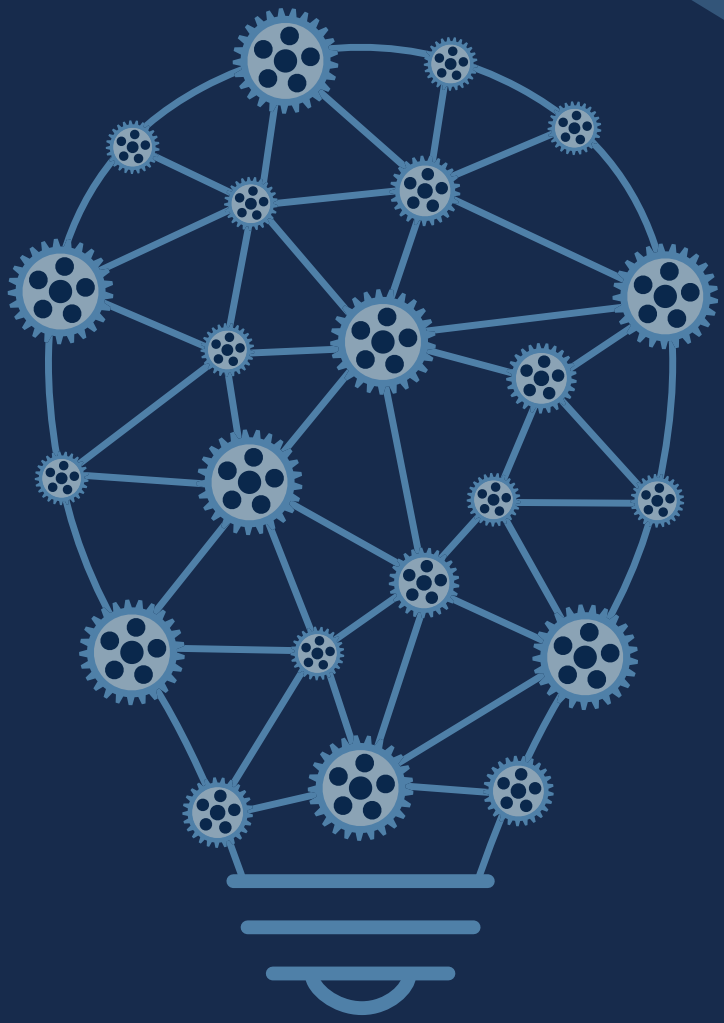
Regeringen

Strategic Priorities for Research and Innovation 2026–2029



OCTOBER 2025

Strategic Priorities for Research and Innovation
2026–2029

October 2025

Ministry of Higher Education and Science
Bredgade 40–42
DK-1260 Copenhagen K

Email: ufm@ufm.dk
www.ufm.dk

ISBN 97887-85420-01-5 (printed version)
ISBN 97887-85420-00-8 (digital version)
2025/26:02

The publication can be downloaded from
www.regeringen.dk
www.ufm.dk

Content

Foreword 1

Challenges in focus. 2

Future-proofing research and innovation in Denmark 4

1. Denmark's security: Critical technologies and defence research 8

2. Responsibility for the green transition 10

3. Health and life science as a significant Danish position of strength 12

4. Top-level research on a solid foundation 14

5. More innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship 16

6. A socially cohesive Denmark 18

7. Visibility of research, trust in knowledge, and freedom of scientific research 20

8. Strong international collaboration 22

Foreword

The world has become more uncertain. Crises are occurring at an unprecedented pace and the geopolitical landscape is seeing rapid changes that most of us could not have imagined just a few years ago. This means that research and innovation have never been more important. Research and innovation is crucial to understanding our problems and to our ability to find new solutions that can strengthen the security, welfare, and competitiveness of Denmark and Europe in the future.

Fortunately, Danish research and innovation stand strong. In fact, when we compare ourselves to other countries, we are right at the forefront: Our research is of high quality and impactful, and we are among the OECD countries that invest the most in research and innovation. In recent years, huge public and private investments in research and innovation have helped create a number of significant positions of strength in Danish industry, including within several critical research areas and technologies. Although Danish research is doing really well, we must continuously consider whether we are doing things in the best possible way.

The government believes that a new approach to investment in research and innovation in Denmark is necessary. We need a stronger focus on the balances of our research funding in order to find solutions to the most pressing problems in the short term and continue laying the foundations for new scientific breakthroughs in the long term.

As Denmark's economy grows, we have the opportunity to invest more in research and innovation, which is very beneficial for Denmark. The time has come to rethink how the growing financial reserve is allocated. The government and parties in the Danish Parliament often renegotiate the same research priorities year after year, when in fact some areas require a long-term and consistent plan. The government is therefore proposing a multiannual political agreement that will set out the strategic course for key parts of the research and innovation area for up to four years. This will create greater robustness and cohesion and give research institutions, industry, and foundations, etc. a better opportunity to plan their efforts for several years and help attract and retain top-level researchers to help address our biggest challenges.

When selecting specific strategic focus areas, we must remember the importance of a strong foundation and research capacity in the research system. This is why we want to give more basic funding for research and innovation to universities. This will provide an opportunity to focus more on top-level research that may not necessarily provide specific solutions in the short term, but which may lead to new, major research breakthroughs in the longer term. It will bolster universities' efforts in translating research into specific technologies and solutions through innovation and knowledge transfer, which is crucial if a strengthened research effort should prepare us for future challenges.

