



# Demographics, entrepreneurship and technology

Defining the frontiers of future economies



## Call for Contributions

### Introduction

Konza Technopolis will host the 41<sup>st</sup> IASP World Conference on Science Parks and Areas of Innovation in September 2024.

The conference will bring together experts in developing and managing different innovation spaces such as Science and Technology Parks (STPs), Areas of Innovation (AOIs), Innovation Districts (IDs) and hubs, together with technology-based incubators, accelerators, universities and other institutions and organisations that work to support innovation and sustainable economic development in their cities and regions.

To serve their companies and communities, all these innovation-centred projects work closely with city policy makers and a broad range of other public and private partners, such as development and funding agencies, industry associations, chambers of commerce, consultants and developers of innovation spaces, networks, venture capital funds and many more.

Alongside STP and AOI managers, all of these entities and innovation professionals in general are welcome to make contributions to this conference, where we will debate the latest trends in our industry's increasingly complex structures for professional innovation support.

### Theme and Programme

The programme will be divided into a variety of sessions – retaining both the traditional plenary and parallel sessions on specific topics, as well as more innovative formats for knowledge exchange. All conference sessions will be related to the overall theme for the 2024 IASP World Conference, which has been set as:

***Demographics, entrepreneurship and technology***

*Defining the frontiers of future economies*

The United Nations (UN) projects a significant demographic shift: by 2030, an estimated 1.3 billion individuals worldwide will fall within the age bracket of 15-24. This youth surge, representing vast potential, is set to reshape the global landscape. Regions with the greatest youth populations are primed for significant opportunities, from expanding their share of the global workforce to fostering innovation, driving economic growth, and enlarging domestic consumer markets. However, the UN's projections also foresee a contrasting future, with one in six individuals expected to be over 65 years old by 2050.

In regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Northern America, and Oceania, youth populations have plateaued, signalling the onset of ageing demographics and diminishing workforces. This demographic shift threatens to shrink domestic markets in these areas. In stark contrast, Asia and Africa are experiencing a youth population boom. Africa, in particular, boasts the world's youngest population, with 40% below the age of 15, and this trend is anticipated to endure well beyond 2050. While this demographic dividend promises growth in labour supply, innovation, and consumer potential, it also presents unique challenges.

The recent coronavirus pandemic has also highlighted the need for more distributed/devolved global manufacturing and supply chains, amid a growing number of multinational corporations which struggle to survive and the necessity to create shared value in markets where they have traditionally focused on sales and distribution. There is rising need for innovation and technology transfer across markets to support such manufacturing and supply chains. This calls for skilling to ensure the creation of a workforce that can work globally to also address the decline in workforce in other parts of the world.

The transition of many countries to knowledge-based economies, the intersection of technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship offers new models of shared growth, based on innovative startups seeking to address emerging global challenges. There is a strong realisation that competitiveness in the knowledge-based economies will be based on the ability to solve problems at scale, whilst creating wealth in domestic markets and employment opportunities in the world's most youthful regions – thus focusing on shared value creation.

As the 41<sup>st</sup> IASP World Conference returns to Africa for the first time since 2008, our theme, **"Demographics, Entrepreneurship, and Technology: Defining the Frontiers of Future Economies,"** has particular significance as we explore the role to be played by science parks and areas of innovation, not only in empowering regions such as Africa and Asia to harness the potential of their burgeoning youth demographic, entrepreneurship, and technology for economic growth but also in addressing the challenges posed by a global population that is steadily ageing. In this context, the theme calls upon us to reflect on critical components of collaboration across the world to ensure that there is a sufficient talent pool, innovation, and technology base, to sustain the global economy.

Authors are invited to submit paper proposals and a 1-minute video summary for the sessions listed below:

## DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS:

Listed in random order, and numbered for the sole purpose of easy reference when submitting the proposal. The type of sessions (plenary, parallel, workshop, etc) will be determined after the review of all the contributions.

### Session 1. Youth entrepreneurship ecosystems:

Youth entrepreneurship is gaining momentum in the global South to reduce the burden of unemployment and under-employment. It is estimated that over 95% of all young workers in developing countries are part of the informal economy. However, capacity building and skills training are not enough to drive an entrepreneurial culture. There needs to be specialised environments such as STPs/AOIs that foster a culture of creation, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Within these environments there also needs to be support mechanisms and processes in place for the growth of these entrepreneurial projects, which includes access to finance. Young entrepreneurs often do not have access to capital and with a lack of a consolidated track history, it can be difficult to obtain investment. Many countries across the world are addressing this issue in a variety of ways.

This session will elicit discussions on the intersection of youth and technology, covering how organised innovation spaces can foster and support youth entrepreneurship, ensuring they have the resources, mentorship, and infrastructure needed to succeed.

