

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF THE NETWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ON DESERTIFICATION

DESERTNET INTERNATIONAL (DNI)

Translation provided for information, the only legal document is the original in French

Preamble

The Association *DesertNet International* aims to generate and enhance knowledge and understanding of the biophysical and socio-economic processes of desertification. DNI supports any mechanism by which science and technology may contribute to sustainable dryland development, combating desertification, reversing soil degradation in drylands, and to the identification of preventive measures to conserve the natural resources.

The Association *DesertNet International* will replace the former network known as 'European DesertNet' that, despite its name, was also open to non-European researchers. This network had no legal status, and its name wrongly suggested it to be an association of researchers only from Europe. The Association DesertNet International has been created to provide a legal structure, and is open to scientists from all nations and disciplines.

- As a multidisciplinary network, DesertNet International provides a platform for scientifically based discussions and exchange of ideas. It also addresses knowledge gaps and identifies research areas.
- As a think tank, DesertNet International communicates with stakeholders and policy-makers by identifying issues and priorities for them. The network responds to demands for assessment and information needs and translates knowledge into lay terms to improve public awareness of desertification, its costs and implications beyond drylands. DesertNet International closely cooperates with the European Commission's Research Directorate, ministries, development agencies and UN bodies (specifically the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification - UNCCD).

Article 1 Title and Seat

The NETWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ON DESERTIFICATION (abridged as DesertNet International (DNI), hereinafter referred to as "the Association"), is a non-governmental, non-profit association, composed of scientists working in bio-physical and human sciences research on land degradation/desertification at the national and international level.

DesertNet-International has its seat at LSIIT – TRIO, Pôle API, Bd Sébastien Brant, BP 10413 67412 Illkirch CEDEX.

The seat can be transferred upon decision of the Steering Committee (Article 7). The Association is governed by Articles 21 to 79-3 of the French Civil Code (Code Civil Local) and by the present Statutes. It is registered as an association with the associations du tribunal d'instance d'Illkirch-Graffenstaden (Bas-Rhin).

All official positions (e.g. chair, co-chair, treasurer, bureau, secretary general) of the Association DesertNet International (DNI) can be filled by any member of the Association irrespective of his/her nationality. DNI is non-partisan and supra-denominational, and is firmly rooted in France's basic free order of democracy.

The Association has no government affiliation and is autonomous; being independent of any form of lobby or private interests, and will take measures to remain so. In this regard, the Association undertakes to abstain from all political activity.

Article 2 Aims of the Association

The aims of the Association are to encourage research and promote concerted efforts in all disciplines concerning human and bio-physical issues of dryland development and degradation. The Association does this through facilitation of scientific exchanges between scientists and the participating bodies, identifying priority areas for research and fostering cooperation. DNI supports mechanisms that will provide academically sound data and information to combat desertification, recover degraded land, support sustainable social and economic development in drylands and identify preventive measures for safeguarding the natural resources of drylands worldwide. The Association also aims at cooperating with policy and other decision makers to identify information needs and to translate scientifically sound knowledge to improve land management of drylands including governance.

Article 3 Members and Observers

Membership of the Association shall be open to all scientists who endorse the Declaration of DNI.

Members of the association are individual persons as opposed to institutions.

- Scientists of all disciplines with expertise in dryland research are invited to join DNI.
- Students may join but do not have the right to vote and are not allowed to stand for membership to the Association's Steering Committee or Advisory Board.
- Members who fail to pay their membership fee may not have access to all services provided by the association and are not entitled to stand for election to the Association's leadership positions committees or boards.
- Requests for membership are evaluated and approved by the Steering Committee and Advisory Board.

Persons acknowledged by a 2/3 vote (qualified majority) of the Steering Committee as having rendered outstanding services to the Association and to the scientific and/or institutional activity which it encourages, can be appointed 'Honorary Members'. The Honorary Members are appointed for life. An honorary membership can be discontinued by the Steering Committee of the Association in case the conditions of his/her appointment are no longer satisfied. A vote of at least 2/3 of the Steering Committee members will be required to discontinue an Honorary Member.

The Association may invite to its meetings as observers:

- Representatives of national and international institutions and ministries
- High level experts
- Students

The Steering Committee may invite UN bodies, specifically the UNCCD, commissions, councils and other relevant bodies from all continents as observers to the DesertNet International General Assembly.

