

**Minutes on Decisions taken at the General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI)
05 July 2012 in Bari, Italy**

(Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Giuseppe Enne, Richard Escadafal, Maria José Marques, Chiara Zanolla)

Venue and General Information:

The General Assembly of DNI was held at the CIHEAM IAMB - Agronomic Mediterranean Institute of Bari – Via Ceglie, 9, 70010 Valenzano (Bari) Italy,
Meeting room: Documentation Centre
Time: 15.00 - 19.00

The meeting was organised with kind support of the Pandi Zdruli, (DNI member) from CIHEAM IAMB (GA agenda: **Annex 1**; participants: **Annex 2**).

Newly elected Steering Committee and Advisory Board of DNI, opening of DNI Bank Account and Status Report.

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

Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster officially announced and inaugurated the newly elected Steering Committee and the newly elected Advisory Board of DNI by introducing the newly elected Steering Committee (SC) and Advisory Board (AB), and by announcing the new Chair, Co-chair, Treasurer and General Secretary, who were nominated by the incoming Board for the next two legislative years. The results of the DNI elections are as follows:

Chair: Prof. Dr. Giuseppe ENNE (NRD-UNISS, University of Sassari, Italy)

Co-Chair: Prof. Dr. Elena ABRAHAM (Argentine Institute of Arid Zones, IADIZA-CONICET, Argentina)

Treasurer: Dr. María José MARQUES (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)

Secretary General: Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement - IRD, France)

Steering Committee (alphabetical order):

- Prof. Dr. Elena ABRAHAM (Argentine Institute of Arid Zones, IADIZA-CONICET, Argentina)
- Prof. Pedro BERLINER (Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, Ben Gurion Univ., Israel)
- Dr. Michael CHERLET (European Commission DG Joint Research Centre, Belgium)
- Prof. Dr. Giuseppe ENNE (NRD-UNISS, University of Sassari, Italy)
- Dr. Richard ESCADAFAL (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement - IRD, France)
- Dr Wafa ESSAHLI (Consultant GM, Tunisia)
- Prof. Dr. Donald GABRIELS (UNESCO Chair on Eremology, University of Ghent, Belgium)
- Dr. María José MARQUES (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)

- Prof. Dr. Carlos SAN JUAN MESONADA (Economist, University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain)
- Dr Maurizio SCIORTINO , Natl. Agency for new technology, Energy, Sust. econ. dev., – ENEA, Italy)
- Dr. Mary SEELY (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia - DRFN, Windhoek, Namibia)
- Dr. Fei WANG (Inst. Of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University, China)
- Dr. Pandi ZDRULI, (CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy)

Advisory Board (alphabetical order):

- Dr. Mariam AKHTAR-SCHUSTER (Secretariat DesertNet International, Hamburg, Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Jorge BATTLE-SALES (Dept, Biología Vegetal, Universidad de Valencia, Spain)
- Dr. Gèrard BEGNI (CNES, France)
- Prof. Dr. Mauro CENTRITTO (National Research Council, Italy)
- Dr. Patrick KLINTENBERG (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia)
- Dr. Christopher MARTIUS (Centre for Development Research – ZEF, Univ. of Bonn, Germany)
- Dr Abdul RAZIQ (Soc. of Animal, Veterinary and Environmental Scientists - SAVES, Pakistan)
- Prof. Dr. José L. RUBIO (Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación –CIDE-CSIC, Spain)
- Dr. Stefan SOMMER (European **Commission** DG Joint Research Centre, Germany)
- Dr. Lindsay STRINGER (Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, UK)
- Dr. Richard THOMAS (UNU-INWEH, Canada)

General information and details on the elections process were provided to the General Assembly (**Annex 3**)

2. DNI activities in 2010 - 2012

2.1 Financial Report 2010-2012: As defined in Article 6 of the Statutes of DNI, the newly appointed treasurer Dr. Maria José Marques presented the DNI financial report for the period 2010-2012 on behalf of the former treasurer Dr. Richard Escadafal. The DNI bank account was opened at the CIC Bank in France in 2010. Access to the DNI Bank Account was made available to the Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer and General Secretary of DNI, as per decision taken at the DNI General Assembly in Rome in 2010. A short financial report is available in **Annex 4, paragraph 5**. The Chair proposed to the General Assembly to discharge Mr. R. Escadafal after the fulfilment of his duties during the period 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012 as has been agreed by the former and current DNI Bureau (see page 14 of this report: letter of the Bureau).

2.2. DNI activities in 2010 – 2012. As defined in Article 6 of the Statutes of DNI, Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, as former Chair of DNI, gave a Status Report on the activities and services of DesertNet in the period 2010-2012 (**Annex 4**).

3. DNI activities in 2012 - 2014

3.1 Status Report of DNI Working Groups/Task Force:

WG on Soil Salinisation: Prof. Jorge Battle-Salles informed the DNI Bureau that he intends to continue leading this WG in the future. Future activities of the DNI WG on Soil Salinisation: i) **One week summer school on salinity survey and measurement in natural and agricultural landscapes** (in Valencia, end of July 2013, supported by ESF / COST programme); ii) proposal by WG leader for the organisation of **two working meetings** for the WG members within the Conference "Utilization and protection of halophytes and salt-affected landscapes" (Commission 3.6 IUSS), and within the 3rd International Salinity Forum, to be held in Riverside, California (USA) in October 2013.

WG on Economics of SLM: Dr. Richard Thomas informed the DNI Bureau that he intends to continue leading this WG in the future. Future activities of the DNI WG on Economics: i) **Opportunities to link with the E-LD initiative.** (E-LD will prepare and present a cost-benefit analysis in the context of land degradation, supporting decision-makers in politics and business to take the necessary measures for better rural development and food security and promote sustainable land management); ii) second objective: **Systemize scientific studies on the economics of land degradation** and reach agreements on scientific and methodological.

