



**biotope** by VIB

A stimulating place for biotech entrepreneurs  
to start their venture

SCOUTING TOOLKIT

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## About you

Since biotope is all about putting entrepreneurs first and taking away boundaries for start-ups, we are reaching out to you as an ecosystem connector **to ask for your help in spreading the word about this new agrifood biotech incubator.**

The success of biotope depends on the quality of its first cohorts. We hope that you see the added value of biotope for some of the start-ups, scientific teams and early ideas from across your own networks.

We believe an ecosystem is only successful if all players collaborate and share expertise and contacts **so it would be great if you could help us to identify perfect candidates for biotope and invite them to put themselves forward.**

In this document, you can find more info on biotope, what we offer and what type of entrepreneurs or scientists we are looking for.

If you think somebody in your network could benefit and be eligible, do not hesitate to share our contact information; we are always happy to talk to them.

The same goes if you want to know more or want to share some information, we are all about collaboration and complementarity.

Thank you so much,

Annick & Lore

## About Biotope

**biotope by VIB is a pre-seed incubator for aspiring agrifood for health biotech startups with a strong scientific backbone to craft their ideas into sustainable, impactful seed-investment-ready businesses.**



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## Our offer

biotope by VIB supports early biotech startups in making the leap from concept to viable business.

Biotope offers access to a stimulating ecosystem with labs, a network of experts and significant seed funding.

As no science-based startup is the same, we only work with a small number to offer a tailored journey based on each venture's unique challenges and strengths.

Ventures will rapidly advance their science and develop their startup into an investment-ready business. The process will also grow their capabilities as a founder and will help build their team for success.

## Backed by VIB

biotope is an initiative of **VIB**, one of the world's premier life science institutes, that strives to turn its scientific discoveries into new agricultural, medical and industrial applications and businesses.

VIB is also the driving force behind the Flanders' life sciences ecosystem by providing access to innovation, technology and talent, as well as by recruiting international companies and creating startups.

**VIB's internal venture program resulted in successful spin-offs like Aphea.bio, Protealis, MRM Health and Biotalys.**

**With biotope, VIB opens up its expertise, support, and fertile ecosystem to external startups.**



# The offer: **biotope basecamp**, our 3-week accelerator program

## BY APPLICATION ONLY

This short, intensive program (at no cost\*) is designed to support the translation of your biotech science into a viable business and prepare you and your venture for the challenges that lie ahead as you develop your business concept further.

It's a chance for you and your team to work together to rapidly develop and test your thinking on key aspects of your venture's potential with expert feedback and guidance from our core team, partners and wider biotope ecosystem.

You will work fast and collaboratively across the areas that experience has taught us are most needed for the future success of your venture, being biotechnology, IP, business, team and funding.

By the end of the 3 weeks, you will receive a 360° assessment of your pre-seed investment readiness, gain clarity and expert feedback on what you need to focus on next in your venture's development.



\* except travel & accommodation

# The offer: from lab to life in 12 months

BY INVITATION ONLY



## 3 levels of personalised support

1. Technology & science
2. Commercialisation
3. Team



## €250K convertible loan

Tech derisking  
Value creation



## High-tech facilities and networks

To bring your innovation out of the lab and close to the market

Invited start-ups for the biotope 12-month personalised support will each receive €250k pre-seed funding as a convertible loan to finance key experiments and technology development activities while developing the skills and resources needed to secure seed funding and succeed.

Our dedicated biotope team will work closely together with the startups during the 12-month personalised support that is tailored to the individual needs and challenges of each team. On top of the financial ticket, we offer personalised support, access to state-of-the-art lab and office facilities, VIB technology, and experts.

We match the team with scientific experts and business mentors who will accompany them in their development process and introduce them to relevant stakeholders.

The startup teams will be supported by the **world class agri-food biotech hub in Ghent, Belgium**. The continuous combination of tackling scientific as well as business challenges by learning, doing, and validating in a high-paced, well-structured support will allow you to grow smarter, leaner, and faster.

This tailor-made support journey enables early biotech entrepreneurs to test, validate and de-risk their technology and further develop their assets while increasing their business skills for seed stage investments.

# The Process: from lab to life in 12 months

## 1. Online Application and Evaluation

**Online application**  
through this link

2 closing dates a year:

**30/4 and 30/10**

All applications  
evaluated by an  
external expert panel.

Top applications are  
selected to proceed into  
biotope Basecamp.

## 2. 3-Week Hybrid Basecamp

Scientific challenge  
Entrepreneurial challenge  
Expert advice  
Gap identification  
Investment committee  
feedback

### biotope basecamp

This quick validation of  
your startup prepares you  
and your venture for the  
challenges ahead.

Biotope basecamp offers  
(at no cost\*) the teams a  
360° assessment of their  
venture's preseed  
investment readiness.

