



# AI4Gov

Trusted AI for Transparent Public Governance  
fostering Democratic Values

*Designing a local-level data space  
platform as a strategic approach  
to reduce human-wildlife conflicts  
in rural Italy*

*M. Odintsov Vaintrub, P. Di Giuseppe, D. Chavez, O. Corcho*



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863



**POLITÉCNICA**

UNIVERSIDAD  
POLITÉCNICA  
DE MADRID



## A photograph of a car accident scene on a road. A white car is heavily damaged, with its front end crushed. A large, brown, shaggy animal, possibly a bison or moose, is lying on the road in the foreground. A person in a high-visibility vest is standing near the car, and a bus is visible in the background.



# Pressure on wildlife:



Bresciaoggi 08.12.2019

## L'inchiesta contraddetta

### Il piano della Prefettura ripete prassi censurate

In attesa che la politica, e magari anche gli apparati dello Stato, prendano atto dell'esistenza di un pensiero diverso rispetto a una presunta emergenza che forse andrebbe anche affrontata alla fonte, chiedendone conto a chi l'ha creata con decenni di immissioni illegali che continuano ancora oggi, nel Bresciano le fucilate continuano; e stranamente l'approccio alle operazioni di «contenimento» del cinghiale segue gli stessi criteri che hanno causato un'inchiesta e il rinvio a giudizio per diversi reati di 8 persone.

In questo mese di dicembre è fissata la prima udienza del processo a funzionari e agenti della polizia provinciale e dirigenti dell'Ufficio territoriale



La caccia è sempre aperta



## Cinghiali, con la caccia di selezione si punta ad abbattere 182 capi

Da giugno avviate in tutta la Lombardia battute di cacciatori: a Brescia già presi 96 animali

Roberto Manieri  
r.manieri@gornatedbrescia.it

«La caccia di selezione agli ungulati ha permesso sino ad oggi, dal 22 giugno, di abbattere nel Bresciano 96 cinghiali a fronte dei 182 capi previsti dal nostro piano regionale. Fabio Rolli, assessore lombardo all'Agricoltura, alimentazione e sistemi verdi, si dice soddisfatto dei risultati ottenuti, anche guardando in prospettiva all'obiettivo fissato per il gennaio prossimo.

