InnoStars Connect Programme

Call for Applications

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History of changes

Version	Publication date	Changes
1.0	01.09.2026	Initial version
1.1	30.09.2026	The submission deadline has been extended from October 1, 2026, 16:00 CET, to October 8, 2026, 16:00 CET. Evaluation and hearings rescheduled accordingly. Applications already submitted remain valid. No other call conditions have changed.

Any changes to this call are listed in the table above. Amended copies of the call will be available on the call website.

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1. Call summary

MAIN FEATURES	
Why should you apply	Join 'InnoStars Connect', an open innovation and challenge-based collaboration programme. It connects Laboratorio Reig Jofre (RJF), as challenge owner, with European healthcare start-ups and SMEs from the BRIDGE regions to work closely together and address real-world biomanufacturing challenges. . Selected applicants receive non-financial programme support, including mentoring, coaching, bootcamp participation, and travel/accommodation arrangements for the offline bootcamp. No direct grant, subgrant, prize, or other financial support will be paid to selected participants.

Who can apply	This call is open to legal entities that qualify as small or medium enterprises (SMEs), including spin-offs and start-ups, as defined by the European Commission.
	Applicants shall:
	• be legally registered in one of the following BRIDGE regions:
	  • **Campania (Italy)**
	  • **Silesia (Poland)**
	• have an innovative solution addressing one of the InnoStars Connect challenges described in Annex 1
	• have a solution with a maturity level of at least **TRL 5 up to TRL 7** where the technology/service/solution has been demonstrated in a working/relevant environment.

Key dates	• Call opening: 01.09.2026 • Application submissions deadline: 08.10.2026 • Applications evaluation: 09.10.2026 – 15.10.2026 • Invitations to hearings: 16.10.2026 • Hearing and selection: 19.10.2026 – 23.10.2026 • Announcement of the selected teams: 26.10.2026 • Bootcamp first cycle: November - December 2026 (online) • Bootcamp second cycle and final event: January - February 2027 (in-person) in Barcelona (RJF facilities) • Activity closure & reporting: February 2027
Challenge Owner	Laboratorio Reig Jofre
How to apply	Applications must be submitted electronically through the designated application platform by the deadline indicated in this call. Submission link: BRIDGE InnoStars Connect 2026 - Application Form
Contact details	alessio.smeraldo@innostars.org

2. Background

2.1 The Interregional Innovation Instrument (I3) Instrument

The Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument addresses the innovation divide in Europe by supporting interregional collaboration. As part of the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), it supports interregional innovation projects in their commercialisation and scale-up phases and brings them to the investment level. It uses smart specialisation as a coordination principle and empowers ecosystems in less-developed regions.

2.2 BRIDGE project

BRIDGE (Biomanufacturing Regions for Integrated Development and Growth in the Ecosystems) is a two-year project, funded by the I3 under the ERDF. It focuses on advancing medical biomanufacturing, a field at the intersection of pharma, medtech, and biotechnology. It promotes the use of renewable biological resources (such as plant-based sugars and proteins) to produce biologic drugs and medical devices, contributing to more sustainable and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. At the same time, it emphasizes digital transformation to improve efficiency, product quality, data reliability, and safety.

A key aspect of the project is regional collaboration. BRIDGE connects one more developed region, Catalonia, with two less developed regions, Silesia and Campania, to build a shared, interconnected ecosystem of biomanufacturing innovation. Through knowledge transfer, joint initiatives, and access to advanced innovation networks, the project aims to strengthen capabilities in the less developed regions.

Overall, BRIDGE is designed to:

- **Enhance skills, capacities, and collaboration** among stakeholders in the biomanufacturing sector
- **Develop interregional value chains and investment opportunities**
- **Support innovation and research projects** in medical biomanufacturing
- **Unlock funding opportunities** across regional, national, and EU levels
- **Increase competitiveness and resilience** of regional innovation ecosystems

In summary, the project aims to build a stronger, more connected European biomanufacturing landscape that drives innovation, sustainability, and economic growth.

2.3 InnoStars and Laboratorio Reig Jofre

InnoStars is an independent non-profit life sciences innovation initiative dedicated to bridging Europe's innovation gap by strengthening innovation capacity in emerging and moderate innovation regions. Through international collaboration, it connects ideas, funding opportunities, and strategic partnerships to create long-term impact across the European healthcare and life sciences ecosystem.

