



2017 Lund  
Conference on  
Earth System Governance



Earth  
System  
Governance



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Meeting report: 2017 early career researcher workshop

“Developing a career in earth system governance: opening up science”

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Workshop organized by: Karlijn Muiderman, Lucas Rutting & Jennifer Bansard

Report written by: Jennifer Bansard

As was the case at previous ESG conference, early career researchers had the opportunity to meet for a one-day event ahead of the Lund conference. The aim of these workshops is to foster the exchange between scholars from different universities and to create a dedicated space for discussions on developing a career in earth system governance research.

The workshop is organized by a different group of volunteers every year. Oftentimes, but not necessarily, these are people who have participated in and benefitted from these workshops themselves in the past. The 2017 edition was organized by:

[Karlijn Muiderman](#)  
Utrecht University  
(Netherlands)



[Lucas Rutting](#)  
Utrecht University  
(Netherlands)

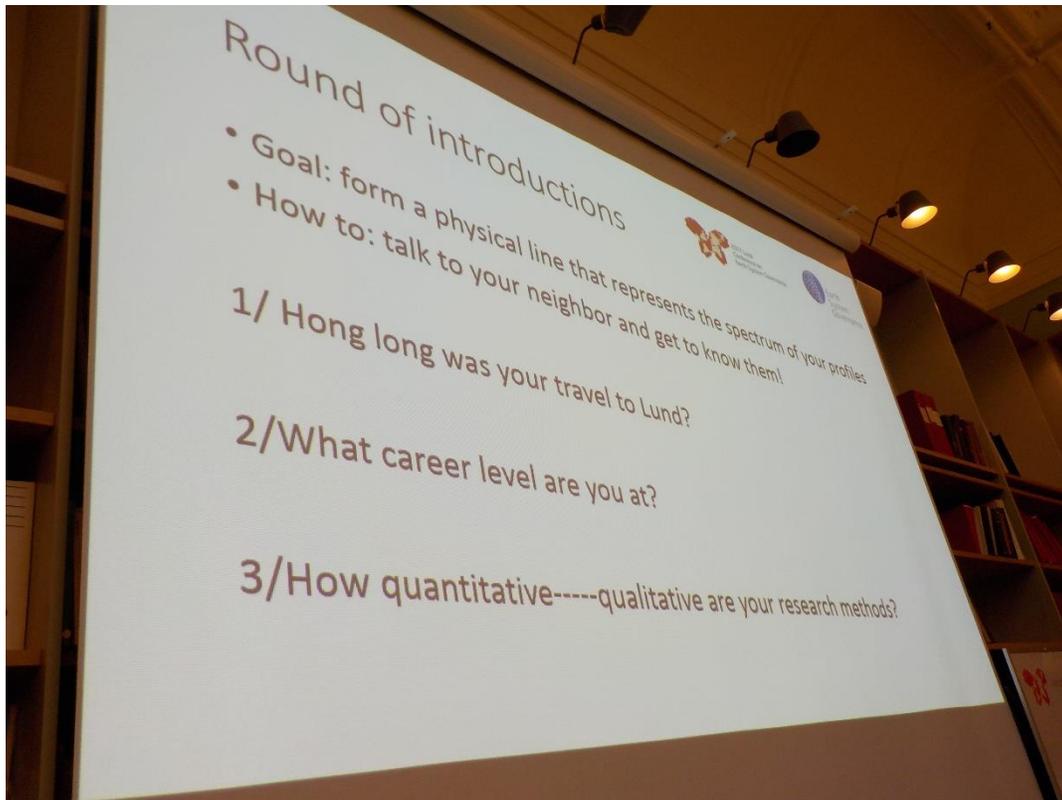


[Jennifer Bansard](#)  
University of Potsdam  
(Germany)



After brief welcome remarks by the organizers, the day started with an interactive round of introductions. Rather than having each participant taking turns to stiffly introduce themselves, we opted for a format that had them talk to each right from the start and allowed them to identify colleagues with a similar profile.

