

Tender for DSAI Study Groups Review

Background

The Development Studies Association Ireland (DSAI) was formed in 2012 as an independent national association representing development studies in Ireland. The DSAI Mission is to provide a national platform, which creates an open and participatory space for dialogue between researchers, policymakers and practitioners, who have an interest in, or are working in the area of international development. This is achieved by:

- Supporting cohesion and capacity-building in the development studies sector;
- Promoting strategic alliances and partnerships to grow the development studies sector;
- Harnessing research which supports and promotes coherent evidence-based development policy and practice aimed at the reduction of global poverty, the enhancement of all forms of equality and respect for human rights.

DSAI runs key strategic public events each year, including an annual conference, a seasonal school and numerous Study Group seminars.

The DSAI Study Groups are thematic groups of researchers, practitioners and policymakers and allow for very focused debate on specific themes. DSAI currently facilitates nine Study Groups: 1) Civil Society; 2) Education; 3) Gender; 4) Information Technology and Development (ICT4D); 5) Humanitarian Action; 6) Climate and Development; 7) Business and Development; 8) Nutrition and Health; and 9) Postgraduate network.

DSAI is at a point where it feels the need to review the nature, structure and working of the Study Groups to build on their achievements, strengths and perceived opportunities while exploring where and how strengthening Study Groups might best be achieved. In particular, clarifying what DSAI is trying to achieve and how the Study Groups contribute to its overall impact seems overdue and worthwhile.

Terms of Reference

Objectives of the Study Groups Review

1. To review the clarity of the objectives of the Study Groups in contributing to the overall mission and objectives of DSAI.
2. To review the progress of the Study Groups against the Objectives and key roles and responsibilities set out in the Study Group Reference Guide, and to identify key changes that need to be made to ensure that the Study Groups are productive in line with these objectives and which are realistic for SG Convenors and members.
3. To refresh and revitalise our Study Group offerings.

Specific Tasks

- Using the 2021 Study Group Reference Guide as a basis, interview a sample of current and former SG Convenors as well as ordinary members on the progress and workings of the SGs.
- Explore if the Objective/purpose of the SGs is clear enough for the convenors and members.
- Explore what has worked well in the work of the SGs over the last five years.
- Explore the key challenges the SGs have faced over the last five years.
- Explore to what extent the Convenors are using the Study Group Reference Guide and any issues for why they might not be following it.
- Explore the realism of expectations of the SGs as outlined in the Reference Guide.

- Gather suggestions for how the SGs might be more active or work better, in the view of the members and convenors.
- Identify any overlaps or synergies between the Study Groups which might be useful to explore in terms of seeking greater effectiveness or efficiency.
- Interview the current and past Chairs and the full-time Coordinator as to their views of how successful the SGs are and what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of the SGs.
- Collate and synthesise all the information gathered in an analytical way and prepare a draft document with draft findings and draft recommendations.
- Present the draft findings and recommendations to DSAI (need to agree participants) with a view to interrogating, verifying and finalising these for the final report.
- Present the final report to the DSAI Chair and Steering Committee for their consideration and action.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The consultant will report to the DSAI Chair.
- The DSAI Chair and Coordinator will check in with the consultant at some intermediary stage to check if the Review is on track or if any adjustments need to be made.

Outputs

- A succinct report on the findings, with a set of targeted recommendations.
- Presentation of the findings and recommendations to the DSAI Steering Committee.
- Potentially, a presentation of the report to the wider DSAI group, likely to be around the time of the Annual Conference/AGM in early 2027.

Timelines

- Between September and November 2026.
- Please note that there is a limited budget for this review and it is expected that it would comprise the hours commensurate with 10 – 15 working days.

To apply: Please send a CV with an accompanying letter of interest to admin@dsaireland.org by **COB on Wednesday, 9 September 2026.**