Voting rights in the General Assembly:

- Members of DNI have 1 vote.
- Honorary members cannot participate in the vote.
- Students have no vote.
- Invited representatives of institutions have an observer status at the General and the Extraordinary Assemblies. They have no right to vote and cannot be elected or appointed to the Steering Committee or to the Advisory Board.

The members' duties in terms of fees and other contributions will be defined by the General Assembly and updated as necessary.

Article 4 Withdrawal and Expiration of Membership

Membership expires under the following conditions:

1. Death
2. Members may leave the Association at the end of the year provided they have notified the Bureau at least three months in advance.
3. Membership can be discontinued by the Steering Committee of DNI in case the conditions of a membership are no longer satisfied. A vote of at least 2/3 (qualified majority) of the Steering Committee members will be required to expel an Association member.

Article 5 Organs

The organs of the Association shall be the

- General Assembly (Article 6)
- Extraordinary General Assembly (Article 6)
- Steering Committee (Article 7)
- Advisory Board (Article 8)
- Permanent Secretariat (Article 10)
- Bureau (Article 10)
- Users Board (Article 9)

Article 6 The General Assembly and the Extraordinary General Assembly

The General Assembly shall be composed of all Association members.

The Bureau of DNI will be in charge of organising the General Assembly.

The General Assembly shall have the power to decide on all matters affecting the Association.

The General Assembly determines changes in the articles of Association, and the dissolution of the Association.

At the General Assembly, the Chair, on behalf of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board, must present the biennial report, and the Treasurer must present the biennial accounts for the period between the last General Assembly and the present one.

Decisions at the General Assembly shall be taken by simple majority, except in certain cases provided for by the articles of the Association.

According to the statute of DNI:

- a. the General Assembly will be convened once every two years (biennially). Members will participate either physically (in person) or electronically (remote vote).
- b. a list of subjects for discussions at the General Assembly must be submitted by the members of the Association to the Steering Committee at least 3 weeks beforehand.
- c. members of DNI who have paid their membership fee in the past and for the next term in advance can become members of the Steering Committee and Advisory Board. Their candidacy should be sent to the Steering Committee, in writing, at latest 6 weeks prior to the General Assembly or the Extraordinary

General Assembly. The Committee will review the candidates' prerequisites for candidacy.

- d. The names of the proposed candidates will be announced to the members of DNI 4 weeks before the General Assembly (see Art. 6). The General Assembly will elect the new Steering Committee by simple majority.
- e. the call for subjects for discussion will be sent by the Chair of DesertNet International in writing (electronic mail) to all Association members 4 weeks beforehand.
- f. decisions made during the General Assembly are reported in the Register for the General Assembly proceedings and resolutions. They will be signed by the Chair and Co-chair of the Association of DNI, and are made available in writing by the Bureau of the Association to all members and observers of the Association via a protocol which will be distributed electronically.

Elections

The Chair of the Association DNI will chair the General Assembly and call for elections and will organise them with the assistance of the Steering Committee and the Bureau. See Art. 3 for differentiated vote procedure for election in DNI.

Extraordinary General Assembly

In the event that exceptional circumstances may arise, an Extraordinary General Assembly may be convened either by the Chair, the Steering Committee, a simple majority of its members, or 1/5 of the members of the Association DNI who are entitled to vote (as defined in Art. 3 of the statute). The call will be notified by the Bureau at least 8 weeks before the given date of the Extraordinary General Assembly.

At an Extraordinary General Assembly, the Chair or the Steering Committee can be asked to present an interim report. The Treasurer can also be asked to present the current status of the accounts.

If the Statutes need to be revised, an Extraordinary General Assembly can be convened by the Chair or the Steering Committee, or by a simple majority of its members. Any changes in the Statutes will require a vote of approval by 2/3 of the members.

Article 7 The Steering Committee

The Association shall be administered by a Steering Committee consisting of up to 13 members. Members of the Steering Committee are elected by the General Assembly. The Steering Committee should maintain a fair balance between human and bio-physical disciplines. The members of the Steering Committee represent the interests of all members of DNI.

The Chair and Co-Chair are part of the Steering Committee, and are elected by the members of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board by simple majority. Positions on the Steering Committee are not remunerated. Re-election is possible.

