Lithuania-Poland Life Science & Biotech

Ecosystems Summit Brief

2025-11-27

Vilnius

Executive Summary

The *Lithuania-Poland Life Science & Biotech Ecosystems Summit*, held in Vilnius in 2025, marked the first coordinated effort to unite two rapidly growing biotechnology ecosystems into a shared regional partnership. The Summit confirmed that both countries recognize the critical importance of acting now to strengthen collaboration across scientific research, technology transfer, startup development, investment, and biomanufacturing.

This Brief consolidates the core insights from all five Summit sessions and outlines a proposed 2026 Action Plan that establishes the Lithuania–Poland Biotech Partnership Initiative as an ongoing bilateral framework. The aim is to build a coordinated innovation corridor that leverages shared strengths, addresses ecosystem gaps, and positions both countries as leaders within the Baltic and CEE region.

The Brief calls for structured cooperation between academic institutions, technology transfer offices, industry, investors, and government institutions, with clear milestones leading toward the next Summit in Vilnius in autumn 2026.

Session Insights

Session 1 – Connecting Ecosystems & Building Vision

The opening session clearly demonstrated a unified understanding between Lithuania and Poland that **now is the moment to act**. Both countries recognize that the global life sciences and biotechnology landscape is evolving rapidly, and that proactive bilateral collaboration will create opportunities neither country can achieve alone. The strongest shared message was the need to **build a structured, long-term partnership**, not just maintain occasional cooperation. Participants emphasized the importance of creating a **bilateral action plan**, involving the right stakeholders, and establishing mechanisms that ensure continuity beyond individual events or initiatives. There was broad agreement that collaboration must be systematic, long-term, and supported at multiple levels - political, institutional, academic, and industrial. Both ecosystems acknowledged that Lithuania and Poland have **complementary strengths and different gaps**, and that this diversity should be leveraged intentionally. Instead of competing, the countries can create opportunities to support each other - through knowledge exchange, shared expertise, coordinated projects, and joint ecosystem-building initiatives. A major theme across all sessions, including this one, was the **importance of improving access to investment and enabling companies to grow and scale**. Both countries expressed commitment to working together on new public–private mechanisms, improved innovation financing models, and practices that support the growth of early-stage biotech ventures. Participants also emphasized the need to **increase regional visibility and shape a stronger Baltic–CEE life sciences identity**. By coordinating efforts, Lithuania and Poland can take a leadership role in promoting the region on the European stage and in global markets. Most importantly, all participants - including ministry representatives and the Embassy of Poland - expressed **strong support for continuing this collaboration**, developing concrete next steps, and preparing joint initiatives. The next milestone identified for this bilateral effort will be the **CEE BioForum Conference in Warsaw in spring 2026**, where progress can be reviewed and further commitments made.

Session 2 – Technology Transfer & Academia-Industry Collaboration

Session 2 placed significant focus on **technology transfer** as a critical link between scientific excellence and market-ready innovation. Representatives from universities, research institutes, and technology transfer offices (TTOs) from both countries highlighted that many of the challenges faced in Lithuania and Poland are similar - fragmented processes, insufficient incentives for researchers, and institutional structures that are not yet fully aligned with the needs of modern innovation ecosystems. Participants acknowledged that both countries still operate within systems that heavily prioritize **academic publications over commercialization**, which not only limits researchers' motivation to collaborate with industry, but also reduces their ability and incentives to conduct research oriented toward solving concrete market challenges. This misalignment makes it harder for scientific work to remain up-to-date with real industry needs and global innovation trends. The session emphasized the importance of strengthening researcher awareness, improving institutional incentives, and modernizing university policies to better support both commercialization activities and applied research that addresses real-world problems. Polish participants shared practical insights into what works and what does not in their own TTO practices, providing a valuable knowledge base for bilateral learning. Building on these experiences, the session identified a clear opportunity for **Lithuanian and Polish TTOs to collaborate more closely** through joint programs, shared best practices, and participation in existing cross-border initiatives. A key takeaway was the proposal to **connect Lithuanian and Polish TTOs into a shared cross-border technology transfer ecosystem**. Such cooperation would allow scientists from both countries to benefit from common programs, pooled expertise, and a broader network of commercialization support. The longer-term vision extends beyond bilateral cooperation: participants expressed interest in creating a **regional TTO platform across the entire CEE region**, positioning Lithuania and Poland as co-leaders of this effort. In summary, the session reinforced that improving technology transfer requires a combination of structural reforms, researcher engagement, and institutional collaboration - and that Lithuania and Poland can advance this agenda more effectively by acting together rather than separately.

