

GeneNovate Investors' Day - Advisory Board 2026

Trine Bartholdy

Chief Business Officer, BioInnovation Institute (BII), Copenhagen

Trine has + 20 years' experience in the life science sector, working in her favorite place in the intersection between Life Science and Business. In her role as CBO at BII, she is part of the Executive Leadership Team. She leads the Venture Creation Department responsible for Scouting, Sourcing, Due Diligence and providing Acceleration expertise to start ups and scientific projects. Furthermore, her Team runs the company creation program, Bio Studio, as well as newly established Center of Excellence within Women's Health, Bio Solutions with more to come.

Prior to joining BII, Trine worked as an Investment Director at Sunstone Life Science Ventures, investing in health tech and pharmaceuticals. Furthermore, she spent 6 years with Novo Nordisk working with the strategic planning of the R&D portfolio within metabolic diseases/obesity followed by initiating Novo Nordisk's Digital Health journey. She holds a M.Sc. in Finance and Accounting (Copenhagen Business School) and a Certificate in Pharmaceutical Drug Development from European Center of Pharmaceutical Medicine (ECPM, Basel).

BioInnovation Institute is a non-profit life science institute bridging the gap between academia and business, working with accelerator and incubator models. Established in 2018 by the Novo Nordisk Foundation, it has to date fostered +112 life science start-ups within pharmaceuticals, health tech and bio industrials.

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Johannes Fruehauf

Johannes Fruehauf is a physician-scientist, serial entrepreneur, and venture capitalist focused on advancing life science innovation. He is the Founder and Chairman of BioLabs and LabCentral, a global network of lab spaces that has supported more than 1,200 startups across the US, Europe, and Japan, which together have raised over \$30 billion in venture funding.

He is also Co-Founder and General Partner at Mission BioCapital, where he leads early-stage investments in life science companies and serves on multiple portfolio company boards. Throughout his career, he has focused on accelerating innovation, reducing inefficiencies, and empowering entrepreneurs.

With over 20 years of experience in biotech entrepreneurship and a background in clinical medicine, Fruehauf has dedicated his work to supporting startup ecosystems. His organizations currently serve hundreds of startups across multiple cities and have played a significant role in early-stage biotech funding.

He studied medicine in Germany and France, conducted fieldwork in Africa, and practiced medicine before moving to the US for research at Harvard Medical School. He holds a medical degree from the University of Frankfurt and a doctorate from the University of Heidelberg, and has authored over 30 scientific publications and holds several patents.

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Markus Gerhard

Markus Gerhard is a physician and scientist specializing in infections and immunology. He studied medicine in Heidelberg and Hamburg and earned his MD in 1996. He completed his residency training in internal medicine at Klinikum rechts der Isar in 2004. In 2006, he began leading a research group there and obtained his habilitation in 2009. In 2010, he was appointed associate professor of medical microbiology and immunology at the Technical University of Munich, where he also serves as Academic Director of the TUM Venture Lab Healthcare.

His research focuses on how pathogens interact with the human host, particularly in gastrointestinal infections. His group studies mechanisms by which pathogens suppress the immune response to establish chronic infections, as well as inflammatory processes involved in cancer development, with the aim of developing new preventive and therapeutic strategies.

In addition to his academic work, he has co-founded several biotech companies, including Imevax and Hepyvaxx, and actively supports startups in biotech, medtech, and digital health through his role at the Venture Lab.

Professor Gerhard has published more than 120 scientific papers, including in leading journals such as *Nature Medicine* and *Gastroenterology*.

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Varun Gupta

Varun Gupta is Partner at Wellington Partners, where he plays a key role in shaping the firm's early-stage investment strategy and deal sourcing, with a focus on biopharma. He serves on the boards of several portfolio companies, including Confo, ImCheck, SciRhom, and Dunad, and is also a board observer for others.

Since joining Wellington in 2018, he has been actively involved in building the firm's early-stage pipeline and supports multiple investments. Beyond his role, he mentors early scientific projects within European innovation programs such as SPARK-BIH and EIT Health.

Before Wellington, Varun gained experience in venture capital at Ysios Capital in Spain and Forbion in the Netherlands. He holds a PhD in Neuroscience (summa cum laude) from Freie Universität Berlin, an MBA from IESE Business School, and a Master's degree in Medical Biotechnology. His academic work has been published in leading journals, and he has received several prestigious research fellowships.

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Elisa Kieback

Elisa Kieback is a biologist and immunologist, and co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of the biotech company T-knife Therapeutics. She studied biology in Dresden, Heidelberg, and Glasgow, and completed her PhD in immunology at Humboldt University in Berlin.

