

## Green Watershed & BothENDS

### Report on EU-China NGO Twinning program

Yu Chen, Green Watershed, Kunming, China

Pieter Jansen, BothENDS, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

*Green Watershed and BothENDS share the mission of calling for and promoting a responsible sustainable role of both international and Chinese investors, especially financial institutions, in the development both in and out of China. For them the exchange of two members of staff was an attempt to explore possibilities for working together in feeding back the realities of local people and the environment into the debates and decision-making processes of Boards of international and Chinese financial institutions.*

### Yu Chen, Green Watershed, China

Between 2<sup>nd</sup> September and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013, I was working with Both ENDS, Amsterdam, as part of the EU-China NGO-Twinning-Program.

I had two main **objectives** for the time at BothENDS. First, I wanted to improve communication and cooperation between Green Watershed and its European counterparts. Second, I am personally interested in knowing more about how European civil society organizations work and achieve their mission, especially on the matter of sustainable finance which falls into my current research field.

#### ***My Eight Weeks with Both ENDS in the EU-China NGO-Twinning-Exchange Program***

During these eight productive weeks I was able to contribute to Both ENDS on its work related to Chinese overseas investment and China's environment and green credit policy, and, on the other hand, learned a lot from the wonderful people I worked with.

#### ***At the BothENDS office***

Most of the time, I worked at Both ENDS office with colleagues. I enjoyed very much the professional and friendly environment. Both ENDS seems to me both institutionally organized and flexible operationalized, with clear rules, procedures, tasks and responsibility set for different positions on one hand, combined with freedom and space for staff's creative thinking on the other. This impressed me from the first day I joined, which I believe can be learnt by Green Watershed.

As twinning partners, Pieter and I worked very closely and kept real-time communication, but he still set a rule for us to do half an hour weekly reflection talk every Tuesday, which allowed us a clear picture of where we were and where we were going.

Another impressive routine activity in Both ENDS office is the weekly staff presentation. Every week, an announcement about a short presentation by a staff is broadcasted through Email, where a staff presents stories about his/her work and receives comments from colleagues who attend. Together with Pieter, I did my presentation as an introduction to both myself and Chinese “green” regulations the first day I joined Both ENDS. Apart from receiving questions and comments from colleagues during the presentation, the next day I found two feedback forms on my desk by which two colleagues gave their comments and advices on my presentation. Later I learned from Pieter that it is a BothENDS tradition that every time the presenter will receive written comments afterwards from colleagues at random. Although I didn’t attend all the presentations, I was really impressed by this team work and benefitted from it.

Besides pairing with Pieter, I also worked with other BothENDS colleagues in my capacity to support their China-related work. For instance we visited the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present our argument in favor of the integration of human rights assessment into the World Bank Safeguards. Also I assisted another colleague with his work on EU-China bilateral trade agreement.

### ***The EuroIFI Network Annual Meeting 2013 – Pristina, Kosovo***

The second week I worked with Both ENDS, Pieter and I travelled to Pristina, Kosovo, to attend the EuroIFI Network Annual meeting hosted by KOSID (the Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development).

I was the first person from Chinese civil society appearing in this team. Bringing an introduction to China’s legal framework of green credit and overseas investment regulations, Pieter and I made a comparison between China laws and regulations for banks and World Bank policies. I also gave a picture of China’s Green Choice Alliance, China’s NGO network working on green supply chain, green stock and green credit, and briefed the dynamic of Chinese NGOs efforts towards better green credit policy-making and policy implementation in China, using Green Watershed as an example.

My Kosovo trip ended at one of the two power plants outside Pristina financed by the World Bank and an affected village. The World Bank considers funding a third plant. This was a reason for KOSID to invite us to hold the meeting in Kosovo.

My best gain in Kosovo was the effective networking within EuroIFI Network, which I believe can be very helpful for Green Watershed’s networking in China. In addition, Kosovo trip became a great chance for me to extend Green Watershed’s contact and cooperation with European NGOs beyond Both ENDS. Since that meeting, Green Watershed has been working together with CEE Bank Watch on Chinese overseas investment in central and Eastern Europe and helping it to develop an action tool for NGOs targeting Chinese investors.

### ***The World Bank Annual Meeting 2013 – Washington D.C., USA***

My other precious opportunity of contributing and learning was the World Bank Annual Meeting in Washington. Our main purpose was to highlight the importance of social and environmental requirements that the investments of the World Bank should meet, the so-called 'safeguards'.

