EIFO

Danish Life science Venture Capital

- Recent trends and market outlook

July 2025

Scope and contents

The life science industry is a cornerstone of Denmark's national and innovation economy. In 2023, Danish life science exports reached EUR 23 billion, representing 20 % of Denmark's total goods exports – a figure that has more than tripled since 2008. The government's *Life Science Strategy* sets a clear ambition for Denmark to become one of Europe's leading life science nations, supported by a goal to double life science exports to EUR 46 billion by 2030.

In recent years, venture capital investment in Danish life science startups has expanded rapidly, driving innovation across Biotech, Medtech, and Healthtech – and positioning Copenhagen as a rising European life science hub.

This analysis provides an overview of the current structure of the Danish life science industry and assesses developments in venture capital investments from 2018 through 2024. It examines how life science startups progress through funding stages, how capital is distributed across verticals and maturity levels, and how the investor base has evolved – highlighting, for example, the growing role of international investors in the Danish venture capital market.

In addition, the analysis presents a forward-looking projection of venture capital demand through 2035, based on historical funding patterns, startup dynamics, and the expected impact of strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the early-stage pipeline.

The analysis is based primarily on EIFO's proprietary venture capital funding data from 2018 to 2024, which is publicly available on EIFO's website. Additional data sources and methodological details are provided in the appendix.

Sources: EIFO and Danish Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs (2024): Life science Strategy Towards 2030.

Key takeaways

Life science accounts for one third of the Danish venture capital market – growing significantly since 2018

Investment volumes tripled between 2018 and 2024, reaching EUR 391 million in 2024. Biotech remains the largest and most mature vertical, but Healthtech is emerging as a key growth area, attracting a rising share of deals and capital.

Venture capital investments in Danish life science are projected to reach EUR 1.1 billion by 2035

Based on historical funding dynamics and the expanding startup base, Danish life science venture capital activity is expected to continue growing. When combined with projections for the broader market, life science is set to consistently account for close to 40% of total Danish venture capital volumes.

Investor participation is deepening in Danish life science – driven by increased international engagement

The number of active life science investors has increased, with syndicates becoming larger and more diverse. Foreign investors – particularly from the U.S. – remain key participants in larger late- and growth stage rounds, underlining the importance of international capital in scaleup financing.

Denmark's life science sector is poised for growth – but must overcome structural hurdles

Strong institutions, global research ties, and emerging technologies like AI and quantum support long-term innovation and expansion of Danish life science. Yet capital bottlenecks, a weak exit environment, and commercialization gaps could constrain future momentum unless actively addressed.

Life science in this analysis includes Biotech, Healthtech and Medtech – defined by innovation focus and application area

In this analysis, life science refers to research-driven innovation aimed at improving human health through diagnostics and therapeutics, digital health solutions and medical technologies. We distinguish between the three sub-verticals – Biotech, Healthtech and Medtech, based on their core focus.

	Definitions	Examples of Danish venture backed companies
Biotech	Bio-technology (Biotech) encompasses companies developing biological or pharmaceutical products, including drug discovery, gene and cell therapy, and platform technologies rooted in molecular biology.	orbis MEDICINES, FREYA™, ANTAG THERAPEUTICS, HEMOB, adcendo, NEUmiRNA Therapeutics
Healthtech	Health-technology (Healthtech) includes digital health solutions, software-based tools, data-driven diagnostics, AI-enabled decision support, and remote monitoring technologies aimed at improving healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.	corti, Dawn Health, LENUS, eupry, embla, Cerebriu
Medtech	Medical-technology covers medical devices, diagnostics hardware, imaging technologies, and physical equipment used in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of diseases and conditions.	ADVA LIGHT, EVOSEP, CathVision, MEDTRACE, Reapplix, Fidabio

Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).
Note: Life science in this analysis included Biotech, Healthtech and Medtech – other areas such as Biosolutions is not covered.

Market Insights

The Danish life science ecosystem as of 2024

2.327
companies make up the Danish life science industry - most are Startups and SME's and only few Large Enterprises

9%
average annual growth rate in the life science startup base between 2014-2024

58%
of Danish life science companies are located in the Capital Region of Denmark

106
Life science companies have raised venture capital between 2018-2024

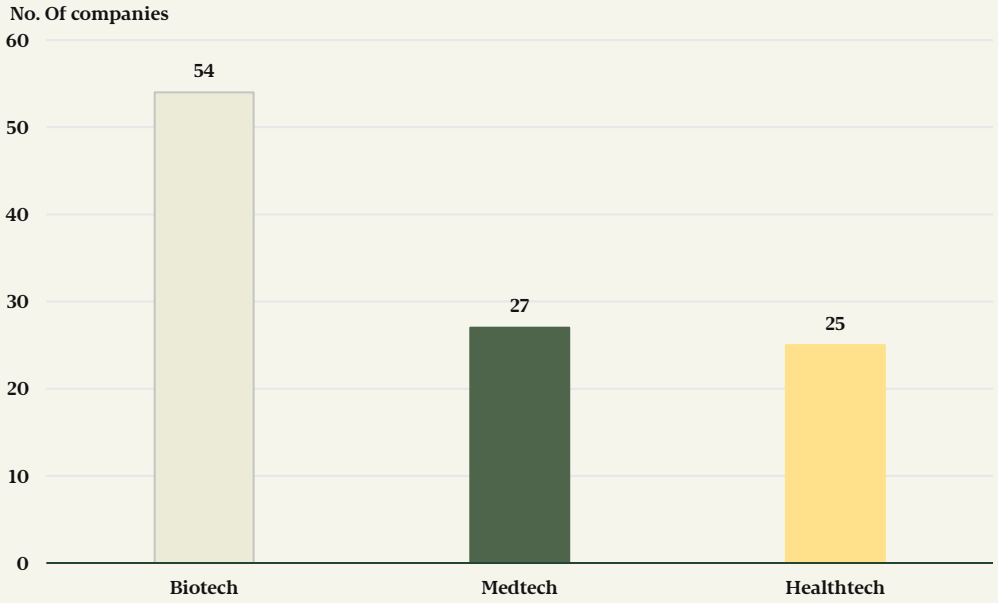
Source: The Central Business Register (CVR) via LassoX.
Note: SMEs and Large Enterprises are categorized in accordance with the European Unions SME definitions. A company is considered a startup if it is established within the last 5 years, and it has less than 50 employees.

Biotech accounts for the largest share of Danish life science venture capital activity, with most companies concentrated in the Capital Region

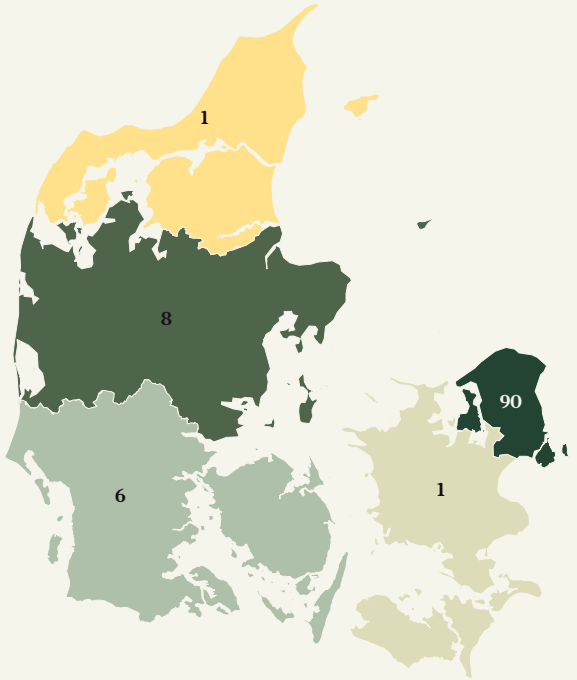
Between 2018 and 2024, 106 unique life science companies in Denmark raised venture capital. More than half of these were Biotech companies, while Medtech and Healthtech each accounted for roughly a quarter of the total.

The industry is geographically concentrated, with 85% of venture capital funded life science startups located in the Capital Region, highlighting the region's central role in Denmark's life science ecosystem.

Number of life science companies that raised venture capital by vertical, 2018-2024



Number of life science companies that raised venture capital by region, 2018-2024



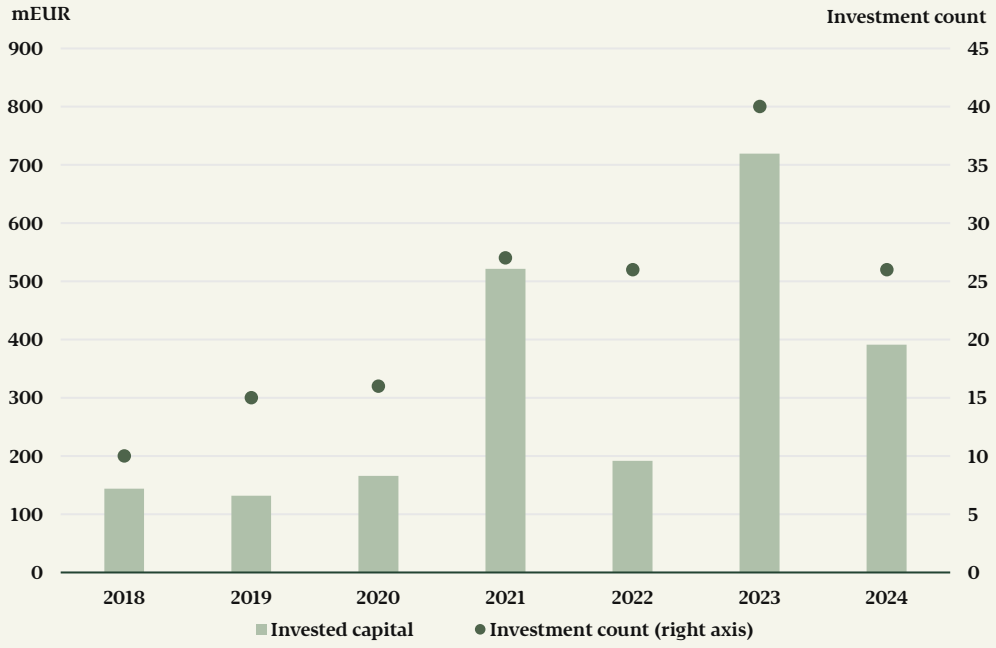
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).

