

Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (IGU CSRS) Report 2025

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A. Membership

A1. Structure of the Steering Committee 2025-2028

- Co-Chairpersons
 - Aleksandar Lukić Croatia alukic@geog.pmf.hr
 - Cornelia Steinhäuser Germany/Argentina cornelia.steinhaeuser@uni-muenster.de
- Members
 - Abhineety Goel India abhineety.goel@flame.edu.in
 - Suk Kyeong Kang Turkey ecoksk@gmail.com | skang@ohu.edu.tr
 - Hualou Long China longhl@igsnrr.ac.cn
 - William Moseley United States moseley@macalester.edu
 - (secretary)
 - Lou Angeli Ocampo the Philippines laocampo@up.edu.ph
 - Valerià Paül Spain v.paul.carril@usc.gal
 - Marcin Wojcik Poland wojcik.moskwa@gmail.com
 - Giacomo Zanolin Italy giacomo.zanolin@unige.it

This structure was decided at the virtual meeting of the Steering Committee held on 10 September 2024, in accordance with IGU guidelines on gender and geographical (Global South/Global North) balance.

A2. Steering Committee Meetings

Three IGU CSRS Steering Committee (SC) meetings were held in 2025. The first online meeting was held on 27 March, the second online meeting on 23 September, and the last took place during the annual colloquium of the IGU CSRS (on 5 December in the Philippines).

The agenda of the first virtual meeting in March included topics on the forthcoming 32nd IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in the Philippines, preparation for the 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium in Italy (2026), the appointment

of the new Secretary of the IGU-CSRS, updating the homepage, improving communication with members, and sharing information on the virtual meeting of Commission chairs with IGU President Nathalie Lemarchand and all IGU EC members, held on 21 February 2025. Regarding the 32nd IGU CSRS Colloquium, Dr Emman Garcia, President of the Philippine Geographical Society, and Dr Lou Angeli Ocampo shared updates on the preparations, which are progressing very well. Financial and organisational issues regarding this conference were discussed, particularly support for PhD students from the Global South within the framework of the Ann Firmino scholarship. An update on the preparations for the 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium in Italy (2026) was presented by the chair of the local organising committee, Dr Giacomo Zanolin. We discussed the possibility of shifting the previously proposed conference dates from June 2026 to the first week of July due to an overlap with the Conference of the European Rural Geography Group in Porto. Furthermore, co-chairs Dr Aleksandar Lukić and Dr Cornelia Steinhäuser, along with Ana, proposed Dr Bill Moseley as the new secretary for the commission until 2028. The proposal was well received. The issue of updating the homepage and mailing lists was also discussed. We concluded that Dr Cornelia Steinhäuser will update the webpage and that the mailing list will continue to be managed as before, restricted to the work of the IGU CSRS, while Facebook will be used to disseminate further information on rural geography.

The second virtual meeting took place in September. It was mainly devoted to announcing final details for the 32nd IGU CSRS Colloquium in the Philippines in December and the first call for papers for the 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium in Italy. The final dates for the Italy colloquium, titled “Rural Systems in an Age of Local and Global Mobilities”, are 6–10 July 2026. Ideas for a rural geography textbook were further elaborated. As already discussed, it is envisioned as a multi-authored textbook on rural geography, embracing the main themes of rural geography with authors from several countries and different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Dr Bill Moseley, secretary, will serve as coordinator for this task, having previous experience in academic book publishing.



During the 32nd IGU CSRS Colloquium, a third Steering Committee Meeting was held on 5 December. Several points concerning the future activities and organisation of the IGU CSRS were discussed and agreed. First, the locations for upcoming conferences were confirmed: the 2026 conference will be held in Italy, followed by Turkey in 2027 and Australia in 2028. This sequence reflects both the international orientation of the Commission and its aim to strengthen engagement across different world regions. Second, the status of current and planned publications was reviewed. The Special Issue resulting from the Argentina

conference (2025) is currently in preparation, and its progress was briefly discussed. In addition, plans for future Special Issues were presented, with prospective journals identified for contributions from the conferences in the Philippines and Italy. Third, the maintenance and further development of the IGU CSRS website were addressed. The importance of keeping the homepage up to date, both in content and visibility, was emphasised. Finally, the meeting discussed future responsibilities for managing the IGU CSRS mailing list.

A3. Corresponding Members

The number of corresponding members of the IGU CSRS, calculated by means of the e-mailing list, is 1,027 in total.

