



SHIFT-HUB Entrepreneurial Discovery Workshop

EXPLORING BADEN- WUERTTEMBERG'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMART HEALTH

SHIFT-HUB Entrepreneurial Discovery Workshop: Exploring Baden-Wuerttemberg's Opportunities for Smart Health

Stuttgart, June 02, 2025 – The SHIFT-HUB project, funded by the EU, hosted a workshop titled "You innovate – We connect: Life Science Network in the LÄND" together with two regional key players of the regional Life Science innovation ecosystem: [BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH \(BIOPRO\)](#) and [BadenCampus GmbH & Co. KG \(BadenCampus\)](#). The event took place during the [Start-up BW Summit 2025](#) in Stuttgart, Germany. The workshop featured an informative pitching session of various regional funding support initiatives followed by a comprehensive panel discussion titled "The BW Life Science Innovation Ecosystem – discover chances for Entrepreneurs". Together, this session aimed at exploring regional opportunities and challenges in the Life Science innovation ecosystem connecting the regional stakeholders in Baden-Wuerttemberg and identifying opportunities for improvements to strengthen the regional ecosystem.

Panellists

The pitching session was chaired by Özgül Boztepe (BIOPRO) and the panel discussion by Alena Bubeck (Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, coordinator SHIFT-HUB project). The both sessions featured notable speakers who provided insights into various supporting initiatives and represented different stakeholder groups of the regional smart health ecosystem:

Pitching Session:

- **Özgül Boztepe**, Project Manager, [BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH \(BIOPRO\)](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Özgül is a start-up coach working in the Innovation & Start-up Support division at the state agency BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH. She supports founding teams from the life sciences sector—including medtech, biotech, and pharma—at various stages of their Start-up journey. BIOPRO offers a broad range of activities and services, such as validation programs, pitch training for fundraising, public relations, support with cooperation inquiries, and coaching on funding and financing opportunities. As a branch partner in the start-up and innovation ecosystem, BIOPRO also serves as the initiator of the LinkHealth@BW network.
- **Ingo Hämmerle**, CEO, [Medical Innovation Incubator](#), presenting the [4C Accelerator](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Ingo Hämmerle is the CEO of Medical Innovations Incubator GmbH (MII), which serves as a central hub for start-ups and innovations in the field of medical technology. MII offers a comprehensive support portfolio, providing targeted consulting services and practical assistance to foster the development, approval, and market introduction of medical innovations. A key offering is the internationally renowned 4C Accelerator. Since 2021 it has been offered to support founders in developing an entrepreneurially successful and regulatory plausible business model.
- **Günther Kornacker**, Head of Startup Services, [BadenCampus GmbH & Co. KG \(BadenCampus\)](#), presenting [arise](#) Accelerator
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Günther Kornacker is Head of Startup Services at BadenCampus. The BadenCampus innovation platform bundles concentrated knowledge, trust-based exchange and methodological excellence - for SMEs, start-ups, research institutions and municipalities, for a successful and liveable future. As part of BadenCampus, the arise Accelerator offers a great portfolio for startups and founders, from early stage to later stage.

