

Request for Proposal

KIC DC Biotech Frontier Program

**Korea Innovation Center (KIC)
Washington D.C.**



Korea Innovation Center
Washington DC

March 9th, 2026

Released by KIC Washington D.C.

Section 1: Letter of Invitation

March 9th, 2026

Dear Sirs/Madams,

1.1. The Korea Innovation Center Washington, D.C. (“KIC”) is soliciting proposals from professional consulting and marketing services institutions (“Accelerator”) possessing demonstrated knowledge and expertise within the United States' biotech startup sector.

1.2. KIC is one of the South Korean (The Republic of Korea) government agencies operating under the Ministry of Science and ICT, dedicated to promoting global market penetration and investment through its international KIC branch network. Specifically, KIC Washington, D.C. administers a program designed to assist selected Korean biotech-based entrepreneurs from universities and laboratories (“Startups”) in participating in the KIC Biotech Frontier Program (“Program”).

1.3. The objective of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit competitive proposals and secure the services of experienced professionals capable of providing effective assistance to a cohort of Korean Startups, ensuring meaningful progress throughout the entire duration of the Program. Further details are provided in **Section 5. Scope of Services**.

1.4. This RFP encompasses the following sections:

- Section 1 – Letter of Invitation
- Section 2 – Information for Accelerator
- Section 3 – Accelerator Qualification
- Section 4 – Program Plan
- Section 5 – Scope of Services
- Section 6 – Selection Criteria

1.5. Upon receipt of this RFP, please formally notify us of your intent to submit a proposal in response to this solicitation, **no later than March 22nd, 2026**, via email to the designated contact person at KIC listed below. KIC DC will only accept Proposals if the Accelerator has indicated its intent to respond through the designated email channel.

ATTN: Hyungjin Yun

Email: hjyun@kicdc.org

Phone: (617) 543-0970

Yours sincerely,



Chang Hee Kim

President of KIC Washington, D.C.

Section 2. Information to Accelerator

2.1. General Information

2.1.1. KIC shall select an Accelerator institution possessing comprehensive expertise in Lean Business Model methodologies and Customer Discovery techniques applicable to the technology startup marketplace, based upon the competence and evaluation procedures delineated in this Request for Proposal (RFP). Accelerators are formally invited to submit a Proposal.

2.1.2. Proposers are advised that (i) costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal and the negotiation of the ensuing contract, including any visit to KIC, shall not be reimbursable; (ii) KIC retains the prerogative to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or anomalies in submitted proposals, to engage in negotiations with any or all Accelerators, and to amend or withdraw this RFP; (iii) all reports, proposals, and studies generated by Accelerators specifically for the Program shall become the exclusive property of KIC; (iv) Accelerators shall indemnify KIC against any losses and expenses resulting from the Accelerator's negligent or willful acts or omissions. Furthermore, KIC shall not indemnify or agree to limit the liability of the Consultant for the Accelerator's negligent or willful acts or omissions connected with this engagement.

2.2. Program Overview

2.2.1. **Objective** The paramount objective of the Program is to instruct the participating startups in the Lean Startup Methodology and Customer Discovery techniques, to provide guidance to the startups in conducting customer discovery interviews, and to arrange field trip(s) for exposure to a maximum of four (4) Biotech-related facilities, firms, or locations during the Program. Through the execution of customer discovery activities, the startups are expected to validate the market need for their product or service within the U.S. market, thereby refining their business model and executing necessary pivots. The core purpose of this program is to support entrepreneurs in the successful launch of their startups while mitigating the probability of failure.

2.2.2. **Duration of Services:** The term of services shall commence on April 20th, 2026, and conclude on July 30th, 2026.

2.2.3. Comprehensive details regarding the required services are provided in **Section 5. Scope of Services** hereunder.

2.2.4. **Selection Process** The selection of an Accelerator shall adhere to the following procedure. This process is subject to modification at KIC's discretion, should circumstances necessitate a change.

- The First Evaluation shall be predicated upon the proposals submitted. The selection criteria will primarily rely upon the content of the proposals submitted by the candidates. Accelerators that submit a proposal but are not shortlisted for the Second Evaluation process will be duly notified.
- The Second Evaluation shall be convened if a subsequent assessment is deemed requisite. This phase of evaluation will be based upon an interview. A formal presentation may also be requested.
- The specifics of the final agreement shall be determined through negotiation between the

designated finalist and KIC.

2.2.5. Award Schedule The submission and subsequent award of this project shall follow the timetable outlined below. KIC reserves the right to amend this schedule and procedure as necessary.

Item	Date
RFP Release	March 9, 2026
RFP Submission Deadline	March 22, 2026
Evaluation and Selection (Announcement)	March 23–27, 2026
Negotiation and Contract Signing	March 30– April 3, 2026

The aforementioned dates are subject to revision.

