

# T18P01 / Public Sector Innovation: Organizational and Institutional Trends in the Post-New Public Management Era

**Topic :** T18 / Others

**Chair :** Pedro Cavalcante (Brazilian Institute of Education, Development and Research (IDP))

**Second Chair :** Bruno Queiroz Cunha (Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea))

**Third Chair :** Antonio Isidro (University of Brasilia)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

**Note:** *This Panel is eligible for the GCPSE (UNDP) Grant.*

Improving public sector has been a crucial purpose embedded in reform movements since the end of the 1970s. Currently, practitioners and scholars seem to look beyond comprehensive reform strategies and focus attention on minor changes in public administration with lower transactional costs that also generate short-term outcomes. Public sector innovation has become a field of interest on its own right, to a large extent distinguishable from the New Public Management and other competing paradigms, as well as increasingly popular in recent decades. The theme has also moved from being exclusive to private enterprises to start integrating public organizations' debates and practices worldwide. Public sector agencies generate or adopt innovations policies in response to the constant economic, political, social and technological changes in a more globalized and networked world, constrained by rising citizen expectations, complex problems and tight budgets. In other words, the phenomenon's status has escalated in public administration in the last twenty years especially because governments have been, for reasons of not only pure rational judgment, strategically prioritizing "micro-improvements" solutions to public issues instead of broad and costly reforms. Their strategic focus may vary, but generally governments aim to perform better, improving deliveries. In this sense, many have claimed that innovation can contribute not only to economic growth, industrial change, competitive advantage, but also to improvements in public services quality and efficiency, as well as to enhance governmental capacity, reputation and legitimacy in solving problems and reaping opportunities. Innovation in public administration has gained followers not only as a result of the need to respond pressing circumstances by providing better services regarding responsiveness, quality and efficiency, but also because of the close relationship between management strategies, economic development and innovation policies. However, despite the increasing interest in the public administration field of study, innovation suffers from having the 'magical concept' status, i.e. the noble and normative nature of innovation to some extent hinders the ability of analysts to deepen the understanding as to its limitations. Nonetheless, in the last fifteen years, scholars have been placing more emphasis on public sector innovation research, which gets reflected in a greater thematic relevance in seminars/conferences and, above all, the increase of publications in scientific journals, books and international agencies. On one hand, it seems to be a hot topic in public administration, yet, on the other, lacks evidence-based knowledge about different dimensions of innovation, which hampers state capacity to innovate and, then, provide better policies and more effective institutions. With the intention to contribute to this relevant debate, this panel welcomes papers with different approaches – theoretical, methodological and empirical, that cover the variety of issues concerning innovation in government, from organizational to institutional approaches. Additionally, we encourage researchers to present papers that discuss innovation cases along the lines of public administration trends in the post-New Public Management Era that encompass, among others, e-government; accountability; new public policy's implementation arrangements; institutional experimentalism; partnership and communication and information technologies.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

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