



CALL FOR PAPERS

IASIA–MENAPAR DIALOGUE 2026

Building State Capacity in the MENA Region for a New Era

Recalibrating Public Administration Education and Training for AI-Enabled
Governance and Citizen-Centered Service Delivery

12-16 October 2026 | Athens, Greece

A joint Event of with the IASIA 2026 Annual Conference

Convened by IASIA and MENAPAR | With the support of IIAS and ESCWA | Hosted by EKDDA



Rethinking Governance for a Changing World

Call for Papers

The International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) and the Middle East and North Africa Public Administration Research Network (MENAPAR) invite researchers, educators, practitioners, policy-makers, and leaders of schools and institutes of administration to submit papers for the IASIA–MENAPAR Dialogue 2026, to be held in Athens on 12-16 October 2026 as a pre-conference event of the IASIA 2026 Annual Conference.

The Dialogue will connect Global and MENA perspectives on the future of public administration and state capacity. It will combine one or two focused Research–Policy Roundtables with thematic research sessions bringing together policy-makers, institutional leaders, educators, researchers, and practitioners. Selected authors will present evidence, comparative insights, institutional experiences, and practical recommendations, while the dialogue sessions will translate these contributions into policy and cooperation priorities.

The special call is organized within the institutional framework of IASIA 2026. Abstracts and final papers will be submitted through the official IASIA ConfTool platform, and accepted authors will be required to register for the IASIA 2026 Conference.

Working Language

The working language of the Dialogue is English. Abstracts, full papers, PowerPoint presentations, and oral presentations must all be prepared and delivered in English.

Institutional Framework

IASIA 2026 Annual Conference

The IASIA 2026 Annual Conference will take place in Athens, Greece, from 12 to 16 October 2026 under the theme “Rethinking Governance for a Changing World”. Organized in cooperation with the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), the conference brings together schools and institutes of administration, scholars, practitioners, educators, and policy-makers from around the world.

MENAPAR

The Middle East and North Africa Public Administration Research Network (MENAPAR) is a regional platform for knowledge creation, research exchange, institutional collaboration, and dialogue on public administration and governance. MENAPAR works with government institutions, universities, schools and institutes of administration, researchers, and international partners across the MENA region and beyond.

Supporting and Host Institutions

The Dialogue is envisaged with the institutional support of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and will be hosted in Athens in cooperation with EKDDA. Their participation strengthens the connection between international administrative sciences, regional governance priorities, and public-sector capacity development.

Concept Note

Public administrations in the MENA region are entering a new era shaped by artificial intelligence, data-driven government, demographic and fiscal pressures, repeated crises, institutional fragility in several contexts, and rapidly evolving citizen expectations. These forces are transforming the functions of the state, the organization of public institutions, the design of services, and the competencies required of public servants and public leaders.

State capacity in this environment cannot be strengthened through technology alone. It depends on institutions that can learn, adapt, coordinate, regulate, innovate, and remain accountable. It also requires education and training systems that prepare public servants to combine technical capability with ethical judgement, strategic leadership, policy competence, digital literacy, and a sustained commitment to public value.

Schools and institutes of public administration, universities, civil service training centers, and government academies therefore face a fundamental task: recalibrating their missions, curricula, pedagogies, research agendas, and institutional partnerships. The challenge is not simply to add artificial intelligence to existing programs, but to rethink how public administration education and training can support capable institutions, responsible AI-enabled governance, and accessible, inclusive, and citizen-centered public services.

The IASIA-MENA dialogue setting provides an opportunity for reciprocal learning. Global and MENA institutions can compare reform experiences, identify transferable practices, examine contextual differences, and establish practical partnerships in research, executive education, faculty exchange, and institutional capacity development.

Objectives

- Examine how public administration education and training in the MENA region should evolve in response to artificial intelligence, digital government, institutional reform, and changing citizen expectations.
- Identify the competencies, leadership capabilities, ethical frameworks, and learning methods required for the future public workforce.
- Generate evidence-based recommendations for strengthening state capacity and institutional performance in diverse MENA administrative contexts.
- Connect research findings with the practical needs of governments, schools and institutes of administration, and public-sector reform institutions.
- Promote collaborative learning experiences and identify opportunities for sustained research, knowledge exchange, and institutional cooperation.

