



Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists Institutional Review Board (ESSWA IRB)

Establishment and Purpose of ESSWA IRB

Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists Institutional Review Board (ESSWA-IRB), hereinafter referred to as IRB, is an independent Board established by ESSWA Board in its meeting held on 13 January 2018 to review and approve research protocols involving human study participants. The primary purpose of the ESSWA's IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human study participants by assessing potential risks and harm. Researchers who are planning to do research in the areas of social sciences and humanities can submit an application to ESSWA's IRB and receive approval and ethical clearance before they can start recruiting participants and collecting any data and thereby ensure the ethical soundness of their research undertakings.

Structure and Composition of ESSWA IRB

ESSWA has selected six members drawn from different educational backgrounds to ensure representativeness of the relevant fields of studies that constitute the society, for a complete and robust review of research protocols prepared and conducted by social and behavioral scientists and research institutions. ESSWA has also nominated IRB members on the basis of their commitment to provide research ethical review services on a volunteer basis. ESSWA IRB is currently composed of six members (chairperson, vice chairperson, a secretary and three other members). The chairperson, vice chairperson and a secretary of the IRB have been elected by the IRB members; and each of them has some administrative functions to discharge. The Board approves ethical clearance after a thorough review is completed through different mechanisms.

Review and approval procedures

ESSWA IRB discharges its duties on the basis of the license it has obtained from the National Research Ethics Review Committee (NRERC). The six member committee is responsible for conducting the ethical review process. Each research proposal is reviewed by two members who are selected by the chair in consultation with the secretary and other members. Reviewers submit their assessment to the IRB secretary using a form prepared for this purpose. The secretary in consultation with the chairperson will then call for a meeting of all IRB members to discuss and decide on the results of the review. The decision will be communicated to individuals/institutions that applied for ethics review. This process will normally **take 3-4 weeks**, though urgent review requests can be processed within **2 weeks**.

Application Procedures and Requirements

Documentation

For a thorough and complete review, all research proposals should be submitted with the following documents:

- Name of the applicant with designation.
- Name of the Institute/ field area where research will be conducted.
- Approval of the Head of the Institution.
- Protocol of the proposed research.
- Ethical issues in the study and plans to address these issues.
- Informed consent process, including participant/respondent information sheet and informed consent form in local language(s).
- Curriculum vitae of all the investigators with relevant publications in last five years.
- Source of funding and financial requirements for the project.
- Statement of conflicts of interest (COI), if any Or statement that indicates absence of this
- Agreement to comply with the relevant national and applicable international guidelines.
- A statement describing any compensation to be given to research participants.
- Plans for publication of results – positive or negative- while maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants.
- Any other information relevant to the study

ESSSWA's IRB Review Check List

- The applicant should submit hard copies (3 copies) of the full research protocol and an electronic version.
- ESSSWA's IRB Application Form
- A signed cover letter from the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI/Advisors and the institutional details where the investigator is based (which should include a physical address, fax number, telephone number, mobile number and email address) also must be submitted.
- Informed consent forms (English, Amharic & other applicable language in the research)
- Participant information sheet (English, Amharic & other applicable language in the research)
- Up-to-date signed and dated CVs of the PI and/or co-PI should be submitted. (Maximum 3 pages each)
- Support letter from collaborating institutes

- The Secretariat receives applications submitted using the application form from IRBs for ethics review and final decision as stated under ESSSWA's IRB mandates.
- Upon receipt of complete applications, preliminary screening is done by the Secretariat.
- Agreement to comply with the relevant national and applicable international guidelines.
- A statement describing any compensation to be given to research participants.
- Plans for publication of results – positive or negative- while maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants.
- Any other information relevant to the study.

Communicating the decision

- Decision will be communicated to researchers by the IRB the Member Secretary in writing.
- Suggestions for modifications, if any, should be sent by IRB Secretary.
- Reasons for not approval should be informed to the researchers.
- The schedule / plan of ongoing review by the IBR should be communicated to the Principal Investigator/PI/.

Follow up procedures

- Reports should be submitted to the IRB at prescribed intervals for review.
- Final report should be submitted to the IRB at the end of a study.
- Protocol deviation, if any, should be communicated in writing to the IRB with adequate justifications.
- Any amendment to the protocol should be resubmitted for renewed approval.
- Any new information related to the study should be communicated.
- Premature termination of a study should be notified with reasons along with summary of the data obtained so far.
- Change of investigators / sites should be communicated to the IRB.

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