InnoStars supports innovators throughout the full innovation journey, from research to market, by helping transform scientific discoveries and technological advances into scalable healthcare solutions. Its activities focus on supporting innovators, opening markets to facilitate adoption and integration, and strengthening regional ecosystems by connecting entrepreneurs, researchers, institutions, healthcare stakeholders, and industry partners.

Acting as a collaborative platform and life sciences cluster, InnoStars develops and supports projects, challenge-based programmes, and initiatives that enable knowledge exchange, accelerate innovation adoption, and foster stronger connections across Europe. By bringing together people, institutions, and innovation ecosystems, InnoStars contributes to creating opportunities for sustainable growth and increasing the impact of healthcare innovation across regions.

Reig Jofre is a family-run pharmaceutical company, listed under the ticker RJF on the Spanish stock exchange's continuous market, dedicated to the research, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceutical products and food supplements at its four plants in Spain (Toledo (2) and Barcelona) and Sweden (Malmö). RJF organizes its product development activities into three business divisions: (1) Pharmaceutical Technologies specializing in sterile and lyophilized injectables and penicillin-derived antibiotics; (2) Speciality Pharmacare specializing in dermatology and osteoarticular disorders and (3) Consumer Healthcare with consumer products under the Forté Pharma brand mostly in France, Belgium, Spain and Portugal, and other over the counter drug (OTC) areas. RJF has more than 1,300 employees, direct sales in 9 countries (Spain, France, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, United Kingdom, Poland, Singapore and Czech Republic), and 155 business partners in more than 70 countries. In 2025, REIG JOFRE reached 331.1 million euros in sales. Over the past decade, Reig Jofre has progressively reduced its dependence on the Spanish market. The company has expanded its international footprint from operating in 58 countries in 2015 to more than 70 countries in 2025. This growth is closely aligned with its corporate purpose and has been achieved through a combination of wholly owned subsidiaries, licensing agreements, and strategic distribution partnerships that have enabled a broader global presence.

In 2025, Reig Jofre obtained new marketing authorizations for its products in more than 30 countries, further strengthening its international position. These achievements reflect the company’s continued commitment to international growth and the expansion of patient access to its products worldwide.

Reig Jofre is committed to open innovation to add the best experts from around the world to their development teams, establishing synergies that provide innovative solutions in their therapeutic and technological areas.

3. Scope

3.1 Programme Overview

InnoStars Connect is an open innovation and challenge-based collaboration programme aiming to connect leading institutions, who act as challenge owners, with European healthcare start-ups, and SMEs. It allows them to work closely together to address and solve real-world healthcare challenges. The activity provides non-financial support to selected applicants to further develop their innovative solutions in response to the challenge owner’s need, while also aiming to commercialize these solutions after the programme. This call does not provide Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), cascade funding, subgrants, prizes, or any direct payment to selected participants.

The programme provides bootcamp sessions and mentoring to participants, helping them refine their value propositions to meet the specific needs of the challenge owner. By fostering these collaborations, InnoStars Connect drives innovation, enhances patient outcomes, and supports the development of value-based healthcare delivery models.

For challenge owners, the programme offers access to cutting-edge innovations and collaboration opportunities with health tech innovators. This ensures that solutions are tailored to tackle the most pressing challenges faced by healthcare systems, keeping these organisations competitive and future ready. Through this process, InnoStars Connect bridges the gap between innovative health tech solutions and the specific needs of the healthcare sector, driving transformational change across the industry. The programme supports the growth of start-ups while enabling challenge owners to deliver better care, optimize resources, and achieve measurable results for patients. Ultimately, InnoStars Connect ensures that innovation moves beyond theory, creating practical solutions that directly benefit healthcare systems and their stakeholders.

The programme's first edition, held in 2024, brought together two challenge owners, Synlab Italia and Chiesi Group, with a shared goal of accelerating innovation in healthcare. Ten selected teams were given the opportunity to collaborate directly with leading European healthcare players, pilot their solutions, and demonstrate the real-world impact of their innovations.

