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City of Lions

Hightech Incubator: Info Session



Disclaimer

- This document might be updated due to new information or legal restrictions.
- Last updated: 10.07.2025



What is the Hightech Incubator Program of Lower Saxony?

Program Content	Guidance for founding teams in developing market-ready innovations
	Provision of expertise, infrastructure, and network access
	Financial support through NBank
Goal	Promotion of innovations and technological developments
	Creation of new, sustainable jobs
	Strengthening the competitiveness of the regional economy
Funding Scope	Over 11 million euros in funding for six Lower Saxony hightech incubators
	Focus on different future technologies per incubator (e.g. mobility, AI, life sciences)



Hightech Incubator Brunswick

Focus Topics

- Mobility
- Digital Economy
- Production Technology
- Digital and technology-intensive innovations, particularly in the key areas of metrology and quantum technologies
- Environmentally friendly and resource-efficient innovations

Funding Framework

- Up to €180,000 in funding for RIS3-related projects
- Up to €300,000 for projects with an additional focus on critical technologies (STEP)
- Accompanied by a tailored support program (coaching, mentoring, networking)

Partners



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The Hightech Incubator concept

- Final selection of startups
- Direct financial support for startups (90% co-financing)
- Funding is covered in accordance with Article 22(2) of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER).

NBank

Startups

Incubator

Partner

- Program participation
- Utilization of support services (under De Minimis regulation)
- Payment of value-added tax (VAT)
- Contribution of own funds (10%)


- Structural decisions
- Involvement of institutions
- Access to research infrastructure



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Preliminary batch planning

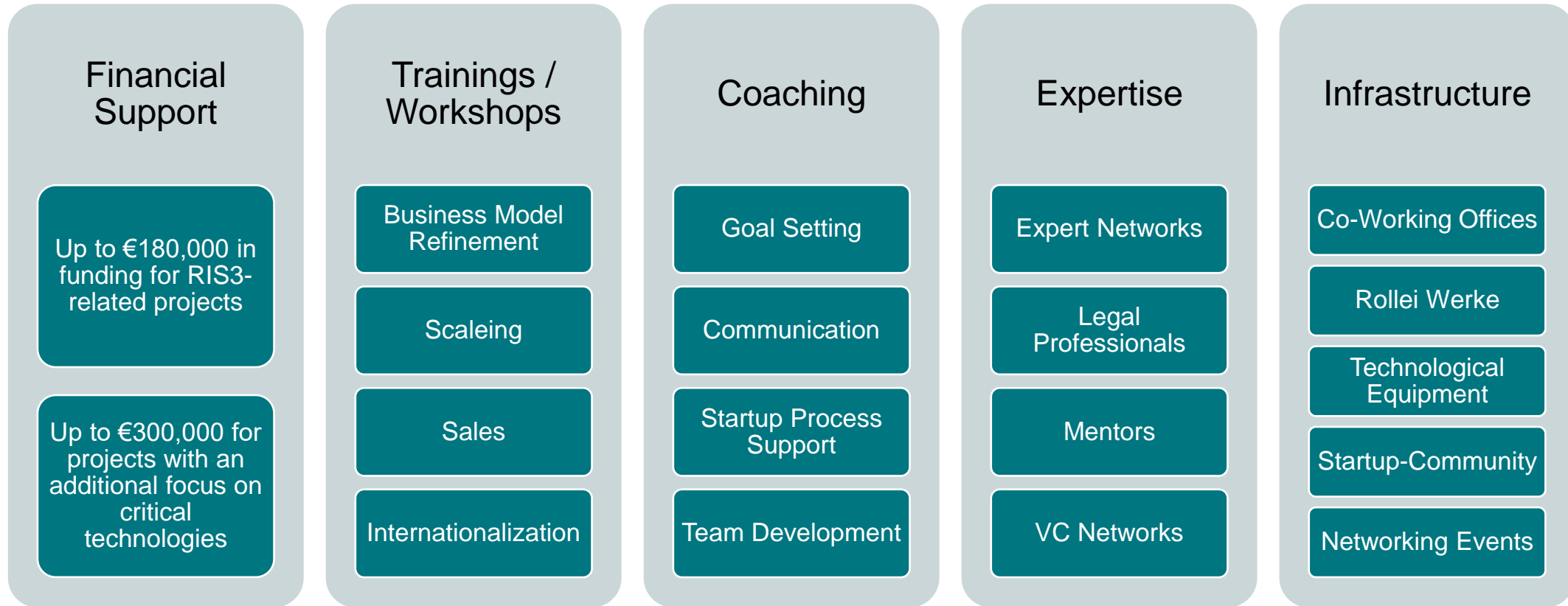


- 5 batches planned until the end of 2028
- Minimum of 5, maximum of 10 startups per batch
- Duration: 12 months per batch (optionally 18 months, except for the final batch)

Batch	Beginning	End
1	September 2025	August 2026
2	January 2026	December 2026
3	September 2026	August 2027
4	January 2027	December 2027
5	September 2027	August 2028



What's in it for startups?





