

NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT  
AND INNOVATION FUND

# 2025 PROGRAMME STRATEGY

JANUARY 2025



MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
AND INNOVATION

APPROVED BY:

**BALÁZS HANKÓ**  
MINISTER

NATIONAL  
SCIENCE POLICY  
COUNCIL

**ISTVÁN ÁDÁM KISS**  
PRESIDENT



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT  
AND INNOVATION OFFICE  
HUNGARY

Domestic public funding schemes managed by the NRDl Office are financed from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund (hereinafter: NRDl Fund), according to the portfolio of funding schemes set out in the NRDl Fund's annual programme strategy.

The total budget of the 2025 Programme Strategy is HUF 128.3 billion. Within this, the Programme Strategy proposes a budget of HUF 107.1 billion for the launch of new calls from the NRDl Fund, and a further HUF 21.2 billion for the management of calls launched in 2024. In addition, under the Operational Programme for Economic Development and Innovation Plus (GINOP Plus), there are additional innovation calls with a total budget of around HUF 107.8 billion. Thus, a total of HUF 214.9 billion of new funding will be available to support the Hungarian research, development and innovation (RDI) ecosystem from two interoperable and mutually reinforcing sources.

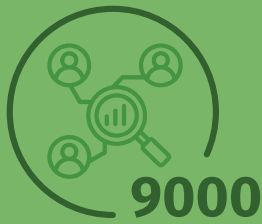
## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME STRATEGY

The 2025 Programme Strategy contributes to the implementation of Hungary's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy (2021-2030), supports the RDI measures of the Shifting of Gears in Higher Education Strategy, and takes into account the priority sectors of Hungary's Competitiveness Strategy 2024-2030.

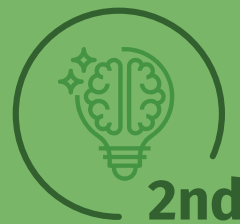
Hungary's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy (2021-2030) sets the target for R&D expenditure to reach 3% of GDP by 2030. The NRDl Fund and its respective Programme Strategy play a key role in achieving this objective. On the one hand, the largest share of public R&D expenditure is provided by the NRDl Fund, and on the other hand, the Fund's funding system prioritizes the increased involvement and encouragement of non-governmental funding sources. Both Hungary's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy and the Programme Strategy are aligned with the overarching National Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) 2021-2027, which identified Hungary's territorial strengths and national economic and horizontal priorities in the fields of RDI, business development and digitalisation.

The programmes and calls planned in the 2025 Programme Strategy aim to serve the vision of the John von Neumann Programme (NJP), the strategic innovation package adopted by the Government in 2023, according to which Hungary should be among the world's top 25 innovators by 2030 and the top 10 by 2040, based on the Global Innovation Index (GII). To achieve this, the NJP focuses on strengthening the knowledge-based economy through the development of the existing funding system and the implementation of new programmes.

## The 2025 Programme Strategy contributes to the achievement of the main objectives set by the RDI policy up to 2030:



The headcount of researchers and developers per million inhabitants should reach **9000**.



**Every second** Hungarian SME should innovate.



**One in four** innovative businesses should cooperate with universities and research institutes.



The number of patent applications filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) should reach **3.5** per 1 billion in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) of GDP.

# THE INTERVENTION LOGIC OF THE PROGRAMME STRATEGY

The 2025 Programme Strategy has a three-year horizon, setting out the programmes to be announced on an annual basis and those to be announced on a multi-annual cycle. For the sake of the three-year planning and in order to align with the related strategies, the evaluation system of the Programme Strategy will be extended with new features.

A further important aspect of the design of the programmes and calls presented in the Programme Strategy is to ensure that they are consistent with the RDI calls for proposals planned under Priority 2 of the GINOP Plus programme, in order to ensure that the interventions are mutually reinforcing. From the end of 2024, two GINOP Plus schemes, open for several years, will support the development of the domestic SME and large enterprise sector (GINOP Plus 2.1.1-24 Support for Focus Area Innovation Projects; GINOP Plus 2.1.3-24 Support for SME Innovation Capacities), and in 2025, GINOP Plus 2.2.1-24 Support for the Complex Development of Domestic Research Infrastructures will be launched with a budget of HUF 26 billion.