In different rounds they were tasked to form a physical line that represents a spectrum of answers to questions such as whether the focus of their research rather lies on the global or the local level.



The introductory session was followed by what would become the highlight of the workshop: a key note by [Kim Nicholas](#), senior lecturer at Lund University. Kim shared “10 things she wished she had known 10 years ago” with the group of early career researchers. In her candid talk she addressed topics such as time management, dealing with failure, coping with the imposter syndrome, worrying about the future, taking care of your health, and the importance of maintaining relationships with friends and family.

**ESG Project** @ESG\_Project Following

A great end to our first day of **#ESG2017**  
**@KA\_Nicholas** session 10 things I wish I knew  
10 years ago was "the best of the day" 🙌🙌

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**Harriet Bulkeley** @harrietbulkeley · 8 Oct 2017

Replying to @ESG\_Project @KA\_Nicholas  
sounds like title of a forthcoming blog to me...

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Seeing how strongly her speech resonated with the participants and other people who had heard about its content, [Ina Möller](#) (Lund University) later went on to interview Kim about it. If you are interested in hearing Kim’s recommendations, listen to the first ESG early career researcher’s podcast - available [here](#).

The last event of the morning was the mapping exercise. The objective of this session was to give the participants a space to jointly reflect on the impact of their current research project. These could be entire dissertations, a paper, a post-doc project, etc. The participants started by clarifying their research objective, particularly from a policy/societal perspective, and then identified all the stakeholders or interest groups associated with it.



The aim was for them to leave the session with a completed stakeholder mapping, allowing them to build strategies for how best to engage them (at various stages of the research process) and how to 'frame' their conclusions to make them salient to the stakeholders.

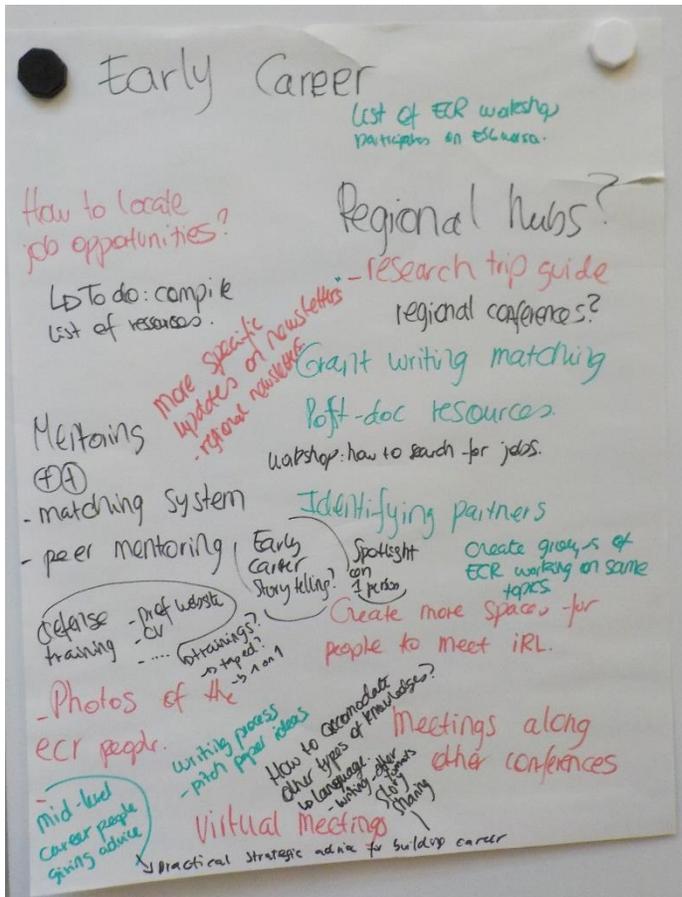
After the vegetarian lunchbreak the group reconvened for an open discussion with ESG Executive Director [Ruben Zondervan](#). This session was especially useful for newcomers to the ESG network. Ruben got to clarify how researchers can engage with the network, what the status of ESG fellow entails and what directions the network is taking in the future.

