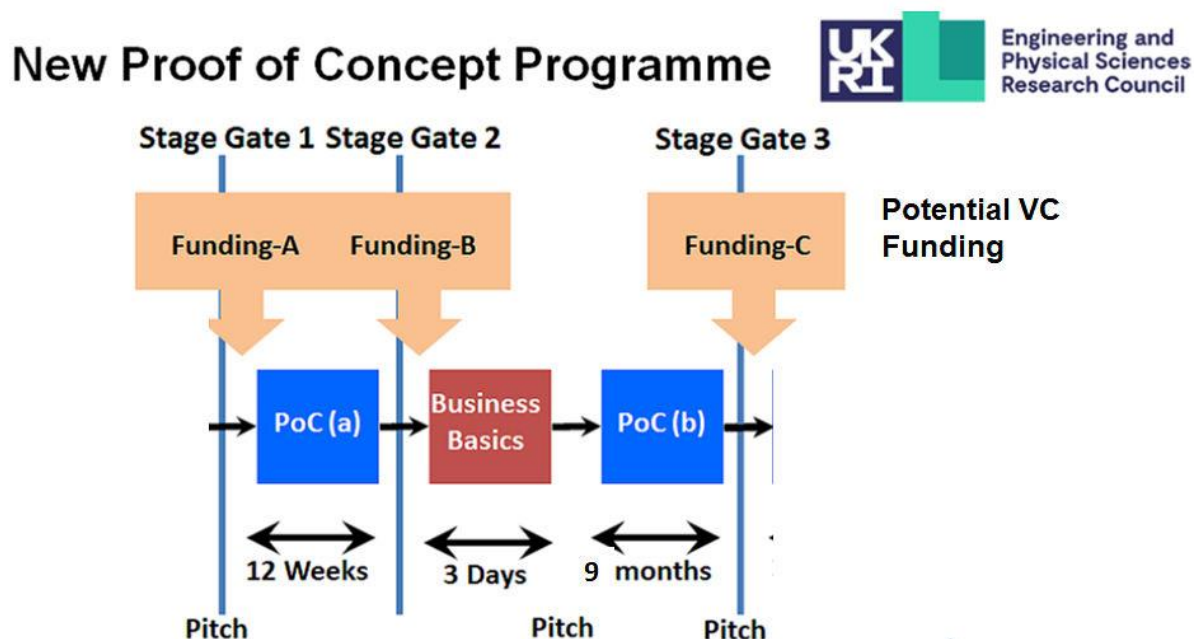


## New SynbiCITE IKC Proof of Concept Projects Round

SynbiCITE is the UK's National Centre for the Acceleration and Commercialisation of Synthetic Biology/Engineering Biology<sup>1</sup>. It is hosted at Imperial College London and led by Prof. Richard Kitney and Prof. Paul Freemont, the Centre's Co-Directors, with the goal of creating a new industry based on Synthetic Biology.

We are announcing an expanded SynbiCITE PoC Programme with EPSRC. The new programme comprises two stages. The PoC (a) Stage comprising 12-week basic project. This is followed by a PoC(b) which is designed to build on the PoC(a) Stage. At the end of the PoC(a) Stage teams taking part in the programme will be evaluated by an expert group comprising both scientific/engineering experts and commercial experts. Successful teams then proceed to the final Stage of the programme (PoC(b)), which comprises development of their project/prototype product over a 9 months, supported by significant development funds.

The diagram below illustrates the PoC Programme.



Throughout the programme projects will be supervised by SynbiCITE's scientific and technical staff, as well as external experts the teams will have access to the SynbiCITE facilities, including the biofoundry. Following successful completion of the development stage, SynbiCITE will typically act as the point of liaison between teams/companies that have successfully completed the programme and Private Sector funders, for example SynBioVen<sup>2</sup>. As now, SynbiCITE will then organise the next stages of the development of the project/company, in collaboration with Private Sector funders including pre-Seed and Seed Funding.

<sup>1</sup> Internationally, the terms Synthetic Biology and Engineering Biology are often used interchangeably. For the purpose of simplicity, the term Synthetic Biology will be used throughout this document.

<sup>2</sup> SynBioVen is an investment company working closely with SynbiCITE through the SynBioVen/Imperial joint venture programme.

## Timetable

**Deadline for applications 12pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

Completed Proof of Concept Project Proposals (using the project proposal form at the end of this document) should be returned to Laura McKay at SynbiCITE by email to [l.mckay@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:l.mckay@imperial.ac.uk) not later than the 12pm on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

**Note: All information and data provided by the Applicants will be treated as critically confidential and will only be made available to the assessors (similar to the terms used by UKRI for grant reviewers). In funding these PoC projects, SynbiCITE/Imperial College has no IP rights, which will remain solely with the applicants and/or associated institutions.**

**Any questions or queries should also be addressed to Laura McKay.**

## Assessment Process Overview

The applications will be assessed and scored by an expert assessor panel.

The PoC Project Applications will initially be ranked on a scored assessment.

