

# Danish Development Research Network

## Minutes of DDRN Board Meeting

March 8, 2010 – Risøe, DTU.

Participants: Arne Wangel (AW), Carl Erik Schou Larsen (CESL), Claus Jørgensen (CJ), Estelle Fanjaud (EF), John Christensen (JC), Niels Fold (NF), Olav Jull Sørensen (OJS) and Thomas Nielsen (TN).

Secretariat staff: Anne Marie Sørensen (AMS), Bo Karlsen (BK), Lone Frederiksen (LF), Marianne Forti (MF) and Kris Borring Prasada Rao (KPR).

Apologies from: Mogens Buch-Hansen (MBH).

LF and BK were rapporteurs.

### Draft agenda:

1. Approval of the board meeting agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of last meeting (December 4, 2009)
3. Briefing on progress of activities by the secretariat (information and discussion), including
  - a. Meeting with DANIDA
  - b. Draft ToR for DDRN visits to Danish universities and research institutions
  - c. Lessons learnt and ideas for research communication events
4. Status and perspectives with regard to DANIDA's new draft strategy
5. Status and perspectives with regard to the DU platforms, and implications for the DDRN work plan. Briefing from the task force – and discussion
6. Planning of the General Assembly on May 26, 2010 and of the thematic meeting on "Networks and their roles in relation to Research & Development"
7. Overviews – prioritization of themes and process for selection of consultants
8. A.O.B

### Ad. 1. Approval of the board meeting agenda

It was agreed that the member driven activities were to be discussed under item 7.

### Ad. 2. Approval of the minutes of last meeting (Dec. 4, 2009)

It was noted that action 6 and action 8 were both done, even though they were still not rated as such in the list of actions.

Besides, it was mentioned that the minutes of the board meetings are of a very high quality.

### Ad. 3. Briefing on progress of activities by the secretariat

- A report from a consultant did not live up to the expected standards; and the consultant had violated the deadlines repeatedly. It was discussed that poor performance should have implications and various options were discussed, including reduction of honorarium and others.

*Based on this discussion it was agreed that the secretariat would take steps to hold a meeting with the consultants and decide on the best way of finalising this assignment.<sup>1</sup>*

**Action 1:** *KPR will make a summary of the process to be used in case of a legal dispute, and AMS will write to the consultant about the consequences of not fulfilling the contractual obligations*

- The report and guidelines on ENRECA projects have been circulated. Most board members have not commented yet, but the feed back from DANIDA has been positive.

<sup>1</sup> Text in *italics* is only for internal use and will not be included in the official minutes to be posted on the website.

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- The study tour for the delegation from MOST from Vietnam was discussed. Detailed planning should attend confirmation from the delegation that the flight tickets are bought.

**Action 2:** The draft programme for the MOST delegation will be circulated in the board.

- AS informed about a meeting with Lars Christian Oxe from UFT about DDRN's role in European initiatives within the area of agriculture and development. Denmark is still participating in the ERA-ARD project's phase II; and even though Denmark does not finance calls, Denmark can get financial support from EU for ERA-ARD related activities (salaries, travel and other costs). It was agreed that AS should be proactive in finding out more about the content and terms of the ERA-ARD project from the European Coordinator. It was discussed whether DDRN, which is the representative for Danida in ERA-ARD for Phase II can invoice such salary as an income in the budget.

**Action 3:** AS finds out more about the current status of the project and LF finds out if DDRN can invoice salary and other expenses from the project as DDRN income.

- The Sahel workshop to be held in Niger was cancelled due to the coup d'état. The planning will be resumed and the content of the meeting reviewed later. DDRN will be kept informed about possible inclusion of research-related topics around which we could cooperate. At a previously held meeting with DDRN Danida UFT mentioned that a working group within the field of agriculture would be welcomed as a sparring partner. The ministry already profits from collaboration with the Climate Task Force and brought up the idea of a similar partner within agriculture and development. It was explained that the sparring with DANIDA in relation to the CC group is a spin off and not a goal in itself. The board supported the idea of a working group or task force within agriculture and development and it was agreed that DDRN should look into the possibility of organising a meeting on agricultural research and of identifying three dedicated persons to co-ordinate a possible working group. In case there is no interest among DDRN members for this, DDRN can suggest that Danida uses the GVC working group.

It was suggested to benefit from the existing debate about the position of agriculture in the new Danida strategy for development assistance.

*This is also an opportunity, since the newly established DU platform within agriculture is not very active. Hence, a working group within the auspices of DDRN would contribute to making DDRN visible as an active player within this field.*

**Action 4:** AMS makes a small note about the information from DANIDA; and afterwards the secretariat will assess the interest among members with expertise and interest in agricultural research to participate in a meeting on forming a working group on agricultural research, presenting the opportunities of a working group to possible key persons.

**Action 5:** The entire board will look for possible interested candidates to such a working group in their respective networks.

- It was informed that later this year Uni-BRAIN will publish a call in view of spurring innovation and capacity building within the agricultural sector.

## Ad. 3.a. Meeting with DANIDA

Cf. item 5 below.

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## Ad. 3.b. Draft ToR for DDRN visits to Danish universities and research institutions

MF mentioned she intends to make a small survey among some of the Danish researchers in the network within research communication in order to assess how much they are engaged in research communication and whom they use as resource persons in their work.

