



Alpha
Biotech

Acceleration program for startup
or innovative company in **industrial
biotechnology (TRL 4–8)**

La Région
Grand Est

Quest
for bioeconomy

**BIOECONOMY
FOR CHANGE**

InnoRem

CEBB

ard

bpi france

**GRAND
REIMS**
COMMUNAUTÉ URBAINE

Open till May 31, 2026

REGIONAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Industrial Biotechnology – Innovation, Establishment, and regional deployment

1. Regional context and ambition

The Grand Est region has placed the bioeconomy and innovation at the forefront of its strategic priorities. This is reflected in a growing community of **more than 150 bioeconomy startups, 40% of which originate from outside the region** (share of external projects among all startups supported by Quest for Bioeconomy during the 2024–2025 period), highlighting the attractiveness of its ecosystem.

Among them, startups in the field of **industrial biotechnology** face **multiple development challenges**: handling living organisms, complex regulatory requirements, the high cost of access to bioreactors, and the need to control process parameters at an industrial scale while maintaining competitive production costs...

As a result, **development cycles tend to be long and capital-intensive**. To secure equity financing, startups must be able to present robust techno-economic data derived from experiments conducted at sufficiently large scales resources that are often difficult to access for solutions at intermediate stages of maturity.

The **Alpha Biotech** program was designed to address this challenge by leveraging existing resources to help startups scale up to industrial production and gain access to the market. In particular, it builds on the **expertise of CEBB and ARD** and their **state-of-the-art technical platforms, capable of supporting projects from TRL 3 to TRL 9**, all centralized in a single location: the **Bazancourt-Pomacle biorefinery**.

Alpha Biotech is a comprehensive and unique **acceleration program** that **brings together technical and scientific expertise** on the one hand, and **strategic and financial capabilities** on the other, covering the entire pathway from research to pre-industrialization in the field of **industrial biotechnology**. Its aim is to facilitate access to experimental platforms, **secure the industrial scale-up of startups, and accelerate their market entry through a network of**

industrial partners and key clients, while encouraging innovative projects to establish and grow within the Grand Est region.

In this context, the Grand Est Region is launching a **call for applications** aimed at:

- Identifying **startups and young innovative companies** in industrial biotechnology,
 - Supporting their **technical, industrial, and commercial development**,
 - Promoting their **establishment, experimentation, and deployment** within the regional territory.
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2. Objectives of the call

The call for applications pursues the following objectives:

- **Identify and select** startups developing innovative solutions in industrial biotechnology,
 - **Accelerate project maturation** through technical, industrial, and business support,
 - **Facilitate access to regional infrastructure** (technology platforms, demonstrators, pilot facilities, and industrial partners),
 - **Encourage the long-term establishment** of selected companies within the regional territory,
 - **Structure local value chains** and strengthen the regional bioeconomy ecosystem.
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3. Scope of the call

Projects must fall within the field of **industrial biotechnology**, including in particular (non-exhaustive list):

- Bioprocesses and industrial fermentation
 - Bio-based chemistry and industrial enzymes
 - Biomass and co-product valorization
 - Biotechnologies for the agri-food, energy, materials, chemicals, cosmetics, or health sectors (excluding regulated medical biotechnology)
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4. Eligible projects and applicants

4.1 Eligible organizations

- Innovative startups that have already been established
- Located in France or abroad
- With a credible plan to **establish or expand their activities** in the Grand Est Region

4.2 Expected maturity level:

- Indicative TRL: **4 to 8**
 - Validated proof of concept
 - Identified need for industrialization, scale-up, or pre-industrial demonstration
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5. Support provided by the program

Selected projects will benefit from tailored support designed to secure the industrial scale-up of biotechnologies, including:

- **Regular and coordinated support provided by a single consortium** of partners capable of delivering both technical and business guidance:
 - Technical, technological, and scientific support from the experts of CEBB and ARD, with facilitated access to their state-of-the-art technical platforms.
 - Strategic support for structuring the development project and validating application market opportunities, provided by experts from the B4C cluster and Quest for Change.
 - Regular and tailored follow-up with multidisciplinary partners across the region.
- **Support in accessing funding, through a framework that provides reassurance** to public and private investors.
 - Personalized support in building a robust financial strategy, in coordination with partner funding sources and aligned with the financing schemes that can be mobilized.
 - Identification of funding opportunities in the short and medium term, and optimization of their combination to ensure the financing of the early R&D stages.
 - Anticipation of future funding needs, including access to monitoring of national and European calls for projects, as well as access to a pool of specialized investors through networking and matchmaking opportunities.
- **Access to a comprehensive ecosystem through the networks** of the program partners:
 - Privileged access to a broad multidisciplinary ecosystem at the regional level and beyond.
 - Access to numerous events dedicated to biotechnology and green chemistry.
 - Support from a mobilized ecosystem committed to facilitating establishment in the Grand Est region and ensuring **access to biomass**.