Il nuovo piano regionale concordato con

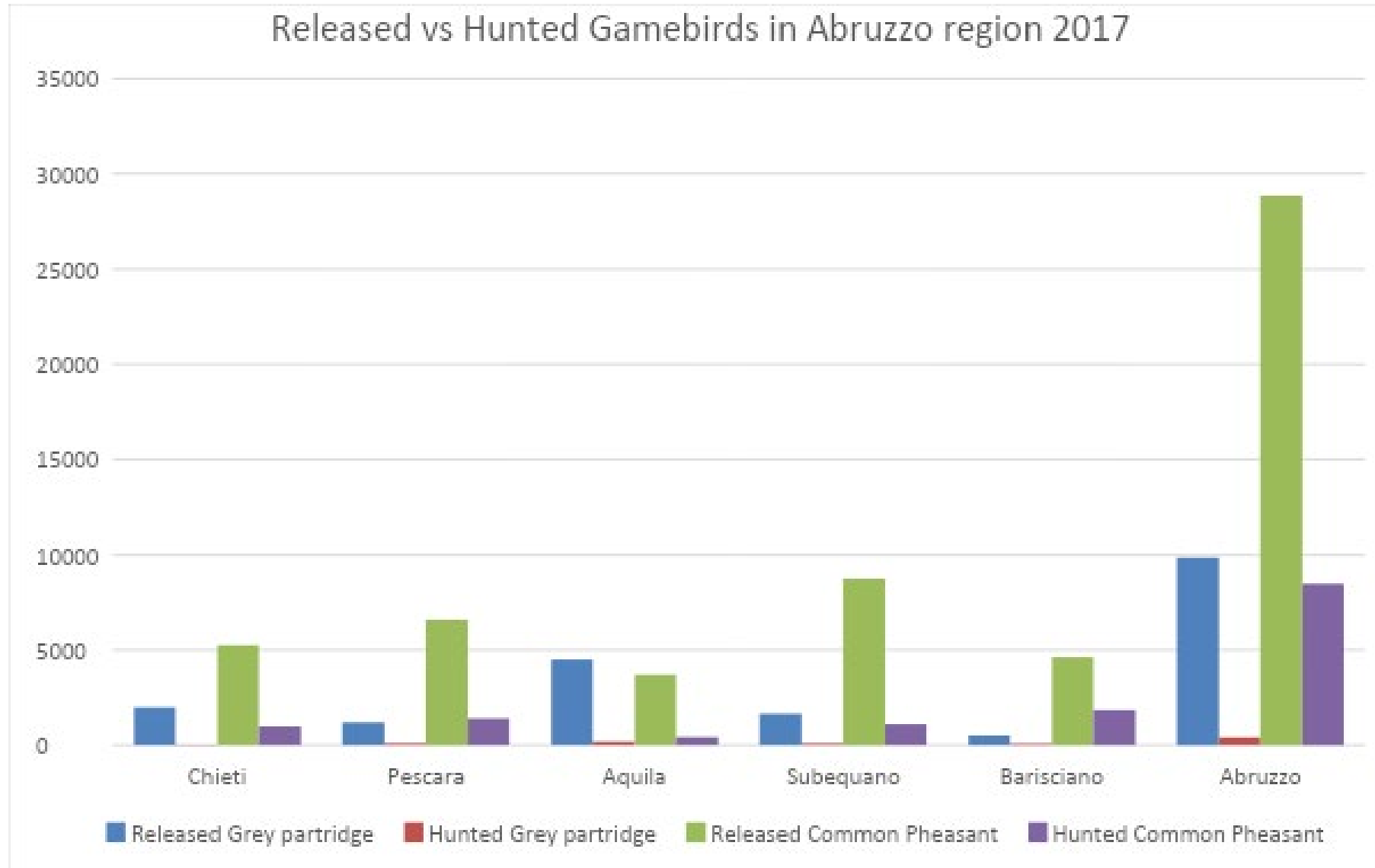
«Il piano di selezione prevede per Brescia il prelievo di 182 cinghiali fino a gennaio 2020», ha spiegato l'assessore. Sono ammessi al prelievo solo i cacciatori che sono iscritti alla forma di specializzazione per la selezione agli ungulati e possiedono l'abilitazione per la caccia di selezione. I prelievi devono essere realizzati solo con fucile ad anima rigata e sono ammessi sino alla mezzanotte. «Rispetto all'anno scorso abbiamo raddoppiato sul territorio lombardo il numero dei capi abbattuti: siamo arrivati a quota 2.456 dopo i 1.341 del 2018. Oltre mille uccisi nella provincia.

l'agricoltura. Pochi giorni fa in Laguria un uomo è stato ucciso da un cinghiale che aveva investito in moto il 28 luglio, così come è successo a Lodi a gennaio. Questi animali si stanno spostando anche nelle aree urbane. Era necessario intervenire con decisione e la Regione Lombardia ha già fatto tutto quanto di propria competenza sfruttando ogni strumento messo a disposizione dalla legge», ha aggiunto Rolli.

«Quest'anno sono dunque raddoppiati gli abbattimenti. È il risultato della legge regionale sui cinghiali, voluta per dare tutti gli strumenti possibili relativi alla gestione della fauna selvatica. Abbiamo imposto un cambio di marcia. Anche perché l'alleanza tra agricoltori e cacciatori è cruciale. Proprio per questo la Regione Lombardia ha esteso agli agricoltori abilitati, che abbiano subito danni ai raccolti, la possibilità di sparare ai cinghiali per tutto l'anno», ha aggiunto poi l'assessore, ricordando l'importanza dell'attività venatoria.