Based on this approach, the second edition continued to pursue the same objective of fostering impactful healthcare innovation through collaboration. This round engaged Chiesi Group and ULS de Coimbra, as challenge owners, offering participating teams the opportunity to work closely with them to co-develop and validate solutions addressing key healthcare challenges.

Building on the InnoStars Connect methodology developed and refined through previous programme editions, InnoStars, in collaboration with Reig Jofre and within the framework of the BRIDGE project, is launching two new strategic innovation challenges. These challenges have been jointly defined as priority areas by Reig Jofre, reflecting key operational and strategic needs in next-generation biomanufacturing.

The first challenge, **Digital Twin for Biomanufacturing Scale-Up**, addresses one of the most critical bottlenecks in biologics and advanced therapy production. The transition from laboratory or pilot-scale processes to full industrial manufacturing remains a high-risk phase, often associated with process failures, delays, increased costs, and limited robustness in production systems. To overcome these limitations, this challenge seeks digital solutions capable of developing advanced predictive digital twins. These models should support process optimisation, enable more reliable scale-up decisions, and improve the efficiency and predictability of industrial biomanufacturing development.

The second challenge, **Sustainable Biomanufacturing Excellence**, focuses on the growing imperative to reduce the environmental footprint of pharmaceutical production. Biopharmaceutical manufacturing is inherently resource-intensive, requiring significant amounts of water, energy, single-use materials, and chemical inputs. At the same time, evolving ESG expectations and regulatory frameworks such as CSRD are placing increasing pressure on manufacturers to demonstrate measurable sustainability improvements without compromising product quality or regulatory compliance. This challenge calls for innovative technologies and approaches that enable quantifiable reductions in environmental impact across biomanufacturing operations, supporting a more sustainable and responsible production ecosystem.

Together, these two challenges reflect a dual ambition: to advance digital transformation in biomanufacturing while simultaneously embedding sustainability at the core of industrial innovation.

Further details can be found in Annex 1: InnoStars Connect Challenges.

3.2 Activities

Selected teams will take part in a structured support programme aimed at further developing, validating, and presenting their solutions in response to the BRIDGE/InnoStars Connect challenges. The programme includes up to 10 hours of customised mentoring and coaching, tailored to each team's needs and development stage, as well as four dedicated workshops covering key topics such as business model development, financial planning and investment readiness, market strategy, and scale-up pathways. Support will be delivered by experts through online mentoring sessions, targeted advisory activities, and direct engagement with the challenge owner. In addition, participants will take part in an in-person bootcamp at Reig Jofre facilities in Barcelona. The bootcamp will offer an intensive and collaborative environment where teams can test their assumptions, receive expert feedback, engage directly with the challenge owner, and further strengthen the feasibility, relevance and potential impact of their solutions. The programme will culminate in a final pitching event, where participating teams will present their solutions to an expert panel, receiving valuable insights and evaluation from experienced stakeholders.

No direct grant, subgrant, prize, Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), cascade funding, or other direct payment to selected participants will be provided under this call. Selected participants will receive non-financial programme support, including mentoring, coaching, expert feedback, online sessions, and participation in the in-person bootcamp. InnoStars will arrange travel and accommodation for participation in the bootcamp in Barcelona at Reig Jofre facilities for a maximum of two (2) representatives per selected team. These arrangements are contracted and paid by InnoStars directly to the relevant service providers as InnoStars' own programme delivery costs; no funds are paid or reimbursed to participants, and participants are not required to incur and reclaim any cost. The support is provided in kind.

3.3 Form of support

This call provides no financial support to participants. No budget is allocated for grants, subgrants, prizes, FSTP or cascade funding. The programme is delivered by InnoStars as its own activity within the BRIDGE project; all programme elements — including mentoring, coaching, bootcamp delivery, travel to the bootcamp and related accommodation — are provided by InnoStars. as an in-kind contribution provided free of charge. The bootcamp travel and accommodation arrangements are described in the Activities section.

4. Timeline

Milestone	Dates
Call opening	01.09.2026
Application submissions deadline	08.10.2026
Evaluation	09.10.2026 -15.10.2026

Hearing and selection	19.10.2026 – 23.10.2026
Notification of applicants	26.10.2026
Deadline for appeals	10 days following receiving the letter of notification on the results
Activity closure, reporting	February 2027

If there are any changes to the dates, the participants will be notified well in advance.

