

Minutes of the First Board Meeting of Danish Development Research Network

December 15th 2006, Institute of Geography, University of Copenhagen

Participants: Arne Wangel (AW), Alex Percy-Smith (APS), Helle Munk Ravnborg (HMR), Peter Oksen (PO), Eskild Holm Nielsen (EHN), Dean Jacobsen (DJ), Claus Jørgensen (CJ), Marten Sørensen (MS), Peter Brorson (PB), Søren Jeppesen (SJ), Mille Møllegaard (MM)

Apologies: Mette Kjær (MK), Ole Mertz (OM), Olav Jull Sørensen (OJS), Ahmed Jahoor (AJ)

Agenda:

1. Election of chairperson and secretary to take minutes
2. Approval of draft agenda
3. Election of chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Board
4. Discussion of Danida's grant document (bevillingskrivelse)
5. Job announcements
6. Agreement with host institution
7. Articles of association
8. Rules of procedure for the board of DDRN
9. Assistance during the initial phase of the network
10. Next board meeting
11. Any other business

Ad 0. Presentation of board members

The board members briefly introduced themselves.

Ad 1. Election of chairperson and secretary to take minutes

EHN was chosen as chairperson for the meeting and MM was asked to take notes for the minutes.

Ad 2. Approval of draft agenda

It was agreed to discuss the job announcements and the grant document prior than suggested in the draft agenda. The approved agenda is shown above.

Ad 3. Election of chairperson and deputy chairperson of DDRN

APS and MK had announced prior to the meeting that they would run for the post of chairperson of DDRN. MS also announced his candidature. Furthermore, OM had announced his candidature for the post of deputy chairperson by e-mail.

PB presented MK's background, as she was not present at the board meeting. The candidates for the post of chairperson presented their views on a series of issues raised by the board members, including the issue of enhanced focus on South-based activities and of making Danida commit to an enhanced cooperation with the network in promoting research activities. The candidates were also asked about their administrative experience.

- MS had 8 years' experience as project coordinator and would aim at an increased quality of research within the network's areas. MS stressed that the decision process in the network should neither be purely top-down nor bottom-up. DDRN

should try and build on the experiences from the previous networks. It should preferably not be up to the chairperson exclusively to make final decisions. Regarding the focus on South-based activities, MS commented that focus of the Network activities appeared to be subjected to an increased politically dictation. However, MS felt that a constructive critical approach would be required.

- APS had worked with project administration for 11 years and had the support of his institution to use time on DDRN activities. APS agreed that DDRN should build on the experiences from the previous networks and stressed that the board ensure that the Network members should feel ownership. The board should involve the resource base and formulate ideas. Regarding the focus on South-based activities, APS stressed the importance of facilitating North-South research partnerships.

Both candidates confirmed that they would be willing to continue on the board also after the new election for half of the board, which is to be held at the next general assembly within half a year from the first general assembly.

Votes were given with a ballot. PO added that he would also run for the post of deputy chairperson, as would APS and MS if they would not get elected as chairperson. MS was elected as chairperson and APS withdrew his candidature as deputy chairperson. For the post of vice chairperson there were an equal number of votes for PO and OM. It was thus decided to have a new election for the post of deputy chairperson at the coming board meeting in January 2007.

Ad 4. Discussion of Danida's grant document

The board decided to write a letter to accompany the signed grant document. In the letter, the board would clarify its understanding of the network's objectives as stated in the grant document. The letter is to include the following items:

1. Approval of revised budget
2. Activity plan for 2007
3. Dialogue regarding the interpretation of ad 1 and 2 on "Southern members in DDRN"

It was decided that the letter should preferably be sent by December 15th or 16th.

Ad 5. Job announcements

The board got a copy of the law on "Transfer of operation" (= Virksomhedsoverdragelse), which had an influence on the issue of Anne Marie Sørensen's (AMS) employment in DDRN as a continuation of NETARD. The board agreed that AMS should continue as coordinator of DDRN and that KVL should present AMS' terms of employment. A new job description for AMS and for the second coordinator should be written. It was decided that AMS would begin working for DDRN on February 1st 2007 and it agreed that the board (= chairperson(s)), should examine the possibility of using some of the unexpended funds of NETARD to finance AMS' employment.

PO, HMR, MS and a representative for the Institute of Geography were chosen as members of a recruiting committee, to proceed with the job descriptions and recruitment of staff for the secretariat.

Ad 6. Agreement with host institution

It was agreed that the University of Copenhagen should define the terms of employment and placement of the secretariat.

It was also agreed that the board should contact the director of the Institute of Geography, Bjarne Holm, in order to clarify the procedures for transfer of overhead to DDRN, e.g. 7% of the 20% (i.e. leaving 13% to the Institute), which would go to the University of Copenhagen. A monitoring procedure for the budget and expenses of DDRN should also be clearly defined by the financial secretary at the Institute of Geography.

Ad 7. Articles of association

The issue of individual versus institutional membership of the new network was raised. Some board members argued that institutions should be represented in the new network and that institutional membership would be an advantage for operating with a focus on South-based activities, as requested by Danida. It was also stated that it should be a combination of both kinds of membership, while other commented that the kind of activities carried out by the network are based on individual engagement, not institutional. The issue of continuity if individual members stop their engagement was also raised and different opinions were expressed regarding the possibility of individual members creating lobbying groups. It was also stated that the individual members would automatically have an institutional affiliation and would not need to have a formal institutional membership.

It was suggested that the deputy members should have the same rights as other board members, except from legally binding issues.

It was decided that the board would present a revised version of the articles of association, which included the comments from the first general assembly. Then the task to formulate and finalise the articles of association would be taken over by the new secretariat.

Ad 8. Rules of procedure for the board of DDRN

It was agreed that the rules of procedure might be revised and presented at the next general assembly. Because of the limited attendance at the current board meeting, it was agreed to postpone the discussion of this issue to the next meeting

Ad 9. Assistance during the initial phase of the network

It was agreed that the chairperson would contact ReNED and GEPPA in order to agree on the possibility of getting assistance from the current staff of the networks.

Ad 10. Next board meeting

It was decided that the board would meet again on January 4th 2007, at 14:00 hrs at the same location (if available).

Ad 11. Any other business

MS told that a plan for the future organisation of the development cooperation at the University of Copenhagen was expected to be launched before Christmas and he promised the board that he would send the document as soon as it becomes available. He also suggested that DDRN might have a chance to influence the plan.

(the minutes were taken by MM, MS and edited by Marianne Forti)