WG on Livestock: Dr. A. Raziq Kakar expressed his interest and optimism to continue leading this WG. However he requests for a strong support from DNI.

WG on Food Security: Dr. Lindsay Stringer confirmed her interest to continue leading this WG that was launched formally at the Intl. Conference in Alghero in 2011. Future Activities of the DNI WG on Food Security: i) AAZ abstract to be converted to an abstract to be submitted for the Second UNCCD Scientific Conference; ii) continue the quest for funding to support face-to-face meetings/a workshop to further develop FS WG priorities; iii) Identify further publishing opportunities that bring together the state-of-the-art research on FS; iv) Continue to raise the visibility of FS issues at relevant science-policy fora, in particular at those linked to DLDD

WG on Dryland Observation Systems: WG leader Norbert Juergens and co-leader Joachim Hill informed that due to other pressing commitments they find it currently difficult to continue leading the DOS WG and have asked for substitute. The DNI Bureau is currently holding promising consultations with other DNI members.

WG on Environmental Management: No information has been provided by the WG leader Dr. Marton Lazslo about the progress and achievements of this WG. He will be contacted again to explore his interest to continue leading this WG.

WG on Science Policy interface: No information has been provided by the WG leader Dr. Gerard Begni about the progress and achievements of this WG. He will be contacted again to explore his interest to continue leading this WG

Task Force on Land and Soil: Maria Jose Marques presented the progress and achievements made by the Task Force (a TF a small group created within the Association *DesertNet International* to target and achieve a specific task) also on behalf of the co-leader Richard Escadafal. The TF future activities include an electronic forum of interested members to provide contributions to analyse links between Land issues and Soil issues using bibliometric and data mining techniques, and a Workshop organised at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly (EGU, Vienna, April 2013). A Special Issue is expected to be published with contributions to the workshop. Detailed information on the future activities of this DNI TF have been provided by the TF leaders and are available in **Annex 5**

3.2 DECISIONS TAKEN with regard to the DNI Working Groups:

- a) A message will be sent by the DNI chair to all WG and TF leaders to ask confirmation by a given deadline for leading the Working Group in the period 2012-2014. WG leaders who confirm their availability will provide the newly elected SC and AB with: i) a report on the WG achievements in the period 2010-2012; ii) the Terms of Reference; and iii) the description of the activities planned for the period 2012-2014.
- b) If a leader does not confirm the leadership of his WG, then a message will be sent by the DNI chair to all DNI members to ask for candidatures to become leaders of those WG; all candidatures will be evaluated by the SC and AB.
- c) Acknowledging the importance of funds for the proper functioning of the WGs, the WG leaders will be encouraged to participate in EC calls (FP7 and the forthcoming Horizon 2020 in particular) as well as call by other relevant international funding institutions.

3.3 Scientific Activities in 2012 - 2014: the newly elected Chair Giuseppe Enne warmly thanks the outgoing chair Mariam Akhtar-Schuster for the excellent work carried out during her mandate that constitute the foundation to DNI's success. He then proposes the strategies for the next biennium, starting from the lessons learned, the approach to be possibly utilised and the strategies. A detailed report is available in **Annex 6**. Specific emphasis was laid, *inter alia*, on the importance to i) further enhance the role of DNI as an independent scientific body and contribute to bring land degradation and desertification on the political and scientific agendas; ii) reinforce DNI role as science-policy interface; iii) support fund raising activities, particularly in support of the WGs; and iv) favour the membership and participation from experts from Latin America, Asia and Africa.

3.4 DECISIONS TAKEN with regard to Scientific Activities in 2012 – 2014

- a) Working Groups have a relevant role in enhancing the scientific relevance of DNI, and in identifying gaps at the scientific and political level.
- b) Position papers, scientific and policy briefs can be produced in the framework of the WGs and TFs and brought to the attention of relevant scientific and political bodies, similarly to the successful experience of the DNI position paper presented at the ad hoc side event organised by DNI at the UNCCD COP10.
- c) The DNI SC and AB will take measures to reinforce WGs and TFs and their operational and fund raising capacities encouraging the participation of DNI WGs and TFs in international calls for research and cooperation projects (see point 3.2c above).
- d) Enhance a proactive role of DNI in the framework of the forthcoming HORIZON 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2014 – 2020. Research options available in Horizon 2020 should be identified and promoted inside the DNI network.
- e) Enhance DNI visibility at the global level via: i) website update; ii) top-level scientific conferences; iii) increase networking activities with other internally renown networks and associations (such as WOCAT, GNDRI, AGMIP, Global Research Alliance); iv) organise a 2nd DNI hearing at the EU Parliament to reinforce the importance to tackle land degradation and desertification at the EU level and globally; (v) participation in UN-led activities ((i)DNI is currently member of the Steering Committee of the UNCCD Fellowship Programme and (ii) is also member of the UNCCD *Ad Hoc*

Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice (AGSA) focusing on desertification / land degradation and drought issues).

- f) Propose DNI members that academic courses on desertification are set up in order to develop joint international courses on the subject to make up for the gradual disappearance of desertification from the scientific priorities, particularly at the EU level.

Signed on 5th July.2012 by

Prof. Giuseppe Enne

Chair

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

Prof. Elena Abraham

Co-Chair

Argentine Institute of Arid Zones,
IADIZA-CONICET, Argentina

Dr. Richard Escadafal

General Secretary

IRD-CESBIO, 18 av. E. Belin
31401 Toulouse cedex 9, France

Dr Maria Jose Marques

Treasurer

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Dept. Geology and Geochemistry
Calle Darwin 2
28049 Cantoblanco, Madrid, Spain

4. 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 4 of the minutes: Tasks accomplished by DNI SC and AB during their mandate phase from 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012.