Country	Number	Country	Number
Afghanistan	2	Japan	115
Argentina	52	Malaysia	1
Australia	29	Mexico	4
Austria	7	Morocco	2
Bangladesh	1	Netherlands	8
Belgium	7	New Zealand	6
Brazil	24	Nigeria	3
Burundi	1	Norway	1
Cameroon	3	Poland	4
Canada	56	Portugal	9
Chile	5	Romania	12
China	18	Russia	3
Colombia	1	Saudi Arabia	1
Croatia	2	Serbia	2
Czech Republic	7	Singapore	1
Egypt	6	Slovakia	1
Ecuador	1	Slovenia	5
Finland	1	South Africa	8
France	20	South Korea	24
Germany	31	Spain	50
Greece	1	Sri Lanka	1
Guinea	1	Sudan	1
Haiti	1	Sweden	5
Hong Kong	2	Syria	2
India	154	Taiwan	2
Indonesia	1	Thailand	4
Iran	6	Turkey	3
Ireland	17	United Kingdom	17
Israel	5	United States of America	249
Italy	10	Vietnam	5
Ivory Coast	1	Others	5
		Total	1,027

B. Meetings

The annual IGU CSRS Colloquium has been the most important activity of the Commission since its inception (originally as the Study Group “Rural Systems”) at the IGU Conference in Washington in 1992. It offers a unique opportunity for academic collegiality and the exchange of experiences among rural geographers worldwide. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 was the only year since 1992 that the IGU CSRS annual colloquium was not held.

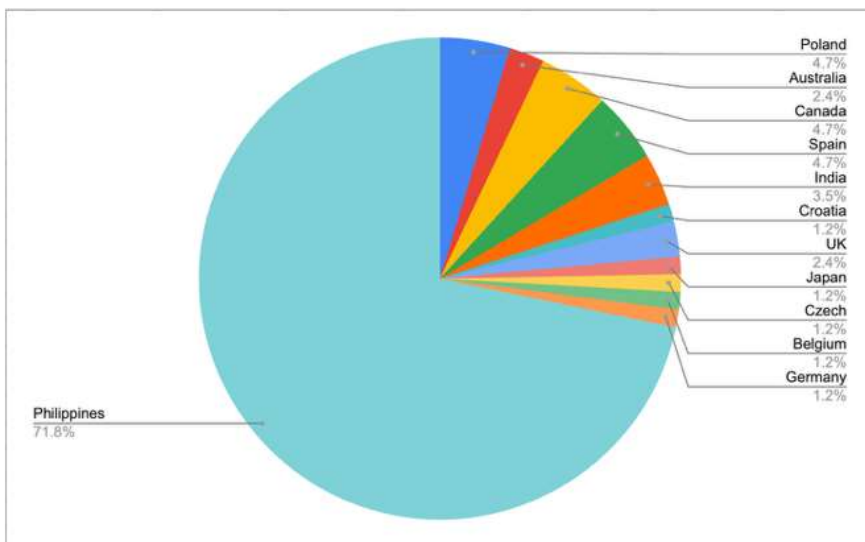
Each year, the IGU CSRS colloquium includes a three-to four-day field trip in rural locations to showcase initiatives, experiences, economic activities, transformations, conflicts, and more, which serve as living laboratories and arenas for in situ academic debates on sustainability in rural areas. Typically, colloquia are held on a different continent each year, with an effort to alternate between the Global North and Global South.

B1. 32nd IGU CSRS Colloquium: The Philippines (2025)



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The Colloquium was attended by 85 participants, including 24 international participants from North America, Europe, Australia, and other parts of Asia. There were 43 paper and panel presentations organised into 13 sessions, covering a wide range of themes and issues related to rural sustainability. The Ana Firmino Scholarship funded four local participants from various state universities and colleges, covering their conference registration fees, transportation, and accommodation.

As with previous IGU-CSRS colloquia, the 32nd IGU-CSRS Colloquium was divided into two parts: a two-day conference and field immersion activities in Northern Philippines.

The conference featured one international and two local keynote and plenary speakers. Dr Philip Kelly from York University delivered a lecture entitled “Mapping Value in Labour Migration & Rural Social Reproduction”. Dr Rowena Boquiren, a retired historian from UP Baguio and a consultant and researcher on environmental governance, indigenous land rights, and community-based forest monitoring across Southeast Asia, provided

historical and ecological perspectives on environmental conservation. Dr Kristian Saguin, Chair of the UP Department of Geography and recipient of the 2022 AAG Meridian Book Award for Outstanding Scholarly Work in Geography for his book *Urban Ecologies on the Edge: Making Manila’s Resource Frontier*, discussed emerging Philippine rural ecologies.