Denmark is a small country and we cannot do everything ourselves. We share challenges with other European countries, which in many ways are our closest and most important allies. We must therefore play an active role in the European community and shoulder our share of political responsibility in the field of research and innovation. We must also keep pace with global research and technological development and establish strategic and informed international alliances that places Denmark in the best possible position in the technology race.

This initiative marks an important step towards future-proofing Danish research and innovation at a crucial time. We will bolster long-term basic research while giving even greater impetus to our strategic efforts, where it matters most, here and now. Knowledge is our most important resource, and research and innovation is key to ensuring that it remains so in the future.

The Government

CHALLENGES IN FOCUS

A new geopolitical reality and global challenges

Significant geopolitical and security policy changes are taking place across the world. Consequently, Europe – and Denmark – must navigate new paths and interact with the rest of the world.

Geopolitical changes are creating new conditions for the research and innovation sector, which must find solutions to both existing and new challenges. Important areas such as climate, environment, and health require a sustained focus, while the current geopolitical and security situation has created new demands and intensified international competition for research, innovation and technological development, especially in relation to critical technologies. Denmark's partners and competitors are making significant strategic investments in critical technology areas that are crucial to our national security, strategic autonomy, and defence technology development, while also having the potential to develop existing and new Danish positions of strength that can help generate growth and jobs. These new developments place high demands on research and innovation policy and increase the need for long-term strategic investment in selected areas of critical importance to Denmark and Europe.

The European Commission has identified ten technology areas that are critical to the EU's economic security and therefore of strategic importance for research, innovation, and competitiveness in Denmark. These ten technology areas are considered to be the most sensitive in terms of technology security and technology leakage.

The EU's ten critical technology areas:

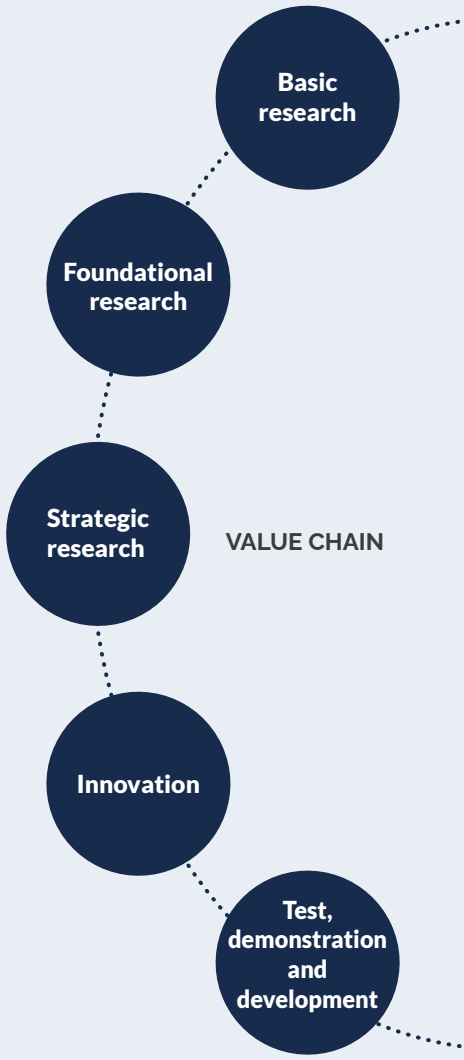
- Advanced semiconductors
- Artificial intelligence
- Quantum technologies
- Biotechnologies
- Space and propulsion technologies
- Robotics and autonomous systems
- Energy technologies
- Advanced materials, manufacturing and recycling technologies
- Advanced sensing technologies
- Advanced connectivity, navigation and digital technologies

Balances in the financing of Danish research and the need for innovation

Each year, research funding of up to 1 per cent of GDP is allocated in the research reserve negotiations. The expected development of public research funding by 2030 means that an increasing share of the public research budget will be allocated from year to year. While this practice provides flexibility, allowing for ongoing adjustments to prioritised topics in a changing world, it also limits the possibilities for more long-term and strategic prioritisation, including in areas of critical importance to Denmark's future.

In recent years, the economic development has caused a shift in balance between actual basic funding, including for universities, which has remained fixed from year to year in the Finance Act, and competitive project funding for research and innovation from public and private foundations and the EU, which has increased significantly.

A well-functioning research and innovation system requires balance in terms of research funding to create the proper conditions for excellent research and innovation across the entire value chain. An increased strategic focus on selected thematic areas must therefore be complemented by an increased focus on bottom-up, non-thematic research, and basic funding for research institutions. This will support the robustness and international impact of the research and innovation system in the long term, for example, by increasing opportunities for high risk research and bold ventures that could create strong preconditions for new breakthroughs, innovation, and future positions of strength for Denmark. Basic



funding must also support the ability of universities to maintain broad research capacity, including in areas not currently of strategic interest and where a need may not be currently be recognised.

We also need to invest in research infrastructures and test, demonstration and development facilities, which constitute a competitive benchmark for attracting top-level researchers and innovative companies and are crucial to realising and increasing the value of Danish research and innovation.

If Denmark – and Europe – are to remain secure and competitive in the future, we need to strengthen our innovative capacity and accelerate the speed at which research can be translated into new technology, new businesses, and innovative solutions for society.

We must therefore strengthen our capacity to translate excellent research into innovation, and to support companies in growing and remaining in Europe.

Trust in knowledge is challenged

Research is a prerequisite for an informed society and holds a key role in our open and free society. It is therefore a matter of deep concern when, in the Western world, we see attacks on the freedom and integrity of research – alongside the spread of mis- and disinformation in our societies. This development poses a threat to our social cohesion and democratic society, in which science and an open, unprejudiced debate is a precondition.

