Measuring the Economic Footprint of the Biotechnology Industry in the European Union

2026 Edition

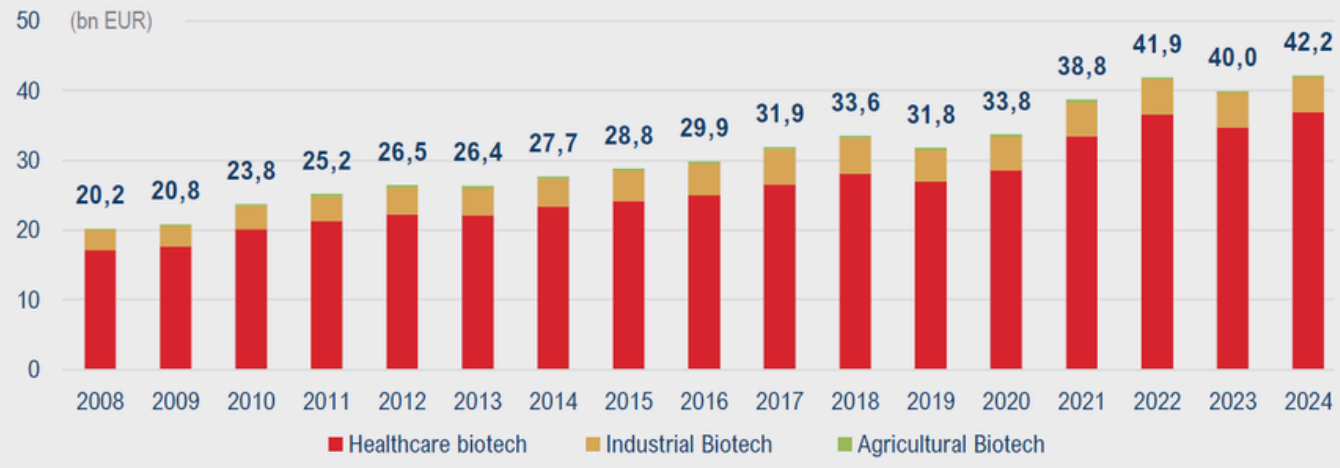
Executive Summary

This 2026 edition of the report 'Measuring the Economic Footprint of the Biotechnology Industry in the European Union' now includes data from 2008–2024, reflecting changes in biomanufacturing outputs across sectors towards the end of the Covid pandemic. The report documents the continued growth of biotechnology products within healthcare and across industrial biotechnology applications, with accelerated economic performance seen during covid falling back slightly, although remaining at an elevated level and continuing the trend upwards.

Gross Value Added

Gross value added (GVA) from biotechnology activities reached €42.2 billion in 2024, almost doubling since 2008. Levels in 2024 are the highest to date, with a small decline in 2023 from the unusually high 2022 GVA. Healthcare remains the dominant application, at 83% of contribution. Rate of increase has altered from the previous report of 2022 data, with healthcare accelerating by 4.9% to 2024 and industrial biotechnology falling from its 2022 high of 5.3%, down to 3.6% in 2024. Both remain substantially higher than the EU average.

Figure 6: Direct GVA effect caused by Biotech sectors



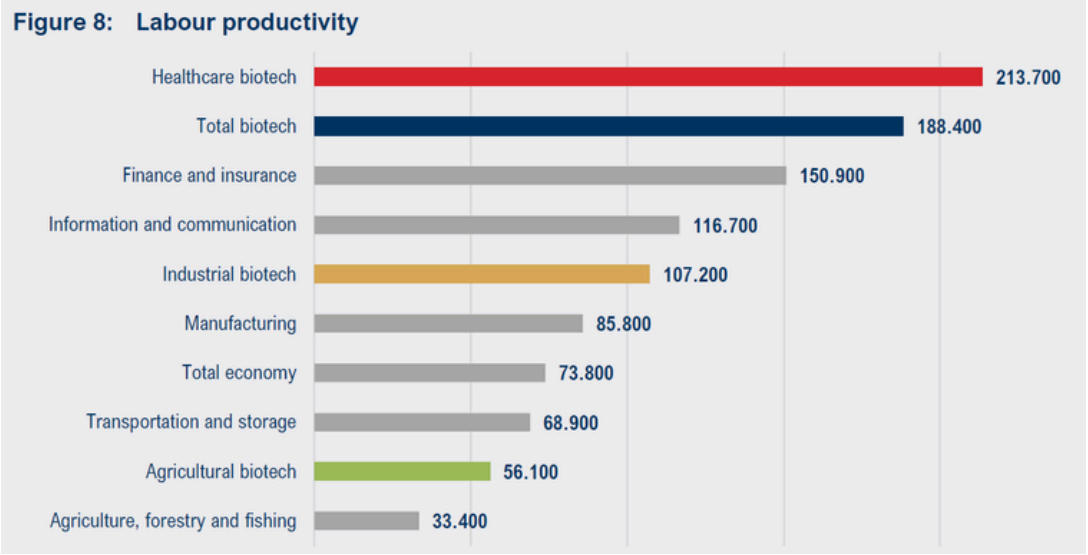
GVA time series for the EU biotechnology industry (EU, current prices). Source: Eurostat: Prodcom database; WifOR analysis.

Labour Productivity

Labour productivity is measured as gross value added per employee. With higher values indicating a more productive use of labour. Biotechnology remains one of the most economically productive industries in the EU. In 2024, across all sectors, it generated €188,400 GVA per person employed. Nominal labour productivity within healthcare biotechnology increased by 20% from 2022 data at €213,700 per employee, significantly exceeding finance and IT sectors. While part of this increase may reflect rising prices rather than real productivity gains, the sector's labour productivity relative to the overall economy also rose, from 2.65 times in 2022 to 2.89 times in 2024. Productivity through industrial biotechnology also accelerated from 2022, reaching €107,200 per employee in 2024.