Danish life science venture capital activity has nearly tripled since 2018 – accounting for over a third of the market in 2024

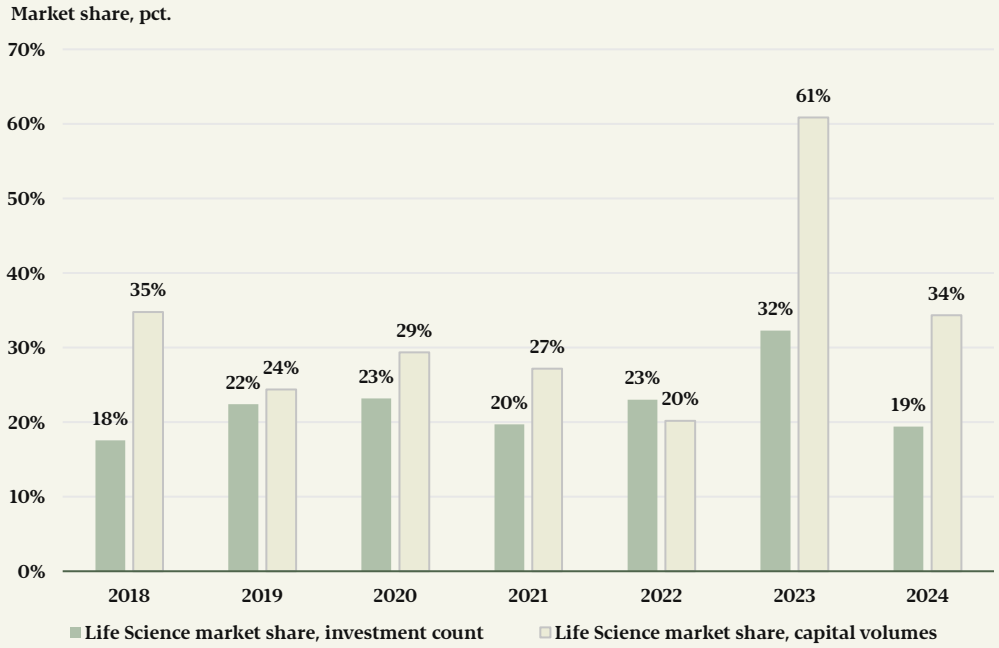
In 2024, venture capital investments in Danish life science companies totalled EUR 391 million across 26 rounds. While this marked a 45% decline in both capital and deal count compared to 2023, the broader trend remains positive: investment volumes have nearly tripled since 2018.

Fluctuations in annual investment levels reflect the impact of large, late-stage rounds raised by a few mature scaleups – particularly in 2021 and 2023. Despite the 2024 decline, life science remained a central pillar of the Danish venture capital market, accounting for 34% of total capital invested.

Number of venture capital investments and capital volumes invested in Danish life science companies, 2018-2024



Life science investments as a share of total Danish venture capital market activity, 2018-2024



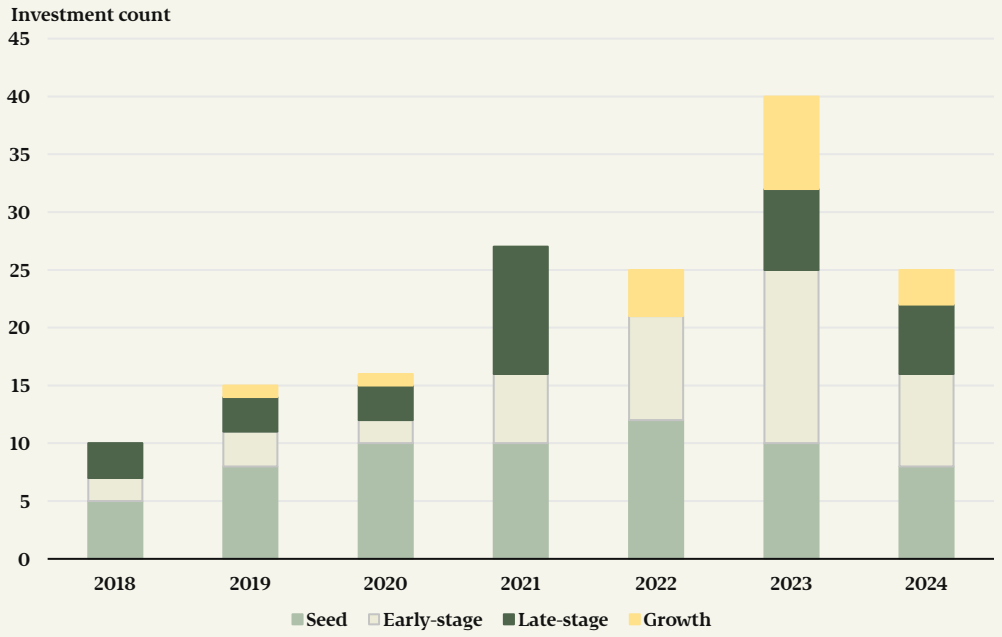
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten)..

Most venture capital investments in Danish life science occur at early stages, but capital is concentrated in few late- and growth-stage deals

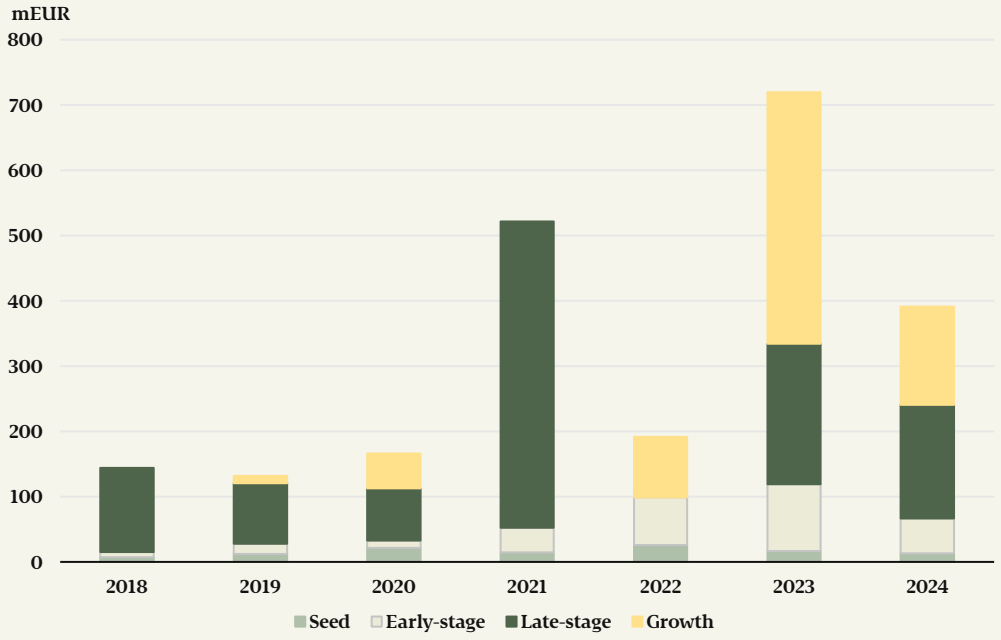
Between 2018 and 2024, Seed and Early-stage rounds accounted for roughly 70% of all venture capital deals in Danish life science. In contrast, these stages represented just 20% of total invested capital, reflecting their smaller round sizes.

By comparison, Late- and Growth-stage investments, though far fewer in number, have absorbed most of the capital. This stage-skewed distribution highlights the sector's dual character: a strong pipeline of early innovation activity, alongside a limited but impactful group of mature scaleups. As expected in a capital-intensive industry, investment volumes at later stages fluctuate, as large rounds tend to occur irregularly rather than annually.

Number of venture capital investments in Danish Life science companies by stage, 2018-2024



Invested venture capital volumes in Danish Life science companies by stage, 2018-2024



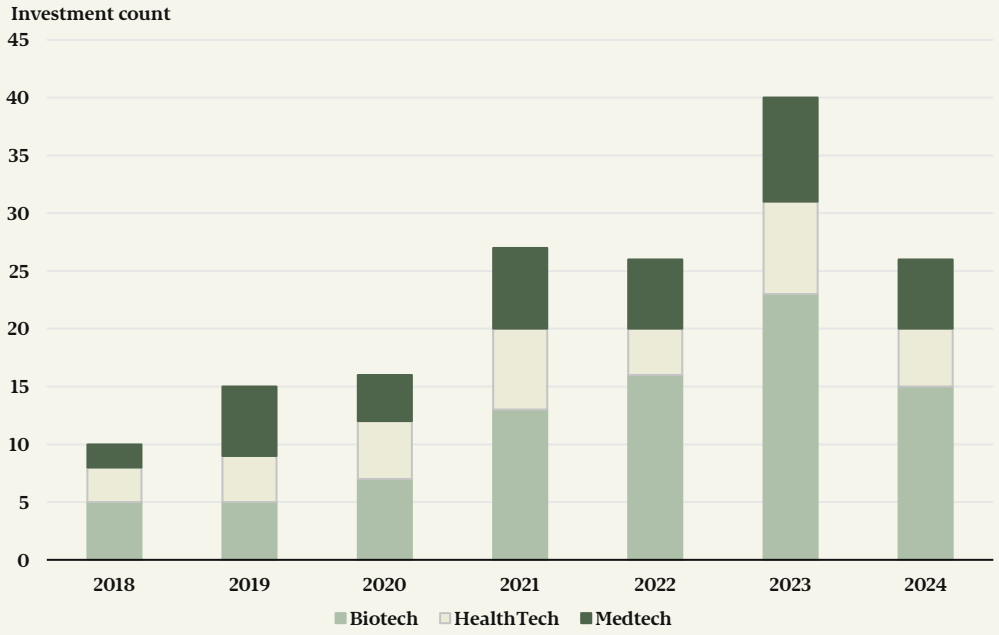
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).

