

IIAS-DARPG India Conference 2025

10-14th February

"Next Generation Administrative Reforms:
Empowering Citizens and
Reaching the Last Mile"





IRAS Panel on “Next Generation Administrative Reforms: from Crisis to Resilience?”

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Under the general conference theme of the IAS-DARPG Conference ‘Next Generation Administrative Reforms’, the panel will address ongoing reform movements in public administration, which are in connection with current crisis phenomena and new transformational challenges in global, regional and local contexts. On the one hand, this involves reactive adaptation processes of public administration with regard to external shocks and stress factors. The challenges here are in connection inter alia with demographic changes, climate change, socio-economic crises, new cleavages, global conflicts, and polarizations, some of which leading to disruptive incisions in traditional structures and patterns of public administration. On the other hand, the focus is on targeted administrative reforms aimed at proactively and creatively shaping upcoming social transformation processes. This involves, for example, the reorganization of administrative systems in many countries as a result of the digital transformation, introduction of AI and automation, which might also lead to unintended negative effects and new distortions to be addressed from the perspective of administrative sciences.

This raises the question of the extent to which these comprehensive or incremental changes are ultimately suitable for strengthening the general resilience of the state and public administration. For example, to what extent are ‘old’ and ‘new’ reform approaches mixed and combined in new ways? Does this lead to functional, useful or rather explosive mixtures that ultimately even jeopardize the functionality, performance and resilience of the politico-administrative system?



This panel is dedicated to the various types of these ‘Next Generation Administrative Reforms’. It will ask what type and scope the reforms are, whether they contribute to overcoming crises, absorbing external shocks, advancing necessary transformation processes or to what extent reform measures can represent ‘fatal remedies’ with regard to social problems, which in the worst case can do more harm than good. The question is what drives and motivates the reforms and what effects do they have, including un-intended consequences. Research-based and/or theory-based analyses from different countries and cultural contexts or from a comparative perspective as well as for different administrative levels and policy sectors are welcome. We invite public administration scholars and practitioners to analyze and critically assess these transformations and challenges PA systems are facing around the world drawing on sound theoretical, methodological and empirical foundations. We have identified five dimensions of “Next Generation Administrative Reforms” and welcome papers which address one or several of these dimensions/key questions:

- **Grand Challenges, Crisis Management, Resilience:** What are the greatest challenges and external stress factors for public administration? What are public administrations’ responses to exogenous or endogenous crises? Can public administration deal with acute crises, what conditions must be in place for this and what can explain administrative failures in crisis situations? How are key transformation challenges, such as climate change, SDG implementation, social polarization or socio-economic crises, absorbed and coped with by public administration? Does this result in more resilient structures and what resilience resources are necessary/available?
- **Digitalization, Automation, AI:** What is the real transformative power of new technologies? To what extent are digitalization, automation and AI contributing to transforming public administration? Under what conditions do radical, comprehensive change or rather incremental and gradual change occur? Who are the actors, promoters and what are the success factors of the digital transformation in public administration? What capacities are available to shape the change and what are the effects, including possible unintended (negative) effects?
- **Post-NPM and Neo-Weberian State:** What new governance models can be found in the post-NPM era in different countries and cultural contexts? Is there a comeback of the state, a resurgence of the public sector and local self-government (e.g. re-municipalization, re-insourcing etc.)? To what extent can a shift towards a Neo-Weberian State model (NWS) be observed and is this a suitable new reform paradigm to respond to new challenges and major crises?



What impact does this have on service delivery and the interaction between public administration and citizens?

- **Intergovernmental reforms:** What new administrative reforms can be observed in multi-level systems? Are there significant shifts between the central, regional and local levels and in central-local relations? What is the role of territorial re-scaling, functional re-allocations and local capacity building? How should the resilience-promoting or resilience-inhibiting effects of these reforms be assessed?
- **Democratic Governance:** What about the democratic embedding and internal representation of public administration? Do participatory reforms and citizen engagement contribute to making public administration more responsive, crisis-proof and resilient? What role do representative bureaucracy, diversity and inclusion play in PA?

For these themes, we particularly welcome papers which seek both to deliver empirical, research-based arguments and to build a theoretical understanding of these issues. Moreover, we welcome papers which adopt a comparative approach, be it ‘over time’, ‘cross-countries’, or ‘cross-service’.

The International Review of Administrative Sciences (IRAS) is a Clarivate-ranked public administration journal with an international comparative focus. It is owned by the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) and has been published since 1927.

Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuhlmann (Potsdam University, Germany) has been appointed Editor-in-Chief since 2024. Under her leadership and with the support of a renewed editorial team, the thematic priorities for the journal also include the above-mentioned five key areas.

We invite authors to submit manuscripts to the IRAS Track of the IIAS-DARPG India Conference 2025. The panel aims to gather excellent papers that demonstrate innovative research perspectives, sound theoretical and methodological foundations as well as fresh empirical material. To this end, papers accepted for the panel are pre-reviewed by the panel chairs to identify those that are eligible for double-blind review in IRAS. After approval by the panel chairs, the selected manuscripts will be invited for submission to IRAS, where they will undergo the double-blind peer review process. A first selection will be made on basis of abstracts, their quality and relevance to the panel. The manuscripts should comply with the [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#) set for the Journal in order to be scheduled for presentation in this track. Authors of non-compliant manuscripts would be invited to submit in another track.



Submission Guidelines

The organizers of the IIAS-DARPG India Conference 2024 are therefore inviting interested authors to visit <https://www.conftool.net/iias-darpg-indiaconference2025>

They should create an account, go to the submissions menu and submit their contributions under the following categories:

Abstracts

To be submitted in one of the tracks listed in this document; 500 words maximum, covering the research question(s), its societal relevance, the theoretical framework, data collection methods, empirical evidence collected

- Deadline for submission: November 1st, 2024
- Acceptance notification: November 30th, 2024
- Deadline for full paper submission: January 18th, 2025

Panel Proposals

Where a title, an abstract, and a list of identified speakers who will discuss the proposed topic in a specific parallel session.

- Deadline for submission: November 30th, 2024
- Acceptance notification: December 14th, 2024
- Deadline for finalization: January 18th, 2025

Practical information

- Submissions should be made through:
<https://www.conftool.net/iias-darpg-indiaconference2025/>
- All information related to the conference is available through:
<https://www.iias-darpg-indiaconference2025.org/>
- All requests can be made through: info@iias-darpg-conference2025.org