#### *Application procedure*

To apply to be an Earth System Governance Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow, please submit a complete CV including publication list, and a motivation letter expressing how your work relates to the Earth System Governance Science Plan (no more than 1 page) to [ipo@earthsystemgovernance.org](mailto:ipo@earthsystemgovernance.org).

In the application, please specify what analytical problem(s) your research is most closely associated with and whether you want to be considered a senior fellow. The Earth System Governance Scientific Steering Committee, in consultation with the Regional Research Fellow Coordinators, will evaluate the applications and the network coordinators will contact the applicants upon acceptance.

The aim of the World Café that ensued was to stimulate structured conversations in a relaxed atmosphere, to explore ideas and experiences and allow new collective insights to emerge. In different group constellations, the participants rotated between tables discussing three topics:



1. Open science: At this station participants discussed structural issues related to open science. This for example meant sharing their understanding of the concept, reflecting on modalities for a transition to a publishing model favoring open access to publications, or sharing or challenges they have faced in this regard (acquiring funds for open access, navigating the clutter of pre-print permissions, sharing data on repositories, getting recognition for peer review work, etc.).

2. Teaching earth system governance: The objective here was to favor an exchange of ideas about what constitutes quality teaching. Participants for example reflected on the process of syllabi creation (i.a.

regarding aspirations of gender balance or the inclusion of non-Western authors), or pointed each other towards interactive teaching formats they successfully implemented. The session also provided a space for participants without teaching experience to gain some insights into common challenges others faced and benefit from their peers' experience in this area.

3. Young scholars in earth system governance research: Discussions at this table were dedicated to understanding some of the challenges early career researchers experience and to find constructive suggestions on how we can support each other as well as engage more actively with the Earth System Governance project. Follow-ups from discussions held at this table for example are the creation of a [page on the ESG website](#) dedicated to useful resources for early career researchers and of an ECR newsletter.

In the afternoon participants finally heard inputs from [Carel Dieperink](#) (Utrecht University) and [Emily Boyd](#) (Lund University). Carel highlighted participating in radio programs and writing articles for newspapers as ways to “open up science” and increase the impact of his research. He reflected on action research he conducted on flood risk management in Eastern Europe and emphasized challenges related to this type of research. Emily focused on the issue of knowledge co-production, pointing to different motivations for using co-production as a research approach. She further highlighted challenges inherent to conducting community level work, giving examples from a project on urban resilience in Maputo. While both lauded the ideal of opening up science, and increasing the policy impact and stakeholder responsiveness of academic research, they also cautioned the participants against raising their expectations too high at this early stage in their career.



After this final session, we collectively summed up the day’s discussions and highlighted some key take-away points. Some ideas generated during the workshop, such as the creation of an ECR page on the ESG website or the preparation of a 2018 ECR research trip, are already being implemented.

Beyond generating ideas for new initiatives, the greatest impact of the early career researcher workshops lies in the personal relationships built among the participants. From this and previous editions we know that ESG newcomers for example appreciate the opportunity to get to know people ahead of their first ESG conference, and that scholars working in “non-environmentally focused” departments welcome the chance to exchange with colleagues working on similar issues.

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Reflections from the workshop organizers:

*"I think the format of the ECR workshop prior to the annual conferences has proven successful. The event provides a dedicated forum for early career researchers to meet, discuss common challenges and share lessons learned. It also spearheads collaborations between researchers from different universities, for example in the form of joint papers. If you are interested in organizing such a workshop - be it in the context of the ESG or other fora – and would like insights into how we planned the 2017 edition, don't hesitate to get in touch."*

*Jennifer Bansard*

*"The ECR offered great opportunities to brainstorm about issues that early career researcher's encounter. These include professional issues, but also personal issues that might influence a professional career. The participants enthusiastically exchanged ideas and became familiar with each other's research interests in an informal setting. As such, the day offered good network opportunities and fostered ideas for collaborative action even before the conference had started."*

*Karlijn Muiderman*