Venture capital remains concentrated in Biotech, partly due to its capital intensity, while Healthtech emerges as a growing focus

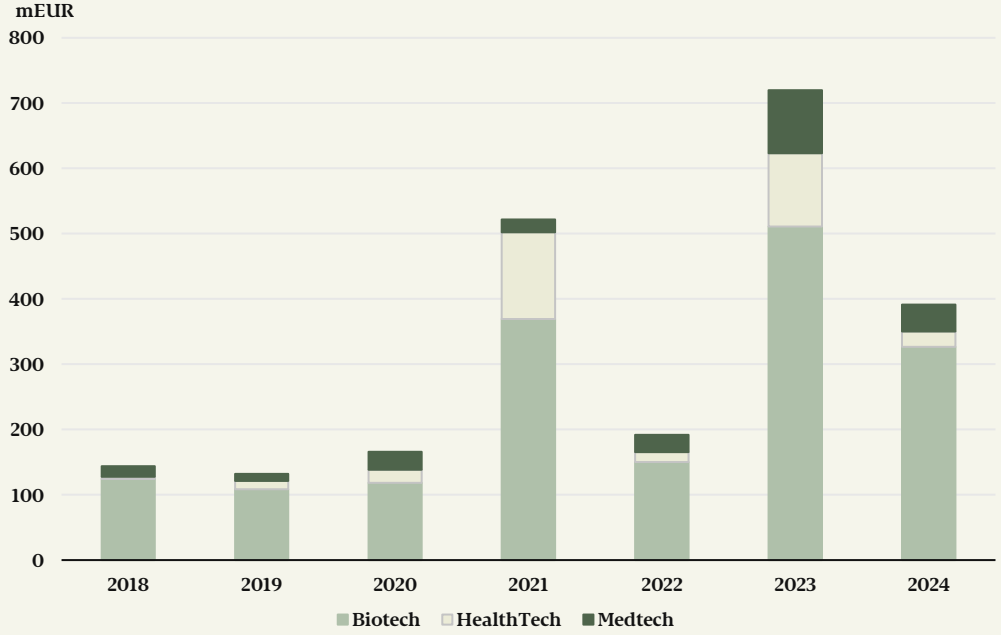
Biotech remains the most established vertical within Danish Life science, consistently attracting around 70% of total venture capital invested each year since 2018. Its share of investment rounds has also increased from 45% to 60%, reflecting both its maturity and the capital-intensive nature of drug development and deeptech innovation. Medtech has seen more stable levels of activity, typically driven by device-based solutions.

By contrast, Healthtech has historically been more capex-light, often centred around scalable software and digital health solutions. This is reflected in its lower share of capital despite a relatively high number of deals. However, over the period, capital volumes in Healthtech have steadily increased, signalling growing investor confidence and the gradual maturation of the vertical. This trend suggests a broader diversification of venture capital activity within Danish life science and a stronger pipeline across all three verticals.

Number of venture capital investments across Biotech, Healthtech and Medtech, 2018-2024

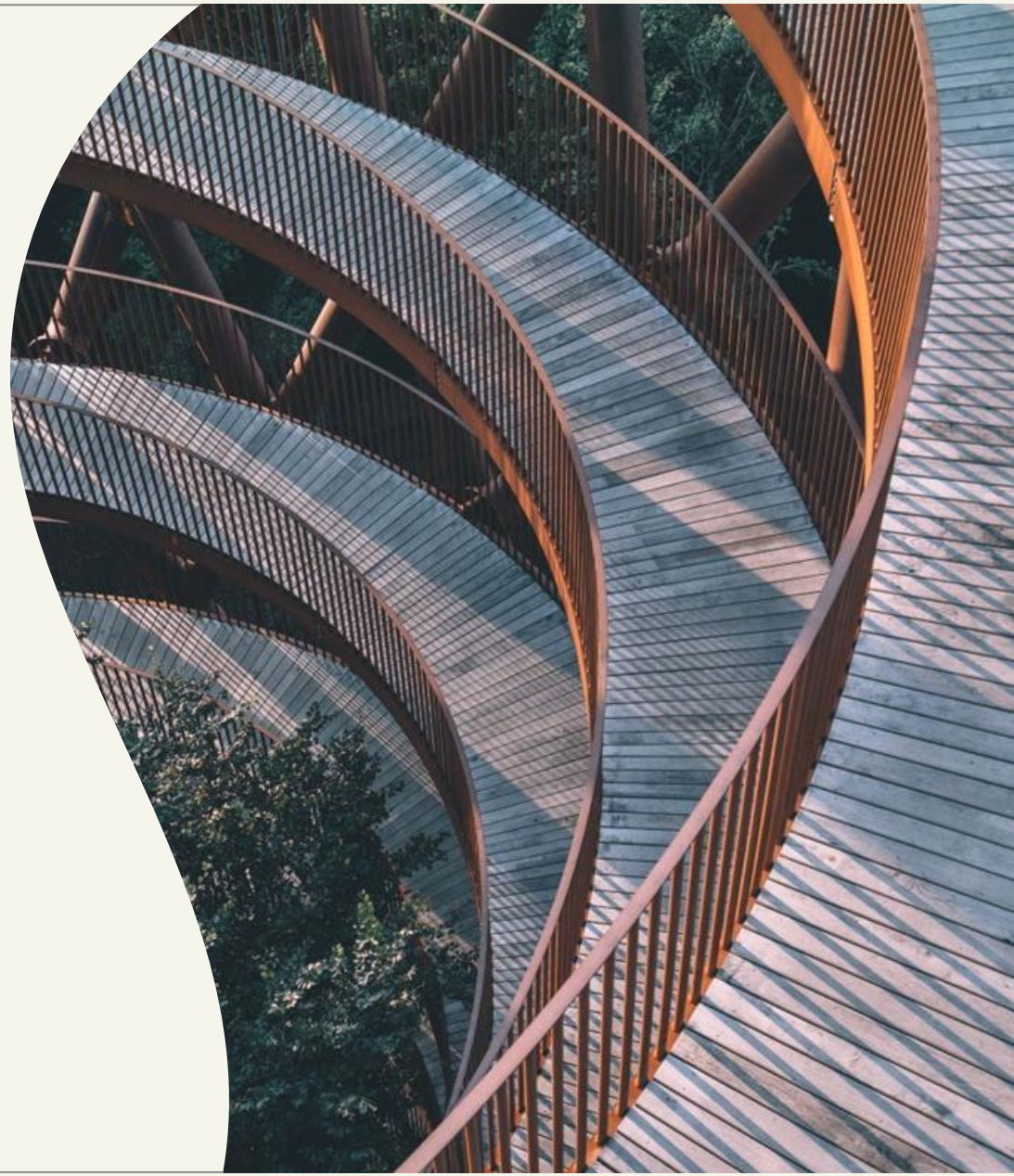


Invested venture capital volumes across Biotech, Healthtech and Medtech, 2018-2024



Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).

Funding dynamics and market projections

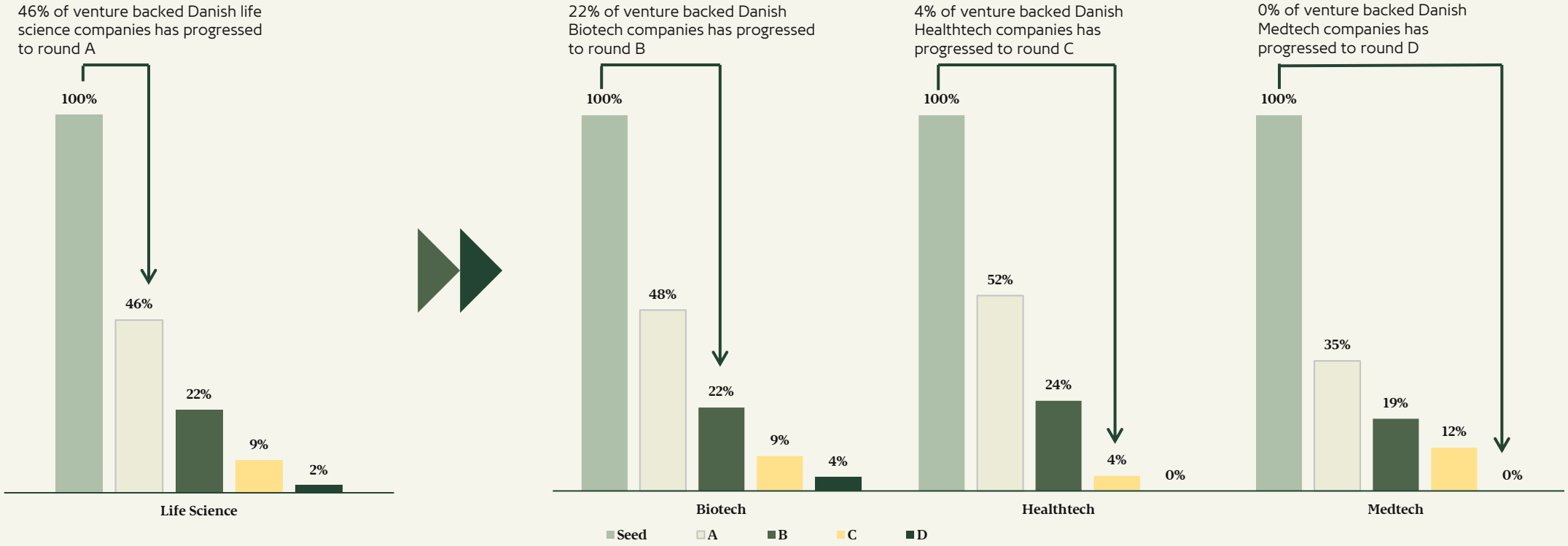


Nearly half of life science startups that raise Seed funding advance to Series A – with Healthtech showing the strongest early-stage progression

Not all innovations succeed - graduation rates reflect the share of venture capital-backed companies that secure follow-on investments. In Danish life science, 46% of startups that raised a Seed round between 2018 and 2024 progressed to Series A.

Among the three verticals, Healthtech shows the highest graduation rates at both Series A and B, indicating strong early-stage progression. In contrast, only Biotech companies have reached Series D.