Labour productivity in the EU, 2024, GVA in Euro per person employed. Source: Eurostat: Prodcom database, NAMA 64a, NAMA 64e; WifOR analysis.

Figure 8: Labour productivity

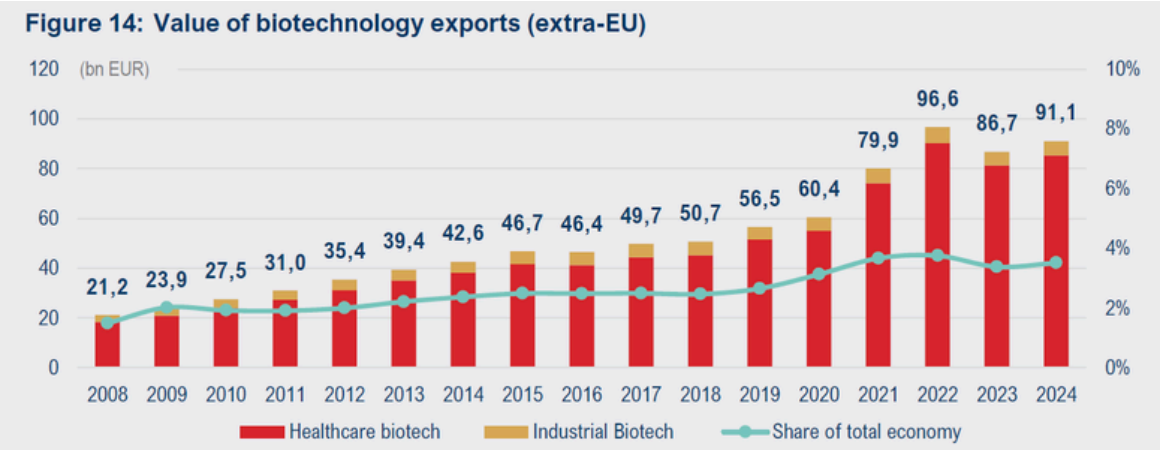


Trade and Exports

Biotechnology outputs deliver a significant trade surplus for the EU with its global trading partners, at a value of €91.9 billion in 2024, continuing an upward trajectory since 2008, delivering an eightfold increase. The economic value of healthcare exports rose significantly in 2021 and 2022 (up 35% from 2020), indicative of the European Union's role in COVID-19 pandemic response. The increase from 2022-2024 has adjusted back to pre-covid trends, falling slightly in absolute terms after 2022, although remaining substantially higher than 2020. Industrial biotechnology exports have remained consistent, with no change in trend through covid. Imports since the 2022 update have fallen for both technologies, although remaining higher than the pre-covid era.

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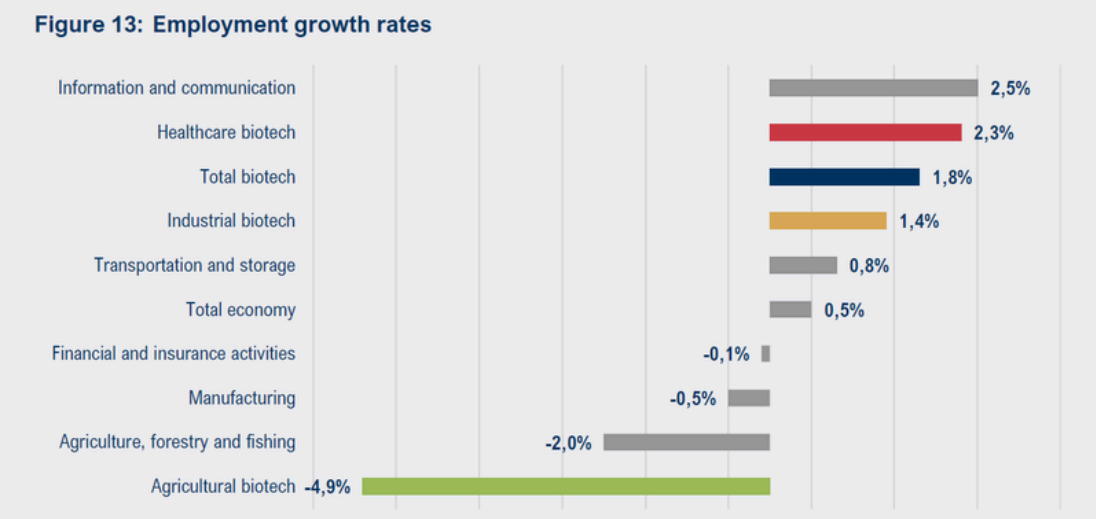


Extra-EU exports of the biotechnology industry. Source: Eurostat: Prodcom database; WifOR analysis.

Employment

Pace of employment growth in biotechnology in 2024 was almost four times higher than the overall EU economy. Healthcare biotechnology grew most quickly at over 4.5 times the EU average, and industrial biotech employment at just under three times the EU average. Pace of growth since the 2022 update indicates slowing space of employment growth in both sectors. Overall employment within biotechnology in 2024 was slightly above the 2022 data, indicating a retention of the gains made during Covid.

Employment compound average growth rate, 2008-2022. Source: Eurostat: Prodcom database, NAMA64e; WifOR analysis.



For more information, please contact communications@europabio.org