

Special Issue Call for Papers

Journal:

Triple Helix Journal

Special Issue:

“Public Policies in the Context of Helix Models”

Guest Editor:

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The objectives of public policies encompass several dimensions of a society, like social, economic, financial, entrepreneurial, innovative, institutional and environmental, and in various ways have locally and globally impact. These impactful policies are necessary at a time when we need to promote development, innovation, and economic and climate resilience to overcome the immense challenges to which we are currently subject.

Since 1990s the Triple-, Quadruple- and Quintuple-Helix (TH/QH/QnH) frameworks have become the dominant lenses for analysing how knowledge, innovation and socio-economic development arise through interaction among universities, industry, government, civil-society actors and the natural environment. Yet, as Zheng & Cai (2022) demonstrate, the public-policy dimension—the “Public Helix”—remains thinly theorised and empirically under-explored within helix scholarship. Their study shows that policy layering—the addition of new sustainability- and inclusion-oriented instruments on top of legacy science, technology and innovation (STI) policies—is essential for converting linear innovation systems into agile, place-based innovation ecosystems capable of advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the same time, governments at all levels face unprecedented turbulence: digital-government reforms, poly-crises of climate and public health, geopolitical supply-chain shifts, and rising demands for transparency and democratic co-creation. Policy interventions increasingly take the form of mission-oriented programmes, living labs, sandboxes and public-private partnerships that transcend administrative and sectoral boundaries. Empirical evidence on how these novel arrangements work, and under which contextual conditions they succeed or fail, remains scattered across case studies and jurisdictions.

Public policies today are multifaceted and have multiple arrangements to seek the innovation, socioeconomic development and sustainability of our society's way of life and production. The challenges are complex and varied, but experiences when shared can guide the solution of similar problems that occur in other regions, countries or communities. Beyond addressing aspects of digital government, research in public management must also engage with the processes of creation of public value. The role of the public sector in the development and collaboration of networks was examined in Larsen et al. (2018). The findings indicate that public involvement varied according to the stage of the network life cycle and the position of the public sector within the value chain. The level of

participation ranged from minimal engagement (*laissez-faire*) to full partnership with the private sector.

A significant gap remains in the impact assessment of public policies (Gertler et al., 2018). Future studies should aim to offer clear guidance to policymakers and program managers on enhancing governmental actions. Crucially, they should articulate the causal mechanisms through which a program operates to achieve its intended outcomes. Continuous monitoring should serve as a key tool for gaining a comprehensive understanding of results, while future evaluations will be essential for assessing medium-term effects. Currently, policymakers are challenged by new circumstances involving environmental and economic sustainability. They are usually not accompanied by ex-ante or ex-post analyses, which makes it difficult to assess their results. Based on this premise, the goal of the SI is to collect high-quality papers addressing contemporary challenges and innovation aimed at improving public policies.

This Special Issue (SI) answers the call for deeper investigation into the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies that mobilise Helix interactions to foster resilient, just and green innovation ecosystems. We particularly welcome work that operationalises concepts such as transformative innovation policy, Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI), policy mixes, policy layering, systemic policy design and impact evaluation, and that situates analyses within (or across) the TH/QH/QnH frameworks. This special issue is interested in empirical or conceptual studies, which involve local, regional or national policies, whether purely public, from state-owned companies or through public-private partnerships. Authors are invited to explore how Public Policy is connected with Triple Helix. Contributions can deal with state-of-the art research, models, policies, empirical studies, and case studies in this research area.

Accordingly, we invite papers covering, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Stakeholder engagement and the role of stakeholders in Public Policy
- Triple Helix governance in public administration initiatives
- Local or regional public policy and Helix actors (policies for innovation habitats and ecosystems)
- Public procurement for innovation
- Urban Consortium Operations
- Budgetary goals and indicators of performance
- Solutions in waste recycling, public transportation, lighting, energy and water to sustainability engaging university, industry, government and social players
- Spatial and regional analysis
- New public policies arrangements to enhance SDGs, including Public Private Partnership
- Public value
- Social experiences, civil society engagement
- Policies to green sectors as tourism, health and education
- Science, technology and innovation policies
- Innovation in public policies

- Equity, diversity and inclusion in public policies
- Public Policies for emerging technologies.

The special issue is seeking strong qualitative or quantitative studies that examine public policies within their specific geographic or innovation contexts, and also at subnational levels (regions, provinces, local). They also encourage studies that encompass multiple contexts or ecosystems, or that critically compare different policies across various countries or subnational. Papers utilizing innovative empirical methodologies or systematic literature review techniques are particularly encouraged. Actionable insights — offer recommendations for practitioners and co-creation arenas that accelerate sustainable, equitable and inclusive innovation. Case studies showing engaged society or innovative approaches in particular sectors are also encouraged. Authors should clearly outline their primary research question, theoretical framework, and the anticipated contribution of their paper to the field. Submitted manuscripts must be original and not currently under consideration or previously published elsewhere. Below is the timeline for the special issue.

- **September 30, 2025:** Expression of interest, abstract (optional) (around 500 words) submission by email to the guest editor for consideration in the special issues.
- **October 30, 2025:** Acceptances/Rejections, Guest editors provide recommendations for further paper development.
- **February 15, 2026:** Submission of the full article manuscript. The final submission will be managed through the standard submission systems for external review of the journal. The finally accepted paper will be first published online.
- **May/June 2026:** Publication of the special issue.

Submission instructions

Before submitting your manuscript, please ensure you have carefully read the submission instructions for *Triple Helix Journal* at

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Please indicate within your cover letter that you wish your manuscript to be considered as part of the article collection on:

Public Policies in the Context of Helix Models

All submissions will undergo rigorous peer review and accepted articles will be published in the journal as a collection.

Additional information:

Submissions will also benefit from the usual advantages of open access publication:

- Efficient publication: Online submission, electronic peer review and production make

the process of publishing your article simple and efficient.

- High visibility and international readership in your field: Open access publication ensures high visibility and maximum exposure for your work - anyone with online access can read your article.
- Authors retain copyright, licensing the article under a Creative Commons license: articles can be freely redistributed and reused as long as the article is correctly attributed.
- The APC fee of the papers will be covered by the Triple Helix Association and its partners.

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