Graduation rates in the life science industry by series and by individual verticals, 2018-2024



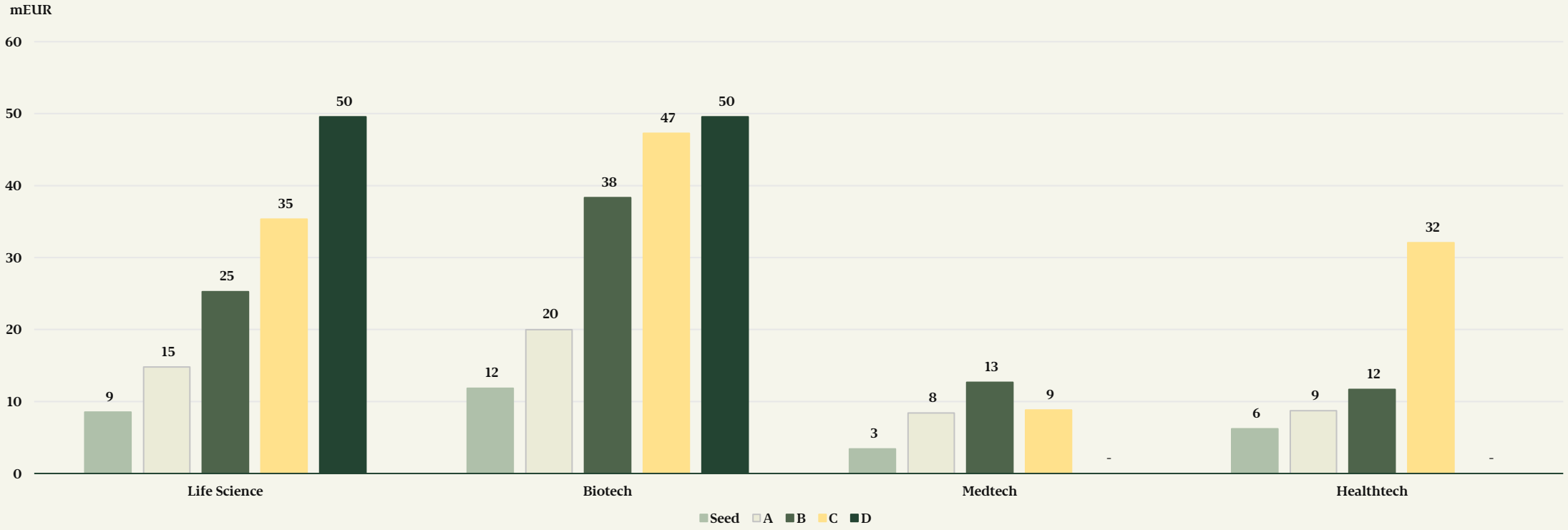
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).
Note: As the analysis includes rounds up to and including 2024, graduation rates are likely underestimated – particularly for the most recent cohorts – as many companies have not yet had the opportunity to raise a later round.

Biotech companies raise significantly larger rounds across all stages – reflecting maturity and high development costs

Across all funding stages, Biotech companies raise rounds that are 2 to 3 times larger on average than those in Healthtech and Medtech, once again reflecting both the greater maturity of the Biotech vertical and its inherently higher capital requirements.

In contrast, Healthtech and Medtech remain at earlier stages of venture maturity in Denmark. None of the companies in these verticals that raised venture capital between 2018 and 2024 have progressed beyond Series C, underscoring their more limited late-stage funding histories.

Average funding round sizes in life science industry and individual verticals by series, 2018-2024



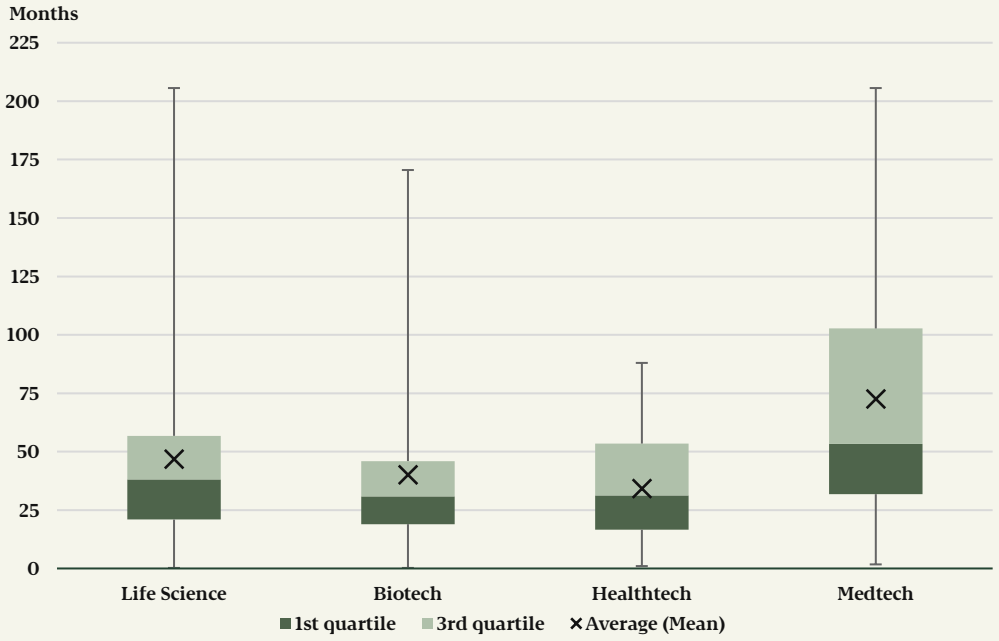
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).

It typically takes around 3 years for Danish life science startups to raise their first venture capital funding round – with notable variation across verticals

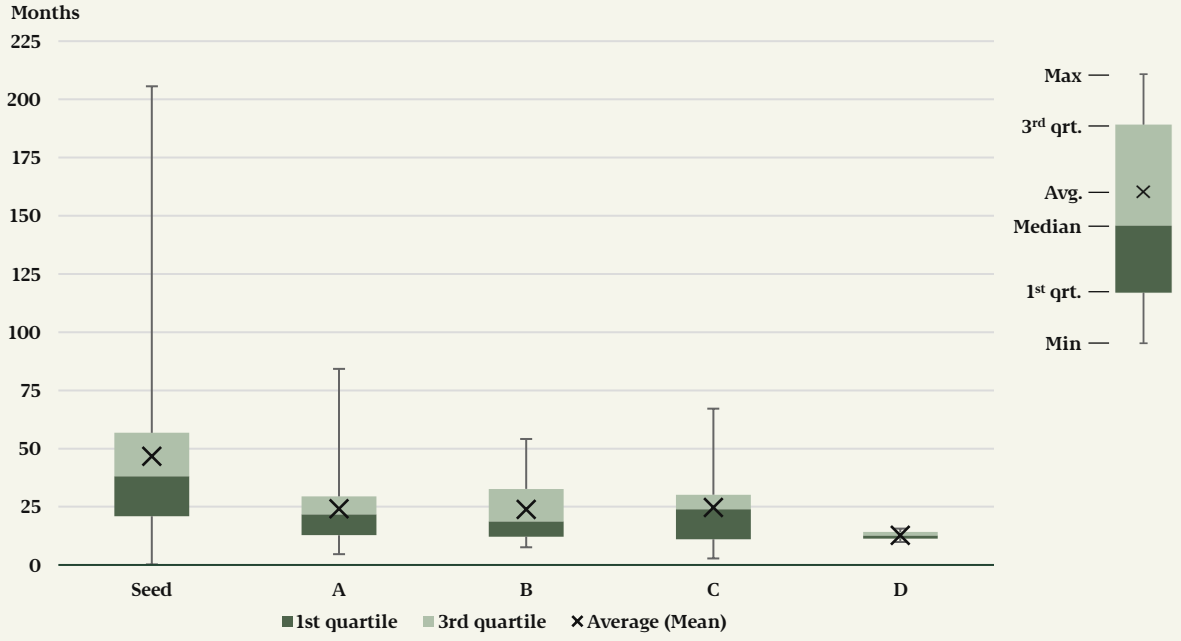
The median time from incorporation to first venture capital round in Danish life science is 38 months, or just over 3 years. After receiving initial venture capital funding, startups typically raise their next round within 1.5 to 2 years, with relatively consistent graduation timelines across verticals.

There is, however, variation in time-to-first funding: Biotech and Healthtech startups are the fastest to attract venture capital, typically within 2.5 years, while Medtech companies take considerably longer – on average, around 4.5 years.

Time from company incorporation to first venture capital round by vertical, 2018-2024



Time to first venture capital round and graduation time between rounds in Danish life science industy, 2018-2024



Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).
Note: Graduation times are based only on companies that have already raised a follow-on round. This may underestimate actual times, as slower-moving companies are not captured in the average.

Projecting Danish life science venture capital investments through 2035

Using the presented funding dynamics, we can now turn to the projection of future venture capital investments activity for the danish life science Industry.

The projection model builds on the presented funding dynamics, but it also incorporates the impact of structural industry specific developments such as the expanded mandate of the BioInnovation Institute (BII), expected to strengthen the early-stage pipeline in the coming years.