Collectively, their lectures provided a strong conceptual foundation for the conference discussions and helped frame subsequent paper sessions and field immersion activities within broader debates on “new ruralities”.

Field Immersion

The field immersion activity, which involved visits to key sites and conversations with community leaders and members, NGO workers, and local government officials, was attended by 35 participants. The sites visited included the municipalities of Itogon and La Trinidad in Benguet Province, and Aringay in La Union Province, highlighting the diversity of rural livelihoods and socio-ecological contexts in the Philippines.

Itogon, Benguet, was visited as a key upland site shaped by the long history of small-scale gold mining. Participants viewed active mining areas and the site of the September 2018 landslide, which underscored the environmental risks and social costs associated with extractive livelihoods. Discussions led by an Ibaloi community leader and pastor focused on the historical development of mining in the area, land rights issues, and the impacts of corporate mining since the American colonial period, providing critical insight into the political ecology of upland rural spaces.

La Trinidad, Benguet, highlighted agricultural livelihoods and rural transformation in a peri-urban context. Known for vegetable farming and agrotourism, the site illustrated how rural communities adapt to market demands, urban proximity, and environmental pressures. Conversations emphasised changing livelihood strategies, land use transitions, and the role of agriculture in sustaining both local and urban populations, reflecting the dynamics of “new ruralities” at the rural–urban interface.

Aringay, La Union, offered a coastal perspective through a visit to a community-based mangrove forest supported by the NGO KADUAMI. Participants engaged with community members, local leaders, and NGO workers to learn about mangrove conservation, ecosystem-based adaptation, and community-led coastal resource management. The site highlighted how coastal communities mobilise local knowledge, collective action, and external partnerships to protect ecosystems while sustaining livelihoods amid development and environmental change.



B2. 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium: Italy (2026)

The first call for the 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium, to be held in Italy from 6 to 10 July 2026, was issued in late October 2025. The Colloquium is organised by the University of Genoa (Italy), with Dr Giacomo Zanolin as Chair of the local organising committee. The key theme of the 33rd Annual Colloquium of the IGU-CSRS (International Geographical Union Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems) is “Rural Systems in an Age of Local and Global Mobilities”. It aims to provide an opportunity to reflect broadly on the transformations of rural systems in light of the paradigm of mobility that characterises the contemporary era.

The Colloquium, which will take place in Genoa (Italy), seeks to foster dialogue between scholars from the Global North and Global South. The aim is to advance research on rural systems while strengthening awareness of the local specificities that define them.

Liguria, the region where the Colloquium and subsequent fieldwork will be held, represents an ideal context in which to engage with these themes. Owing to its extensive coastal development, Liguria has always been traversed by various internal and international flows. Although it forms an arc overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, Liguria is essentially a mountainous territory, where the Alps and the Apennines meet. It is a land historically linked to rural activities such as vine and olive cultivation and sheep breeding, which have deeply shaped its slopes – both those facing the sea and those further inland.

Contributions referring to case studies, theoretical reflections, or methodological aspects will be accepted if they are coherent with at least one of the following sub-themes.

The first sub-theme, Rural-Urban Mobilities, focuses on the reconfiguration of relationships between urban and rural spaces, which are increasingly less distinct, as they are subject to multidirectional and overlapping movements unfolding over different timeframes, from everyday life to permanent migration to and from rural areas. The second sub-theme, Climate Mobilities, invites contributions addressing ecological and environmental aspects that generate internal and international mobility processes, particularly concerning rural systems. This theme involves how changing climate conditions create crises and opportunities arising from global warming and related dynamics, as well as how environmental actors (animals, plants, habitats, etc.) change in space and time due to human-induced or natural processes. The third sub-theme, Economic Mobilities, provides space for contributions focusing on the economic aspects connected to rural systems, which may lead either to the marginalisation of the local scale or to the activation of interests by major global actors. The fourth sub-theme, Conflict Mobilities, focuses on forms of mobility related to rural systems that stem from political, military, economic, and social conflicts, which in turn generate various migratory flows. Finally, the fifth sub-theme, Socio-Cultural Mobilities, welcomes contributions focusing more generally on the various forms that mobility can take within different systems in different regions of the world. The concept of mobility entails a transformation within or of space, and may also refer to change over time; therefore, we also welcome proposals that address the diachronic dimension of mobility in the phenomena under consideration.