The final question on Responsible Innovation will not be scored, but will form part of SynbiCITE's ongoing approach to satisfying the need for Responsible Innovation in Synthetic Biology. It is essential that this question is completed – submissions without a considered response will be deemed ineligible for funding until completed to the satisfaction of the Assessment Panel.

A research funding contract will then be issued to the successful teams following the completion of the Assessment Process. Unsuccessful teams at Stage 2 will be given feedback.

## The Application Form

On the attached Application Form there is a Project Description, followed by five main questions, together with a sixth question on Responsible Innovation.

### ***Project Outline Description***

For **11th May** deadline, teams wishing to enter the programme should complete the application form. At this stage we are looking for a project plan that will cover the basic PoC(a) Project Stage - with a description of the work that will be carried out during the 12-week period of the Stage. Together with a description of costs. The project description should also include a vision of the potential product that will be developed during the PoC(b) Stage (the duration of the Stages will be 3 and 9 months, respectively).

The teams selected following a review after the **11th May** deadline will be subjected to a full review by experts in the field (scientific, engineering and business), and be asked to make a presentation before proceeding to the PoC(a) Stage.

The Project Description should comprise a maximum of two sides of A4 (11-point Arial normal font - **do not use Arial Narrow**) with 2.54 cm margins all round. It will carry a total mark of 20.

### **Please Note**

The aim of the programme is to develop products that will be successful in the engineering biology/BioEconomy marketplace. It is therefore essential that from the start of entering the programme teams focus on not only the excellence of the science and engineering to be undertake, but, also, the commercial viability of what is being proposed. Normally, when teams enter the PoC (b) Stage they should have either formed a company or be in the process of so doing. Typically, we expect teams to comprise three people (2 scientists/engineers and 1 business-oriented individual) to cover the scientific/engineering and commercial aspects of the project.

### **Questions**

Each question carries a total of 10 marks, making an overall total of 50. The Responsible Innovation will not numerically be scored - but has to be satisfactorily completed.

The answer to each question should comprise a maximum of one side of A4 (11-point Arial, normal font - **do not use Arial narrow**) with 2.54 cm margins all round. In addition, applicants should provide a Gantt chart for the project on one side of A4 (Landscape).

### **Questions**

#### **1. What is the business opportunity that the project addresses?**

#### **Guidance**

Outline the business opportunity and what the project team needs to do to successfully address it within the desired timeframe and cost.

Describe the nature of the problems or issues facing you and/or your potential customers and how the intended outputs of the project will address these problems and issues.

#### **2. What is the size of the market opportunity that the project might open up?**

#### **Guidance**

Describe the size of the market opportunities that this project might open up, including details of:

- the current nature of the specific market(s) at which the project is targeted
- the dynamics of the market including quantifying its current size, actual and predicted growth rates
- a clear and robust strategy for developing market share
- the projected market share for the project outcome, with justification in the light of any potential competitors
- the potential to create value-added for the UK.

#### **3. What will the project deliver? What is innovative about this project in the context of the current synthetic biology industry landscape?**

#### **Guidance**

List or describe the potential exploitable outputs of the project such as:

- products
- services
- processes
- applications

- software solutions

and show these are credible, scientifically, technically and/or otherwise.

Identify the extent to which the project is innovative both commercially and technically.

#### **4. *What technical approach will be adopted?***

##### **Guidance**

Describe the main scientific/technological challenges and provide an overview of the technical approach to address them.

#### **5. *What economic, social and environmental benefits is the project expected to deliver?***

##### **Guidance**

This section might address how the project could assist with climate change, sustainability and green Industrial Revolution agendas and/or address broader societal benefits (including medicine and healthcare).

#### **6. *Responsible Innovation***

##### **Guidance**

please refer to the EPSRC Responsible Innovation Framework

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/index.cfm/research/framework/>



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**PROOF OF CONCEPT PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Summary of Project Details

<b>Submission number: (Lead partner Surname_Version_X.Y_ddmmyyyy)</b>	
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<b>Project title:</b>	
<b>Organisation/Institution:</b>	
<b>Project lead and other members of the (Max 3):</b>	
<b>Proposed project partner(s):</b>	
<b>Proposed start date:</b>	
<b>Project duration (months):</b>	

Contact Details:

<b>Project lead address:</b>	
<b>Lead contact telephone:</b>	
<b>Lead contact mobile:</b>	
<b>Lead contact email:</b>	
<b>Lead contact website:</b>	

About the project:

**Project Description (max 2 pages Arial size11 normal font) - 20 Marks**

**1. *What is the business opportunity that this project addresses? (10 Marks)***

**2. *What is the size of the market opportunity that this project might open up? (10 Marks)***

**5. *What will the project deliver? What is innovative about the project *in the context of the current synthetic biology industry landscape?* (10 Marks)***

**3. *What technical approach will be adopted? (10 Marks)***

**4. *What economic, social and environmental benefits is the project expected to deliver? (10 Marks)***

**5. *Responsible Innovation (not scored numerically)***