It is crucial that perspectives can be exchanged in an open and unbiased dialogue based on different research disciplines. There must be room for disagreement within the research communities and the competence of researchers must be respected in society. Otherwise, our ability to make informed decisions and understand the complexity of our world will be compromised.

We must uphold our core values and the basic principle that research must be conducted and communicated impartially and without interference from political or economic interests.

Consequently, greater focus is needed on academic freedom and on the broad impact and visibility of research in society.

Future-proofing research and innovation in Denmark

Strong research institutions and close collaboration – also in terms of investments in research and innovation – between the public and private sectors, including private research foundations are key features in the Danish research and innovation system.

We have a strong outset for future-proofing the Danish research and innovation system, enabling Denmark to continue to conduct world-class research and innovation as well as maintain existing positions of strength and to develop new ones.

Through this initiative, the government outlines its vision for a more a more balanced, robust research and innovation system that focuses on long-term, strategic investments. Specifically, the government will initiate negotiations with the parties in the Danish parliament on a multiannual political agreement on research and innovation 2026-2029.

The agreement will set the direction for the most important strategic initiatives within critical technologies, green research and innovation, and health science over a four-year period. This will give research institutions, industry, and foundations a long-term perspective and better opportunities to plan their efforts, thereby increasing the long-term societal impact of research and innovation investment.

With the agreement, the government will also increase basic funding for universities. This will enhance the development of world-class research capacity and of research and innovation ecosystems, thereby laying the foundation for us to reap the benefits of our strategic efforts. It could also increase the willingness to take risks in Danish top-level research and innovation, thereby increasing the possibility of major breakthroughs in the longer term.

The government will supplement the multiannual political agreement on research and innovation with annual negotiations on new priorities. This will provide flexibility and political scope to respond to unforeseen opportunities and challenges that require a specific research and innovation effort.

Overall, national investments in research and innovation must contribute to building positions of strength in order to solve major challenges facing our society, with particular emphasis on national security and strategic autonomy, green transition, and health. Such investments will contribute to creating growth in Danish industry, supporting innovation in the public sector, and creating world-class research-based higher education. Finally, research will contribute to the democratic dialogue in society and counter mis- and disinformation at a time when it is more important than ever.

The government will prioritise a total of

DKK 15 billion

for long-term, strategic investments in research and innovation in critical technologies, green transition and health between 2026 and 2029.

The government will prioritise

DKK 3.8 billion

for basic funding for research and innovation between 2026 and 2029.

The government will make long-term, strategic investments into research areas of critical importance to Denmark

1. Denmark's security: Critical technologies and defence research

The government will maintain and advance Denmark's positions of strength in critical technologies and defence research and innovation for the benefit of Denmark's capacity, security and competitiveness by allocating DKK 6.9 billion between 2026 and 2029 for long-term, strategic initiatives in *quantum technology, space, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and biosolutions, as well as defence.*

DKK 6.9 billion
in 2026–2029

2. Responsibility for the green transition

The government will continue to strengthen the green transition and support Denmark's ambitious climate goals as well as a greener nature, a cleaner environment, and a better biodiversity by prioritising DKK 6 billion between 2026 and 2029 for long-term, strategic initiatives, particularly within the four green research missions, the development of strategic research environments, and funding for fundamental green research.

DKK 6 billion
in 2026–2029

3. Health and life science as a significant Danish position of strength

The government will strengthen health research and the Danish life science sector by allocating DKK 3 billion between 2026 and 2029 for long-term, strategic initiatives in life science and clinical and independent health research, including to psychiatry and in relation to the transition to a citizen-oriented, cohesive, and sustainable healthcare system. The government will also establish a National Centre for Research in Women's Health and allocate multiannual funding for research in fertility and enhanced research in dementia.

DKK 3 billion
in 2026–2029

The government will strengthen the balance of research funding and increase the innovative capacity

DKK 3.8 billion for basic funding for research and innovation between 2026 and 2029.

4. Top-level research on a solid foundation

The government will strengthen the foundation for Danish top-level research and encourage researchers to be more willing to take risks by increasing the basic funding for universities by DKK 2 billion in 2026–2029. This will contribute to the further development of strong research environments and a solid research capacity while creating better conditions for the universities to develop research talent and attract and retain top-level international researchers at all career levels.

DKK 2 billion
in 2026–2029

5. More innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship

The government will strengthen the innovation capacity and the application of research in society and create more knowledge-based entrepreneurs by allocating DKK 1.8 billion between 2026 and 2029 for the establishment of a multiannual funding stream to support the long-term innovation efforts of universities and the entrepreneurial ambitions of researchers in Denmark. The government will also prioritise DKK 100 million in 2026 to strengthen practice-based and application-oriented research and innovation at university colleges, business academies, higher education institutions within Fine Arts, etc.

DKK 1.8 billion
in 2026–2029

The government will strengthen the societal impact of research, trust in knowledge, and international collaboration

6. A socially cohesive Denmark

The government will strengthen social cohesion in Denmark by prioritising research into vulnerability and lack of well-being, socially excluded adults, learning and well-being in primary and secondary schools, and research in antisemitism, and the Danish Realm.

DKK 180 million
in 2026

7. Visibility of research, trust in knowledge, and academic freedom

The government will increase the visibility of research and trust in knowledge as well as strengthen academic freedom and thereby the legitimacy and relevance of research, which is crucial to its impact. The government will therefore introduce new research awards and an updated *Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*will be presented in collaboration with the research sector.

