

7. New International Governance Index – Reports & Indices

India, as the current president of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) based in Brussels (Belgium), has proposed the creation of a new International Governance Index.

International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)- Overview

Established – 1930

Headquarters – Brussels, Belgium

Nature – Independent, international, non-profit organization dedicated to research, training, and dissemination of knowledge in public administration, governance, and policy.

UN Affiliation – Not formally a UN body, but actively collaborates with UN agencies and multilateral institutions on governance and administrative reform projects.

Membership –

1. 31 member countries
2. 20 national sections
3. 15 academic research centers

India's Role – Member since 1998, represented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

Presidency (2025–2028) – India's election to the IIAS presidency marks the first-ever Indian leadership of the institute, a historic milestone highlighting India's growing global administrative influence.

Proposed International Governance Index (IGI)

Initiative Launch – Announced during the 100th day of India's IIAS presidency, signaling India's ambition to create a new global governance measurement framework.

Collaborating Institutions

The index will be developed by a working group in collaboration with –

1. World Bank
2. OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)
3. UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

Methodology – Aims to integrate quantitative and qualitative insights to ensure a balanced and inclusive approach. Will ensure regional representation and consider diverse political, social, and administrative contexts. Intended to feature prominently at the IIAS Annual Conference 2026, highlighting its international relevance.

Rationale and India's Critique of Existing Governance Indices

Perceived Western Bias – India has criticized many global governance indices for relying heavily on subjective expert opinions, often concentrated in Western institutions, which may misrepresent developing nations.

Lack of Transparency – Indices such as the World Governance Indicators (WGI) often –

1. Do not disclose data sources, weightages, or scoring methods
2. Limit reproducibility and accountability
3. Influence international perception despite methodological opacity

Alternative Framework – India seeks to develop an evidence-based, balanced framework that –

1. Recognizes diverse political and administrative systems
2. Avoids imposing a single governance model globally
3. Ensures methodological transparency and inclusivity

Encouraging Indigenous Research – The EAC-PM's 2022 paper recommended that Indian think tanks develop home-grown perception-based indices, contributing to – Diversifying global governance narratives
Reducing overreliance on Western-centric indices

Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) – Overview

Released by – World Bank, annually

Coverage – ~215 countries and territories

Purpose – Measures perceptions of governance quality over time using six parameters –

1. Voice and Accountability
2. Political Stability
3. Government Effectiveness
4. Regulatory Quality
5. Rule of Law
6. Control of Corruption

Data Sources – Draws from over 30 credible institutions, including think tanks, international organizations, NGOs, and private firms.

India's 2023 Percentile Ranks

Voice and Accountability – 51.47

Political Stability – 21.33

Government Effectiveness – 67.92

Regulatory Quality – 47.17

Rule of Law – 56.13

Control of Corruption – 41.51

India's Broader Critique of Global Indices – Examples

V-Dem Report 2025 – Ranked India 100 out of 179 countries on the Liberal Democracy Index; labeled India an “electoral autocracy” since 2017.

Freedom in the World Index (2022) – Compared India's status to the Emergency period of the 1970s, highlighting perceived democratic backsliding.

EAC-PM Statement (2022) – Criticized indices for being methodologically flawed, non-transparent, yet highly influential, affecting both policy perception and WGI outcomes.

Implications – These criticisms underscore India's push to develop an inclusive, transparent governance metric that –

1. Reflects diverse administrative models
2. Encourages global credibility and methodological rigor
3. Provides a counterbalance to Western-centric indices

Significance of India's Initiative

1. Marks India's leadership in global administrative reforms through IIAS.
2. Promotes methodological transparency and inclusivity in governance assessment.
3. Enhances India's role in shaping global governance discourse.
4. Encourages home-grown research, providing policy-relevant insights for both developed and developing nations.
5. Could become a key reference point for policymakers, academics, and international organizations in evaluating governance systems worldwide.

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