

## Minutes from 3<sup>rd</sup> DDRN General Assembly

Wednesday May 21, 2008, 13:00 – 17:00

Department of Geography and Geology, 05.2.535 – Lecture hall 1  
University of Copenhagen, Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 Copenhagen K

### Agenda:

1. Election of chairperson and secretary
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Report by the board, by Ole Mertz, chairperson of DDRN
4. Presentation of the work plan for 2008 by Anne Sørensen, chief coordinator of DDRN
5. The future of DDRN: vision and strategies for strengthened integration of research and knowledge in development. Workshop facilitated by Lisbet Fich, consultant
6. Proposals from members to be discussed:
  - a. Proposal from the secretariat of revision of Articles of Association
  - b. Other proposals
7. Election of board members and substitutes
8. Any other business

The newly elected board will hold its constituting meeting upon termination of the General Assembly.

### Ad 1. Election of chairperson and secretary

Ole Mertz, chairman of the board, opened the general assembly and gave a brief introduction to the meeting.

Bente Topsøe-Jensen, COWI, was proposed and accepted to take the chair.

Lone Frederiksen from the DDRN secretariat took minutes.

### Ad 2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved with the latest change according to which the DDRN work plan 2008 was presented before the discussion of the future of the network.

### Ad 3. Report by the board, by Ole Mertz

Ole Mertz, reported on the DDRN activities and expenditures in 2007 and the first months of 2008. OM thanked the secretariat for working very efficiently all through 2007, which was a very busy and challenging year. Practically all the targets within each of the three objectives have been reached; and besides, new and unplanned priority areas have been included. DDRN now has a well functioning information and communications system with monthly newsletters on both general and specific subject areas. DDRN has received many new members, not least among young researchers and students; and the network has now more than 1200 members listed in the database on the website, many of them students. Member driven activities have increased, both in Denmark and in the South. DDRN has organised/co-organised a number of workshops and seminars in developing countries and is working on developing a coherent strategy for activities in the South. Contacts to research institutions, embassies and programmes in developing countries have increased and

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new links and platforms have been established in the South. The merging of the three former networks has been very positive in offering greater opportunities of cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and international co-operation. In collaboration with the other two research networks (ENRECAHEALTH and DWF), DDRN is responsible for assessing applications for Danida's Travel Grants, which have increased in numbers. Due to a late start of the network and to changed plans of collaborators, some activities have been postponed from 2007 to 2008, resulting in under-expenditure. On the whole expenditures have followed the budget during the first 3-4 months of 2008.

Questions and comments from participants:

Clarification of the increase in member activities: This is due to the fact that DDRN has supported a number of member driven workshops and working groups, and that the network has initiated and facilitated several inputs to strategies and overviews.

It is more important to know whether the objectives have been reached than how much money has been spent. It was replied that the outputs are cited under each objective in the annual progress report, sent to Danida in January.

In which fields does DDRN collaborate with the other two research networks? Administration of Danida's Travel Grants, a series of communication seminars, and the climate task force were mentioned as examples.

## **Ad 4. Presentation of the work plan for 2008 by Anne Sørensen**

AS presented DDRN's work plan for 2008, relating the upcoming activities to the targets in the work plan. It was underlined that the work plan is a rolling one, continuously open for updating and for incorporating new, upcoming themes and trends. At the same time the board and the secretariat endeavour to ensure continuity in services and activities. The work plan aims to reflect strengths and interests of members and to focus on problems and challenges in developing countries. Upcoming tasks in 2008-09 are among others:

Objective 1. Bringing knowledge and research into use and linking N-S-S

- Overview and competences on climate change (in collaboration with Danish Water Forum),
- Inputs to Danida Development Days,
- Collaboration with Danida on review of development research,
- Facilitating a regional multi-stakeholder network on Urban Environmental Management (UEM) in Southern Africa, including a visit to Mozambique and Tanzania,
- Carrying out briefings in Mozambique, Tanzania and Vietnam and receiving reversed visits from universities in South Africa and Vietnam.

Objective 2. The member base

- 155 new individual members and 4 institutional members in 2008,
- 5 monthly newsletters, 1 thematic conference and 2 research communication seminars during the first months of 2008,
- Member driven activities coming up in 2008/09 are among others: Workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility, organized by members in Uganda; workshop on Spatial Disparities in Development; a session focusing on development issues at

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the Climate Conference in Copenhagen; a DDRN conference on Politics, Business and Development; possibly another Sahel conference.

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Objective 3. Fostering links and synergies, entering strategic alliances N-N and N-S, and contributing to the 'reproduction' of the resource base in DK

- Coordination with the other research networks has been ongoing continuously.
- 2 out of 4 targeted meetings with regional networks accomplished, and 2 out of 4 international workshops/meetings conducted.
- In 2008/09 DDRN will carry out activities in Mozambique and Tanzania in relation to UEM, and initiate activities related to the decentralized pilot projects in Vietnam and Tanzania.
- Possibly a workshop on research communication will be organized in the South.
- 3 out of 6 planned inspiration seminars for master students conducted.
- 49 applications within the thematic areas of DDRN received for the May 2008 call for Danida's Travel Grants (36 of them granted).
- An application for another phase of the travel grants sent to Danida and pending. A new phase will mean another call in autumn.
- DDRN will collect lists of study topics from South partners, e.g. RUFORUM.

