

Minutes from 3rd DDRN General Assembly

Wednesday May 25, 2009, 10:30 – 12:15

Søauditorium 4, Building 1252, Universitetsparken, Aarhus University

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 2009 by Anne Sørensen, chief coordinator of DDRN
5. Proposals from members to be discussed:
 - a. Amendment of Articles of Association
6. Election of board members and substitutes
7. Any other business
 - a. Brief on ERA-ARD

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.

Carsten Nico Hjortø 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 without changes.

Ad 3. Report by the board, by Ole Mertz

Ole Mertz started by thanking the secretariat for being hard-working and efficient. This was followed by a brief report on the DDRN activities and expenditures in 2008 and the first months of 2009. New staff has been engaged recently: Kris Prasada Rao as coordinator and two student assistants – Bo Karlsen and Iona Eberle. DDRN has organized three major thematic conferences in Denmark and one in Africa, supported about 30 member led activities financially, facilitated North-South knowledge platforms like SACCNET (climate change) and SARUEM (environment), and taken active part in EU platforms/networks on agricultural research for development. Three thematic overviews have been published and a number of research communication seminars carried out. A detailed communications strategy and action plan has been finalized. It focuses on three main objectives of communication: making existing knowledge visible, facilitating contacts in view of creating new knowledge, and dissemination of information of relevance to generation of new knowledge. There has been an increase in applications for support to member led-activities; and two new working groups have been established (Industry, Environment, Energy and Infrastructure; Urban Environmental Management). Among challenges ahead OM mentioned the task of filtering and disseminating knowledge, which is quite time-consuming and demanding. Likewise, the diversity of members (about 1/3 from the South) is a strength, but also demanding since different categories have different

Danish Development Research Network

expectations and members often tend to look most upon the secretariat as service provider and contact other members less. Increased member ownership should be encouraged. A third challenge is integration of South members, which may demand special modalities. Finally, OM explained that the balance of DDRN shows that about ¼ of the budget may not have been used when the grant period ends by June 30, 2009.

Ad 4. Presentation of the work plan for 2nd half of 2009 by Anne Sørensen

AS gave a short introduction to the background: During 2008-09 the board and the secretariat has been working at a revised strategy, including discussions with Danida on priority areas and regions. In November 2008 an application for a second phase of the network was sent to Danida. This second phase has now been unofficially approved for a period of two years (July 2009 – June 2011). The new grant period will not offer any changes in staff (3½ plus students) or in location (at IGG). It seems that the framework will be more flexible than before since there was no requirement of an LFA or a detailed work plan in the application, but only of focus areas and strategies. DDRN intend to make good use of our core competences, namely a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder member base, an effective communication system, a high degree of flexibility, and continuous knowledge sharing and learning. Besides, the secretariat has developed a broad network of contacts, in the North as well as in the South. As in the first half of 2009, the focal areas will still be climate change, food security, and research communication; and geographically the main focus will be on Africa. However, this does not exclude that DDRN is active in other regions or around other thematic areas, according to the interests of our members and shifting national priorities. DDRN supports a number of member driven activities and will continue to do so. The network will also continue its efforts to involve the younger segment of the Danish resource base. Another important field of activities is networking, where DDRN will utilize the contacts already created as platforms of increased information sharing and collaboration. The highly appreciated communication system developed by the secretariat will be further elaborated to suit members' demands, including a platform of interaction between members and a functional member database. The highest priority areas according to the communications needs assessment are: Information; Communication N-S/S/N; and Influence policy. When we have received the official grant letter, a new work plan will be elaborated.

Ad 5. a. Proposal from the secretariat of revision of Articles of Association

The secretariat suggested two amendments to the articles of association. One concerned paragraph 4, in which the sentence: "Membership is terminated by notifying a member of the board or the head of the secretariat" was proposed changed to "Membership is terminated by notifying a member of the secretariat". The reason was that following the original provision would be more circumstantial than necessary. A member present at the GA remarked that this wording presupposed that members wanting to terminate their membership should address a particular member of the secretariat. In stead it was suggested to change the clause into "Membership is terminated by notifying the secretariat". This wording was adopted by the assembly.

In §6 the deadline for sending in postal votes was changed from: "... members who are not able to attend the GA can send in a postal vote no later than one week prior to the GA." to "...members who are not able to attend the GA can send in a postal vote, which

Danish Development Research Network

must be received at the secretariat no later than five days prior to the GA. This amendment was intended to secure that the secretariat receive postal votes before the GA also in cases where the GA follows right after Danish holidays. This amendment was also adopted.

Ad 5. b. Other proposals to be discussed

The secretariat had not received any other proposals.

Ad 6. Election of board members and substitutes

Four members of the board were to be elected. The mandates of the following board members stood for election: Bente Topsøe-Jensen (COWI), Claus Jørgensen (NIRAS), Ole Mertz (IGG, KU), and Peter Oksen (RUC). When asked, only Claus Jørgensen wanted to stand for re-election.

In due time before the general assembly 5 members had sent in their presentations and were listed on the ballot paper: Claus Jørgensen (NIRAS), Estelle Fanjaud (COWI), John Christensen (Risoe), Mogens Buch-Hansen (RUC), and Niels Fold (IGG, KU). All candidates were asked to give a short oral presentation of their professional background and their motivation for running for election. Including postal votes (13) and votes by proxy (10), there were a total of 41 votes.

The four members elected to the board were: Claus Jørgensen (NIRAS), Estelle Fanjaud (COWI), Mogens Buch-Hansen (RUC), and Niels Fold (IGG, KU). John Christensen (Risoe) will be substitute member.

Ad 7. Any other business

Danida has accepted to continue as a member of ERA-ARD, but will not allocate any money to the scheme. DDRN has been asked to represent Denmark and disseminate information on the project. A brief on ERA-ARD will be attached to the minutes of this general assembly.

The deputy chairman of the board, Olav Jull Sørensen, thanked Ole Mertz, for a very engaged and competent chairmanship during the past two years. OM had been able to combine a formal and informal approach to obtain an efficient functioning of the DDRN board.