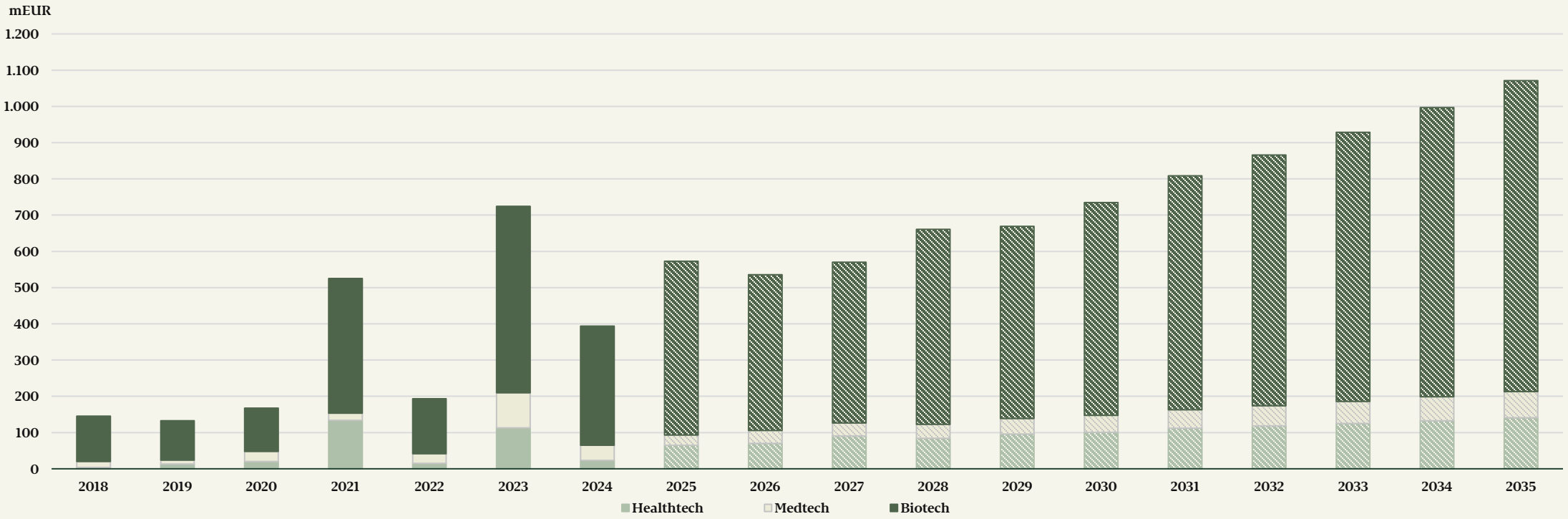
Further details on the model logic and underlying assumptions can be found in Appendix I.

Danish life science venture capital investments projected to more than double by 2035 – Biotech remains dominant, Healthtech grows fastest

Total venture capital investments in Danish life science are projected to grow from EUR 400 million in 2024 to just shy of EUR 1.1 billion by 2035. Biotech is expected to remain the dominant vertical, increasing more than 1.5x from EUR 330 million to EUR 860 million, while Healthtech grows the fastest in relative terms – rising almost 5x from EUR 24 million to EUR 140 million. The projection reflects continued momentum in the startup base and the anticipated impact of BII's expanded mandate on the early-stage pipeline.

While grounded in detailed historical funding patterns and structural developments, the model does not account for potential future accelerators such as advances in AI, the emergence of quantum technologies, or national infrastructure investments like the Gefion supercomputer. These developments may strengthen Denmark's position as a global life science hub by increasing the rate of startup formation and attracting international IP – suggesting that actual long-term venture capital investment levels could exceed current projections..

Historic and projected venture capital investment volumes in Danish life science companies by vertical



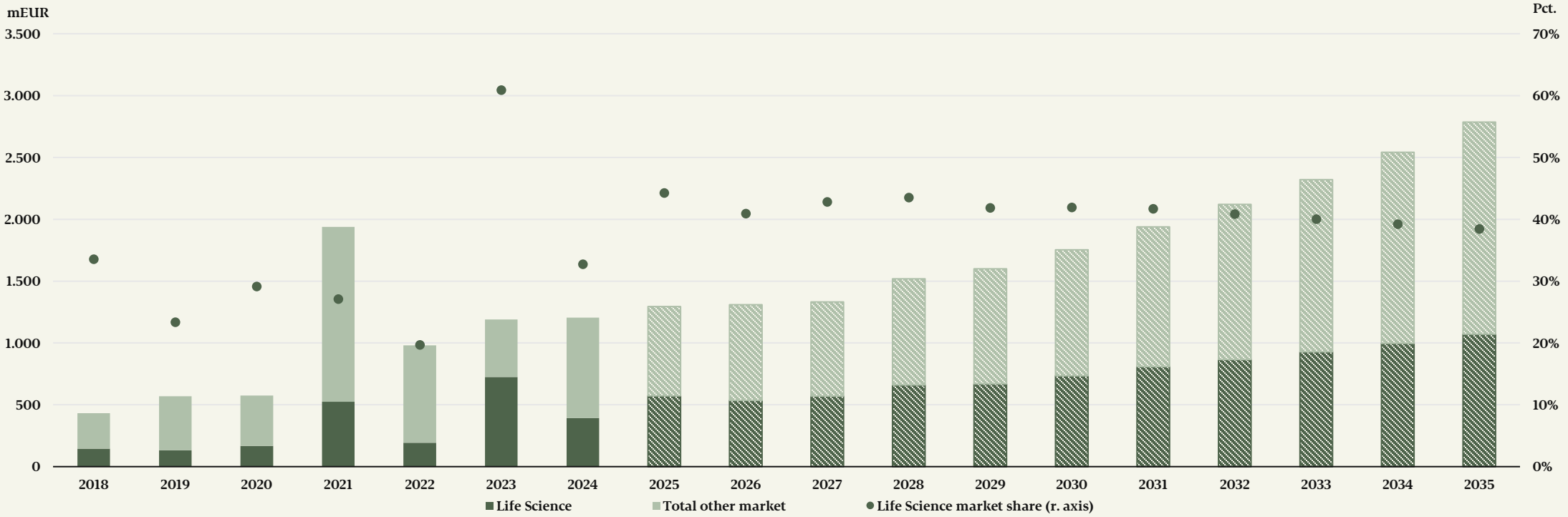
Sources: EIFO (Venturelisten) and BioInnovation Institute..
Note: Scattered area indicates that figures for 2025 through 2035 are projected values The projection extends to 2035 and is therefore subject to considerable uncertainty – especially in the later years. The model builds on historical graduation rates and average time between rounds. It should be noted that graduation rates likely pull the projection downwards (due to underreporting in recent cohorts), while graduation times may push it upwards (due to potential underestimation of time between rounds). These effects work in opposite directions..

Life science is projected to account for 40% of Danish venture capital by 2035 – remaining a key growth driver in the market

Building on the life science projections, the same modelling approach is applied to the broader Danish venture capital landscape. Total investments are projected to exceed EUR 2.7 billion by 2035 – reaching a level 2.5x higher than in 2024. This growth is driven by continued momentum in life science, as well as in sectors such as Fintech, Green Tech, and Advanced Manufacturing.

Life science is expected to maintain a central role, accounting for close to 40% of total venture capital funding – a slight increase from 2024. This sustained position reflects the sector's strong early-stage pipeline and structural advantages, including the expanded BII mandate. As such, life science will remain a key growth driver and enabler of innovation across the Danish economy.

Projection of venture capital investment volumes in Danish companies split by life science and all other industries



Sources: EIFO (Venturelisten) and BioInnovation Institute.
Note: Scattered area indicates that figures for 2025 through 2035 are projected values. The projection extends to 2035 and is therefore subject to considerable uncertainty – especially in the later years. The model builds on historical graduation rates and average time between rounds. It should be noted that graduation rates likely pull the projection downwards (due to underreporting in recent cohorts), while graduation times may push it upwards (due to potential underestimation of time between rounds). These effects work in opposite directions..

Investor Landscape

Danish life science is backed by a diverse and increasingly international investor base

The Danish life science ecosystem is supported by a broad range of active investors, spanning private venture capital funds, corporate venture arms, government funds, family offices, and accelerators. In recent years, the investor base has expanded notably – both in terms of volume and diversity – reflecting growing international interest and a maturing domestic venture capital environment. International investors now play a significant role, particularly in later-stage rounds, while Danish investors remain key in early-stage funding and ecosystem development.

Active life science investors on the Danish venture capital market between 2018 to 2024

	Private funds	Government funds	Corporate VC funds	Accelerators & other
Danish Investors	Lundbeck Fonden, Novo Holdings, Eir Ventures, Sound Bioventures, Sunstone Life Science Ventures, Unconventional Ventures	EIFO Eksport- & Investeringsfonden, Innovationsfonden	N/A	BioInnovation Institute, DTU, Health Tech Hub Copenhagen, DTU Skylab, Beta.Health, TS
International Investors	HealthCap, Sofinnova partners, OMX Ventures, Crowberry Capital, Innovestor, RA Capital	Industrifonden, European Innovation Council	Labcorp, Evonik, Crescent Enterprises Ventures, MP Healthcare Venture Management, Inc.	Antler, eit Health, Y Combinator, Sofina, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

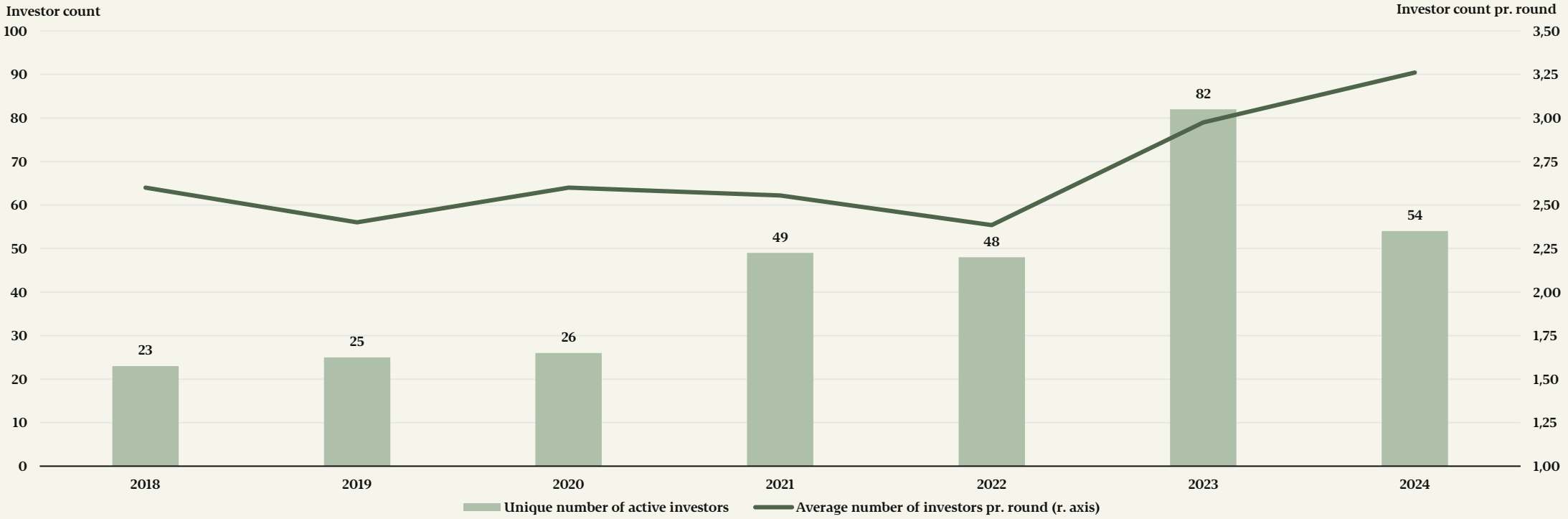
Sources: EIFO (Venturelisten), PitchBook and Dealroom
Note: The listed investors and organizations are used as examples for illustrative purposes and does not necessarily reflect the full list of market participants across the given investor types. Distinction between Danish Investors and International investors is categorized by HQ.