Deadline for Abstract Submission (Second call) is 31 January 2026.

Abstract Submission Form: <https://forms.gle/4Nwu17fULS7SBTQy7>

Conference Email: igu.csr.2026@gmail.com

C. Networking

The IGU CSRS regularly collaborates with other IGU commissions and related international, intergovernmental, or inter- and multidisciplinary groups. In 2025, this was particularly evident in coordinating the dates of the 4th European Rural Geographies Conference, chaired by IGU-CSRS active member Dr Helena Pina (Portugal), and the forthcoming 33rd IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in Italy in 2026. Both events will take place at the

beginning of summer 2026, but without overlapping. In this way, we hope to encourage as many rural geographers as possible to attend both events.

D. Publications and Dissemination

Academic dissemination has been a central purpose of the IGU CSRS since its inception. Most early colloquia produced conference proceedings volumes, which took considerable time to publish after the respective events. Furthermore, in many countries, a proceedings volume is not considered a legitimate scientific publication. For these reasons, at recent conferences it was decided that the outcomes of presentations at the colloquia would be published in peer-reviewed conference proceedings and peer-reviewed articles in ranked scientific journals, commonly through a special issue. A weakness of the latter is that they appear after the event and depend on the ex post submission of papers and the review schedule of the respective journal.

D1. Publication derived from the 31st IGU CSRS Colloquium in Mendoza, Argentina, 2024

A special issue featuring papers presented at the 31st IGU CSRS Colloquium in Mendoza, Argentina, in 2024, entitled “Territorios rurales en disputa”, is currently being prepared for the journal *Boletín de Estudios Geográficos*. The journal is a well-established, peer-reviewed publication with an international orientation, focusing on geographical research and interdisciplinary perspectives on spatial processes, with a strong emphasis on Latin American contexts. The call for papers resulted in 13 submissions, reflecting broad international engagement and a strong thematic fit with the focus of the special issue.

All submissions are currently undergoing a double-blind peer-review process. Reviews are conducted by internationally based geographers, ensuring scholarly rigour and topical relevance. The review process is progressing as planned and is expected to be completed by mid-January. Publication of the special issue is scheduled for the first issue of 2026, with an anticipated release in June 2026.

D2. Digital Networking

Website <https://igu-csrs.github.io>

In mid-2020, we set up a new website of the IGU CSRS. It is regularly updated and includes a section on previous publications from the Commission and another on previous reports from the IGU CSRS SC available at <https://igu-csrs.github.io/reports.html>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ruralgeography/>

This social network is constantly updated by Suk Kyeong Kang (Turkey) to be contacted via ecoksk@gmail.com or skang@ohu.edu.tr

It has 583 followers.

E-mail list igu-csrs@okayama-u.ac.jp

This e-mail list is maintained from Okayama University. The e-mails are filtered by Doo-Chul Kim (Japan).

E. Popularization

Professor Long Hualou (龙花楼), Steering Committee Member of IGU-CSRS, Chair of the Commission on Agricultural Geography and Rural Development of the Geographical Society of China, and Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK), was invited to deliver a speech at the opening ceremony of the “Public Welfare Action for Rural Geography Teachers’ Development · Hohhot Station and the 9th ‘Jiuzhou Cup’ National Research and Study Course Design Competition”, held at Inner Mongolia Normal University. In addition, Professor Long Hualou (龙花楼) was interviewed by the “Yanfu Masses Daily” for a report, discussing how to enhance the value of rural land use space through land use transitions, thereby accelerating rural revitalisation in China’s coastal areas.



F. Accountability

Traditionally, IGU funds are primarily used to support the local organising committee of the IGU CSRS Colloquium. Recently, these funds have mostly been used to support PhD students and young scholars from the Global South through the Ana Firmino Scholarships. For the 32nd Colloquium in the Philippines, there were originally six intended recipients; however, two grantees from India were unable to participate. The organisers were able to support four Filipino scholars from local state universities and colleges outside Metro Manila, covering their conference fees, transportation, and accommodation, for a total amount of PHP 45,600 (770 USD).

Submitted by co-chairs of the IGU-CSRS

Aleksandar Lukić

Cornelia Steinhäuser

Zagreb and Münster, 16 January, 2026