

ESCMID Operating Procedures – Study Groups

1 ESCMID Study Group Definition

An **ESCMID Study Group (SG)** is a group of scientists who organise themselves under the auspices of ESCMID with the main objective of studying a defined research area within clinical microbiology, infectious diseases and/or infection control in line with ESCMID's mission.

2 Responsibilities of SGs

- Promote and encourage the research in the topic of the SG
- Build a consistent membership that operates on a democratic basis (elections & statutes)
- Aim to recruit new members to ESCMID interested in the SG topic including ones from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) countries
- Disseminate their achievements to other health professionals both within ESCMID and beyond to the wider scientific community
- Advise public health authorities as well as other organisations about topics within the subject area of the SG
- Establish and foster links with other scientists and scientific societies in similar fields
- Actively participate in
 - o ECCMID scientific & education programme (symposia, educational workshops, exam setting)
 - o ESCMID education programme(s) outside ECCMID (i.e. propose and organise postgraduate education courses and technical workshops)
 - o ESCMID scientific programme(s) outside ECCMID (i.e. propose and organise conferences, sessions at other congresses)
- Plan and execute research projects
- Develop consensus documents, position papers, etc.
- Advise ESCMID Executive Committee in their field of expertise
- Represent ESCMID upon request by the ESCMID Executive Committee at conferences and in collaboration meetings with international partners and stakeholders
- Report timely all their activities to the Scientific Affairs Officer, the Scientific Affairs Subcommittee, Executive Committee, and public through the SG annual report.
- Always use SG logo and official SG name in conjunction with SG activities and on SG publications

3 ESCMID support towards SGs

- Provides templates for SG annual reports and SG newsletters
- Provides various logistic & financial support (detailed below)
- Hosts annual SG business meeting at ECCMID
- Hosts SG website embedded in the ESCMID web environment
- Promotes SG information through the ESCMID website and newsletter
- Supports social media activities of the SG (see §5.5.5)

4 Foundation of a SG

- Persons wishing to establish a new SG should first determine if their area of interest could fall under an existing SG topic. A new SG should only be formed when the area of interest is outside the scope of all existing SGs and large enough to sustain a substantial membership.

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- Complete the SG proposal form and send it to the Scientific Affairs Officer (CC Science Manager). Please note that you should be able to nominate at least 30 individuals from at least three European countries who wish to be part of the SG (after an informal meeting of interested individuals).
 - Await evaluation by the ESCMID Scientific Affairs Subcommittee
 - Get approval by the ESCMID Executive Committee
 - Hold inauguration meeting (at ECCMID) with election of SG Executive Committee (see § 5.2)
 - Assemble all information important for the SG website

5 General rules for ESCMID SGs

5.1 Membership: The SG defines the conditions and procedure for individuals who wish to join the SG as members. Membership is strongly encouraged across European countries and the world including LMIC. A wide representation of geographic areas, career level and gender balance are sought.

Individuals employed by companies can still become ESCMID and/or Study Group Members as long as they do not appear as an official representative of their employer. Members employed by commercial institutions cannot stand for election into the SG Executive Committee; if a member of the Executive Committee is hired by a commercial institution during their office, they must leave the SG Executive Committee.

5.2 Organisation: The SGs elect an Executive Committee, composed of at least a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. If stated in the bylaws, the Executive Committee can have 5 members; additional roles are Education officer and Scientific officer. The maximum duration of service on the Executive Committee is restricted to eight years. Each position can be held by the same person for a maximum of four years (two mandates of two years).

Election by the group's members can be held during the assembly of members, which must take place on alternate years, preferably during ECCMID. A minimum of 15 people must vote in each election. The members of the Executive Committee must be ESCMID members in good standing and should be professionally active. No more than one elected member of the Executive Committee shall come from the same country (country of working place).