In that meeting, our team visited the World Bank ED (Executive Director) offices trying to make our voice in favor of stronger rule-based Safeguards be heard by the Bank's decision makers; we also attended the Bank's Safeguards session to get updated by the Bank about its review process, where I was impressed by the active involvement of civil society from all around the world and was also touched by the story-telling of representatives from affected communities where the Bank-supported projects are located.

As the first person from Chinese civil society formally presenting in the World Bank Annual Meeting, I gave a presentation on China's law and regulation on environmental and social issues in its overseas investment, delivering Chinese civil society's voice in favor of stronger safeguards based on concrete rules for the World Bank to avoid duplicating China's failure in environmental protection partly due to its hollow principles. I received quite a bit of questions and comments from both the Bank officials and NGO people, and the Q&A triggered further discussion between the Bank staff and NGO audience about the World Bank Country System. Afterwards, some audience came to me with great interest in future coalition.

### ***Reflection Workshop in Berlin***

This workshop organized by Asienhaus was intensive but very informative and thought-provoking. It was a precious chance for me to get to know how civil society functions in Germany in different fields, and also a great time to share with other Chinese and European participants about our harvests and difficulties working in different environment and with different teammates. Our visit to the Bundestag and meeting with the president of the Green Party was unique.

### ***Conclusion – Learning and Contributing***

In short, during these eight weeks, I was trying my best to contribute and I did find that knowledge of Chinese regulations and experience of Chinese civil society can be beneficial to European groups working on China-related issues; I also learned a lot: policy analysis, networking, fund raising, and approaching targeted groups, lobbying, strategy planning, approaches designing and networking.

This learning experience also included learning from the European side *about* China, not only because some stories were hidden from us inside our country, but also because different perspectives from the outside helped me to gain different angle and new depth to reflect on the situation that I had easily taken for granted at home. I will bring what I have learned back to China and share with my Chinese colleagues and make the best of it in the Chinese

context.

The exchange strengthened Green Watershed mainly in the way of extended connection with international civil society working on similar topics. In the support of BothENDs, Green Watershed and its Green Credit Advocacy project got known by more international NGOs and NGO networks, including Bank Watch, Bank Information Center, EuroIFInet, and some NGOs based in developing countries where Chinese investors are active, as well as funder organizations interested in China-related green finance issue. This is very helpful because it builds a good basis for future information exchange, resource sharing, and joint action.

### ***The Future of our Partnership***

For the future, Green Watershed and BothENDs are planning to share with each other information concerning Chinese overseas investment (especially environmentally controversial projects), China's Green Credit Policy, international civil society action targeting Chinese investors as well as dynamic of Chinese NGOs in the field of sustainable finance.

Green Watershed will also offer support to BothENDs's work on environmental issues along the Mekong River upon request of BothENDs and in Green Watershed's possible capacity.

I personally will be continuing to work with BothENDs as a volunteer (tentatively scheduled between June and December 2014) and will participate in BothENDs' China and green finance related activities.

**More detailed information is given in the long reports of the twinning. Anyone interested can contact the Stiftung Asienhaus staff/China program to receive more information.**

## **Pieter Jansen, Both Ends, Netherlands**

Between 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014, I was visiting Green Watershed, China, as part of the EU-China NGO-Twinning-Program.

My **objectives** for the program were to learn more about the working methods and the working environment of Green Watershed, the Chinese Green Credit and investment policies and about local farming strategies. Furthermore, my aim was to explore possibilities for future cooperation between Both ENDS and Green Watershed in working on development banks.

### ***At Green Watershed's office***

Together with Green Watershed I had three main topics to work on. First, I participated in several meetings with bankers, government officials and commercial advisers. The meetings were mostly about the international commitments of corporate social responsibility that bankers agreed upon among themselves.

Second, was the work on the Chinese civil society. I took part in a talk between Yu Xiaogang of Green Watershed and Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental affairs, about the possible change of tactics to make banks more receptive to the outcome of the green credit footprint assessment.

Third, I worked with Green Watershed as an advisor and contributed my expertise about safeguards and about international networking. I helped to launch a footprint publication and worked on a green credit related campaign.