5. Call conditions

5.1 Admissibility

Applications must be submitted before the deadline and through the designated submission tool specified in the Submission section.

Applications must be submitted in English using the forms available in the electronic submission system. Applications must be readable, accessible, and complete and contain all the requested information and mandatory annexes and supporting documents.

In addition to the conditions mentioned above, specific limits may be applied to documents, pages, or sections of the application. The character limits are clearly shown in the electronic submission system. Any parts of the application that exceed the limits, as well as any additional documents that are not specified as part of the application will not be taken into consideration.

Submissions that are incomplete, late, or made through any other channel (for example, email or on paper) will not be accepted.

5.2 Eligibility

To be eligible, the applicant shall:

I. be a legal entity that qualifies as small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), including start-ups and spin-offs, in accordance with the applicable EU SME definition;

II. be a legal entity registered in one of the following regions:

- Campania (Italy)
- Silesia (Poland)

III. have an innovative solution addressing one of the InnoStars Connect challenges described in Annex 1: InnoStars Connect Challenges.

IV. have a solution with a maturity level of at least **TRL 5 up to TRL 7** where the technology/service/solution has been demonstrated in a working/relevant environment. Additional information regarding the Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) can be found here.

5.3 Exclusion

The exclusion grounds below are based on Articles 138 and 139 of the EU Financial Regulation

(Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509).

To take part in the programme, applicants confirm, through a Declaration of Honour checkmark within the application, that they — and the persons who represent or control them — are not in a situation that would prevent their participation. In particular, applicants confirm that they:

- have not been convicted of, and are not subject to a final decision for, fraud, corruption, money laundering, terrorist financing, child labour, human trafficking or comparable serious offences;
- have not been found guilty of grave professional misconduct affecting their integrity;
- are not in breach of obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions;
- are not bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, or in any comparable situation under applicable national law;
- are not subject to a conflict of interest that cannot be effectively remedied;
- have not seriously misrepresented information required for participation in this call or failed to provide such information; and
- are not subject to EU restrictive measures, sanctions, or any other legal restriction that would make their participation incompatible with EU funding rules or applicable law.

An applicant that is unable to make this declaration, that falls under one of the exclusion situations above, or that has seriously misrepresented the information provided, will not be admitted to, or retained in, the programme.

6. Submission

Deadline: applications must be submitted no later than **08.10. 2026, 16:00 (CET).**

Submission: applications must be submitted electronically through the following link: BRIDGE InnoStars Connect 2026 - Application Form

Applications must be complete and contain all parts and mandatory annexes and supporting documents as follows:

- Application Form
- The Declaration of the SME Status needs to be downloaded, completed and uploaded onto the application platform when submitting the application. It is important to ensure that it is signed before uploading it to the platform.
- The Company registration certificate needs to be uploaded onto the application platform when submitting the application (PDF format required)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete and submit their applications well in advance of the deadline to avoid any potential issues related to last-minute submissions, which remain the responsibility of the applicant.

7. Selection

7.1 Process

Applications are processed in the following steps.

Step 1 – Admissibility and eligibility check: Applications will first be checked for formal admissibility and eligibility requirements as set out in Section 5.

Step 2 – Independent evaluation and scoring: Eligible applications are evaluated by three independent experts against the selection criteria set out in Section 7.2. InnoStars may request clarifications from applicants where information is missing, unclear or inconsistent, provided that such clarification does not substantially modify the application or give the applicant an unfair advantage.

Step 3 – Ranking and quality threshold: The score for each application is the average of the three evaluators' scores, expressed out of a maximum of 100 points. Applications are ranked according to their average score. Only applications achieving at least 75% of the total available score (i.e. a minimum of 75 points) are eligible to proceed to the hearing and selection step. Applications below this threshold are not retained.

Step 4 – Hearing with the Challenge owner: Applicants whose applications meet the 75% threshold are invited to an individual online hearing with the challenge owner, Laboratorio Reig Jofre. The hearing allows the applicant to present its solution and the challenge owner to assess its relevance and feasibility in relation to the published challenge.

