



Trend Chart on Innovation in Europe

UK 5

General presentation of the measure/scheme/action/regulation

Country

United Kingdom

Geographical coverage, national or regional (state region)

(National)

Title of the measure

Biotechnology Mentoring and Incubator (BMI) Challenge

Information Source/Reference

DTI Biotechnology Directorate

Overview (nature, main goals)

Overall objective is to further stimulate the growth of the UK biotechnology industry via new company formations. The BMI Challenge is a competition to encourage intermedia organisations to provide new incubator facilities and specialist business mentoring services. Planned to run for three years. Up to 50% grant for first three years of the proj (up to max. £0.5 m - 808,500 EURO).

Action Plan objective addressed by measure

II.5. Financing

III.3. Start-up of technology-based companies

Administering agency

[DTI - Department of Trade and Industry](#)

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Name of the manager(s) responsible for the implementation of this measure with address, fax, phone

[P McDonald](#)

DTI - Department of Trade and Industry

151 Buckingham Palace Road, United Kingdom

Description of Scheme

General Information

Reference to legal basis (e.g. act, public document, ...)

Science and Technology Act 1965.

Does the measure receive central funding or regional funding?

Central

Start date

1996

Expected date of completion

Ended 2000

Previous measure (name, date, links with the current measure)

None.

Reasons for launching/modifying the new measure

The shortage of business and management skills in biotechnology SMEs; the need for targeted advice, covering financial, commercial, regulatory, patenting and legal issues; and a lack of specialist premises and facilities.

Have any of the main features of the measure/scheme/action/regulation changed during its implementation

For the first round of the competition only, limited support was offered towards short feasibility studies for bio-incubator facilities.

What is the predominant role of the government?

Catalyse increased private sector activity through award of limited number of publicly funded grants.

Target Group

Who are the target groups of the measure?

Large Companies/Large Industrial Companies

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Publications



Who is Who



News



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SMEs/Industrial SMEs
 Research Institutes
 Universities
 Public Authorities/Organisations
 Other

Organisation and Implementation

Organisation and Structure

The Challenge is run by the Small Firms Group of the Biotechnology Directorate. The Directorate aims to work in partnership with industry and others to help UK companies to improve their competitiveness through the commercial application of biotechnology. With the Directorate, the Small Firms Group has responsibility for sponsorship of biotechnology SMEs and for developing and implementing novel programmes to help stimulate the growth of the sector.

What are the criteria for eligibility?

To avoid these problems, all entries are judged by an independent panel of experts

What is the mode of delivery of the measure?

Grant of up to £500,000 (EURO 808,500) towards up to 50% of eligible project costs, awarded on competitive basis. Bids are assessed by an independent panel of experts against published criteria - contribution to the growth of the British biotechnology sector added value of Government support, the calibre of bidding organisations, short and long term viability of proposal, the degree of innovation and the wider benefits. (Further detail are in the Guidelines, a copy of which has been forwarded to the Commission).

Financing : Overall budget allocated to the measure

Up to £4.9 million (EURO 7.9 million) from DTI

Financing : expenditure per year

Varies depending on individual projects. No requirement to repay Grant.

Financing : other budgetary sources (additional financing)

At least 50% of project costs must be met from private sector sources. Total public sector contributions from whatever source (such as central or local Government, Research Councils, European funding), and including any BMI grant, must not exceed 50% of project costs. Capital costs of incubator premises are not supported by the Challenge and must be provided from separate private or public sources.

Results

Result Measurement

What are the main indicators for the measurement of the results ?

These include: ? number of new self-sustaining private sector mentoring/incubator projects generated; ? number of new biotechnology companies established (and still operating at 5 years); ? level of private sector support in new incubators; ? number of events to disseminate best practice in mentoring/incubation learnt through the Challenge.

Where an evaluation has taken place, what were the main results achieved?

On-going monitoring against objectives but no formal evaluation has yet been undertaken

If no official evaluation has been undertaken, have there been any indicators of success?

The Challenge is expected to meet, or exceed, the objectives set out at the outset of the Programme

Observations

Which mechanisms seem to function well in the measure?

This is a novel approach to addressing the issues. It is a sectoral initiative commended by the Bank of England (Financing of Technology based Small firms) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI - Tech-Stars Report). It reflects recommendations of the Enterprise Panel report on the "Business Incubation" and of the Health & Life Sciences Technology Foresight Panel.

Which mechanisms seem to be less successful in the measure?

Too early to evaluate.

Are there any other measures planned or in operation as a follow up to this measure? Direction of the planned measures? Objectives? Target groups?

Further requirements will be considered as part of an assessment of the programme in light of future market developments- new phase started 1999. Considering a follow up measure at October 2001 for the future.



