

Danish Development Research Network

DDRN Brainstorming Meeting

May 12, 2011 – 15:00-17:00

Room 6.1.611 (Area 6, 1st floor)
Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen
Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 Copenhagen K

Agenda:

1. Background and introduction to the meeting by Anne Sørensen.
2. Brief presentation of the participants and their motivation for attending the meeting.
3. Discussion of vision, objectives and activities of DDRN "to be continued". Which activities do we want to continue/develop? Sources of inspiration and learning from other networks and associations?
4. What does it take (human and other resources)? Others we need to involve? And which kind of association are we aiming at (Board, membership fee, legal issues)?
5. Draft plan for way forward (setting up of working groups, who does what etc.)
6. A.O.B. – including input to DDRN General Assembly + seminar of 15 June 2011 and date for possible next meeting.

1)

Anne Sørensen opened the meeting by setting the scene: Danida has decided not to extend the funding of DDRN for another grant period; and therefore DDRN can no longer continue in its present form. However, quite a few members have expressed regret at the loss of this useful and unique news service and multi-stakeholder communication channel. No other options for funding have been found so far, but a scenario that remains interesting to the secretariat and board, and in line with proposals from members, is transforming the network into an association driven by members engaged on a voluntary basis. The meeting was called in order to explore the perspectives and feasibility of this idea and of other possible scenarios.

2)

The participants briefly introduced themselves and their motivation for attending the meeting. Reasons mentioned were: DDRN's interdisciplinary aspect; DDRN as a communication channel between the North and the South; the possibility to create new projects; the network between members; the information service; the multiple stakeholders in DDRN (e.g. NGOs, consultants, engineers, researchers, students); and DDRN as a essential information service in the South.

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3) and 4)

For the discussion of visions and of possibilities the participants split into two groups in order to brainstorm on issues like: a) vision, objectives and activities of DDRN to be continued; b) inspiration and learning from other networks and associations that are based on voluntary contributions; c) the human resources needed to ensure the envisioned activities; and d) the kind of association (e.g. membership fee and board). Ideas should be grouped under the following headings, according to their focus, and posted on the wall:

1. Multistakeholder collaboration
2. North-South collaboration
3. Information services
4. Other

Most suggestions were posted under the headings 'Information services' and 'Multistakeholder collaboration', which may reflect the fact that members living in the South were not able to participate.

Brainstorming suggestions:

- Emphasis should be on small working groups that are member driven and therefore cheap. Incentives could include the possibility of doing joint applications for funding, capacity development seminars on a small scale (for active members), and the ability to post/edit DDRN "blogs".
- Thematic linked-in groups? However, aversion to relying too much on social media was expressed.
- Information services were repeatedly mentioned. Splitting up web-editing for each subject/theme could help create labour division. It would require a coordination effort in the end.
- It might be considered a possibility to hire a student assistant for e.g. 1 day a week in order to maintain the news service.
- It was mentioned that there were perhaps too many news categories. Fewer and broader categories could be considered.
- The forum could be used to strengthen connections and collaborations (with more emphasis on interaction).
- Having joint annual meetings with FAU could help keep costs down.
- DDRN could include a forum for sharing research ideas/ building up research knowledge – to offer services similar to research gate (<http://www.researchgate.net>)?
- Membership fees? U-landsnyt's model could be replicated with a combination of members who pay an annual fee in order to support the organization, whereas news services are free. Furthermore, 2/3 of their income come from posting jobs/tasks on the website. Having institutional members who pay e.g. 5000 DKK a year (Danish Water Forum's model) was also mentioned. A 3rd model from which to seek inspiration is based on the "International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems". This society has a physical address at a university, a secretary who is partly paid for by the society, and a member fee of \$24 a year (\$300 for institutional members). In addition, the society is paid to undertake assignments on a case-by-case basis.

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- The new DDRN should start out small, focus on survival.
- It is a possibility to look into 'Africa Network Norway' and how it managed to continue despite losing its Norad funding. Is there a possible model to follow?
- In continuation, creating a Nordic Development Research Network (NDRN) is a possibility. Nordic researchers are continuously looking to enhance collaboration.
- The option of EADI - DDRN collaboration is being explored.

5) and 6)

It was agreed to establish 3 working groups, which are in charge of exploring the way forward within their area, as well as communicating their ideas to the wider DDRN network in order to ensure support and recruit new working members.

Groups established were (the person underlined is responsible of taking the group initiative further):

- **Communication:** Marianne Forti, Afton Halloran, and Uffe Wilken
- **Fundraising:** Arne Wangel
- **Strategic planning and organization:** Helene Ystanes Føyn, Anne Sørensen, Lone Frederiksen

Action 1: Each group should draft a proposal for the way forward. The proposals are to be presented at the DDRN General Assembly on June 15, 2011.

Action 2: DDRN members in general, and in particular those who have expressed special interest in the meeting, but could not attend or left early, should be informed of activities undertaken by the groups.