Session 3 – Startups & Scaleups Growing the Bioinnovation Engine

The third session highlighted the deep structural challenges faced by biotech startups in both Lithuania and Poland - particularly the "valley of death," where early innovations struggle to progress toward market readiness due to long development cycles, high capital needs, and limited specialised support. Participants emphasized that traditional startup models built around rapid iteration and short investment cycles are not suitable for deep-tech or life sciences ventures. A recurring theme across the discussion was the **lack of visibility between the two ecosystems**. Both scientists and businesses often do not know what capabilities, research directions, or technologies exist across the border. This information gap slows down collaboration, creates duplication of effort, and prevents startups from accessing potential partners, mentors, or infrastructure that could accelerate their progress. This challenge was strongly echoed in Session 4, where even two of the largest and most advanced biomanufacturing companies from Lithuania and Poland admitted they were unaware of each other's capabilities until this Summit - a clear indicator of how fragmented the regional landscape currently is. If such gaps exist among industry leaders, the disconnect among SMEs and early-stage teams is even more profound. To address this, participants proposed creating a **shared virtual ecosystem platform**, enabling transparent access to information about scientific competencies, infrastructure, capabilities, and company profiles across both countries. Such a platform would serve as a practical, low-barrier tool for scientists, startups, corporates, and investors to discover one another, connect, and build partnerships. It was identified as one of the most actionable and impactful next steps for strengthening the bilateral corridor. Beyond visibility, the session reinforced that biotech founders require patient capital, tailored mentorship, and business training models adapted to deep-tech realities rather than generic startup frameworks. More importantly, both countries recognized that supporting biotech startups requires ecosystem-wide collaboration: shared infrastructure, cross-border mentoring, coordinated investment instruments, and joint exposure to international markets. Ultimately, the session concluded that a **unified Lithuania–Poland innovation space**, and later a broader CEE-wide biotech corridor, is essential for enabling startups to survive the valley of death and scale globally. Pooling knowledge, competencies, research strengths, and physical infrastructure will create a critical mass the region currently lacks in isolation.

Session 4 – Biomanufacturing – From Molecule to Market

Session 4 provided an important and long-overdue overview of the **biomanufacturing capabilities** present in both Lithuania and Poland. The discussion revealed that both countries possess substantial experience, established GMP infrastructures, and industrial know-how - yet these strengths remain largely invisible to each other. This lack of visibility has kept the two ecosystems in a position of *unnecessary competition* rather than collaboration. The presentations from **BIOCITY (Northway Biotech)** and **BIOTON** showcased the impressive manufacturing maturity present in both markets. Northway demonstrated its global-scale expertise in biologics development and CDMO services, while BIOTON highlighted its long-standing insulin manufacturing capacity and strong industrial footprint. Together, these examples illustrated that Lithuania and Poland already form a powerful biomanufacturing corridor - even if this corridor is not yet formally recognized or strategically coordinated. A key takeaway was that **both countries hold significant, complementary capabilities**, and that collaboration could allow them to collectively offer a much broader and more competitive biomanufacturing scope. By understanding each other's capacity - from fermentation to biologics production, fill-and-finish, quality systems, and s cale-up expertise - Lithuania and Poland could fill existing gaps, reduce duplication, and create a more integrated and flexible production environment. In the broader EU context, where Europe aims to reshore and strengthens its biomanufacturing capacity, a coordinated Lithuanian–Polish approach could position both countries as leaders. Instead of acting as isolated mid-sized players, Lithuania and Poland together could become a **strategic biomanufacturing node** in Europe's industrial landscape. Participants agreed that visibility, information-sharing, and structured collaboration are essential. Without knowing what exists across the border, companies cannot optimize their production strategies, nor explore division of labor, shared supply-chain solutions, or capacity balancing. The combined strengths of BIOCITY (Northway Biotech) and BIOTON were repeatedly cited as a compelling example of the synergy that becomes possible once capabilities are understood. In summary, the session demonstrated that Lithuania and Poland have the potential to build one of the strongest biomanufacturing clusters in Central and Eastern Europe - but realizing this potential requires a coordinated effort to map capabilities, open communication channels, and develop collaborative models rather than competitive ones.