Step 5 – Selection: Following the hearings, the challenge owner selects from among the applications that met the 75% threshold the participants with the highest potential to address the challenge. In accordance with the BRIDGE Grant Agreement, up to four (4) participants are selected, with the aim of selecting two (2) from Campania and two (2) from Silesia, provided that sufficient high-quality eligible applications are received from each region. The challenge owner documents the reasons for its selection, with reference to the published selection criteria.

All persons involved in the assessment, including the independent experts and the challenge owner's representative, sign confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declarations before accessing applications. The scores, the ranking, the hearing outcome, and the reasons for the final selection, including any input provided by the challenge owner, are recorded in a panel report. The selection process will be documented by InnoStars for BRIDGE reporting, review and audit purposes.

Applications that meet the quality threshold but are not selected may be placed on a reserve list. Reserve-list applicants may be invited to participate if a selected applicant withdraws or does not confirm participation within the required timeframe.

For applications with the same score the priority order will be determined as follows:

1. Solutions that address aspects of the call that have not otherwise been covered by more highly ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority.
2. The applications identified under 1), if any, will themselves be prioritized according to the scores they have been awarded for "Relevance and challenge fit". When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for "Impact and market potential".
3. If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

7.2 Selection criteria and scoring

The applications will be evaluated and ranked against the following selection criteria:

- Relevance and challenge fit (Alignment with the specified challenge, 40%)
- Quality and maturity of the solution (30%)
- Impact and market potential (20%)
- Implementation readiness and team capacity (10%)

Applications will be assessed against the selection criteria set out above and ranked according to their final scores. Each application is scored out of a maximum of 100 points. Only applications achieving at least 75% of the total available score are eligible to proceed to the hearing and selection step (Section 7.1). The highest-ranked eligible applications are considered for selection, subject to the number of available programme places and to the objective of ensuring a balanced selection across the eligible BRIDGE regions of Campania and Silesia.
If an applicant applies to more than one challenge, only the highest-ranked eligible application may be considered for selection.

7.3 Notification and Programme Participation Agreement

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process by email.

Selected participants will be invited to sign a programme participation agreement**.** The agreement will set out the practical conditions of participation, including programme activities, participation commitments, confidentiality, communication requirements, reporting or feedback obligations, and travel and accommodation arrangements for the in-person bootcamp.

Selection to the programme does not create any entitlement to a grant, subgrant, prize, Financial Support to Third Parties, cascade funding, reimbursement scheme, or other direct payment. Participation support is limited to the non-financial programme support described in this call.

8. Gender Equality

InnoStars is committed to promoting equal opportunities between men and women. Applicants are encouraged to take all appropriate measures to support this objective and strive for balanced representation at all levels, including supervisory and managerial positions, to the greatest extent possible.

9. Appeals

Applicants may request a review of the selection process only on procedural grounds. A review request may concern, for example:

- a technical problem with the electronic submission system that prevented timely submission and was outside the applicant’s control;
- a factual or administrative error in the processing of the application;

- a breach of the selection procedure described in this call;
- a conflict of interest or other procedural irregularity affecting the assessment process.

Disagreement with the assessment score, evaluator comments, ranking, or final selection decision does not in itself constitute grounds for review.

Review requests must be submitted in writing to InnoStars within 10 calendar days from receipt of the result notification. The request must clearly describe the alleged procedural issue and include any relevant supporting evidence.

InnoStars will assess the review request and inform the applicant of the outcome in writing. Where the request is justified, InnoStars may take appropriate corrective measures, which may include re-checking the application, correcting an administrative error, or repeating the affected part of the process.

10. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

All applications submitted through the application platform are accessible only to InnoStars staff members for the processing of the application.

During the selection process, application documents are shared with assigned evaluators, who are contractually bound to confidentiality, and with the challenge owner's representative; all of them are bound by confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declarations.

Additionally, InnoStars may give access to documentation provided to external advisors to support the assessment. Furthermore, InnoStars may give access to the submitted data to sub-contractors who are tasked with maintaining the application and project monitoring platform. All such third parties are also bound by confidentiality provisions.

To comply with the obligations, InnoStars may provide access to relevant documentation and data to the granting authority, authorised EU bodies, project reviewers, auditors, and other persons or bodies entitled to access the information for reporting, checks, reviews, audits or investigations.