Funding Amount

In the RIS3 Context:

- Funding amount: **minimum €50,000 to maximum €180,000**
- Funds are disbursed upon reaching defined milestones (minimum two, maximum four)
- Eligible costs:
 - Personnel expenses
 - Expenses for external contractors
 - Project-specific material expenses (e.g., expert reports, licensing and patenting costs, rent and leasing)

In the STEP Context:

- Funding amount: **minimum €50,000 to maximum €300,000**
- Eligible costs:
 - Direct expenses for project personnel
 - Direct expenses for external contractors
 - 40% flat rate for other eligible expenses based on direct personnel costs



Who can apply? – hard facts

1. **GBER:** Qualify as a "young company" according to Article 22(2) of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)
2. **Company Age:** The commercial register entry must not be older than five years at the time of application
3. **Legal Form:** The startup must be registered as a "GmbH" (limited liability company) or a "UG" (entrepreneurial company with limited liability).
4. **Location:** The company's headquarters or at least one operating site must be located in Lower Saxony at the time of funding approval
5. **Own Financing:** The startup must provide at least 10% of the requested funding amount as own contribution
6. **De minimis Aid:** A minimum available de minimis budget of €50,000 must be demonstrated
7. **Thematic Fit:** Fall within the incubator focus topics of RIS3/STEP strategy
8. **STEP specific:** The company's focus must align with one of the RIS3 innovation fields, and the product must have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of at least 4 (i.e., a successfully tested prototype in a laboratory setting)



Deep dive: 10% own contribution

	Possible Contribution	Max. funding NBank (90%)	Max. own contribution (10%)
RIS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash (hard funding)• Personnel costs• Own consulting or expert services• In-kind contributions, such as rented office space	180.000 EUR	20.000 EUR
STEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash (hard funding)• Personnel costs• Own consulting or expert services	300.000 EUR	33.333 EUR



Who can apply? – soft factors

1. **Founding Team:** The team must have the relevant professional, entrepreneurial, and personal qualifications to successfully implement the project.
2. **Business Model:** A coherent, plausible, and viable business model must be presented.
3. **Feasibility:** The business idea must be technically and operationally implementable, based on realistic assumptions and a functional product approach.
4. **Innovation Potential:** The idea should demonstrate a high degree of technical, process, or business model innovation.
5. **Market Potential and Entry Strategy:** The product or service targets a clearly defined market with growth potential, supported by a solid market entry strategy.
6. **Scalability and Investment Readiness:** The startup should show a level of maturity that makes scaling through venture capital investment plausible.



Who can not apply?

Companies that have not complied with a repayment order

Companies classified as “undertakings in difficulty” according to the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)

Projects that are already receiving funding from other ERDF or EU funds



How does the application process look like?

Phase 1: Online Application Form (Deadline: July 22, 2025)

Startups must first complete the online application form, available until **July 22, 2025**.

After submission, the Hightech Incubator team will review whether all formal eligibility criteria are met (e.g., technological focus, available de minimis budget). If the application is eligible, startups will receive a personalized link to Phase 2 within two working days (Monday–Friday).

Phase 2: Submission of Documents (Deadline: July 28, 2025)

Using the personalized link, applicants can upload the documents required for the jury review by **July 28, 2025**:

- Pitch video (max. 5 minutes)
- Pitch deck
- Business plan

Important: Only applicants who meet all formal criteria will receive access to Phase 2. Early submission of the online form gives you more time to prepare your documents. Unfortunately, late submissions cannot be accepted.



How is the timeline for the Hightech Incubator?

Milestone	Start	End
Application Phase	08.07.2025	28.07.2025
Review Phase	01.08.2025	15.08.2025
Jury Selection Phase	16.08.2025	22.08.2025
Announcement of the 1st Batch	26.08.2025	
Application Phase NBank	01.09.2025	30.09.2025
Training- and Coaching	01.10.2025	12-18 months
Possible Funding NBank	01.11.2025	Maximum of 18 months



How is the monthly invoicing and VAT handled?

Monthly invoice

☐

☐ For the services used (e.g., coaching, workshops, etc.)

☐ Invoice amount waived and only VAT payable

Payment term

☐

☐ Every 6 weeks

☐ Allowing for VAT to be refunded by the tax office before payment is due



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