Minutes on Decisions taken at the 4th General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI)
05 December 2016 in Paris, France

(compiled by Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Pietro Arras, Giuseppe Enne, Wafa Essahlì, María José Marqués,
Melanie Requier-Desjardins, Pier Paolo Roggero and Chiara Zanolla)

Venue and General Information:
The General Assembly of DNI was held at the Institut Curie, 12 rue Lhomond, 75005, Paris (France)
Meeting room: Room “Joliot”
Time: 15.00 – 18.00


1. Announcement and Inauguration of the newly elected Steering Committee and Advisory Board of DesertNet International

Eng. Wafa Essahlì, DNI outgoing chair, officially announced and inaugurated the newly elected Steering Committee (SC) and the newly elected Advisory Board (AB) of DNI by introducing the newly elected members in the SC and AB, and by announcing the nomination of the new Chair, Co-chair, Treasurer and General Secretary of DesertNet International for the next two legislative years. The results of the DNI elections and nominations are as follows:

Chair: Mélanie REQUIER-DESJARDINS (Inst. Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier - CIHEAM, France)
Co-Chair: Fei WANG (Inst. of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University, China)
Treasurer: María José MARQUÉS (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)
Secretary General: Pier Paolo ROGGERO (Desertification Research Centre NRD – Univ. of Sassari, Italy)

Steering Committee (alphabetical order):
– Youssef BRAHIMI (NGO “LA ROUTE DU SEL ET DE L’ESPOIR” – LA ROSE, France)
– Ali Akbar DAMAVANDI (Inst. Technical and Vocational Higher Education, Agriculture, Iran)
– Wafa ESSAHLI (Consultant, Tunisia)
– María José MARQUÉS (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)
– Cesar MORALES (Consultor, Asesor de Delegado Presidencial para Recursos Hídricos, Chile)
– Kakha NADIRADZE (Association for Farmers Rights Defense, AFRD-EUFRAS, Georgia)
– Dalila NEDJRAOUI (Univ. des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediène Algiers, Algeria)
– Mohamed OUESSAR (Institut Des Regions Arides, Tunisia)
– Mélanie REQUIER-DESJARDINS (Inst. Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier - CIHEAM, France)
– Pier Paolo ROGGERO (NRD University of Sassari, Italy)
– Richard THOMAS (ICARDA, Jordan)
– Fei WANG (Inst. of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University, China)
– Pandi ZDRULI (CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy)

Advisory Board (alphabetical order):
– Mariam AKHTAR-SCHUSTER (Secretariat DesertNet International, Germany)
– Jorge BATTLE-SALES (Universidad de Valencia, Spain)

Secretariat of DesertNet International at the University of Hamburg, Germany E-mail: office@european-desertnet.eu
www.european-desertnet.eu
DNI Bureau Coordination at the University of Sassari, Italy Tel. +39 079 213103; nrd@uniss.it
Mélanie REQUIER-DESJARDINS and Fei WANG could not participate in the General Assembly but were contacted and gave their availability to take office as Chair and Co-Chair of DesertNet International.

General information and details on the election process were provided to the General Assembly (Annex 3).

2. DNI activities in 2014 - 2016


On 1st December 2016, the budget of the association accounts for € 3,318 distributed in two different accounts: CIC Bank, based in Toulouse, France: € 2,512, and PayPal, the online payment service provider: €806.

During this 2nd year period, 25 new payment fees have been received. Currently the rate of paying-members is 11% of membership.

2.2. DNI activities in 2014 – 2016. As defined in Article 6 of the Statutes of DNI, Eng. Wafa Esshali as the former Chair of DNI presented a Report on the activities and services of DesertNet in the period 2014-2016 (Annex 5).

3.1 DNI proposed Activities in 2016 - 2018: The newly elected madam Chair, Melanie Requier-Desjardins could not attend the General Assembly and was officially represented by Marc Bied Charreton. On her behalf, he expressed the new chair interest in committing to further dynamize and improve the DNI network in the 2016-2018 biennium with the support of the new SC and AB members and the newly elected DNI Bureau. A report is available in Annex 6.

a) DECISIONS TAKEN with regard to the DNI Future activities 2016-2018:

With regard to SC and AB specific activities in the next biennium

The need is expressed by the former Bureau to achieve a greater involvement of DNI SC and AB to enhance the scientific role in all future strategic activities of DNI.