In addition to the resources of the NRDl Fund, the Governmental Guarantee Fund will be opened in 2025 with a budget of HUF 8 billion, which will cover the costs of model-changing universities that have been discriminatorily deprived of EU funding by Brussels, so that they can continue to participate as associated partners in international projects supported by Horizon Europe.

## Within the framework of this year's programme strategy of the NRDl Fund, the following programmes will be re-launched in 2025:

- Under the **Innovation Sub-fund**: Fast Track, Industrial Property Rights, international bilateral and EU partnership programmes, HU-rizon Programme.
- Under the **Research Sub-fund**: the University Research Scholarship Programme (EKÖP), the National Research Excellence Programme (NKKP).

# INNOVATION SUB-FUND

## **Further instruments and interventions of the Innovation Sub-fund under the 2025 Programme Strategy:**

- A new element is the call for proposals for the Large Company Focus Area Innovation Programme, prepared and launched in 2024, with the evaluation of proposals and the launch of projects in 2025, and the financial framework provided by the 2025 Programme Strategy. The call will support the development and strengthening of long-term cross-sectoral RDI partnerships to improve the competitiveness of large companies and develop their innovation potential.
- Health innovation is a priority of national economic interest, but there are currently limited resources available to finance more complex and risky projects in this area, and the parameters of the current portfolio of competitive calls are less adapted to the specific needs of the sector. The path to market for new technologies can vary significantly in some areas of health research and innovation. For example, in the case of drug development, biotechnology or medical device development, the pre-clinical and clinical phases can take several years. The Life Sciences Catalyst Programme will take these sectoral characteristics into consideration, with two successive calls in 2025 to support preclinical development.
- Alongside the Life Sciences Catalyst Programme, a dedicated scheme supports the incubation of innovative hospital and clinical business ideas.
- The Innovation Sub-fund also supports the supply of research and innovation professionals, mainly through the continued funding of programmes to strengthen the student lab network and the Hungarian Startup University Program (HSUP), which strengthens the entrepreneurial and innovation mindset of university students.
- A further objective is to channel risk capital into innovation funding from 2025 onwards, also in the case of the NRD Fund. In addition to the typically non-refundable grants, the target group of beneficiaries should be able to get financed from risk capital investments (combined with non-refundable funding where appropriate).

## RESEARCH SUB-FUND

### **Additional instruments in the Research Sub-fund, a changing and expanding portfolio:**

- From 2025, new schemes will be introduced to help research teams that have been established through previous excellence calls and have consistently delivered high performance since then to continue their research (NKKP, HIGHLIGHT).
- A new call for proposals is launched to develop and improve the services of the HUN-REN Research Network.

## MISSIONS SUB-FUND

### **Pursuant to the amendment to the NRD Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2025, a new sub-fund was created within the NRD Fund.**

In 2025, a new call for proposals will be launched to support mission-driven research, based on the operational observations of the National Laboratories Programme and the Thematic Excellence Programme. The work in the thematic areas will be carried out by consortia, bringing together the most outstanding and competent Hungarian stakeholders in the fields concerned – university knowledge centres, businesses, research institutions – and providing a dynamic and fertile environment for coordinated exploratory and applied research and experimental development based on constructive cooperation.

## Regulatory environment

Pursuant to Section 12 (2) of the RDI Act, the annual programme strategy of the NRDIFund is approved by the minister responsible for science policy coordination, after consulting the National Science Policy Council (hereinafter: “NTT”).

According to Section 10/D of the RDI Act, the Research Council (KKT) proposes the excellence-based calls and their budgets to be announced under the Research Sub-fund. As of 1 January 2025, the Scientific Director of the NRDIFund Office, who is also the President of the KKT, decides on calls for proposals and funding decisions for the Research Sub-fund of the programme, subject to the approved programme strategy.

