



IIAS2026 CONFERENCE

Seoul, South Korea

November 17-20

**Growth for Society: Collaborative
Governance, Social Innovation, and Public Value**



iias-iisa.org/iias-2026-conference/

AI Readiness in Local Governments

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This panel tries to explore organizational and individual readiness for artificial intelligence (AI) adoption in local governments.

Local governments are the institutions responsible for delivering essential public services toward residents and community, and improving efficiency of their operations is critical to the citizens' well-being. Across many countries, local governments have pursued a wide range of reforms in organizational management and service delivery; however, the structural rigidities inherent in legal frameworks and administrative organizations have impeded reform efforts and large-scale organizational restructuring. This administrative



inertia is particularly evident in the context of AI. While many organizations - predominantly in the private sector - have leveraged rapidly advancing AI to achieve greater efficiency and optimization in decision-making, management, and operational processes, AI adoption in public administration remains limited. This limited uptake stems from structural barriers such as legacy administrative systems and rigid procedures, alongside chronic shortages of qualified personnel and financial resources.

While the importance of integrating AI into the public sector has been growing, empirical evidence regarding the status quo of AI readiness in public administration, especially among local governments, remains scarce. What critical factors, then, determine the success and/or failure of AI adoption in local governance? How do public sector employees, particularly public managers, perceive these technologies and envision their application in practice? These questions are critical to any rigorous inquiry into the future of public management.

This panel aims to identify the organizational and human resource conditions necessary for AI adoption in local governments, examine the roles AI is expected to play, and shed light on the challenges currently faced by pioneering municipalities and their practices. In doing so, the panel seeks to explore both theoretical contributions and empirical insights relevant to academic research and local government practice alike. We warmly welcome contributions that offer – especially -comparative analyses or diverse regional perspectives from around the world. Contributions from practitioners are welcome to enrich the discussion with researchers.

Recommended topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Top-down vs. bottom-up approaches to AI adoption in local governments
- Who determines policies and strategies and prepares financial resource for AI adoption? National government or each local government?
- The scope and limits of standardization in AI use within local governments
- Who should take responsibility for developing and securing human resources with AI competencies, and how?
- How to deal with human resources? In-house capacity building or outsourcing?
- Who should regulate AI use in local government, and by what mechanisms?
- Who should evaluate use and application of AI in local governments, and how?
- Dialogue between theory and practice: bridging academic research and local government practitioners



References

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- Mikalef, P., Lemmer, K., Schaefer, C., Ylinen, M., Fjortoft, S. O., Torvatn, H. Y., et al. (2022). Enabling AI capabilities in government agencies: A study of determinants for European municipalities. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39(4), 101596.
- OECD (2025), "Governing with Artificial Intelligence: The State of Play and Way Forward in Core Government Functions"
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- Sandoval-Almazan, R., Millan-Vargas, A. O., & Garcia-Contreras, R. (2024). Examining public managers' competencies of artificial intelligence implementation in local government: A quantitative study. *Government Information Quarterly*, 41(4), 101986.
- Tomažević, N., Murko, E., & Aristovnik, A. (2024). Organisational enablers of artificial intelligence adoption in public institutions: A systematic literature review. *Central European Public Administration Review*, 22(1), 109-138.



Practicalities

Key Links

- Conference website: <https://www.iias-iisa.org/iias-2026-conference/>
- Submission system: <https://www.conftool.org/iias2026/>
- Contact: iias-conference@iias-iisa.org

Important Dates

- Abstract / Panel submission deadline: **30 August 2026**
- Notification of acceptance and opening of registration: **30 August 2026**
- Full paper submission and registration deadline: **4 October 2026**

Submission Guidelines

- Unless otherwise specified in the track call, abstracts are limited to **500 words**. They should clearly outline the research question, theoretical framework, methodology, main findings (or expected findings), and implications.
- Accepted abstracts are expected to be developed into full papers.
- **Panels** are session proposals submitted under the main conference theme. A panel proposal includes a title, abstract, proposed chairperson(s), and a list of expected presentations. Panels are not required to produce full papers.

Evaluation

Proposals (papers and panels) are evaluated by the chair(s) (or co-chairs) of the track to which they are submitted. Evaluation criteria include:

- Academic quality and rigour
- Relevance to the track theme and overall conference theme
- Thematic fit and originality
- Clarity and quality of presentation

Paper Requirements

- Maximum length: **6,000 words** (all inclusive, including references).
- Structure: abstract, introduction, main body (developing the research question, theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and implications), conclusion, and references.

