

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF THE NETWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ON DESERTIFICATION

DESERTNET INTERNATIONAL (DNI)

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 seats at *Agropolis International, 1000 avenue Agropolis, 34394 Montpellier - France*

The seat can be transferred upon decision of the Steering Committee.

The Association is governed by the Law of July 1, 1901, relating to the association contract as well as the Executive Decree of August 16, 1901.

All official positions (e.g. Chair, co-Chair, Treasurer, Bureau, Secretary General) of the Association can be filled by any member of the Association irrespective of his/her nationality. The Association DNI is non-partisan and non-denominational.

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 scientific 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. The Association 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 Duration

The Association's duration is unlimited.

Article 4 Membership

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

Membership in the Association is open to scientists from all disciplines with experience in dryland research.

Requests for membership are evaluated and approved by the Steering Committee.

Members who do not pay their membership fees may not have access to all the services provided by the Association and are not entitled to stand for election to the governing bodies of the Association.

Students may also be members of DesertNet International (DNI), but do not have voting rights and cannot be members of the Steering Committee

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

Article 5 Observers

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 United Nations bodies, specifically the UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), Commissions, Councils and other relevant bodies as observers to the DNI General Assembly.

Article 6 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 withdrawn by the Steering Committee of the DesertNet International (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 remove an Association member.

Article 7 Organs

The organs of the Association are:

- The General Assembly (Article 8)
- The Extraordinary General Assembly (Article 9)
- The Steering Committee (Article 10)
- The Bureau (Article 11)

Article 8 The General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of all Association members.

The Bureau of the Association is in charge of organizing the General Assembly.

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

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

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

The President of the Association shall chair the General Assembly and the call for elections, and organizes them with the assistance of the Steering Committee and the Bureau.

Each member of the Association has one vote.

Students do not have voting rights.

Representatives of invited institutions have observer status at Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assemblies. They do not have voting rights and cannot be elected or appointed to the Steering Committee.

According to the Articles of the Association:

- a. The General Assembly is convened once every three years. Members participate either 'in person' or electronically ('remote voting').

- b. The members of the Association shall submit to the Steering Committee a list of topics to be discussed at the General Assembly at least six weeks in advance.
- c. Members of the Association who paid the membership fee may become members of the Steering Committee. Their application must be sent in writing to the Steering Committee at least six weeks before the General Assembly. The Steering Committee shall consider the requirements for nominations.
- d. The names of the proposed candidates are announced to the members of the Association four weeks before the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall designate the new Steering Committee as elected according to the election procedures.
- e. The Steering Committee shall decide on new nominations submitted in writing to the Chair of the Association.
- f. The invitation to participate and the list of topics to be discussed shall be sent by the President of the Association in writing (e-mail) to all members of the Association four weeks in advance.
- g. Decisions taken during the General Assembly are recorded in the Register of Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly. They shall be signed by the President and the Vice-President of the Association, and shall be made available to all members and observers of the Association by the Bureau of the Association through an electronic distribution channel.

Article 9 – The Extraordinary General Assembly

If necessary, or at the request of half plus one of the registered members who regularly paid the membership fee, or at the request of the Steering Committee, the Chair may convene an Extraordinary General Assembly, according to the modalities provided for in the present Articles.

The modalities of convocation are the same as for the ordinary General Assembly. The deliberations for the modification of the Articles or the dissolution or for acts concerning real estate are taken by a majority of two thirds of the participating members.

Article 10 - The Steering Committee

The Association is administered by a Steering Committee consisting of up to 20 members. Members elected of the Steering Committee are designated 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 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:

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

The Steering Committee meets at least once a year to define the work program, to prepare the items requiring decision by the Steering Committee and the tasks to be carried out by the Bureau. If necessary, or for practical reasons, the annual meeting can be organized by electronic networking.

Article 11 - The Bureau

The Bureau of the Association is composed of the following persons, elected among the Steering Committee by the Steering Committee.

- The Chair,
- The Vice-Chair,
- The Treasurer, and a Vice-Treasurer, if necessary,
- The Secretary General, and a Deputy Secretary General, if necessary

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

The Bureau consults the Steering Committee during the annual meetings for every new decision and actions and informs regularly on the ongoing activities.

The Association Operational Secretariat is located at: *NRD Nucleo di Ricerca sulla Desertificazione, Università di Sassari, Viale Italia 39, 07100 Italy.*

The Operational Secretariat supports the Bureau of the Association in communication, organization of the Association's activities and archiving of the Association's official documents.

Article 12 - Resources

The resources of the Association include:

- The amount of the membership fees;
- Subsidies that may be granted by the State, the European Union, any body or international institution or public authorities,
- The resources created exceptionally and, if necessary, with the approval of the competent authority (Conferences, Symposiums, etc.) for the benefit of the Association,
- All resources authorized by the laws and regulations in force.

Article 13 - 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, in accordance with the regulations in force.

The Treasurer is in charge of keeping the financial records of the Association. 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.

Article 14 - Amendment of the Articles

The President may submit proposals for amendments to the Association's Articles if they are requested by one fifth of the members of the Association who regularly paid the membership fee,. These proposals must be submitted at least six weeks before the Extraordinary General Assembly. Amendments are adopted if they receive the support of 2/3 of the members participating in the quorum who also regularly paid the membership fee.

Article 15 - Dissolution

The Extraordinary General Assembly can vote for dissolution by qualify majority of 2/3 of the members participating in the quorum. In case of dissolution, one or more trustees are appointed. The net assets may not be transferred to any member of the Association, even partially, except for the recovery of a contribution. Any remaining assets of the Association will go to any Association having similar objectives as agreed to by the Extraordinary General Assembly.

Article 16 - Approbation of the Statutes

We the undersigned certify have approved the present text and request its registration as the Articles of the new Association *DesertNet International (DNI)*.