

FUTURE FORUM: Health. Tech. Diplomacy. – Takeaway

September 7 & 8, 2025 – Cambridge, MA

Executive Summary

The Future Forum 2025, hosted by DWIH New York at the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, brought together experts, innovators, and institutional partners from both sides of the Atlantic to examine the intersections of health, technology, and diplomacy. To ground these discussions empirically, the program opened with an analytical presentation by ISTARI.AI. Their comparative study of the Massachusetts and Baden-Württemberg health sectors served as an illustrative example of how two mature, health science-oriented regions can be examined using large-scale WebAI methods.

Two expert workshops followed, addressing **strategic decision-making** in life sciences and the dynamics of **research transfer** and **late-stage innovation**. This document summarizes these analytical insights and discussions, highlighting key themes, challenges, and implications for future transatlantic cooperation.

ISTARI.AI Analytical Report – Comparative WebAI Study

ISTARI.AI introduced a comparative study examining the health-sector landscapes which examined the health-sector landscapes of Massachusetts and Baden-Württemberg using large-scale WebAI, clustering, spatial mapping and hyperlink analysis.

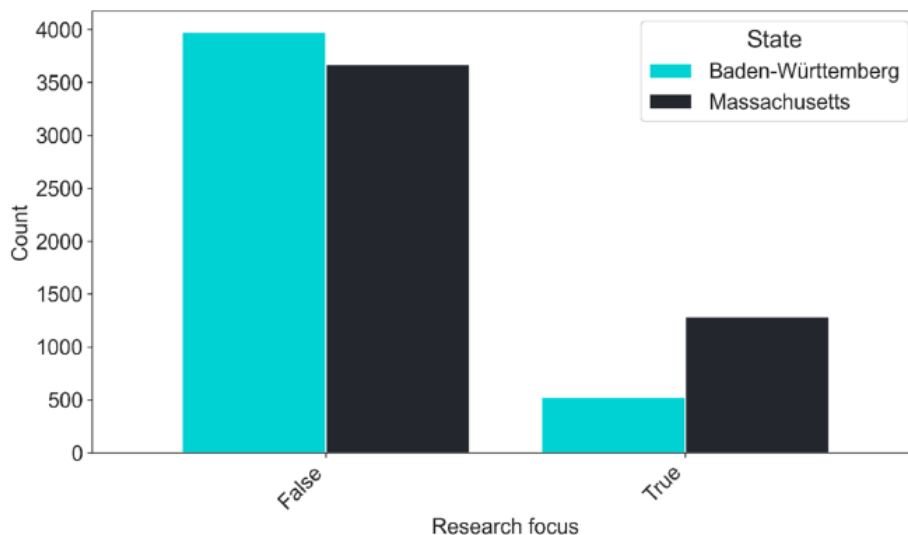


Figure 8 Health sector firms with research focus

The report provides a quantitative perspective on how both regions position themselves within the broader health innovation environment. Massachusetts contains a far larger number of research-active health-sector firms (1,284 vs. 522), reflecting the strong influence of institutions such as MIT, Harvard University, and the Broad Institute (figure 8). AI adoption follows a similar pattern: 8.5% of Massachusetts firms reference AI use compared to 3.0% in Baden-Württemberg (figure 9).

