



## What have we achieved so far and what is the Network bringing to European development practitioners?

The Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation has entered a new phase of institutionalization which will enable it to increase its activities and better serve its members as well as the broader community of development practitioners throughout Europe.

The activities of the Network until now have concentrated on three main focus areas:

- development, organisation and clarification of priorities of the Network,
- creating opportunities for sustained collaboration within the thematic groups,
- dealing with new issues linked to the European agenda or to global development issues.

**Developing the Network** since it began in 2007 has essentially consisted in preparing a sustainable solution for ensuring the secretariat and coordination functions. This will be achieved through the creation of a coordination office in Brussels in early 2010. A previous step was the launching in November 2008 of the current website, which is now regularly updated and supplied with useful documents and news.

☪ *The network should transform the website into a more interactive tool.*

Additionally, the growing membership (13 as of December 2009) and the even broader participation of European practitioners in some of our activities confirm the capacity of the Network to gather European development cooperation actors around operational issues.

☪ *Contact with non member European aid actors will be further developed.*

Concerning issues and themes brought along by **the European and global contexts**, the Network has endeavoured to handle them through specific initiatives such as:

- an exchange on the consequences of the global economic crisis on the activity of European aid actors, in the framework of the annual meeting of the Network in May 2009,
- technical workshops on issues linked to aid efficiency (notably delegated cooperation), climate change (measuring carbon footprint of projects), evaluating development results ("MDG reporting"), etc.
- a structured collective contribution to the consultation on the reform of the European Commission's financial regulation.

☪ *Monitoring the development agendas and global issues and proposing subsequent joint action or coordination among Members will continue to be one of the Network's priorities.*

Generally speaking, the Network has contributed to a number of meetings in very diverse configurations and helped generate **a growing mutual understanding between European actors**.

Thanks to our **annual meetings**,

- Our Members and other European practitioners have an opportunity to get together on a regular basis,
- Participants exchange views on current global issues with regard to how they affect our organisations, individually and as part of the European development cooperation.
- Participants are widely informed of the activities carried out in the Network and contribute to determining further activities and priorities

**The European Development Days (EDD)** have become an annual occasion for European development practitioners to come together, so the Network has been an active participant since 2008. During the 2009 EDD, top management of all Members of the Network joined for a first meeting of this kind, resulting in concrete decisions for the future setup of the Network. The Network has also gained in visibility, being represented in the “development village” on its own.

Steering of the Network is carried out through the **Core Group** which meets several times a year, and maintains continuous e-mail contact. This has enabled the Network, for example, to develop proposals relatively quickly. Moreover, as a result of the annual rotation within the core group (one member steps in and one member steps out), a growing number of contact persons are well aware of Network activities and are able to work together, forming a true European team.

**Thematic meetings** are the more operational side of the Network’s activities. These meetings contribute to broadening the scope of European practitioner coordination to our colleagues in charge of cross-cutting issues or to organisation matters or support services and, in the future perhaps to operational issues on regional level.

The thematic group leaders organise or coordinate the organisation of meetings related to their overall domain and thereby provide for continuity and coherence.

In addition, all member organisations may propose meetings on an ad hoc basis, where a need for coordination or brainstorming on a particular topic is identified. This provides for flexibility and quick response to demands.

[In this sense, several workshops or seminars have been launched in 2009 by Network Members. Not all of them were explicitly network events, but all were supported by the Network with regard to their relevance for European practitioners:

January	Joint Monitoring
February	Delegated cooperation
March	Assessing carbon footprint of development projects
October	Delegated cooperation
May	Information and follow-up meetings during the Network annual meeting
November	MDG Reporting and other impact assessment tools
December	Accountability of development agencies

Ø *In the future, the Network seeks to keep both the flexibility of ad hoc initiatives and the more structured approach of thematic groups. But it will also set longer-term priorities for the network in order to have a clearer view of where we want to go.*