3. RDI Scheme Fund - Science & Technology

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addresses the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave 2025. PM Modi launched a ₹1 Lakh Crore Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme Fund to be disbursed over 6 years, aiming to boost private sector R&D. The scheme, managed by the DST with strategic direction from the ANRF, addresses India's low R&D spending (0.7% of GDP) and minimal private sector contribution (<40%).

PM Launches ₹1 Lakh Crore RDI Scheme Fund

The Event - Prime Minister Modi launched the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme Fund while inaugurating the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2025 in New Delhi.

The Fund - The scheme has a total corpus of ₹1 Lakh Crore.

About the RDI Scheme Fund

Financials & Implementation

Total Outlay - ₹1 lakh crore.

Duration - The fund will be disbursed over a period of 6 years.

Initial Allocation - ₹20,000 crore is allocated for the fiscal year 2025–26.

Funding Source - The scheme is funded from the Consolidated Fund of India.

Nodal Department - The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the nodal department responsible for the scheme's implementation.

Governance & Strategic Direction

Oversight Body - The Governing Board of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) will provide the overarching strategic direction for the RDI Scheme.

Leadership - The ANRF Governing Board is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Key Objectives of the Scheme

Boost Private Sector RDI - To encourage and scale up research, development, and innovation (RDI) by the private sector, particularly in -

1. Sunrise domains.
2. Sectors vital for economic security.
3. Areas of strategic purpose and national self-reliance.

Finance High-TRL Projects - To provide financing for transformative projects that are at higher levels of Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), meaning they are closer to being market-ready.

Acquire Strategic Technologies - To support the acquisition of technologies that are critical or hold high strategic importance for India.

Establish Deep-Tech Fund of Funds - To facilitate the creation of a specialized Fund of Funds to invest in deep-tech startups and ventures.

India's Current R&D Landscape

R&D Expenditure Comparison - India's R&D expenditure has doubled in the last decade but remains low as a percentage of GDP compared to global leaders.

Country/Region	R&D Spending (as % of GDP)
India	~0.7%
USA	2.8%
China	2.4%

Sector-wise Contribution - There is a significant imbalance in R&D spending, with the private sector's contribution lagging far behind advanced economies.

Country/Region	Private Sector R&D Contribution
India	Less than 40%
Advanced Economies	Over 70%

Other Government Initiatives to Boost R&D

National Research Foundation (NRF) - An overarching body aimed at enhancing research funding and strengthening the collaboration between academia and industry.
Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) - A flagship initiative to encourage startups, entrepreneurship, and innovation among students and professionals.
Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme - Supports high-tech manufacturing by providing financial incentives for R&D-driven industries.

Launch of National Missions

National Quantum Mission - Aims to make India a leader in Quantum Technologies & Applications (Budget - ₹6,003.65 crore).
Electric Vehicle-Mission - Operates under ANRF's MAHA (Mission for Advancement in High-impact Areas) programme.
India Semiconductor Mission - Focused on building a robust semiconductor ecosystem in India (Budget - ₹76,000 crore).
Deep Ocean Mission - To explore and sustainably utilize the deep ocean's resources (Budget - ₹4077 crore).
India AI Mission - To strengthen India's Artificial Intelligence capabilities (Budget - ₹10,372 crore).
Enabling Policy Frameworks -

1. Geospatial Policy 2022
2. Space Policy 2023
3. BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy 2024

Challenges in India's R&D Ecosystem

Limited University-Industry Collaboration - There is a weak link between academic institutions and private industry, which hinders the effective commercialization of research.
Fragmented Institutional Ecosystem - Overlapping responsibilities and a lack of coordination among various R&D institutions reduce efficiency in fund utilization.
Skilled Workforce Deficit - India faces a shortage of adequately trained R&D professionals, especially in cutting-edge deep-tech and interdisciplinary fields.

Way Ahead

Global Collaborations - Leveraging international partnerships to accelerate domestic R&D, such as those under the Indo-US iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology), G20 S&T Cooperation, and the BRICS Innovation Network.
Performance-Based Funding - Implementing systems for regular monitoring and linking financial disbursements to performance-based outcomes to enhance accountability.
Regional Innovation Clusters - Encouraging the development of R&D hubs and clusters in Tier-II and Tier-III cities to democratize innovation and spread its economic benefits.
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