

Minutes of DDRN Board Meeting 1/2008

March 14, 2008 – 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). Danida observer after lunch: Hanne Carus (HC)
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), Merete Villum Pedersen (MVP, Danida observer), Peter Lund-Thomsen (PLT).
Stefano Ponte (SP) was not present since by mistake the papers for the meeting had not been sent to him.

Draft agenda:

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
3. DDRN's strategies and core performances (discussion and decision)

LUNCH

4. General Assembly (discussion and decision)
 - 4.1. Proposals for new election procedures and amendments to the Articles of Association
 - 4.2. Draft agenda
5. Applications for member activities
 - Presentation of proposals (decision)
 - Implications of multiple postponements of the workshop on Cross-disciplinarity in FP7? Do we withdraw the grant? (See Document Ad 7. Brief by the secretariat, p. 2)
6. 2nd conference theme in 2008 (decision)
7. Briefing on progress of activities by the secretariat
 - a. Climate Task Force
 - b. Mail to John Nielsen, UM, on research collaboration with Vietnam
8. A.O.B

Ad 1. Approval of the agenda

It was agreed that item 4 was to be dealt with before lunch. With this change the agenda was adopted.

Ad 2. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

A few amendments were decided:

Item 4. Output 1.1, 2nd paragraph: the example ("GlobalOrg...") was deleted.

Item 5c. In the minutes of the discussion of establishment of a Climate Task Force, the names of the discussants should be removed.

With these reservations the minutes were approved.

Ad 3. DDRN's strategies and core performances

The discussion was organised as follows:

First the meeting came forward with some general comments on the paper from the secretariat. Afterwards, the members of the board had 10 minutes for writing down three main goals/visions and three main strategies. And finally, when these points had been gathered under a few headings, it was discussed which implications these ideas might have for DDRN's future focal points of activity.

The general discussion touched upon points like:

- What is the objective of this paper in view of the fact that we are only guaranteed financing for about one more year? Is it in preparation of a new application; or do we take future funding for granted working on a vision of longer scope?

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- It should be a more reader-friendly format: 1-2 pages with good cases of how DDRN can make a difference (e.g. climate task force).
- The strategies are not sufficiently clear and do not mirror the goals.
- Discussion of the relationship between core research, applied research, funding mechanisms, and local needs and demands.
- How can DDRN become sustainable? – If that is a goal? Should we look for funding from other sources than Danida?
- A central issue is why research is not made useful in development. DDRN might have an important role to play here.
- What do we do about the problem of broad thematic scope and the other two research networks?
- How do we assure institutional ownership?
- Should we try to catch a big fish as our chairman?
- DDRN has an important role to balance the provinces vis-à-vis Copenhagen.

The three goals/visions and three strategies mentioned individually by the board members were gathered into the following groups:

Goals/visions:

- N-S and S-S research platforms
- Multi-stakeholder forum
- Added value of the networks
- Entry point for Danida and other important development organisations
- Economic sustainability
- Communication of research - rendering development research useful
- Professionalism vs. comprehensiveness

Strategies & tools:

- N-S collaboration. Best practices & flagship projects.
- South ownership vs. international research
- Promotion of research. What kind? Cross-institutional/-disciplinary collaboration.
- Promotion of use of research. Meeting point (dialogue, market place).
- Economically independent. Fundraising.

The following discussion on focus areas touched upon the need for promoting multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaboration irrespective of individual interests and – at the same time - dealing with problems of how to make better use of research. The added value that DDRN can offer includes our contacts to embassies and researchers in the South. But these contacts demand continuous nurturing to be useful.

The conclusions were:

Action 1: The secretariat elaborates a short paper with visions/goals and seasoned with examples (good practices and challenges). After adoption by the board the paper is to be introduced at the General Assembly in May.

Action 2: After the General Assembly the secretariat and the new board will rewrite the paper in view of preparing a new application for funding.

The discussions on South focus and on the thematic areas, including possible merging with the other two research networks, are to continue after the general assembly. The general opinion was that we shall not confine ourselves to the present three thematic areas.

Ad. 4a. General Assembly. Proposals for new election procedures and amendments to the Articles of Association

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Item 4a.1. The text under item 1) in the forwarded document was clarified, so that everybody agreed on the following meaning of the text: Members of the board are elected for two years. But in order not to have all 9 members on election the first time, a system will be introduced with alternating election of 4 or 5 members per year. This means that 4 of the members elected in May 2007 will have to put their seats on vote at the General Assembly in May 2008. Substitutes are up for election every year.

