



MSc Internship + Thesis Opportunity: The Political Economy of Coal in Myanmar (Burma)

The context

In 2011, Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, began a process of democratic reform following 50-years of military dictatorship. In the coming year its nascent government is expected to formalize its first national energy policy, and the decisions that are being made now will determine the country's development practices for generations to come. While the country has real potential to pass a sustainable energy policy, powerful foreign governments and investors are beginning to introduce the most unsustainable and damaging methods of development – including mega-dams and coal-fired power plants.

Earth Rights International (ERI, an advocacy NGO based in Thailand) is collecting information on future energy projects based on government insight, information from international partners, and observations from partners on the ground. By facilitating the verification of each of the aforementioned sources of information, ERI seeks to paint a holistic picture on the future landscape of coal projects within the region; and navigate the best ways to change it. ERI will first create a map of local and international initiatives working on the coal campaign in Myanmar, many of which will be linked to current and upcoming plans for coal projects identified during the data collection described above. Upon the collection and verification of data on coal projects within Myanmar, ERI will conduct a political economy and stakeholder analysis to inform campaign and communications strategies. The analysis will be presented to civil society groups that will not only allow them room for commentary, but provide a valuable space for networking among them.

Call for MSc thesis/internship students

Call for MSc students

This is a call for student to support EarthRights International in this project, in particular to conduct the political economy analysis. Because of the size and complexity of the task, we are looking for an MSc student willing to combine their internship and thesis. The internship would be based at ERI (in Chiang Mai, Thailand) and result in a report that can feed into their advocacy strategy. The thesis component would take a more academic angle, but can focus on the same or a closely related topic.

There is no formal remuneration for this internship, but ERI will try to support good students with the means they have.

Who should apply?

- You are a WUR student in the field of environmental science, economics, development studies or a related discipline
- You are fluent in English
- You are happy diving headfirst into a new cultural context
- You possess excellent writing skills
- You are confident and can work independently
- You have some experience with research on this topic and/or in this part of the world (preferred)

Who would you be working with?

- Daniel King (Mekong-Myanmar Regional Program Director, Earthrights International).
- Mattijs Smits (Assistant Professor, Environmental Policy Group)

How to apply?

- Send a short motivation letter, your CV and list of courses and grades to mattijs.smits@wur.nl
- There is no formal deadline, but let us know if you're thinking about applying

If you have any questions or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.