

Panel proposal title: Smart Governance and Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development in the Post-Pandemic Era

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COVID-19 has caused a range of city challenges, which presents chances for policy makers and urban leaders to learn the right lessons from this crisis to build long-range socioeconomic and environmental resilience against future disasters (Kumar et al., 2020). Policy makers and practitioners in many countries have increasingly used a wide range of digital platforms and big data techniques to support public administration, e-participation, and governance processes to address sustainable challenges. Smart governance, as an innovative way of institutional arrangement, has been consistently argued to provide the potential to respond to the crisis and help recover from the crisis (Jiang et al., 2021). Here, smart governance indicates “the process of utilizing modern technologies and ICT to ensure a collaborative, transparent, participatory, communication-based and sustainable environment for citizens and governments” (Ikizer, 2022). It is usually related to improving the participatory and collaborative processes and change the ways public services and policies are innovatively offered to the public (Whitelaw et al., 2020).

In Chicago, for instance, local government applied anonymized cellphone data to examine travel pathways and patterns, and trace whether people obey the quarantine or self-isolating regulations and rules. In South Korea, Singapore and Middle East, smartphone data was employed to position those who have close contacts with confirmed cases and map their movements for further policy interventions. In Indian cities, operational integrated command and control centers served as quasi-war rooms to administer contact tracing activities, offer essential services, provide emergency alert information, and make decisions for COVID response. In Western countries, apps and digital platforms have been widely used to assist e-participation and collaborative governance processes. The pandemic indicated that a large diversity of smart governance applications and capabilities already exist across cities all over the world.

As we begin to slowly realize that we might have to live with it, it is time to re-think how we can plan for sustainable development in the post-pandemic era.

- 1) What has been changed in our society and what are their impacts on socioeconomic and environmental systems?
- 2) What are the new challenges of urban governance and public administration in the pandemic and post-pandemic era?
- 3) What kinds of digital platforms and innovative solutions are applied to address these challenges?
- 4) To which extent can they lead to improved or smart governance for crisis management and sustainable transition?
- 5) What could be the new policies, strategies, or solutions for long-term sustainable development?

This panel intends to gather analyses, perspectives, and case studies that can be applied to facilitate the development and implementation of more effective and resilient cities in post-COVID-19 era. High-quality original studies and review articles on smart governance modes, smart governance policies, and novel applications in different contexts are very welcome.

Potential topics include but are not limited to the following:

1. Changes in our cities and society, such as living style, in the post-pandemic era;
2. Innovative governance or solutions for coping the crisis and challenges in the pandemic and post-pandemic era;
3. Usage of digital platforms (e.g., public participatory platforms, planning support tools, social media, apps, and smart platforms) for participation, collaboration and management in urban transformation, water governance, green solutions, shared mobility, and other domains;
4. Big data techniques in urban analysis and prediction for crisis management and sustainable development;
5. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for smart governance in response to COVID impacts and sustainable development;
6. New policies, strategies, or smart governance solutions for long-term sustainable development .

References

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