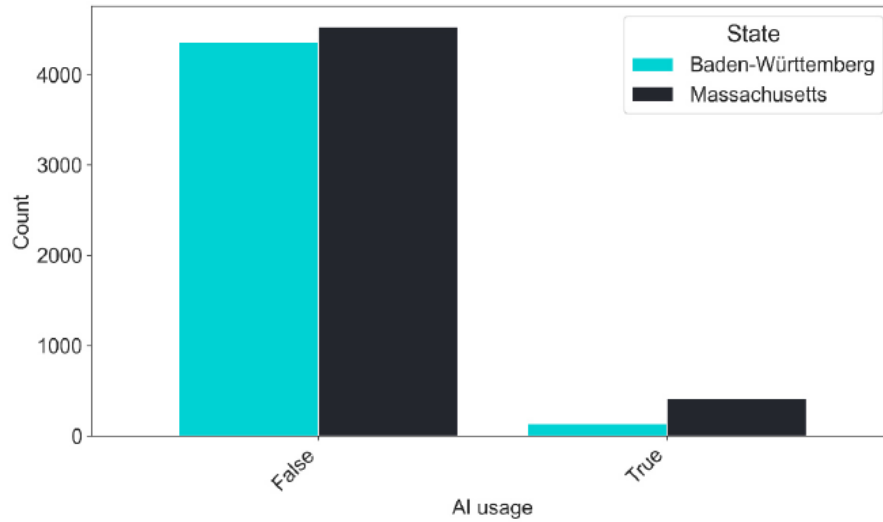


Figure 9 Health sector firms with AI usage

By contrast, Baden-Württemberg shows notable strengths in medical technology, diagnostics and applied clinical tools, supported by SMEs, specialized clinics and university-linked hubs across Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Freiburg, and Mannheim. While less AI-driven, the region demonstrates considerable depth in precision engineering and clinical integration.

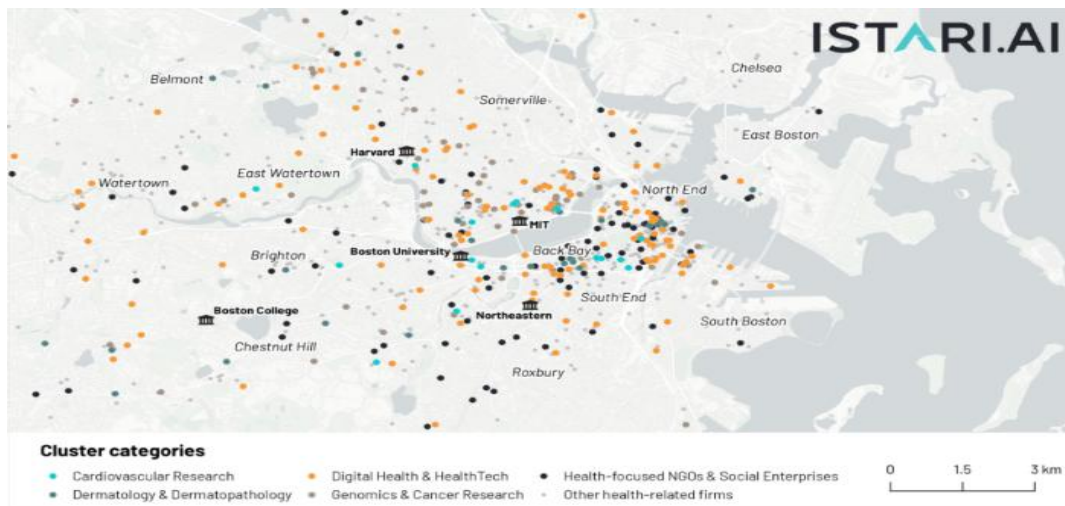


Figure 13 Distribution of health sector in Boston, MA

Spatial analysis further reveals **different structural patterns**. Massachusetts forms a tightly concentrated cluster around Boston-Cambridge, whereas Baden-Württemberg’s activity is distributed across several innovation nodes. Hyperlink mapping (a proxy for digital and institutional connectivity) indicates strong domestic U.S. linkages for Massachusetts firms and significant outbound ties from Baden-Württemberg to international partners. This suggests an existing, yet underleveraged transatlantic interface that holds **crucial potential** for collaboration.