Annex 5 Task Force on Land and Soil

Annex 6 of the minutes: Scientific activities in 2012 – 2014: lessons learned and proposal for the way forward

Annex 7 of the minutes: Template for requesting information about DNI Working Groups / Task Forces.

Annex 1

Agenda of the 2nd General Assembly of DesertNet International (DNI) 05 July 2012 in Bari, Italy

Venue address: Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy

Via Ceglie 9, 70010 Valenzano, Bari

Meeting room: Documentation Centre

14.30: Registration of participants

Session I: Welcome (chaired by **Pandi Zdruli**)

15.00: Opening of the Second General Assembly of DNI

- Welcome by DNI Chair
- Welcome by CIHEAM IAMB director Dr. Cosimo Lacirignola

Session II: DNI elections (chaired by **Mariam Akhtar-Schuster**)

15.15: Adoption of the meeting's agenda

DNI election process and its results

Proclamation and inauguration of the new Steering Committee, Advisory Board and Bureau of DNI

Session III: DNI activities in 2010-2012 (chaired by new DNI Chair)

15.45: Status report on:

- Financial report 2010 - 2012 (**Richard Escadafal & María José Marques**)
- DNI activities in 2010 -2012 (**Mariam Akhtar-Schuster**)

16.30 - *Break*

Session IV: DNI activities in 2012-2014 (Chair: new DNI chair)

17.00: DNI scientific and organisational strategies in **2012-2014**

- Status Report of DNI Working Groups/Task Force. Function and responsibilities of participants.
 - Task Force on Land and Soil
 - Status report Working Group on Food Security
 - Statement by the Working Group leader on "Dryland Observation System"
 - Statement by the Working Group leader on "Soil Salinity"
 - Statement by the Working Group leader on "Economics"
 - Statement by the Working Group leader on "Indigenous Livestock"
- Scientific activities in 2012 – 2014
- Adoption of the DNI work programme and functions for 2012 – 2014
- DNI secretariat: DNI homepage & maintenance of the DNI Homepage
- Quarterly DNI electronic newsletter
- Strategies to enhance participation from all regional areas
- Other organisational aspects

19.00: Wrap up

Annex 2

Participants to General Assembly in Bari, 5 July 2012:

DNI Members (Alphabetical order):

	DNI member	
1	AKHTAR-SCHUSTER Mariam	mariam.akhtar-schuster@pt-dlr.de
3	CENTRITTO Mauro	mauro.centritto@ibaf.cnr.it
4	CHABRILLAT Sabine	chabri@gfz-potsdam.de
5	CHERLET Michael	Michael.cherlet@jrc.ec.europa.eu
6	ENNE Giuseppe	ennegiuseppe@gmail.com
7	GREGO Stefano	grego@unitus.it
8	MARQUES Maria José	mariajose.marques@uam.es
9	ROGGERO Pier Paolo	pproggero@uniss.it
10	RUBIO Jose Luis	jose.l.rubio@uv.es
11	SCIORTINO Maurizio	maurizio.sciortino@enea.it
12	ZANOLLA Chiara	czanolla@uniss.it
13	ZDRULI Pandi	pandi@iamb.it

Observer (alphabetical order):

1. **Montanarella, Luca**, EC JRC Ispra, Italy (luca.montanarella@jrc.ec.europa.eu) .

Annex 3

DNI Election Process

12 April 2012 The process towards the second DNI elections officially started with the invitation to the elections and to the submission of candidatures sent to all DNI members.

April-May 2012: The electronic election system was masterfully created and managed by Olivier Piau, CSFD data manager and webmaster from Acropolis Production in Montpellier (France). An electronic election system was created that guaranteed that i) voters could cast only 1 vote using an automatically generated unique link sent by e-mail to all DNI members; ii) only DNI members could vote, and iii) made it impossible to link casted votes to e-mail address, thus granting anonymity.

12 April 2012: letter sent out to DNI members to request candidatures (only paying members)

30 April 2012: deadline for returning nominations

4 May 2012: deadline for selection process by DNI SC and AB*

8 May 2010: circulation of candidate lists to DNI members (15 candidates to SC; 15 candidates to AB), with instructions on voting procedure

14 May: Internal technical testing of the electronic election system

4 June: Personal electronic link to the ballots sent to all eligible voters of DNI

4-8 June: election period

8 June: Election results automatically generated by the system were sent to the DNI Bureau members.

13 June: Results of the elections announced

30 June: Newly nominated Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary General, Treasurer are settled by the newly elected Steering Committee

5 July: Second General Assembly in Bari

Annex 4

Tasks accomplished by DNI SC and AB during their mandate phase from 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012

(Compiled and presented by the former Chair of DNI, Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster on behalf to the former SC and AB).

