

novo nordisk  
foundation



Powering *research*  
and *innovation*

2025 Year in Review

# Key numbers

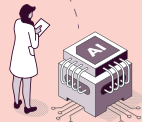
**11.8**  
DKK **BN**  
awarded in philanthropic grants and investments



**3.3**  
DKK **BN**  
to improve human health



**2.8**  
DKK **BN**  
to advance the green transition



**5.7**  
DKK **BN**  
to strengthen Denmark's life science ecosystem



**3.1**  
DKK **BN**  
awarded through open competition



**2,206**  
grants awarded



**16%**  
success rate in open competition programmes



**4,522**  
publications by scientists funded by the Foundation



**22**  
spin-outs and start-ups established, based on the Foundation's grants

# Improving human and planetary health

2025 was a turbulent year in many parts of the world, making **philanthropy and international collaboration** more important than ever.



At the Novo Nordisk Foundation, we remained committed to helping tackle some of the biggest challenges in health and sustainability by supporting **impactful research and solutions**.

Key areas of work include cardiometabolic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food systems, and quantum computing.

## Supporting science in Denmark

While our international engagement is growing, Denmark remains our centre of gravity, with DKK 9.4 billion awarded here in 2025.

This included nearly half a billion Danish kroner for a [major study on a type of heart failure](#) affecting millions of people worldwide.

We also [invested in a Level 2 quantum computer together with EIFO](#) (the Export and Investment Fund of Denmark), and established a company, QuNorth, to run it.

Once it's operational, we want researchers, innovators, and companies across the Nordic quantum community to use this powerful machine to help solve real-world challenges.

We increased our support for the BioInnovation Institute (BII) too with our [largest ever grant to a single institution](#). Since 2018, BII has empowered more than 130 early-stage **health and biotech start-ups** in Denmark. They now plan to scale their support and expand partnerships across Europe, boosting the region's ability to respond to pressing issues.

## Good news on AMR

During Denmark's EU Presidency, we intensified our advocacy efforts alongside others on topics from biosolutions to AMR.

On the latter, we saw EU lawmakers agree on new measures to **improve market conditions for antibiotics** – an important step towards reviving the pipeline and improving access to lifesaving medicines.

DKK **600**<sub>M</sub>  
*joint investment in  
Level 2 quantum  
computer*



At the other end of the value chain, we [co-funded a global research consortium](#) to help develop new antibiotics – the first initiative in our **global health partnership** with the Gates Foundation and Wellcome. There is much more to come.

## Partnering for progress

Partnerships are crucial to making progress on global challenges. In 2025, we forged **new alliances** and deepened existing ones.

We made our first joint grant with the [Temasek Foundation](#) in Singapore to advance research that could improve diagnosis of bacterial infections and help tackle AMR.

We also [expanded our collaboration with the World Health Organization](#) on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). These conditions drive 75% of global deaths, yet prevention and care remain underfunded and fragmented.

NCDs were central to discussions at the UN General Assembly in New York too, where I and colleagues met with partners old and new and advocated for more research and better prevention and treatment

of NCDs, including cardiometabolic diseases.

### **New knowledge, new solutions**

No progress is possible without research driving new knowledge. That's why we're committed to supporting science education and both fundamental and applied research, much of this through open competition grants.

Several of our calls were expanded beyond Denmark for the first time in 2025. These included the [Challenge Programme](#) – our largest open competition programme spanning health and sustainability – and the [New Exploratory Research and Discovery \(NERD\) Programme](#), which backs ambitious projects in the natural and technical sciences.

DKK **380**<sub>M</sub>  
joint investment in  
AMR consortium



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### **Building on success**

We expanded or renewed several other Foundation initiatives too.

One is a [co-funded project turning carbon dioxide into nutritious food](#), now into

phase two – a bold bet that could help fight climate change, food insecurity, and cardiometabolic disease.

Another is [our partnership with the World Food Programme](#), where we're supporting the establishment of **school meals programmes** across East Africa, helping local smallholder farmers to produce more sustainable, nutritious crops.

