

ESRS Research and Study Groups Terms of Reference 2020

María Jesús Rivera

European Society for Rural Sociology Research and Study Groups

Rationale:

Some professional academic organizations have Research and Study Groups (RSGs). These groups meet between the Society's conferences. Groups would be thematic or regional in focus (gender, migration, service provision, Central and Eastern Europe, etc.). As ESRS conferences are biennial, there is particular benefit in fostering RSGs, which will continue disciplinary scholarship on rural issues between conferences. We anticipate that some of the conference working streams could be RSGs.

The Society's RSGs would bring together active researchers, students and where relevant, other stakeholder groups. Each RSG is responsible for organizing their own seminars, conferences, workshops and other activities. Each RSG should have a convenor. The convenor is responsible for organising the group and liaising with the ESRS Executive Committee about the group's activities.

The Role of the Executive Committee:

1. Approve the formation of new study groups
2. Provide some financial assistance to study groups depending on budgetary constraints
3. Assist with the recruitment of study group convenors and members by promoting groups to ESRS members and on the ESRS website
4. Assist in the promotion of study group events through the ESRS website
5. Providing each group with a presence on the ESRS website (to be maintained by the group convenor)
6. Facilitating policy discussion and the sharing of knowledge and experience between study groups by organising a meeting for convenors at the biennial conference

The Role of the Convenor:

1. Convenors will have final authority on decisions about the academic activity of the study groups; It is good practice for convenors to consult their study group members on all relevant matters
2. The convenor will ensure that an accurate record of the membership of the group is maintained and recorded on the ESRS website
3. The convenor will be responsible for co-ordinating the group's programme of activities.

4. The convenor will provide financial information to the Executive Committee about how ESRS funds were used.
5. The convenor will actively participate in the Study Group Convenors' meeting at the ESRS biennial meeting or send a representative. This will allow discussion on how ESRS meets the needs of its study groups and vice versa
6. The convenor will ensure that relevant information about the study group and its activities is communicated regularly to the Executive Committee so that it can be posted on the website, emailed to ESRS members and included in the ESRS members' newsletter, as appropriate.
7. The term of a convenor is three years, with a possible extension of three years.

Formation of a new study group:

Proposals for new study groups must be submitted to the responsible person on the Executive Committee who will circulate to the committee for approval. Proponents of a new RSG should ensure that the proposed field is not already covered by an existing group. Proposals for new study groups must include the following:

- An outline of the field to be covered, briefly explaining why a new group is needed.
- A statement of the proposed aims of the group.
- The support of at least five current members of the Association (either hard copy signatures or e-mails), the name of the convenor, who must be a paid-up member of the ESRS at the time of proposal, and any other participants who will support the group.
- How ESRS funds will be used to assist the group's activities.

Membership, activities and acknowledgment:

RSGs convenors and members should be ESRS members. Membership of the ESRS includes free membership to any group. Activities organised by the RSGs may be open to non-members, e.g. seminars, workshops.

RSGs events which are partially supported by money 'given' by the ESRS e.g. an event held at an academic institution using funds from the group's designated fund, must carry appropriate acknowledgment on all promotional materials as follows:

"This event has been made possible with the financial support of the European Society for Rural Sociology and the voluntary assistance of its members".

Closure of a study group:

Where a RSG has little activity and few volunteers, the Executive Committee will assist with trying to raise its profile to attract new members. Over time, though, the array of RSGs is bound to alter, so when it is clear that a group is no longer viable and active, the convenor(s) should notify the Executive Committee so that ESRS publicity and records can be properly amended.