

Minutes of DDRN's 8th Board Meeting

December 12, 2007 – Institute of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen

Participants: Arne Wangel (AW), Henrik Egelyng (HE), Mette Kjær (MK), Olav Jull Sørensen (OJS), Ole Mertz (OM), Peter Oksen (PO), Observer: Merete Villum Pedersen (MVP).

Secretariat staff: Anne Marie Sørensen (AMS), Lluís Armangué (LA), Marianne Forti (MF), Lone Frederiksen (LF) – rapporteur.

Apologies: Alex Percy-Smith (APS), Bente Topsøe-Jensen (BTJ), Claus Jørgensen (CJ), Peter Lund-Thomsen (PLT), Stefano Ponte (SP).

Agenda:

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
3. Briefing on progress of activities by the secretariat
 - Report from UEM workshop and meetings in south Africa
 - Travel report and memo from Danida seminar on governance and DDRN-RUFORUM workshop on knowledge, research and development related to governance in Uganda, October 2007
4. Work plan for 2008 (discussion and decision)
 - Strategies for South activities - New considerations on criteria in 2008? Implications of FFU prioritisation of themes and countries/funding opportunities? (discussion based on experiences of 2007)
 - Member driven activities and input to joint activities. Key challenges and opportunities (discussion based on experiences of 2007)
5. Applications for member activities
 - Presentation of proposals (decision)
 - Application for the extension of the funding period of Trade Mondays (decision)
 - Establishment of Climate Task Force across Danish research and knowledge networks (decision)
6. DDRN Conference related activities 2007-2008
 - Conference themes in 2008 (discussion and decision)
7. Budget for 2008
8. Dialogue and cooperation with Danish NGOs (discussion)
9. A.O.B (including decision of dates for General Assembly 2008 and next board meetings)

Ad 1. Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted with the modification that item 7 (Budget for 2008) was treated under item 4 (Workplan for 2008).

It was suggested and agreed upon that one annual board meeting is extended to the duration of half a day.

Decision 1: One annual board meeting with duration of half a day.

Ad 2. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

A minor change of expression was proposed in the beginning of item 5a and in Decision 1. With these reservations, the minutes were adopted.

Ad 3. Briefing on progress of activities by the secretariat

A meeting with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation on the VTU/Danida/WB initiative on "Applying Technology and Innovation in Africa" is planned on December 18, 2007.

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One objective is to clarify the possible role of DDRN; and AMS asks for participation from the board. OJS and AW were willing to participate.

The board expressed praise to the secretariat for the brief and the activities carried out.

Ad 4. Work plan for 2008

Output 1.1

i AMS explained that the overviews and the competence profiles are still under development in order to assure that they will be useful in practice, and at the same time give an overview of available research. Monitoring the usefulness of already elaborated overviews has shown that some researchers have been contacted on the background of the competence profiles. The question as to whether the overviews should focus on Danish researchers was discussed. The conclusion was that it is important to distinguish whether the focus is on a country or on a thematic issue. In the first case it is evident to include relevant research from other countries, including local institutions and their partners. In the latter case it is necessary to limit the geographical area, although important research from other countries and regions may be included. It was underlined that monitoring the effects and usefulness is important.

With regard to South members, it is important that they gain something from their membership. We must consider what we can offer South members that want to participate actively. It was suggested that the objectives for South collaboration must be the same as those for DDRN in general. Many calls for funding are not open for researchers from South, e.g. Danida's February 2008 call for research funding (which is not even published in English). It was suggested that DDRN could publish a call for proposals for partnerships/cooperation with South members.

A discussion on whether DDRN should focus on very few countries (e.g. Tanzania and Vietnam, which are selected as research partners in 2008 by Danida) or work broadly in all development regions (e.g. also West Africa, where Denmark has 4 programme countries) was concluded with the recommendation that we grab the chance of focusing on the two selected countries, in order to gain experiences and use the momentum. But at the same time we should be open for other opportunities and try to be actively involved in all regions.

Decision 1: DDRN focuses on Tanzania and Vietnam, the countries selected by Danida for Danish funding of their research, but at the same time the network should target at being involved in all regions.

