

## **Team IOA: How interdisciplinary approaches to organizing can help address grand challenges**

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Like other departments, The Department of Organization (IOA) has been requested by DIR to submit input to the task of strategy realization at the department level. The CBS Strategy is Transforming Society with Business. The IOA input is based on that and the current *IOA Department Strategy from 2021*, with added elements and recent issues and activities as the world is changing rapidly. We focus on how interdisciplinary approaches to organizing can help address grand challenges. We think of it as a living strategy, building on our current priorities and pointing to future aspirations.

Our aspirations continue to build on our foundations expressed this way: “The Department of Organization (IOA) is a thriving and longstanding academic environment dedicated to organizational research and teaching” (see our IOA Department Strategy 2021, p.1.).

IOA has been expanding in recent years with a number of new employees. IOA is one of the largest departments at CBS. IOA is situated in the centre of CBS, performing on a high and steady level across the areas of research, teaching, and outreach.

Since 2023, IOA is organized in seven research centres and groups:

- Center for Organization and Time (COT)
- Center for Organizational Research on Impact (CORI)
- Imagine – Center for Creative Industries and Institutions
- Organization, Markets and Governance (OMG)
- People and Organizing (PnO)
- Research, Innovation and Organization (RIO)
- Work, Expertise, Technology and Organization (WETO)

IOA is furthermore engaged with administration and leadership tasks in collaborative organizations, including in:

- CBS Leadership Centre (CLC)
- Sino-Danish Centre (SDC)
- SCANCOR (Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research) at both Stanford University and Harvard University

IOA has a significant presence in teaching at a number of different programmes at all levels at CBS. This is expected to continue as delivering high quality education is a deeply seated commitment at IOA and CBS. Education within the key areas of the department will always be prioritized at IOA, as explicated in our 2021-strategy.

IOA has a great many resources to leverage in the realization of our strategic activities: We are engaged in research projects with national and international scholars. Many international scholars prioritize visiting IOA for research stays, including those who are here through formal affiliations such as Otto Mønsted professors or as part-time faculty with their main position at another university. Through our empirical research projects, we are in contact with many important Danish and international companies and organizations. We employ approximately 125 external teachers, many of whom work in Danish companies with highly relevant job titles.

IOA therefore comes from a good starting point, but also need to point to future goals.

*Organizing for a responsible society*, a motto from our 2021 strategy, and in alignment with CBS's transformative strategy, is an indication for our explorative instinct at IOA, and the continued contributions of our research groups and centres are essential to pursuing this agenda.

There are three interconnected areas upon which IOA will focus on strategically in the coming years: **(1)** Addressing grand challenges from the viewpoint of the department's research areas, **(2)** Making quality applications, and **(3)** Improving research communication and impact.

We address grand challenges, we craft collaborative research projects, and we communicate about our efforts and engage with our stakeholders.

The three areas all depend on the strengthening of our community and shared objectives in "carrying out high quality research and research-based teaching characterized by empirical curiosity" as our strategy says.

### **Moving to the next level in addressing cross-cutting grand challenges that require a team-effort**

The grand challenges are plenty and they are here already, including, but not limited to: Climate crisis; digitalization and challenges in motivating and attracting a diverse set of employees to companies, and now war and unrest as a result of geo-political challenges in Europe and the world. A department like IOA can continue to develop knowledge on organizing and leadership and the political, economic- and social context that has potential to support the handling of crises and challenges. We focus on how interdisciplinary approaches to organizing can help address grand challenges. As our strategy states, we develop research, teaching and outreach on how to "organize for a responsible society" (see also Nordic Nine here).

Key areas of heightened awareness of grand challenges will be relevant for the research groups and centers of IOA.

#### *Expected outcomes*

A department that is engaged in addressing selected grand challenges such as climate change, digitalization of work and securing the leadership competences to handle complex issues.

A department that makes a firm imprint on its stakeholders in helping addressing grand challenges.

A department that attracts and hosts scholars and stakeholders in engaged conversations and actions exploring how to address big questions and meet grand challenges.

#### *Action points*

##### IOA Green Transition initiative

Creating a green transition/sustainability initiative in IOA on research, teaching and outreach that works across the research groups, and which can lead to partnerships with other stakeholders. The IOA Green Transition initiative will work closely with CBS Green Transition Office.

##### CBS Leadership Centre

IOA will focus on supporting the CBS Leadership Centre and agenda further and contribute with new research as well as teaching and outreach initiatives. Providing responsible leadership is a key

element in transforming society with business when meeting grand challenges. We will support the directors of the CBS Leadership Centre in these activities.

#### Addressing grand challenges in each of the research groups and centres

The research groups and centres will explore how their research areas change in the wake of the many crises and grand challenges that the world is facing in these times, including, but not limited to the climate crisis, diversity, digitalization of work processes, unrest and upheaval (even war) in Europe. This requires new ways of thinking about research avenues.