Henrik Egelyng announced that he will put his seat on vote and not stand for re-election. For the remaining three members, the following procedure was decided:

Action 3: The secretariat announces a deadline for members of the board to put their seats on vote. If three members (besides HE) have not given such notice to LF at the announced date, the three members with the lowest number of votes will put their seats on vote.

Broadness of the composition of the board, both as regards institutional, professional and geographical representation, is difficult to assure with individual memberships, but members will be encouraged to take these issues into consideration when voting. Item c) under 2) in the paper on "4a.1. Proposals for new election procedures" was retained.

The issue of e-mail or postal votes and voting by proxy was discussed and the following was decided:

Action 4: The secretariat makes a proposal of themes that the candidates up for election should relate to in their written presentations in order to ensure that they intend to work broadly for the goals of DDRN. At the same time it is underlined that candidates should consider the intention that no more than one candidate from each institution, ngo, company etc. should stand for election.

Action 5: The secretariat makes a link to a ballot paper on the website and in a newsletter. They also announce the following decision: Members who have updated their profile on the website can send in a postal vote no later than one week prior to the General Assembly or they can vote by proxy, giving authority to another member. Voting by e-mail is not possible. Members can vote for 1-4 candidates (when 4 are on vote).

The board saw no urgent need to suggest amendments to the Articles based on the above decisions. The secretariat was asked to check on this:

Action 6: The secretariat checks whether the above decisions on election procedures require any amendments of the Articles of Association. If so, they suggest possible amendments to the board in due time before the GA.

Ad 4b. Draft agenda

The board estimated that 1 hour and 50 minutes was too much time for the discussion of the visions. The secretariat finds a good facilitator; and the point should perhaps not be in the middle of the agenda.

Action 7: The secretariat proposes a detailed procedure for the discussion at the GA on DDRN's vision and goals.

Ad 5. Applications for member activities

The applicants for support to the workshop on Cross-disciplinarity in FP7 (granted in 2007) have cancelled the workshop. Consequently, the grant is withdrawn; and there is money for three workshops under the present call.

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Ad. 5a.1. Applications for workshops

Four applications were received. The discussion concluded in the following decisions:

1. Spatial Disparities in Development: Supported with the remark that ngo-participation should be clear from the programme.
2. FAU conference: Cities, Climate Change and Development: Supported. It should be coordinated with the Climate Task Force.
3. DK-EU Sustainable Business in Latin America: Not supported. There is not money for more than 3 workshops, and the focus is not much on development. The applicant is not a member of DDRN.
4. Social Responsibility workshop in Kampala: Application from Uganda. Discussion on how to ensure representation from Denmark and from companies. It was also stressed it should be “**Corporate** Social Responsibility” and that there should be linking to previous DDRN activities in Uganda (assist in creating a local platform) and to the local university. Peter Lund Thomsen and Søren Jeppesen will participate and could represent DDRN. The question of how to ensure financial accountability when transferring money to Uganda was raised.

Action 8: The secretariat investigates how best to transfer money to members in the South and ensure accountability.

Ad. 5a.2. Applications for network activities

HC explained why Danida had asked the three first applications presented in the forwarded paper plus one received after the deadline to apply for DDRN funding. They are to participate in WB/Danida/VTU conference in Tanzania on “Developing Agriculture and Food Industry Innovation”. This gave occasion to much discussion on whether DDRN is to pay for this, and if so how much. What will DDRN get out of it? To which degree do the applicants represent their institutions more than they promote research and DDRN? The ceiling for DDRN grants to network activities is DKK 10,000, which should also be respected in these cases. The idea of organizing a DDRN workshop in Tanzania has been dropped after consultation with Danida as this activity could interfere with the process of setting up the FFU funded pilot research project based in local priorities.

Action 9: The secretariat sends replies to the four applicants included in the discussion above that DDRN can offer a grant of max. DKK 10,000 per person.

Application from Uganda for participation in the DDRN/Danida conference on Rural Economic Development. Has sent an abstract, which is not very relevant for DDRN. Not supported.

Application from member in Pakistan for one month’s visit to Denmark: Not supported.

Application from member in Ghana for one month’s research in Denmark, in collaboration with LIFE, KU: Supported with max. DKK 10,000.

Application from Ghana for a conference in Ghana and for conducting a project in Malawi: Not supported.

Ad. 5a.3. Applications for other activities

Translation of a leaflet. Not supported. We have formerly decided that we do not support translation. Perhaps this should be reviewed in the light of promoting research communication.

