

QUERCUS - Friends of Nature

Report on 2016 EU-China NGO Twinning Program

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Introduction

The objectives of QUERCUS and Friends of Nature were the following:

- Understanding working methods of non-government-organizations in China/Europe,
- Understanding working in fields of low carbon, sustainable development and climate change,
- Establishing sustainable development relationships
- Enlarging horizons and capabilities.

Luis Moreira, QUERCUS, Lisbon, Portugal

Beijing, Friends of Nature, Aug.15-Sep.15 2016

Challenges (Cultural contrasts)

Many examples could be provided of surprising facts about China and Chinese society. One of them is the level of public participation. Citizens appear to be highly engaged with non-government-organizations, contributing to the evolution of the society.

Other example is the concept implementation capacity. Concept and projects ideas are implemented very fast. As an example, the online payments, which are still being discussed in other parts of the world, are fully implemented in China, making citizen's life easier.

The most challenging situation was (and still is) understanding the Chinese legal framework that will make possible the effective partnership between QUERCUS and Friend of Nature.

Activities

During all the stay in China it was possible to meet and to engage with all the team at Friends of Nature's office. Each department introduced its projects and activities.

Further to the activities at the office, there were many visits to the field that gave additional insights about the ongoing projects, activities and actions (Low-carbon household project, Fongaya school, public participation actions, waste collection events, etc.)

Regarding the Workshop in Changsha, it was fundamental to acquire crucial knowledge about Chinese society and the current situation of the society in terms of non government organization's activities.

It was also important to meet with all the twinnings and share partnership ideas with them.

Outcome and Impact

QUERCUS will try to have practical results after the EU-China Twinning Program. The following documents will be essential to reach that goal:

- EU-China Partnership Strategy Formulation,
- EU-China Partnership Legal Framework Analysis,
- EU-China Partnership Proposals.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

The EU-China NGO Twinning program provides valuable communication opportunities. QUERCUS and Friends of Nature are similar and can learn each other on low-carbon family projects, especially seeking for collaborations on the Zero-waste concerts and ecological tourism. QUERCUS is eagerly pursuing further partnerships in China. In the upcoming months there will be a discussion on how to implement such partnerships.

Wang Yuan, Friends of Nature, Beijing, China

Lisbon, Quercus, Oct.27-Dec.13th 2016

Introduction (Objectives, expectations)

- Understand work modes of nonprofits in Europe
- Understand work in fields of low carbon/sustainable development/climate change
- Establish sustainable development relationships for future
- Enlarge horizons and capabilities

Challenges (Cultural contrasts)

- Language
The official language in Portugal is Portuguese. Although some colleagues in the partner nonprofit speak English, many activities and events are in Portuguese. Due to limited supporting translation resources, understanding of the events is also limited.
- Meeting Rituals
Portugal is a passionate country that has different meeting rituals as in China. In China people shake hands, while in Portugal people perform cheek kiss rituals, which puzzled me for a while.
- Coordination with my own work (time difference)
During exchange in Europe, I still took charge of my own work, which made me tired and anxious.

Activities

- Zero-waste concert
The zero waste concert at a large grocery market in Lisbon is an annual event hosted by the Quercus Nature Conservancy's solid waste team. The team uses waste to create instruments and play music, ultimately advocating for sustainable lifestyles. Drumming performance by cleaning workers with trashcans as musical instruments was stunning. Portugal produces 90 % of the world's cork products, and is also famous for wine. Thus, for me the recycling of red wine cork is a special project, calling for special recycling bins that can be made into other softwood products to continue to use. Apart from classified recycling, the zero waste team also helps improving recycled products' quality and design for wider use. The zero waste association at Friends of Nature is developing, and this innovative form of activities brings us inspiration.
- The Portugal NGO symposium
The NGO symposium is the annual Portuguese congress. All the NGOs in Portugal sit together and discuss various social issues: environmental protection, environmental education, food safety, food safety, etc.. Here people discuss action goals and

common action plans for the coming year, and award the annual person awards. The activity is Portuguese, although my understanding of the content is very limited, still I understand how European civil society works, and communicated with diverse Portuguese NGOs.

- **Green talk at the University of Lisbon (Theme: COP22)**
In the COP22 green talk at the University of Lisbon, I shared my experience at COP22, facing mainly college students, with government officials, Quercus's colleague Madalena, and climate change experts.
- **Visiting environmental education courses**
In a private primary school, Quercus's colleagues come to teach environmental education courses once a month. I saw the first environmental education course for pupils who are 6 years old. Contrast to the environmental education curriculum of central Europe (Friends of Nature and Quercus), they have the same content, but the teaching methods are different, and I felt more freedom for design.
- **Work in the Farmers Market**
In addition to the weekly fixed farmer markets, there is a large farmer market in Portugal every year, in which NGOs and social enterprises throughout the country all participate and introduce their programs to sign names to protect land, finally gaining support from the European community and developing joint action projects with government.
- **Quercus regional office and wildlife protection hospital**
Quercus has two animal protection hospitals in Portugal, mainly for birds. After they find wounded birds, it united with national power company to modify electricity lines nationwide and largely reduced causality of birds.

Berlin workshop

- **Largest fulfillment**
My largest fulfillment at the workshop is professional presentation training. It is targeted, simple, and clear. The special training for Twinners is especially helpful for my work. Share from European peers expands my understanding of EU although we work on different topics.
- **Dialogues with other NGOs**
In Europe I visited NABU, Bread for the World, and Save Our Seeds. NABU and Friends of Nature have similar work frame and was my first exchange goal. In this meeting I understood work about low-carbon tech, member management, and brand management. NABU's work methods are important for us. Bread for the World was Friends of Nature's partner. This visit introduced future potential partnership opportunities for Friends of Nature in our transition. Save Our Seeds with a farm project is similar to Gaiya Nature School at Friends of Nature, so I also saw future

cooperation possibilities.

Visits in Europe

- Wuppertal Insitut

Wuppertal Insitut talked with Friends of Nature on low carbon cities in 2011. Then Friends of Nature thought our case samples were different from low carbon cities. After five years' development, we have collected nearly 70 households from family to communities, and from private to public fields. Now, we need more professional institutes to analyze and test, to regroup with innovative methods and influence more green citizens.

Cop22

- Side events
- Interviews with local organizations

With the CCAN 2015 national school climate change creative competition awarded postcards, I interviewed different participants, including young volunteers at university, NASA technical staff, elderly people in negotiating delegations, low carbon project " green click " peers from South Korea. It provided another perspective for me to look at COP22. The Our Life 21 program that my low-carbon family program participated still continues. This year, family cases from Morocco and Tunisia join. At the side event of NGO 4D, I also shared the project development of my low-carbon family at Friends of Nature. Quercus had a booth at COP22. It is a pity that I didn't know Quercus earlier so that I could earlier join the team to work together.

Outcome and Impact

- Reports
 - EU-China NGO Twinning reports
 - Inner report at Friends of Nature
- Events
 - Friends of Nature member share Salon
- Work models

Quercus and Friends of Nature both have low-carbon family proejcts since 2011, but our work methods are different. While Friends of Nature deeply delve into cases, Quercus invites experts for consulting. The instrument courses at Zero-waste concerts that Quercus works on, as well as membership management methods, are appealing to me.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

The EU-China NGO Twinning program provides valuable communication opportunities. Quercus and Friends of Nature are similar and can learn each other on low-carbon family projects, especially seeking for collaborations on the Zero-waste concerts and ecological

tourism. Friends of Nature is innovating now and hoping to use business mindset to realize its nonprofit, inviting more green citizens to have more accesses to environmental protection.







