

IFKAD
International Forum on Knowledge Asset Dynamics

28 - 30 JUNE 2027

IFKAD 2027

22nd International Forum on Knowedge Asset Dynamics

University of Basilicata, Matera, Italy

The Ecology of Knowledge in the AI Era

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS - IFKAD 2027
www.ifkad.org

Special Track n.: 12

From Data to Collective Knowledge Formation - Knowledge Ecologies and Epistemic Infrastructures in the Public Sector

Description

Public organizations operate in complex environments where multiple goals, accountabilities, and stakeholder demands intersect with professional specialization and political contestation. In such settings, effective knowledge use requires more than collecting data or deploying knowledge management systems. Instead, knowledge in the public sector is shaped through collective processes in which policymakers, managers, professionals, citizens, and other stakeholders interpret information, negotiate meanings, and construct shared understandings that can guide action. This special track focuses on the social arrangements and epistemic infrastructures — the institutional, organizational, social, and technological structures — that make such collective knowledge formation possible.

The track builds on a knowledge formation approach that shifts attention from knowledge as a static organizational resource to the social and institutional processes through which information becomes meaningful and actionable in organizations. This perspective responds to critiques that conventional knowledge management has often privileged data, efficiency, and technically solvable problems over interpretation, context, and the value-laden character of public problems (Spender, 2014; Dumay, 2020). In the public sector, what counts as relevant knowledge is rarely self-evident, as political interests, competing values, and diverse professional perspectives shape what is recognized as valid. Instead, meanings are negotiated and the legitimacy of action is formed through interaction among multiple actors, shaped by power relations, professional traditions, competing interests, and differing criteria of validity (Weick, 1995; Maitlis, 2005; Laihonen et al., 2023).

We are particularly interested in the processes and mechanisms that help explain how this collective knowledge is created, used, enabled, and constrained in everyday organizational actions. Social mechanisms shed light on how policies and strategic goals are interpreted, how resources are allocated, and how performance information is used in decision-making. Examining these mechanisms connects institutional structures, organizational practices, and individual interpretations, and helps explain why similar management arrangements may produce different outcomes across organizational and governance contexts.

The concept of epistemic infrastructures complements this processual perspective. Epistemic infrastructures comprise the interconnected institutional, organizational, social, and technological arrangements through which knowledge is produced, validated, interpreted, shared, and applied. These arrangements may include governance structures, information systems, performance management practices, professional communities, cross-boundary learning forums, and routines for dialogue and collective sensemaking. Together, they form the knowledge ecology of public organizations and shape their capacity to recognize, integrate, and apply heterogeneous forms of knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Rajala and Laihonen, 2019; Laihonen and Kokko, 2023).

The track invites conceptual, empirical, comparative, and design-oriented contributions examining arrangements and epistemic infrastructures in the public sector context. In connection with the IFKAD 2027 theme, "The Ecology of Knowledge in the AI Era", the track pays particular attention to how artificial intelligence enters public sector knowledge ecosystems. We welcome research on how AI and other digital technologies reshape established epistemic relations, interpretive practices, and forms of epistemic authority, and how they may either enrich or erode the diversity of knowing — including professional, experiential, and citizen-based knowledge — on which effective public action depends. The primary interest is not the technology itself, but how changing knowledge ecologies influence collective knowledge formation, organizational learning, public sector effectiveness, and the capacity for coordinated action in the AI era.

Indicative Topics

We welcome contributions addressing questions such as: How is knowledge collectively formed through interactions between organizations, managers, professionals, policymakers, and citizens? Indicative topics include:

- Epistemic infrastructures and their role in shaping public sector knowledge ecologies
- Social mechanisms that enable or constrain collective knowledge formation
- Collective sensemaking, dialogue, and deliberation in translating policy goals into coordinated action
- Production, validation, interpretation, and integration of heterogeneous forms of knowledge
- Epistemic authority, legitimacy, power, and inclusion in public sector knowledge practices
- Knowledge formation in policy design, resource allocation, performance management, evaluation, and decision-making
- Leadership, governance, and organizational capabilities that support collective learning and knowledge formation
- Cross-boundary learning forums and professional communities as epistemic arrangements
- Knowledge formation in relation to public value, effectiveness, sustainability, and resilience
- The influence of artificial intelligence and digital technologies on epistemic relations, interpretive practices, and forms of epistemic authority
- Reconfiguration of knowledge ecologies in the AI era: opportunities, tensions, and risks for public organizations

Keywords

knowledge formation; epistemic infrastructures; knowledge ecology; public sector knowledge management; sensemaking; public sector effectiveness; artificial intelligence

Organizers

Harri Laihonen – University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Lotta-Maria Sinervo – University of Vaasa, Finland
Anna-Aurora Kork – University of Vaasa, Finland
Henri Hussinki – LUT University, Finland

Follow this link to see the Special Track details on IFKAD website ››

Guidelines and Requirements

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an EXTENDED ABSTRACT (in MS Word format) of min 500 and max 1000 words, not later than **22 JANUARY 2027**. All submission must be done via dedicated form on our website. The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice.
Authors are required to follow the guidelines and templates available on IFKAD website: www.ifkad.org

Important Dates

22 January 2027 – Extended Abstract Submission Deadline
19 February 2027 – Acceptance Notification to Authors
16 April 2027 – Early-Bird Registration & Payment Deadline
23 April 2027 – Full Paper Submission Deadline
28 May 2027 – Regular and PhD Students Registration & Payment Deadline
12 June 2027 – Conference Program Release
28-30 June 2027 – Conference sessions *(to be considered as 3 full working days)*

Please note that all above indicated dates are **CUT-OFF** deadlines. There will not be an extention to any of these.

Further Information

For any information related to the conference and/or any special track, please see the event website at www.ifkad.org or contact the conference manager at **info@ifkad.org**