

Minutes of the First General Assembly of Danish Development Research Network

November 21st 2006, Institute of Geography, University of Copenhagen

Participants: See attached list of attendance

Agenda:

1. Election of chairperson and secretary to take minutes
2. Presentation of the application for Danish Development Research Network and the response from Danish Foreign Ministry
3. Approval of articles of association
4. Election of board members and substitutes
5. Any other business

Ad1. Election of chairperson and secretary to take minutes

Ole Therkildsen (OT), chairperson of GEPPA, opened the meeting and suggested Anette Reenberg (AR) as chairperson for the meeting and Marianne Forti (MF) as secretary. The participants agreed with the proposal.

AR, chairperson of ReNED, briefly introduced the process up to the assembly. Due to specific timelines for Danida's budgeting and acceptance of applications, the board for the new network had to be established within 2006. For this reason the process had been quite hasty and AR hoped for the participants' understanding.

AR presented the agenda for the general assembly, which was accepted without any changes.

Ad 2. Presentation of the application for Danish Development Research Network and the response from Danish Foreign Ministry

OT gave a brief presentation of the background for the meeting. The application is available in English on the three current networks' homepages together with the response to the application in Danish from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. OT assumed that all participants had read the documents and commented mainly on the process. The three networks had started preparing for a new joint network in May 2006 and worked on the application throughout the summer. This process included several meetings among the chairpersons, the coordinators and a few meetings with Danida staff. An interim board including three persons from each network was established and the application was sent to Danida on September 15th 2006. In their response, Danida had put a number of conditions for the grant, which would require minor changes in the objectives and activities of the network. A further condition was that a formally elected board must sign the grant document. This was the reason for holding the general assembly already in November.

Ad3. Approval of articles of association

AR explained that the draft articles of association had been developed as a part of the application to Danida. The articles were mentioned in the response from Danida and thus

in part reformulated by members of the interim board with the assistance of the coordinators. AR suggested the articles should be looked upon and commented on in this perspective. She proposed that participants could forward comments to be noted in the minutes. The newly elected board could then take these into account when preparing a revised version of the articles to be presented at next general assembly.

The comments and issues raised by the participants are summarised below according to the topic discussed. AR stressed that all comments would be presented to the board for further consideration. The response to the comments by AR and other members of the interim board follows each comment.

Following comments were presented:

- **Institutional vs. individual membership:**

Paragraph 6.2 does not indicate the institutional spreading, while the institutional links are mentioned as criteria for proposing board members. There is a need for clarification on this discrepancy. In GEPPA the personal engagement has been an important drive and some participants expressed worry that shifting from a member to an institution-based network would compromise this.

→ Acknowledgment of the issue of individual membership vs. institutional membership, which requires further reflection. This issue had also been discussed in the application process and will have to be taken into further consideration by the new board.

- **Decision taking processes:**

Practically no numbers are mentioned with respect to decision taking processes. Absolute numbers should be indicated so that decisions not only depend on the participants attending the meetings.

A mismatch was noted, as paragraph 9 indicates that proposals for changes in the articles of association should be received at the secretariat no later than two months prior to the general assembly, while notice of the assembly is given four weeks prior to the meeting.

→ The new board must take both issues into account when defining the rules of procedure.

- **Composition of the board:**

Some participants found the number of 9 to 12 members difficult to manage in practice and involving large expenses. Another participant suggested reducing the number to 6 persons, as the main engagement in the network would be in the thematic working groups. On the other side, some found that the large number would guarantee a representation of the different interests in the network.

A participant also thought it could be difficult to guarantee that half of the board should be active researchers. In relation to this, a concern about the wording 'active researcher' was expressed, as it might exclude relevant persons from research institutions who are not active researchers. Others commented that it was very important to include active researchers, while half of the seats in the board could be assigned to candidates with another background. It was further suggested to change the wording to 'active *development* researchers'.

→ ReNED had functioned well with a large number of board members and the number in the new network should not be reduced, at least not in the initial phase. It should be for the new board to find effective ways to manage a large board composition without excessive costs.

- **Relation between board and secretariat:**

It was questioned whether the relation between the secretariat and the board is specifically described in the articles. A question was also raised about who is employing the secretariat.

→ **Rules of procedure** must be further developed to make sure that the relationship between the board and secretariat is clearly specified. The rules of procedure from the current networks can serve as inspiration in order to build on what has been functioning well in the three networks.

The secretariat will be recruited by the board and officially employed by the Institute of Geography, University of Copenhagen, and thus be part of the university institutional staff. Details regarding the employment process of the secretariat could also be included in the rules of procedure.

- **Danida's role:**

In paragraph 6.3 the role of Danida is not clearly explained. Can Danida staff members both be elected as members of the board and nominated by Danida as observers? Other participants added that in case Danida staff members get elected in the board it would be on basis of personal interest as Danida as a general rule of procedure does not get involved in the decision taking process of funded organisations.

A present Danida staff member also confirmed that the board is to manage the network and the funds, while Danida is clearly interested in close links to the board and the working groups from a professional point of view.

→ Mutual interest in close contacts and collaboration between Danida and the network was confirmed.

The participants agreed that the board would have to work on the articles based on the above mentioned comments and discussions and thus approved the presented draft articles.

