

# STARTECH – FIVE YEARS OF INNOVATION

StarTech is a project that supports innovation and digital transformation of the Serbian economy; it is implemented by NALED in cooperation with the Government of Serbia. With a budget of \$8 million provided by Philip Morris, it is also the largest development project in Serbia fully financed by the private sector.

Since 2021, StarTech has positioned itself as an important partner of innovators, helping them develop and commercialize their ideas through a grant fund. Additionally, it supports the entire innovation ecosystem by working on establishing a favorable legal framework and replicating the best global practices for innovation support.

**\$8** million for the innovation ecosystem

**111** innovative ideas supported

**70+** recommendations for cutting red tape

**45%** of grantees are present in foreign markets in more than 29 countries

**81** approved requests for protection of intellectual property rights

## Grantees' major successes

**Baby FM**, special award Supernova Expand North Star, Dubai, 2025

**Coming, finale TOTYbot** – Robotic tractor of the Year, Hanover, 2025

**Neuroblast**, Most Impactful Business, WHT Tech event, Dubai, 2025

**Reputeo**, CyberE71 Innovation Award, Dubai, 2025

# Innovations Drive Nations

[www.startech.org.rs](http://www.startech.org.rs)

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## 2024–2026: ACTIVITIES IN FOCUS

Starting from 2024, StarTech has also focused on providing expert support to selected startups through two direct support programs: grant allocation and participation in an accelerated development program, aimed at helping innovators navigate their way to investments and markets. In terms of innovation policies, alongside topics such as the cooperation between the research community and businesses, and overcoming administrative and financial barriers for startups, the exports have come into focus, through the establishment of an advisory Export Hub in the city of Niš, to support startups seeking to enter international markets.

### DIRECT SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIONS

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

\$50,000 for up to 10 projects per year: Support for existing businesses not older than 10 years.

#### GROWTH ACCELERATION PROGRAM

The program combines mentoring, training, networking with investors, companies, and other stakeholders, and support for participating in international conferences and trade fairs.

#### SCIENCE-BUSINESS COOPERATION

Support to institutions in connecting businesses and academia, through guidelines for supporting PhD studies and technology transfer programs.

#### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Fostering the dialogue on challenges for innovators, through participation in working groups for regulatory reform on topics such as the import of R&D materials, intellectual property, B2B, B2S, and B2G cooperation, alternative financing sources, and digital assets.

#### BIO4

Support for the establishment and capacity building of the BIO4 campus.



#### EXPORT HUB NIŠ

Support for startups entering international markets: identification of promising markets, expert support and mentoring, guides, and training.

## DIRECT SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIONS

### SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Through five cycles of grant funding, the StarTech program has supported 106 projects with a total of around \$4 million, with individual teams having received grants ranging from \$15,000 to \$100,000. An additional five projects received 200 hours of expert support for market entry through an accelerated development program.



28 projects were initiated by informal teams, who used the StarTech program to formally establish their businesses. Among these projects, 11 teams from scientific institutes or universities stand out as examples of best practices for commercializing innovations from the academic community.

Some of the greatest grantee successes include the launch of a medical supplement in the USA, a medical device for neurodegenerative diseases, an e-accountant ERP system for entrepreneurs, advanced software for real-time data collection and processing, a platform for digital agricultural monitoring, a device for continuous remote temperature monitoring of infants, and smart houses for dogs.

Only three of the awarded projects were related to digital transformation, 47 projects developed physical products, and 55 innovations focused solely on software. As many as 38 projects use artificial intelligence and machine learning, with the most common areas being engineering and electronics, agriculture and food, MedTech, environmental technology, and BioTech.

StarTech and its grantees represented the Serbian startup ecosystem at international conferences including ViennaUp, berlin.hub, Dubai Expo, Gitex Europe, Bio Europe, and Slush, where they gained insights from global startups and established important business contacts.

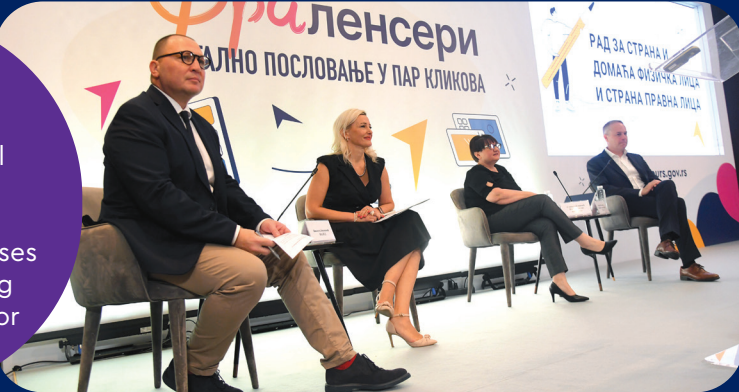


## IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS FOR INNOVATION

Through Innovation Policy Lab, StarTech also focuses on systematically improving the conditions for innovators' work, fostering dialogue, proposing reforms based on analysis, and providing support to institutions in developing public policies.

### EXPORT HUB

In collaboration with NTP Niš, the Pop-Up Export Hub was established in Niš, with the aim of supporting startups in conquering international markets. Two "Export Weeks" were organized for the markets of Far East countries and Nordic countries, featuring presentations of export analyses and guides. Approximately 100 hours of mentoring support were also provided to prepare startups for participation in international conferences.



### GREY BOOK OF INNOVATION

Upon broad consultations with the innovation community, two editions of the Grey Book of Innovation were published, containing over 70 proposals for removing administrative obstacles to innovative work, of which 17 have been implemented, are in process, or have been applied in part.

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

At our initiative, a new Law on the Import of Dual-Use Goods was adopted, simplifying the import of goods for R&D purposes, and the reform of freelancer taxation was supported. We participated in working groups for amending regulations on the import of R&D materials, technology transfer, intellectual property, alternative financing sources, and digital assets, and we will work on preparing a new Strategy for the Development of the Startup Ecosystem. Analyses were conducted on clinical trials of medicines and medical devices, as well as on the issuance of import permits for NIO.

### SCIENCE-BUSINESS COLLABORATION

Support was provided to the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation in creating a B2B platform for collaboration between small and large businesses, and an agreement was made to collaborate on another segment of the Open Research Infrastructure portal for science-business cooperation (S2B). StarTech provides long-term support in developing Guidelines for Industrial Doctorates, and a concept was created for establishing a Coordination Body for Innovation Based Growth.

### EDUCATION

More than 200 accountants and business owners were trained on using tax incentives, 170 freelancers were trained on using the portal [frlenseri.purs.gov.rs](https://frlenseri.purs.gov.rs), and the first training cycle for innovation incubators in the field of technology transfer was conducted.