2.2.6. Budget The anticipated permissible budget for the entirety of the program ranges approximately from **Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000)** for the program. The Accelerator shall accommodate eleven (11) startups. The total budget amount provided is an estimated range and shall be definitively established prior to the final selection of the Accelerator.

This amount shall be incrementally increased for each additional company exceeding the designated number of eleven (11).

2.3. Response Submission and Deadline:

2.3.1. Proposers must adhere to the following file naming convention:

- company_name_RFP_firstinitial_lastname.doc
- *For example: KIC_RFP_H_Yun.doc*

2.3.2. Responses to this **RFP must be officially submitted no later than 06:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, March 22nd, 2026.** RFP submissions shall be accepted exclusively as email attachments. All responses are to be transmitted to hjyun@kicdc.org with the subject line formatted as “[KIC] Proposal: Accelerator name.” KIC shall issue an email confirmation of receipt to the designated point of contact.

Disclaimer:

KIC is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of any proprietary information obtained as a consequence of this RFP and shall not publicly disclose such data.

Section 3. Accelerator Qualification

The Accelerator submitting a proposal for this project must satisfy the following qualification criteria:

3.1. Possession of specialized expertise in the Lean Business Model methodology for the education and mentorship of Customer Discovery activities, specifically optimized for enhancing technology commercialization opportunities for international biotech startups operating within the United States.

3.2. Demonstrated proficiency and a verifiable history of successful performance within the U.S. market, preferably encompassing, but not restricted to, the biotechnology products/services sector. Potential outcomes resulting from team mentorship and guidance include:

- Direct commercialization of startup projects
- Establishment of new startup businesses
- Execution of licensing agreements
- Development of comprehensive business plans suitable for evaluation by third-party investors

3.3. Experience in facilitating entrepreneurial engagement and the transition of scientific and technological innovations among faculty, students, and other academic personnel. Competitive Accelerators shall possess the capability to furnish resources to individuals and startups, such as physical space, seed capital, entrepreneurial mentorship, curriculum, or other assets requisite for bringing technology to market.

3.4. A proven network capable of organizing teaching teams to support international startups. This includes Program Directors, bio/health industry Instructors, mentors, industry experts, administrative personnel, and any other necessary human resources to effectively assist startups in conducting Customer Discovery activities and appropriately pivoting their business model within an online learning environment.

3.5. Demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, and business practices pertinent to Korean biotech startups, necessary for the effective evaluation, development, and implementation of business execution strategies within the U.S. market.

Section 4. Program Plan

4.1. Program Period: April 20 – July 30, 2026

4.2. Participants: Eleven (11) teams (Startups) selected by KIC Washington DC.

4.3. Format of Delivery:

4.3.1. Online Sessions

The program shall include eight (8) structured online sessions prior to the in-person program. The sessions shall cover the following topics:

Session	Topic / Description
1	Orientation Session: Introduction of Instructors, Mentors, and Participating Startups
2	Introduction to Lean Startup Canvas
3	Customer Discovery: Practical Approach to Investors and Buyers
4	Customer Discovery: Practical Approach to Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) (Biotech and Healthcare tracks delivered as separate parallel sessions)
5	Team Presentation and Discussion: Lean Startup Canvas Review
6	Customer Discovery: Practical Approach to Patient Advocacy Groups
7	Customer Discovery: Health Insurance and Reimbursement in the U.S. Healthcare System
8	Final Team Presentation: Each team presents its customer discovery journey (Approximately five (5) minutes per team)

4.3.2. Mentoring Program

- The Selected Accelerator shall recruit and engage a minimum of ten (10) mentors with demonstrated expertise in the biotech and/or healthcare industry. Mentor qualifications shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas of competency:
 - U.S. regulatory pathways (FDA approval, 510(k), EUA, etc.)
 - Clinical development and trial design
 - Healthcare reimbursement, payer strategy, and health economics
 - Biotech/pharmaceutical commercialization and market access
 - Venture capital and fundraising in the life sciences sector
 - Intellectual property strategy and patent portfolio management
 - Digital health, medical devices, and diagnostics
 - Key Opinion Leader (KOL) engagement and medical affairs
 - Business development, licensing, and strategic partnerships
- Each participating Startup shall receive a minimum of four (4) individual mentoring sessions, each lasting no less than thirty (30) minutes per session.

- Mentoring sessions shall be scheduled at mutually agreed-upon times and may be conducted virtually or in person during the on-site program period.

4.3.3. Field Trips and Industry Event Participation

- The Selected Accelerator shall arrange participation in at least three (3) industry events or site visits during the in-person program period, including:
 - One (1) major biotechnology convention (e.g., BIO International Convention or equivalent)
 - Two (2) additional industry events, facility visits, or institutional tours relevant to the biotech and healthcare sectors

Event participation shall provide Startups with exposure to the U.S. biotech ecosystem, networking opportunities, and potential partnership leads.

