



**International Rivers Network**  
Linking Human Rights and Environmental Protection

**Policy Program**  
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## Cooperative Education Program Work Report

### Intern

Chunbo Ma, Ecological Economics, PhD. Candidate, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

### Award Organization

Centre for the Applied Study of Economics and the Environment (CASE&E)

721 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97206

### Host Organization

International Rivers Network (IRN)

1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703

Starting Date: May 22, 2006    Ending Date: July 21, 2006

IRN Supervisor: Peter Bosshard    CASE&E Supervisor: David Batker

## **Job Description**

The Center for the Applied Study of Economics & Environment (CASE&E), a network of economists who are developing and applying economic analysis to support the protection of human well-being and the natural environment, launched a summer internship program that will match economics graduate students with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work on environmental issues. The internship program is part of an effort to develop a new network of economists who are developing and applying the economic arguments for active protection of human health and the natural environment.

The first internships were awarded for the summer of 2006. Awarded interns this year have the opportunity to work with one of the following host organizations: Massachusetts Climate Action Network, International Rivers Network (IRN), NRDC Green Nanotech and NRDC Ocean Initiative Program.

As one of the awarded interns, I have been working at IRN over the period of the internship. Established in 1985, IRN has become a very influential NGO protect rivers and defends the rights of communities that depend on them. It seeks a world in which rivers and the ecosystems they support are valued, and the importance of the links between healthy environments and healthy societies is understood. It also envisions a world where development projects neither degrade nature nor impoverish people, and where all people have a voice in decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods.

Over the period of my internship, I worked mainly in IRN's policy program, supervised by Policy Director Peter Bosshard. The goals of the policy program are to strengthen international environmental, social and human rights standards and guidelines, particularly in the water and energy sectors. I took mainly on the following two projects (Both projects were presented at the CASE&E workshop, Portland, Oregon, July 31 – Aug 1, 2006):

## **Mott Foundation Project**

My duty with this project is to provide research assistance for an assignment on the sustainability of the World Bank's infrastructure lending. In this assignment for the C.S. Mott Foundation, we firstly reviewed existing sustainability assessment toolkits in the literature and provide relevant information on each toolkit for further reference, then developed criteria for the assessment of energy projects considering particular characteristics of energy projects, and finally analyzed the World Bank's infrastructure (and particularly power) projects against these criteria.

- 1) Review existing sustainability assessment toolkits and provide relevant information on each toolkit for further reference;
- 2) Develop our working criteria and table for ETPSA, considering particular characteristics of energy projects;
- 3) Get the full dataset of World Bank's power projects (a total of 506 projects since 1984), clean and sort it;
- 4) Compile a sample of 76 projects (out of the total 506) approved since 2004 and conduct a decomposition analysis of the sample based on the Project Information Documents (PID) of these projects;
- 5) Compile the final sample of 25 projects (out of the 76) based on some predetermined selection criteria and review the Project Appraisal Documents (PAD) of these 25 projects;
- 6) Apply our working tool to this final sample;
- 7) Draft a report on this research project;

The outcome of this project is a 30-page draft report. At this stage, no conclusions have been drawn and, only results of analysis are presented in the draft report. The report will probably be circulated among interest groups, NGOs, partners and friends for comments and critiques.

## **UNEP-DDP (2<sup>nd</sup> Stage)**

Housed at UNEP, the Dams and Development Project (DDP) is the official follow-up process to the World Commission on Dams (WCD). The DDP's main project for 2006 is

the elaboration of a Compendium on good practice in developing dams and their alternatives. IRN is consulted on the case studies that the Compendium includes. Moreover, my supervisor, Peter Bosshard, is on the Steering Committee of the DDP. Over the last three weeks, my work focus switched to this project. My duty is to check and analyze the quality and relevance of the case studies in the draft Compendium, and draft comments on the case studies to the DDP. At current stage (2<sup>nd</sup> stage), 7 priority key issues are identified and for each identified issues, several case studies (8-15) are selected and presented in the draft. The seven priority key issues are:

- 1) Benefit Sharing
- 2) Stakeholder Participation
- 3) Compensation Policy
- 4) Social Impact Assessment
- 5) Compliance: Enforcement/Mechanisms
- 6) Outstanding Social Issues
- 7) International Policy Concerning Shared River Basins

With the DDP report for each issue 100-200 pages long, I haven't had enough time to finish commenting on all issues during my internship. By the time I completed my internship with IRN, I had managed to prepare a draft report (about 30 pages) with comments on the first four issues listed above.

### **Assignment Evaluation**

During the first six weeks, I conducted research on the sustainability of the World Bank's infrastructure lending, helped develop criteria for assessing the sustainability of infrastructure (and particularly energy) projects, and analyzed the World Bank's portfolio of energy projects against these criteria.

During the concluding three weeks of my internship, I mainly focused on the second project. I analyzed and prepared comments on the draft studies for a compendium on

good practice on dam-building that UNEP's Dams and Development Project is currently preparing.

Both projects ended up with a 30-page draft report. My work was reviewed by my supervisor as "of outstanding quality" throughout my internship at IRN. "Chunbo is committed and very pleasant to work with...has a very intelligent and analytical mind, and a quick grasp of the issues. He has a good understanding both of sustainability issues and of the standard methods of economic analysis...carried out all his assignments independently, reliably, with great technical skill, and very efficiently".

IRN has a very pleasant working environment. Colleagues are from all over the world with different expertise and all are always open to help you. They are smart, friendly and passionate. They do not simply think of protecting rivers as their work, rather, they have true passions for life, environment and people. I feel very happy to have been working here for the past two months and recommend IRN as an ideal Co-Op place for all interest students.