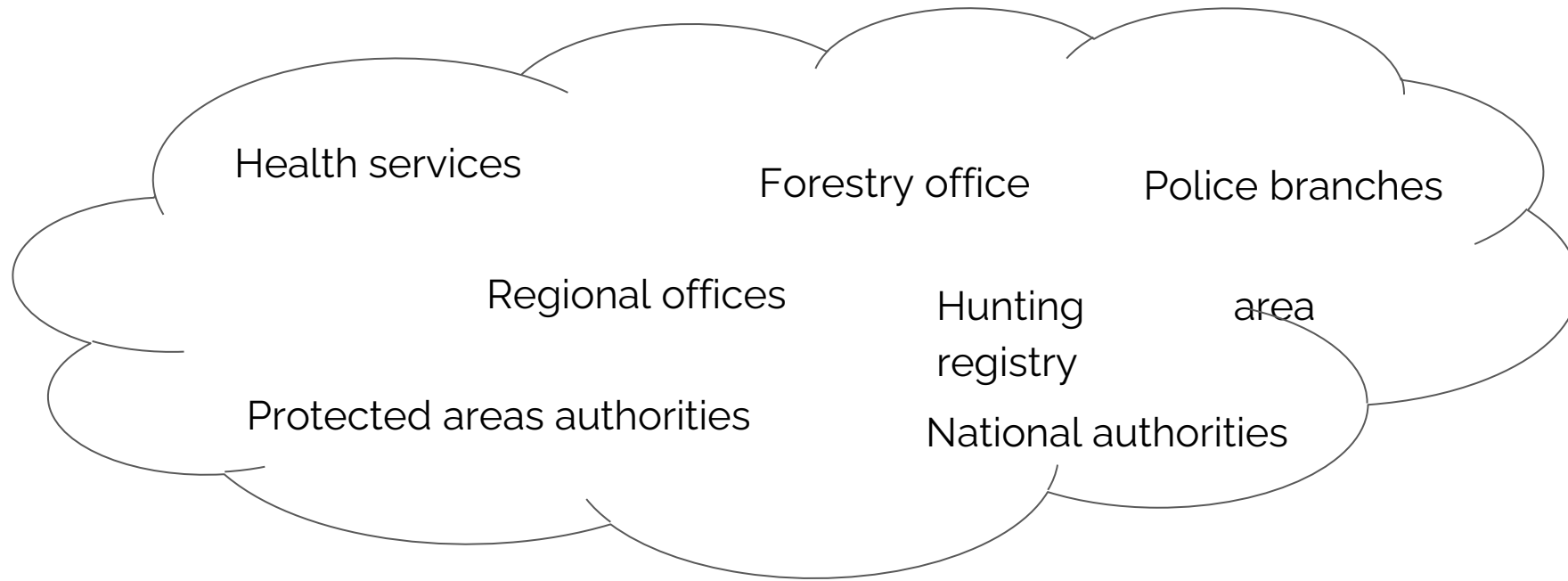


## Artificial game bird management:



# The problem of coordination:

## *Authorities*



## *Stakeholders*

Farmers      Hunters      Hikers      Tourists      Tour operators      Public



# Challenges to data integration:

## **Technical challenges:**

- a) Data Quality: Ensuring the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of data can be a significant challenge.
- b) Technical Infrastructure and Resources: Implementing and maintaining an open data portal requires adequate technical infrastructure and resources.
- c) Data Standardization and Interoperability: Datasets available from different sources often have varying formats, structures, and metadata.

## **Human-centered challenges:**

- a) Awareness and Capacity Building: Limited awareness of open data concepts among stakeholders can hinder adoption.

## **Legal and privacy challenges:**

- a) Data Privacy and Security: Open data portals need to strike a balance between making data accessible and protecting privacy and security.
- b) Legal and Policy Frameworks: Legal and policy frameworks may not always be supportive of open data initiatives.

# Materials and Methods:

## Human-centric data collection:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with different Public Administration officials covering different aspects of the management of human-wildlife interactions in rural areas.

The questionnaires all followed the same structure, focusing on obtaining key insights regarding specific pain points related to the aspect under management.

The questionnaires were conducted according to the following steps:

- 1) Opening questions: Broad, open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their experiences, opinions, or perspectives.
- 1) Probing: More detailed questions aiming to provide additional information or examples.
- 1) Probing for alternative viewpoints: These questions were also aimed to uncover diverse perspectives and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

All questionnaires were recorded, and key insights were extracted during the transcription of the content.

# Materials and Methods:

## Key design features:

- 1) Knowledge representation: The process of structuring and organizing information in a way that enables the system to understand, store, and reason with knowledge.
- 1) Data catalog: A centralized repository or inventory that organizes and provides information about available datasets.
- 1) Key features: Definition of key aspects that the proposed system must have in order to be accepted by the intended user.
- 1) Definition of KPI and metrics for progress: Key metrics are vital for any project related to digital integration. The metrics are pre-defined from the beginning in most projects which follow the "Lean startup" framework in order to detect user trends.



# Human-centric data collection:

## Interview general conclusions:

- 1) The different PA offices are fragmented and do not share a common vision
- 2) They are focused predominantly on the specific output
- 3) All interviewees members expressed the importance of having a platform with real-time data
- 4) The main interest was the identification of local trends based on operation areas.
- 5) The transition of manual into a digital and shareable format was considered the main challenge
- 6) Interviewees expressed little interest in making the effort to make their data publicly available.
- 7) Issues such as disinterest in transparency emerged as limiting factors
- 8) Additional issues included sharing of police records from deposited complaints and reports ("Carabinieri Forestali" police branch).