1. Responsibilities for the DNI working phase from 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012 lay with the following DNI SC and AB members:

	Name	Affiliation	Country	Function
Members of the Steering Committee:				
1	Prof. Dr. Elena Abraham	Argentina Institute of Arid Zones, IADIZA-CONICET	Argentina	Co-chair
2	Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster	Univ. of Hamburg	Germany	Chair
3	Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Enne	NRD-UNISS, Univ. of Sassari	Italy	Secretary Gen.
4	Dr. Richard Escadafal	IRD - CESBIO, Toulouse	France	Treasurer
5	Dr. Wafa Essahli	Consultant GM	Tunisia	
6	Prof. Dr. Donald Gabriels	Univ. of Ghent	Belgium	
7	Prof. Dr. Carlos San Juan Mesonada	Univ. Carlos III of Madrid	Spain	
8	Ms Khadija-Catherine Razavi	Centre for Sustainable Develop., - CENESTA, Tehran	Iran	
9	Dr. Mary Seely	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia - DRFN, Windhoek	Namibia	
10	Dr. Lindsay Stringer	Sustainability Research Institute, Univ. of Leeds	UK	
11	Dr. Richard Thomas	UNU-INWEH	Canada	
12	Dr Fei Wang	Institute of Soil & Water Conservation, Northwest A&F University	China	
13	Dr. Pandi Zdruli	CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari	Italy	
Members of the Advisory Board:				
1	Prof. Dr. Marc Bied-Charreton	Honorary Chair CSFD	France	
2	Prof. Dr. Mauro Centritto	Natl. Res.Council, Ins. of Agro-Environment & Forest Biology	Italy	
3	Prof. Dr. Héctor Francisco del Valle	Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT), CONICET	Argentina	
4	Prof. Dr. Joachim Hill	Univ. of Trier	Germany	
5	Prof. Dr. Norbert Jürgens	Univ. of Hamburg	Germany	
6	Dr. Maud Loireau	Centre IRD-Montpellier	France	
7	Dr. Kamila Magzieva	FP7 National Coordinator	Kazakhstan	
8	Dr. María José Marqués	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	Spain	
9	Dr. Christopher Martius	Inter-American Institute of Global Change Research (IAI), São José dos Campos	Brazil	
10	Dr. Manojkumar Pardeshi	Gujarat Insitute of Desert Ecology	India	

11	Dr. José Luis Rubio	Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación - DIDE-CSIC	Spain	
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DNI Bureau members in the reporting phase 2010-2012: Mariam Akhtar-Schuster (Chair); Elena Abraham (Vice Chair); Giuseppe Enne (Secretary General); Richard Escadafal (Treasurer); María José Marques & Chiara Zanolla (Bureau coordinator).

2. Summary of the reporting period 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012

With its scientific work and contributions to (1) develop options for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD and (2) with its support to economic activities on land degradation and desertification, DNI was very **visible at the science-policy** interface during the reporting period 2010-2012.

The peer-reviewed publications of DNI during the reporting period also underline that DNI was also **active in delivering cutting-edge science**. However, there is much potential to enhance DNI's scientific activities through the initialization of continuous activities in more DNI working groups.

Details of products and services delivered by DNI in the reporting period 2010-2012 (for details see below chapters 3 to 7) show that **DNI SC and AB supported the implementation of DNI's mandate in the reporting period** by (i) being active as a multidisciplinary network that provides a platform for scientifically based discussions, addressing also knowledge gaps and identifying research areas, and by (ii) communicating as a think tank with all stakeholders and policy-makers and identifying issues and priorities for them (see preamble in the statutes of DNI at: http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/FINAL_DNI-STATUTES_ENG_060509.pdf).

3. List of major activities, which were organised by DNI in the working phase 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012 (Organisation of scientific conferences, workshops and exhibitions):

Activities started in early 2012 and ongoing: Since 03.04.2012, DNI is member of the Steering Committee of the UNCCD Fellowship Programme – (DNI member Harriet Bigas will be representing DNI in the Steering Committee of the Fellowship Programme).

Activities started in early 2012 and ongoing: On 05.06.2012 UNCCD informed M. Akhtar-Schuster, that she has been selected by the CST Bureau as representative of the international organisation DNI in the newly launched Ad Hoc Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice (AGSA) focusing on desertification / land degradation and drought issues, established by decision 20/COP.10. A DNI Task Force will be established by M. Akhtar-Schuster to address AGSA.

First half 2012: Organisation of the electronic election process and the 2nd General Assembly, held in Bari on 05.07.2012.

First half 2012: Ongoing co-operation with IUCN on writing a chapter on "Drylands Biodiversity".

First half 2012: Development of a concept for the next DNI scientific meeting (short title "Food Security and Monitoring") (to date not realised due to financial constraints. However, the concept was provided to the new Chair, Giuseppe Enne, by the former Chair, Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, in Bari on 5th July 2012).

Second half 2011, first half 2012: Initial positive discussions triggered by DNI between the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), and the Global Network of Dryland Research Institutes (GNDR) to start developing a network of dryland-related scientific networks. Agreement was reached between the three networks to continue this process.

Second half 2011, first half 2012: DNI members are invited to the preparatory working groups of UNCCD's 2nd Scientific Conference "Economics of Desertification" and the E-LD initiative.

Second half 2011, first half 2012: DNI critically reviewed and commented the various draft versions of the Terms of “Global Soil Partnership” (GSP) (process is coordinated by FAO).

October/November 2011: DNI is officially accredited as a CSO to the UNCCD (COP10 outcome).

13.10.2011: Organisation of the DNI Side Event, titled “Channelling core scientific advances into the UNCCD process” at UNCCD COP10 in Changwon, Republic of South Korea; including organisation and coordination of the DNI Scientific Booth at UNCCD COP10 in Changwon, Republic of South Korea.

06.-08.07.2011: Member of the scientific steering committee in preparation of the international conference on “Dryland ecosystem functioning and resilience: integrating biophysical assessment with socio-economic issues” (6-8 July 2011, Alghero, Sardinia, Italy). The conference was jointly organised by The European Science Foundation (ESF), DesertNet International (DNI) and the Desertification Research Group (NRD) of the University of Sassari, Italy.