Key challenges:

- Decentralization of part of Danish research support,
- Providing added value of Danish involvement in N-S and N-N partnership projects,
- Strategic alliances and innovative partnerships,
- Moving from dichotomous thinking towards 'research as a continuum' – different contexts require different types of research (applied, basic, other...),
- Research communication.

The work plan did not give rise to much discussion, but to the question of funding members' activities, it was mentioned that the former network GEPPA funded participation of members in workshops etc. in the South.

Darriann Riber from UM explained that the pilot projects in Tanzania and Vietnam will receive funding of DKK 10 mio. per country per year. Themes will be selected in collaboration between Danish embassies and local universities. In Vietnam the focus areas will be: climate and technology; in Tanzania nothing has been decided yet. A framework agreement has been signed between Denmark and each of the two countries. Local partners will be invited to Denmark to meet and choose possible partners at universities here. After the summer holidays, concept papers will be published in Danish newspapers.

## **Ad 5. The future of DDRN: vision and strategies for strengthened integration of research and knowledge in development (facilitated by Lisbet Fich)**

After a short introduction by Lisbet Fich, taking the point of departure in the need for DDRN to prioritise its activities, the participants were split into 4 groups. Each group was asked to rank a number of items, taken from the above presentations of the progress report and the work plan (DDRN's objectives, activities, challenges and outputs).

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In plenum each working group presented a few items that they had ranked with the highest and the lowest score, respectively. The group presentations gave rise to a brief discussion highlighting opinions that there were some tasks that the secretariat should focus on, whereas others could best be taken care of by members.

Suggested tasks that the secretariat should prioritize can be summed up under the following three headings:

- Facilitation of alliances and partnerships;
- Nurturing of members – including enhancing modalities for involvement from South members;
- Research communication – including access to research based knowledge.

On the other hand, the discussion suggested that proposals for contents and thematic inputs to conferences and the like could be left to the initiative and responsibility of members.

The result of this exercise was not conclusive, but will serve as an input for the further discussion of strategic priorities of DDRN.

## **Ad 6. a. Proposal from the secretariat of revision of Articles of Association**

The secretariat suggested two amendments to the articles of association. One concerned paragraph 5, in which the sentence: "Proposals to be discussed at the annual general assembly and the final draft agenda will be available on the network website or can be requested from the secretariat, from **one week** prior to the general assembly" was changed to "Proposals to be discussed at the annual general assembly and the final draft agenda will be available on the network website or can be requested from the secretariat, from **two weeks** prior to the general assembly". The reason was that if members should have the opportunity to vote by letter no later than one week before the general assembly, the necessary information must be available at least one week before that.

In §6 an explanatory text was added, so that the wording became:

1. All members can stand for election to the board.

***Guests attending the GA may register as DDRN members during the GA, thus be given an opportunity to vote. Provided that they have updated their profile on the DDRN website, members who are not able to attend the GA can send in a postal vote no later than one week prior to the General Assembly. Members who have updated their profile can also vote by proxy, giving written authority to another member. Voting by e-mail is not possible.***

The first amendment was adopted without discussion. With regard to the second, there was some questioning as to why postal vote and vote by proxy were possible, but vote by e-mail was not. The reply was that this had been discussed in the board; and one argument against vote by e-mail had been that this would demand very much work on behalf of the secretariat.

Both amendments were adopted.

## **Ad 6. b. Other proposals to be discussed**

The secretariat had not received any other proposals.

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## **Ad 7. Election of board members and substitutes**

In due time before the general assembly 6 members had sent in their presentations and were listed on the ballot paper: Arne Wangel (DTU), Bjarne Graabech-Sørensen (SDU), Carl Erik Schou Larsen (KU, LIFE), Esbern Friis-Hansen (DIIS), Olav Jull Sørensen (AAU), Thomas Nielsen (AU).

Another 2 members decided to run for election to the board: Helene Kyed (DIIS) and Thomas Kristensen (KU, LIFE). Since that latter two had not had the possibility of having their presentations printed beforehand, all members were asked to give a short oral presentation of their professional background and their motivation for running for election.

The four members elected to the board were:

Carl Erik Schou Larsen (KU, LIFE), Helene Kyed (DIIS), Olav Jull Sørensen (AAU), Thomas Nielsen (AU).

Board substitutes were:

Arne Wangel (DTU), Esbern Friis-Hansen (DIIS).

## **Ad 8. Any other business**

The question was raised of whether after the decentralization of research funding, applications to FFU are only recommended by the embassies if they are very close to Danish development cooperation. It was pointed out that so far the embassies should only give an assessment of research applications, not decisions. It was stressed that it is important that DDRN follow the practice closely. The network should suggest to the embassies that research is not only applied research, and stress the distinction between research and consultancy. TAS (BFT) has asked DDRN to give presentations of the research environment to the sector programmes and to the embassies. Other inputs to the discussion pointed to the fact that there is a tendency to increase South influence, and that there are too many applications for FFU funding.

LF 12.06.08