// According to our own (AMS) experiences and recommendations from DCCD, briefing of Danida advisers is most efficient when done abroad. Reference was made to a 'help desk' of researchers in Sweden, where SIDA has outsourced tasks to Gothenburg University (esp. environmental economics). MVP did not see this as a relevant option for Danida at the moment. It was concluded that the secretariat consider and elaborate the idea of offering similar services.

Action 1: The secretariat investigates possibilities of establishing a 'Help desk', facilitating access of development practitioners to research based knowledge.

Output 1.2

V LA mentioned that members rarely give much response to calls for inputs; and he asked for opinions as to the role of the secretariat in this respect.

It was underlined that active members and working groups are essential for DDRN, but that one should not expect reactions from groups that are not focusing on the specific theme in question. MK replied that often it is not possible to trace your comments in the final strategy to which you have given inputs, and since it is work done for free, this is not encouraging. She

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suggested that the secretariat prepares a short summary of the strategy to be commented on when sending out calls for comments.

Decision 2: The secretariat prepares a short summary of proposals for strategies when sending out calls for comments.

Output 2.2

Viii Only one of the working groups preparing the joint Danida-DDRN conference on Rural Economic Development is active. OM was of the opinion that in cases where DDRN is co-arranger of a conference, the secretariat must be the prime mover; and the groups can offer inputs.

X In response to a question on the number of visitors to the website, MAF informed that since mid October there had been more than 4,000 visits. We now have a cluster map, which shows where in the world people visit our website. It is obvious that travels to the South engender many local visits to our website; and people in particular visit the site after receiving newsletters. Preparing newsletters takes much time for MAF, in particular sorting news and links. It was suggested not to write so much text in the newsletter, but only the heading and 1-2 lines for each item.

Output 3.1

Xi Collaboration with the two other Danish development research networks - Water (DWF) and Health (SUNNET) - is weak. DDRN has taken contact in order to cooperate on methods and strategies for elaboration of thematic briefs, but has had no response. With regard to the Inspirations seminars for master students, Health has their own system, but perhaps Water is interested in participating next year. OM has started collaboration on climate (see below under item 5c) with Torkil Jønch Clausen from DWF, the most evident collaboration partner of the two. MVP pointed to the fact that DWF has existed for many years and is not so depending on Danida funding as DDRN. She also asked whether the budget prepares for a sustainable phasing out or other funding for DDRN after the present grant has expired. The board agreed that it is an essential debate to take in 2008, including a clarification of our core performance.

Action 2: The secretariat and the board discuss core performance of DDRN and strategies for future funding in 2008.

Output 3.2

Xiii MK found it difficult for students to find local collaboration partners, since the embassies do not have resources for this task. However, this is not a task for embassies, but they may facilitate contacts. As to PhD students, DDRN cannot support courses for Danish students, but OM suggested that we investigate possibilities of supporting South PhD students' stays in Denmark.

Action 3: The secretariat investigates whether DDRN can support PhD students from South who want to study in Denmark.

The board must discuss proposals for altered regulations with regard to election procedures for the board before the next general assembly. AMS pointed to the fact that we often encounter difficulties related to the fact that DDRN is not a network of institutional members. The board agreed that abroad DDRN should be presented as a network supported by all relevant Danish universities and research institutions. Individual researchers cannot enter into contracts without being covered by their institution.

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Action 4: The question of proposals for new election procedures for the board to be at the agenda for the next board meeting.

Budget 2008

OM and MK mentioned that DDRN has carried out many activities in 2007, taking into account that it is our first year. The question of demanding an extension of the grant period to spend unused money may be relevant. We should try to use consultants for specific tasks of elucidation. Researchers from the South can also be engaged for such tasks.

Ad 5. Applications for member activities

It was suggested and decided that members can send in applications prior to each board meeting, where they will be treated.

Decision 3: Members' applications for funding can be treated at each board meeting.

5a. Presentation of proposals

OM declared to be involved in the preparation of two applications and left the room during the discussion of these.

The first application, from Steen Fryba Christensen and Vibeke Andersson, on new *Latin American Development Strategies in a Changing International Economic and Political Context* was a revised version of an application that had been presented at the previous board meeting. The present one was much improved; and thus DKK 25,000 was granted in support. The second one, from a group of 12 researchers planning a seminar series on *Poverty and Environment*, also received a funding of DKK 25,000.

Decision 4: The two applications for funding were each granted DK 25,000.