### ***Working with banks***

Since it is very little known about the Chinese investment policies, it was very important to get a deep insight into this working field. It was interesting to learn that there exists an informal network of international bankers in Beijing. They introduce corporate social responsibility policies to their Chinese counterparts. By connecting to this informal network, Green Watershed could share its knowledge and expertise. Both ENDS could use its contacts within the World Bank to get an entrance into the network.

Together, Both ENDS and Green Watershed met with various stakeholders in Beijing. There seems to be a general demand for multi-stakeholder collaboration between banks and civil society.

Most interesting was a lunch in an informal setting I was invited for. The meeting was organized by BSR and brought Green Watershed in contact with some Chinese bank staffers, who were in charge of CSR. The bankers respect jointly agreed social and environmental standards but one could get to know that it is difficult to implement these because of both political and economic reasons. There is still lack of capacity and incentive to control all ins and outs of their bank's investments at the bank staff, dedicated to CSR.

Simultaneously, Green Watershed introduced Both ENDS to Chinese green credit policies and to the functioning of the Chinese banking sector in general. There is a huge gap in Europe's knowledge when it comes to Chinese investments policies. The overall thought is that Chinese investments do not apply to any rules. There is no awareness of the existence of regulations for investments.

### ***Learning about the role of CSOs in China***

Currently, the Chinese leaders in the newest five year plan consider a deregulation of the banking sector. According to Green Watershed, it is increasingly important that NGOs in China monitor the social- and environmental policies of banks.

Green Watershed's monitoring of banks is not an easy job since banks are often reluctant to share information. During my stay in Beijing we tried to get appointment with banks. Most of the banks (Chinese and foreign) I only saw from the outside, since we could not get an appointment with them.

I took part in a talk between Yu Xiaogang of Green Watershed and Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental affairs (IPE), about the possible change of tactics to make banks more receptive to the outcome of the green credit footprint assessment.

IPE was able to develop the China Water Pollution Map. It is the first database of water pollution information in China. The further aim, is to investigate the banks behind the polluting companies to strengthen the environmental development in China.

What I felt most impressive of my stay was the high level of expertise my Chinese friends and colleagues had concerning the environmental problems that China is confronted with. Also I got impressed by the courageous counter-acting by quite some environmentalists in reaction to a not always politically friendly surrounding. I was impressed by the way that people like Yu Xiaogang and Ma Jun, proclaimed heroes of the environmentalist movement in China by international prize awarding organizations as Goldman and Magsaysay, treated me as their equal. Yu Xiaogang told me once about it that he simply is taking the steps that seem obvious for him to take.

### ***Achievements***

The twinning between Green Watershed and Both ENDS has offered us an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of World Bank safeguards and Chinese green credit policies.

During my stay in China I was able to get and inside into Chinese green credit policies and into Chinese NGOs work. The twinning period also offered an opportunity to increase mutual understanding and the implications for their development project monitoring.

Most important during my stay was the networking. Both ENDS was able to connect to many actors of the Chinese and international banking sector and to establish contacts between Chinese NGOs and peer groups globally. Especially the contact to Yu Xiaogang of Green Watershed and Ma Jun of the Institute of Public and Environmental affairs was very important. These connections enable further cooperation in Asia.

On the other hand, Both ENDS offered a window for Green Watershed to the world of international financing institutions and helped them to publish their publication on Green credit footprint in an international setting.

### ***Outlook for cooperation***

First, there is a huge opportunity for international cooperation between Green Watershed and Both ENDS in the area of monitoring Chinese overseas investments. Both ENDS is knowledgeable about export credit agencies and (inter)national development banks and IFIs. Green Watershed however solely deals with overseas investments at the mere abstract level of green credit policies and for political reasons is not involving itself much in the staging of problems that projects outside China cause. We would like to establish cooperation on this matter.

To establish cooperation between a Chinese and a European NGO is important in order build up more mutual trust between organizations in general, to integrate the Chinese civil society into the international CSO efforts in the advocacy for stronger environmental and social policies and to have a Chinese specialist contact person on Chinese green policy matters.

Second, Green Watershed has been working on the strengthening of capacity of environmental groups in Mekong countries such as Burma and Thailand by giving training about Environmental and Social Impact Assessments on the basis of the experiences of

Chinese civil society. Green Watershed has a lot of experience in the monitoring of EIA regulations. Both ENDS could facilitate the learning by international partners from Chinese counterparts.

Furthermore, Both ENDS was able to establish contact to other Chinese NGOs. There is the possibility to establish further cooperation. .



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