5.3 Transparency declaration: ESCMID requests that Study Group Executive Committee Members declare to the ESCMID Executive Committee their relationships with companies, organizations or societies, which may create a conflict of. Possible conflicts of interests will be evaluated by the Scientific Affairs Officer and the ESCMID Executive Committee according to the ESCMID guidance regarding conflicts of interests.

5.4 Information policy: The SG must inform the Scientific Affairs Officer and the ESCMID SG Manager in the ESCMID Office in advance about all major activities, such as the organisation of meetings, courses, workshops, development of consensus papers, the production of printed material and the planning and running of research projects. All these activities must be approved by the ESCMID Executive Committee. The SG maintains its website up to date by delivering publishable news texts, pictures etc. to the ESCMID Executive Office.

5.5 SG Activities: SGs are expected to complete and engage in a number of scientific activities to be considered an active SG.

5.5.1 SG Symposia and SG Educational Workshops at ECCMID

The ECCMID Programme Director will invite the SG prior to each ECCMID to submit proposals to be staged during the said ECCMID. Symposia proposals should focus on new findings and developments in the SG's field and educational workshops rather on state-of-the-art knowledge in the field. Among the most competitive symposia proposals the best fitting ones will be chosen for the ECCMID programme and designated as "Study Group Symposia". The Programme Committee reserves the right to use parts of the other proposals for the ECCMID programme. The SGs will be informed about this.

5.5.2 SG Scientific Meetings and SG Sessions at other Congresses

SGs may organise by themselves or actively participate in scientific meetings organised by other societies. ESCMID can provide assistance according to the ESCMID Operating Procedures for Scientific Events (www.escmid.org/eop). The final decision rests with the ESCMID Executive Committee.

5.5.3 SG Postgraduate Education Courses (PGECs) and Technical Workshops (PGTWs)

SGs are expected to submit at least one proposal for organising a free-standing PGEC or PGTW, i.e. not linked to ECCMID, every three years. A call for course proposals is released each year for events happening the following year. Proposals must be submitted to the ESCMID Education Manager following the ESCMID Operating Procedures for Educational Activities (www.escmid.org/eop).

5.5.4 SG Newsletter

SGs are expected to produce and distribute a regular newsletter at least twice annually to the SG members pertaining to the current activities of the SG. The ESCMID Office can distribute the newsletter template upon request.

5.5.5 SG Digital activities

SGs may organise a variety of digital activities such as setting up a SG Social Media account and/or organising/supporting web-based symposia. SG social media accounts must be made and maintained in compliance with the [ESCMID Study Group Social Media Account SOP](#).

5.6 Annual reporting: An annual report is prepared by the SG Executive Committee following the template distributed by the ESCMID Office. The annual report is the basis for evaluating the progress and achievements of the SG. The completed annual report template must be completed and sent to the SG Manager in the ESCMID Office. It is due by the end of the calendar year and will be requested by the ESCMID Executive Office at least 8 weeks in advance in normal circumstances. It will be evaluated by the Scientific Affairs Subcommittee and overseen by the Scientific Affairs Officer. The SG agrees with publication of the annual report material on the ESCMID website and in the ESCMID Yearbook.

5.7 Representation: SG Members may represent ESCMID upon request by the ESCMID Executive Committee at conferences and in collaboration meetings with international partners and stakeholders. SG Members cannot act as representatives of ESCMID without prior approval by the ESCMID Executive Committee.

6 Financial Support of SGs by ESCMID

6.1 SG Administrative Funding

SGs complying with these operating procedures are entitled to receive funds in support of their duties. The current administrative funding is set at EUR 2'000 per year.

6.2 Support of SG Activities

SG are required to complete certain activities as described in §5.5 and ESCMID is capable of providing financial support for these events as indicated below. Alternatively, SGs may choose to utilize the Administrative funding provided to finance SG Activities.

6.2.1 Support of SG Symposia and SG Educational Workshops at ECCMID

The ECCMID Programme Director will invite the SG prior to each ECCMID to submit proposals to be staged during the said ECCMID. ESCMID will cover all costs involved with these sessions.

