

Final Report: Junior Research Stay at University of British Columbia

Natasha Donevska

Free University Berlin

Environmental Policy Research Center

Integrating nature conservation and sustainable development
within the Chinese Biosphere Reserves

13.11.2016-30.11.2016

I was intrigued by the fact that China is very actively involved in the Man and the Biosphere program of UNESCO. With 33 Biosphere Reserve designations as well as more than one hundred potential ones as members of the Chinese Biosphere Reserves Network, China is a leading country in the Asia and the Pacific macro sub-region according to the UN division.

Considering that the Biosphere Reserves are areas, which are intended to demonstrate examples of integrated sustainable development and nature protection, it was interesting to see how this concept is implemented in the context of the Chinese society. Furthermore, I was investigating how is the participatory management, as a major feature of the Biosphere Reserve concept, introduced in a state with centralized governance system.

Another intriguing point I was trying to look into was what the implications are of China's involvement in the Man and the Biosphere Program of the UN in the efforts to climate change mitigation, as a major actor on the world stage.

My research stay was rather short to be able to investigate these questions thoroughly. However, it was very intensive and provided me with very interesting insights. I met with eight professors from the Peking University, two high-level scientists from the Chinese Academy of Science and one professor from the Forestry University. I also managed to meet with a representative from the Chinese National MAB committee and with the Program Specialist in the UNESCO office in Beijing.

In most of these meetings Ms. Dongping Wang (a PhD candidate at Free University Berlin) and Ms. Hui Wen (a PhD candidate at Peking University) were present upon their interest in the topic. The findings we managed to gather from the interviews we intend to deliver in a working paper.