DKK 42 million
in 2026

8. Strong international collaboration

The government will strengthen Denmark's international commitment and collaboration in the field of research and innovation, including by ensuring good conditions for Danish research and innovation communities to collaborate with the strongest partners both within and outside the EU, especially in areas of strategic importance to Denmark.

DKK 119 million
in 2026

1. Denmark's security: Critical technologies and defence research

The current geopolitical and security situation and global challenges have intensified international competition in research, innovation, and technological development. This applies not least to critical technology areas that are of crucial importance to Danish society and industry, future innovation, and competitiveness as well as Denmark's national security, strategic autonomy, resilience, and defence technology development.

The government believes that an ambitious, long-term commitment to research and innovation in critical technologies is a necessary prerequisite for Denmark to maintain and expand its positions of strength whilst influencing technological development.

Quantum technology, space technology, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology are particularly relevant here, all of which have the potential to revolutionise technological development in a wide range of sectors and to accelerate innovative solutions in society at an unprecedented rate. The link between these technologies is particularly interesting.

Quantum technology allows us to break the boundaries of traditional computing and simulation, enabling us to develop new medicines and more accurate diagnostics, improve climate modelling and environmental monitoring, create secure communications, and better protection against cyberattacks.

Space infrastructure (space technology, space data and space services) is part of modern navigation, Earth observation and communication services, for example, in connection with military and civil preparedness, weather services, and in the form of satellite data for the efficient optimisation of agriculture, construction, and transport. Satellite data also helps predict changes in nature and the environment and supports our security.

Artificial intelligence can help us strengthen decision-making processes in our everyday lives, free up resources for citizen-oriented welfare services, and increase productivity and competitiveness among Danish companies, including SMEs.

Biotechnology and biosolutions can be used to revolutionise personalised medicine, and with gene therapy, potentially cure hereditary diseases that are currently incurable. It can also create resilient crops, sustainable production, and new foods with a lower carbon footprint. In addition, biosolutions can lead to new, sustainable solutions in sectors such as agriculture, environment, energy, and health.

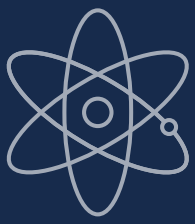
We need to further develop the potential and applications of these technologies and become better at understanding how to deal with the ethical and social issues associated with them. These technologies also have military potential, and we are beginning to see the threats they pose to our security.

If we can exploit the opportunities while defending ourselves against the threats, critical technologies hold crucial potential in relation to global challenges and Danish industry, as well as societal resilience and emergency preparedness.

The government will therefore make long term research and innovation investments in the four technology areas mentioned above. This is in line with the government's strategies on quantum and space, respectfully, and the government's *Strategic Initiative for Artificial Intelligence (2024)*. The long-term priorities also support opportunities for public-private collaborations, with several private foundations having launched significant research and innovation projects in these areas.

The government will also strengthen defence technology research and innovation with particular focus on exploring synergies between civilian and military research in order to support the Danish Armed Forces' increased demand for knowledge and technological development as well as operational needs, based on experiences from Ukraine, hybrid warfare, etc.

As part of this effort, the government will launch a strategic research and innovation programme, which include the establishment of dedicated research and innovation centres that bring together existing environments within defence technology and critical technologies with a dual-use perspective within Denmark's research positions of strength. This initiative should be viewed in the context of the government's expected upcoming defence industry strategy.



The government will further develop Denmark's positions of strength within critical technologies and defence research and innovation

Among other things, the government will:

- Invest long-term in quantum technology and prioritise over DKK 800 million between 2026 and 2029 for a strategic programme under Innovation Fund Denmark. The government will increase total investment in quantum technology research and innovation to more than DKK 300 million in 2026.

- Invest long-term in space research and technology development and prioritise a total of DKK 2.7 billion between 2026 and 2029 in the government's Finance Bill and research reserve.

- As a result, Denmark is able to commit DKK 1.2 billion for the period 2026–2028 for participation in optional programmes at the ESA Ministerial Council 2025.
  - This includes allocating a total of DKK 400 million between 2026 and 2029 for a strategic space programme under Innovation Fund Denmark.

- Invest long-term in artificial intelligence by allocating DKK 620 million for programmes under Innovation Fund Denmark and Independent Research Fund Denmark for the period 2026–2029. In 2026, the government will allocate a total of DKK 208 million to artificial intelligence focusing on responsible and innovative technological development, ethical aspects and science-based advice.

- Establish a long-term strategic programme under Innovation Fund Denmark of DKK 460 million between 2026 and 2029 for research, innovation and technological development within biotechnology and biosolutions.

- Establish a long-term, strategic programme under Innovation Fund Denmark of DKK 720 million between 2026 and 2029 for research, innovation and technological development in defence. The government will also continue to prioritise the National Defence Technology Centre.

- In the coming years, prioritise efforts that complement the multiannual research programmes, including in research infrastructure or test, demonstration and development. By 2026, a total of DKK 1.6 billion will be prioritised to the general effort in critical technologies and defence research and innovation.

2. Responsibility for the green transition

Climate change, environmental change and biodiversity loss are among the greatest challenges facing our society. Record-breaking temperatures, floods, and droughts represent a warning that climate change is real and affects our world and everyday life. The world's oceans are affected by oxygen depletion and pollution, and biodiversity is under pressure. Research and innovation are crucial to the green transition.

