



Meridian Institute

Connecting People to Solve Problems

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Dear Constance:

We are pleased to provide this final report on Nanotechnology and Development News (NDN – <http://www.merid.org/NDN/>), which completed its grant period on June 30, 2008.

A free, daily electronic news service, Nanotechnology and Development News was established to raise awareness about the implications of nanotechnology for developing countries and to contribute to informed decision-making about the appropriate role of nanotechnology in addressing human development needs. More specifically, NDN's objectives are to:

1. Provide timely and balanced information about nanotechnology and development issues to meet the needs of governments, inter-governmental organizations, academics, industry, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in developed and developing countries;
2. Enhance transparency in nanotechnology and, more broadly, science and technology, decision-making and contribute to informed public debate;
3. Contribute to an informed public debate by providing balanced coverage of issues; and
4. Foster partnerships and networks among people interested in development, science, and technology, and nanotechnology.

To meet these objectives, NDN provides 2-4 succinct daily summaries of the most important global developments at the nexus of nanotechnology, poverty alleviation, and

the role of science and technology in development. NDN is available online, by email, and through RSS news feed and is designed as a single, convenient source of balanced and timely information on a range of complex and interrelated science, technology, and policy issues.

Since the public launch of the news service on 12 December 2005, Meridian Institute has established NDN as an important and valuable service for the thousands of users who look to it as the trusted source of balanced, daily coverage of issues related nanotechnology and international development. NDN is currently the only available source of daily news dedicated specifically to issues at the nexus of nanotechnology and international development. Moreover, as a product of Meridian Institute, NDN is trusted as a balanced, fair, and unbiased source of information.

With more than 1000 email subscribers from more than 50 countries and an average of over 3,000 website visits from more than 80 countries per month, we believe NDN has contributed significantly to raising awareness about the implications of nanotechnology for developing countries and to meeting the ongoing needs of stakeholders and decision-makers in developed and developing countries for unbiased and timely information that helps them examine and make informed decisions about these complex substantive issues.

We thank DFID for your support of NDN and assistance in driving its success. The following sections outline NDN's objectives, activities, and accomplishments over the grant.

Unique Value and Approach

NDN uniquely responds to the ongoing needs of public and private stakeholders in developed and developing countries for unbiased and timely information that helps them examine and make informed decisions about such complex issues as:

- **Governance and policy developments** such as regulatory and policy initiatives, voluntary standard-setting initiatives, public debate, public participation and engagement, and the opinions of prominent actors on the potential benefits and risks of nanotechnology, especially for poor people in developing countries.
- **Scientific and product innovations** in fields applicable to priority development needs, such as the development of water purification, renewable energy, and health technologies with potential to help achieve the MDGs.
- **Risk-related information** such as research and political discussions on the potential environmental, human health, and safety risk of nanotechnology, as well as information on risk assessment and management related to nanotechnology.
- **Other cross cutting issues** such as innovation approaches, socio-economics, ethics, intellectual property rights and access to technology, capacity building, and scalability, delivery, and sustainability of new technologies.

- **Relevant initiatives** dealing with nanotechnology policy, responsible research and development of nanotechnology, R&D cooperation with and among developing countries, and international development.¹
- **Resources and events** such as upcoming conferences and the launch of important new reports and websites.

NDN's daily summaries of important news items are drawn from a diverse range of sources, including: peer-reviewed journals; national and international newspapers; scientific journals; government, industry, and NGO publications; communiqués from the UN and other international organizations; and a range of specialized Internet-based news sources that are focused on nanotechnology, development, and other relevant topics.

With nanotechnology-related citation continuing to increase daily, NDN's daily summary format and targeted multi-source coverage makes it accessible and valuable to busy people who have limited time to monitor new developments and keep up-to-date. Because each summary is a single paragraph that emphasizes the new item's most important details and larger relevance, it usually takes no more than five minutes to scan each day's edition of NDN. Each summary also includes a link to the news item or more information for those readers who want to learn more. Many subscribers have provided positive comments, both informally and through our biannual subscriber questionnaires, on NDN's unique approach and format.

Broad Global Reach

NDN covers issues relevant to a global audience and a broad range of decision-makers and stakeholders. Specifically, NDN's target audience includes:

- **Governments**
 - Government officials in developing countries involved in developing policies, regulations, and R&D strategies for nanotechnology, as well as those working on a range of development and other relevant issues (e.g., water, energy, health, agriculture, mining, etc.).
 - Government officials in developed countries involved in establishing nanotechnology and, more broadly, science and technology (S+T) policies that could affect the development and/or availability of inventions and innovation to meet development needs, as well as those working on a range of development and other relevant issues.
- **Donor organizations** interested in development and the role of nanotechnology, emerging technologies, innovation, and S+T in development, as well as those interested in governance issues related to existing and emerging technologies.

¹ For example: US National Nanotechnology Initiative; European Union Framework Programmes; Intergovernmental process on responsible research and development of nanotechnology; United Nations Millennium Development Goals; UK Africa Commission; International Risk Governance Council; International Council on Nanotechnology; UNIDO North-South Dialogue on Nanotechnology; Global Research Alliance; Asian Nanotechnology Network

- **Journalists**, in particular journalists writing about S+T and development issues.
- **NGOs**, including but not limited to organizations with interest in development, sustainability, environment, health, and science and technology.
- **Academics**, in particular academics working on development issues, nano-scale science, risk research, etc.
- **International institutions** aiming to help developing countries overcome poverty.
- **Companies**
 - Companies developing nanotechnology applications.
 - Companies exploring new business models for doing business with the poor.

NDN was able to meet its 2 year target of 500 subscribers from 50 countries by the completion of its first year, and it currently has more than 1000 subscribers from more than 30 developing countries and 20 developed countries. In addition, the NDN website receives a monthly average of over 3,000 visits from more than 80 countries. NDN subscribers include key individuals from governments, companies, NGOs, and others who are involved in policy and decision-making processes. Other subscribers are distributed across the main target audience groups.

NDN's reach also extends beyond its subscribers and website visitors. Several other news outlets are using NDN summaries on a regular basis, sometimes in translation. NDN is also currently one of Google News' top ranked sources for nanotechnology news. Many of our subscribers have commented that they regularly circulate NDN summaries to their colleagues and networks, and two universities currently use NDN as required reading for their courses on nanotechnology and society.

To further expand NDN's reach, Meridian has provided instructions for how other organizations can include Meridian's daily nanotechnology news summaries on their websites using RSS news feeds. Individuals are also able to add NDN to their newsreaders by following the XML link on the web portal.

Looking to the Future

NDN's large and rapidly growing subscriber base, the heavy user traffic to the NDN website, and the positive feedback we have received from users confirm that there is an ongoing need and growing demand for continuing the news service. Furthermore, with nanotechnology investments continuing to rise and applications rapidly proliferating, NDN will become an increasingly important tool for busy decision-makers from the public and private sector in developed and developing countries, as well as international organizations, standardization bodies, NGOs, and other groups, who have begun initiating efforts to discuss, develop, and implement research, risk assessment, governance, standardization, and public involvement strategies related to nanotechnology.

Feedback from NDN users suggests that there are a number of opportunities to expand NDN into a platform for bridging together people from different countries, sectors, disciplines, and perspectives. For example, web-based "social networking" tools (i.e., Web 2.0) would allow NDN readers to discuss important issues online, share relevant news of their own projects, and find partners and allies for collaborative projects.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

Todd Barker
Partner, Meridian Institute