# Apennine Wolf - *Canis Lupus Italicus* (Protected species):



- **Estimated number:** 500 animals
- **Nucleus size:** 2-6 animals
- **Tracking techniques:**
  - a) Snow tracking
  - b) Hidden cameras
  - c) Direct observation
  - d) Farm damage registry
- **Risk and conflicts:**
  - Direct predation, Hybridization
- **Management practices:**
  - a) Tracking of individuals
  - b) Controlled feeding
  - c) Subsidizing fences, dogs and farm damage compensation

## Relevant databases:

Database	Open/ Close	Description
<u>Pre-season</u>		
Forestry office planning	Partially	Some open tables exist, but not all the data is open
Regional offices	closed	Published only at the end of evaluations
Hunting bag proposals	closed	Published only at the end of evaluations
Official meeting protocols	open	Especially 5-year plans for wildlife management
<u>In - season</u>		
Hunting area registry	on demand	communicated directly to hunting groups
Police reports	Closed	Registry of complaints, accidents, and conflicts
Social media	Open	Private, association, and public announcements
Press publications	Open	Whole Open, usually provide anecdotal data
Health services	Closed	Registry of incidents and boar meat inspections
<u>Post - season</u>		
Regional offices	Closed	Internal reports
Hunting bag registry	Partially	Registry of hunted animals by forestry services