Although the climate challenges are considerable and urgent, the green transition also holds significant potential. New technologies, methods, and solutions can help reduce carbon emissions, support adaptation to a changing climate and at the same time create growth, increased competitiveness, employment, and export opportunities. Green research and innovation also support the development of sustainable energy systems, circular production methods, and new solutions for protecting both nature and the environment. The green transition can also help to improve the quality of life in Denmark through cleaner air, healthier food, and increased biodiversity.

The potential is therefore economic, environmental and societal, and realising it requires long-term research and innovation efforts that are directional and form the basis for a broad and solid research capacity.
The government will therefore prioritise ambitious green research initiatives by allocating long-term multiannual financing for specific areas in order to achieve our climate goals and maintain and expand our international leadership in selected green technologies and solutions.

In continuation of *Green solutions of the future – Strategy for investments in green research, technology, and innovation (2020)* and *Accelerating green solutions of the future (2024)*, the government proposes to allocate multiannual funding to the four green research missions, independent and curiosity-driven green research and green strategic research environments at universities that support a well-functioning framework for research-based public sector services.

The government also plans to increase research funding in 2026 for climate adaptation, Arctic research focusing on climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable development in the Arctic. In 2026, the government will also prioritise DKK 85 million for the establishment of new, small-scale green test, demonstration and development facilities that support the possibility of bringing new technologies and innovative solutions to market more rapidly.

The government will strengthen the green transition

Among other things, the government will:

- Continue the four green research and innovation missions within PtX, CCUS, agriculture, and the circular economy with DKK 1.2 billion between 2026 and 2029.

- Invest long-term in independent green research and allocate DKK 600 million between 2026 and 2029 for green research based on researchers' own original ideas, and to support career development for emerging researchers in green research.

- Prioritise DKK 140 million in 2026 to the long-term development of strategic research communities at universities and maritime educational institutions, including DKK 120 million in 2026 to universities, which will be expanded to DKK 140 million each year between 2027 and 2029.

- Prioritise DKK 85 million in 2026 to follow up on work on a roadmap for small-scale, green test, demonstration and development facilities that support the implementation of new technologies in companies' products and services.

- Prioritise DKK 310 million in 2026 for green research, technology, and innovation focusing on energy production, energy efficiency, agriculture and food production, transport, environment and the circular economy, nature and biodiversity, sustainable behaviour, and societal impact.

- Prioritise DKK 500 million in 2026 to strengthen the development and implementation of climate technologies in areas such as agriculture and food, including DKK 100 million for test, demonstration and development of specific biosolution technologies.

- Strengthen climate adaptation and early warning efforts, including focus on research and improved data, particularly regarding flooding, drought, high groundwater levels, and landslides, for which DKK 73 million will be allocated in 2026.

- Prioritise DKK 57 million in 2026 for Arctic research across various scientific disciplines that can contribute to increased knowledge about climate change, security policy issues, as well as social, cultural, and historical conditions in Arctic communities.

3. Health and life science as a significant Danish position of strength

Health research and innovation is crucial in order to improve treatment and quality of life for patients in Denmark and to solve future healthcare challenges, including an ageing population and more patients with chronic diseases. The life science industry also represents a significant Danish position of strength and is of great importance to Denmark's growth, exports, and prosperity.

The government will therefore strengthen research and innovation in health and life science. This will strengthen research in areas of limited commercial interest, create better and more precise treatments and contribute to maintaining and developing Denmark's commercial strength in life science. The initiatives concerning healthcare must also strengthen the ongoing transition to a citizen-oriented, cohesive and sustainable healthcare system, including at municipal level and in relation to the transition to the primary healthcare system, cf. *agreement on health reform (2024)*.

The government will make significant, multiannual investments in mental health research. This will support the government's 10-year plan for mental health, *Stronger Mental Healthcare (2025)*, and help ensure that people with mental health disorders receive earlier and faster help and better treatment both in and outside hospitals.

The government will also strengthen independent clinical research, cf. the government's *Strategy for Life Sciences by 2030 (2024)*, through a multiannual funding commitment so that we can continue to develop better treatments and methods for diagnosing diseases. It will also contribute to the strategic benchmark and indicator in *the Strategy for Life Science* that Denmark continues to be among the countries in Europe with the highest proportion of clinical trials relative to population size towards 2030.

The government is proposing a multiannual commitment to research in fertility. The government has expanded access to fertility treatment, including providing the opportunity to receive assistance for a second child without private payment. Similarly, with the 2026 Finance Act, the government is proposing to increase the number of IVF treatment attempts. However, we still need to strengthen our efforts and acquire new knowledge about prevention and the causes behind the declining birth rates.

The government also wishes to establish a National Centre for Research into Women's Health. The Centre will support a national effort to generate more research and knowledge about women's health and various diseases and health conditions related to women, including endometriosis, as well as disorders and diseases that manifest differently in women than in men. The Centre will also support capacity building and increased coordination and strengthen research in women's diseases.

Strengthened clinical research in dementia will also be prioritised, focusing on prevention and treatment strategies, lifestyle interventions focusing on risk factors, and better methods for diagnosing dementia. Furthermore, research in care and support for citizens with dementia will also be supported.

The government will strengthen health and the life science sector in Denmark

Among other things, the government will:

- Invest DKK 1 billion between 2026 and 2029 in clinical and independent research, focusing on citizen-oriented, cohesive, and sustainable healthcare, as well as research areas with limited commercial interest.

