



## CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY



## RETHINKING INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE (POST) - CRISIS WORLD



## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY



The world has, over the last two decades, been hit by a succession of crises: from financial to political crises. The Great Recession of 2008 has had huge and long-lasting impacts on the economies of both the developed and developing countries. These financial crises also worsened the political crises, as evidenced by the recent political polarisation, and the regression of democracy around the world. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has unmasked the extent of inequality, poverty, and social exclusion among citizens of the world. These crises also occurred within the existing “grand” climate and sustainability challenges.

It is against this background that the theme of the inaugural Conference on Public Innovation, Development and Sustainability is centred on innovation and how it can respond to the recent crises. Concepts such as “innovation for development”, “information and communication technology (ICT) for development”, “digital economies”, and “artificial intelligence” (AI) are becoming increasingly used in academic and policy discourses. The idea of innovation for development (I4D) has now been entrenched within countries and international development organisations.

In trying to tackle these grand societal challenges through innovation, some scholars and policymakers have recently called for mission-oriented innovation. Previously, debates on innovation centred on Research and Development (R&D), mainly to enhance the productivity of firms (Hekkert et al., 2020). Where the state was involved in innovation, the aim has been to strengthen national systems of innovation to ensure national economic growth (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018). However, missions-oriented innovation centres on the notion of public value in its design and aim to create a pathway for different ways of working across the public sector and creating better public value for citizens (OECD, 2022). Conceptualising innovation and development through a “missions” lens has several advantages and offers a range of opportunities. First, the proposed policy solutions (for example, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)) to grand challenges require cross-sectoral and multiple-actors collaboration. Second, mission-oriented innovation calls for the transformation of the state and the public sector, and the re-orientation of the state to shape innovation for public value.

It is against this background that the Conference on Public Innovation, Development and Sustainability invites high quality papers for presentation at a two-day conference. Multidisciplinary papers are invited that focus on public innovation, development, and sustainability. We call on researchers, academics, public officials, private sector, and civil society to send submissions, which can address the following topics and more:

### **INNOVATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

An increasing challenge is evident in respect of economic inequality, and the fact that a large segment of the population outside formal innovation in developing countries has access to innovation (Daniels et al., 2017). Innovation for inclusive development (IID) offers a platform to address the challenges of poverty, inequality, and exclusion that developing countries are contending with. IID is guided by two principles: namely enabling marginalised people’s participation in the mainstream economy, as well as their involvement in innovative and development activities (Daniels et al., 2017). Thus, we are making a call for papers that articulate the concept of innovation for inclusive development, and how it influences developmental change in developing countries.

### **E-PARTICIPATION, DIGITAL PARTICIPATION, E-DEMOCRACY**

Government has used citizen participation as an important vehicle to ensure legitimacy, trust, and transparency of decision-making processes. The concept of citizen participation has entered a new era in the past two decades, owing to the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Wirtz et al., 2018). E-participation is defined as active participation using ICTs that fosters partnership between government and citizens, where citizens actively engage in defining the process and content of policy making (Wirtz et al., 2018). This theme calls for submissions that address the concept of e-participation, digital participation, and e-government in relation to the value it brings in advancing interaction between government and citizens, and its impacts on policy making.

### **INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES**

Government and private firms have made huge investments in the development of technologies and products that promote sustainable building and urban regeneration (Dewick and Mjozzo, 2002). This move has been marked by the identification of the different factors and institutions across different countries that either hinder or facilitate the adoption of sustainable technologies. Therefore, this theme calls for submissions that address the concept of innovation and sustainable technologies from a holistic perspective. This includes, but not limited to, institutional support for the adoption of sustainable technologies, the role of the private sector in promoting the use of sustainable technologies, the regulation of the use of sustainable technologies, etcetera.

## **ENABLERS AND BARRIERS TO PUBLIC INNOVATION**

Public innovation is embraced as an important vehicle for improving the quality of public services and enhancing the problem-solving capacity of governmental organisations in dealing with societal issues. However, some factors may either permit or hinder innovation in the public sphere. Therefore, contributions are invited under this theme to articulate the factors that promote and inhibit public innovation.