17.02.2011: Organisation of the Side Event (jointly with UNU-INWEH) “Providing Inter-Disciplinary Scientific Advice to the UNCCD: A View from the Scientific Community”. DNI Side Event auf der CST S-2 (16-18 February 2011) in Bonn, Saal A, BMZ Building. DNI and UNU-INWEH also invited a UNEP-IPBES representative to speak on the IPBES process at this Side Event.

Entire 2010 and First half 2011: Organisation and coordination of a global scientific e.consultation on “Needs & Options of a Land Panel” (in cooperation with UNU-INWEH). During the entire phase DNI met discussed the issue with the CST Bureau and the CST Secretariat.

Second half 2010: Setting up of DNI Working Groups (please refer to the Minutes text for information on current status and future activities of the DNI WGs):

- **WG on Economics of SLM.** WG leader: R. Thomas (UNU-INWEH): rthomas@inweh.unu.edu.
- **WG on Environmental Management.** WG leader: M. Laszlo (RISSAC-Hungarian Academy of Science): marton@rissac.hu
- **WG on Dryland Observation System (DOS).** WG leaders Norbert Jürgens (University of Hamburg): norbert.juergens@t-online.de and co-leader Joachim Hill (hillj@uni-trier.de).
- **WG on Livestock.** WG leader: A. Raziq Kakar (Livestock and Dairy Dev., Dept., SAVES, Pakistan): raziq2007@gmail.com
- **WG on Science-Policy Interface:** WG leader: G. Begni (CNES, France): Gerard.Begni@cnes.fr
- **WG on Modelling:** WG leader M. Kappas (Univ. of Goettingen, Germany): mkappas@gwdg.de
- **WG on Soil Salinisation:** WG leader: J. Battle-Sales (Univ. of Valencia, Spain): jorge.battle@uv.es
- **WG on Food Security:** L. C. Stringer (Univ. of Leeds, UK): L.Stringer@leeds.ac.uk
- **TF on Land & Soil:** Leaders: (Richard Escadafal (CESBIO/IRD, France: richard.escadafal@cesbio.cnes.fr & María José Marques (Univ. Autónoma de Madrid) mariajose.marques@uam.es

4. Logistic and administrative support provided by the DNI Bureau to its members during the entire reporting period 2010 - 2012

- Accreditation of DNI members to UN events;
- Provision of space to DNI members to display their scientific work at UN events (DNI maintained its own booth throughout the COPs and CSTs and partly also at CRICs);
- DNI supported partnership building between its members for the development of dryland-relevant projects;
- DNI invited its members to participate in the compilation of publications;
- DNI enabled its members to participate in science and in science-policy consultations;
- DNI continuously provided dryland-relevant information either via its regularly circulated newsletter or in real time (*ad hoc* news).
- DNI invited its members to be actively involved in the organisation of scientific conferences and workshops.
- DNI responded to students’ queries coming especially from non-OECD countries in need of support for advanced academic training.

5. Short FINANCIAL REPORT DesertNet International (DNI) for the period from 01.10.2010 to 30.06.2012 (compiled by the former DNI treasurer Richard Escadafal)

Following the decisions of the First General Assembly of our association, using the power given by the Chair, the first treasurer opened a bank account in the CIC bank in Toulouse, France.

Having registered our association in France eased the procedure and allowed to have a special account for associations (which is fiscally advantageous).

The monthly cost is 6.48€ and allows full access to bank services through the internet, such as balance, money transfer with no charge to other accounts in the euro zone,... These services are accessible to all bureau members wherever they are ; as consequence, the next treasurer may continue to use the same account, if the bureau wishes so.

An invitation to all DNI members has been then disseminated with indications on the modest yearly rates and explanations on how to pay their fees by money transfer on the DNI bank account. As for June 30th 2012 a total of 93 members payed their fees. Each one was sent a formal receipt, with a copy to Chiara Zanolla for the bureau archives. The offer to pay for 4 years and be registered for 5 encountered a good success (40)

A difficulty appeared for the money transfer from countries not belonging to the euro-zone (such as Argentina, Great Britain, Pakistan,...). Indeed the bank charges a very high transaction and conversion cost, almost bringing the money received down to nil. Money transfer through Western Union has been tried, but is very inconvenient (the treasurer has to go personally to the post office to receive the money in cash, then to transfer it to the bank account).

To circumvent this difficulty I explored other international money transfer schemes and finally opened for DNI an account in the PayPal system. The account opening is free of charge, only a small percentage is debited on each transaction, making it much more viable than using the regular transfer from bank to bank.

The leaflet about fees has then been updated in summer 2011 with information on how to pay with Paypal through contacting the treasurer. So far only a ten or so members have used this possibility. However it remains an easy way to pay for the fees for anybody owning a credit card in any currency. The most used option so far is to have them payed through a colleague, friend, relative having a bank account in euros.

Comment : A challenge is to have all members (instead of only some of them!) actually reading and applying the recommendations for fees payment. It is not very complicated, but when a money transfer is done on the DNI bank account without informing the treasurer about its exact purpose, it make his (and now her) task rather difficult : 3 transfers remain unidentified so far.

Final Balance: as expenses have been very limited (876,25€), the final balance is positive with a total of 3385,52 € (3165,35 on the CIC account, plus 220,17 on the Paypal account)

Noting that 40 members have already paid their fees for several years, one should not expect an important influx of membership payments in the 2 coming years. Other sources of funding will have to be mobilized !

Toulouse, June 30th 2012

Richard Escadafal, outgoing treasurer

DNI BUDGET SUMMARY

(as for June 30th, 2012)

	credits	debits	
membership fees received on CIC bank account	4041,60		
balance of other movements		-633,81	
CIC service costs (=account handling and transfers)		-242,44	
Total	4041,60	-876,25	
theoretical balance (from the above)			3165,35
current balance (CIC account 30june)			3165,35
delta (theoretical - actual)			0,00
recieved on Paypal	250,00		
costs of Paypal account		-10,83	
transferred to CIC		-19,00	
available on Paypal account			220,17
TOTAL DNI budget balance (CIC+Paypal)			3385,52

Note: the complete record for the period has been handed to the new treasurer and is available for any member requesting it through the bureau.

