

Sustainability Transitions Research Network - Articles of association

June 2016

Governance of the STRN network is based on four structural elements.

- A *Board*, including a chair, which coordinates the network and has responsibility for core operational tasks,
 - The *Steering group* (SG), which elects the board members from its midst, gives strategic advice to the board members on the development of the network and fulfills a number of tasks described below,
 - *Working groups* that coordinate strategic tasks in a temporary, project based way and
 - *Thematic groups*, which are longer-term fora for interaction of STRN members on specific research topics.
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1 Steering Group

1.1 Purpose

The steering group guides the functioning of the STRN network, is responsible for strategic developments and elects the board members. It facilitates different lines of activities including:

- Internal and external communication
- Updating the STRN research agenda (and/or selected research topics) and stimulating debates about it
- Development and improvement of network governance procedures
- Organization of annual IST conference and other events of STRN
- Set up and functioning of working groups or thematic groups

1.2 Membership of SG

The SG comprises approximately 15 members.

Members are elected for a period of 2 years. Board members are an exception here: they are elected for three years (see 2.2) and also remain SG members during their term. Elections take place in the yearly SG meetings at the IST conferences. The SG strives for a balance of continuity and renewal. For instance, each year about 1/4 of the SG could be renewed (3-4 members), which results in an average tenure of 4 years or more for each SG member.

New members can be suggested by anyone in the STRN community. Calls are issued through the newsletter and at the conference. Self-nomination is possible as well. New members ideally come as a replacement of existing members.

The SG votes on suggestions for new members. Re-election is possible, especially if the member is responsible for a specific duty (e.g. EIST editor).

SG members are experienced transition scholars and / or those who play or want to play an active role in developing the STRN network further. There are two SG membership positions that specifically represent PhDs and Postdocs. There is also one position for the editor of EIST and at least two positions for IST conference organizers (current and upcoming year).

The SG strives for representational diversity of the STRN network, e.g. in terms of gender, age, topics, research groups and geographical diversity. SG members are explicitly asked to take this diversity into account in their voting and nomination. If this process does not lead to sufficient diversity, SG members will decide on another more formal approach.

SG members take on specific duties as 'regular' SG members (e.g. EIST Journal, IST conference organization in a specific year, coordination of working groups), as PhD/postdoc representatives (e.g. organization of PhD events) or as board members (newsletter, website, see below).

There are also members without specific duties who e.g. represent a particular research group (max one per group), line of research interests, region or the like.

1.3 Meetings and communication

SG members meet in person once a year at the IST conference, ideally on the 1st day of the conference. The conference organizers are responsible for organizing the meeting and communicating the time/date early on.

Throughout the year, the SG meets in online meetings. There should be at least one online meeting for a general update each year. There can be more online meetings upon request. These meetings are typically initiated by the board, but the initiative can come from any SG member. In case of doubt, the board has the final say whether to convene the SG or not.

SG members are presented on the STRN website. Changes in the SG are communicated in the STRN newsletter.

The SG has a slot at the IST conferences – either for an open meeting, where all STRN members can participate, or to present the current activities/discussions of the steering group to STRN members.

The SG communicates through a dedicated mailing list.

1.4 Decision making

The SG seeks to make decisions unanimously and to reach consensus through discussion. If there is no consensus, decisions are taken by voting. All members have equal votes.

When there is voting, SG-members will be able to cast their vote from a distance by mandating a colleague SG to vote for them, in advance.

2 Board

2.1 Purpose

The SG delegates responsibility for the following core operational tasks to board members:

- The STRN newsletter (which is a crucial information exchange vehicle)
- STRN website and mailing list (which enables internal and external communication)
- Interaction with EIST (which is a crucial academic outlet)
- Communication and interaction with external actors on behalf of STRN (e.g. EEA, European Commission, IPCC); the Board forms the initial portal for this interaction, but can draw on wider SG members.

The performance of these operational tasks is discussed at the annual meeting, where the SG can hold the board to account. Throughout the year, SG-members can offer advice to board members. The board also takes care of issues that need to be handled on a short-term basis and do not require involvement of the SG. Board members take these decisions conscientiously and may convene the SG when needed.

2.2 Membership of the board

The board comprises 3 members. Board members are active and experienced SG members. The chair is one of the 3 board members (primus inter pares).

Board members are suggested by SG members, or self-nominate. They are elected by the SG for a period of 3 years. The board members, once elected, appoint the chairman from among themselves.

3 Working groups

3.1 Purpose

Working groups (WG) are in charge of certain strategic or operational STRN tasks that require close and intense collaboration by a small number of people (e.g. renewal of the manifesto, major re-design of website, formulation of guidelines for STRN governance).

Working groups are temporary and work in a project-based manner i.e. until the task is fulfilled.

3.2 Set up and membership of working groups

Working groups are initiated by the board or SG.

Working groups typically comprise 3-6 persons.

Each working group has a coordinator who guides the process, is responsible for the outcome and reports to the SG. The coordinator of a WG needs to be a SG-member but other members can come from the wider STRN membership.

Calls for WG membership may be issued through the newsletter and/or the mailing list. All STRN-members can apply / respond to these calls. The coordinator decides about appropriate mechanisms of how to select WG members if necessary and communicates them in a transparent way.

3.3 Meetings of WG and communication

Meetings and communication within the WG is decided by each WG.

Set up and outcomes of working groups are reported in the newsletter and on the website.

4 Thematic Groups

4.1 Purpose

Thematic groups (TG) are groups of STRN-members (e.g. 5 members or more) that want to gather around particular thematic sub-themes on a regular basis (e.g. geography of transitions, politics of transitions, transition modeling etc.) and present themselves as such to the network and beyond.

4.2 Activities of thematic groups and communication

TGs can present themselves on the STRN website with a general description, (a selection of) key publications and how others can get involved. They need to have one contact person that is willing to publish his/her email address on the website.

Activities of TGs may include the organization of workshops, conference sessions (at IST and beyond), special issues, writing research proposals etc.

TGs commit to writing an update on the status of their TG once a year, which also qualifies as a 'report' to the SG. Status reports may also be communicated in the newsletter.

4.3 Set up of thematic groups

Any group of at least five STRN members can propose a thematic group to the SG. The proposal consists of a draft of how the TG would present itself on the website. It needs to be clear how a new TG differs from/ relates to the other TGs.

The acceptance or decline of the thematic group is decided by the SG through majority voting at SG meetings. If accepted, one SG member will be appointed as the key point of contact for any new TG.