How Drugs Are Developed
From Idea to Drug

Step 1: Needs Analysis
Before a research project for a drug is launched, experts analyze areas where there are needs for new drugs or where new findings are available.

Step 2: Drug Discovery
Once a starting-point has been identified, work begins on developing thousands of pharmaceutical compounds. Perhaps ten of these will finally make it through to development.

Step 3: Testing
The potential drug compounds are extensively tested for several years to examine their effects and tolerability. The tests single out the final lead compound for the new drug.

Step 4: Application for Approval
In the next step, approval for the new drug is applied for. If this is granted, the drug is now available to patients.

Step 5: Observational Studies
Even after being approved, the drug continues to be monitored in clinical use, possibly including investigation of whether it can be used for other diseases too.

Fact Summary
- Time: The average time from the idea for a new drug to its market launch spans twelve years.
- Personnel: Around 7,900 staff work in Boehringer Ingelheim’s Research and Development and Medical departments all over the world.
- Money: Up to over one billion euros must be invested for a drug to become successful – including any failures along the way.