Formal letter indicating formal approval of the financial report 2010-2012.

To whom it may concern

Your reference

Our reference

Telephone

Hamburg /Berlin

27.07.2012

SUBJECT: Approval of DesertNet's bi-annual financial report 30.09.2010 – 05.07.2012

The bi-annual financial report for the period 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012, as compiled by the former Treasurer of DesertNet International, Dr. Richard Escadafal, 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 05.07.2012.

Signed by

Dr. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster
(Former Chair)

Prof. Giuseppe Enne
(Former Secretary General)

Prof. Elena Abraham
(Vice Chair)

Dr. María José Marques
(Treasurer)

6. DNI's efforts to gain external financial support in the reporting period 2010 - 2012

These efforts were partly successful (see list below):

1. Funds from GIZ for the printing of hard copies of the LD&D special issue "*Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends*" (peer reviewed).
2. Support by NRD, JRC-IES and ESF to invite experts to the international conference "*Dryland eco-system functioning & resilience*" Alghero, Sardinia. (Jointly organised by DNI, ESF, NRD).
3. NRD & UNU-INWEH sponsored print material, material transport & catering at DNI Side Event (COP10 in Changwon, Rep. of Korea).
4. In the period Nov. 2011 – Feb. 2012, DNI prepared and submitted its application to the *Land for Life Award*, which was launched at COP10 in 2011, as part of the Changwon Initiative. Prize totalled 100,000 USD. DNI was informed by UNCCD in 2012 that it was a pre-final candidate. However the final result showed that 3 very grass-root level projects from Haiti, Turkey & Uganda were selected.
5. Autumn 2011: DNI had promising discussions on funding support by European organisations for a scientific conference on "Food Security & Monitoring". The outcome of the negotiations was however negative in early 2012 due to focused support to "economic initiatives on desertification".

Further Discussions needed on:

DNI's involvement in the European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action ES1104: Arid lands Restoration and Combat of Desertification: Setting Up a Drylands and Desert Restoration Hub.

7. List of Publications and Policy Briefs, which were compiled within DNI working groups and other activities in which DNI was involved during the working phase 30.09.2010 to 05.07.2012:

Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Escadafal, R. / Marqués, M.J. / Pilardeaux, B. (2012): Towards an Intergovernmental Panel on Land and Soils? – The debate is gaining new momentum. -In: local land & soil news 40/41 I/12. The Bulletin of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) e.V.: 22-23.

Thomas RJ; Akhtar-Schuster M; Stringer LC; Marques MJ; Escadafal R; Abraham E; Enne G (2012) [Fertile ground? Options for a science-policy platform for land](#), *Environmental Science and Policy*, **16**, pp.122-135. [doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2011.11.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2011.11.002) Available online at www.sciencedirect.com.

Synthesis of the Conference Outcomes. (2011). Dryland ecosystem functioning and resilience: integrating biophysical assessment with socio-economic issues (eds. University of Sassari, DesertNet International and European Science Foundation). International Conference, Alghero (Italy), 6-8 July 2011. http://www.uniss.it/documenti/conference_outcomes_final.pdf

Policy Brief (ed. DesertNet International). 2011. Fertile Ground? Options for a Science-Policy Platform on Land. A Policy Brief from the Scientific Community prepared for UNCCD COP10. http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/DNI_policy_brief_COP10.pdf

Winslow, M. / Sommer, S. / Bigas, H. / Martius, C. / Vogt, J. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Thomas, R.(eds) (2011): Understanding Desertification and Land Degradation Trends. Proceedings of the UNCCD First Scientific Conference, 22-24 September 2009, during the UNCCD Ninth Conference of Parties, Buenos Aires, Argentina. – In: JRC Scientific and Technical Reports. Download at: <http://dsd-consortium.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/ProceedingsUNCCDFirstScientificConference.pdf>

Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Thomas, R.J. / Stringer, L.C. / Chasek, P. / Seely, M. (2011): Improving the enabling environment to combat land degradation: Institutional, financial, legal and science-policy challenges and solutions. –In: -In: Special Issue on Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends (Guest Editors: M.D. Winslow, M. Akhtar-Schuster, C. Martius, L.C. Stringer, R.J. Thomas, J.V. Vogt,, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>) Land Degradation 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

& Development, 22, Issue 2 (29 March 2011): 299 - 312. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1058/pdf> (peer reviewed).

Reed, M.S. / Fazey, I. / Stringer, L.C. / Raymond, C.M. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Begni, G. / Bigas, H. / Brehm, S. / Briggs, J. / Bryce, R. / Buckmaster, S. / Chanda, R. / Davies, J. / Diez, E. / Essahli, W. / Evely, A. / Geeson, N. / Hartmann, I. / Holden, J. / Hubacek, K. / Ioris, A.A.R. / Kruger, B. / Laureano, P. / Phillipson, J. / Prell, C. / Quinn, C.H. / Reeves, A.D. / Seely, M. / Thomas, R. / Van Der Werff Ten Bosch, M.J. / Vergunst, P. / Wagner, L. (2011): Knowledge management for land degradation monitoring and assessment: An analysis of contemporary thinking. – In: Land Degradation & Development: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1124/abstract> (peer reviewed).