The teams will gain real  
clarity on what to focus  
on next in their venture's  
development

\* except travel and  
accommodation

## 3. Pre-seed Stage Ready

## 4. 1-year bespoke Support

Mirroring: identifying your unique priorities and  
challenges Commercial, science, technology  
and team support Non-dilutive funding options  
Learning by doing Connecting and networking

### biotope 1-year bespoke support

The most promising startups with the strongest  
mutual fit will be invited to embark on a 12-month  
personalised biotope journey:

- €250k pre-seed ticket as a convertible loan  
with potential matching grant funding
- Personalised science, technology, team and  
business support in a tailor-made journey
- Access to cutting-edge research technology  
and facilities
- Aspaceatthemultipurposeeco-working labs,  
greenhouses and offices
- TailoredaccesstoabroadVIB network of  
applied researchers, experts, corporate  
partners and investors
- Dedicated mentorship and coaching by  
biotechnology entrepreneurs

## 5. Seed Stage Ready

### End of program

The unique  
combination of  
technology maturation  
in combination with  
business support will  
get start-ups to seed  
stage in an exciting,  
fast-paced journey.

## For who?

We welcome entrepreneurs and scientists who:

- a reset to make a big impact in agriculture, food or nutrition
- have a unique, science-based solution to a clearly articulated and quantified problem
- preferably (pending) IP\* is present or at least you must have an idea of what IP could be generated
- can demonstrate their biotech innovation working in a lab
- need scientific support and high-tech facilities to build a benchmarked proof-of-concept
- are part of a team of at least 2 members, combining strong science with business savviness
- can commit to fast-paced journey to build seed-stage ready startup
- in general, teams committing to working from or building their operational team at the biotope facilities will have preference

\* If your technology is based on already generated IP, ideally the IPR is already owned by or licensed to your company or a Term Sheet from the IP owner (e.g., university tech transfer office) exists stating willingness to enter into an exclusive license agreement.

## How?

Only applications meeting the criteria will be evaluated by an external expert panel. If you are in doubt, do not hesitate to reach out to us or forward the potential candidate directly.

Teams do not need to have an established company at application, however, when accepted on the 12-month biotope personalised support journey, they will need to become a legal entity to get the pre-seed funding.

Foreign startups can be accepted for biotope, as long as they can demonstrate to have a link with the region (i.e. set-up your company or a daughter office locally or have a signed collaboration with a local research institute) or are committed to build one.

## When?

Applications will be open **until April 30, 23:59 CET** through this link.

- The hybrid basecamp will run from **June 6 until June 23**.
- In person presence in Ghent, Belgium, is expected on June 6-9 and preferably on June 23.
- Invited companies will start their 1 year biotope bespoke support journey in **August**.



# FAQ – We can imagine you have these questions

## 1. Why should you join the biotope basecamp?

The basecamp challenges you in translating your biotech science into a viable business and prepares you and your venture for the challenges that lie ahead as you develop your business concept:

1. Build confidence through hands-on workshops, relevant for agrifood biotech startups
2. Test and validate your idea with relevant stakeholders such as scientific and IP experts, potential customers, and serial entrepreneurs
3. Receive a 360° assessment of your pressed investment readiness and gain real clarity and expert feedback on what you need to focus on next in your venture's development

If we both feel there is a strong mutual fit based on our experience of working together, we will invite you to join our 12-month personalised support journey.

When invited, each of our startups receive €250K and the facilities and expertise to enable real proof of concept building and to equip the team with the skills & resources needed to make them seed stage ready.

You will be mentored throughout the program by leading biotech captains of industry and scale-up entrepreneurs, and you become part of the Biotope/VIB Biotech ecosystem.

## 2. What is a biotech innovation?

For us, biotech is not limited to lab coat specific, deep scientific solutions. We use the core definition of biotech here: “basic molecular mechanisms of life, from microorganisms to plants and human beings”. Still not sure? Contact us on [biotope@vib.be](mailto:biotope@vib.be).

If you are seeking a personalised program fitting your needs, and you need labs, greenhouses, and experts to help you along the road, biotope is the perfect program. Since just a few startups will enter per cohort, the experienced management team works continuously hand-in-hand with you to proactively activate the biotope ecosystem according to your needs.

The program includes a spot in our amazing biotope loft, your own state-of-the-art lab facilities, and access to the VIB expertise and core facilities.

## 3. What does it take to get invited to the 12-month personalised support?

We evaluate the invitation based on three main criteria:

- **Investor confidence:** at the end of the basecamp, you will have the chance to pitch your venture to the Biotope Ventures investment committee. Here it is critical to convince investors of your biotechnology and potential product, strength of IP and business potential.