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She has over 15 years of experience in cellular immunotherapy, particularly in T cell receptor (TCR) research and its therapeutic applications. Her work includes translational research at the Max Delbrück Center and leading a clinical trial at Charité using gene-modified T cells. In 2019, she co-founded T-knife as a spinout from these institutions.

Dr. Kieback has contributed to numerous patents in adoptive T cell therapy and has received several recognitions, including being named one of Germany's "100 most visionary women" and the Marthe-Vogt Award for outstanding young female scientists.

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Kahina Lang

Strategist at heart, scientist by nature, and entrepreneur in spirit.

Kahina Lang is passionate about healthcare innovation and dedicated to advancing novel technologies with transformative potential for patients. She joined Merck in 2016 as part of Inhouse Consulting, continued her career in Group Strategy, then naturally transitioned to Healthcare R&D where she drove the Discovery Strategy and later took ownership of a worldwide portfolio of academic partnerships.

For the past three years, as an Entrepreneur in Residence, she successfully built an international research organization from the ground up, spanning three continents and operating with the agility of a startup. The team now composed of 45+ experts, is pioneering a portfolio of cutting-edge nanoparticle delivery solutions to harness the full potential of mRNA.

Pushing the boundaries of science and creating game-changing treatments for patients is her main driver.

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Karl Naegler

Karl Naegler is a Partner in the Sofinnova Capital Strategy. He joined us in September 2024, bringing a strong track record of 20 years of investment experience. Before joining Sofinnova, he was a Managing Partner at Wellington Partners Life Sciences and before that, a Partner at Gimv. In those roles, he was instrumental in the success of several high-profile startups, from company formation to exit. These include Seamless Therapeutics, launched with a top syndicate of investors; Breath Therapeutics, a co-investment with Sofinnova Partners, acquired by Zambon; Covagen, acquired by Johnson & Johnson, and Prosonix, acquired by Circassia Pharmaceuticals. His career also includes key roles at Ventech and Atlas Venture. Karl earned his PhD in Molecular Neurobiology from the Max-Delbrück-Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin followed by a position as Scientific Fellow at CNRS for Neurochemistry in Strasbourg.

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Andreas Schmidt

Andreas Schmidt is a Managing Director of Springboard Health Angels, an early stage venture investment firm centered in Berlin and operating globally. As a serial entrepreneur, Andreas has built companies in the deeptech and precision medicine sector across Europe, Asia, and the US. After selling his last company Proteona to Singleron Biotechnologies, he is heading their global clinical and pharma business development, applying single cell technologies to precision medicine. Andreas is board member as well as mentor and shareholder of multiple international start up companies often with a focus on multi-omics, data and AI-driven technologies for cell and gene therapies as well as diagnostics and precision medicine. Andreas is an immunologist by training from Berkeley and one of the early entrepreneurs of the SMART Singapore MIT Alliance of Research and Technology.

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Thierry VandenDriessche

Thierry VandenDriessche, PhD, is a professor and leading researcher in gene therapy. He is a tenured Full Professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where he founded and directs the Department of Gene Therapy and Regenerative Medicine, and also holds a professorship at KU Leuven. In addition, he has received prestigious distinctions, including the Francqui Chair.

He earned his PhD in 1992 and conducted postdoctoral research at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, where he began his work on gene therapy for hemophilia. Throughout his career, he has held positions at major research institutions, including the Flanders Institute of Biotechnology, and has contributed to advancing gene therapy and genome engineering technologies.

His research focuses on gene therapy and gene editing for hereditary diseases, particularly hemophilia and muscular dystrophy. He has also been actively involved in the scientific community, serving as President of the European Society of Gene & Cell Therapy and holding leadership roles in international organizations.

Professor VandenDriessche has published over 130 peer-reviewed papers in high-impact journals and has received multiple awards for his contributions to the field.

Angela Vlachou

Angelika Vlachou joined High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF) in July 2021 bringing more than 15 years of experience in the life science industry spanning venture investing, strategy management and research. She is jointly responsible for HTGF's investment activities in life sciences. Over the course of her career, Angelika has managed many transactions ranging from seed stage venture capital and growth financing to licensing agreements, trade sale transactions and IPOs. She supported portfolio companies across different stages of development. Earlier in her career, Angelika worked for a contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO) in the areas of strategy and business development. Her expertise is also based on her virology-molecular biology research experience. One of her

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strengths is to combine scientific innovation with commercial potential. She is a valued sparring partner for founders, investors, and stakeholders. With a doctorate in biology, she started her professional career in investment banking.

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