

Defending against biological threats: UKDI launches Biosecurity Frontiers competition

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This competition seeks innovations to strengthen the UK's ability to detect, prevent and respond to biological risks.

- UKDI has launched a new Themed Competition: Biosecurity Frontiers
- Run on behalf of the Cabinet Office
- Funded by the Integrated Security Fund
- Up to £2 million (excluding VAT) funding available
- Competition closes midday 10 June 2026 (BST)

UK Defence Innovation (UKDI) is pleased to launch a new Themed Competition called Biosecurity Frontiers. Run on behalf of the Cabinet Office, this competition seeks innovators to help deliver the ambitions of the 2023 UK Biological Security Strategy and the 2025 National Security Strategy and strengthen the UK's ability to understand, prevent, detect and respond to biological risks.

The biological threats facing the UK continue to evolve in complexity. Rapid advances in AI and engineering biology bring significant opportunities, but also introduce new risks of misuse. New methods for biodetection and biosurveillance are essential to ensure the government can detect emerging threats quickly and accurately. At the same time, the supply chains for protective equipment and countermeasures must be strengthened to ensure that frontline users — including police, military and NHS personnel — remain protected.

This competition seeks to catalyse innovation between UK Government departments, agencies, academia and industry across three challenge areas:

Challenge 1:

Next Generation Biodetection and Biosurveillance — the government is seeking capabilities to detect and monitor traditional and novel biological threats, including portable in-field technologies deployable in harsh environments, environmental surveillance systems and bioforensics tools.

Challenge 2:

AI and Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Vaccines — proposals are sought to harness AI in identifying and developing new diagnostic, therapeutic and vaccine candidates, including tools to reduce diagnostic uncertainty and support accelerated development timelines.

Challenge 3:

Non-pharmaceutical protective systems — the government is looking to diversify and strengthen PPE supply chains, including more efficient manufacturing, universal respiratory protective equipment and innovative decontamination solutions.

Read the full competition document and submit your proposal

For all challenges we are interested in...

We want concepts, products or solutions that benefit end-users working in UK defence and security. Your proposal should include evidence of:

- how it addresses a critical capability gap in the UK Biological Security sector
- how it will support the UK industrial sector and strengthen domestic supply chains
- the potential for your innovation to be translated into a practical demonstration
- innovation or a creative approach
- how the proposed work applies in specific One Health, Defence and/or Security contexts

Learn more in the full competition document

Key dates and funding

Up to £2 million (excluding VAT) funding is available. We expect to fund 5 to 7 proposals across the 3 challenges, in the region of £100,000 to £500,000 each, but we reserve the right to fund proposals at higher and lower values than these amounts.

1-2-1 teleconference sessions to ask specific technical questions to the competition team will be available on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 April.

Booking for these will be open from 17 April - please see the full competition document for links.

The deadline to submit a proposal is midday 10 June 2026 (BST).

Submit a proposal

If you have a solution that could help the UK detect, prevent or respond to biological threats, we want to hear from you. Read the full [competition document] to learn more and submit a proposal.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defending-against-biological-threats-ukdi-launches-biosecurity-frontiers-competition>