**23.2**<sub>M</sub>  
school meals funded  
by the Foundation  
in 2025

Looking ahead, the work continues – built on strong partnerships, shared curiosity, and a belief that science can improve lives.

Mads Krogsgaard Thomsen  
Chief Executive Officer

# What our partners and grantees say



**Erik Balck Sørensen**  
Chief Investment Officer,  
Export and Investment Fund  
of Denmark (EIFO)

“Public-private partnerships play a critical role in moving emerging technologies from the lab into society. By combining long-term scientific ambition with investment and implementation capacity, we can accelerate progress in areas like quantum and AI. In Denmark we are privileged that the Novo Nordisk Foundation had the foresight to invest into quantum as early as 2021. That ambition allows locally rooted innovation to scale internationally.”

“School meals are so much more than just a plate of food – they are transformational programmes that help vulnerable children to learn, communities to make a sustainable living and economies to grow and prosper. The partnership with the Novo Nordisk Foundation, the Grundfos Foundation, and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs demonstrates how we can bring together expertise from the private and public sectors to create and fund innovative programmes that address the root causes of hunger and support long-term resilience against food insecurity.”



**Cindy McCain**  
Executive Director, UN World  
Food Programme



**Dr Lee Fook Kay**  
Head, Pandemic Preparedness,  
Temasek Foundation

“Challenges like antimicrobial resistance require partnerships that bring together different regional strengths and expertise. Working with Novo Nordisk Foundation and the National University of Singapore, we’re strengthening microbiology testing capabilities across hospitals in Asia. Better diagnostics mean faster and more accurate identification of infections and resistant pathogens, which translates to improved patient care and stronger regional preparedness for future health threats.”

“Most chemistry research focuses on either chemical reactions or complex molecular structures. With the support of the NERD grant, my team is exploring how these reactions and structures interact with each other. Creating this interplay is crucial to understanding how life emerges from a set of lifeless molecules and represents a significant step towards synthetic life. This research also leads to the development of new tools to probe cellular processes and new applications in biotechnology and intelligent materials. The seven-year grant provides us the necessary timeframe to make this ambitious project possible.”



**Junjun Tan**  
Assistant Professor, University of  
Copenhagen, New Exploratory  
Research and Discovery (NERD)  
Programme grantee



**Professor Jacob Fog Bentzon**  
Aarhus University, Challenge  
Programme grantee

“We are excited to have launched our Challenge project on ectopic fat deposition. The themed nature of the Challenge program inspired us to forge new research alliances to tackle the research problem from multiple angles. And the project timeline is long enough to hopefully see those new synergies blossom into tangible, useful knowledge.”