- This includes establishing a National Centre for Research into Women's Health, for which a total of DKK 160 million will be prioritised between 2026 and 2029.
  - It includes prioritising DKK 80 million between 2026 and 2029 for research in fertility among men and women, including research into biological causes and the prevention, investigation, and treatment of reduced fertility and involuntary childlessness.

- Prioritise DKK 660 million between 2026 and 2029 to strengthening mental health research, including research into prevention, causal factors, developments in diagnoses, dissatisfaction, loneliness, and digital forms of treatment.

- Prioritise DKK 50 million in 2026 for multidisciplinary and practice-oriented research into care for the elderly in local healthcare systems, including research in relation to dementia.

- Invest long-term in strategic and challenge-driven research, technological development and innovation in life science, health, and welfare technology with a prioritisation of DKK 1.3 billion between 2026 and 2029.

4. Top-level research on a solid foundation

The government will prioritise strategic, long-term investment in critical technologies, green transition, and health – primarily disbursed in open competition to the best projects. The government will also prioritise basic funding for universities in order to create a better balance in public research investments.

This prioritisation should be seen in light of the fact that over a number of years there has been a shift in the balance between multiannual basic research funding for universities, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, external (public, private and EU) project funding, which has increased significantly. Long-term research capacity building as well as strong research environments are necessary in order to absorb the project funding disbursed through open competition by both public and private foundations. Strong basic funding strengthens the ability of universities to attract and retain top-level international researchers at all career stages, and strengthens researchers' decision-making and freedom, including the freedom to pursue risky, bold ideas. Basic funding is also crucial to ensuring that Denmark has a solid research base and a broad research capacity to draw on in unforeseen crises, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. A solid research base also contributes to world-class research-based higher education programmes. Finally, basic funding provides universities the opportunity to finance and run research infrastructures and test facilities, which is a benchmark when Denmark attracts and retains top-level international researchers. It is also crucial to realising and increasing the value of Danish research and innovation.

The government therefore wants to prioritise a total of DKK 3.8 billion between 2026 and 2029 for basic funding for research and innovation, including DKK 2 billion for basic research funding for universities.

A multiannual increase in basic funding will create even better conditions for universities to attract public and private funding. However, when receiving external funding, universities must first and foremost focus on strengthening the quality rather than the quantity of research, so that Denmark continues to have world-class universities in the future. The increase in basic funding should therefore contribute to universities being able to increase their current level of foundational initiatives. This includes strategically prioritised areas where tenured researchers can take more risks and create more scope for curiosity and testing of new ideas. These ideas may result in unforeseen scientific and technological breakthroughs. The funding should also contribute to more talent development and the attraction of top-level international researchers, for example, by universities offering attractive starter packs.

Private investments in research, including from private research foundations, have increased significantly in recent years. Such investments make a very significant contribution to Danish research and contributes to wide international recognition of Danish research. It is crucial for Denmark's research and innovation efforts that the overall (public and private) research funding works together in the best possible way. The government therefore proposes that the Minister for Higher Education and Science organises an annual summit between public and private foundations and universities to discuss joint ambitions for Danish research and innovation.

The government wants to strengthen the foundation for Danish top-level research and increase risk-taking among researchers

Among other things, the government will:

- Increase universities' basic research funding by DKK 2 billion between 2026 and 2029 to support long-term capacity building in the research communities, including talent development and attraction of top-level researchers from international elite research environments. A total of DKK 3.8 billion will be prioritised to basic funding for research and innovation between 2026 and 2029.

- Prioritise an additional DKK 120 million in 2026 to basic funding for Independent Research Fund Denmark to support competitive research activities based on researchers' own ideas. The total prioritisation of basic funding to Independent Research Fund Denmark will therefore be DKK 1,266.3 million in 2026.

- Support the next generation and future research talents through the Inge Lehmann and Sapere Aude talent programmes.

5. More innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship

At the same time as focusing on top-level research, Denmark must become even better at translating excellent research into concrete, innovative solutions, new businesses, products and services through stronger innovation, technology transfer, and collaboration with private actors. It is crucial that the translation of research into innovation and commercialisation, particularly in critical technologies, occurs at a faster pace than is currently the case.

Innovation must become an even more prominent feature of university culture than it is today and Danish universities must achieve international recognition for their work to support knowledge-based innovation and entrepreneurship. It must be easier and more attractive for researchers to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions. Universities and foundations should, to a greater extent than today, recognise and reward innovation and dissemination of knowledge when Danish researchers apply for positions and grants. Universities should also be transparent about research career paths. This includes making it clear that the vast majority of PhD students and postdocs will have to contribute to value and growth in other sectors outside the university after graduation. This includes the private sector.

Access to research infrastructures (for example, equipment, databases, laboratories, and computing power) is a crucial prerequisite for testing and expanding the boundaries of research and creating groundbreaking results. Infrastructures play an important role in training, recruiting, and retaining top-level researchers at all career stages at Danish research institutions. Access to test, demonstration and development facilities, including at GTS institutes (Danish government-approved research and technology organisations) and universities, is also important for private companies that may need to develop and test technology so that it can be scaled up and commercialised more quickly.

Denmark is in a good position, partially because of earmarked funding from the National fund for research infrastructures and through national research beacons that support Danish participation in a number of international research infrastructures, such as Denmark's co-hosting of the European Spallation Source (ESS) materials research facility. In addition, Danish universities and GTS institutes etc. have made several investments in research infrastructure and test, demonstration and development facilities with support from both public and private foundations. Going forward, the government will prioritise investment in research infrastructure and test, demonstration and development facilities to support the strategic priority areas within particularly critical technology, green transition, and health.