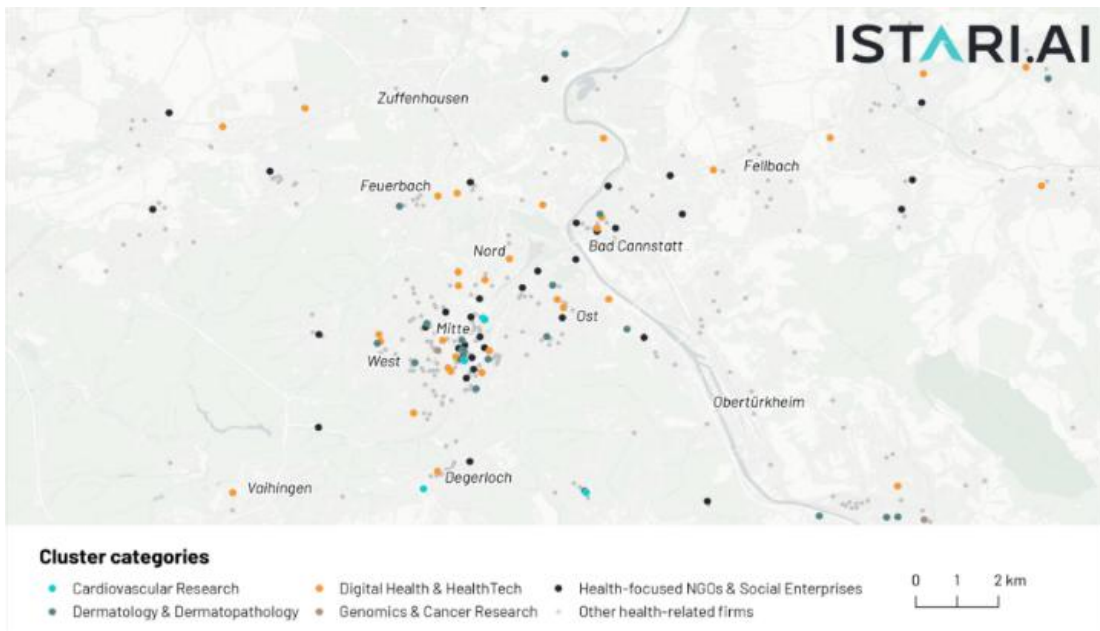


Figure 14 Distribution of health sector in Stuttgart, Germany

Taken together, the findings highlight distinct yet complementary strengths: Massachusetts offers scale, speed and digital research intensity, while Baden-Württemberg provides engineering excellence, translational rigor and stable clinical environments. These differences create opportunities for joint pilot projects, AI-enabled research collaborations and coordinated commercialization pathways. Ultimately, this example underscores how regional complementarities across the U.S. and Germany can serve as a foundation for more strategic, data-informed transatlantic collaboration.

Workshop 1: Taking Risks & Making Decisions in Health and Life

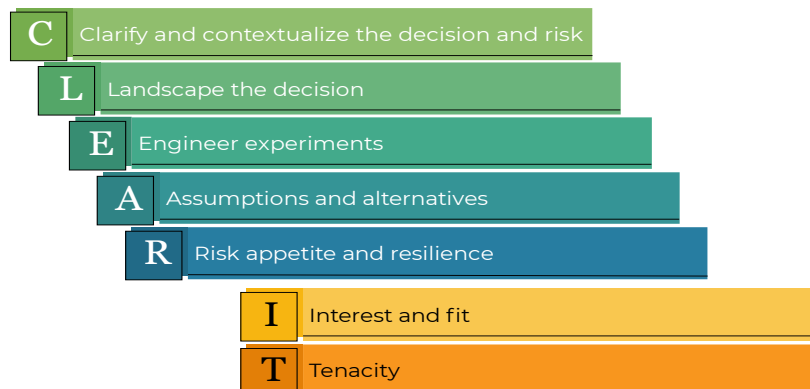
Sciences Transfer

Moderator: Elizabeth Jennings (*Venture Atlas Labs*), facilitated by Christian Strowa (*DAAD/DWIH NY*)

Elizabeth Jennings highlighted the challenge of making **strategic decisions** in health and life sciences, where choices must be made quickly and with incomplete information. She presented the CLEAR/IT framework. **C**larify, **L**andscape, **E**vidence, **A**lternatives, **R**isk, **I**nterest, **T**enacity—as a fast, defensible approach that sets boundary conditions, aligns stakeholders, tests assumptions, and matches risk appetite to institutional resilience.

A fast, defensible way to decide under uncertainty

CLEAR/IT



Case Study: Bilateral MedTech Testing

To demonstrate the framework in practice, Jennings presented a binational MedTech case study involving German and U.S. remote-monitoring software. Three distinct pathways were compared:

- U.S. first with Germany Fast-Follow
- Germany first with U.S. Fast-Follow
- Parallel Pilots (“Sandboxes”) with a Shared Data Trust

The discussion revealed several insights:

- ➔ Leading regulatory authority (Food and Drug Administration (FDA) vs Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM)) often dictates sequencing, making true parallelism challenging
- ➔ Stakeholder **identification is critical**: who owns risk, who executes, and who benefits?
- ➔ Incomplete information is unavoidable; teams must choose the **game they can win**, given constraints, goals and business models
- ➔ External risks such as budget fluctuations; data friction and tariffs must be weighted for whether they meaningfully **“move the needle”**.

