline passenger and freight railways.

The facility will include two 25KV electrified test loops, with one a 6.9km high speed rolling stock track with a maximum speed of around 180km/h and the other a 4km 60km/h test track. Other facilities will include a dual-platform test environment, rolling stock storage and maintenance facilities, operations and control offices, staff accommodation, shunting staff facilities and connections to the nearby main line. There will also be state of the art secure testing environments; equipment, systems and communications development facilities. Education, training, visitor and conference facilities and an industrial development zone are all envisaged in the wider site.