With *the Startup Agreement (2024)*, the government and signatories of the agreement wish to create a more uniform and efficient system for knowledge and technology transfer from universities to industry as well as better frameworks for entrepreneurship and innovation environments associated with universities. On that background, the government has set up a task force with representatives from the university sector, entrepreneurs, private companies, and foundations to make recommendations on how this can be achieved. The task force is expected to present its recommendations in November 2025.

The government will follow up on the recommendations quickly to realise the ambitions of the Entrepreneur Package with a view to strengthening technology transfer and creating better frameworks for the development of innovation and entrepreneurial communities on and around university campuses so that more private companies and entrepreneurs can spin out from universities. It must be clear that innovation is a core task for universities on a par with education and research.

The government will establish a multiannual funding stream for the innovation activities of universities to support innovation as a core task. Specifically, the government will prioritise DKK 0.3 billion in 2026 and DKK 0.5 billion annually between 2027 and 2029 to enable universities to build stronger innovation environments and support entrepreneurship and technology transfer between universities and private companies.

But innovation is not only about entrepreneurship and growth in Danish industry – it is also about translating research into new solutions in society, including in the welfare sector. Innovation often requires interdisciplinarity and cross-sectoral collaboration, including, for example, between universities, other higher education and research institutions, public authorities, civil society, or cultural organisations. In addition to basic funding for universities, the government will therefore prioritise DKK 100 million in 2026 to strengthen practice-based and application-oriented research and innovation at university colleges, business academies, higher education institutions for Fine Arts, etc. This initiative may support the knowledge base for the new professional masters' programmes in the welfare sector and generally support the work of the institutions regarding innovation, including in the welfare sector, and the utilisation of technology especially in small and medium-sized enterprises.

The government will increase innovation capacity and the application of research in society and create more knowledge-based entrepreneurs

Among other things, the government will:

- Strengthen the framework for technology transfer and the development of innovation and entrepreneurial environments on and around university campuses, as a follow-up to recommendations from the Taskforce on Knowledge and Technology Transfer.

- Establish a multiannual funding stream to support the long-term innovation initiatives of universities and entrepreneurial ambitions among researchers in Denmark. DKK 300 million will be allocated in 2026 and DKK 500 million annually between 2027 and 2029, which will be allocated to universities as basic funding for innovation. A total of DKK 3.8 billion will be prioritised to basic funding for research and innovation between 2026 and 2029.

- Earmark DKK 10 million in 2026 to strengthen the Innoexplorer programme under Innovation Fund Denmark with a view to maturing early-stage inventions from universities and other knowledge institutions. The funding will complement the priorities that Innovation Fund Denmark has already set for the programme.

- Prioritise DKK 35 million in 2026 for strategic investments in research infrastructures (equipment, databases, and laboratory facilities) that can form the basis for solutions to key societal challenges.

- Strengthen the knowledge base of programmes at university colleges, business academies, higher education institutions for Fine Arts, etc. including with a view to building capacity within research and innovation and collaboration with SMEs. DKK 100 million will be prioritised in 2026 and allocated as basic funding to the institutions.

6. A socially cohesive Denmark

Strong social cohesion is crucial to preserving Denmark's strong democracy. In a future Denmark, there must also be a robust and modern welfare society with good conditions for our children and youth to grow up in, where no one is left alone with their problems.

The government therefore wants to prioritise research concerning the social sector and in relation to vulnerable children and young people. The research may focus on safer digital environments for children and young people who might be exposed to harmful content on social media, etc. Initiatives must also support the link between research and relevant education programmes and practices, including in municipalities and regions, so we can convey the latest knowledge to where it has the most benefit.

The government also wants to strengthen research in learning and well-being for children and youth in primary and secondary education, especially in light of technological development and the changes it entails. Children and young people must be aided to critically and reflectively engage with the technologies they are surrounded by in their everyday lives, and to develop their creativity so they may exploit the many opportunities offered by these technologies.

Additionally, the government wants to prioritise research that can strengthen democratic cohesion in Denmark.

The Danish Realm comprises the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Denmark. To support cohesion within the Danish Realm, the government wants to support the production of more knowledge concerning social and societal issues related to the Danish Realm and its citizens, including knowledge about discrimination against Greenlanders and Faroese living in Denmark and in relation to children and young people.

In recent years, and especially since the terrorist attack on Israel in October 2023, there have been reports of increasing antisemitic behaviour in Europe. The government will therefore support the production of new knowledge about how antisemitism in Denmark evolves, where it exists and how it spreads, including on social media.

The government will improve social cohesion in Denmark

Among other things, the government will:

- Strengthen research into vulnerability, especially among children and young people, as well as research into lack of well-being among children and young people, with DKK 55 million in 2026.
- Strengthen practice-based research in the specialised social sector and work environment economics with DKK 45 million in 2026.
- Strengthen research in learning and well-being in primary schools, secondary and vocational education and training with DKK 45 million in 2026.
- Launch a new, broad research initiative on social and societal issues related to the Danish Realm, for which DKK 20 million will be prioritised in 2026.
- Continue to build capacity in research concerning antisemitism with DKK 12 million in 2026 to increase knowledge about how antisemitism evolves, where it exists and how it spreads.

7. Visibility of research, trust in knowledge, and freedom of scientific research

In a world increasingly affected by fake news and disinformation, knowledge and research have become more important than ever.

