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NANG SHINING: EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EGAT INTERNATIONAL'S CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY FOR THE HATGYI DAM PROJECT ON THE SALWEEN RIVER, MYANMAR  
ADVISOR: CARL MIDDLETON, Ph.D., 133 pp.

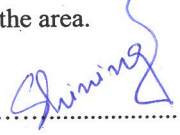
Rising electricity demand in Thailand is a key driving force for building new power projects in Thailand, as well as importing electricity from neighboring countries. One of the proposed projects in Thailand's 2010-2030 Power Development Plan is the Hat Gyi Dam, which is located on the mainstream Salween River near the Thailand-Myanmar border in Karen State, Myanmar. The Salween River is approximately 2,400 km long and is regarded as the longest free-flowing international river in Southeast Asia, originating on the Tibetan Plateau and flowing through China, Thailand and Myanmar. The Hat Gyi Dam project is a joint venture cooperation between EGAT International (EGATi), Sinohydro Corporation, the Department of Hydroelectric Power Plan (DHPP) of Myanmar government, and a local Myanmar private investor named International Group of Entrepreneur Company.

As EGATi is a major shareholder, this thesis seeks to assess how EGATi has implemented its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy during planning of the project to date. The thesis main research question is "Has EGATi implemented its Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Governance policies for communities in Thailand in preparing the proposed Hat Gyi Dam project on the Salween River, Karen State, Myanmar"?

Qualitative research methods have been applied in this study through a combination of in-depth interviews with villagers, semi-structured interviews with key informants and secondary database research. The research sites are the potentially affected communities living along the Salween River on the Thai side, namely Ban Mae Sam Laep, Ban Tha Ta Fang, and Ban Sob Moei, Mae Hong Son Province.

EGATi CSR policy has three key components: Public Participation and Information Disclosure; Social Responsibility; and Environmental Responsibility. Regarding "Public Participation and Information Disclosure", the findings reveal that EGATi has not disclosed complete project information in a timely, accurate, sufficient and transparent manner; for example, the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for the Myanmar side, completed in 2008, has not been made available to the public. Also, EGATi has yet to form a Tripartite Committee and has only weakly encouraged the communities and wider public to participate in its activities. Regarding "Social Responsibility," EGATi has failed to build mutual understanding and trust with the communities. Regarding "Environmental Responsibility", whilst EGAT has conducted an EIA report, it does not cover the scope of the entire potentially impacted areas in Myanmar and Thailand. Thai civil society have called on EGATi to conduct a new EIA which covers the entire scope of affected area, although a government subcommittee subsequently required EGATi to only undertake an Environmental Assessment that is not equivalent to Thailand's full-EIA legal standards. This legal ambiguity allows EGATi to claim that it has followed its CSR policy on Environmental Responsibility.

Whilst EGATi's CSR is ultimately voluntary, this thesis argues that EGATi has not followed its CSR policy in the case of the Hat Gyi Dam for a number of reasons, including because of the ambiguous laws for the trans-boundary project and its failure to gain the trust and cooperation of the local communities. In turn, communities oppose the Hat Gyi dam due to the value that the communities place on their livelihood and environment, their concerns with regard to their legal status as non-Thai citizens, the influential role of NGOs in the communities, and the strong belief of the communities that the Myanmar government supports the dam so as to clear ethnic groups from the area.

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