- **Bodo Brückner**, Coordinator of the [Life Science Accelerator BW](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Bodo is a coordinator of the Life Science Accelerator Baden-Württemberg (LSA BW) and works in the Mannheim Department of Economic Development. The LSA BW is a 12-month Accelerator program for life science startups (digital health, medtech, biotech) in the pre-seed or seed phase to optimise their development process. Startup funding is one of the core priorities. Bodo is also a support partner ("Betreuungspartner") for the Startup BW Pre-Seed program.
- **Peter Neske**, Innovation Lead, [Pfizer Healthcare Hub](#), presenting [LinkHealth@BW](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Peter is the founder and head of the innovation platform Pfizer Healthcare Hub Freiburg. Together with the hub in Berlin, he drives innovations for the healthcare sector with a co-creation mindset. The focus is on topics related to digital patient care and innovative solutions for sustainable pharmaceutical production. Also, Peter is a board member of Baden-Württemberg connected e.V. and one of two spokespersons for LinkHealth@BW: As a network of networks, LinkHealth@BW offers all interested parties unique access to the life sciences ecosystem in Baden-Wuerttemberg – which is excellently positioned thanks to its strong partners.
- **Malaika Lauk**, Senior Consultant Health, [BadenCampus GmbH & Co. KG \(BadenCampus\)](#), presenting the [Trinational HealthTech Days](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Malaika oversees the health sector at BadenCampus, spearheading the "arise" brand, which focuses on startup programs and early-stage funding. She also leads the smartXhealth initiative, a collaborative platform that fosters innovation and promotes startups in the health sector, involving clinics, research and development entities, companies, and startups. As the spokesperson for the LinkHealth@BW network and co-initiator of the Trinational HealthTech Days, she continuously expands networks to promote innovation, connects experts, and implements concrete projects.
- **Larissa Ketterer**, Project Manager, [BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH \(BIOPRO\)](#), presenting the [HACK-IT-NET](#) project
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Larissa is project manager at the state agency BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH and responsible for the INTERREG Alpine Space project HACK-IT-NET, short for 'Health And Care Knowledge and Innovation Transfer NETwork'. HACK-IT-NET aims to establish a multi-stakeholder community in the Alpine region and to pool the expertise of stakeholders in the health and care sector in order to create a forward-looking health and care ecosystem in the Alpine Space.
- **Alena Bubeck**, Project Manager, [Steinbeis Europa Zentrum](#), presenting [SHIFT-HUB](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Alena is coordinating SHIFT-HUB, a project funded by the European Commission to establish a pan-European Hub for smart health innovations and future technologies. The hub provides a holistic service portfolio offering dedicated supporting activities and services to foster the development, the promotion and uptake of smart health technologies.

Panel Discussion:

- **Özgül Boztepe**, Project Manager, [BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH \(BIOPRO\)](#)
- **Malaika Lauk**, Senior Consultant Health, [BadenCampus GmbH & Co. KG \(BadenCampus\)](#),
- **Ramona Samba**, CEO and Co-founder of [sync2brain GmbH](#) and startup consultant at [Medical Innovations incubator GmbH](#).
 - o Role & Responsibilities: Ramona Samba is the CEO and Co-Founder of sync2brain, a pioneering medtech startup dedicated to advancing personalised brain stimulation for brain disorders. With a strong focus on the effective implementation of innovation, she plays a key role in bridging cutting-edge research with practical healthcare applications. In addition to her leadership at sync2brain, Ramona shares her expertise by consulting early-stage companies at the Medical Innovations Incubator GmbH in Tübingen, supporting the next generation of medtech entrepreneurs.
- **Christian Leikert**, Managing Partner Investor, [CARMA FUND Management GmbH](#)
 - o Role & Responsibilities: CARMA FUND Management GmbH is a venture capital firm managing CARMA FUND I, an investment fund, initiated by Ascenion and the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, committed to advancing early-stage developments in the life-science and healthcare space. CARMA FUND I is tailor made to suit the specific timeframe and needs of young companies and projects in these fields.

Key Discussion Points

Existing Regional Initiatives and Services

The session began by exploring the support services available to life science innovators, start-ups, and SMEs in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Those ranged from the regional level, e.g. provided by [BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH \(BIOPRO\)](#), [LinkHealth@BW](#) to international initiatives represented by the [Trinational HealthTech Days](#) as well as the European projects [HACK-IT-NET](#) and [SHIFT-HUB](#). Additionally, the Accelerator's [arise](#), [4C Accelerator](#) and the [Life Science Accelerator BW](#) were presented as a key enabler for early-stage start-ups, providing support through pitching sessions and training workshops that help newcomers navigate the industry. More information on the presented initiatives is outlined in the panellist introduction above.

Status of the Baden-Wuerttemberg Ecosystem

In the second part of the session, the panel discussion highlighted that Baden-Wuerttemberg's life science ecosystem is well-developed but still faces certain challenges. Regulations and fundraising were identified as the primary hurdles for start-ups. Regulatory frameworks require entrepreneurs to understand and align with these guidelines from the outset, which restricts their development flexibility. Furthermore, securing sufficient funding remains a significant challenge, particularly for early-stage ventures. Regional support programs, such as accelerators, play a vital role in helping new businesses overcome these obstacles by offering networking opportunities, pitching sessions, and training to facilitate integration into the ecosystem and gain valuable industry insights.

