

Announcement

WORKSHOP

Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies in German and Chinese Infrastructure Projects

**May 3-5, 2010
Berlin, Germany**

I. Planned activity

The planned workshop in Berlin will provide a forum for German and Chinese scholars to exchange ideas on environmental and social safeguard policies in infrastructure investments. In addition, representatives from fields such as international finance, development cooperation and civil society organizations are to be included.

Besides content and norms of environmental and social safeguard policies the participants of the workshop should also discuss the more complex dynamics, risks and cumulative effects of such interventions with regard to the natural and social environment of people.

With growing insights into the potential impacts of global climate change the need to formulate environmental standards for investments of a certain volume has increased worldwide. These are interventions that not only leave their footprint on ecosystems and natural living spaces, but often also have negative impacts on the local communities which depend on these resources. A classical example is involuntary resettlement caused by the construction of dams, railways, airports and other infrastructure projects. Therefore infrastructure investment has to come along with the formulation of environmental and social standards. There are at least three reasons why China has become an important actor for the future of the global economy and environment, i.e.: 1. because of the serious environmental challenges in China itself; 2. because of China's rapid economic growth with the construction of infrastructure as one of its main pillars and 3. because China in the meantime has become an important investor for large infrastructure projects in other parts of the world including South East Asia, Subsahara and Latin America. During the last ten years a framework of environmental and social

standards for international private and public investment in developing and transformation countries has emerged. But in most cases these are voluntary declarations which are often given for reasons of reputation. In addition, national laws and regulations on environmental and social safeguards differ widely. By critically commenting on selected projects NGOs worldwide contributed to raise public awareness on the environmental and social risks of such investments and to pushing forward the development of such a framework.

A dialogue on the norms, institutions and the implementation of environmental and social safeguard policies is of increasing importance for the Chinese-German relations. So far not many German and Chinese financial institutions have signed the so called „Equator Principles“. At the same time first German-Chinese experiences with the „Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)“ show that the implementation of environmental standards may cause contradictory results. Given that there are more and more opportunities for investing in infrastructure construction in China, more research, policies and measures are needed.

II. Main objectives

Sustainable economy and the use of environmental friendly technologies will definitively become more and more important for the German-Chinese relations. The planned kick-off workshop should contribute to make the theme of social and environmental safeguard policies more visible as a German-Chinese dialogue-topic of the future.

The planned workshop is intended to provide a forum for German and Chinese scholars and other stakeholders (such as representatives of enterprises and NGOs, practitioners with experience in German-Chinese development cooperation, politicians) to exchange experiences and ideas on questions of creating and regulating social and environmental standards for investment in infrastructure. This includes e.g. questions of social risks of environmental projects as well as questions of the distribution of responsibilities in creating and realising environmental and social standards, questions regarding the content and scope of environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments, as well as questions regarding the necessary qualifications of social scientists and environmental scientists in the field of sustainability management. Thus a platform is to be established to design further research needs regarding social and environmental standards and the necessary qualifications of social and environmental

scientists in the field of sustainability management. On this basis later graduate programs e.g. in the field of sustainability management could be designed. With the workshop itself as well as with the possibilities emerging from the workshop for further German-Chinese cooperation in research and teaching a considerable contribution can be made to intensify the German-Chinese scientific cooperation and for developing new interdisciplinary perspectives for training the younger generations .

As a mid-term objective the workshop is aiming at encouraging joint education programmes and cooperation of German and Chinese scholars in the field of sustainability management. Thus, a basis could be provided to better integrate social and environmental research with a long-term perspective of German-Chinese cooperation.

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III. Methodology and Approaches

The workshop will be conducted mainly through approaches such as lecture presentation, panel discussion, case studies, impulse lectures and round table discussions. The workshop language is English.

IV. Requirements for invited speakers

Invited speakers are required to provide the organizers background information of the project or lecture topic before attending the workshop. Please let us know whether you are attending the conference **before January 31, 2010** and provide a title and short summary of your contribution. To facilitate discussion, participants are kindly asked to submit their papers electronically **before April 15, 2010** to the following address:

bgransow@zedat.fu-berlin.de

V. Project organisers

- Principal Investigator: Prof. Dr. Bettina Gransow, Freie Universität Berlin, East Asian Institute
- Cooperation partner (Principal Investigator): Prof. Dr. Wang Can, Research Center for International Environmental Policy (RCIEP), Tsinghua Universität, Department of Environmental Science and Engineering
- German partner: Dr. Eva Sternfeld, Technical University Berlin, Center for History of Chinese Science and Technology
- Chinese Partner: Prof. Shi Guoqing, National Research Center for Resettlement, Hohai University, Nanjing

VI. Time, Venue and Agenda

1. Time: May 3-5, 2010 (3 days)
2. Workshop Venue: Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
3. Workshop agenda will follow later.

VI. Travel and Accommodation Costs

1. Invited speakers:
Travel costs (from China to Berlin and back to China, economy class) and costs for accommodation (up to five days) will be covered by the sponsors. Travel costs within Germany and for participants from outside China cannot be covered by the sponsors.
2. Additional speakers and participants:
We are still looking for additional funding to broaden the scope of participants. So far, additional speakers and participants are welcomed as far as their travel and accommodation costs are borne by themselves.