

# T07P04 / The Rise of Policy Labs

**Topic :** T07 / Policy Design, Policy Analysis, Expertise and Evaluation

**Chair :** Emma Blomkamp (University of Melbourne)

**Second Chair :** Jenny Lewis (University of Melbourne)

**Third Chair :** Michael Howlett (Simon Fraser University)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

**Note: This Panel is eligible for the GCPSE (UNDP) Grant.**

Governments around the world have been experimenting with policy design and seeking innovative approaches, as they try to increase the value for money they get from their limited funds, while simultaneously addressing intractable policy problems. In recent years, governmental interest in innovation, experimentation and measurement has spawned a multitude of policy design labs and government innovation teams. These 'policy labs' take a variety of forms, applying different methods and focusing on a range of issues – sometimes developing a high profile (e.g. Denmark's MindLab), and at other times disappearing not long after they emerge (e.g. Australia's DesignGov).

Despite their differences, policy labs predominantly draw on and reflect contemporary interest in behavioural insights, design thinking and evidence-based policy making, and there is a growing body of grey literature describing and promoting policy labs. Some are located within government; and some are autonomous but sponsored by government, not-for-profit organizations, or some combination of both. Others are located within universities. Some appear to be 're-branded' units, while others are clearly new initiatives. And while some specialise in particular policy sectors, others have a very broad area of interest. Yet there is still relatively little academic research on the specific form, practices and influences of these 'innovative' policy-making/evaluating units. If policy labs are themselves experimental, what are we learning from these experiments in policy design?

This panel aims to better understand the emergence and spread of the policy lab as a distinct institutional form, as well as the particular concepts and methods being applied and promoted by these units, and their influence on policy design, implementation and evaluation.

We propose a panel that sheds light on the following questions, among others:

- What explanations are there for this rise in policy labs?
- Where do policy labs come from? To what extent are they an example of policy transfer or an instrument constituency?
- What forms of knowledge and expertise do policy labs draw on and promote?
- What methods and tools are they using?
- How do policy labs interact with existing institutions and interests?
- Are there particular institutional locations, models of governance or policy realms in which policy labs thrive?
- What impacts are policy labs having on policy processes and outcomes?

The aim of the panel is to bring together researchers from diverse disciplines and geographic locations with a common interest in understanding the origins, practices and impacts of policy labs.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

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If policy labs are themselves experimental, what are we learning from these experiments in policy design? This panel aims to better understand the emergence and spread of the policy lab as a distinct institutional form, as well as the particular concepts and methods being applied and promoted by these units, and their influence on policy design, implementation and evaluation. We want to bring together researchers from diverse disciplines and geographic locations with a common interest in understanding the origins, practices and impacts of policy labs.

We are calling for submissions that shed light on the following questions, among others:

- What explanations are there for this rise in policy labs?
- Where do policy labs come from? To what extent are they an example of policy transfer or an instrument constituency?
- What forms of knowledge and expertise do policy labs draw on and promote?
- What methods and tools are they using?
- How do policy labs interact with existing institutions and interests?
- Are there particular institutional locations, models of governance or policy realms in which policy labs thrive?
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## Session 1 Policy Labs and Public Policy I: Crafting New Approaches to Old Problems?

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Manasseh Meyer MM 3 - 2)

### Discussants

Jenny Lewis (University of Melbourne)

### Mapping and evaluating behaviour-change policy innovation agendas

Brian Head (University of Queensland, Australia)

### The Rise of the Behavioural Insights Team: A Research Agenda

Sarah Ball (University of Queensland)

### Public innovation labs caught between a rock and a hard place: to randomize or to experiment?

Rainer Kattel (Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance)

Veiko Lember (Ragnar Nurkse School of Innovation and Governance)

Piret Tonurist (OECD)

### The craft of Policy Labs: an overview of methods applied for development and testing of policy solutions.

Karol Olejniczak (SWPS University)

Sylwia Borkowska-Waszak (University of Strathclyde, European Policies Research Centre)

Anna Domaradzka (University of Warsaw, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 26/2, Warsaw, 525-001-12-668)

Yaerin Park (George Washington University)

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## Session 2 Policy Labs and Public Policy II: Experiences on the Street

Wednesday, June 28th 16:15 to 18:15 (Manasseh Meyer MM 3 - 2)

### Discussants

Karol Olejniczak (SWPS University)

### Lab or No-Lab? Exploring institutional trajectories of public innovation teams

Emmanuel Coblenz (Institut Supérieur de Gestion, Paris)

Frédérique Pallez (Mines Paris-Tech )

Elsa Vivant

jean-marc weller (LISIS)

### Everybody else is doing it so why don't we? Analysing the rise of the policy lab

Emma Blomkamp (University of Melbourne)

McGann Michael (University of Melbourne)

Jenny Lewis (University of Melbourne)

### Public Innovation Design in Chile: The Governmental Lab experience

Oriana Piffre (Universidad Central de Chile)

Ximena Soto (King's College London)