



## Dgroups Operational Plan 2015

Working together for a world where every person is able to contribute constructively to dialogue and decision-making for international development and social justice

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The Dgroups Foundation Board will continue to fulfill its responsibilities across nine work areas:

1. Strengthen the Partnership (Lead: Neil Pakenham-Walsh)
2. Platform improvement (Lead: Saskia Harmsen)
3. Service reliability (Lead: Hapee de Groot)
4. Users' support for optimum use of the platform (Lead: Pier Andrea Pirani)
5. Engagement with current partners (Lead: Pier Andrea Pirani and Neil Pakenham-Walsh)
6. Marketing and outreach (Lead: Sarah Cummings)
7. Governance and administration (Lead: Neil Pakenham-Walsh and Sarah Cummings)
8. Finance (Lead: Rob Witte)
9. Monitoring and evaluation (Lead: TBC)

### **1. Strengthen the Partnership (Lead: Neil Pakenham-Walsh)**

- 1.1. We shall promote our vision statement widely: A world where every person is able to contribute constructively to dialogue and decision-making for international development and social justice.
- 1.2. We shall launch and refine the Dgroups Directory in consultation with Partners.
- 1.3. We shall create a visual map of Dgroups using [DebateGraph](#).
- 1.4. We shall explore the potential for progressive mapping of the global CoP ecosystem, and thereby promote alignment, reduce duplication, increase collective impact of all CoPs (Dgroups + non-Dgroups) working in international development.
- 1.5. We shall explore potential for Dgroups to lead global efforts towards a long-term goal (2020) whereby:
  - All (open) Communities of Practice will be readily visible and searchable by moderators and users.

- All (open) CoPs will be able to connect and share seamlessly with one another.
- All (open) CoPs will be able to harness the collective intelligence of their members (multi-stakeholder input into policy and practice).

## **2. Platform improvement (Lead: Saskia Harmsen)**

- 2.1. We shall continue to improve the platform through a user-driven process.
- 2.2. We shall identify and monitor functionality issues as raised by users.
- 2.3. We shall, in particular, address the following outstanding issues:
  - Clear login details when new members are added/invited;
  - Allow multiple email addresses for users;
  - More granular approval policies (toggle option for admin messages to not be moderated);
  - Better statistics (users, downloads);
  - “Make public” function;
  - Incorrect building of strings in email that results in messages in a thread not always being filed together on the web archive;
  - Better search;
  - Better guidance materials;
  - Email formatting: Sometimes the formatting is stripped out and the message arrives as plain text; in other occasions, line spacing is added;
  - Function to see whether email addresses for members are still active or 'dead', making bounce reports easily accessible to admins
  - Better integration of Dgroups into partners' websites (through APIs).
- 2.4. We shall launch the public Dgroups directory in liaison with WA-Research and refine the metadata (Lead person: Pier Andrea Pirani).
- 2.5. We shall continue to explore opportunities presented by mobile technologies.
- 2.6. We shall publicise the existing API more among the Partners. We shall provide guidance to Partners who would like to implement it. We shall start a discussion through [redesign] on how Dgroups can benefit from the API to keep growing and meeting the needs of partners. We shall look into REST architectural style for web services in relation to the API.

## **3. Service reliability (Lead: Hapee de Groot)**

- 3.1. We shall maintain service reliability at or very near to 100%.
- 3.2. We shall continue to increase our disaster preparedness, so that normal service is maintained in the event of disaster (eg technical breakdown, illness, injury). A named deputy will be instated in early 2015.

## **4. Users' support for optimum use of the platform (Lead: Pier Andrea Pirani)**

- 4.1. We shall introduce a peer support/training programme.
- 4.2. We shall organize regular online peer exchange sessions (1 each quarter).
- 4.3. We shall continue to develop the [dgroups.info](http://dgroups.info) website.

## **5. Engagement with current partners (Lead: Pier Andrea Pirani and Neil Pakenham-Walsh)**

- 5.1. We shall continue to encourage members to make full use of their membership, including the possibility to create Dgroups for affiliated organizations.
- 5.2. We shall continue to maintain regular communications with all our Partners, through 1-to-1 calls (at least 2 times per year). Neil and Pier are responsible for regular conversations (2 times per year) with Dgroups members, with Neil covering the UK based partners, and Pier the others. Partners will be routinely invited to help with Dgroups marketing and outreach.
- 5.3. We shall explore other ways to promote communication and cooperation among Dgroups, for example online "share fair" and increased cooperation to publicise Dgroups.

## **6. Marketing and outreach (Lead: Sarah Cummings)**

- 6.1. We shall continue to develop the Dgroups Foundation website ([dgroups.info](http://dgroups.info)), particularly to attract new Full Partners and Associate Partners.
- 6.2. We shall retain all existing Full Partners and engage 4 new Full Partners and 6 new Associate Partners.
- 6.3. We shall market Dgroups to French, Spanish and Portuguese audiences.
- 6.4. We shall coordinate and provide support to at least 6 Partners to promote Dgroups at conferences and through their websites (conference calendar, leaflets, PPT).
- 6.5. We shall develop marketing personas.
- 6.6. We shall update the standard Dgroups email footer, to add more information about Dgroups and a link to the [dgroups.info](http://dgroups.info) site.
- 6.7. We shall proceed with formal invitations to all organizations that have been using Dgroups free of charge, beyond the usual trial period of 6 months.

## **7. Governance and administration (Lead: Neil Pakenham-Walsh and Sarah Cummings)**

7.1. We shall seek opportunities to further strengthen the Dgroups Board, including gender and geographical balance. (The Dgroups Statutes allows for up to 9 Board members and the Board currently has 7 members).

7.2. We shall identify a person to take over the Treasurer role from Rob Witte.

## **8. Finance (Lead: Rob Witte)**

8.1. We shall prevent cash flow issues, due to members not paying the contributions on time. To prevent this, invoices will be sent in Q1 or Q2 2015 (instead of Q3 or Q4 as done in previous years).

8.2. We shall recruit at least 4 new Full Partners (and/or income equivalent number of Associate Partners) to bring us back into positive balance.

## **9. Monitoring and evaluation (Lead: TBC)**

9.1. We shall seek feedback through [redesign] on what the key needs are for easily accessible statistics - and how to be less reliant on stats provided by WA Research.

9.2. We shall seek feedback through [redesign] on whether/how to improve other aspects of M&E.

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## **Annex - List of Dgroups Partners at 1 January 2015**

### **Full Partners**

1. CIDSE
2. Department for International Development (DFID)
3. European Centre for Development Policy Making (ECDPM)
4. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
5. Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
6. Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (Hivos)
7. ICCO
8. International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
9. International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)
10. Natural Resources Institute (NRI)
11. Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN)
12. Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
13. Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
14. Tropical Health & Education Trust (THET)
15. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
16. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDPF)

### **Associate Partners**

1. Access Agriculture
2. Alfa Redi

3. Enda Energie
4. Euforic Services
5. SAP International
6. The Broker Online