6.2.2 Support of SG Scientific Meetings and SG Sessions at other Congresses

ESCMID can provide assistance according to the ESCMID Operating Procedures for Scientific Events (www.escmid.org/eop). The final decision rests with the ESCMID Executive Committee.

6.2.3 Support of SG Postgraduate Education Courses (PGEs) and Technical Workshops (PGTWs)

ESCMID can provide assistance according to the ESCMID Operating Procedures for Educational Activities (www.escmid.org/eop). The final decision rests with the ESCMID Executive Committee.

6.2.4 Support of SG Websymposia

ESCMID can provide assistance for SG organising web-based seminars and/or Symposia according to the [SG Websymposia SOP](#). This includes providing a request form to be filled by the organiser and returned according to the timeline stated in the SOP.

6.3 Support for Research Projects

SGs may request support from ESCMID for the conception and preparation of a research project. To this aim, the SGs can apply annually to the dedicated “Study Group Research Funding”

(https://www.escmid.org/profession_career/awards_grants/study_group_research_funding/)

The SG may also be actively involved in research projects based in universities and hospitals associated with SG members although not directly supported by ESCMID.

6.4 Accounting

Each Study Group must run a dedicated account through the ESCMID Executive Office, where all financial aspects of the respective SG are dealt with. No accounts outside the ESCMID accounting may be held. Disposition of funds is possible only through the Study Groups’ Treasurers, as outlined in the Study Group Statutes.

7 Publication Policy

For a scientific article to be considered a SG publication, at least three study group members (coming from at least two different countries) must be in the authors’ list with affiliation to the Study Group stated in the section “Author information”. Additionally, the sentence “from the Study Group...” or “on behalf of the Study Group...” has to be present in the authors’ list. Alternatively, the name of the Study group is clearly mentioned in the title.

Ideally SG publications will be submitted to an ESCMID journal such as Clinical Microbiology & Infection although publication in other high impact journals is also encouraged.

Furthermore, the SG logo is to appear on each document, announcement and brochure published by a SG.

8 Evaluation and Termination of SGs

A SG is initially set up for five years. After this time period and from then on annually, the Scientific Affairs Subcommittee evaluates its scientific output measured by publications, contributions to scientific meetings, scientific workshops, educational courses and/or collaborative research projects through the completion of the SG annual report. See examples of SG Activities in §5.5.

The minimum activity should be:

- 8.1 At least one proposal to the ECCMID Programme Committee for a symposium and/or educational workshop every two years
- 8.2 Maintain a membership of at least 90 ESCMID members (within 2 years of formation) and ideally over 250 (from an ESCMID membership of about 9000, January 2021).

Plus at least four of the five following items:

- 8.3 At least one free-standing (i.e. not linked to ECCMID) educational activity (PGEC/PGTW, see § 5.5.1) every three years
- 8.4 At least one collaborative research project underway during any one-year cycle
- 8.5 At least one SG publication (see §7) in a peer-reviewed journal every second year (including consensus documents)
- 8.6 Other SG activities like conferences, symposia at other congresses, websymposia, e-learning offerings, involvement in technical or clinical practice guideline production, etc. The SAS decides whether this activity can be counted in the evaluation
- 8.7 A regular newsletter (at least twice a year) to all members of the SG

If the SG is underperforming, the Scientific Affairs Officer and Subcommittee may suggest a mentor to help improve activities and outcomes.

If the SG has not covered the minimum activity or has a persistently low number of members, the Scientific Affairs Subcommittee may propose through the Scientific Affairs Officer to the ESCMID Executive Committee to merge with another SG in the same broad area or be disbanded.

At any time, SGs may be terminated either by a majority vote of members or by a decision of the ESCMID Executive Committee if there is a documented violation of the present operating procedures. In such cases, remaining funds from SGs should be transferred to ESCMID to support other SG activities.

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