EGPA European Group for Public Administration

SAPIENZA Università di Roma

EGPA2026
CONFERENCE
24-27 August   Rome, Italy
CALL FOR PANELS

Public Governance for the Common Good: Human Intelligence Serving the Global Community

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EGPA Specialized Panel 6

Living Labs in Government and Administration: Problems, positions and perspectives

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Living labs are open innovation ecosystems that operate in a real-life setting, placing citizens and end-users at the center of the innovation process. They are fundamentally about co-creation and experimentation, bringing together diverse stakeholders to design, test, and validate new solutions, services, or policies in an authentic, multi-contextual environment.[1]

Such labs often operate using the 'Quadruple Helix' model, which involves intensive collaboration among four key stakeholder groups: (1) Public authorities/government: ensuring alignment with policy, providing infrastructure, and ensuring solutions address societal priorities; (2) Citizens/civil society: contributing lived experiences, needs, and feedback; (3) Private sector/industry: offering market perspectives, technological solutions, and capacity to scale; and (4) Academia/research: bringing scientific evidence, research methods, and expertise.[2]

Living labs are a powerful method to enhance government innovation capabilities, especially for (wicked/complex) problems that lack a single, easy solution (such as urban

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[1] Gascó, M. (2017). Living labs: Implementing open innovation in the public sector. *Government Information Quarterly*, *34*(1), 90-98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2016.09.003

[2] Marchesani, F., & Ceci, F. (2025). A quadruple helix view on smart city: Exploring the effect of internal and external open innovation on public services digitalization. *Technovation*, *139*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2024.103141

mobility, or digital local public services). In this context, the real-life setting is often a city, neighborhood, public service, or even a specific piece of public infrastructure.

The purpose of this proposed panel (one session @ 90 mins.) is to connect scholars with expertise and vision on living labs. The session aims to bring together three speakers that share their expertise on the following aspects of living labs:

- Taking stock of different types of initiatives (e.g. civic tech labs, open government data labs, smart city/urban mobility labs, public health living labs) across government and administration;
- Exploring the specific methodologies that are applied within living labs and that aim to ensure active, user-centered co-creation (largely drawn from the fields of design thinking, co-creation, and action research);
- The role of digital technologies in living labs, either regarding digital public services or living lab methodologies that are pursued in the digital realm;
- Case studies on successful but also lessons from failed labs.

In terms of format, each speaker is allocated a slot of 15 minutes for an opening address, followed by a plenary discussion of 45 minutes.

Please submit a short abstract of the proposed input outlining its format, topic, and content via the central electronic conference system (max. 1 page). In the proposal, it should be clearly mentioned which one(s) of the four aspects mentioned above is to be addressed.

Practicalities

If you wish to present a paper in one of the Permanent Study Group's, Ad Hoc Group's, or Specialized Panel's sessions at the conference, please upload an abstract outlining your proposed conference paper. This may be done through the conference website.

Important dates

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 6, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Booster Grant applications: April 15, 2026
- Acceptance notification and opening of registrations: April 20, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Travel Grant applications: April 26, 2026
- Full paper submission deadline and registration deadline: July 19, 2026

Website

- https://www.iias-iisa.org/egpa-2026-conference/

Submission

- https://www.conftool.org/egpa2026/
- Unless specified otherwise, 500-words limit for abstracts

Contact

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