



IIAS2026 CONFERENCE

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Growth for Society: Collaborative
Governance, Social Innovation, and Public Value



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Leadership Skills and Competencies for Anticipatory Social Innovation and Collaborative Governance

Dr. Foteini (Fani) Komseli; National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA);
fanikomseli@gmail.com

Dr. Angeliki Bourmbouli; National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA);
abourbouli@ekdd.gr

Social innovation is widely recognized as a vital response to complex public challenges such as inequality, aging populations, digital exclusion, and climate adaptation. However, much of the literature and practice focus on reactive innovation, solving problems after they have become visible, urgent, and costly. This track argues that a fundamental shift is needed: from reactive problem-solving to proactive intelligence-led social innovation.

Leadership skills and competencies play a critical role in enabling social innovation across public, private, and civil society sectors. While collaborative governance has become a central feature of contemporary public management, collaboration alone is often insufficient to address increasingly complex and rapidly evolving societal challenges. Effective social innovation requires leaders and professionals who possess a broad range of competencies, including strategic foresight, systems thinking, adaptive leadership, evidence-informed decision-making, stakeholder engagement, resilience-building, and the capacity to act under conditions of uncertainty.

Among these competencies, particular attention is given to anticipatory capabilities that enable individuals and organizations to identify emerging risks, opportunities, and societal needs before they become visible crises. Such capabilities include detecting weak signals, integrating information from diverse sources, fostering collective intelligence, supporting preventive action, and facilitating coordinated responses across organizational and sectoral boundaries. These competencies complement collaborative governance arrangements by helping organizations move beyond reactive problem-solving toward more proactive and future-oriented approaches.



This track addresses an important gap in public administration, governance, and leadership research. Although collaborative governance, co-production, and social innovation have been widely studied, less attention has been devoted to understanding the leadership skills and organizational competencies that enable actors to anticipate change, navigate uncertainty, and create sustainable public value. Similarly, social innovation laboratories, policy labs, and cross-sector partnerships frequently generate innovative solutions but often struggle to institutionalize the competencies, learning processes, and intelligence routines required for long-term anticipation and adaptation.

The track welcomes theoretical, empirical, comparative, and practice-oriented contributions examining leadership skills and competencies for anticipatory governance and social innovation. Contributions may draw from public administration, governance studies, leadership research, strategic foresight, organizational learning, strategic human-resource management, public-sector innovation, and collaborative governance. Papers exploring competency development, leadership education, workforce transformation, foresight capabilities, collective intelligence, and future-ready public institutions are particularly encouraged.

By bringing together scholars and practitioners, this track aims to produce actionable insights for leadership development programs, public sector innovation units, and collaborative governance design. It challenges the assumption that collaboration alone is sufficient, arguing instead that intelligent proactivity is the missing link between social innovation and durable public value.

Research Questions

- What leadership skills and competencies are most critical for fostering anticipatory and collaborative social innovation across public, private, and civil society sectors?
- How do competencies such as strategic foresight, adaptive leadership, systems thinking, collaborative governance, and proactive intelligence contribute to innovation and public value creation?
- What organizational structures, cultures, information routines, and incentive systems support or hinder the development and application of these competencies?



- How can leadership competencies for anticipatory governance and social innovation be assessed and measured, particularly in terms of problem prevention, resilience, stakeholder trust, and long-term public value?
- Which educational approaches, leadership-development practices, strategic human-resource management policies, and learning methods are most effective in cultivating future-ready leaders and professionals?

It challenges the assumption that collaboration alone is sufficient, arguing instead that effective social innovation depends on a broader combination of leadership skills and organizational competencies that enable anticipation, adaptation, collective learning, and informed action under conditions of uncertainty. By strengthening these capabilities, organizations can enhance their capacity to create durable public value and address emerging societal challenges before they escalate.

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Practicalities

Key Links

- Conference website: <https://www.ias-iisa.org/ias-2026-conference/>
- Submission system: <https://www.conftool.org/ias2026/>
- Contact: ias-conference@ias-iisa.org

Important Dates

- Abstract / Panel submission deadline: **30 August 2026**
- Notification of acceptance and opening of registration: **30 August 2026**
- Full paper submission and registration deadline: **4 October 2026**

Submission Guidelines

- Unless otherwise specified in the track call, abstracts are limited to **500 words**. They should clearly outline the research question, theoretical framework, methodology, main findings (or expected findings), and implications.
- Accepted abstracts are expected to be developed into full papers.
- **Panels** are session proposals submitted under the main conference theme. A panel proposal includes a title, abstract, proposed chairperson(s), and a list of expected presentations. Panels are not required to produce full papers.

Evaluation

Proposals (papers and panels) are evaluated by the chair(s) (or co-chairs) of the track to which they are submitted. Evaluation criteria include:

- Academic quality and rigour
- Relevance to the track theme and overall conference theme
- Thematic fit and originality
- Clarity and quality of presentation

Paper Requirements

- Maximum length: **6,000 words** (all inclusive, including references).
- Structure: abstract, introduction, main body (developing the research question, theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and implications), conclusion, and references.