# Data type classification:

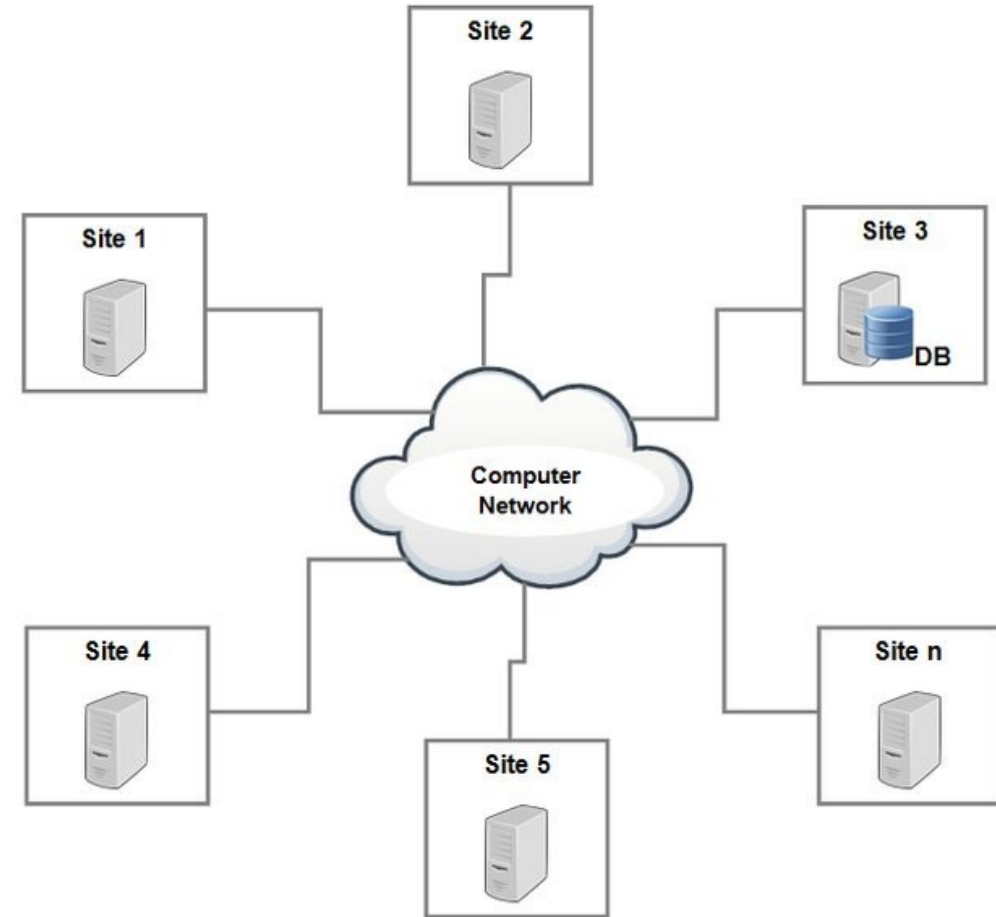
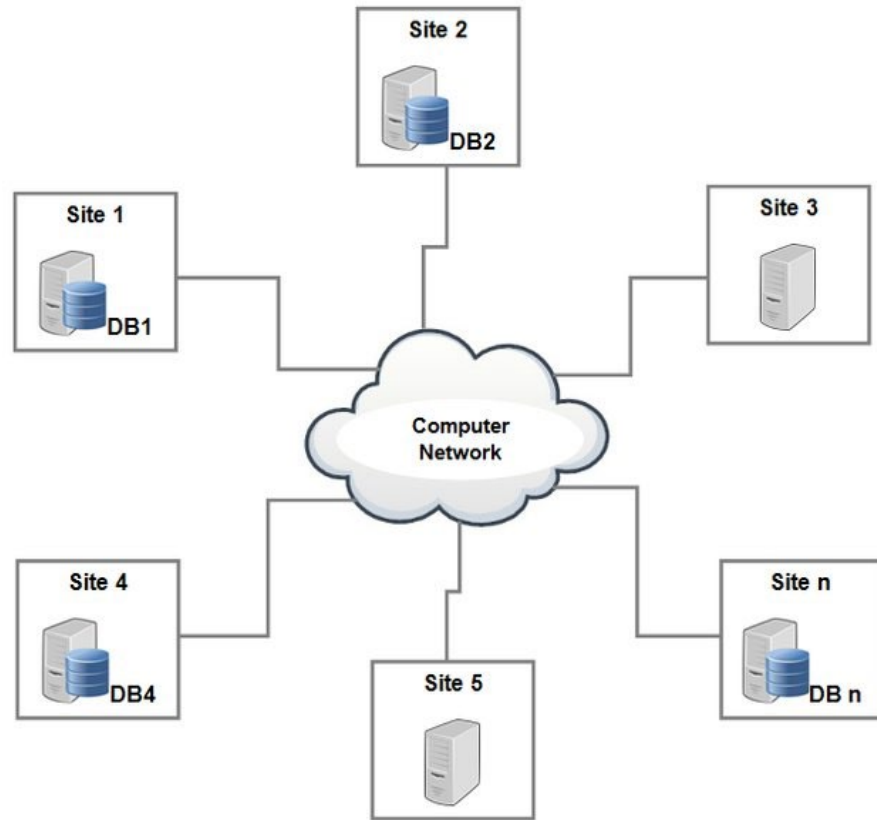
Database	Type of data	Analysis technique
<u>Pre-season</u>		
Forestry office planning	Text	NLP / Text Classification / Topic Modeling
Regional offices	Text	NLP / Text Classification / Topic Modeling
Hunting bag proposals	Numerical	Time Series Analysis / Clustering / Anomaly Detection / Probabilistic Models
Official meeting protocols	Text	Topic Modeling / Sentiment Analysis
<u>In - season</u>		
Hunting area registry	Categorical	Categorical Visualization / Association Rule Mining / Clustering
Police reports	Text	Clustering / Topic Modeling
Social media / Social media API	Text	NLP / Text Classification / Topic Modeling/ Sentiment analysis
Press publications	Text	Text Classification / Topic Modeling/ Sentiment analysis
Health services	Categorical	Categorical Visualization / Association Rule Mining / Clustering
<u>Post - season</u>		
Regional offices	Text	NLP / Text Classification / Topic Modeling
Hunting bag registry	Numerical	Time Series Analysis / Clustering / Anomaly Detection / Probabilistic Models