Winslow, M.D. / Vogt, J.V. / Thomas, R.J. / Sommer, S. / Martius, C. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. (2011): Science for improving the monitoring and assessment of dryland degradation. –In: Special Issue on Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends (Guest Editors: M.D. Winslow, M. Akhtar-Schuster, C. Martius, L.C. Stringer, R.J. Thomas, J.V. Vogt, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>, Land Degradation & Development, 22, Issue 2 (29 March 2011): 145-149. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1044/pdf> (peer reviewed).

Cowie, A.L. / Penman, T.D. / Gorissen, L. / Winslow, M.D. / Lehmann, J. / Tyrrell, T.D. / Twomlow, S. / Wilkes, A. / Lal, R. / Jones, J.W. / Paulsch, A. / Kellner, K. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. (2011): Towards sustainable land management in the drylands: Scientific connections in monitoring and assessing dryland degradation, climate change and biodiversity. –In: –In: Special Issue on Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends (Guest Editors: M.D. Winslow, M. Akhtar-Schuster, C. Martius, L.C. Stringer, R.J. Thomas, J.V. Vogt, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>) Land Degradation & Development, 22, Issue 2 (29 March 2011): 248 – 260. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1086/pdf> (peer reviewed).

Reed, M.S. / Buenemann, M. / Athlipheng, J. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Bachmann, F. / Bastin, G. / Bigas, H. / Chanda, R. / Dougill, A.J. / Essahli, W. / Evely, A.C. / Fleskens, L. / Geeson, N. / Glass, J.H. / Hessel, R. / Holden, J. / Ioris, A.A.R. / Kruger, B. / Liniger, H.P. / Mphinyane, W. / Nainggolan, D. / Perkins, J. / Raymond, C.M. / Ritsema, C.J. / Schwilch, G. / Sebege, R. / Seely, M. / Stringer, L.C. / Thomas, R. / Twomlow, S. / Verzaandvoort, S. (2011): Cross-scale monitoring and assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management: A methodological framework for knowledge management. –In: –In: Special Issue on Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends (Guest Editors: M.D. Winslow, M. Akhtar-Schuster, C. Martius, L.C. Stringer, R.J. Thomas, J.V. Vogt, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>) Land Degradation & Development, 22, Issue 2 (29 March 2011): 261 – 271. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1087/pdf> (peer reviewed).

Chasek, P. / Essahli, W. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Stringer, L.C. / Thomas, R. (2011): Integrated land Degradation Monitoring and Assessment: Horizontal Knowledge Management At the National and International Levels. –In: Special Issue on Understanding Dryland Degradation Trends (Guest Editors: M.D. Winslow, M. Akhtar-Schuster, C. Martius, L.C. Stringer, R.J. Thomas, J.V. Vogt, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.v22.2/issuetoc>) Land Degradation & Development, 22, Issue 2 (29 March 2011): 272 - 284. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ldr.1096/pdf> (peer reviewed).

Akhtar-Schuster, M., Thomas, R., Abraham, E., Chasek, P., Enne, G., Escadafal, R., Marques, M.J., Stringer, L. and Zanolli, C. (2011). Report on Outcomes of the Side Event on 'Providing InterDisciplinary Advice to the UNCCD' (Side Event held on 17 February 2011 at the CST S-2 in Bonn, Germany). DesertNet International. Unpublished but internationally cited report available at: http://www.european-desertnet.eu/docs/Official_Report_on_Outcomes_of_the_e_forum_Side_Event-20110303-FINAL.pdf

Stringer, L.C. / Thomas, R.J. / Akhtar-Schuster, M. (2010): Expand scientific input to address environmental effects, NATURE, 465, pp.869-869. doi:10.1038/465869c.

Akhtar-Schuster, M. / Bigas, H. / Thomas, R. (eds.) (2010): Monitoring and Assessment of Desertification and Land Degradation: Knowledge Management, Institutions and Economics. White Paper of the DSD Working Group 3. – In: UNU Desertification Series No. 9. (http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/DSD-WG3_WP_final_web_with-cover.pdf).



8. Some considerations on DNI's science & policy activities, which are still in the pipeline:

Organisation of DNI's next scientific meeting (a first draft concept for a scientific workshop on "Food Security and Monitoring" was developed by DNI members in the first half 2012 and has been provided to the Chair Giuseppe Enne).

Further Strengthening DNI's interdisciplinarity. 3 categories:

1. Applied Sciences
2. Natural Sciences
3. Social Sciences and Economics

DNI participation at the **Drylands, Deserts and Desertification Conference** at Sede Boquer, Israel?
(<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/desertification/Pages/default.aspx>)

Continuation of the **networking discussions with other existing dryland networks** (see discussions with WOCAT and GNDRI)

DNI's Accrediation as CSO to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

(In order to participate as a CSO in UN meetings beyond UNCCD's meetings (such as Rio+20) a first attempt to accredit DNI as a CSO with the *UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs* was attempted in 30.01.2012). DNI was however not included in their database due to technical errors, although submission was on time. A failure message was not received so that DNI was not accredited to Rio+20. The organisers could not explain where the problem lay).

Annex 5

Task Force on Land and Soil

Richard Escadafal¹, Maria Jose Marques², Celia Barbero², Williams Ebrayat¹, Manuel Ruiz², Mariam Akhtar-Schuster³

There is a growing consensus on the need for a mechanism providing independent scientific advice on land degradation issues, particularly in the drylands, where it is known as desertification. In the UN context it is called addressing DLDD = Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (the mandate of UNCCD).

According to the results of electronic polls carried out by DNI⁽⁴⁾ and UNCCD, on the one side, a majority of scientists strongly believe that their research results are not sufficiently used. On the other side, the parties of UNCCD state that fighting land degradation should be more science-based to better guide policy makers and to gain in efficiency.

