

DG RTD Workshop: Supporting the translation of research results and the development of health biotech innovations for greater European benefit

26th of November 2024

CDMA Building, 21 Rue du Champ de Mars, B-1050 Brussels

The Commission recently reaffirmed the importance of biotechnology for the EU's competitiveness and strategic autonomy and has proposed a series of targeted actions to boost biotechnology and biomanufacturing in the EU. The Communication *Building the future with nature: Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing in the EU* identifies the challenges and barriers that the sector faces: research and technology transfer to the market, regulatory complexity, access to finance, skills, value chain obstacles, intellectual property, public acceptance and economic security.

The major biotech breakthroughs that have transformed healthcare (e.g., trastuzumab, genome sequencing, CRISPR, vaccines) warrant the substantial investments needed to commercialize health biotech products and call for further investment in research and innovation. Health biotechnology or biopharmaceutical R&I is substantially supported by the EU R&I Framework Programmes with more than 1250 projects funded under Horizon 2020 (€2.7 billion) and nearly 600 projects funded from Horizon Europe (€1.5 billion) so far.

Following the Commission Communication, this workshop aims to discuss what is needed at a scientific level to foster the most promising health biotech innovations, where are the opportunities and what are the gaps where EU support can have the biggest impact. The workshop is focused on discussions with the onsite audience so attendance is in person only.

Preliminary workshop agenda

(9:30-10:45) Opening session:

- Welcome & research implications of the Biotech Communication (Irene Norstedt, Director, DG RTD)
- EU R&I projects in the field of health biotechnology (Angelo Marino, Health and Food Department, HaDEA)
- Examples of ongoing EU initiatives supporting Innovation (e.g. EIT, EIC, STEP)

Coffee break

(11:15-12:30) Panel discussion: What are the EU strengths in health biotechnologies and how can Collaborative Research across Europe reinforce this leadership?

Moderator: Carmen Laplaza Santos, Health Innovations and Ecosystems

This session aims at identifying in which areas of health biotechnology Europe performs well, what are the drivers of their success and how to ensure that the EU remains an attractive environment to perform Health biotech research. The panel represents the various stakeholders within the health research ecosystem (infrastructures, academic researchers, clinicians, SME's and partnerships with industry) who will share their own experiences and discuss with audience.

Lunch Break

(13:30-15:00) Roundtable discussions (breakout groups)

- What are the opportunities or gaps where research can make the difference?
- How can R&I help in overcoming the technical challenges for the field to translate more research results into health biotech products and services?
- What infrastructures are needed to further boost EU competitiveness in the field?
- Where would collaboration of academia or SMEs with industry be beneficial to progress health biotech?
- What strategies could be suitably adoptable to tackle public acceptance of biotechnology innovations?

Short break

(15:15-16:00) Conclusions

Moderator: Irene Norstedt

- Report back from each breakout group
- Collective discussion on the main points
- Wrap-up & next steps