### Session 2. Sustainable innovation for ageing populations:

An ageing population and workforce can bring with it some difficulties but innovation ecosystems are ideally placed to look at the ways to turn this demographic bulge into an advantage.

This session will cover a number of perspectives on the topic, ranging from best practices and presenting existing solutions, highlighting how technology and innovation can address the challenges of an ageing population (e.g. healthcare solutions, assistive technologies, and inclusive design). Submissions for this session could also include examples directly from entrepreneurs who have developed solutions for an ageing population.

### Session 3. Digital transformation in education:

The impact of changing demographics mean that future generations need to be better equipped. Quadruple helix entities, and other organisations working within academic-industry partnerships, play a crucial role in providing innovation environments to support and prepare the younger generation with the necessary skills for the workforce of the future. Each country has their own strategy with regards to education and this session will hear a variety of approaches towards digital transformation on an international level.

Edtech is a growing industry globally and holds huge promise for developing countries. It spans specialised coaching and training in emerging technologies, school and college level curriculum, employment skills and entrepreneurship. The session will present case studies and discuss on the role of STPs, AOIs, IDs and other innovation spaces in driving digital transformation in education.

#### **Session 4. Distributed global manufacturing and shared value creation:**

Distributed global manufacturing is an increasingly popular solution in reducing distribution costs, capacity flexibility and boosting local economies. This encourages a more sustainable way of working and supports inclusive innovation as well as technology transfer and adapting to dynamic labour markets.

This session will look at examples of how cross-border collaboration is successfully taking place, also discussing how to engage with international universities and entrepreneurs in order to support and encourage innovation communities.

#### **Session 5. Innovation in emerging markets:**

It is clear that there is plenty of potential in the growing youth population but specific strategies need to be in place to leverage this youthful demographic, especially with regards to emerging markets.

Methods, strategies and structures for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship will be presented in this session, covering capacity building for startups, innovation hubs, and science parks. Suggestions towards the development of governance and regulatory frameworks, including policies, legal structures, and institutional mechanisms to support the growth of science parks and areas of innovation are invited to be submitted, highlighting examples from developed economies to learn from as well as showcasing what is being done in emerging markets

#### **Session 6. Future of work and talent development**

A dynamic labour force and changing demographics present some challenges for the future of work, as well as the impact of ongoing developments in technology. In order to engage ageing populations upskilling and reskilling initiatives is essential, and innovation ecosystems play a key role in implementing such activities as well as identifying and employing talent. This ties in with life-long learning and providing opportunities for an older workforce to be attracted to the world of entrepreneurship, in parallel to activities to encourage and support the youth.

This session will discuss the future of work and talent development in an era marked by changing demographics as well as other uncertainties, including the increasing impact of AI on day-to-day lives, emerging technologies, economic disruptions, and labour protection, especially in the context of Industry 4.0. Additional questions are raised by remote and hybrid work in a post-covid workplace which is now more prevalent, but is it here to stay?

## Session 7. Ethical considerations in innovation:

With the green and digital revolution, innovation spaces such as STPs, AOIs and IDs find themselves at the spearhead of setting an example, and taking the lead to guide their innovation communities. There are a number of ethical dilemmas and considerations that innovation spaces and their resident companies face in this context. Innovation drives progress and growth but the impact it has on society, the environment, and related values needs to be taken into account.

This session invites contributions covering ethical issues related to privacy, cybersecurity, AI, and responsible innovation. For example, what is the ethical price to pay for implementing or using a new technology or platform? Do ethics affect the admission requisites of STPs/AOIs?

This is a far-reaching topic on which there may not be an international consensus, but where open discussion and collaboration is essential. Contrasting global perspectives on some of these ethical challenges and how they may be seen differently in different parts of the world will bring valuable insights and knowledge.

## Session 8. Inclusive innovation for underserved populations:

Innovation ecosystems are ideally positioned to promote inclusive innovation to benefit underserved populations, bridging demographic gaps in access to technology and entrepreneurship opportunities. There is increasing interest globally in inclusive innovation, whereby government policies in a number of countries are now incorporating elements to address this.

'Underserved populations' in this context may refer to women, youth, disabled people and ethnic minorities although predominantly attention has been on those on lowest incomes, aiming to reduce income inequality and bringing the poor out of poverty by raising their income. Broadly speaking inclusive innovation can also be about giving rights, voice, capabilities and incentives for the excluded to become active participants in processes of development and innovation, centring on the idea of innovation for inclusive growth.

This session will hear examples of such support schemes or policies within the context of organised innovation spaces, discussing gender issues, persons with special needs as well as alignment to the SDGs and the role of STPs/AOIs in championing inclusive designs and spaces.