## Ad. 3.c. Lessons learnt and ideas for research communication events

*It was discussed whether the secretariat should publish the paper on lessons learnt from the research communication seminars or whether it should be kept as an internal document only to be circulated among the participants. It could be used as a particular DDRN resource, which might be helpful in accentuating DDRN as an important player in the future restructurings of the development research area.*

**Action 6:** MF finds out whether similar guidelines are already available from other sources and whether it would be more strategic for DDRN to keep the lessons learnt as an internal document to promote the quality of own activities.

It might be relevant to publish it in the form of a small manual. In view of the current uncertain situation of DDRN, it was decided to prioritise the revision of the current communications strategy in stead of developing a recruitment strategy. When revising the communications strategy, relevant formats to promote and disseminate knowledge on research communication gathered by DDRN will be considered.

## **Ad. 4. Status and perspectives with regard to Danida's new draft strategy**

It was discussed how DDRN should contribute to the debate and dissemination of the knowledge about the strategy. It was suggested that DDRN could ask 5-10 resource people to make contributions to the debate in the media. In that way the debate could be coordinated. However, the general opinion of the board was that it was not necessary to spur the debate, since it would start no matter what.

There was a consensus to focus the debate on very specific topics. It was suggested to focus on the shift in the new draft strategy from eradication of poverty as the main goal to freedom and economic growth. Another suggestion was to focus on the MGDs as Danida is likely to give a high priority to this since Denmark and Senegal will chair a UN meeting on the goals next year. The majority of members, however, found that the focus of a DDRN meeting on the new strategy should be the role of higher education and the universities in the new strategy, and it was decided to make this the topic for the seminar at the GA 2010. AS suggested that OJS and/or TN provide a first input, preferably before the Easter holidays.

**Action 7:** The secretariat together with one or several board members make a concept note for a seminar on the role of HE, research and the universities in connection with the GA in May 2010.

## **Ad. 5. Status and perspectives with regard to the DU platforms, and implications for the DDRN work plan.**

*The latest development in the process of establishing the DU platforms is that a new working group has been formed, consisting of two members from each of the eight Danish universities. The Rectorate has appointed Lauritz Holm Nielsen (AU) and Per Holten-Andersen (KU-LIFE) as Chair and vice-chair, respectively. Universities Denmark has hired a coordinator in order to speed up the process. Universities Denmark hopes to be able to materialize the idea to such an extent that the initiative 'Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries' can be a part of the new Danish Aid Policy.*

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*It was the general opinion that the situation and future of DDRN depend on so many uncertainties and external factors that it is currently extremely difficult to navigate within the field of higher education, research and development in Denmark. And as one board member mentioned, DDRN is just a small player in this field.*

It was agreed to make yet another contact to DU and request for a meeting to inform about what DDRN has to offer to the research and development environment and discuss what the future role of DDRN in a restructured support to research and development could be.

*Since the BAGGRUNDSGRUPPE is just formed, the key persons are new, and their opinions may still be possible to influence. Besides, DDRN has to make its special competences more visible to outsiders, including access to and information about opportunities at the European level, e.g. through involvement in ERA-ARD; and capacities and competences on research communication, including dissemination.*

**Action 8:** CJ invites Lauritz Holm Nielsen and Per Holten for a meeting with DDRN.

## **Ad. 6. Planning of the GA on May 26, 2010 and of the thematic meeting on "Networks and their roles in relation to Research and Development".**

There was no time to discuss the GA, but it was decided that the Thematic meeting on "Networks and their roles in relation to Research & Development" is to be substituted with the seminar about the new DANIDA Strategy, previously mentioned in item 4. Comments to proposals for amendments of articles are to be discussed by email.

**Action 9:** LF sends out a list of board members on election this year.

We should consider encouraging new members to stand for election, since there are no substitutes for the board members presently. TN, who is up for election this year, announced that he will stand for re-election.

## **Ad. 7. Overviews – prioritisation of themes and process for selection of consultants.**

This item is to be discussed by email.

**Action 10:** KPR facilitates an e-mail discussion based on the note attached to the agenda as document 7.2.

## **Ad. 8. A.O.B.**

The job announcement for the two student positions that will become available from June 1 and July 1 was distributed. The board members were asked to inform any relevant students that they know.

### **List of actions from 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting 2010**

Reference	Action	By whom	Status
BM1/10 act 1	<i>KPR will make a summary of the process to be used in case of a legal dispute on the gender overview.</i>	KPR	Done
BM1/10 act 2	The programme for the MOST delegation will be circulated in the board.	MF	Done
BM1/10 act 3	LF finds out if DDRN is allowed to invoice salary and other costs related to ERA-ARD as an income.	LF	Done

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BM1/10 act 4	AMS makes a small note about the information from DANIDA and follows up on the idea of arranging a meeting on establishing a task force or a working group on agricultural research.	AMS	Done
BM1/10 act 5	All board members will look for possible interested prospects candidates for a work group on agriculture in their respective networks and feed back such information to the secretariat (if any).	All	On-going
BM1/10 act 6	<i>MF finds out whether similar guidelines are already available from other sources and whether it would be more strategic for DDRN to keep the lessons learnt as an internal document to promote the quality of own activities.</i>	MF	On-going
BM1/10 act 7	One or several of the board members make a concept note for the seminar in connection with the GA. AS suggested that OJS and/or TN provide a first input, preferably before the Easter holidays.	Board and AMS	Done
BM1/10 act 8	CJ invites Lauritz Holm Nielsen and Per Holten for a meeting with DDRN	CJ	Done
BM1/10 act 9	LF sends out a list of board members on election this year.	LF	Done
BM1/10 act 10	KPR facilitates an e-mail discussion based on the note attached to the agenda as document 7.2	KPR	Pending