Session 5 – Investors Dialogue: "Scaling Biotech – EU and Global Capital Outlook"

Session 5 brought together venture capital investors, business angels, and representatives from national investment agencies to discuss the current state of financing for life sciences and biotechnology in Lithuania and Poland. A shared conclusion quickly emerged: **both countries currently have limited impact in the global investment landscape**, particularly in deep-tech and biotech segments, where large, patient capital pools dominate. Strengthening the region's investment presence is a long-term challenge - but one that can begin with practical, achievable steps today. A crucial insight was that **cross-border collaboration in early-stage financing is almost nonexistent**. Business angels from both countries do not collaborate at all, despite the critical role angel syndicates play in early biotech development in other regions. Venture capital collaboration does exist but remains minimal and unstructured. Participants agreed that this represents a major missed opportunity: by pooling expertise, networks, and capital at the earliest stages, Lithuania and Poland could significantly increase the survival rate of biotech startups and strengthen regional deal flow. The representative of the Embassy of Poland highlighted the opportunities offered by Poland's financial market infrastructure - including stock exchange mechanisms that cater to smaller and scaling companies - suggesting that this could become an accessible route for biotech ventures in both countries. Although further exploration is needed, the suggestion underscored the value of continuing financial cooperation discussions. Investment promotion agencies acknowledged that past attempts at joint investment attraction initiatives often fell apart due to **competitive pressures**. When competing for the same foreign investors, country-level incentives tend to overshadow collaborative ambitions. While no definitive solution was identified, the discussion emphasized the need for new approaches that allow cooperation without undermining national interests. Despite these challenges, the session concluded with a clear actionable direction: begin by building structured cross-border collaboration **between business angels and VC funds**, focusing on co-investment, deal-sharing, joint evaluation frameworks, and cross-border syndicates. These early-stage funding mechanisms are less influenced by geopolitical competition and more directly connected to startup success. As such, they represent the most practical and impactful foundation for deeper investment cooperation between Lithuania and Poland. Participants agreed that strengthening these early connections can, over time, create the trust, shared pipelines, and investment maturity needed to build a more visible and competitive regional investment environment for life sciences and biotech.

Proposed Next Steps for 2026

The next steps focus on the first operational steps of the Lithuania - Poland Life Science & Biotech Partnership Initiative. These activities aim to build structured collaboration, map ecosystem capabilities, involve relevant stakeholders, and prepare for the next bilateral Summit in Vilnius in autumn 2026.

Key proposed actions for 2026 include:

1. Establishing a bilateral coordination group (LithuaniaBIO, BioForum, innovation agencies, TTO representatives).
2. Conducting consultations with academia, startup ecosystems, and biomanufacturing industry.
3. Preparing a plan for creation capability map covering research expertise, industry infrastructure, and innovation assets.
4. Designing a concept for a shared virtual ecosystem platform.
5. Initiating dialogue among business angels and venture funds in both countries.
6. Presenting coordinated plans during the CEBioForum event in Warsaw in spring 2026.
7. Finalizing progress updates and presenting the roadmap at the next Lithuania–Poland Summit in Vilnius (autumn 2026).

Summit Partners:

POLISH AND LITHUANIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Innovation Agency LITHUANIA

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