## Session 9. Circular economy and sustainability:

STPs, AOIs and their wider innovation ecosystems can lead the way in promoting circular economy practices and sustainability in emerging and established markets. Being ambassadors for sustainable living and working, and with a green focus helps ensure an extension to the lifecycle of products being produced within these communities and a more sustainable way of working. There are various models for commercialisation but a growing focus should be on those which are environmentally aware.

This session will explore the role of science and technology in sustainable innovation ecosystems, including setting up and running sustainable hubs, as well as hearing best practices and success stories. It will also delve into the role of science parks and areas of innovation in advancing sustainable energy and green transitions within the built environment including revolutionary developments such as green datacentres and Cloud infrastructure as catalysts for future economies, electric vehicles (EVs), green hydrogen, and green minerals.

## Session 10. Disparity in demographics:

With both an increasing young and ageing population in different parts of the world, we invite you to reflect on critical components of collaboration across the world. How can we bridge the gap via new collaboration models and what's the role of organised innovation spaces to support this effort? How can technology be best leveraged in supporting these efforts?

This session will welcome contributions on visionary projects already implemented in STPs/AOIs, pilot testing new collaboration models and any emerging best practices in this field.

## Session 11. Food tech and climate change:

As the world is racing towards net zero in 2050, climate change is top of the agenda for many, which also includes food security. Climate change influences how crops are grown and there are various alternative agricultural methods being used. The changing climate, also affects an ongoing push for alternative proteins and novel ingredients as well as waste circularity and technology can provide scalable solutions for all of this.

This session will hear examples of food technology start-ups, investors or STPs/AOIs working on developing and scaling products and services which are changing the way we produce, consume, and dispose of our food. It will explore the significant role that science parks and areas of innovation play in advancing technologies to mitigate impacts of climate change and support innovation in food systems. Discussions may cover urban agriculture, supply chain management, traceability, food and nutrition, alternative food sources, and the use of living modified organisms for food security within the global supply chain systems.

## Session 12. STPs & AOIs as drivers of future economies

The theme of the conference defines Demographics, Entrepreneurship and Technology as the drivers of future economies. STP & AOIs play a leading role in promoting entrepreneurship. With changing global demographics, a more widespread gig economy and a hugely technology dependent society, will it be “business as usual” for STPs & AOIs? Resilience is the hallmark of entrepreneurship.

How well and how fast can STPs & AOIs, that are by design asset heavy, respond to changes? In this session, we would like to explore emerging models and structures of STPs & AOIs that will make them more resilient. What role does knowledge generation play here and how might the positioning of higher education institutions incite innovation and entrepreneurship?

## Session 13. The fintech sector and emerging funding models

A fundamental transformation in the global economy is taking place. It is expected that new financial technology models will emerge and become more widespread to cater to the developing economies. Financial technology or fintech combines a finance-related concept with technology, including AI and blockchain, to educate and/or enable users to access various financial opportunities that can add value to their lives.

This session invites discussion and case studies on the how science parks and areas of innovation can help drive the fintech sector by engaging with entrepreneurs, innovators, the traditional banking and insurance sectors as well as financial regulatory bodies.

It will also discuss innovative financing for science, technology, and entrepreneurial ecosystems and various creative financing methods that innovation spaces can leverage for sustained development. These approaches encompass, resource mobilisation approaches, the monetization of intellectual property (IP) collaborations to build resources, and the application of green financing principles.

## Session 14. The role of communication and evidence-based decision making

Aside from general promotional efforts and branding, there are critical aspects of communication in science parks and areas of innovation with regards to the role they play in promoting development, influencing their innovation ecosystems and channelling accurate data.

In order to grow and develop, organised innovation spaces need to communicate and disseminate their results and the impact of their innovation community on the wider regional innovation ecosystem. This is essential for encouraging the participation of other entities as well as civil society. However, having a large platform requires there to be careful



handling of what is communicated. Evidence-based decision making is a crucial aspect of monitoring and evaluation processes, as it ensures that such decisions are grounded in reliable and valid data.

This session will address the need for clear and coherent messaging, the dangers of misinformation, ethics in evidence management, governance of things, etc. hearing some of the challenges that leaders of innovation communities face in this regard, strategies for implementing evidence-based decision-making processes and communication efforts, best practice examples, lessons learnt and other insights.

## Session 15. Emerging tech and AI

The World Economic Forum lists the [top 10 emerging technologies](#) of 2023, highlighting at the same time that such technologies, whilst designed to shape our collective future, are so new that they are not yet familiar names and many have never heard of them. Emerging tech seeks to revolutionise current ways of working, easing day-to-day life or improving processes. AI is ever prevalent and several emerging tech trends are AI based, such as generative AI or AI-facilitated healthcare. Other aspects of emerging tech and with AI in particular relate to the fear of being replaced in the workplace or loss of creativity as more and more systems become computerised.