The tasks of the Steering Committee and the Bureau include but are not limited to:

- ⊗ Formulate on behalf of the General Assembly interior rules of procedure which detail the working rules of the Association as a complement to the Statutes.
- ⊗ Initiate, organise and oversee working groups of the Association on behalf of the General Assembly.
- ⊗ Organise *ad hoc* working groups to react quickly and flexibly to newly emerging topics and demands.
- ⊗ Initiate research projects and make recommendations on coordination.
- ⊗ Provide information on equipment and methods, e.g. proceedings, news and symposia reports.
- ⊗ Encourage exchange programmes between laboratories.
- ⊗ Organise working sessions and high level peer-review international conferences on specific subjects.
- ⊗ Maintain regular contact with all stakeholders (e.g. policy and other decision makers, commissions, councils and other relevant bodies from all continents, UN organisations, international programmes, and land users);
- ⊗ React to the demands of policy makers so that the science-policy interface functions;
- ⊗ Prepare reports for submission to the General Assembly;
- ⊗ Design and submit to the General Assembly complementary regulations as required for the functioning of the Association.

Article 8 The Advisory Board

The Association shall be assisted in its decisions and functioning by an Advisory Board consisting of up to 11 members. The Advisory Board will complement the expertise existing in the Steering Committee while ensuring a wider representation of member countries and maintaining a fair balance between human and bio-physical disciplines. The members of the Advisory Board are elected by the General Assembly.

Positions on the Advisory Board are not remunerated. Re-election is possible.

Article 9 - The User Board

The User Board is open to institutions interested in becoming end users of the results of the Association's activities. Institutions are encouraged to name a representative from their institution to the User Board, and the Steering Committee will validate the appointment. The

User Board formulates recommendations for the work programme and is invited to the General Assemblies as an observer. Positions on the User Board are not remunerated.

Article 10 - The Bureau

The Bureau of the Association DNI is composed of the following persons, elected among the Steering Committee by the Steering Committee and Advisory Board members:

- the chair,
- the vice-chair,
- the treasurer,
- if necessary a vice-treasurer,
- the secretary general,
- if necessary a deputy secretary general

The Bureau term of office shall be two years. Re-election is possible.

A The Permanent Secretariat is the official address of DNI to the UNCCD. The Permanent Secretariat will support the Bureau of the Association in communication and archiving of the official documents of the Association

Article 11 - The Work Procedure

The Steering Committee will meet physically or virtually at least once a year to design the work programme, prepare the issues to be decided upon by the Steering Committee and the tasks to be implemented by the Bureau. Members of the Advisory Board will be invited to the work meetings. If necessary, or for the sake of convenience, the annual meeting can be organised using electronic networking tools. Any Steering Committee work meeting is quorate if convened according to the guidelines stipulated in Art. 6.

The Bureau of the Association DNI will consult the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board between annual meetings on any new decisions and tasks to be implemented, and will keep the Steering Committee and Advisory Board regularly informed about ongoing work.

Article 12- The Budget

The General Assembly shall determine and monitor the arrangements for the payment of members' contributions to the expenses of the Association, and other general budgetary rules. The Steering Committee will be empowered to undertake contracting arrangements and to receive funds in accordance with the general objectives of the Association and the work programme adopted.

The Treasurer is in charge of keeping the financial records of DNI. The Association is responsible for proprietary obligations that are undertaken by the Steering Committee. Liability is limited to the wealth and assets of the Association, so obligations must not exceed the annual income of the Association.

DNI is authorised to contract legal counsel at the expense of the Association.

Article 13 - Amendment to the Articles of the Association

Proposals for amendments to the articles of the Association must be submitted at least six weeks before the next General Assembly or the next Extraordinary General Assembly. The modifications shall be adopted if they receive the support of 2/3 of the members participating at the quorum (Article 6).

Article 14 - Dissolution

The General Assembly or the Extraordinary General Assembly can vote for dissolution by simple majority. The Steering Committee is responsible for the settlement of all the Association's debts and the fulfilment of all its commitments. Any remaining assets of the Association will go to any Association having similar objectives as agreed to by the General or Extraordinary General Assembly.

Article 15 - Approbation of the Statutes

We the undersigned certify have approved the present text and request its registration as the statutes of the new DNI Association.

Place,

Date,

Eng. Wafa ESSAHLI
Chair of DesertNet International (Free Consultant, Tunisia))

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signature

Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL
Vice-Chair of DesertNet International
(IRD – UMR CESBIO, France)

.....
signature

Dr. Maria Jose MARQUES PEREZ
Treasurer of DesertNet International
(University of Madrid, Spain)

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signature

Prof. Pier Paolo ROGGERO
Secretary General of DesertNet International
(Desertification Research Centre – NRD, University of Sassari, Italy)

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signature