## Marsican bear - *Ursus Arctos Marsicanus* (extremely endangered):



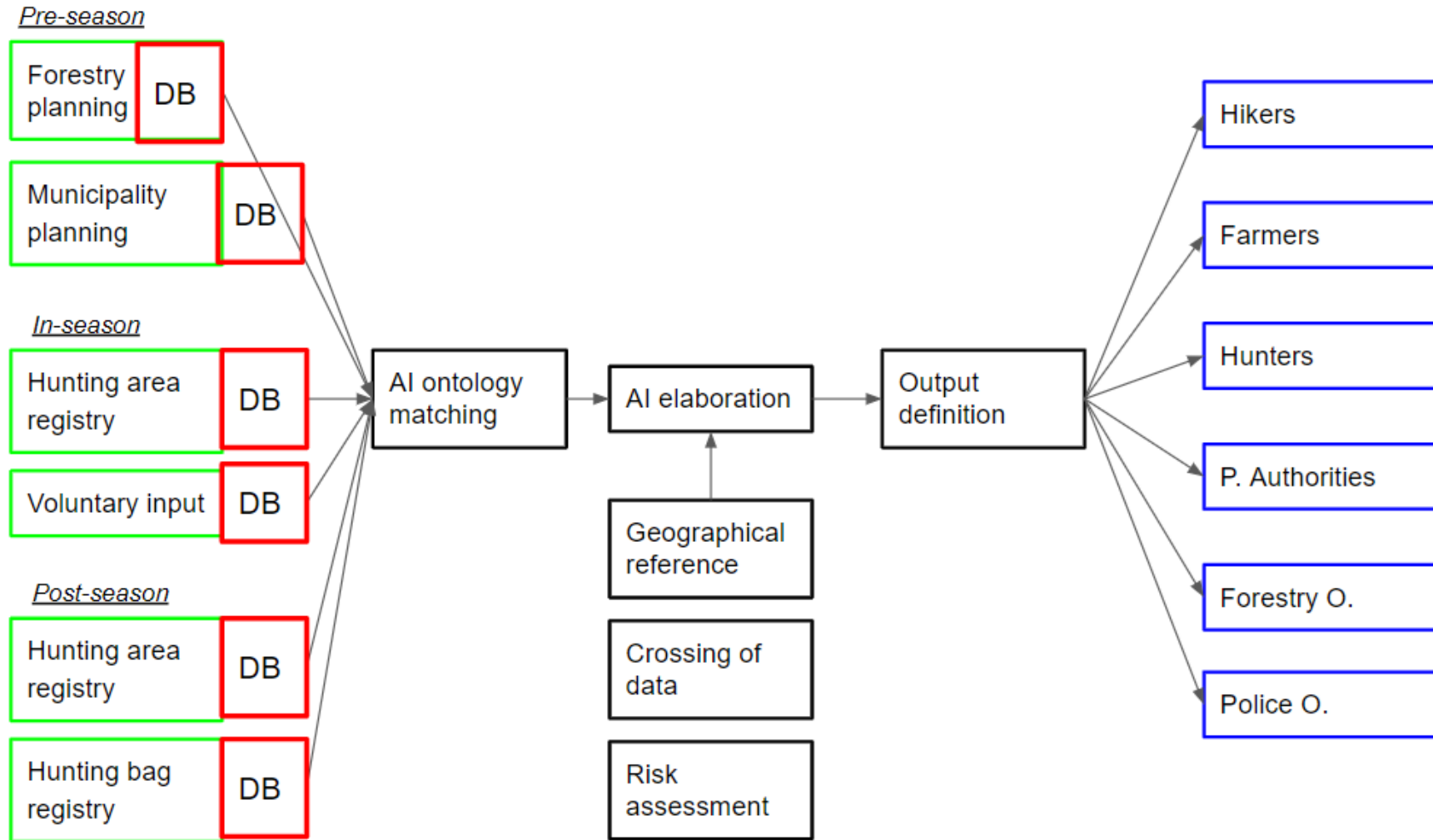
- **Estimated number:** 50 animals
- **Nucleus size:** 1-3 animals (240 kmq each)
- **Tracking techniques:**
  - a) Radio collaring
  - b) Indirect tracking
  - c) Direct observation
  - d) Farm damage registry
- **Risk and conflicts:** Direct predation, damage to hives, damage to infrastructures
- **Management practices:**
  - a) Tracking of individuals
  - b) Controlled feeding
  - c) Subsidizing fences and farm damage compensation
  - d) Media campaigns for education