4.3.4. Presentation Day

Participating Startups shall have the opportunity to present their learnings and customer discovery outcomes to the instructors, mentors, and invited stakeholders in the format of a final presentation.

4.4. Program KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)

#	Objective	Description
1	Number of Graduating Teams	All Startups must complete the program, except where a Startup is no longer able to participate and such withdrawal has been approved by KIC.
2	Customer Discovery	- A minimum of thirty (30) customer discovery interviews per Startup for whole program period - Participation in at least three (3) biotech/healthcare industry events or site visits
3	Mentoring Completion	Each Startup shall complete a minimum of four (4) mentoring sessions of at least thirty (30) minutes each.
4	Program Satisfaction	Overall program satisfaction rating shall be no lower than 4.3 out of 5.0 as measured by post-program survey.

Section 5. Scope of Services

5.1. The Selected Accelerator shall develop the entire program curriculum, program description, and operational plan, including but not limited to the program syllabus, learning materials, and session-by-session lesson plans for all eight (8) online sessions and in-person activities described in Section 4.3.

5.2. The Selected Accelerator shall submit a program summary including the program's purpose, focus areas, management structure, and a complete list of instructors and mentors with their respective biographical profiles and areas of expertise. The mentor roster shall include a minimum of ten (10) mentors with demonstrated competencies in biotech and/or healthcare as outlined in Section 4.3.2.

5.3. Mentoring sessions and Office Hour sessions shall be included in the program as required under Sections 4.3.2 Documentation requirements for mentoring sessions are as follows:

- Meeting minutes for each mentoring session shall be submitted by the assigned mentor and shall include:
 - Mentor Name
 - Participating Startup
 - Date and Duration of Session
 - Main Objective of the Session
 - Key Discussion Points and Recommendations
- Each mentor shall submit a comprehensive evaluation report for each assigned Startup at the conclusion of the program.

5.4. During the program and for a period of six (6) months following program completion, the Selected Accelerator shall provide access to an online learning platform and share such access with participating Startups, KIC staff, and designated Korean government personnel.

5.5. All program materials, including lecture materials and presentation decks, shall be submitted to KIC prior to the commencement of the program. The Selected Accelerator shall also prepare a program brochure suitable for distribution to stakeholders and participants.

5.6. Final Report: Upon completion of the accelerating program, the Selected Accelerator shall submit a comprehensive performance and results report to KIC no later than thirty (30) business days after the program end date. The Final Report shall include, at minimum:

- Program overview and execution summary
- Individual Startup performance assessments
- Mentor evaluation reports for each Startup
- Customer discovery interview metrics and outcomes
- KPI achievement analysis as outlined in Section 4.4
- Recommendations for each Startup's U.S. market entry strategy
- Program satisfaction survey results and analysis

5.7. The Selected Accelerator shall coordinate and arrange all logistics for field trips and industry event participation as described in Section 4.3.3, including but not limited to event registration, transportation arrangements, and on-site coordination for participating

Startups.

Section 6. Selection Criteria

The successful proposal will be determined at the sole discretion of the KIC. KIC may utilize the following considerations in its selection process, with each category assigned a differential weighting:

6.1. Commitment (20%)

- Demonstrated clarity in goals and a verifiable track record of facilitating the transition of academic projects into the marketplace.
- Exhibited willingness to implement distinctive and competitive methodologies to assist Startups in achieving their Program objectives as expeditiously as possible, within the defined time constraints of the Program.
- A commitment to directly support Startups in conducting Customer Discovery activities, connecting them with biotech-specific subject matter experts, providing structured mentorship, and overcoming potential challenges (e.g., language barriers, networking limitations, understanding U.S. business etiquette, cultural differences, etc.).

6.2. Capabilities of the Accelerator (30%)

- Demonstrated experience in guiding participating international teams or companies toward biotech commercialization within the U.S. and possessing sufficient and appropriate leadership, capacity, and a comprehensive plan for managing the entirety of the program.
- Establishment of a robust network of business, industry, governmental, and community contacts, with the capability to leverage these networks to benefit the individuals and projects served by the Accelerator.
- Any additional characteristics and capabilities that serve to differentiate the Accelerator's services from competitors in the areas of biotech commercialization and Lean Startup Methodology training.

6.3. Experienced Professional Staff (25%)

- Ability to dedicate an adequate number of professionals with relevant expertise and experience to deliver services to the Program's participating Startups and KIC, taking into consideration the specific nature of the Program and the participating Startups.
- The proposed ratio of mentors/instructors per Startup for the Program.
- Supporting personnel, including administrative employees, interns, and other relevant staff.

6.4. Competitive Fee Structure (25%)

- Ability to propose a competitive and justifiable fee structure that adheres to the budget constraints detailed in **Section 2.2.6. Budget** above.
- A majority of the Accelerator's proposed budget must be allocated toward services rendered for and direct support provided to the participating teams.

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