

P R E S S R E L E A S E

25 Years of aws BoB – Best of Biotech: These are the winners of the anniversary edition of the international life science competition

On October 14, the winners of the 11th edition of the international life science competition were announced in the Grand Hall, Erste Campus Vienna.

Vienna. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the renowned start-up competition aws BoB – Best of Biotech, a distinguished expert jury honored the best business concepts in the fields of biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, as well as medical technology and digital health, across four categories.

The goal of the competition is to stimulate new start-up activity in Austria's life sciences sector by identifying economically promising ideas and specifically supporting entrepreneurial talent in research. Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, BoB was launched in 2000 and is organized by Austria Wirtschaftsservice (aws).

Leading Role in the Life Sciences Sector

In recent years, the life sciences sector has developed into a major economic factor in Austria. The strong international response underlines the high attractiveness of aws BoB – Best of Biotech: 63 project teams from eight countries competed for a total of €32,000 in prize money, sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim, Takeda, Erste Bank, and aws LISA. In addition, the winning teams received tickets to key industry events such as BIO-Europe 2025 in Vienna, the SLAS Europe Conference 2026, and the MedTech Forum 2026 — providing valuable insights and networking opportunities within the global life sciences community.

The Four Winning Projects in Detail

Biotech Ideator Category: *BetterStrains*

(Prize money €8,000, sponsored by Takeda)

BetterStrains has developed a synthetic biology platform to make E. coli bacteria genetically stable for continuous cultivations. The technology allows upgrading existing strains to stable long-lasting producers to make the production of biomolecules more resource-efficient.

Biotech Start-up Category: *Elaris*

(Prize money €8,000, sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim)

ELARIS is advancing a novel, best-in-class C. difficile vaccine designed to redefine disease management by preventing both initial and recurring infections.

Medtech Ideator Category: CollimateHealth

(Prize money €8,000, sponsored by aws LISA)

CollimateHealth's technology is a paradigm shift in radiation oncology, creating treatment options for previously incurable tumors (e.g. brain tumors) and maximizing synergy effects with chemo- and immunotherapy.

Medtech Start-up Category: Syntropic Medical

(Prize money €8,000, sponsored by Erste Bank)

Syntropic develops a non-invasive wearable device that stimulates the brain through light, delivered to the eyes. This groundbreaking technology activates microglia, the brain's resident immune cells, to remodel key brain regions linked to depression, leading to significant symptoms improvement without adverse drug reactions.

173 Start-ups Originated from aws BoB – Best of Biotech

So far, more than 173 companies have been founded from over 550 submitted projects – a clear indicator of the effectiveness of targeted funding instruments and competitions. aws BoB – Best of Biotech is part of the aws LISA program package, through which aws has been strengthening the Austrian life sciences sector for over 20 years, creating optimal conditions for this forward-looking industry. Start-ups, particularly in their early stages, receive support through Deep Tech funding programs such as aws Preseed and aws Seedfinancing. This support is complemented along the entire value chain by consulting services, for example in innovation protection. aws LISA also serves as an umbrella brand for regional life science clusters, helping to boost international competitiveness and enhance Austria's global visibility in the life sciences field.

Further information about the competition can be found at: <https://www.bestofbiotech.at/>

About aws Best of Biotech

aws Best of Biotech is a start-up competition focused on life sciences, organized by Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism. Financial support comes from Boehringer Ingelheim, Takeda, and Erste Bank.

To date, more than 170 start-ups have emerged from past competition rounds, with a total of around €400,000 in prize money awarded.

About Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws):

Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (aws) is the Austrian promotional bank. It supports companies in implementing their innovative projects - from the initial idea to market success - by providing low-interest loans, guarantees, grants, and equity capital. aws also offers advice and support regarding the protection and commercialization of intellectual property. In addition, specific information, consulting, service, and support offerings are provided for start-ups, existing businesses, and companies looking to expand.

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