Investor participation is deepening in Danish life science – more active investors and larger syndicates

The Danish life science venture market has seen a steady increase in the number of unique active investors per year – from 23 in 2018 to 54 in 2024, following a peak of 82 in 2023. This points to growing interest from a broadening investor base and suggests increased capital availability in the sector.

Simultaneously, the average number of investors per round has risen from 2.6 in 2018 to 3.3 in 2024 – the highest level to date – highlighting a trend toward larger syndicates and stronger investor collaboration, particularly in later-stage and capital-intensive cases.

Active life science investors on the Danish venture capital market, 2018-2024



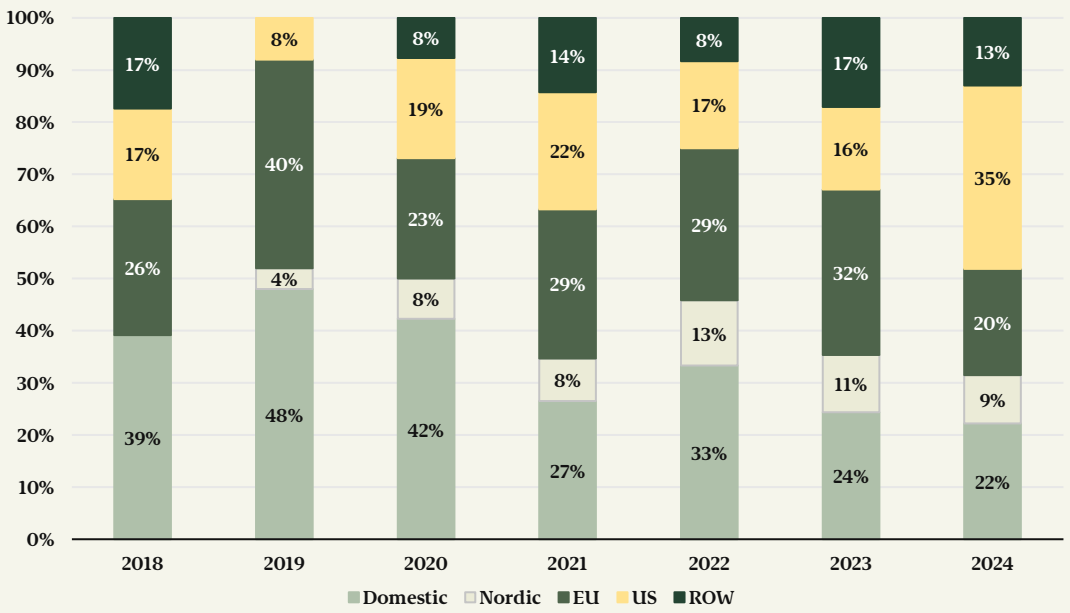
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).

Foreign investors are increasingly dominant in Danish life science – and provide the bulk of capital in larger rounds

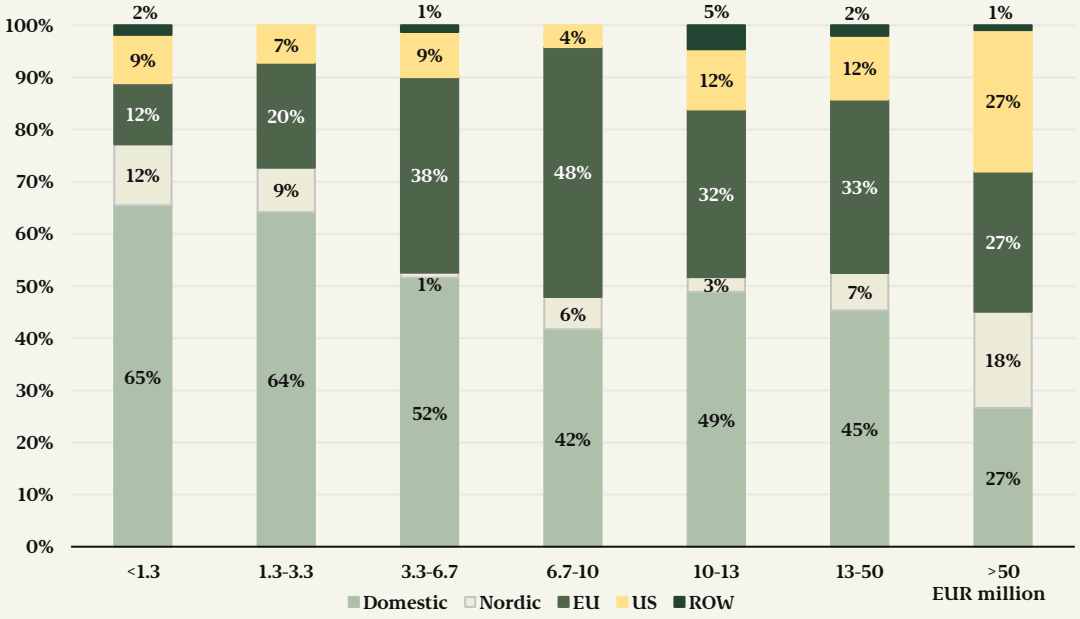
From 2018 to 2024, the Danish life science sector has seen a growing presence of foreign investors. The share of Danish investors has declined from 39% to 22%, while US investors have increased their presence from 17% to 35%. European and Nordic investors have also expanded their activity over the period.

At the same time, foreign investors contribute an increasing share of capital in larger funding rounds. While Danish investors account for over 50% of capital in rounds below EUR 6.7 million, this drops to just 27% in rounds above EUR 50 million. In these larger rounds, US and European investors each contribute 27%, underlining the sector's reliance on international capital at later stages of company growth.

Share of active investors in Danish life science by investor origin, 2018-2024



Share of capital invested in life science by investor origin across round sizes, 2018-2024



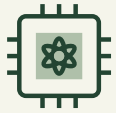
Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).
Note: In syndicated rounds where individual investor allocations are not disclosed, the capital contribution by investor origin is estimated based on the assumption of equal participation by each investor.

Challenges and Opportunities

Key opportunities and challenges that underpin the future of Denmark's life science industry and ecosystem development

Opportunities

Strong institutional anchors underpin Denmark's global life science position



Advancements in adjacent sectors unlock new opportunities for life science innovation

Proven investor appetite and structural health trends drive capital inflow

Challenges

High capital needs and foreign investor reliance risk scaleup leakage

Weak exit environment limits capital recycling and fund formation

Commercialization gaps may hinder innovation capture

Strong institutions, investor momentum, and emerging technologies position Danish life science for continued growth and transformation

Strong institutional anchors underpin Denmark's global life science position

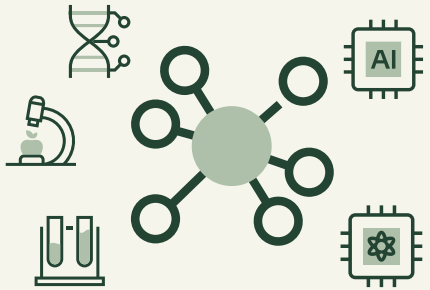
Denmark's life science sector is anchored by global leaders like Novo Nordisk and the world's largest philanthropic foundation, the Novo Nordisk Foundation, which attract talent, founders, and capital to the ecosystem.

The BioInnovation Institute plays a key role in translating cutting-edge research into startups, with its expanded mandate strengthening the pipeline for future growth. These institutions are reinforced by world-class universities and hospitals, as well as initiatives like the Innovation District Copenhagen, which aims to bring more science, talent, and capital together to foster life science innovation at scale.

Advancements in adjacent sectors unlock new opportunities for life science innovation

Breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and novel manufacturing technologies are creating new opportunities across the life science value chain – from drug discovery and diagnostics to clinical trials and production.

These cross-sectoral enablers are expected to accelerate innovation cycles, reduce development costs, and enable new business models across Biotech, Healthtech, and Medtech. As Denmark strengthens its position in areas like AI infrastructure (e.g. the Gefion supercomputer) and quantum research, the potential for more interdisciplinary innovation in life science grows significantly.

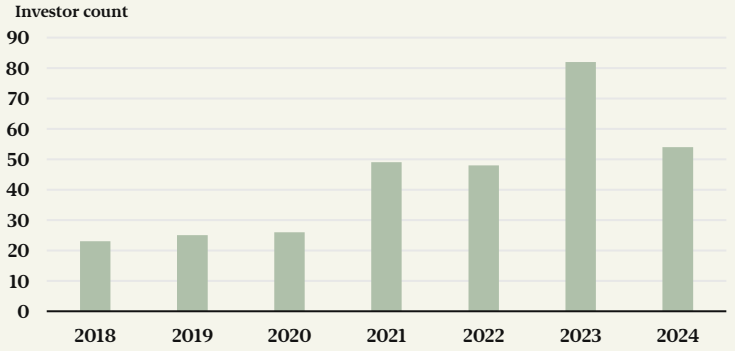


Proven investor appetite and structural health trends drive capital inflow

The number of active life science investors in Denmark has grown steadily since 2018, with a notable rise in international participation. Unlike newer sectors, life science has demonstrated successful exits and strong return potential, attracting repeat investments. Notably, international pharma companies are increasing their local presence in Denmark, creating more collaboration opportunities - such as the recent license agreements between Roche and Zealand Pharma, and AbbVie and Gubra.

Long-term health trends such as a demographic transition to an aging Danish population, and implied increases in healthcare costs, further reinforce the sector's demand-side fundamentals.