Additionally, the interdependence between regulation and funding is especially evident in the life science sector, as illustrated by the example of clinical trials. While clinical trial data is crucial

for attracting investors, funding is necessary to generate that data, creating a vicious cycle for start-ups that struggle with both financial and regulatory constraints.

Another significant challenge, highlighted by the audience, is communication with the target customer or end-user. For many start-ups, identifying the market relevance of their product is a critical obstacle. Networking plays a crucial role in overcoming this challenge, as it enables start-ups to connect with those who have access to target customers and gain insights into market needs. To ensure their solutions align with customer demands, start-ups require teamwork and diverse expertise. Regional support organisations also provide valuable assistance by offering expert guidance through programs that help start-ups refine their market positioning and customer engagement strategies.

Vision of an Ideal Innovation Ecosystem

The discussion on the vision of an ideal innovation ecosystem highlighted several key points beyond just financial support. Panellists emphasised that a successful ecosystem starts with science and research, as innovative ideas and entrepreneurs driven to establish companies often emerge from universities and research institutes. However, for these ideas to thrive, adequate infrastructure, such as laboratories and office spaces, is essential to support early-stage ventures especially in the Life Science sector. In addition to infrastructure, a strong network of support services, mentors, and investors is crucial to ensure that entrepreneurs have access to the resources they need to scale their innovations.

One common wish among the panellists was the creation of a centralised contact point to streamline access to all available support initiatives and networks. While establishing a single point of contact may be challenging, participants emphasised that effective networking is key. Building relationships where one individual knows who to turn to for specific needs can help entrepreneurs navigate the ecosystem more efficiently.

Additionally, the visibility of role models and success stories was highlighted as a critical factor in fostering growth. Showcasing successful entrepreneurs and their journeys can inspire new start-ups and demonstrate potential pathways to success. Strengthening connections between start-ups and investors, as well as promoting exchanges between established founders and newcomers, was seen as vital for encouraging growth and nurturing the next generation of innovators.

Regional Comparison and Opportunities for Development

The discussion on the regional innovation ecosystem in Baden-Wuerttemberg highlighted both its strengths and areas where further development is needed. The region stands out for its well-established networks, particularly in the life sciences and biotech sectors, which form a solid foundation for innovation. Participants also pointed to Baden-Wuerttemberg's political support and access to financial resources as key enablers for fostering growth in the innovation ecosystem.

However, several areas for improvement were identified. A major issue is the lack of cross-location health data infrastructures, which limits the region's ability to fully leverage data and impedes progress, particularly in fields like artificial intelligence. The need for better data utilisation was emphasised, with the suggestion that establishing a general health data

infrastructure could significantly benefit start-ups by providing easier access to relevant datasets for research and innovation.

While Baden-Wuerttemberg was praised for its offerings compared to other regions in Germany, such as Hessen, the visibility of its innovations was noted as an area with room for improvement. Unlike more prominent ecosystems like Berlin or Munich, the region's achievements are not as widely recognised. There was a strong call for more vocal promotion of Baden-Wuerttemberg's innovations to attract greater attention and investment, both nationally and internationally.

Despite these challenges, the panel emphasised that Baden-Wuerttemberg holds significant locational advantages and has the potential to lead even further by addressing these gaps, particularly in infrastructure and data-driven innovation.

Recommendations for Enhancing the Baden-Wuerttemberg's Health-Tech Ecosystem

1. **Improving infrastructure** for life science start-ups, especially in terms of laboratories and data systems, will help the region remain competitive.
2. **Enhancing networking opportunities** and fostering a more collaborative ecosystem through better communication channels.
3. **Raising visibility** of the region's life science innovations both within Germany and across Europe.
4. **Closing the funding gap** for early-stage clinical trials and market validation phases is crucial.

Conclusion

The life science innovation ecosystem in Baden-Wuerttemberg is already well-established, especially through initiatives such as LinkHealth@BW, and has proven to be a strong player within the European context. The region benefits from a robust network of initiatives, support services, and financial backing at the political level. However, there are still gaps, particularly in infrastructure, data utilisation, and early-stage funding. Addressing these challenges would significantly enhance Baden-Wuerttemberg's competitiveness and accelerate the growth of its life science sector. By fostering increased collaboration, investing in infrastructure, and promoting the visibility of innovations, the region can ensure its continued success and attract international attention, reinforcing its position as a global leader in the field.