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Hydro CDM Hall of Shame

Date: Thursday, May 17, 2012

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is meant to catalyze climate-friendly and sustainable projects in low-income countries. Instead, it's provided massive subsidies to hydropower developers while increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Through deception and abuse of the system, at least two-thirds of all CDM projects are likely not additional, and more are slipping in each year.

Despite attempts at reform, the CDM continues to approve egregious hydropower projects while delaying any improvements. In December 2011, an EU-commissioned report recommended the European Union consider banning credits from large hydro projects. However, the EU has decided to delay any action, essentially ignoring the urgency for reform raised by this study.

Below are some of the worst hydropower projects that we've seen in the CDM pipeline since 2008. Last updated: 21 May 2013.

Registered by the Executive Board

- ▶ **In Panama**, the Barro Blanco Dam is currently undergoing construction despite investigations into the developer's human rights abuses and failure to consult the local indigenous Ngobe communities living along the Tabasara River. Despite ongoing protests by indigenous communities against dam building and mining in the region, the CDM Executive Board approved the project for 67,000 CERs per year.
- ▶ **In Uganda**, the World Bank-funded Bujagali Dam, which drowned a treasured waterfall and forced hundreds from their lands, was registered by the CDM Board to the tune of 858,000 CERs for the Netherlands, even though it is near completion.
- ▶ **In India**, the Rampur run-of-river project was registered despite being nearly complete and the recipient of a World Bank loan back in 2007. India will sell these credits to Sweden for 1.4 million CERs.
- ▶ **In Brazil**, the 3,750 MW Jirau Dam on the Madeira River (part of the same complex as Santo Antônio), has been registered despite serious concerns over worker's rights and and slave-like labor conditions. The project currently has no buyer.
- ▶ **In Lao PDR**, the 120 MW Nam Ngum 5 Hydropower Project was registered in 2013 despite having already been completed in 2012 by China's Sinohydro Corporation and Lao PDR's Electricite du Laos. The approval by the CDM Executive Board was made on the basis of an incomplete environmental impact assessment, which failed to assess cumulative impacts as required by Lao law. Lao PDR will sell the project's credits to the Netherlands for 248,501 CERs.
- ▶ **In Cambodia**, the 246 MW Stung Tatay Hydroelectric Project located in the Southern Cardamom Mountain Tropical Forest in Koh Kong Province, has been under construction by China National Heavy Machinery Corporation since March 2010. The project was registered despite a lack of sufficient community consultation and having violated a number of Cambodian laws. Cambodia will sell the project's credits to the Netherlands for 563,074 CERs.



A Kachin refugee family flees the fighting at the Dapein dams in June 2011. Dapein I Dam is trying to seeking carbon credits. Photo: U.S. Campaign for Burma

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Seeking validation approval

- ▶ **In Cambodia**, the Kamchay Dam, already operational and built by the world's largest dam builder, China's Sinohydro Corporation, is currently seeking validation for the second time. The project has been plagued by controversy, safety concerns, and a lack of transparency ever since it was awarded a development contract in 2005. If registered, it would generate 281,000 CERs for the UK or €1.2 million per year for Sinohydro. In addition, Cambodia is also pushing other large hydropower projects for CDM credits, including Lower Stung Russei Chrum, Stung Tatay, and Stung Atay. Local communities and authorities have opposed many of these projects due to their lack of transparency and the flooding of huge swathes of protected forests, but these voices are often ignored in high-level discussions between Cambodian and Chinese government officials.
- ▶ **In Brazil**, the 1,820MW Teles Pires Dam is being planned for the Teles Pires River, a tributary of the Tapajós River, which in turn is one of the principal tributaries of the Amazon. Civil society in Brazil considers it a dismal example of violations of indigenous rights and environmental legislation. It will likely flood 123 square kilometers of land and be a carbon source rather than carbon neutral. It is estimated to sell 2.5 millions CERs or €10 million per year. The 3,150 MW Santo Antônio Dam project on the Madeira River is seeking carbon credits despite being already operational. It is estimate to sell 5.2 million CERs or €21.2 million per year.



Construction work at the Kamchay Dam site - 2008 © Marcus Rhinelander

More information:

- ▶ All CER data from the UNEP Risoe CDM Pipeline Database
- ▶ Read International Rivers and other civil society inputs to the CDM Policy Dialogue
- ▶ View the 2008 CDM Hydro Hall of Shame
- ▶ Read *Failed Mechanism*, International Rivers report exposing the flaws of the CDM
- ▶ Learn more about the CDM

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- ▶ Human Rights and Kyoto's Carbon Offsetting Scheme
- ▶ Chronology of Events for Barro Blanco Dam (Panama)
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