## **INNOVATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Walker (2006) states that innovation is a complex and contested concept: hence, some organisations may adopt innovation with the sole aim of improving service delivery, while others may adopt it to enhance institutional legitimacy. Innovation may emerge from the central (national) government and diffuse to local government, it may also emerge from the local government itself. In line with this connotation, this theme calls for papers that address measures that local government leaders can implement to achieve more cost-effective innovations. It encourages innovation in councils, covering the perspectives of council chief executives, frontline employees, political leaders, and managers.

## **INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

According to Tierney and Lanford (2016) how academics conceptualise innovation differs with disciplines. In this theme, higher education forms the contextual field for exploration of innovation. Therefore, contributions are invited to articulate the concept of innovation in higher education. This includes, but not limited to, methodologies in researching innovation, conceptualisation and theorisation of (public) innovation and their application at a practical level.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE INNOVATION**

Forging public-private partnerships (PPPs) is an effective tool that enables innovation and development processes in times of crises and public budget constraints. PPPs entail the long-term contractual agreement between the public and private sectors, with private entities providing services on behalf of the public sector for the benefit of the communities (Carbonara and Pellegrino, 2020). These relationships often produce good outcomes in terms of innovation (Carbonara and Pellegrino, 2020). Therefore, contributions invited under this theme should address questions such as (among others): Which PPP features enable the advancement of innovation? How should PPPs be properly structured to foster innovation?

## **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND PUBLIC INNOVATION**

Advancements in AI, big data, and other advanced methods present opportunities and risks for the public sector. Therefore, we encourage submissions that highlight the implications of digital transformation on the public sector and service delivery.

## **CRITICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF INNOVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

We invite papers that interrogate the theoretical/conceptual underpinnings of innovation for development. Such papers can focus on:

- governmentality and power;
- innovation in an African context;
- innovation and decolonisation; and
- smart cities.

## **OTHER TOPICS**

The conference also encourages papers/presentations that focus on:

- innovation for sustainability and societal transitions;
- grassroots innovation; and
- innovation and alternative energy systems.

## WE ALSO WELCOME PANELS AND ROUNDTABLE PROPOSALS.

INTERESTED CONTRIBUTORS SHOULD SUBMIT THEIR ABSTRACTS ON OR BEFORE 20 MAY 2024.

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- Submission of abstracts: **20 May 2024 (Extended to 5 June 2024)**
- Feedback on Abstracts: **15 June 2024**
- Full Paper Submission: **26 July 2024**
- Feedback on Full Papers: **23 August 2024**
- Final Paper Submission: **20 September 2024**
- Conference Registration: **4 October 2024**
- Conference Date: **24 - 25 October 2024**
- Full papers will be considered, based on the acceptability of the Abstract, compliance with the publishing guidelines and scientific and professional contribution.

### PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES:



The accepted academic papers will be published as Online Open Access contributions in the *International Journal of Environmental Management and Safety*, Nigeria, or the *Town and Regional Planning Journal*, University of Free State, South Africa. The Work will be sent to multiple indexing services, including Elsevier (Scopus, Compendex and EI) and Clarivate Analytics, Formerly the IP & Science business of Thomson Reuters (Web of Science). Both Elsevier and Clarivate Analytics review submissions prior to acceptance.

### ABSTRACTS:

- Length: The body of the abstract should not be more than 500 words.
- Font: All abstracts must be written in UK English and typed in MS Word, using Arial 12pt, 1.5 line spacing.
- Abstract: The title of the abstract should not exceed 50 words and the whole abstract should not be more than 500 words. The abstract should include the name of the author(s), their institutional affiliation, and the email address of the corresponding author. Author(s) of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit a full manuscript.
- Peer Review: All submitted papers will go through a double-blind peer-review process.
- Revision: Final acceptance is contingent on revising the manuscript in line with the reviewer/s comments.
- Approval: Publication of the proceedings and presentations at the Symposium is subject to registration and submission of copyright forms.
- All abstracts must be written in UK English and typed in MS Word using 1.5 line spacing,
- Abstracts submitted after the closing date will not be considered. Please note the following regarding the submission process:
  - 1 Submit your abstract through the link provided: [PLEASE CLICK HERE](#).
  - 2 Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation email acknowledging receipt.
  - 3 Notifications of acceptance will be sent on or before the specified date.

### REVIEW PROCESS:

In our commitment to uphold academic integrity, we employ a single-blind review process to rigorously evaluate all submissions. This ensures the quality and credibility of the content presented at the symposium.

**Please contact Kwanele Dladla: [DladlaK1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:DladlaK1@ukzn.ac.za) for more information.**

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