Personal data contained in applications is processed by InnoStars for the administration, evaluation and follow-up of this call. The data controller is EIT Health InnoStars EV (INN), the entity issuing this call within the BRIDGE project. Processing is carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and on the legal bases set out in InnoStars' privacy policy. Personal data is retained for as long as necessary for the purposes above and, in any case, for the period required to meet the record-keeping, reporting and audit obligations under the BRIDGE Grant Agreement — that is, up to five (5) years after the final payment of the BRIDGE project. Applicants' rights (including access, rectification, erasure, restriction and objection), the data controller's contact details, and further information are set out in InnoStars' privacy notice referenced in the application documents.

InnoStars ecosystem database

To support its ecosystem-development mission, maintain an overview of innovative companies and identify potentially relevant future programmes and networking opportunities, InnoStars maintains a database of innovative companies.

Company-level information: InnoStars retains specified company-level information provided in

applications, such as the applicant's legal name, company registration number, country and region of establishment, website, sector, technology area, development stage and a non-confidential description of the company's activities, products or services.

To the extent that this information relates solely to an undertaking established as a legal person and does not identify or relate to a natural person, it does not constitute personal data within the meaning of the GDPR. Company-level information retained for this purpose is kept separately from confidential technical, financial and supporting application documentation and is not used in the admissibility, evaluation or scoring of the application. Should any personal data nonetheless be included, InnoStars will either remove it from the database or process it in accordance with the applicable privacy notice.

This provision does not apply in the same manner to sole traders, individual entrepreneurs or other applicants where company-level information identifies a natural person. Any such information will be processed in accordance with the applicable privacy notice.

Applicants must not include in the company-profile section names of founders, employees or representatives, individual email addresses or telephone numbers, photographs, biographies, signatures, personal social-media profiles, trade secrets, confidential customer information or other personal or confidential information.

This provision does not apply in the same manner to sole traders, individual entrepreneurs or other applicants where company-level information identifies a natural person. Any such information will be processed in accordance with the applicable privacy notice.

Optional retention of the nominated contact person's details: The nominated contact person may separately consent to InnoStars retaining their name, professional role, business email address and business telephone number in the innovative-company database.

This consent is entirely optional. Giving, declining or subsequently withdrawing consent will have no effect on the admissibility, evaluation, scoring, contracting or implementation of the application. Contact details retained for this purpose will not be made available to evaluators and will not be used in the assessment of the application.

For this processing, EIT Health InnoStars e.V. acts as data controller independently of the administration of the call and relies on the consent of the contact person under Article 6(1)(a) GDPR.

Contact-person data will be retained until consent is withdrawn. The database will be reviewed periodically to ensure that retained information remains accurate and relevant.

Optional communication: The nominated contact person may separately choose to receive information about future InnoStars funding programmes, events, networking activities and collaboration opportunities, on the basis of their consent under Article 6(1)(a) GDPR. Consent to receive such communications is separate from consent to retain contact details in the database and may be withdrawn at any time through the unsubscribe mechanism included in each electronic communication or by contacting InnoStars.

Data-subject rights: Consent may be withdrawn at any time and as easily as it was provided by contacting info@innostars.org. Withdrawal does not affect the lawfulness of processing carried out before withdrawal. Data subjects may also exercise their applicable rights of access, rectification, erasure, restriction, objection and data portability as described in the call-specific privacy notice. Further information regarding the purposes of processing, legal bases, recipients, processors,

international transfers, retention periods and data-subject rights is provided in the privacy notice.

11. Intellectual property rights rules

Applicants and selected participants retain ownership of their pre-existing rights, submitted solutions, know-how and materials. Participation in the programme does not transfer ownership of any intellectual property rights to InnoStars, Reig Jofre or any other BRIDGE partner.

Results generated during the programme by a selected participant alone remain the property of that participant, including where they are developed in response to the published challenge or informed by non-confidential discussions or feedback from the challenge owner. This does not grant the participant any right to use Reig Jofre's confidential information, proprietary know-how, data, facilities, materials or technical input beyond the purposes and conditions expressly agreed.

Reig Jofre retains ownership of its own background, including its confidential information, proprietary know-how, data, materials and technical input made available during the programme. A selected participant may use such background only for the purposes of the programme and only in accordance with the applicable confidentiality and access conditions.

