

BAM 2021 CONFERENCE IN THE CLOUD



Innovation Track

Track Chairs

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Track description:

Innovation has played an important role in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and will continue to do so as countries around the world seek to contain and move beyond the damaging social and economic effects of the virus. The interaction of the pandemic with the innovation process can be felt in numerous ways, some more direct than others. The urgency of responding to Covid-19 has driven accelerated innovations in key medical areas. Critical among these has been the development of effective vaccines, with multiple scientific teams rushing to develop vaccines and get them approved in timescales hitherto unheard of. Intense pressure on healthcare has driven the rapid construction and deployment of medical facilities, while medical practitioners have experimented with new therapeutic approaches to try to moderate the effects of the virus. More broadly, organisations, institutions, and societies have had to adapt in efforts to contain the pandemic, with remarkably fast shifts in ways of working and living for many people. In some cases these have served to accelerate changing practices that were already underway, such as remote working and online sales of goods and services.

These changes have in turn been prompted by a range of novel government responses, with extensive levels of intervention even in countries where the role of the state has been progressively rolled back. These have been largely protective, with state subsidies for at-risk sectors (e.g. airlines), furlough schemes, and tax relief, functioning as a safety-net for people and organisations adversely affected by lockdown policies. Governments have also acted as direct and indirect sponsors of innovation, through funding for vaccine R&D and wider research on understanding and ameliorating the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, medical and other procurement, and re-emphasising Keynesian-style infrastructure investment. The time-critical nature of the response to Covid-19 has also meant that normal institutional rules and behaviours have in some cases, at least temporarily, been disrupted. These have further influenced the environment within which organisations have had to adapt, enforcing limitations, but also creating opportunities for innovation. As well as commercial and policy-led innovations, there have also been numerous examples of more grassroots,

community-led, social innovations as people improvise ways to cope with the social, psychological, and financial impacts of the pandemic.

Overall, it is clear that Covid-19 has shaped the innovation landscape in significant ways since its onset just over a year ago. In very direct ways there is hope that medical innovation will provide the key to emerging from the pandemic. However, the socio-economic effects of the virus are likely to cast a long shadow where the capacity to innovate across business, government, and wider society is going to be critical in shaping pathways to recovery and resilience in the face of future challenges. It is, thus, a good time to take stock of the different types and dynamics of innovation that have arisen in the era of Covid-19 and how they are likely to influence things in the future. This involves taking an even-handed look at both the successes and opportunities, on the one hand, and the risks and negative consequences, on the other. The disruption of the pandemic has led to a strong narrative of hope and renewal, with a belief that it provides an opportunity to reset entrenched economic, political, and environmental practices and relations. Some are optimistic that, similar to other pandemics, crises, and disasters in the past, a period of positive change and revitalisation will be unleashed in the aftermath. Others are less sanguine, pointing to increasing inequalities and the ways in which established interests have further consolidated their power, as exemplified by the ever-growing dominance of 'big tech'. The effects of Covid-19 have been unevenly distributed, socially and geographically, raising important questions about the role of innovation and the extent to which it reshapes, reproduces, or reinforces these patterns at the local, regional, national, and international scales.

We invite papers from all perspectives, including those that are optimistic about the capacity of innovation to effect positive transformation in the post-Covid period, as well as those that are more sceptical or critical. We welcome contributions across the range of innovation types and activities, from the technological to the organisational, as well as those driven by different value frameworks, not only economic, but also political, social, and environmental. We also encourage studies focusing on a range of geographical locations and scales. Papers may be empirical or theoretical and a range of methodological approaches are encouraged.

Possible and by no means restrictive themes are as follows:

- The socio-economic shaping of innovation
- The implications of innovation for social and economic development and the generation and distribution of wealth and wellbeing
- Innovation in the digital economy
- Innovation in high-tech or high-growth industries and (large or small) firms
- Innovation in low- or medium-tech sectors and (large or small) firms
- Innovation in services, knowledge intensive services and creative industries
- Open Innovation in both large and small firms
- Social innovation and innovation in social enterprises and other not-for-profit organisations
- Public sector and government innovation
- Innovation and entrepreneurship: management practices and policy challenges
- User-led and community-based innovation and crowdsourcing and crowdfunding activities
- Eco-innovation and the environmental challenge
- Intra- and inter-organisational networks and collaborative innovation
- University-industry links and innovation
- The role of groups and peer-to-peer interaction in innovation

- Innovation in Strategic Alliances and Joint Ventures
- 'Illegal' innovation such as cyber-crime and hacker innovations
- Practice-based theories of innovation, knowledge, and learning
- Innovation, dynamic capabilities and routines
- National and regional innovation systems, especially on their activities and their impact on the development, the industrial implementation and the diffusion of innovation
- Innovation metrics and indicators
- Innovation in newly emerging and developing economies