Pursuant to Section 50(1) of Government Decree 380/2014 (XII. 31.) on the rules for the operation and use of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund, the annual programme strategy of the NRDIFund shall include the names and brief description of the calls for the given budget year, the budget allocated for the given call and the budget available for the NRDIFund, which can be publicly accessed by applicants. According to Government Decree 24/2013 (II. 5.) on national excellence in higher education, the funding of the EKÖP scholarship programme shall be provided from the budget of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

Based on Government Decision 1410/2022. (VIII. 18.) on the accession to certain partnerships of the Horizon Europe research and innovation framework programme and ensuring the necessary financial coverage for the accession, the funding required for Hungary’s participation in the following Horizon Europe partnerships shall be provided from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund in a HUF amount equivalent to EUR 5.845 million in 2025: a) Biodiversity, b) Water4All, c) EUROSTARS-3 (Innovative SMEs), d) Driving Urban Transition (DUT), e) Clean Energy Transition (CETP), f) Key Digital Technologies (KDT), and g) ERA for Health.

Pursuant to Government Decision 1242/2023 (VI. 21.) on the additional support required to increase the number of students participating in doctoral studies, an additional support of 50% is required a) for higher education institutions that assume the payment of the pension contribution of their doctoral students and b) for employers who assume the payment of the fee of doctoral studies of their employees participating in self-financed doctoral studies within the framework of a study contract.

# NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FUND 2025 PROGRAMME STRATEGY

## INNOVATION SUB-FUND

### New programmes to be launched in 2025

	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
1	<b>Fast Track</b>	5.0	The call aims to support start-ups and spin-offs that plan to commercialise research results generated primarily, but not exclusively, in higher education institutions and public-funded research institutions, and for which further significant R&D activities are needed to enter the market.
2	<b>Industrial Property Call (IP)</b>	0.5	The aim of the new 2025 announcement of the programme is to support the conscious and competitiveness-enhancing use of intellectual property protection tools as widely as possible.
3	<b>Life Sciences Catalyst Program</b>  I. From target to proof of concept	5.0	The Health Translational Programme aims to exploit Hungary's life sciences R&D potential by supporting translational projects focused on addressing unmet medical needs and aiming at market exploitation. The first call of the programme targets early-stage projects, while the second will support advanced developments that have already achieved Proof of Concept results.  The aim of the "I. From target to proof of concept" call is to support early-stage life science R&D projects with translational potential that may provide therapeutic options for unmet critical clinical needs. The call supports applicants in progressing from the start of exploratory research to the Proof of Concept stage.
4	<b>Life Sciences Catalyst Program</b>  II. From proof of concept to clinical trials	5.0	The Life Sciences Catalyst Program's call "II. From proof of concept to clinical trials" supports advanced life sciences and medical technology R&D projects with Proof of Concept results. The aim of the call is to ensure that developments reach the clinical trials stage as quickly as possible and demonstrate their competitive market potential through targeted funding.



	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
5	<b>MED_TECH hospital incubator programme</b>	2.0	<p>The funding programme aims to incubate innovative hospital and clinical entrepreneurship ideas that go beyond traditional patient care. Practical healing/nursing work in hospitals provides many solutions to existing problems faced by patients and healthcare providers. These innovations have often been tested in a live environment by doctors, nurses, or hospital administrators, meaning they are in an early prototype phase and already incorporate user experience. Incubators working with hospitals are responsible for taking solutions from prototype to product and market.</p> <p>The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of services, to which the optimisation of process management contributes. Incubation is taking place in hospitals/clinics, as they accumulate a critical mass of experience and challenges, both professional and patient. The solutions developed are also tested and validated in institutional environment.</p> <p>Main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digital health technologies</li> <li>• improving hospital workflows</li> <li>• medical instruments and diagnostics</li> <li>• patient-centred solutions.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Developing entrepreneurship skills and STEM career motivation services</b>	5.4	<p>Development of services and programmes provided by the National Innovation Agency to develop the skills of researchers and entrepreneurs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuation of the Selye János Student Lab Programme, as well as small-scale support for other STEM career incentive programmes.</li> <li>2. Continuation of the HSUP.</li> </ol>
7	<b>SEED co-investment fund</b>	10.0	<p>The aim of the capital programme is to provide early-stage financing on a commercial basis within a matching fund structure, primarily for innovative startups or early-stage micro and small enterprises with high innovation potential. Within this framework, the market investor initiates the deal and is the first to assess the financial parameters of the target company. Priority is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enterprises with high growth potential engaged in innovation activities beyond TRL 6 and aiming for market entry</li> <li>• companies implementing projects in collaboration with domestic universities.</li> </ul>