Freedom of scientific research is an essential precondition for an open and enlightened democracy and is central to the credibility, legitimacy, quality, and relevance of research – and thus its impact. Freedom of scientific research is therefore not just an academic matter – it is a societal matter.

The University Act stipulates that universities have freedom of scientific research. Universities must safeguard their freedom of scientific research and that of individuals as well as research ethics. Freedom of scientific research is thus institutional, collective, and individual.

It is crucial that scientific expertise, and not, for example, political or commercial considerations, governs the way research is conducted. It is also crucial for a democracy like Denmark that researchers are able to communicate freely and without restrictions about their research findings and hypotheses, and that they can challenge and discuss each other's approaches and findings. The dissemination of research is important for the public's knowledge and respect for research and therefore for open, democratic dialogue. Universities should be places where perspectives are challenged and where no researchers shy away from controversial topics for fear of reprisals or smear.

The government therefore wants to support freedom of scientific research, the integrity of research and the broad societal interest and trust in new knowledge. University leaders, together with the researchers themselves, have a responsibility to ensure freedom of scientific research and the integrity of research. It is also important that the right framework for conducting high-quality research is in place in Denmark, both now and in the future, where technological development has the potential to change the conditions for how research is conducted and assessed.

An updated *Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* focusing on, among others, freedom of scientific research will be launched in 2025. The update has been made by a committee consisting of universities, university colleges, researchers, public and private research foundations, and others.

The government will also launch new research and innovation awards to honour groundbreaking and exceptional European research and Danish innovation with significance for society. These awards will raise awareness of the significance of research and of Denmark's central position in European research and raise awareness of Europe as a leading science region.

The government will increase the visibility of research and trust in knowledge and strengthen freedom of scientific research

Among other things, the government will:

- Establish two new research and innovation awards: Into Change and Into Innovation Awards with the aim of honouring and rewarding exceptional talent in Danish and European research and innovation.

- Launch an updated *Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* together with the research and innovation community to promote common principles and standards and support a shared understanding and culture of research integrity in Denmark.

- Prioritise efforts to strengthen the dissemination of research findings in Denmark, including Videnskab.dk, Center for Grundtvig Studies, Hans Christian Andersen in to the future etc..

8. Strong international collaboration

Denmark is a small country, and international research and innovation collaboration with like-minded countries plays a crucial role for the quality and impact of Danish research. The right framework conditions must therefore be created to enable Danish research environments to orientate themselves internationally and collaborate with the strongest partners both within and outside the Nordic region and the EU, not least in the thematic research areas on which Denmark is placing strategic focus.

The EU's framework programmes for research and innovation are of great importance to Danish research and innovation, and Denmark must play a central role in the further development of the European Research Area (ERA) and the EU programmes for the 2028–2034 programming period, including focus on European technological independence. This is particularly important in an uncertain global reality, where the race for technological development has implications for Europe's future security.

The government will therefore work to gain greater influence in priority areas on the formal and informal processes and framework conditions for participation in EU programmes, and will prioritise co-funding for Danish participation in strategically selected EU partnerships. The government will also prioritise Nordic cooperation in research and innovation, including under the aegis of NordForsk.

Some of the world's leading research and innovation ecosystems are located outside the Nordic region and Europe, and Denmark needs to cultivate new strategic partnerships with global alliance partners. Denmark has seven innovation centres in strategically located innovation hubs in the United States, Germany, Israel, South Korea, India and China, and, in 2026, a regional innovation centre will be established in Kenya to facilitate collaboration on innovation and entrepreneurship. Denmark also has bilateral collaboration agreements with selected global partner countries that create a framework for joint research projects or specific institutional or industry collaborations. The government will maintain ongoing focus on following up on existing agreements and the need to enter into any new ones in light of geopolitical developments. The government will also maintain continuous focus on Denmark's presence in strong research and innovation ecosystems, to gather knowledge about new trends and to facilitate specific collaborations that benefit Danish research and innovation.

Danish and foreign intelligence shows that international research and innovation collaboration involves the risk of espionage and unwanted knowledge transfer, including in critical technology areas. This presents Danish research and innovation communities with difficult dilemmas where the potential benefits of research collaboration must be weighed against potential ethical, financial, or security risks.

The Committee on Guidelines for International Research and Innovation Cooperation (URIS) made a number of recommendations in 2022 that continue to form the framework for the approach to international collaboration and research security and are the basis for close and ongoing dialogue between research institutions, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the security intelligence services. Going forward, the focus will be on the continued implementation of the URIS guidelines and the need for any new initiatives, including in light of increased investments in critical technologies and defence research and changes in the geopolitical and security landscape.

The government will strengthen Denmark's international engagement and collaboration in research and innovation

Among other things, the government will:

- Establish a new international research and innovation programme under Innovation Fund Denmark to strengthen strategic partnerships through, for example, bilateral calls for proposals and global networks in selected areas of strategic importance to Denmark.

- Seek to gain greater influence on the formal and informal processes and framework conditions for participation in EU programmes and prioritise co-funding for Danish participation in strategically selected EU partnerships.

- Continuously adapt Denmark's presence in strong research and innovation ecosystems in line with geopolitical developments, to gather knowledge about new trends and to facilitate specific collaborations that benefit of Danish research and innovation.

- Prioritise continued implementation of the URIS guidelines on research security and continuously assess the need for new initiatives in light of increased investment in critical technologies and defence research and changes in the geopolitical and security landscape.