

BioProNET early career researchers get more business acumen!

BioProNET boosted the entrepreneurial skills of three early career researcher members when it funded places for them at the BrisSynBio 4 day MBA (More Business Acumen) course. On this practical and immersive course, participants learned about starting a business – from setting the scene for a business idea, setting up and running a venture, through to the execution and preparation for commercial success. Teams of delegates also took part in a Dragons' Den-style competition, where they pitched their business ideas developed throughout the course to a panel of real biotech investors, as well as entrepreneurs, academics and industry representatives.

"This training course enabled me to gain more confidence on pursuing a non-academic career focused on the commercialisation of biotechnology and bioprocessing, with my particular interest on how to bring cost effective and disruptive therapies to the market on behalf of patients." Ricardo Suarez-Heredia, PhD student in biochemical engineering, University College London.

"My participation has had an immediate benefit in terms of enhancing my entrepreneurial thinking and will broaden my skills and knowledge in order to maximise my career outputs and further advance with my career ambitions as a potential biotech leader." Alejandro Fernandez-Martell, PDRA in cell and bioprocess engineering, University of Sheffield

"I found the whole experience very informative and rewarding. During the course, I met and formed relationships with many well-established researchers in a diverse range of synthetic biology fields, opening the possibility for future collaborations." Ben Barnes, EngD student, University College London.

Two BioProNET members were part of the team that won the 'best pre-incorporation prize' at the pitch event. Their business idea focused on an exosome-based delivery platform. This technology seeks to revive failed drug candidates by improving drug delivery across the blood–brain barrier, and was conceived by combining their academic and industrial expertise in cellular engineering, bioprocess engineering and exosome purification. Over the next 12 months the team plans to conduct preliminary studies to establish intellectual property and conduct further market research. This is a direct consequence of their attendance at the course.



Image - The final pitch competition at the 4-day MBA course.

Case study compiled by Alejandro Fernandez-Martell, Ricardo Suarez-Heredia and Ben Barnes.