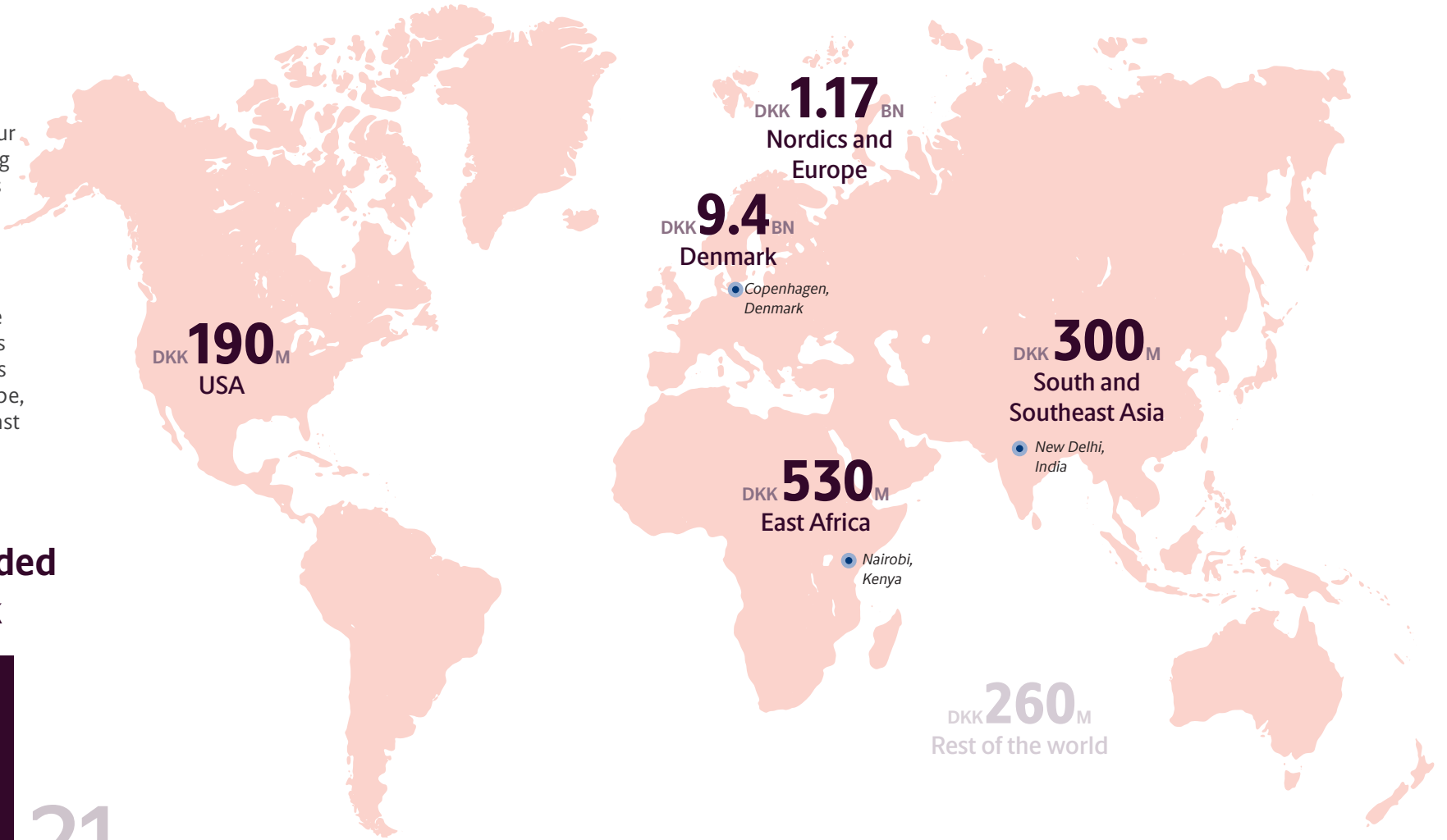
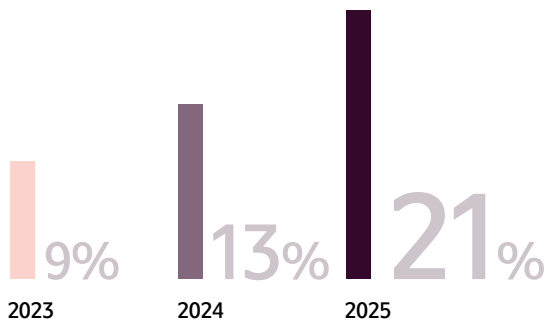
# Expanding horizons

The global challenges we face need global solutions forged through collaboration.

That's why we're expanding our international efforts, partnering with people and organisations around the world who share our vision of a healthier, more sustainable future.

The amount we award outside Denmark continues to grow, as does our presence in our focus regions: the Nordics and Europe, East Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the USA.

## Percentage awarded outside Denmark



● Novo Nordisk Foundation offices

The Novo Nordisk Foundation is an enterprise foundation with philanthropic objectives established in Denmark in 1924. The vision of the Foundation is to improve people's health and the sustainability of the planet. The Foundation's mission is to progress research and innovation in the prevention and treatment of cardiometabolic and infectious diseases, as well as to advance knowledge and solutions to support a green transformation of society.



[See our website >](#)



[See a list of our grants >](#)