

Policy Workshop

“Biomedical Engineering – Science Translation for Future Health”

Opportunities and European Actions

Date: 3-4 March 2026

Location: Conference Room 308, EMBO, Meyerhofstrasse 1, Heidelberg

Organizers: Fiona Watt, EMBO; Vasilis Ntziachristos, Helmholtz Munich, Germany; Rong Li, Mechanobiology Institute, Singapore; Matthias Lütolf, Institute of Human Biology, Switzerland

Day One: Tuesday, 3 March 2026

12:00 – 12:30 *Arrivals and finger food, slides upload and technical check*

12:30 – 12:50 **Welcome and objectives**

Fiona Watt, EMBO Director, Heidelberg

Vasilis Ntziachristos, Director of Bioengineering, Helmholtz Pioneer Campus, Munich

12:50 – 13:10 **Tour de table:** Participants’ introductions and 1-minute initial statements

Session I Biomedical Engineering – The Global Landscape (13mins+2 Q&A)

Intro and moderation: Maria Polychronidou, EMBO

13:15 – 13:30 *The US perspective*

Don Ingber, Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering, Harvard, USA

13:30 – 13:45 *The Singapore/Asian perspective*

Rong Li, Mechanobiology Institute, Singapore

13:45 – 14:00 *The IHB – a new academic/corporate model for Biomedical Engineering in Europe*

Matthias Lütolf, Institute of Human Biology (IHB), Switzerland

14:00 – 14:15 *The Helmholtz Biomedical Engineering Initiative*

Maike Sander, Max-Delbrück-Center, Germany

14:15 – 14:45 *Coffee break*

14:45 – 15:15 *Moderated Q&A*

15:15 – 15:45 **Synthesis: Best institutional practices for policy recommendation**

Session II Science Showcases (13mins+2 Q&A)

Intro and moderation: Ioannis Legouras, Helmholtz Brussels Office, Belgium

16:00 – 16:15 *Biomedical imaging and sensing for next-generation medicine*

Vasilis Ntziachristos, TUM & Helmholtz Munich, Germany

16:15 – 16:30 *Cellular bioengineering to study cell mechanics*

Alba Diz-Muñoz, EMBL Heidelberg, Germany

16:30 – 16:45 *Recreating the stem cell niche on engineered surfaces*

Fiona Watt, EMBO

16:45 – 17:45 **Synthesis: Bio(medical) engineering concepts/culture as driver of translation?**

17:50 *Transport to hotel*

19:15 – 21:30 *Dinner in Heidelberg*

Day Two: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

8:45 *Arrivals and coffee*

09:00 – 09:15 **Opening address**

Unlocking the full potential of Europe's biotech for a healthy and prosperous society
Arjon Van Hengel, Unit Health Innovations and Ecosystems, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, Brussels

Session III **Ingredients for Effective Bioengineering Ecosystems**

Intro and moderation: Marta Dias Agostinho, Executive Director, EU-LIFE, Barcelona, Spain

09:15 – 09:30 *Europe and the need to “Align, Act and Accelerate Research and Innovation”: new challenges and opportunities to face a new complex of uncertainty*
Manuel Heitor, Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research (IN+), Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon, Portugal

09:30 – 09:45 *Health research and biotechnology – Key elements of the German high-tech agenda*
Veronika von Messling, Director General Life Sciences, Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, Germany

09:45 – 10:00 *A scientist's/Biotech startup experience*

Filipe Pereira, Co-Founder, Head of Innovation Asgard Therapeutics, Denmark

10:00 – 10:15 *Beyond serendipity: How to rethink sciencepreneurship to accelerate translation from research into impact*
Barbara Diehl, Chief Partnership Officer, Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation, (SPRIND), Germany

10:15 – 10:45 *Coffee break*

10:45 – 11:15 *Moderated Q&A*

11:15 – 11:45 **Synthesis: Key factors for a European Agenda for Bioengineering Innovation**

12:00 – 13:00 *Lunch and group photo*

Session IV **Bioengineering & Translation – Stakeholder Perspectives**

Intro and moderation: Thomas Schwarz-Romond, Helmholtz Munich, Germany

13:00 – 13:15 *The science of science-based innovation*
Francis de Véricourt, Institute for Deep Tech Innovation, Berlin, Germany

13:15 – 13:30 *Perspectives from high risk, high reward company building*
Alexander Zoellner, Moonshot Discovery at X (Google X), USA

13:30 – 13:45 *From bioengineering to bioenterprise: Building effective BioInnovation ecosystems*
Markus Herrgård, CTO, BioInnovation Institute, Denmark

13:45 – 14:00 *A corporate view on (academic) partnership and innovation*
Michelangelo Masini, Head of Corporate Research and Technology, Zeiss, Germany

14:00 – 14:30 *Coffee break*

14:30 – 15:45 **Moderated round table**

Marta Dias Agostinho, EU-LIFE and Sandra Bendiscioli, EMBO Senior Policy Officer
Stakeholders and responsibilities to create effective BioTech Innovation ecosystems

Take home messages from each participant

15:45 – 16:00 **Closing remarks and next steps**
Fiona Watt and Vasilis Ntziachristos

16:00 *Workshop ends*