- **Ability to benefit from the biotope ecosystem:** how much can we further help you and your venture with the biotope resources such as VIB scientific experts, state-of-the-art facilities, labs and greenhouse infrastructures
- **Motivation and fit with biotope:** we assess if there is a strong mutual fit with you, your team and your venture with biotope

#### 4. How are we different from other incubator programs?

We differ from other incubator initiatives by: offering you not only skills training but also real lab and greenhouse infrastructure, aiming at technology maturation in a constant feedback loop with market and business input

- being intrinsically human-centric. Yes, your business idea and its development in a viable company is key but we allow you as a team to grow with it, focusing on your strengths and capacities as well.
- connecting entrepreneurs in this early stage to VIB scientific experts access to state-of-the-art facilities to validate their technology
- offering you early blended funding: a €250K convertible loan, potentially topped up with grant funding
- supporting only a few startups per cohort (3-5) to guarantee a personal growth path by really knowing and understanding the team, the technology, the trajectory ahead, and the business opportunity and challenges

#### 5. How long does the biotope journey last?

The biotope personalised journey lasts 12 months during which you get all the room, support, and financing mentioned earlier. When the program ends, you become a biotope alumnus who we will support as much as possible in the continuation of your journey to success. Our network is your network, and you remain part of the biotope ecosystem and its events.

Alumni also pay it forward by serving as mentors in younger cohorts.

#### 6. What is included in the convertible loan?

Startups accepted in biotope receive an investment consisting of a convertible note agreement of €300k. This includes the incubator programme fee valued at €50k, so you will get net cash proceeds of €250k.

With a convertible note, we do not artificially value your early startup (idea) at the beginning of the program. We are confident that the journey together will show its value in a concrete valuation by seed stage investors at the end, showing our commitment to add value and support you as much as possible in your development track.

#### 7. We already received funding and would only like to use the high-tech facilities and support. Can we apply?

We also offer support to more mature start-up ideas. Get in touch to tell us more and we will figure the best collaboration model.

**8. I tick all the boxes but am only by myself. Can I apply?**

We require at least a 2-person team. However, we are always open to discussions with single founders who are trying to build their team and assist in this process prior to the biotope application. Remember: investors do not invest in the horse but in the jockey. This makes team and team dynamics a key component of the selection and development process. If you want to know more, just contact us through [biotope@vib.be](mailto:biotope@vib.be).

**9. We have a great digital solution, but it is not really 100% biotech. Can we apply?**

It depends. Due to the focus on labs, greenhouses, hardware support and the significant pre-seed ticket, the personalised support is not built for fully digital start-ups. A biotech solution can definitely be complemented by a digital component but cannot solely consist of a digital solution.

**10. I am already participating in another incubator program. Can I combine?**

This will depend on the focus and time commitment you will be able to make in Biotope. Getting seed stage ready with a tangible proof of concept in 12 months will not be a walk in the park, even with the cash, expertise, and support you get from us! Just inform us beforehand so we can discuss whether a combination would make sense or not.

**11. We do not have a PhD scientist on our team, can we still apply?**

Of course, you can! All entrepreneurs are welcome as long as they have a biotech-based technology they can demonstrate in a lab environment – preferably with early (pending) IP.

**12. We are developing a solution that will require significantly more investment than the convertible. Does it still make sense to apply?**

Definitely. Biotope is a starting point for biotech ventures, a fertile ecosystem which will allow your solution to grow and mature more quickly. The ecosystem will keep on supporting you, with its network of partners, corporates, and later stage investors.

We will also support you in obtaining non-dilutive grant funding during the personalised journey, adding up to a total amount significantly higher than the convertible alone.

**13. I have a great biotechnological idea, but I am not technical. If I apply will you accept me?**

We'll consider the best ideas, regardless of where they come from, but you will need a technical cofounder and be able to show your idea in a lab environment. Read Q8 and reach out to [biotope@vib.be](mailto:biotope@vib.be) if you want to make sure

**14. Where is biotope hosted?**

Biotope is located in, and benefiting from, the dynamic, internationally renowned biotech ecosystem in Ghent, Belgium. Grown out of VIB, one of the world's premier life science institutes, we cover multiple locations in Flanders.

However, the flagship location for the agrifood cohorts is located in Nevele, close to Ghent.

### 15. Do we need to reallocate to Belgium?

Foreign start-ups can be accepted for biotope, as long as they can demonstrate to have a link with the region (i.e., set-up your HQ or a daughter office locally or have a signed collaboration with a local research institute) or are committed to build one.

### 16. Can I reapply to the biotope basecamp?

Yes this is possible. Please get in contact with [biotope@vib.be](mailto:biotope@vib.be), to ensure you will be onboarded as lean as possible when reapplying.

### 17. Still have more questions?

Contact the team through [biotope@vib.be](mailto:biotope@vib.be), we always are available to answer your questions and jump in a quick call if that helps!





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