

Industry stage free: The 11th competition for start-ups in the life sciences and biotechnology has begun

- ***The start-up competition BioRiver Boost! offers start-up teams from the biotechnology and life sciences sector a professional stage to present themselves and their innovative technologies.***
- ***The three best start-ups from all areas of the life sciences are honoured. In 2024, there will be a particular focus on immunology, neurology and oncology.***
- ***Founders are invited to apply via the online form from now until 26 August 2024.***

Very early start-ups and start-up projects from the life sciences will find an open door to their future market in BioRiver Boost! They are invited for the BioRiver Boost! 2024 to apply. The established start-up competition, now in its 11th year and organised by the industry association BioRiver-Life Science im Rheinland e.V., offers innovators the opportunity to gain a broad industry platform and make their first business contacts.

Participation in BioRiver Boost! particularly benefits early-stage companies that develop disruptive and innovative technologies or processes and procedures as well as services for biotechnology and the life sciences. After going through the two-stage selection process, the best three overall concepts are honoured with the BioRiver Boost! award. The decisive jury is made up of renowned industry experts and early-stage investors. In addition to the award, the winning teams receive professional marketing support and coaching from experienced managers. All finalists win through feedback, advice and networking from the jury and the expert audience.

“Since the first round, almost 200 start-ups from North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany and neighbouring European countries have applied to BioRiver Boost! and eight finalists per year have pitched,” explains Dr Frauke Hangen, Managing Director of BioRiver e.V. “Those who are able to present themselves to us bring themselves into the field of vision of industry and investors. I can only encourage all founders to take advantage of this opportunity. I would like to thank the managing directors and managers from the BioRiver network for their tireless and ongoing commitment to the next generation of the industry.” In order to make it easier for both international start-ups and founders to participate, BioRiver Boost! will also be held as an English-language event in 2024.

Extra boost for early-stage life science start-ups

A ground-breaking idea and technical expertise alone are no guarantee for the success of a start-up. Direct contact with decision-makers and the shortest possible routes to market partners are also important in order to successfully develop a new product or technology and place it on the market. “The qualified feedback that the finalists receive from the jury and the expert audience can make a significant contribution to advancing business concepts,” Dr Hangen is convinced. “Participants confirm that BioRiver Boost! provides them with crucial information on their concepts and business models, which helps them to make their start-ups fit for the future.”

Start-up teams from NRW, from all over Germany and international applicants are also welcome to take part. All finalists receive valuable feedback on their projects. Professional pitch training prepares the start-up teams for the final live presentation. All applicants benefit in many ways from the extensive BioRiver network. This year’s final event with pitch

sessions, reverse pitches and award ceremony will be hosted by the global corporation Johnson & Johnson at its headquarters in Neuss on 27 September 2024.

The life sciences community in action for founders

What makes BioRiver Boost! special, apart from its focus on research-intensive start-ups in biotechnology and the life sciences, is the great commitment of the members represented in BioRiver: experienced managers from a wide range of life sciences application fields contribute their knowledge in pitch training, as jury members and on the side of the specialist audience. Companies that are involved in the jury or as sponsors present themselves as innovative and use the opportunity to familiarise themselves with exciting start-up projects at an early stage.

“The closing event of BioRiver Boost! also offers an important supra-regional platform for networking the life sciences community far beyond the Rhineland,” emphasises Dr Hangen. “On 27 September, start-up teams, established companies, scientists and investors will once again come together. You are all invited to actively participate in the professional discussions and networking between all participants and guests.”

The competition is significantly supported by sponsors. Sponsorship acquisition is ongoing until the final event. In addition to the important host Johnson&Johnson, the City of Düsseldorf’s Economic Development Agency has also agreed to be the first platinum sponsor.

How the competition works

1. Online application and selection of finalists

The BioRiver Boost! competition is organised in two stages: In the first phase, the founding projects and start-ups apply via the BioRiver Boost! online portal to take part [via the BioRiver Boost! online portal to take part](#) in the final event. The application deadline is 26 August 2024, the application and the pitch can be submitted in German and English, the closing event will be held in English.

The submitted projects are evaluated by a jury of experts according to fixed criteria such as customer benefit, degree of innovation, team experience and business concept, and the eight best submissions are selected as finalists for the BioRiver Boost! 2024 will be selected.

2. Pitch training for the finalists

The finalists will be invited to a one-day professional training session to prepare their pitches, which will take place on 18 September in Düsseldorf.

3. Final event

The closing event is the highlight of the competition, at which many stakeholders and supporters of the life science industry will be represented alongside the founding teams and jurors. After the welcome address, the start-up pitches follow in regular rotation with equal time for questions from the jury and the audience. The afternoon programme includes presentations by companies and investors as well as a networking session. The day concludes with the presentation of the BioRiver Boost! Awards by the Board of Directors and important sponsors.

[To the online application](#)

BioRiver Boost! 2024

The competition in brief

- >> Competition with a focus on biotechnology & life
- >> Start-up projects from NRW, Germany, international
- >> Jury of industry experts from leading life science companies such as Johnson&Johnson, Bayer, Lonza, Miltenyi Biotec, Qiagen, UCB and early-stage investors
- >> Professional pitch training
- >> Qualified feedback at the final event
- >> Personalised coaching for BioRiver Boost! winners
- >> Visibility and valuable network contacts with industry experts and investors

<u>Application portal:</u>	www.bioriver.de/anmeldung-bioriver-boost
<u>Application deadline:</u>	26.08.2024
<u>Pitch training:</u>	18.09.2024
<u>Final event:</u>	27.09.2024

About BioRiver – Life Science im Rheinland e.V.

BioRiver – Life Science im Rheinland e.V. is the industry association for biotechnology and life sciences in this region. It brings together around 100 member organisations – corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups, universities and research institutions as well as sponsors in municipalities, chambers, technology centres and capital. BioRiver has a long tradition of supporting start-up projects and start-ups and therefore has a special focus on them. The vast majority of the more than 65 life science companies in the association, which include industry giants such as Bayer, Qiagen, Miltenyi Biotec, LONZA and Charles River, were founded by universities in the Rhineland. With the BioRiver Boost! competition, the association set up its own national and international format for the early networking of start-ups and established companies back in 2014.

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