

Take Root Bio (TRB): Student Project Scope & Brief

DICE Consortium · Stupreneurs Live Client Brief

Your consultancy team will produce two pieces of market research for Take Root Bio (TRB), a UK AgriTech company planning “Connected Farms” in non-traditional locations such as mines and derelict industrial buildings: **(1)** a survey of whether urban consumers will buy food grown in such places, and **(2)** a map of who could fund TRB and how to approach them.

Project at a glance

Item	Detail
Project title	Take Root Bio: The Future of Agri-Food Production is Urban, Sustainable and Profitable
Client	Take Root Bio UK (https://takeroot.bio/)
Client type	SME
Sector	AgriTech / Sustainable Food; also listed as AgriTech / Urban Regeneration & Sustainable Food Systems
Project type	Live client brief on the Stupreneurs model
Brief in one line	Feasibility, urban farm consumer perception & VC funding
UN SDG targets	SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
Duration	8 to 12 weeks of structured client problem solving
Workspace	A dedicated team Basecamp (DICE standard for student consultancy groups)
DICE contact	andrem@diceconsortium.com

About the client

TRB plans urban Connected Farms built on an ecosystem of pillars that can run on their own or together, depending on the location. The CIP document introduces six pillars and then lists seven items:

Pillar	What it covers
Agriculture	Vertical / controlled-environment vegetable production
Aquaculture	Seafood, algae and sea grasses
Agroforestry	Boreal forests, orchards, vineyards
Data / Digital	A data centre for the Connected Farm, also as a revenue stream
Distillation	Waste to worth: salt whey, tippable milk and vegetable waste turned into neutral spirit or kombucha
We Farm	TRB's community-based franchise for urban Connected Farms and/or community outreach space, with skills and qualification pathways
Climate / Heat Tech and renewables	Low-energy, net-zero, sustainable multipurpose farms



TRB's stated ambition is to feed the UK and the world, locally and sustainably.

Before starting, read the three TRB files in the Basecamp Resources library: Take Root Bio Pitch Deck, Take Root BioHive Proposal Draft and Take Root BioMine Proposition for Discussion.

The challenge

TRB has two business questions.

1. **Will urban consumers buy food grown in former industrial and derelict places?** TRB's end market is consumers in urban areas. It needs to know whether they will accept food grown and produced in non-traditional locations such as mines and derelict industrial buildings, and what the pros, cons and market perceptions of food produced this way are.
2. **Who will fund TRB, and how should TRB approach them?** According to the brief, experts at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology have privately reviewed TRB's offering and concluded we are eight to ten years of policy / regulation. TRB wants to know what market opportunities this creates from a funding, venture capital (VC) and private equity (PE) perspective, which organisations to target, and how.

TRB describes the market for land and land redevelopment as complex and disparate, with funding able to come from different kinds of organisation. The brief names four examples:

- House builders such as Taylor Wimpey
- Peel Group, which does sustainable regeneration in some locations
- Grosvenor (Ag Tech & Estates)
- Crown Estates

TRB wants to identify like-minded organisations with the capacity to fund its plans.

Scope

The project has two workstreams that match TRB's two deliverables. A team may choose to split into two sub-groups, one per workstream, and combine their findings at the end.

Workstream 1: Consumer attitudes research

Research questions, taken from the brief:

1. Will urban consumers accept, buy and eat food grown and produced in non-traditional locations such as mines and derelict industrial buildings?
2. What are their attitudes, and what pros and cons do they see?
3. How do they perceive food produced by TRB's method?
4. What key development areas and marketing hurdles does this reveal for TRB?

What the survey must do (TRB's requirements):

- ☐ Capture a relevant cross-section of the urban marketplace.

- ☐ Allow results to be extrapolated to national figures. This needs a sample that represents the population (for example by age, region and income), and the report must state how far the sample supports national estimates.
- ☐ Collect both quantitative responses (closed questions, scales) and qualitative responses (open comments, or interviews or focus groups) for a richer analysis.

Workstream 2: Funders and topline strategy

Research questions, taken from the brief:

1. What market opportunities does TRB's position (as assessed by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology) create from a funding, VC and PE perspective?
2. Which organisations should TRB target? Start from the four named in the brief (house builders such as Taylor Wimpey, Peel Group, Grosvenor, Crown Estates) and identify other like-minded organisations with the capacity to fund TRB.
3. How should TRB approach each type of funder? Give topline strategy thoughts.

Out of scope (proposed)

Further project expansion for solution development:

- Technical farm design, engineering or site surveys.
- Detailed financial models or valuations of TRB.
- Contacting funders on TRB's behalf. Students research and recommend; TRB makes the approaches.
- Research into the individual pillars (aquaculture, distillation, etc.), except where it affects consumer acceptance or funder interest.

Deliverables

D1 and D2 are TRB's required deliverables. D3 to D5 are proposed, based on DICE's standard consultancy outputs; confirm them with the module lead.