This session aims to hear what is on the forefront of technology within the innovation communities, how STPs/AOIs work with such companies, and what the ongoing impact is on employment and the changing demographics. Contributions to this session may also explore key elements related to AI, including skills development, data infrastructure, representation/development based on the many diverse languages in the world, agile governance, energy efficiency, computational capacity.

\*\*\*\* See below for the technical specifications on how to submit your contribution \*\*\*\*



# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

## How to submit your paper and video

Submission to speak at IASP 2024 is open to everyone. Authors do not need to be members of IASP, and participation from a variety of organisations and sectors is welcomed. Submissions consist of a short paper and a video summary.

### Submission rules:

**Please read carefully the rules below before submitting your paper.**

- Papers can only be submitted online through the official conference website (available at [www.iaspworldconference.com](http://www.iaspworldconference.com) from January 2024 onwards)
- Authors are required to submit the following per paper:

**1. Executive Summary:**

Each paper should begin with an Executive Summary of no more than 150 words.

**2. Paper:**

The total length of each paper should have a minimum of 1,500 and a maximum of 3,000 words (plus tables, graphs or illustrations). Figure and tables should be attached in the designated box. Only jpg format images are permitted. All notes and references should be as footers at the bottom of the text body field.

**3. 1m video:**

All papers should be accompanied by a 1-minute video presenting the executive summary. If you have multiple authors, the video should be recorded by the person who would speak at the conference. This video will form part of the evaluation process and may also be used in conference promotional material.

Professional recording is not required; speakers should feel free to record on Zoom or similar platforms or on a smartphone. If recording with a smartphone, always film with the phone held horizontally, around 1.5 metres away from the speaker so that most of your upper body is in the frame and use the main camera. Please contact IASP if you have any questions about the video.

You can find a few examples of effective videos [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Authors are required to upload the **video link only, not the actual file**. Please note that the link should NOT EXPIRE (we suggest using YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive or similar services)

- Word or PDF papers are not accepted. You are required to fill in the online submission form with title, main author, co-author(s), presenter and respective affiliation(s)
- Use single line spacing in the text, tables and figures
- TITLE: Capitalise the entire title. Spell out words. Do not use abbreviations.
- Maximum number of characters permitted for the title: 200

- Authors must select one of the available sessions for which they wish to submit their papers.
- The author is responsible for the submission of the paper according to the instructions and in the deadline. Please double check your grammar and word count before submission

Acknowledgement of receipt of your submission will be sent to your e-mail address immediately upon submission. If you do not receive the e-mail, your submission was not completed, and your paper needs to be re-submitted. Please note that acknowledgement of receipt of your paper submission does not mean that your paper is accepted by the Steering Committee of the IASP World Conference.

#### Language:

The official language of the Conference is English. All papers and videos must be written and presented in high-standard English.

#### Deadline and submission:

The submission must be made **by 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024** through the online submission system that will be available at [www.iaspworldconference.com](http://www.iaspworldconference.com) from January 2024 onwards. Only papers and videos submitted via the online submission system will be considered.

#### Selection of papers:

Papers will be evaluated by the conference Steering Committee. The Committee will select the final papers that best contribute to the theme and desired discussion at the conference, based on the clarity and relevance of their argument. The Steering Committee reserves the right to adjust the tentative sessions and decide which session a paper is assigned to. Authors will be notified **after 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024** of whether their paper has been selected for inclusion in the 41<sup>st</sup> IASP World Conference on Science Parks and Areas of Innovation.

#### The contributions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- The relevance of the paper to the session for which it is intended
- The clarity and effectiveness of argument
- The scope of the analysis and the level of generalisation
- The originality of the topic and/or approach
- The proficiency of the English language

Given the limited number of speaking opportunities at the conference, some of the papers that are approved by the review panel may not be allotted time for an oral presentation at the conference, but may be included in the conference proceedings - a digital publication widely read by conference delegates and our innovation community as a whole.

If selected for presentation or publication, the main author will also benefit from a discounted registration fee to attend the conference.

Selected papers should NOT be read verbatim to the audience; instead, the most important aspects that the author wishes to highlight should be presented, leaving a substantial part of the allotted time for questions and comments from the audience and discussion of the proffered conclusions.

Depending on the session format for which the paper is approved, visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations can be used. Further details and guidance related to the conference session and/or proceedings will follow after the paper review.

### Submission Timeline

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Submission of papers and videos | 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2024    |
| Notification to authors         | 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024 onwards |

### Other information

Conference dates: **24-27 September 2024**. Follow updates at <https://iaspworldconference.com/>

For any questions related to your paper submission please contact the Organising Secretariat at [papers@iasp.ws](mailto:papers@iasp.ws).

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