Expected Contributions

The call welcomes empirical, theoretical, comparative, case-oriented, and critical or literature-based studies under the two research themes below. Practice-based papers are also encouraged where they are analytically grounded and draw broader implications beyond a single institutional experience. In addition to the research sessions, the program may include one or more curated dialogue sessions with invited policy-makers, institutional leaders, international and regional organizations, educators, and practitioners. Every paper should clearly state its relevance to public administration education, state capacity, governance reform, or citizen-centered service delivery.

Research and Dialogue Themes

Researchers, experts, educators, and practitioners are invited to submit papers under one of the following two interconnected research themes. A third theme will frame the high-level and thematic dialogue sessions and will be developed through invited contributions rather than a separate paper track.

1

Theme I: Public Sector Training, Skills Development and Future Workforce Readiness

Skills-gap and training-needs assessment; future-oriented public-service competency frameworks; reskilling and upskilling public servants in response to changing institutional and service-delivery needs; executive and in-service training; continuous professional development and lifelong learning; public leadership and change-management capabilities; flexible, modular, practice-oriented, and work-based training models; knowledge transfer and institutional learning; alignment between training programs, organizational priorities, and citizen needs; partnerships among governments, schools and institutes of public administration, universities, and training providers; and measuring the impact of training on individual, institutional, and public-service performance.

2

Theme II: AI-Enabled Governance, Institutional Capacity and Citizen-Centered Service Transformation

Institutional readiness for artificial intelligence and digital transformation; data literacy; responsible and ethical AI; human oversight and algorithmic accountability; organizational learning and adaptive governance; public-sector resilience; citizen-centered service design; digital inclusion and accessibility; trust, transparency, rights protection, and public value; and institutional or country case studies of service and governance transformation.

3

3. Dialogue Theme: Global Cooperation for Building State Capacity in a Changing World

High-level and thematic dialogue sessions may address comparative Global and MENA reform experiences; the role of education, training, and leadership development in strengthening state capacity; opportunities and risks associated with AI-enabled governance; institutional resilience in fragile or high-uncertainty contexts; partnerships among schools and institutes of public administration; joint research and executive education; and a future global agenda for knowledge exchange and institutional cooperation. This is not a separate paper-submission track, although selected authors may be invited to contribute to the dialogue sessions.

Guiding Research Questions

Submissions may address one or more of the following guiding questions. The questions are indicative and do not exclude other contributions directly relevant to the selected theme.

Theme I: Public Sector Training, Skills Development and Future Workforce Readiness

- What emerging skills and competency gaps should public institutions in the MENA region prioritize in preparing future public servants and public leaders?
- How can governments and public administration institutions systematically assess evolving training needs and align capacity-development programs with institutional priorities and changing citizen-service requirements?
- Which reskilling, upskilling, executive-development, and workplace-learning models are most effective in responding to changing public-sector roles and responsibilities?
- How can public institutions strengthen leadership, change-management, institutional learning, and knowledge-transfer capabilities?
- How can governments assess the impact of training and professional development on employee performance, institutional capacity, and public-service outcomes?

Theme II: AI-Enabled Governance, Institutional Capacity and Citizen-Centered Service Transformation

- What institutional, organizational, workforce, and governance conditions are required for the effective adoption of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in public administration?
- What safeguards are needed to ensure the responsible, ethical, transparent, accountable, and inclusive use of artificial intelligence in government?
- How can AI, data, and digital technologies improve the quality, accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency of public services while protecting citizens' rights?
- How can citizen needs, participation, dignity, accessibility, and trust be embedded in the design and delivery of digitally enabled public services?
- How can public institutions build adaptive capacity, resilience, and implementation capability in fragile, conflict-affected, or high-uncertainty environments?

Dialogue Theme: Global Cooperation for Building State Capacity in a Changing World

- Which Global and MENA experiences offer meaningful and transferable lessons for public-sector capacity development, AI-enabled governance, and citizen-centered service transformation?
- How can Global and MENA schools and institutes of public administration strengthen cooperation in professional training, leadership development, applied research, and knowledge exchange?
- What sustainable institutional mechanisms could support a long-term Global agenda for public administration reform and capacity development?

Submission Guidelines

Submission Platform

All abstracts must be submitted through the IASIA 2026 ConfTool platform: <https://www.conftool.org/iasia-conference-2026/>

Applicants should create or access their ConfTool account, open “Your Submissions”, and select the dedicated track “IASIA–MENAPAR Dialogue 2026”.

