SPRIND CHALLENGE

ENGINEERING MICROBIAL CONSORTIA

UNLOCKING ROBUST BIOMANUFACTURING WITH AI AND MICROBIAL COMMUNITIES

Many chemicals and materials are still produced from fossil resources, creating significant environmental impacts. Biomanufacturing offers a sustainable alternative, but conventional approaches based on single microorganisms are often limited to highly refined and uniform feedstocks. Microbial consortia – communities of different microorganisms working together – can process complex feedstocks and perform transformations beyond the capabilities of individual strains. Advances in AI, sensing and automation now make it possible to better understand, predict and control these complex biological systems. The crucial step is to turn this potential into robust, scalable production processes. To accelerate this transition towards circular biomanufacturing, SPRIND (the German Federal Agency for Breakthrough Innovation) starts the Engineering Microbial Consortia Challenge.

THE CHALLENGE

Developing robust, circular, end-to-end biomanufacturing processes using microbial consortia and AI. Teams should combine biological conversion with feedstock preparation, process control, product recovery and, where needed, formulation – enabling sustainable production from complex feedstocks.

WHAT'S IN FOR YOU

- Up to €4.3 million in non-dilutive funding per team across 3 competitive stages (38 months total)
- Operational coaching, access to collaboration partners, and direct connections to investors and industrial off-takers
- Teams must be headquartered in the EU, EFTA, or the UK

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Teams working across microbial consortia, biomanufacturing, AI/ML, process engineering, sensing, automation, or related fields. We welcome startups, research teams and established companies developing breakthrough approaches to robust and scalable biomanufacturing.

APPLICATION IS OPEN NOW

Apply here The call is open until November 16, 2026 11:00 am CET.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHALLENGE IN OUR WEBINARS

To introduce the SPRIND challenge as well as the team behind the scenes and to answer any open questions, we are hosting webinars on October 12, 2026, 4:00–5:30 PM CET and on November 03, 2026, 4:00–5:30 PM CET.

Register here – 12.10.2026 Register here – 03.11.2026