#### *Goal attainment*

IOA Green Transition initiative is organized and coordinated with clear imprints on CBS and society.

CBS Leadership Centre is meeting its targets, supported by the Academic Directors, Centre Director, and IOA faculty and staff.

Research groups and centres incorporate big questions and grand challenges into their research projects and strategies.

#### *Milestones (achievements)*

Green transition is a recognized and vibrant research, teaching, and outreach area for IOA.

Leadership and organization-theme makes an impact on society and raises the profile at IOA/CBS.

Research groups and centres make identifiable contributions to addressing big questions and grand challenges

#### **Research groups focus on quality applications with shared themes on pressing topics/challenges**

Applications to research councils is an increasingly competitive game. IOA has submitted a relatively high number of research applications in the past from different researchers, but often in a manner that primarily support individual preferences. Although individual Principal Investigators can create exciting projects, the research groups are encouraged to explore ways to make quality research applications that use novel ideas and connect researchers from different areas. Research groups can draw on their research networks, including international networks, to create new research applications. A process will be set in motion to make the quality even higher than today. This may result in fewer research applications, but with an improved chance of succeeding as the quality has been ensured in an even more thorough way. Research applications, where appropriate, should reflect a common aspiration to work together on addressing society's pressing challenges.

#### *Expected outcome*

Quality research applications based on shared interests and researchers collaborating in-and across research groups drawing on their international networks.

Sharpened awareness of quality in research applications aided by our screening process.

More relevance for society and stakeholders through our visible engagement with business and society.

#### *Action points*

Increase in activity in research groups to explore shared, cutting-edge themes for research projects, including *iCorps: International Corporations as Social Systems* (Center of Excellence - Grundforskningsansøgning submitted December 2023 and the result is known in June 2024).

Workshops for developing new themes for research projects in the IOA Research Planning Forum and by facilitating/engaging our network of international scholars/visitors.

Improved quality process and screening process for selecting research applications to be submitted further to research councils/funding bodies.

#### *Goal attainment (indicators)*

Improved research applications that are accepted by the research councils/funding bodies named in our IOA funding policy.

Future durable, yet dynamic research themes.

Number of shared applications accepted by funding bodies.

#### *Milestones (achievements)*

Meeting our target in the IOA funding policy of 20 mio DKK per year in research funding

Clear research themes emerging that sets the agenda in research communities and society.

A more integrated department with a team-oriented notion of who we are as IOA and what we have to offer in terms of research in relation to the CBS strategy of transforming society with business.

### **Improved Research Communication and Impact: Explore, engage, empower**

#### Research communication approach:

External stakeholders are interested in finding out what knowledge researchers come up with, but they cannot always find the information they are looking for. IOA faculty conducts highly relevant and excellent research and teaching that is both significant for students and other stakeholders in society, but the impact is not always sufficiently visible for others to see and experience. *The IOA Prototype on Research Communication* from October 2023 has been developed by all IOA researchers working together. It was a first step in improving communication about what researchers do at IOA, and the prototype needs to be expanded and developed even more. The prototype points to three types of activities building on our research and teaching excellence: Explore, engage and empower. There are currently six avenues for research communication in our prototype, and they have to be implemented and refined: Podcasts, private sector engagement through knowledge brokers,

mainstream media, department curated information for dissemination, public sector engagement and teaching (teaching cases).

Organizational research on impact: On the research-side, a new *Center for Organizational Research on Impact* strengthens the research and knowledge on what impact is and which organizational processes work in relation to this.

#### *Expected outcomes*

A department that engages with society on the relevant research topics and supports transformative actions and have a visible presence for target audiences and partnerships.

A department that uses new avenues of research communication and constantly explore new ways of communicating and a department with faculty and staff capable of communicating effectively and responsibly.

A department that provides high quality organizational research on impact.

#### *Action points*

Implement *the IOA action plan for research communication* (based on the prototype) and establish an IOA “editorial team” to develop the prototype further and implement the explore, engage and empower approach.

Develop indicators/pointers to track the performance of the research communication and impact in a supportive and balanced way. Reach out and work with the new CBS Innovation and Impact Dean.

Support the mission and goals of the *Center for Organizational Research on Impact*. Explore reward systems that can support the mutual efforts of improving research communication and the co-construction of knowledge in alignment with the wider CBS-efforts in this area.

#### *Goal attainment (indicators)*

An IOA “editorial team” to produce/curate news/impact stories on a continuing basis.

A preliminary indicator system is in place for research communication to be shared and discussed with other departments at CBS and with other partners.

Improved organizational research on impact: Suggestions for a workable reward system for CBS related to impact in the REEAD model and a deepened research-based understanding of impact.

#### *Milestones (achievements)*

Reaching a full cycle of curated research communication stories and contributions from IOA.

Recognition by key stakeholders of research communication- and impact efforts.

Creating a better understanding of impact through organizational research on impact.