# Decentralized VS Centralized database structure

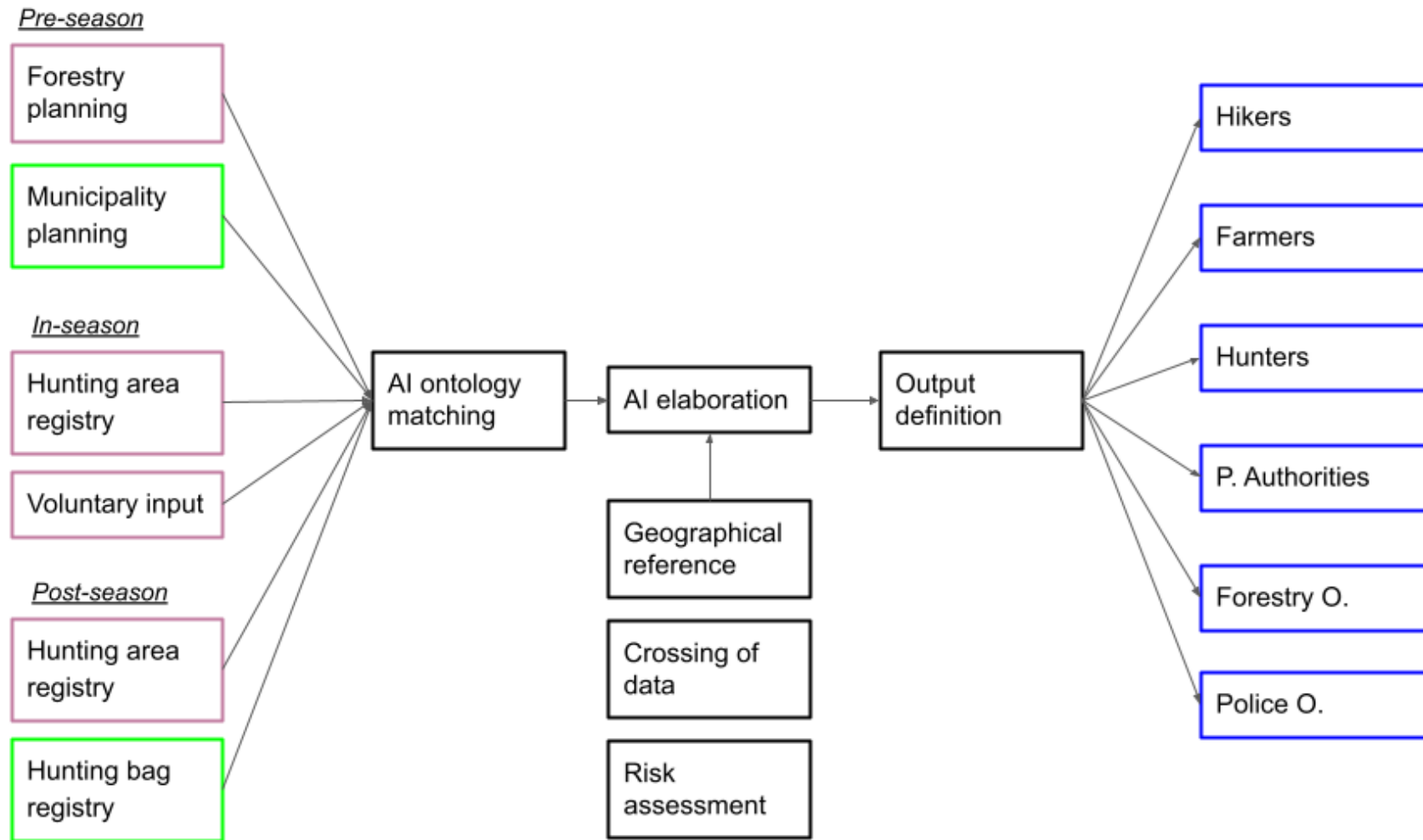




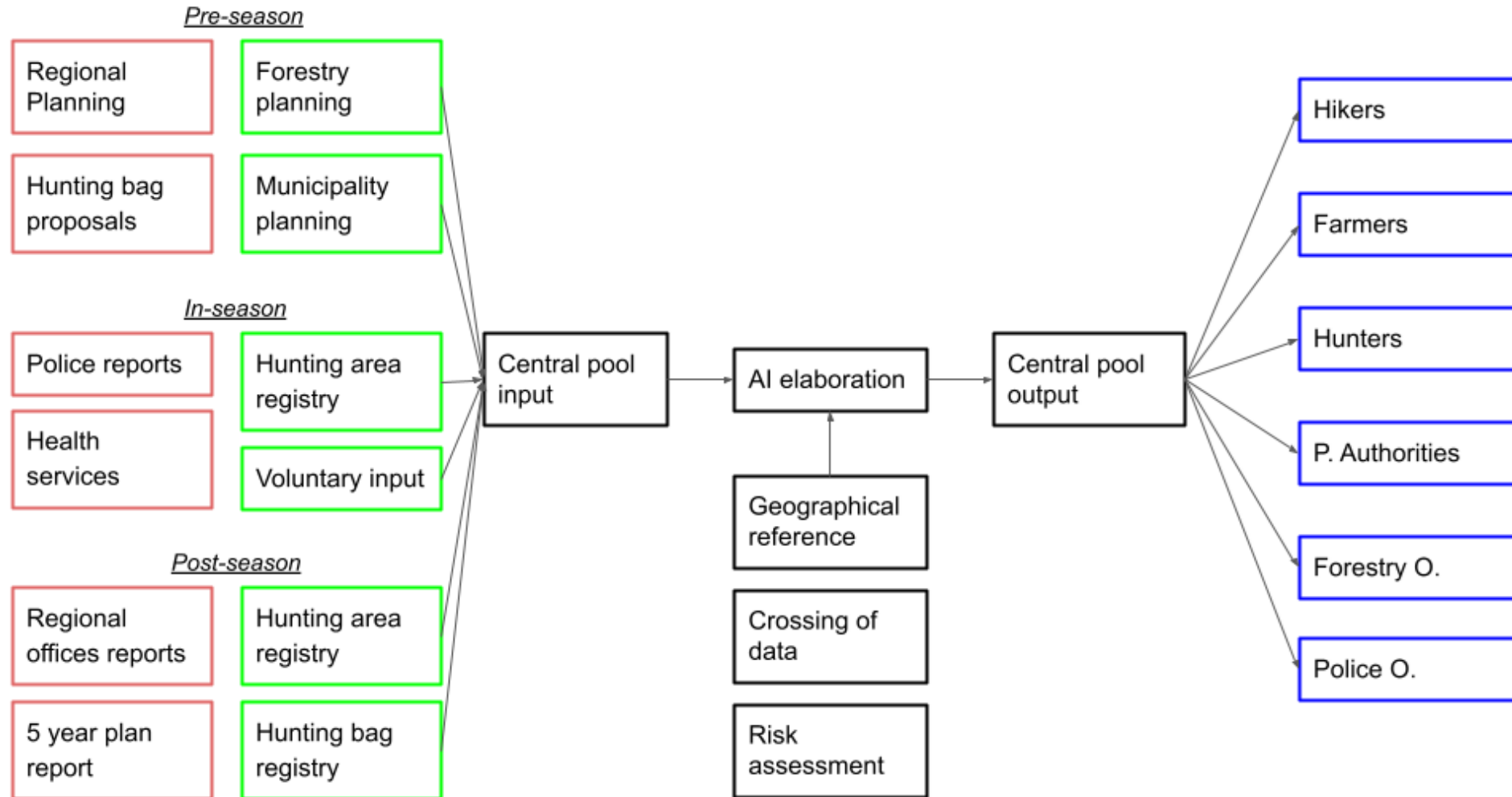
# AI's role: unified ontology and data output



## Short-term and medium onboarding strategy:



# Long term onboarding strategy:





## Wild boar - *Sus scrofa* (“invasive” species)



- **Estimated number:** 48.500 + 20,000 in parks
- **Nucleus size:** 1 - 60 animals
- **Tracking techniques:**
  - a) Direct mass observation
  - b) Farm damage registry
  - c) Hunting bag registry
- **Risk and conflicts:** Crop damage, damage to infrastructures, disease transmission
- **Management practices:**
  - a) Commercial and state assigned hunting
  - b) Trapping in group or individuals
  - c) Subsidizing fences and farm damage compensation
  - d) Increased biosecurity on farms

## Discussion:

- 1) The Introduction of a new AI-driven system into the local levels of PA is always a challenging task.
- 2) This challenge is further enhanced in rural areas, with a long tradition of conservative data management and avoidance of inter-office collaboration.
- 3) Data-driven approach to co-governance can have a significant effect on the quality of the public service in rural areas.
- 4) The local conditions in rural areas dictated that the design should rely on decentralized data gathering and data sovereignty of the individual offices.
- 5) The technical layout is based on a decentralized database approach, with AI data integration tools being a significant component of the system.
- 6) A gradual onboarding strategy based on rigid KPIs and engagement measurement is fundamental for onboarding institutional players.

## Conclusions:

- The challenge of mitigating Human-Wildlife interactions, and reducing friction that can escalate to larger public problems is a challenging responsibility.
- An additional factor complicating the performance is the distribution of responsibilities and authorities across different offices.
- Decentralized data collection and AI-driven data space approach can fit the particular conditions of the sector.
- Technical product alone is not sufficient for its adoption in a wide enough range to provide precise data.
- Product placement and validation strategy is a vital part of the design process and should be incorporated in any AI-driven GovTech solution that faces similar challenges.



# Thanks, acknowledgements and questions



- Thanks to Pietro Santucci (Villetta Barrea) ) for the photos taken in the “ Parco nazionale Abruzzo Lazio e Molise” National Park