The attention has been so far primarily focused on the different institutional options to provide such an independent scientific advice. Whereas some advocate for a new panel dedicated to the DLDD issues (IPCC-like), others propose to use newly created *Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (IPBES, promoted by CBD, UNEP, FAO or UNESCO). A recent initiative the *Intergovernmental Panel on Soils* promoted by FAO, JRC, EC) was initially named *Land and Soil Panel* (Meeting in FAO headquarters, Rome, 7-9 september, 2011). The disappearance of the word “land” in this panel is not just a nuance, it means that basic science on soil will be promoted, as a result Land issues, or applied research, would still be lacking a suitable forum for specific discussions.

Away from the debate on possible competition between these or other possible panels, we thought it might be interesting to reflect beforehand on the type of scientific expertise, the different disciplines and approaches that it would be necessary to mobilise to provide advice on DLDD. So we started this Task Force on Land and Soils early 2012, in the belief that there is a first a need to clarify the Land and Soil issues in the scientific community, and that DNI is the right place to promote such a discussion through its role of independent think tank.

To better grasp the “landscape” of research at stake, we use bibliometrics methods and data mining of publications regarding Land and Soils issues. These provide the tools needed to analyse the structure of this landscape by extracting the hidden information from databases, regarding relationships between scientists, disciplines, organisations, policy makers, and the clusters they form.

After data collection, extraction and organisation of relevant elements of information, in scientific papers, reports, project documents, etc., these techniques allow the visualization of links between clusters, their interconnections and their strength may be interpreted by experts to analyse the current situation of soil and land degradation research and implementation.

Some questions may be addressed, for example, if the strength of interconnections between topics, researchers or institutions is related to a better implementation of measures or more efficient links with policy makers; if there are differences in the vision of this issue when different language is used, or if applied and basic research are interconnected between them and with other relevant organizations.

¹ CESBIO and OMP, Toulouse, France;

² Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

³ Secretariat DNI, University of Hamburg, Germany

⁴ Policy Brief (ed. DesertNet International). 2011. Fertile Ground? Options for a Science-Policy Platform on Land. A Policy Brief from the Scientific Community prepared for UNCCD COP10. http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/DNI_policy_brief_COP10.pdf



After this launch phase, the forthcoming activities of the Task Force on Land and Soil are:

- Invitation of members of DNI to participate in the Task Force to add their contributions to the analysis and to a broad raw database of references
- An electronic forum will be organised to involve motivated participants
- A session entitled "Soil Science for Land Management" will be held in April 2013 in the European Geosciences Union (EGU, Vienna) to compile and discuss results
- The results are planned to be published in a special issue of a peer reviewed journal

For more information, kindly contact Richard Escadafal (richard.escadafal@cesbio.cnes.fr) or Maria Jose Marques (mariajose.marques@uam.es)

Annex 6

Scientific activities in 2012 – 2014: Lessons learned and proposal for the way forward *(proposed by the newly elected DNI chair Giuseppe Enne)*

About the lessons learned so far:

- Willingness, ability, enthusiasm, commitment, determination: they always make it possible to achieve the objectives.
- Even in the absence of financial resources that make travelling difficult for DNI members, ideas can easily travel thus allowing for advancement in knowledge and relationships.
- The strength of an Association lies in its members; the strength of the members lies in the Association (network) .

About the approach:

- All DNI members have equal status in proposing tools and / or actions in line with the statutory purposes
- Therefore all members should contribute to the growth of the Association in accordance with their own responsibilities
- This is particularly true for those members who submitted their candidatures to SC and AB, and who will thus constitute a valuable Contact Group for SC and AB in the future.

About the strategies for the period 2012 – 2014:

- Full exploitation of AB to be charged with the identification of key scientific open questions to support the actions of SC and the launch of new scientific initiatives .
- Support to the activities of the Working Groups, facilitating their enlargement to experts concerned and available to join them.
- Enhancement of the scientific activities of all DNI members with the creation of a cluster for each disciplinary (thematic) area or sub-area so as to implement the scientific information exchange within the network.
- Strengthen the level of participation and the “membership spirit “ of DNI members (48.20% of voters is not the optimal situation)
- Increasing the number of DNI members by at least 50% in the forthcoming biennium, mostly focusing on those continents where DNI is least represented.
- Give breath to and support the implementation of DNI activities that have been recently activated, such as the UNCCD fellowship and AGSA.
- Strengthen the synergies among DNI - WOCAT – GNDRI to consolidate a common and integrated platform for exchanges and services
- Search for sponsorships and for strategies that have a high fund raising potential, which is essential for the enlargement of DNI activities in all continents.

About the mechanisms:

- Identification among DNI members of Focal Points for each geographic macro area (as defined by the SC) with the aim of: i) Favoring the enlargement of the network to other possible DNI members; ii) Promoting a DNI thematic event during the biennium in each geographic macro area (with the participation of at least one SC and one AB member)
- Decentralize some DNI activities along the lines of the WGs and the UNCCD Fellowship
- Stimulate the creation of think tanks on the EC calls for proposals related to the scientific areas of DNI members
- Facilitate the creation of partnerships for international research and/or cooperation projects (via seminars / conferences / thematic workshops led by DNI)
- Identify responsibilities of DNI members in international projects in order to strengthen DNI networking strategies
- Promote training activities and Summer Schools, following the examples given by FAO and EU



Annex 7

Template for requesting information about DNI Working Groups / Task Force

Title of the Working Group / Task Force	
Name of the leader(s)	
Institute(s)	
Participants to the Working Groups	
Theme/Rationale	
Past activities in the period 2010-2012	
Products (publications, presentations, ...)	
Planned activities in the period 2012-2014	
Funding concept	