#	Deliverable	What it must contain	Source
D1	Consumer attitudes survey and analysis	The survey instrument; sampling approach and achieved sample; quantitative results; qualitative themes; how far results extrapolate to national figures; key development areas and marketing hurdles for TRB	TRB brief, deliverable 1
D2	Funder research and topline strategy	Funding and market opportunities from a VC / PE perspective; a target list of funders (starting with the four named, plus other like-minded organisations), with why each fits; topline thoughts on how to approach each	TRB brief, deliverable 2
D3	Final client report	D1 and D2 combined, with an executive summary and recommendations	Proposed
D4	Client presentation	A short presentation of findings to TRB	Proposed
D5	Basecamp project record	Milestones, meeting notes and files kept in the team Basecamp throughout	Proposed (DICE uses Basecamp for all student consultancy teams)



Suggested report structure: Executive Summary; Description of the Product/Service; Technology Consideration; Product/Service Marketplace; Identification of the Specific Market; Marketing Strategy; Organisational Structure; Schedule.

Assessment

The work should also give each student portfolio evidence. DICE's framework calls this Portfolio Proof of Work and Client Portfolio Deliverables. Keep copies of your contributions (subject to any confidentiality TRB requires).

Timeline and milestones

The phases below follow DICE's Stupreneurs process (Skills Audit & Registration, Basecamp Teams, Live Client Brief, SDG Solution, Output) and fit the 8-to-12-week live delivery window DICE describes. Enter the agreed dates as To-dos in Basecamp.

1. **Set-up.** Complete the skills audit and registration; form the team; set up the team Basecamp; read the three TRB documents. *Milestone: team roles agreed.*
2. **Client kick-off.** Meet TRB; confirm scope, out-of-scope items, the DSIT point, confidentiality and contacts. *Milestone: scope agreed in writing (a short Basecamp message TRB confirms).*
3. **Research design.** Draft the survey and the funder research plan; agree the target sample; get ethics approval if the module requires it (see below). *Milestone: survey and plan signed off by TRB and the module lead.*
4. **Fieldwork and desk research.** Run the survey and any interviews; research the funders. *Milestone: target sample reached; funder long-list complete.*
5. **Analysis.** Analyse the survey data and themes; shortlist funders and draft approach strategies. *Milestone: interim findings shared with TRB.*
6. **Output.** Write the final report; present to TRB; archive files in Basecamp. *Milestone: D3 and D4 delivered.*

Ways of working

You are acting as a professional consultancy for a real client. Treat TRB, its documents and its contacts accordingly.

- **Basecamp is the project's home.** Use the team messages for quick chat, To-dos for milestones and owners, for decisions and client updates. Keep all files there.
- **Client contact.** Agree one or two team members as TRB's point of contact. Send an agenda before each client meeting and notes after it.
- **Roles.** Agree roles at set-up (for example project manager, survey lead, data analyst, funder research lead, report editor) and record them in Basecamp.
- **Confidentiality.** TRB's pitch deck and proposals are client documents. Do not share them outside the team and module staff without TRB's permission.

Survey ethics and data protection

Workstream 1 involves collecting data from members of the public. Before launch:

- ☐ Check with the module lead whether research ethics approval is required, and obtain it if so.
- ☐ Give participants a short information sheet and get their consent.
- ☐ Collect no more personal data than needed; anonymise responses; store data securely and in line with UK GDPR.

Resources

From the Basecamp Resources library and DICE's professional skills articles:

Need	Resource
Client background	Take Root Bio Pitch Deck; Take Root BioHive Proposal Draft; Take Root BioMine Proposition for Discussion
Consultancy basics	Introduction to Management Consulting; Consultancy Thoughts of the Day (e.g. What is a Consultant?, The Fundamentals of Consultancy)
Research design	Introduction to Research Methods and Tools in Business; References List
Planning	Introduction to Project Management; GPT_GANTT_Example; Project Scheduling; Effective Time Management
Food-sector context	Food Trends_2011_Lessons for Future Visioning
Working with the client	Navigating Client Meetings; Professional Email Etiquette; Effective Meetings; Communicating on Basecamp
Presenting	Effective Presentations (before, during and after your delivery; planning; production checklist)

Open questions to confirm

Settle these before or at the client kick-off.

#	Question	Ask
1	Module title, assessment components, weightings and submission dates	Module lead
2	Project start date and duration within the 8-to-12-week window	Module lead
3	Who is the TRB contact?	DICE / module lead
4	Is D3 to D5 (report, presentation, Basecamp record) the expected output set?	Module lead
5	What does eight to ten years of policy / regulation mean exactly?	TRB
6	Survey target: which urban areas, what sample size, and does TRB have budget or panels for distribution?	TRB
7	Should the survey test specific site types (mines, derelict industrial buildings) or specific products?	TRB
8	Any funders TRB has already approached, or wants excluded?	TRB
9	Is an NDA required, and can students use the work in their portfolios?	TRB
10	Is research ethics approval required for the survey?	Module lead