Key Takeaways

1. CLEAR/IT provides a pragmatic structure for navigating strategic decisions in health innovation
2. Risk is inherently ambiguous, leaders must prioritize movement, evidence generation and resilience
3. Binational projects depend on regulatory fit, stakeholder alignment and early clarity on business models
4. While uncertainty cannot be eliminated, structured frameworks help “own the right risks” and sustain momentum rather than allowing decisions to stall.

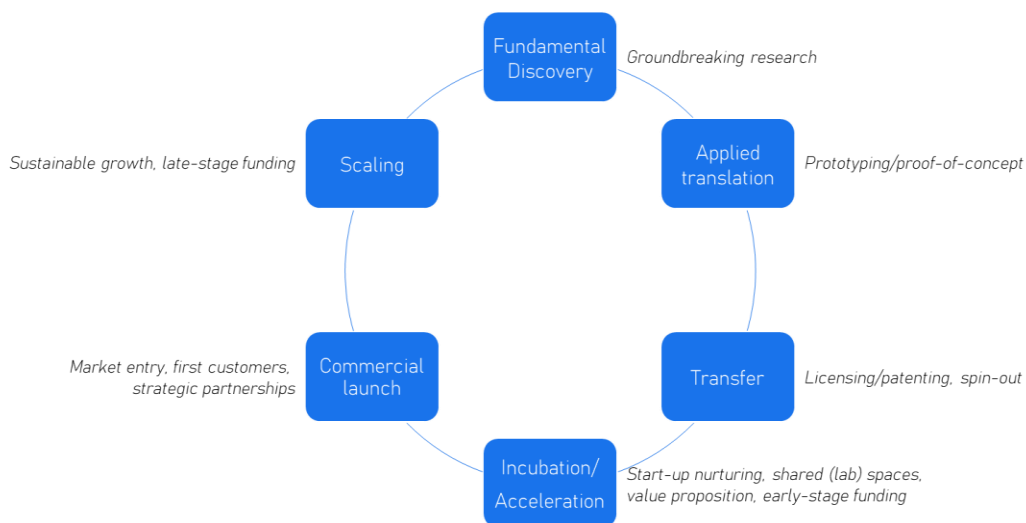
Workshop 2: Innovation Life Cycle – Research to Transfer

Moderator: Mridul Agrawal (*Iuvando Health*), with facilitation by Jan Lüdert (*DWIH New York*)

Workshop 2 examined the so-called **innovation cycle** and conditions for successful research transfer. Mridul Agrawal, a physician-scientist and entrepreneur, draws from personal experience in Germany and the U.S. to illustrate differences in how ideas move from discovery to commercialization.

Stages of the Innovation Cycle:

First, we begin by discovery and applied translation (prototyping, proof of concept), followed by transfer (licensing, spinouts), incubation/acceleration and lastly commercial launch/scaling. While there is overlap in the early stages between the U.S. and Germany, it is the late-stage financing where the U.S. excels.



Transfer Ecosystem Ingredients:

Successful transfer relies on several ingredients: strong academic anchors, frequent serendipitous encounters “**human collisions**,” accessible IP frameworks, strategically aligned funding (‘smart money’) and permeability between academia and industry. Boston’s ecosystem, with its dense research and industry base, was discussed as an example of how these elements reinforce one another. Additionally, the permeability between academia and industry becomes increasingly important. This allows for a more flexible approach, scientists being able to move to industry and back.