In general the criteria for funding or rejecting applications do not seem quite clear.

Action 10: The secretariat verifies the guidelines for granting support to member driven activities in order to check out whether they are sufficiently clear and consistent, and whether they allow for innovative ideas.

Ad. 6. Suggested conference themes

For the autumn conference the board agreed on a theme entitled ‘Politics, business and development’. The secretariat will send an e-mail to all board members asking for participation in the conference preparations.

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Action 11: The secretariat sends an e-mail to the board in order to have their commitment to participation in the preparations of a conference on 'Politics, business and development'.

Action 12: The secretariat takes contact to Simon Bolvig and Kjeld Rasmussen in view of deciding whether and, if so, how a Sahel conference should be organized in 2008/09.

The board (OM had left the meeting before item 5) supported the idea of planning a parallel session on the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies in developing countries at the Climate Conference 2009.

Action 13: OM to take contact to Catherine Richardson in view of arranging a parallel session on climate change in developing countries at the Climate Conference 2009.

Ad. 7. Brief on progress by the secretariat

There were no comments to the brief from board members. AS added that she has been invited to South Africa for a coordination workshop in the Platform for African-European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD).

Ad. 7a. Climate Task Force

LA asked for guidelines for the participation and contribution of the secretariat in the task force. It was difficult for the board to answer the question, since priorities of activities do not seem clear. The question will have to be further discussed in the secretariat and with the chairmanship.

Action 14: The secretariat and the chairmanship discuss the issue of the involvement of the secretariat in the work of the Climate Task Force and send a proposal to the board.

Ad. 7b. Mail to John Nielsen, TAS

A meeting has been programmed between John Nielsen (TAS), Miriam Feilberg (DWF) and AS.

Closing remarks:

This was the last meeting of the present board, and the chairmanship will decide whether to hold a brief pre-meeting before the General Assembly.

Action 15: The chairmanship informs the secretariat and the other board members of a possible pre-meeting of the board before the General Assembly.

List of actions from 1st board meeting 2008

Reference	Action	By whom	Status
BM1/08:Act.1	The secretariat elaborates a short paper with visions/goals and seasoned with examples (good practices and challenges). After adoption by the board the paper is to be introduced at the General Assembly in May.	MF, AS	Done
BM1/08:Act.2	After the General Assembly the secretariat and the new board will rewrite the paper in view of preparing a new application for funding.	MF, AS and new board	Stand-by
BM1/08:Act.3	The secretariat announces a deadline for members of the board to put their seats on vote.	LF	Done
BM1/08:Act.4	The secretariat makes a proposal of themes that the candidates up for election should relate to in their written presentations. At the	LA, LF	Done

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	same time it is underlined that they should consider the intention that no more than one candidate from each institution, ngo, company etc. should stand for election.		
BM1/08:Act.5	The secretariat makes a link to a ballot paper on the website and in a newsletter. They also announce the decision on postal vote and vote by proxy.	MF, LF	Done
BM1/08:Act.6	If the decisions on election procedures require any amendments of the Articles of Association, the secretariat suggest possible amendments to the board in due time before the GA.	LA	Done
BM1/08:Act.7	The secretariat proposes a detailed procedure for the discussion at the GA on DDRN's vision and goals.	MF, AS	Done
BM1/08:Act.8	The secretariat investigates how to transfer money to members in the South and ensure accountability.	LF	Done
BM1/08:Act.9	The secretariat sends replies to the four applicants for funding in participation in the VTU/WB/Danida conference: DDRN can offer a grant of max. DKK 10,000 per person.	LF, LA	Done
BM1/08:Act.10	The secretariat verifies the guidelines for support to member driven activities to check if they are sufficiently clear and consistent and allow for innovative ideas.	LA	Ongoing
BM1/08:Act.11	The secretariat sends an e-mail to the board asking for commitment to the preparations of a conference on Politics, business & development	LA	Done
BM1/08:Act.12	The secretariat investigates with the former Sahel workshop planning group whether and, if so, how a Sahel conference should be organized.	LA	Ongoing
BM1/08:Act.13	OM will take contact to the steering group of the Climate Conference 2009 in view of arranging a parallel session on climate change in developing countries.	OM	Done
BM1/08:Act.14	The secretariat and the chairmanship discuss the involvement of the secretariat in the work of the Climate Task Force and send a proposal to the board.	LA OM, MK	Pending
BM1/08:Act.15	The chairmanship informs the secretariat and the board of a possible pre-meeting of the board before the General Assembly.	OM, MK	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	Pending

12.06.2008 LF