

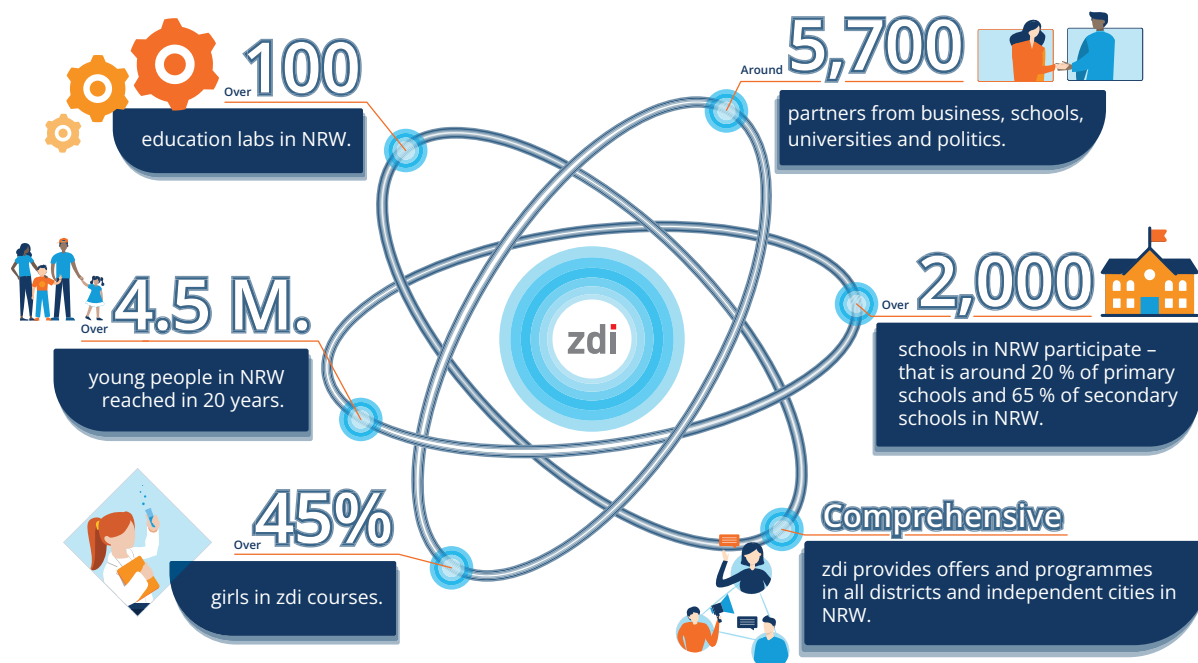
Our vision

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics – in short STEM (German acronym: MINT) – can be used to explain and shape many aspects of the world. STEM education is one of the most important levers for innovative developments in science, business, politics and society.

With the community initiative zdi.NRW, we make our contribution to mastering existing challenges.

What is zdi.NRW?

Zukunft durch Innovation.NRW (Future through Innovation. NRW, in short zdi.NRW) is the largest and most successful initiative for extracurricular support and promotion of young talents in science and technology in Europe. Since 2005, regional zdi networks and zdi student education labs have been working with thousands of (regional) partners to develop and implement STEM programmes for young people (courses, competitions, events, etc.).



zdi.NRW's mission:

- Inspiring young people throughout the entire educational system with attractive STEM offers.
- Reaching young people by placing STEM in real-life contexts and including other perspectives (MINTplus).
- Establishing networks with science, business, schools, universities, politics and society and building a bridge between in-school and out-of-school stakeholders in the education segment.
- Translating current research findings and making them available to offer a basis for critical thinking and action.
- Supporting in-depth career and study orientation with the zdi-BSO-MINTplus programme.
- Strengthening North Rhine-Westphalia as a business and employment hub by helping to increase young people's interest in studying or doing an apprenticeship in STEM fields as well as ensuring companies' access to talented young STEM specialists.
- Activating a multitude of private and public resources locally, utilising state funds.
- Supporting girls and young women in the STEM sector.
- Leading the way by constantly developing and opening up new target groups and subject areas.

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zdi's funding

Funding for zdi.NRW is provided by numerous partners. Central to this effort is the active engagement of sponsoring organisations and regional partners. In addition, zdi's work has been and continues to be supported by funding programmes.

Active engagement of regions (according to zdi monitoring 2025)

- **Annual staff costs:** approx. 7.2 million euro
- **Self-funded course offers:** approx. 17.5 million euro
- **Partnerships** with regional stakeholders from universities, schools, business, politics and civil society

zdi networks funding programme (zdi-Netzwerkförderung)

- State funding is used to support activities aimed at enhancing the relevance of the zdi networks in the respective region.
- Funding is provided over a five-year period on a pro-rata basis, with a maximum funding rate of 90% and total eligible expenditure of up to 250,000 euro per project. A KPI model with three target areas (reach among participants, reach among partners, network management and sustainability) as well as specific target fields allows for a high degree of customisation in individual project applications.
- Approved expenditures of a total of more than 10 million euro for 41 projects in the zdi regions. This corresponds to total funding of more than 9 million euro.

zdi-BSO-MINTplus

- The programme for in-depth career and study orientation in STEM subjects is funded 50% by the State Ministry of Culture and Science and 50% by the North Rhine-Westphalia Regional Office of the German Employment Agency.
- Funding for zdi courses in the regions currently amounts to 8 million euros annually.

EFRE programmes

- **zdi-MINTplus.NRW:** From 2026, funding will be provided for projects which – in collaboration between SMEs, universities as well as organisations linked to business and higher education – either translate current research findings into STEM programmes for school pupils or further expand the existing network of extra-curricular learning facilities in North Rhine-Westphalia ("Mini-MINTLabs.NRW"). A total of roughly 11.2 million euro in EU and state funding is available for this call for proposals. The funding rate across all regions in North Rhine-Westphalia is at 50%.
- **EFRE-zdi I through III:** Between 2012 and 2022, more than 160 projects were funded to the tune of over 16.4 million euro, with matching co-funding provided by the regions. Funding was provided to support the systematic involvement of regional business partners (particularly SMEs) in zdi's networking activities as well as the establishment and expansion of extracurricular learning facilities.

zdi-REACT-EU

- Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the zdi-REACT-EU programme provided additional funding to improve the digital infrastructure of non-school learning facilities. Following the call for proposals launched in summer 2021, non-school learning facilities were able to receive up to 60,000 euro each to set up and expand their digital infrastructure, with 100% funding.
- In the first round, a total of 138 projects with a total volume of around 4.6 million euro were approved in 2021 and 2022.
- The programme was reopened in summer 2023. In this second round, 83 projects with a total funding volume of roughly 2.6 million euro were approved.

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