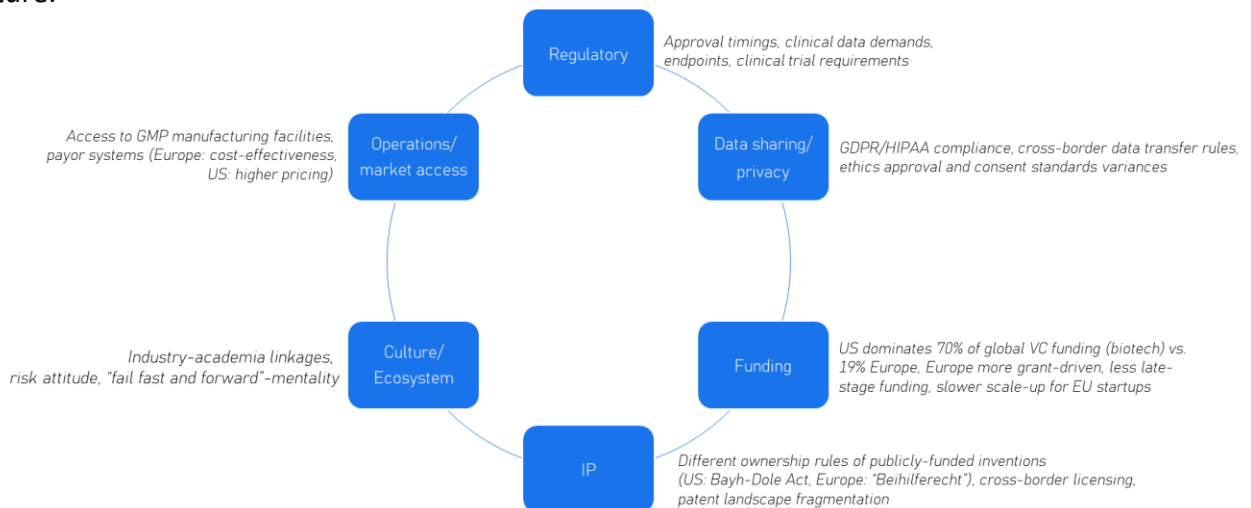
Barriers and Challenges:

Regulatory → differing approval processes and data-sharing rules (GDPR vs. HIPAA).

Funding → U.S. dominance in late-stage VC (70% globally) versus Europe’s reliance on grants.

IP → structural differences (Bayh-Dole Act vs. EU State Aid Law) slows European commercialization.

Culture → lower pace and less entrepreneurial mindset in Germany compared to U.S. 'fail fast' culture.



Participant Insights:

Expert discussions noted that German startups often excel in problem-solving yet lack commercial mindset. Participants noted strong early-stage support in Germany, but many firms move to the U.S. to scale. Possible suggestions included creating cross-Atlantic pipelines, enhancing university-industry partnerships, and reforming European IP and funding structures.

Key Takeaways:

Policy reforms in Europe could accelerate research transfer. Strategic partnerships with U.S. institutions can support scaling and building entrepreneurial mindset early is essential for successful commercialization.

Implications for Transatlantic Collaboration

The combined insights from the Future Forum workshops and the ISATRI.AI WebAI analysis underscored **complementary strengths** of the German and U.S. innovation ecosystems and the opportunities that arise from closer alignment. While the United States is distinguished by its speed, risk-taking culture, and access to late-stage capital, Germany and Europe bring strong research capacity, structured early-stage support, and robust public grant systems. These differences highlight opportunities for greater transnational collaboration/innovation.

For DWIH New York and its partners, the outcomes of the Forum suggest several areas for action:

- 1. Reduce structural barriers to commercialization**

Facilitate dialogue on intellectual property, funding structures, and regulatory frameworks can help reduce barriers and accelerate the transfer of research into practice

- 2. Strengthen transatlantic innovation pipelines**

Build more structured pathways between German universities and U.S. industry networks so German innovations can access capital, scale internationally and reach diverse patient populations.

- 3. Develop entrepreneurial capacity within German academia**

Expand training, mentorship and exposure to U.S. models to equip researchers with the skills and mindset needed to better navigate the challenges of commercialization.

- 4. Facilitate Inflow of German research innovations to the U.S.**

Create structured opportunities for German research teams to test, pilot and commercialize their innovations within U.S. industry and health ecosystems

By focusing on these opportunities, DWIH New York reinforces its role as a connector across borders. The insights from both the workshops and the comparative WebAI analysis point to a shared trajectory:

“A transatlantic innovation space where research excellence, engineering depth and digital advancement combine to address emerging health challenges. Building on these complementary assets, we aim to deepen a stable and long-term relationship between Germany and the United States.”