

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: A MISTRA PEER REVIEWED EDITED VOLUME

The Local Developmental State – Beyond Weberian Roles

The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) invites chapter proposals from scholars, policymakers, and practitioners for a new peer-reviewed edited volume, titled ***The Local Developmental State-Beyond Weberian Roles***.

This research aims to explore the evolving role of South Africa's local government in shaping developmental outcomes within a democratic, decentralized, and politically complex environment. While the developmental state model has historically been framed through East Asian experiences of cohesive bureaucracies and state-led industrialization, South Africa's municipalities operate under different conditions, marked by fiscal dependence, political contestation, and capacity challenges.

This volume seeks to interrogate whether a local developmental state is viable in South Africa and what institutional, political, and fiscal reforms are necessary to enable it. It will examine whether the problem lies in the Weberian model itself or in the absence of its key principles of meritocracy, accountability, and coherence.

Ultimately, the book aims to reimagine local governance through hybrid and context-specific models that blend bureaucratic discipline with participatory, community-driven, and entrepreneurial approaches.

In this regard, MISTRA invites chapter proposals on, but not limited to the following themes:

- Rethinking the Developmental state in a democratic and decentralized context.
- Interrogating the limits and legacies of Weberian bureaucracy in South Africa
- Tracing the evolution of local government reforms and their developmental trajectory
- Unpacking the political-administrative interface and governance accountability
- Coalition politics, patronage networks, and the erosion of bureaucratic autonomy
- Fiscal autonomy and local revenue innovation for developmental outcomes
- Redefining intergovernmental relations for developmental coordination
- From compliance to performance: Addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies in municipalities
- Community participation and informal systems in local governance
- Technology and innovation: Digital governance, smart cities, and their role in service delivery

and accountability.

- Hybrid and adaptive governance models for dynamic local contexts
- Spatial transformation, inclusion, and the local developmental state
- Charting a new paradigm for local governance and developmental accountability

Abstracts must be submitted no later than **15 February 2026** to project coordinator **Khutso Makua**, at khutsom@mistra.org.za

Proposals should not exceed 350 words and must include the following:

- Proposed chapter title.
- Author(s) details: names, institutional affiliations, and email addresses.
- Core argument and research question(s).
- Methodological approach and data sources.
- Anticipated contribution of the chapter to the volume's themes.

The chapters will be expected to comprise original, unpublished work between 6,000 and 8,000 words, inclusive of all references and appendices. Authors will receive detailed guidelines on formatting and referencing with the acceptance of their chapter proposal.

Should an abstract be accepted, contributors to the volume will need to adhere to strict timelines for submission. We ask that prospective authors consider this when making a submission.

For additional queries, you are welcome to contact one of the volumes project leaders: **Machete Rakabe** at Macheter@mistra.org.za