The GA agrees to the proposal of the newly elected chair to enhance DNI discussions and further actions on the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) issue, both from natural and social sciences perspectives. The main purpose concerns the operationalisation of this concept inside the frames of the three Rio conventions, in a context characterised by the rise of environmental finance and the related possible controversial outputs in terms of ecological and socioeconomic impacts, particularly at the local level.
A partnership with the Drynet network was also proposed, that may lead to the production of a common position paper on LDN issues to be possibly presented at official meetings (e.g. UNCCD COP-13 in China).

**With regard to membership** The number of DNI members in the 2014-2016 period increased by 9%. Over the next two years specific efforts should be devoted to the increase the number of members particularly from LAC (currently only 10) and from Africa.

**With regard to the Working Groups:**
A new Working Group on “Drylands Restoration” was created in 2016 to coordinate experts with different fields of expertise (hydrology, soils, ecology, agronomy, landscape planning, etc.) to accumulate traditional and innovative scientific knowledge through such collaborations.

Signed on 5th December 2016

**Pier Paolo Roggero**  
General Secretary  
Centro Interdipartimentale di Ateneo NRD-UNISS  
(Nucleo Ricerca Desertificazione)  
Università degli Studi di Sassari  
Via Enrico de Nicola, 9 - 07100 Sassari, Italy

**María José Marqués**  
Treasurer  
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Dept. Geology and Geochemistry  
Calle Francisco Tomás y Valiente 7  
28049 Cantoblanco, Madrid, Spain

**Annexes to the minutes:**

- **Annex 1** of the minutes: Agenda of the General Assembly.
- **Annex 2** of the minutes: Participants to the General Assembly.
- **Annex 3** of the minutes: DNI Election Process
- **Annex 5** of the minutes: Tasks accomplished by DNI SC and AB during their mandate phase from 15.11.2014 to 05.12.2016.
- **Annex 6** of the minutes: DNI Activities in 2014 – 2016: proposal for the way forward
Annex 1

Agenda of the 4th General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI)
05 December 2016 in Paris, France

Venue address: Institut Curie, 12 rue Lhomond, 75005, Paris

Meeting room: Room "Joliot"

3:00pm: Registration of participants

Session I: Welcome (Chair Richard Escadafal)
3:30pm: Opening of the Fourth General Assembly of DNI
  • Welcome by DNI Chair

Session II: DNI elections (Chair Wafa Essahli)
3:45 pm: Adoption of the meeting’s agenda
  DNI election process and its results (Wafa Esshali and Chiara Zanolla)
  Proclamation and inauguration of the new Steering Committee, Advisory Board and Bureau of DNI

Session III: DNI activities (Chair: Pier Paolo Roggero)
4:15 pm: Status report on:
  • Financial report 2014 – 2016 (María José Marqués)
  • DNI activities in 2014 - 2016 (Wafa Essahli)
    o ICoN SLM
    o Participation to relevant International Conferences (Cancun, Ankara)
    o UNFCCC accreditation process
    o IPBES
    o Activities to promote DNI visibility and interaction with International Organisations
    o Status of DNI membership (preferably according to regional and disciplinary balance)

5:00 pm: DNI organisational strategies in 2016-2018
  • Organisation of work in 2017-2018
  • DNI relevant meetings (UNCCD COP.13, …)

5:45 pm: Wrap up

6:00 pm: Closure
Annex 2

4th Government Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI)
5 December 2016 in Paris (France)

Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FULL NAME</th>
<th>AFFILIATION</th>
<th>EMAIL ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Annex 3

2016 DNI Election Process

4 October: letter sent out to DNI members to request candidatures (only paying members)

10 & 17 October: circulation of first and second reminder

24 October: deadline for returning nominations (13 candidates for SC & 10 for AB)

31 October: deadline for selection process by DNI SC and AB* and agreement on need to propose changes to the DNI GA with respect to the election process

9 November: circulation of candidate lists to DNI members (13 candidates for SC & 10 for AB), with instructions on voting procedure

18 November: reminder about upcoming elections and (not active) personal electronic link to the ballots sent to all eligible voters of DNI

21 November: Start of the election period and (active) personal electronic link to the ballots sent to all eligible voters of DNI