	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
8	<b>International programmes</b>	8.1	Several schemes support domestic participation in Horizon Europe and other international programmes. In this framework, the Innovation Sub-fund will support the participation of Hungarian researchers, companies and other RDI actors in RDI collaborations funded jointly with the European Commission and other Member States. The NRDI Fund's international programmes support the European networking of Hungarian universities and the consortium building needed for high-quality Horizon Europe calls. In 2025, several schemes will continue to support mobility and joint research projects with international partners in different destinations in the framework of bilateral Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation.
9	<b>HU-rizon Programme</b>	8.0	An international funding scheme that provides broad opportunities for researcher creativity and collaboration within the innovation ecosystem. It seeks innovative solutions and R&D concepts addressing relevant and current challenges for the Hungarian community, led by domestic universities and implemented through international research cooperation.
<b>Total programmes to be launched in 2025, Innovation Sub-fund</b>		<b>49.0</b>	

## INNOVATION SUB-FUND

Programmes announced in 2024, to be implemented under the 2025 Programme Strategy

	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
10	<b>Industrial Property call (IP)</b>	0.04	The aim of the programme is to support the conscious and competitiveness-enhancing use of intellectual property protection tools as widely as possible. The call will be launched in 2024 and will be financed under the 2025 Programme Strategy.
11	<b>Large Company Focus Area Innovation Programme</b>	15.0	The aim of the call is to support RDI projects led by large companies and in cross-sectoral collaboration, with a strong focus on social and economic impact.
12	<b>International programmes</b>	3.1	Domestic participation in Horizon Europe is supported by the Partnership Programmes launched in 2024. In this framework, the Sub-fund will support the participation of Hungarian researchers, companies and other RDI actors in excellence collaborations funded jointly with the European Commission and other Member States. The 2025 Programme Strategy will support the Israeli, Turkish and Chinese research cooperation programmes launched in 2024, as well as the French and Slovak mobility calls.
<b>Total programmes announced in 2024 for 2025</b>		<b>18.1</b>	
<b>Innovation Sub-fund sub-total</b>		<b>67.1</b>	

## RESEARCH SUB-FUND

### New programmes to be launched in 2025

	Title of the programme	Total budget (HUF bn)	Short description
13	<p><b>National Research Excellence Programme (NKKP)</b></p> <p>Excellence-based research funding</p>	40.0	<p>Excellence-based research funding aims to strengthen research excellence by supporting, without thematic restrictions, promising researcher-initiated basic research projects that are expected to deliver globally outstanding scientific results. The aim is to develop research resources, both by encouraging the intensive involvement of PhD students, post-docs and young researchers, and by small-scale but continuous renewal and expansion of the local laboratory facilities.</p> <p><b>Sub-programmes of the National Research Excellence Programme:</b></p> <p>The <b>STARTING</b> scheme aims to strengthen the scientific creativity and research excellence of young researchers already experienced in research, and to provide them with the development opportunities to take their research careers to the next level by leading an independent research project.</p> <p>The <b>ADVANCED</b> scheme is designed to support experienced researchers and their research teams with an independent research team, who have an outstanding publication record and are internationally recognised experts in their field. They will pursue their successful basic research theme through the implementation of a scientific project addressing a timely and relevant issue.</p> <p>The <b>EXCELLENCE</b> scheme is designed to provide a preparation for successful participation in European Research Council (ERC) calls for researchers who have recently demonstrated, through a significant international grant success, specifically, researchers who advanced to the second round of a previous ERC application, demonstrating their place among the global scientific elite and their potential for success in a future ERC competition.</p> <p>The <b>HIGHLIGHT</b> scheme aims to enable research teams established with the support of previous excellence funding (e.g. ERC grant, Momentum Programme) and which have since then consistently delivered high performance to continue their successful operation. Applicants must demonstrate their outstanding post-grant achievements through publications in the most prestigious journals recognized as leading in their respective fields.</p> <p>Support for two international research collaborations, one with Austria (ANN) and one with Slovenia (SNN), is provided under the NKKP.</p>