Ad 4. Election of board members and substitutes

Torben Birch-Thomsen (TBT), the vice-chair of NETARD, presented the process of identification of the proposed board composition. Due to the rush to sign the grant letter from Danida, the involved members of the interim board considered that a 'proper' election process would be quite undemocratic, as many interested members due to the short notice would not be able to attend the meeting. Therefore the three members of the interim board discussed a composition for the board, which would include members from all three networks, while planning to have another general assembly within half a year. A few criteria were formulated to guide the starting process of the new network. These included primarily a balanced representation of the current networks and a broad representation of the different technical disciplines within the network. Institutional spreading and gender balance were also taken into consideration. The candidates were consulted and agreed to join the board until a new election at an extraordinary general assembly where they could run again together with other candidates.

After the presentation the floor was open to questions and remarks, which touched upon the following issues:

- **Eligibility of participants:**

The eligibility of other present candidates than those mentioned in the list presented by the interim board was questioned.

→ It was agreed that this was in principle a possibility.

- **Individual vs. institutional membership:** (as above)

Some participants expressed a concern that the principle of representing many institutions might exclude qualified persons from already represented institutions, who might wish to put an effort in the work of the network.

→ It was stressed again that there was no intention of excluding anybody and that by planning a general assembly within half a year the intention was to give interested members who were not present a possibility to run for the board. It was also discussed that much of the work of the network would take place within the working groups, which are open for all interested members. These groups would also have a say on what kind of activities the network is to prioritise.

- **Fresh election within half a year:**

The procedure for committing the present board candidates to call for fresh election within half a year was discussed. It was noted that according to the articles of association board members were only to be elected at regular general assemblies, not at extraordinary assemblies. Furthermore, election was only for half of the board each year.

Some participants commented that half a year was not enough time to secure that the network would be up and running. For this reason they suggested that the board elected at the meeting should have a longer timeframe.

→ It was agreed that next general assembly would be called as *ordinary* general assembly. Furthermore, it was agreed that half of the board would continue for another year, while seats for the other half would be for election at the next general assembly. In this way some continuity would be granted both within the members of the new board as well as the institutional memory from the existing networks. At next election candidates would run as individuals or in groups, as they prefer. The board members will have to decide who continues and who is up for election again in half a year, competing with other candidates (for half of the posts in the board). The board will also have to specify the role of deputy members in the rules of procedure.

All present members accepted the proposal for member composition presented by the interim board and the new board was thus elected (see attached list of board members).

Ad 5. Any other business

Present members of the newly elected board agreed to meet right after the general assembly.

List of participants

	Name	Institution/Organisation	Original Network
1	*Dean Jacobsen	KU	ReNED/NETARD
2	*Arne Wangel	DTU, 92-gruppen	ReNED
3	Anette Reenberg	KU	ReNED
4	Henning Schroll	RUC	ReNED
5	Jytte Agergaard	KU /Geografi	ReNED
6	Sara Di Maria	KVL	ReNED
7	Mads Kjeld Dissing	KVL	ReNED
8	Maria Josefina Figueroa	Roskilde University	ReNED
9	Michael Koefoed	University of KwaZulu Natal	ReNED
10	Sten Struwe	KU	ReNED
11	Shuting Yang	DMI	ReNED
12	Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde	RUC student	ReNED/GEPPA
13	*Mette Kjær	AU	GEPPA
14	*Peter Brorson	Private sector	GEPPA
15	*Olav Jull Sørensen	AAU	GEPPA
16	Helene Maria Kyed	DIIS/RUC	GEPPA
17	Jens Berthelsen	Global Advice Network	GEPPA
18	John Bart Agami	Lado Political Council	GEPPA
19	Marianne N. Larsen	GI/KU	GEPPA
20	Ole Therkildsen	DIIS	GEPPA
21	Stefano Ponte	DIIS	GEPPA
22	*Peter Oksen	RUC	NETARD
23	*Alex Percy-Smith	DJF/Århus University	NETARD
24	Carsten Smith Olsen	KVL	NETARD
25	Erik Steen Kristensen	DARCOF	NETARD
26	Esbern Friis-Hansen	DIIS	NETARD
27	Hanne H. Hansen	KVL	NETARD
28	Jan Torp	KVL	NETARD
29	Lars Peter Kvist	AU	NETARD
30	Mette Lund Sørensen	DanChurchAid	NETARD
31	Peter Vangsbo Madsen	National Environmental Research Institute	NETARD/ReNED
32	Torben Birch-Thomsen	KU	NETARD
33	* Claus Jørgensen	FRI (Niras)	ReNED
34	Ole Winckler Andersen	BFT, Danida	
35	Christian Kühne	AU student	
36	Mille Møllegaard	ReNED secretariat	ReNED
37	Bjarke Hesbjerg	GEPPA secretariat	GEPPA
38	Anne Sørensen	NETARD secretariat	NETARD
39	Marianne Forti	NETARD secretariat	NETARD

* Indicates a participant running for the board of DDRN

Elected board

Name	Institution	Existing networks
Mette Kjær	University of Århus	GEPPA
Peter Brorson	Private sector	GEPPA
Søren Jeppesen	Copenhagen Business School (CBS)	GEPPA
Alex Percy-Smith	University of Århus	Netard
Peter Oksen	University of Roskilde	Netard
Marten Sørensen	KVL/new University of Copenhagen	Netard
Ole Mertz	University of Copenhagen	Rened
Helle Munk Ravnborg	Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS)	Rened
Eskild Holm Nielsen	University of Ålborg	Rened
Arne Wangel	NGO	
Claus Jørgensen	Private sector	
Deputies:		
Olav Jull Sørensen	University of Ålborg	GEPPA
Ahmed Jahoor	KVL/ new University of Copenhagen	Netard
Dean Jacobsen	University of Copenhagen	Rened