Number of active life science investors on the Danish venture capital market between 2018 to 2024



Source: EIFO (Venturelisten).
Note: The listed logos are used for illustrative purposes and does not reflect the full range of institutional anchors in the Danish life science sector.

Capital bottlenecks, weak exit environment, and commercialization gaps could slow Denmark's life science momentum

High capital needs and foreign investor reliance risk scaleup leakage

Meeting the projected capital demand by 2035 is critical to enabling life science scaleup success in Denmark. However, late-stage funding is disproportionately dependent on foreign investors, particularly from the U.S., who often lead large Series C and D rounds.

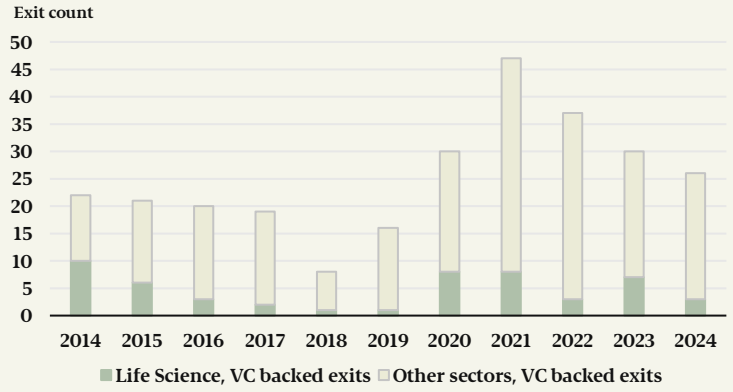
This creates two key risks: first, some foreign funds include relocation clauses that may require companies to move abroad to access follow-on capital – potentially draining the ecosystem of its most promising scaleups. Second, in times of macroeconomic or geopolitical uncertainty, foreign investors often shift focus toward domestic markets, which can introduce volatility and uncertainty in the availability of late-stage funding for Danish companies – especially at critical growth inflection points.

Weak exit environment limits capital recycling and fund formation

Life science is one of the few sectors in Denmark with a strong track record of VC-backed exits, often via strategic M&A by global corporates, as European IPO markets remain weak. However, the number of venture-backed exits has declined structurally in recent years, including within life science.

If this subdued exit environment persists, it could slow capital recycling, limiting investors' ability to reallocate returns into new startups. It may also delay the formation of new venture capital funds, weakening the investment pipeline and reducing available capital for future life science ventures.

Venture backed exits of Danish companies by sector



Commercialization gaps may hinder innovation capture

Despite exceptional research output, Denmark faces persistent challenges in translating breakthrough science into scalable companies. This gap – often referred to as the "valley of death" – represents a continued difficult transition between academic discovery and commercial validation.

Strengthening linkages between universities, hospitals, industry and capital is essential to closing this gap. Without stronger platforms to test, demonstrate, and de-risk innovations in clinical and/or real-world settings, many promising technologies risk stalling before they reach the market – limiting the long-term impact of research investments.

Sources: PitchBook and EIFO analysis.

Appendix

Appendix I: Projection model methodology

Projection model: data-driven logic and forward simulation

The projection is based on a forward-looking simulation model built from historical funding dynamics in Danish life science from 2018 to 2024. It includes vertical-specific patterns in graduation rates, time-to-funding, and average round sizes from Seed to Series D.

The model estimates future capital demand by rolling forward existing companies already in the funding pipeline, while adding new startups annually based on historical growth in the startup base (9% YoY). These companies "graduate" through funding stages based on average historical timing and funding behaviour.

Example: modelling of a life science company formed in 2024

- On average, a new life science startup raises its first Seed round after 38 months, with an average round size of EUR 9 million.
- It then progresses to Series A after 24 months, and subsequently to Series B after another 24 months, with stage-appropriate round sizes applied at each step.
- Graduation probabilities are applied to reflect the likelihood that a company advances from one stage to the next, based on real historical outcomes, e.g. 46% from Seed to Series A.

Two scenarios modelled:

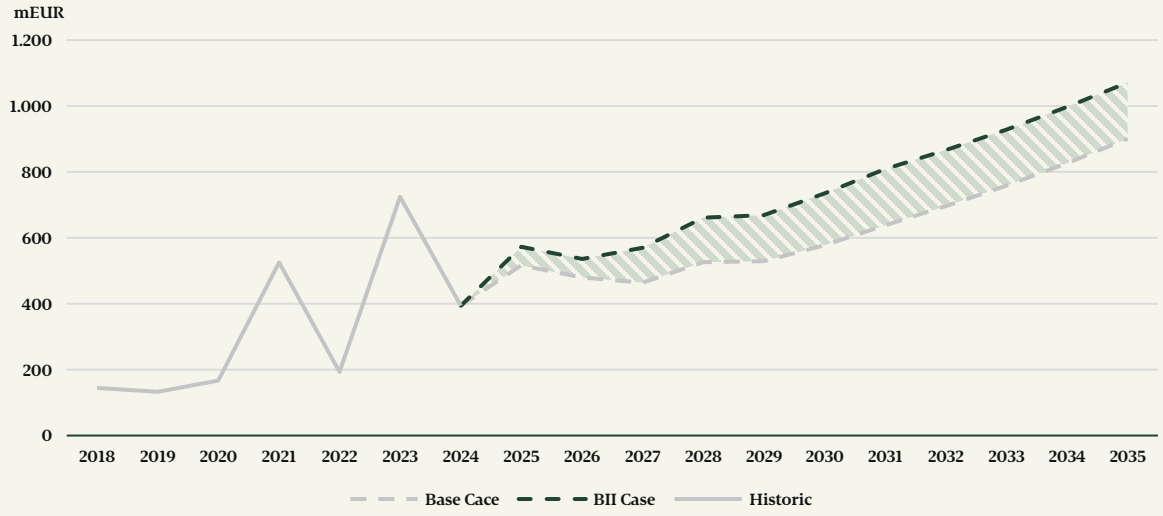
- The base case scenario assumes a continuation of past patterns without structural changes.
- The BII-enhanced scenario builds on this, incorporating the expected doubling of BioInnovation Institute's annual cohort of supported startups and their strategic focus on human health innovation, increasing the volume of Seed-stage companies and downstream funding needs.

From baseline to expansion: a data-backed interval of projected capital demand

The two projection paths illustrate a range from conservative to more ambitious investment volume in Danish life science, reaching EUR 900 million to EUR 1.071 billion by 2035. The EUR 170 million difference reflects the expected uplift from a stronger early-stage pipeline under the expanded BII mandate.

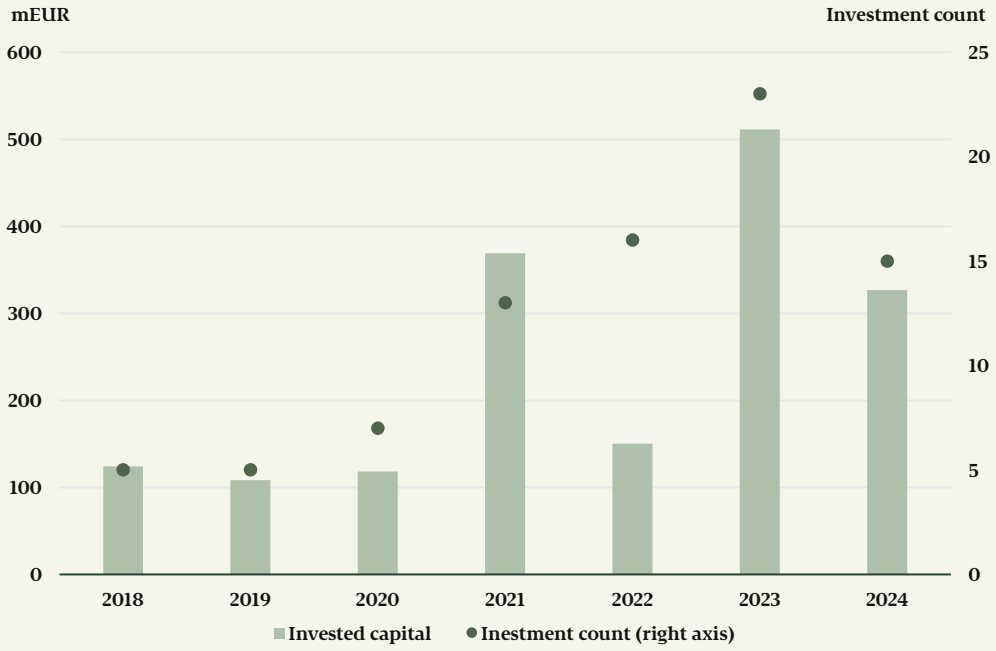
While the model is grounded in historic patterns and institutional developments, additional structural growth drivers – including Innovation District Copenhagen, advances in AI and quantum, and infrastructure initiatives like the Gefion supercomputer – are expected to further strengthen the ecosystem. Though not explicitly modeled, these factors support the plausibility of the projected range and indicate that actual investments may exceed both scenarios.