Where a selected participant and Reig Jofre intend to jointly develop specific outputs during the programme, or where the development, testing or validation of a solution requires access to Reig Jofre's confidential information, proprietary know-how, data, facilities, materials or substantial technical input, the parties must enter into a separate written agreement before such information or resources are shared or such development begins. That agreement will address the ownership, access to and permitted use of any outputs arising. Neither party is required to share confidential information, proprietary know-how, data, facilities, materials or substantial technical input in the absence of such an agreement.

For a period of six months following completion of the programme, Reig Jofre and a selected participant may discuss in good faith any potential follow-on pilot, commercial collaboration, licence, data access arrangement or other use of intellectual property arising specifically from the programme collaboration. This does not create exclusivity, a right of first refusal, a standstill obligation, or any transfer or licence of intellectual property; it does not prevent the participant from pursuing its normal commercial activities; and it does not oblige either party to conclude a further agreement unless separately agreed in writing. Any such further collaboration or use of intellectual property must be agreed separately between the relevant parties.

InnoStars may use non-confidential information about the selected participants, their participation in the programme and high-level summaries of their solutions for BRIDGE reporting, communication and dissemination purposes.

12. Communication and dissemination

Communications relating to participation in the BRIDGE/InnoStars Connect programme should acknowledge that the programme is implemented within the EU-funded BRIDGE project. InnoStars will provide the applicable BRIDGE and European Union visibility instructions to selected participants.

Selected participants must not present their own company, solution, project or commercial activities

as being directly funded by the programme. Any public communication about participation in the programme should be accurate, proportionate and consistent with the non-financial nature of the support provided under this call.

Where participants publish communication materials specifically about their participation in the programme, they may be asked to display the BRIDGE project reference, the European Union emblem and the applicable funding statement in accordance with the instructions provided by InnoStars.

13. Reporting and follow-on engagement

Aggregated information about InnoStars Connect participants, and the high-level description of their solutions, may be reported in BRIDGE deliverables — in particular Deliverable 3.4 (Long list of interregional collaboration opportunities) and to the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency as part of BRIDGE reporting obligations. InnoStars Connect participants may be invited, on a voluntary basis, to engage with consortium partners on follow-on interregional initiatives, including potential proposals for I3 or other EU funding instruments. Any such follow-on activity would be separate from this call and subject to its own conditions.

Annex 1: InnoStars Connect Challenges

Challenge 1: Digital Twin for Biomanufacturing Scale-Up

One of the major challenges in biologics and advanced therapies is the successful transfer from laboratory and pilot scale to industrial manufacturing. Scale-up failures result in delays, increased costs, and reduced process robustness. Challenge 1 seeks digital solutions capable of creating predictive digital twins to support process development and industrial scale-up.

The solution should:

- Simulate scale-up scenarios.
- Predict critical process parameters.
- Identify process deviations before manufacturing.
- Reduce technology transfer risks.
- Improve process robustness.

Desired Outcomes:

- Faster process development.
- Reduced scale-up failures.
- Lower manufacturing costs.
- Improved process understanding.
- Accelerated industrialization.

Technologies of Interest:

- AI/ML
- Process Modelling
- Digital Twins
- Process Analytical Technologies (PAT)
- Advanced Data Analytics

Challenge 2: Sustainable Biomanufacturing Excellence

Biopharmaceutical manufacturing consumes significant quantities of water, energy, single-use materials and chemicals. Sustainability requirements under ESG and CSRD frameworks are increasing pressure on manufacturers to improve environmental performance while maintaining product quality and regulatory compliance. Challenge 2 targets innovative technologies that enable measurable reductions in environmental impact within biopharmaceutical manufacturing operations.

Potential focus areas include:

- Water reduction and reuse.
- Energy optimization.
- Circular use of materials.
- Reduction of single-use plastics.
- Carbon footprint monitoring.
- Sustainable process design.

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduced environmental footprint.
- Improved ESG performance.
- Enhanced operational efficiency.
- Support for CSRD reporting.
- Increased circularity in manufacturing operations.

Technologies of Interest:

- Industrial IoT
- Sustainability Analytics
- Circular Economy Solutions
- Green Manufacturing Technologies
- Resource Optimization Platforms