22 November: reminder of the open election period sent to DNI members

24 November: Results of the elections announced

5 December: Fourth DNI General Assembly in Paris and announcement of new DNI Bureau

The electronic election system met the specific requirements set by the DNI Bureau: i) to allow each DNI member to cast only 1 vote (expressing 6 preferences for SC and AB candidates respectively); and ii) to guarantee anonymity, confidentiality and security
Annex 4

**DNI Financial Report 2014-2016**

Incomes, expenditures and balance of DNI activities in the period 11.11.2014 to 1.12.2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs/Payments</th>
<th>Incomes</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIC bank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank commissions Dec 2014</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fee income (2 new)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Dec 2014 Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank commissions Jan 2015 to Dec 2015</td>
<td>-78</td>
<td>2,405</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank costs, transfers</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>2,339</td>
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<td>Payment UNCCD Sci. Conf. (Cancun, MX)</td>
<td>-1,256</td>
<td>1,083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership fee income</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015 → 1 Jan to 31 Dec / Balance</strong></td>
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<td>1,213</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank commissions</td>
<td>-72</td>
<td>1,141</td>
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<td>Payment, room location GA 2016</td>
<td>-231</td>
<td>910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership fee income</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,770</td>
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<td>Other incomes (Univ. Hamburg contribution 3rd UNCCD S.C.)</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>2,512</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2016 → 1 Jan to 30 Nov / Balance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,512</td>
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<tr>
<td>PayPal balance in Nov 2014</td>
<td>615,30</td>
<td></td>
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<td>received on Paypal</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>costs of Paypal account</td>
<td>-9.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>available on Paypal account 1 Dec. 2016</td>
<td>805.54</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DNI budget balance (CIC + PayPal)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>€ 3,318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To whom it may concern

Your reference | Our reference | Telephone | Hamburg /Berlin
----------------|---------------|-----------|----------------


The biennium financial report for the period 11.11.2014 to 05.12.2016, as compiled by the Treasurer of DesertNet International, Dr Maria Jose Marques Perez, has been checked for correctness by the former and by the present members of the Bureau.

We herewith confirm the completeness and correctness of the financial report for the above period, and its accurate and timely presentation to the General Assembly on 05.12.2016.

Signed by

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Annex 5

Tasks accomplished by DNI SC & AB during their mandate phase
from 15.11.2014 to 05.12.2016
(Compiled and presented by the former DNI Chair, Eng. Eshshali Wafa and by the DNI Operational Secretariat on behalf to the former SC and AB).

About the Membership Status
As of December 2016, the total number of DNI members amounts to 339 from 52 countries. These numbers show that there has been a 9% increase compared to the previous General Assembly in November 2014. The majority of members are from Europe (216) followed by Asia (64), Africa (37), North America and Australia (12) and Latin America Countries (10). This geographical distribution is also reflected in the composition of the past and current DNI SC and AB.

DNI Main activities in the period 2014-2016
UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference: DesertNet International was part of the STK4SD Consortium composed of the other 4 full members (Agropolis International - lead institution, Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel, IADIZA, CGIAR) and three affiliated partners (JRC-Ispra, NRD University of Sassari, Chinese Academy of Forestry), selected for the Organization of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference on “Combating Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development. The contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices” held in Cancún, Mexico on 9-12 March 2015. On that occasion, a DNI booth was installed for dissemination of information about the association.

ICoN SLM
During the past biennium, DNI was strongly involved in the official establishment, consolidation and launch of the Network of Networks (NoN) named ICoN SLM – Independent Consortium of Scientific and Knowledge networks on Land Degradation, Desertification and Sustainable Management. After the official signature of a collaboration agreement between DNI, WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies and GNDRI (Global Network of Drylands Research Institutions) at the UNCCD COP.11 in Windhoek (Namibia) in Autumn 2013, several meetings and joint activities have successfully taken place under the umbrella of ICoN SLM.