5b. Application for the extension of the funding period of Trade Mondays

LF had attended the meeting on China – Friend or Foe on November 5, 2007. This meeting dealt with China's trade relations to Japan and the US, but did not treat development issues. Extension of the funding period was granted, provided that future seminars are relevant for development.

Decision 5: The application for extension of the grant for Trade Mondays was accepted, provided that the seminars deal with development issues.

5c. Establishment of Climate Task Force across Danish research and knowledge networks

OM had in collaboration with Torkil Jønch Clausen, chairman of DWF, elaborated a proposal for the establishment of a task force of 8-10 persons, who with the support of the secretariats of the development research networks should assure that relevant knowledge is coordinated and made available were relevant. Moreover, it could apply for funds for consultancy tasks. It was discussed whether the call was to be sent officially to all universities or whether it was preferable that it did not become too large, although being open to all. Since a task force is a new concept under DDRN, it was also discussed to what degree it could draw upon human and financial resources, taking into consideration that the secretariat is quite heavily loaded with work. It was mentioned that others are working within the same field, and that too much overlap should be avoided. Another issue discussed was whether the primary focus was to be research or dissemination; and it was suggested that the group might establish a kind of 'help desk' (cf. item 4, Output 1.1 above). From Danida it was mentioned that it is important for Danida to know whether funds budgeted for travels, meetings etc. are earmarked. It was also pointed out that with a new ministry for Climate and Energy there will be interfaces with other ministries; and it is important not to focus on BFT only when working with climate issues.

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It was concluded that the initiative is a very important one, which should be supported, but that the board needs more specific information on institutional linkage, on support from the secretariat, and on possible overlap with activities within other institutions and organisations.

Action 5: OM is asked to clarify questions on institutional linkage, on support from the secretariat, and on possible overlap with other initiatives.

Ad 6. DDRN conferences 2008

There was not sufficient time to discuss the forwarded inputs for conference themes, so it was decided that these were to be discussed via e-mails among board members and the secretariat.

Action 6: Board members will comment by e-mail on themes for conferences in 2008, which have been forwarded for the present meeting.

Ad 7. Budget

This item was discussed under item 4 above.

Ad 8. Dialogue and cooperation with Danish NGOs

Proposal from AW for a dialogue meeting between DDRN and various NGOs early in 2008, as a follow-up on a meeting between the secretariat and Projektrådgivningen (the Project Counselling Service) on December 13, 2007. The proposal was supported, and AW was asked to send in an application.

Ad 9. A.O.B.

MVP reminded the secretariat that according to the agreement, BFT is to receive the annual report from DDRN no later than January 15, 2008.

Action 7: The secretariat to forward the annual report to Danida no later than January 15, 2008.

The General Assembly will be on Wednesday, May 21, 2008, in the afternoon.
The next board meeting will be on Friday, March 14, 2008, at 10:00.

List of actions from 8th board meeting

Reference	Action	By whom	Status
BM8:Act.1	The secretariat investigates possibilities of establishing a 'Help desk', facilitating access of development practitioners to research based knowledge.	Secretariat	On-going
BM8:Act.2	The secretariat and the board discuss core performance of DDRN and strategies for future funding in 2008.	Secretariat Board	Planned for next board meeting
BM8:Act.3	The secretariat investigates whether DDRN can support PhD students from South who want to study in Denmark.	Secretariat	On-going
BM8:Act.4	The question of proposals for new election procedures for the board to be at the agenda for	Secretariat Board	Done

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	the next board meeting.		
BM8: Act.5	OM is asked to clarify questions on institutional linkage, on support from the secretariat, and on possible overlap with other initiatives.	OM	On-going
BM8: Act.6	Board members will comment by e-mail on themes for conferences in 2008, which have been forwarded for the present meeting.	Board members	Done
BM8: Act.7	The secretariat to forward the annual report to Danida no later than January 15, 2008.	Secretariat	Done

List of pending actions from previous board meetings

Reference	Action	By whom	Status
BM4: Act.1	Hold a meeting with the head of the department of Geography and Geology to clarify the agreement between the University of Copenhagen and the network.	OM and MK	On-going
BM6: Act.10	Develop guidelines for the establishment of more active engagement of members in the South.	Secretariat and board members	On-going

18.12.2007 LF