Projected VC Financing Demand from Danish life science companies – Base Case vs. BII Case

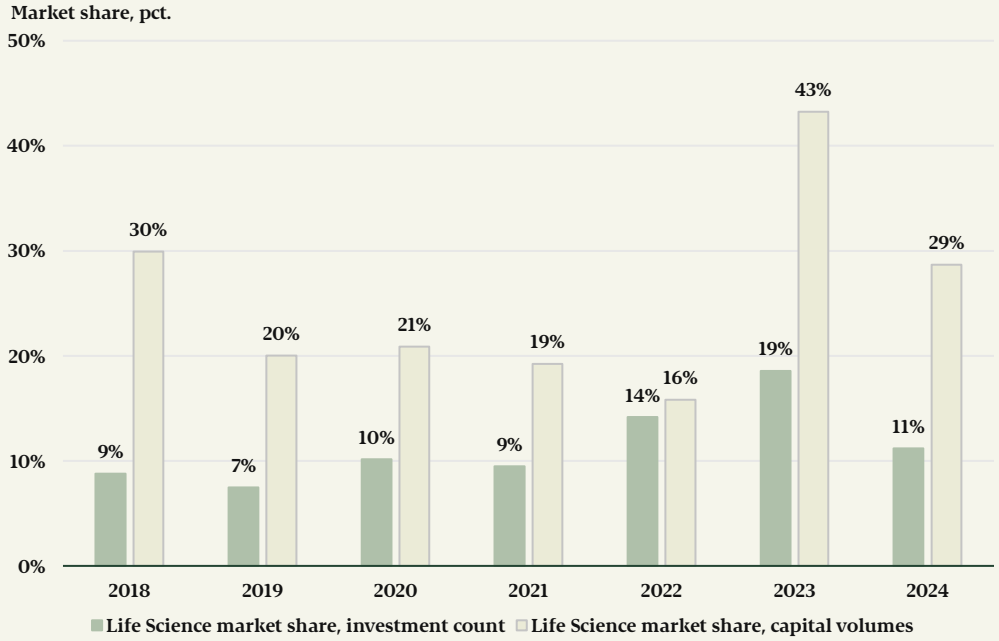


Appendix II: Market Insights (1/3)
Development in Biotech venture capital investments

Venture Capital Investments in Danish Biotech Companies



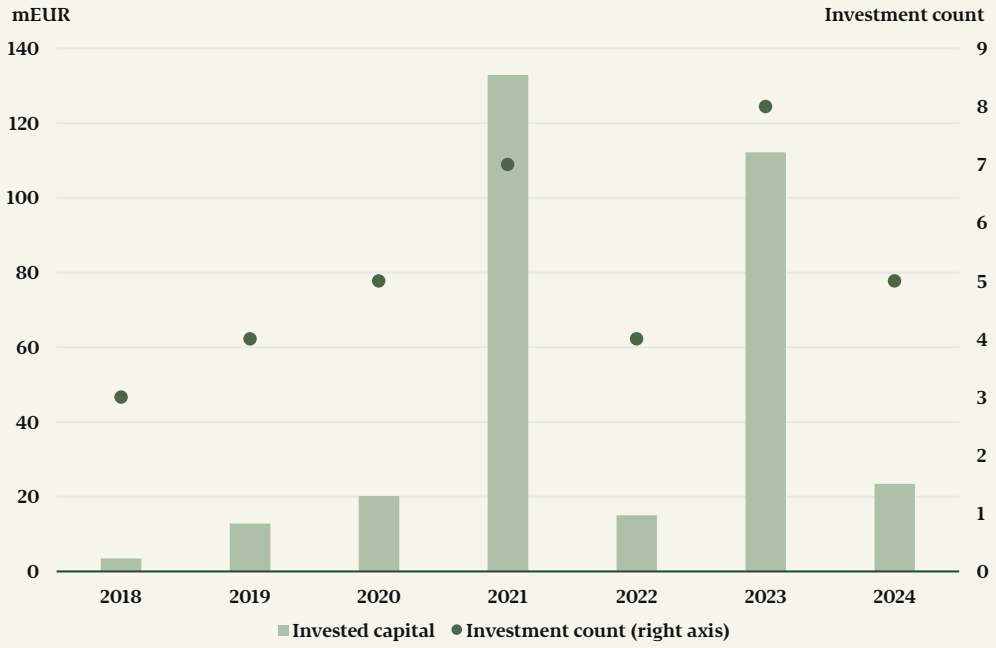
Biotech investments as a share of total Danish venture capital market activity



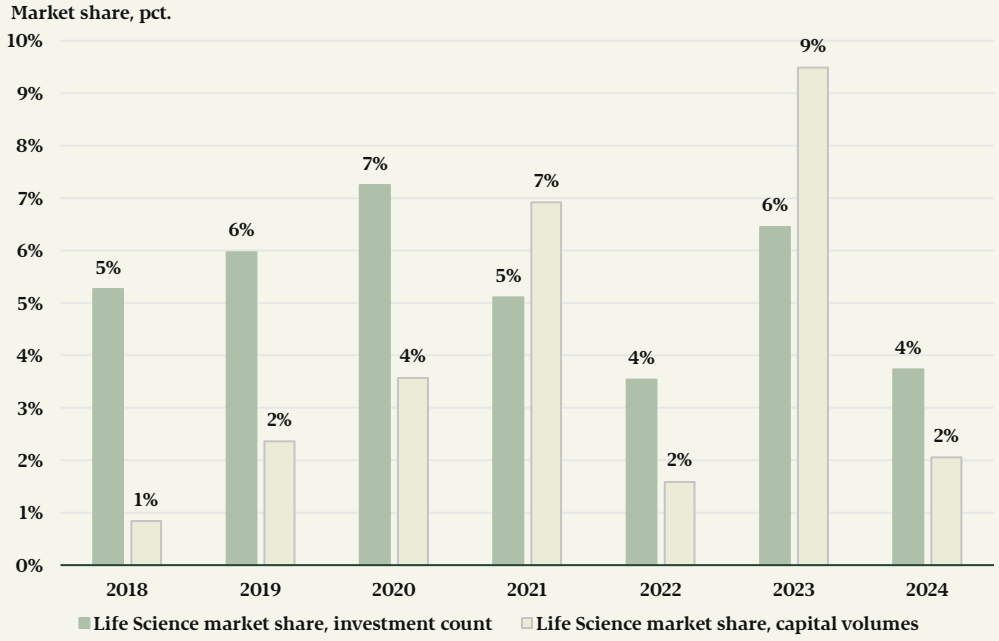
Sources: EIFO.
Note: the data differ from previous analyses, as the venture list has been updated retrospectively, where investment amounts have been registered that were not previously included in the reports.

Appendix II: Market insights (2/3)
Development in Healthtech venture capital investments

Venture Capital Investments in Danish Healthtech Companies



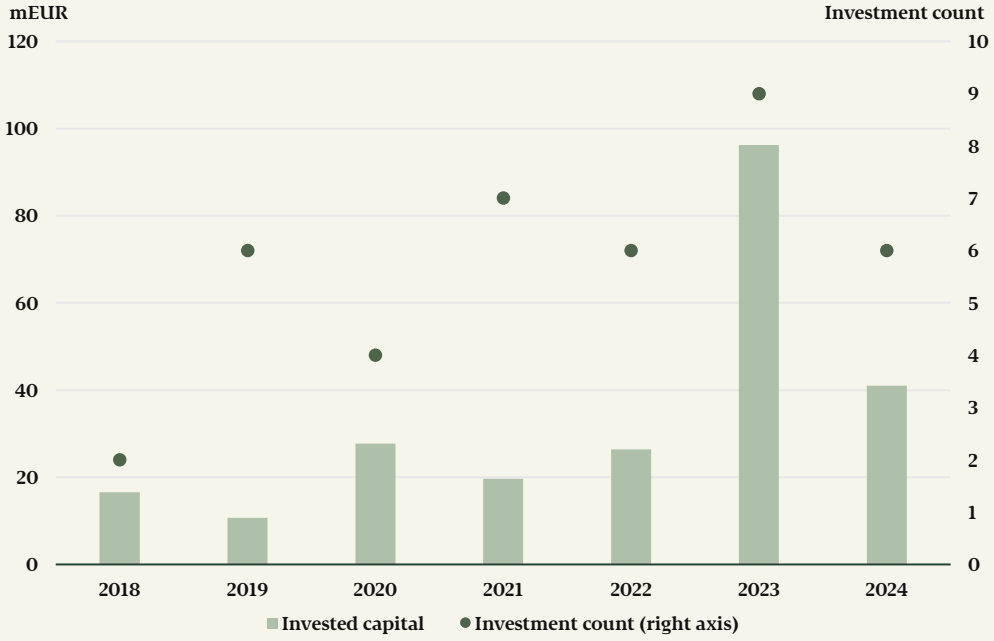
Healthtech investments as a share of total Danish venture capital market activity



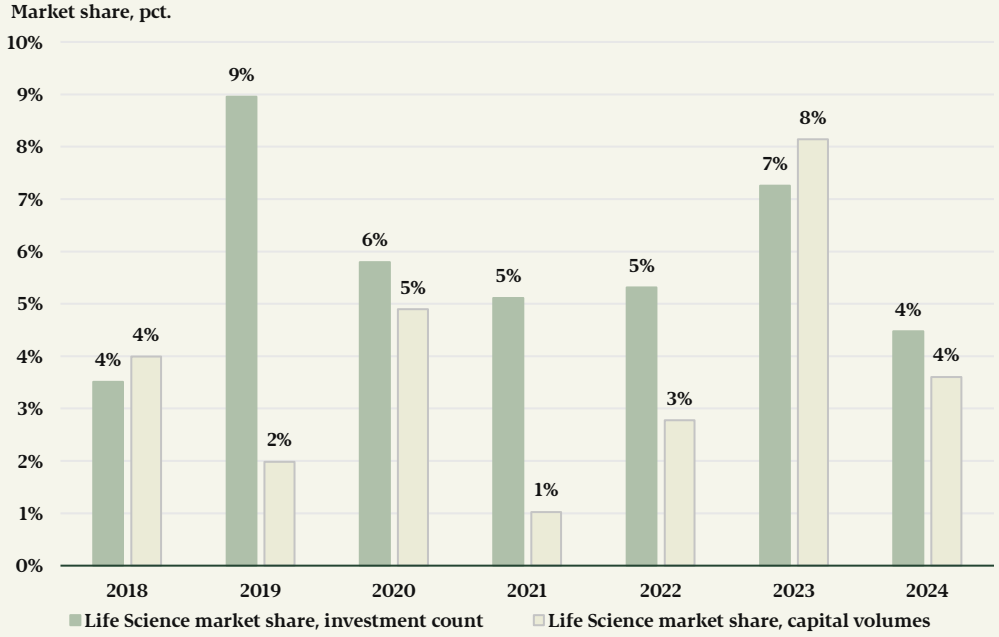
Sources: EIFO.
Note: the data differ from previous analyses, as the venture list has been updated retrospectively, where investment amounts have been registered that were not previously included in the reports.

Appendix II: Market insights (3/3)
Development in Medtech venture capital investments

Venture Capital Investments in Danish Medtech Companies



Medtech investments as a share of total Danish venture capital market activity



Sources: EIFO.
Note: the data differ from previous analyses, as the venture list has been updated retrospectively, where investment amounts have been registered that were not previously included in the reports.

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