These different aspects of support are summarized in the table below:

Technical and industrial support	Business and strategic support	Support for regional establishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to regional technology platforms (laboratories, pilot facilities, and demonstrators) • Support for bioprocess optimization and scale-up • Connections with industrial partners in the region • Regulatory and standards support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business coaching and business model development • Access to networks of investors and industrial partners • Support for fundraising and access to public funding • Assistance with commercial structuring and market access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in identifying suitable locations for business establishment • Connections with local authorities and regional stakeholders • Access to regional investment and innovation support schemes • Access to available biomass resources

Please note that this call does not provide direct financial support but may grant access to existing regional funding schemes.

6. commitments expected from selected projects

Selected applicants commit to:

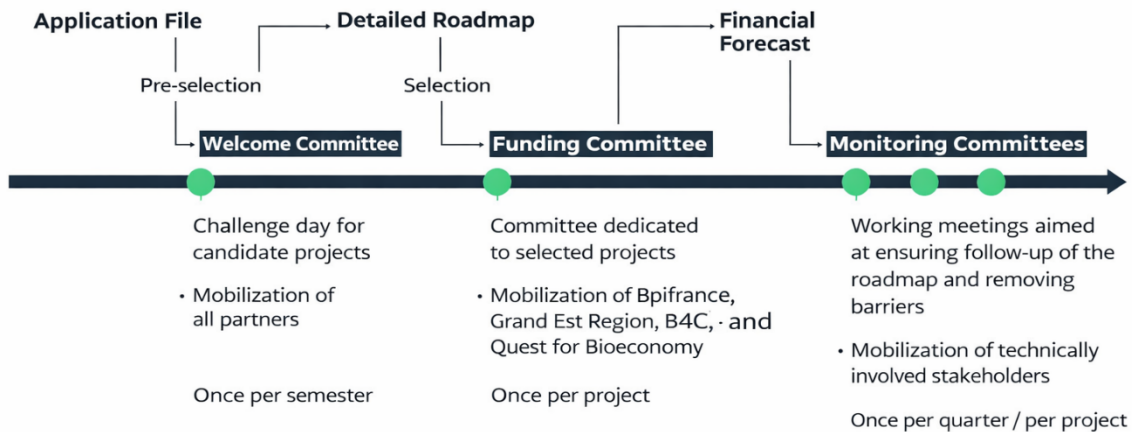
- Actively participating in the support program
- Seriously considering the establishment or development of activities within the regional territory
- Collaborating with stakeholders from the regional ecosystem
- Providing monitoring indicators (technical progress, jobs created, investments, partnerships)

7. Selection criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The **innovative** and differentiating **nature** of the biotechnological project
- The maturity of technical developments and the **potential for scale-up**
- Market potential and the **techno-economic relevance** of the product
- Economic, environmental, and regional **impact**
- The credibility of the **proposed regional establishment plan**

8. Program implementation process



9. Indicative timeline

Steps	Dates
Launch of the call	March 2026
Application deadline	May 31, 2026
Selection and hearings	June 2026
Start of the support program	September 2026

10. Application process

Applicants must submit a project presentation deck including:

- A business plan
- An R&D roadmap
- A summary of the proposed regional establishment strategy

via the platform : bioeconomie-grandest.fr/en/alpha-biotech/

The members of the Alpha Biotech consortium commit to maintaining the confidentiality of all technical, scientific, and financial data and information submitted, exchanged, or received as part of the applications, in any form (experience, know-how, methods, etc.) and on any medium (oral, written, etc.). This confidentiality obligation applies throughout the duration of the program and for a period of three years following its completion.

11. Contact and information

- **Organizer** : Co-led by the Quest for bioeconomy incubator and the Bioeconomy For Change competitiveness cluster, with the support of the Grand Est Region, alongside a consortium of public, academic, and industrial partners.
- **Contact** : bioeconomie@grandest.fr
- **Website** : bioeconomie-grandest.fr/en/alpha-biotech/

Annexe 1 - Overview of the Members of the Alpha Biotech Consortium

	<p>The Grand Est Region supports the Alpha Biotech program and acts both as a potential funder and as a facilitator of access to the ecosystem.</p>
	<p>The Grand Reims Urban Community, a local authority committed to the development of the bioeconomy and to facilitating access to available industrial land.</p>
	<p>The European Center for Biotechnology and Bioeconomy (CEBB) is a leading institute specializing in research and technology validation phases (TRL 2–5).</p>
	<p>Agro-Industry Research and Development (ARD) has specialized in industrial biotechnology, biomass fractionation, and plant-based chemistry since 1989, enabling startups to scale up their technologies to industrial level (TRL 6–9).</p>
	<p>InnoRem, the University Innovation Cluster led by the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) has made the bioeconomy a central pillar of its roadmap.</p>
	<p>Bpifrance (the French Public Investment Bank) plays a key role in supporting the growth and development of French companies by providing tailored financing and services.</p>
	<p>Bioeconomy For Change (B4C) is a leading European bioeconomy competitiveness cluster. It supports companies in their development through its in-house technical expertise and its extensive network of more than 500 members.</p>
	<p>Quest for Bioeconomy is the thematic incubator dedicated to the bioeconomy within Quest for Change, a network of leading incubators in the Grand Est region that supports more than 200 startups in structuring their projects, building their financial strategy, and developing their businesses up to market entry.</p>