



## DDRN Editorial policy

### Purpose of DDRN website

The Danish Development Research Network (DDRN) aims to contribute to the inclusion of research and research-based knowledge in development assistance and in partner countries' development activities. To achieve this goal, DDRN implements a series of networking and communication activities. Communication activities broadly aim to make DDRN a key entry point to the Danish resource base and a main channel for communication between researchers and practitioners in Denmark and across North/South<sup>1</sup>.

More specifically, the website is used to:

- 1) Promote communication among members;
- 2) Enable that interested development researchers and practitioners know how to use DDRN;
- 3) Provide timely access to quality research-based information of relevance to researchers and practitioners<sup>2</sup>.

DDRN links more than 2000 researchers and practitioners from different professions, thematic fields, and geographic regions. Information about this quite unique and broad member base, together with a high number of news items of relevance to the areas of research and work of the members constitute the unique value of the website of the network<sup>3</sup>.

### Purpose of this policy

Given the large thematic and geographic coverage of the website of DDRN, and thus the great variation it contains in terms of contents, this editorial policy aims to formulate broad guidelines that:

- Provide clear basic rules for potential contributors so that members know which kind of information they can disseminate through the network and how;
- Define the overall focus of DDRN, highlighting the characteristics of DDRN in terms of its subject coverage, approach and objectives;
- Provide the DDRN editorial team with guidance on how to make editorial choices.

This editorial policy takes departure in the experience gained through more than 3 years of DDRN communication and networking activities, as well as experiences gained in the networks that preceded DDRN. It builds on lessons learnt as regards effective tools and approaches, and needs to be reviewed from time to time to include new experiences gained in the constantly evolving landscape of research and development in Denmark and in the South. Implementation of the policy will start in September 2010 [and reflect priorities of the communications strategy as revised in August 2010].

### Guiding principles

The information and communication flow in DDRN builds on the following guiding principles:

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the vision formulated in the Communications Strategy of DDRN launched in March 2009 available at [http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/DDRN\\_Comm\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_March\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/DDRN_Comm_Strategy_Final_March_2009.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> These objectives refer to three of the four objectives identified in the Communications Strategy of DDRN.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing this document (August 2010), the website included more than 800 visible online profiles of members. It also included more than 1200 links to papers and reports, which is just one of the news categories of information provided by DDRN.

- **Promotion of multi-disciplinarity:** Given the broad variation in interests among network members, DDRN focuses on issues of relevance to large sections of the members, prioritising information that shows ways and approaches to cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, DDRN selects focal themes that cut across disciplines (currently these are climate change, food security and research communication). Information is also provided within single disciplines, although kept on a general level. Thematically and geographically narrow information is not included on the website. Priority is also given to disseminating information about new and innovative/promising multidisciplinary and cross-sectorial N/S initiatives.
- **Promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogue:** To promote research uptake, DDRN facilitates dialogue and information sharing among researchers and practitioners in various ways. Disseminating research-based knowledge made easily accessible to practitioners is a quite direct way of doing so. A less direct approach is disseminating information from practitioners about priority issues and challenges in the South that may be of relevance to researchers.
- **Promotion of multiple voices:** DDRN attempts to disseminate information from sources representing all kinds of stakeholders involved in the network. The number of references to any single prominent institution has to be limited to leave room for less represented voices, e.g. research institutions and networks from the South. By only providing links to the original source of information, DDRN aims to create awareness about the organisations producing the research.
- **Utilisation of complementarities and synergies:** Links are provided to other sources of information that are in line with the goal of DDRN. To avoid information overload of the Danish member base, which constitutes about half of the members of DDRN, information that is very broadly distributed through other Danish channels is only posted if of very high relevance. DDRN prioritises to share information from outside Denmark that is not broadly shared within the Danish resource base (e.g. from EU and initiatives in the South). On the other hand, through making visible the Danish knowledge base, DDRN distributes information that is not otherwise largely disseminated to members outside Denmark.
- **Transparency and openness:** DDRN disseminates information that is publicly available free of charge. By making this policy available online, DDRN aims to make sure members and users can easily understand criteria and channels for distributing information and engaging in communication within DDRN.
- **Timeliness:** DDRN tries to keep abreast with current knowledge in the fields covered and thus only posts information on the website that is new (e.g. reports less than 1½ years old).
- **Responsiveness to member's needs and engagement:** The secretariat prioritises information received from members by posting it on the website and informing the members as soon as this is done. News that does not fit in any of the specific categories of information on the website is posted as other news<sup>4</sup>. Special attention is given to also including news that are of interest and relevance to members in the South and that may otherwise not easily reach this target group.
- **Flexibility to act rapidly on shifting demands and challenges:** The secretariat improves the functionalities of the website and newsletters on a regular basis according to needs and comments expressed by members. Structural changes are also carried out from time to time to reflect changing prioritisation of focal themes of DDRN.
- **Continuous learning from experiences:** The secretariat monitors the information services provided and adjusts accordingly on a continuous basis.

### What is posted on the website

Contents derives from a broad range of sources, including other knowledge intermediaries, research institutions, networks and individual members, all dealing with development issues within the themes

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<sup>4</sup> From September 2010, members will be able to post information on the website themselves that the secretariat will share further through newsletters.

covered by the network. Each item is considered on a case by case basis before being added to our website.

Information provided includes titles and links to the original source of information. Documents linked to must be available online in full text (or substantially complete) and available free of charge to a public audience. Documents may only be uploaded on the website if not available online upon agreement with the author of the documents.

All information must be based on research of relevance to development, or based on development practice and of relevance to researchers.

The contents of the website include four categories of information:

- 1) Information about the network and its activities: detailed information about events and DDRN publications, and highlights of activities that the secretariat is engaged in;
- 2) Information about the members and DDRN working groups: searchable member database, section where activities of working groups is posted, member-to-member section (upcoming);
- 3) Thematic news from other sources, with special attention to focal themes of DDRN.

The thematic sections are divided in:

- Events (conferences, workshops, seminars)
  - Papers and reports (research and projects reports, working papers, conference papers)
  - Briefs (policy and research briefs)
  - Manuals and guidelines
  - Funding sources (for research or other initiatives involving knowledge building)
  - Links (to organisations, initiatives and large projects)
  - Other news (conference/workshops reports, job announcements, newsletters from other organisations, surveys, and information from members that does not fit within categories above or is very thematically or geographically specific)
  - Archives
- 4) Student section: Information about new master and PhD courses, scholarships, abstracts of Master's theses, and 'Science shop' database (under development).

### **What is NOT posted on the website**

As implied by the criteria above, theoretical research of no relevance to development is not included on the DDRN website; nor is practice-based information of relevance only to practitioners. Furthermore, the following items are NOT posted:

- Ephemeral items such as news stories
- Advertisement of commercial goods
- Journal articles and chapters from books (only whole journals and books if available for free online)
- Articles that are not published at least by the institution where the researcher is based (can though be included in the member-to-member section)
- Project proposal and request for funding and/or partners of small projects and studies (serious proposals can though be included in the member-to-member section)

### **Tools to supplement the website**

To keep members updated on news posted on the website, monthly newsletters are sent for the various thematic categories on the website. In case of important information that will have lost relevance by the time of the next newsletter, news mails are sent to members based on data registered in the member database. By targeting only specific segments of the member base, DDRN aims to avoid information overload of its members.

Please [contact us](#) if you have any further questions.