- November 2014: A working meeting was held in Hamburg (Germany) to define role, mission, governing structure of the NoN, and to identify tools to make it operational. Among the results, availability of GIZ to fund the startup phase of ICoN-SLM
- March 2015: on the occasion of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference in Cancun (Mexico), a side event was jointly organised by DNI-WOCAT-GNDRI on «Making a science and knowledge Network of Networks to achieve land degradation neutrality: improving UNCCD stakeholders’ use of scientific research results». The need was highlighted for the NoN to become a mechanism to reach all scientists with a management set up with clear functions and roles among the 3 organisations. Conscious of the huge amount of unutilised knowledge that needs to be channelled into the policy making process, the NoN highlighted the crucial role of UNCCD in this framework and in raising all the resources and funding available to the scientific community.
- April 2015: Working meeting in Berlin (Germany) at the Global Soil Week on technical and scientific issues related to the creation of ICoN-SLM, and in particular: Statute, Governing structure,
Relationship to UNCCD/SPI. DNI Chair Wafa Esshali was unanimously nominated first Chair of the network for the period 2015-2017.

- **October 2015**: An ICoN SLM side event was organised at UNCCD 12th CoP in Ankara (Turkey) on policy oriented needs, operationalisation of Land Degradation Neutrality and concrete interactions between ICoN SLM and the UNCCD SPI.

- **November 2015**: ICoN SLM is officially registered in France as a Civil Society Organization. The UNCCD accreditation process will start at the end of its first operational year (starting from December 2016). Logo and branding guidelines for the Consortium were developed starting from 2015 with the financial support of ICARDA (GIZ funds) following a consultation process among the three networks.

- **July 2016**: ICoN SLM met in Hamburg (Germany) to discuss future activities based on the jointly developed document “Policy- oriented research to achieve LDN”, previously presented at the ICoN SLM Side Event in Ankara (Turkey) in Autumn 2015 (http://desertnet-international.org/docs/ICoN_SLM_Policy-oriented_research_to_achieve_Land_Degradation_Neutrality.pdf).

**DNI participation to international conferences and events:**

- WADIS-MAR Workshop (March 2016): co-organised in Tunis (Tunisia) by DNI and NRD-UNISS on the occasion of the International Water Day, it aimed at presenting the effective implementation of 5 SWIM projects on sustainable water management.

- TRAINING COURSES: under the auspices of DNI, 17 training courses on water and environmental issues were organised by the WADIS-MAR project.

- **2016 WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (17 June 2016)**: DNI, together with other relevant authorities, was actively involved in the celebrations of 2016 World Day to Combat Desertification on the occasion of the WADIS-MAR final conference in Sassari (Italy).

**DNI accreditation to UNFCCC**

Online submission for DNI accreditation to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was submitted on 5th August 2016. Review of applications commenced in the week of 21 November 2016. The review is scheduled to be completed in mid 2017.

**Some considerations about DNI’s membership and fees**

DNI members have increased by 9% compared to 2014 numbers. Specific measures should be taken for enlargement of membership in all regions, particularly in LAC countries. The involvement of relevant regional organizations can be a valid option but it needs long-term efforts.

The number of fee-paying members is quite low. However, the satisfactory participation of DNI members to the elections (125 voters corresponding to 1/3 of members) highlights their active interest in the network activities and services.
Annex 6

DNI proposed Activities in 2016 – 2018

(proposed by the newly elected DNI chair Melanie Requier-Desjardins)

According to the context, some new opportunities could emerge and DNI will be flexible to bring them in when relevant; still the main activities to be developed are the following, in the continuation of the previous phase.

According to the network available resources and research results, DNI will promote the participation of sound scientists of the network to the main important international scientific events.

Valorisation of DNI activities through special events:

- UNCCD next COP and others COP conventions like UNFCCC via IPCC and CBD via IPBES; DNI has the legitimacy to be a partner of these conventions; there is a need to find a way of committing DNI in these bodies’ scientific debates. DNI appears as a cross-cutting entity working on common issues of the three conventions such as land degradation, sustainable land management and land degradation neutrality.
- Relevant international research workshops and congresses (to be identified).

Promotion of DNI throughout the different world regions: the aim is to improve their participation in the network.

Promotion of the ICoN SLM:

- as an advisory body for decision-makers and donors with regards to LDN issues; in particular market mechanisms are not relevant per se for LDN implementation; other tools are to be recommended and a methodology (or a set of methodologies according to the context and scale) to be set up; DNI could reflect on the conditions under which some market tools could be a solution.
- further elaboration of operational solutions regarding LDN based on the network knowledge and activities;
- an ICoN SLM proposal is under preparation and to be finalized with members of the DNI SC and AC; further research funding to promote the implementation of ICoN SLM project / proposition.