	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
14	<b>University Research Scholarship Programme</b>	6.0	<p>Pursuant to Sections 9 to 12 of Government Decree 24/2013 (II. 5.) on national excellence in higher education, the Government established a national higher education excellence scholarship under the name of the University Research Scholarship Programme (EKÖP), including the Cooperative Doctoral Programme (EKÖP-KDP) as a sub-programme. This scholarship programme encompasses calls for applications announced by higher education institutions. The integrated excellence scholarship programme is designed to recognise excellence in research and to support young people of outstanding potential to embark on a career in research.</p> <p>The programme's calls for proposals support excellence in higher education, for undergraduate and master's students who are engaged in effective research and creative activity in higher education institutions. The aim of the EKÖP-KDP sub-programme is to further expand the number of professionals in research, development, and innovation who seek to enhance their expertise with the latest scientific research findings and are committed to the social and economic application of their knowledge.</p>
15	<b>HUN-REN Centre service development</b>	1.5	<p>The aim of the programme is to enable researchers working in the institutes and centres of the HUN-REN Research Network to carry out their scientific activities to the highest possible standards, thus contributing to the national and international competitiveness of the institutions. At the heart of the programme is the realisation of HUN-REN's strategic vision and mission to become a globally recognised, sustainable, innovation-driving network for Hungarian science. HUN-REN aims to develop integrated, innovative services and support systems that contribute to enhancing research excellence, strengthening collaboration between research communities and the broader social and economic impact of research.</p>

	<b>Title of the programme</b>	<b>Total budget (HUF bn)</b>	<b>Short description</b>
16	<b>Doctoral student pension matching-fund programme</b>	0.3	In order to encourage entry into doctoral studies, the scheme provides a 50% additional support to higher education institutions that take over the payment of pension contributions from their doctoral students on the basis of an agreement concluded for the purpose of acquiring seniority within the meaning of Section 48(4) a) of Act CXXII of 2019 on persons entitled to social security benefits and the coverage of these benefits.
17	<b>Doctoral tuition matching-fund programme</b>	0.2	To encourage enrolment in doctoral programmes, this initiative provides a 50% supplementary funding to employers that cover the tuition fees of their employees enrolled in self-funded doctoral programmes through a study contract.
18	<b>Support for increased utilisation of international and domestic research infrastructures</b>	0.1	The aim of the call is to support researchers in accessing research and measurement opportunities provided by research infrastructures.
<b>Total programmes to be launched in 2025, Research Sub-fund</b>		<b>48.1</b>	

## RESEARCH SUB-FUND

Programmes announced in 2024, to be implemented under the 2025 Programme Strategy

	Title of the programme	Total budget (HUF bn)	Short description
19	<b>Proof of concept: development potential assessment</b>	3.0	<p>The programme will support the strengthening of the domestic deep tech ecosystem, increasing the number and value of deep tech companies.</p> <p>The aim is to support the further development of research results of Hungarian universities and research centres with the professional assistance of companies 100% owned by the institutions (Technology Transfer Company, hereinafter: TTC) and to promote their practical, technological and social utilisation, contributing to the long-term growth of the Hungarian economy.</p> <p>The programme will support, in particular, but not exclusively, the further development of research results from previously funded and implemented research projects. Thus, TTCs will have the opportunity to take institutional R&amp;D results forward to the level of readiness required for exploitation (e.g. spin-offs, licensing) or for programmes supporting exploitation (e.g. input requirements for Fast Track calls).</p>
<b>Total programmes announced in 2024 for 2025</b>		<b>3.0</b>	
<b>Research Sub-fund sub-total</b>		<b>51.1</b>	

## MISSIONS SUB-FUND

	Title of the programme	Total budget (HUF bn)	Short description
20	<b>Support for mission-driven research</b>	10.0	The aim is to create a set of scientific results and innovations along the research areas and missions identified in the National Laboratories Programme and the Thematic Excellence Programme, which will address significant economic, social and environmental challenges, and which will permeate the economy and society as a whole, by effectively combining the best domestic capacities in the field.
<b>Missions Sub-fund sub-total</b>		<b>10.0</b>	

<b>TOTAL BUDGET OF THE 2025 PROGRAMME STRATEGY</b>	<b>128.3</b>	
--	--------------	--