Abstract

Abstracts must not exceed 500 words and must include 3–5 keywords. The abstract should be organized around the following elements:

- Problem statement and societal or institutional relevance;
- Purpose and research question(s);
- Conceptual or theoretical framework;
- Methodology, data, or basis of the institutional case;
- Main or expected findings and contribution;
- Policy, educational, or institutional implications.

The title, names of all authors, affiliations, email addresses, and the selected research theme must be entered in ConfTool. Abstracts will undergo peer review for academic quality, relevance, clarity, originality, methodological coherence, and practical contribution.

Types of Papers

- Qualitative or quantitative empirical studies;
- Comparative or cross-country studies;
- Theoretical or conceptual papers;
- Critical or literature-based analyses;
- Institutional and single-case studies with broader implications;
- Evidence-based practice papers and policy-oriented contributions.

Review and Selection

A joint review process will select a number of papers for presentation in one or two Research–Policy Roundtables. High-level and thematic dialogue sessions will be curated separately through invited participation. Selected authors may also be invited to contribute to these dialogue sessions where their research is directly relevant. The paper-selection process will consider:

- Relevance to the overall Dialogue theme and the selected research theme;
- Analytical quality and clarity of the research problem;
- Soundness of the conceptual and methodological approach;
- Originality and added value;
- Significance for public administration education, institutional capacity, governance, or service delivery;
- Transferability of findings and practical policy implications;
- Balanced representation across regions, countries, institutions, gender, and career stages.

Final Paper Guidelines

Authors of accepted abstracts must submit a thoroughly revised final paper that addresses reviewer feedback. Final papers must be written in English and submitted in DOC, DOCX, or PDF format.

Length

Final papers should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words, including references.

The paper should follow the structure below:

Title Page: Dialogue track, paper title, names and surnames of authors, email addresses, affiliations, a 500-word abstract, and 3–5 keywords.

Introduction: Research problem, purpose, research question(s), significance, and a clear outline of the paper.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework: Relevant literature and the analytical concepts used to examine the evidence or case.

Methodology and Data Collection: Research design, empirical material, methods, data sources, or basis of the institutional case.

Findings and Discussion: Presentation and interpretation of the main findings, linked to the conceptual framework and the wider public administration context.

Conclusion and Implications: Summary, limitations, implications for unstudied cases, policy and institutional recommendations, and potential future research.

References: All cited sources listed in APA style.

Figures, tables, and equations must be clear, legible, and of publication-quality resolution.

Presentation and Participation Conditions

- All presentations will be delivered onsite in Athens. Presenters are expected to be physically present at the venue.
- Oral presentations and presentation slides must be in English.
- Each presenter will normally be allocated 15 minutes, followed by moderated discussion.
- Dialogue sessions will use moderated, interactive formats. Invited speakers may be asked to provide brief opening interventions rather than full paper presentations.
- Presenters should prepare a PowerPoint presentation, upload it through ConfTool before the event, and retain a backup copy on a flash drive.
- At least one author of each accepted paper must complete IASIA 2026 registration by 15 September 2026.
- Accepted papers without confirmed registration and onsite presentation may not be included in the final program.

Important Dates

Phase	Deadline
Abstract Submission Deadline	24 August 2026
Notification to Authors	31 August 2026
Registration Deadline for Presenters	15 September 2026
Final Paper Submission	30 September 2026
IASIA–MENAPAR Dialogue	12-16 October 2026

Registration

There is no separate registration fee for the IASIA-MENAPAR Dialogue. Accepted authors and other participants must register for the IASIA 2026 Annual Conference. Participation is conditional upon payment of the applicable IASIA registration fee.

Category	Registration Fee
Non-Members	EUR 600
Members	EUR 500
Participants from Greece	EUR 400
IASIA Board of Management / IIAS Council of Administration / EGPA Steering Committee / MENAPAR Board of Management	EUR 300
Working Group Chairs and Directors	EUR 200
Accompanying Persons (social events only)	EUR 150
Students	EUR 100

Registration fees do not include travel, accommodation, visa expenses, or other personal costs. The accompanying-person category provides access to social events only.

Contact and Links

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We look forward to receiving your submissions and welcoming you to Athens.