**Partnership Impact Overview: World Wildlife Fund and Northwestern University**

**December 2019**

Established in 2018, the partnership MOU between World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern (ISEN) has generated a rich ecosystem of collaboration between the university and the conservation organization. Below is an overview of the alliance to-date.

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| ***NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH:*** |
| * **Building Materials for Environmental Disaster Reconstruction and Recovery:** ISEN and Northwestern’s School of Materials Science and Engineering are partnering with researchers at WWF to develop *the Building Material Selection and Use: An Environmental Guide (BMEG)*, a tool that supports construction industry professionals in making environmentally responsible decisions in the selection, sourcing, use, and disposal of construction material, with emphasis on reconstruction following natural disasters. The team has presented its work at two conferences in the past year (Natural Capital Symposium and National Council for Science and the Environment Conference) and was encouraged to submit an article for publication to the journal *Nature: Climate Change* (final acceptance pending). * **Ecosystem Impact Analysis of Infrastructure Expansion in Developing Countries (Myanmar/Southeast Asia):** ISEN and Northwestern’s School of Materials Science and Engineering are partnering with WWF to develop a quantitative procedure to assess the effect of earth-moving operations in natural landscapes, as well as to identify sustainable design alternatives applicable to developing countries around the world. The project currently focuses on the construction of the Dawei Road, a large planned transportation system in Myanmar that intersects unique wildlife corridors and heavily vegetated rainforest. As part of a case study that will impact future planning the region, the WWF-Northwestern team is proposing cost estimates of alternative construction design/routes that will allow for road development while mitigating harmful effects on ecosystems. WWF invited this research team to present its findings at the 2019 Natural Capital Symposium in March at Stanford. * **Global Status of Infrastructure Financing:** ISEN and Northwestern’s School of Materials Science and Engineering are partnering to provide WWF with a report on the past trends and estimated future flows of global infrastructure investments. The project will inform WWF’s strategy development and preparation of clear, credible communications materials on sustainable infrastructure. |
| ***LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH:*** |
| ISEN is connecting WWF with Northwestern Pritzker School of Law’s Environmental Advocacy Center (EAC) where students and faculty are providing legal research/advice on various projects including:   * **Global Plastic Waste Prevention:** The team’s domestic/international legal research is helping WWF to craft model legislation that would create Federal standards, governance processes, incentives, and disincentives to guide both plastic production and disposal in such a way to achieve the goal of no additional plastic leakage into nature by 2030. * **Arctic Wildlife Protection**: The team is con­ducting an analysis of inter­national and laws and guidelines that govern the Artic environ­ment to help WWF build an advocacy strategy for protecting wildlife from the harmful effects of increased underwater industrial activity in the area. * **Mainstreaming Natural Capital and Livelihood Planning in the Amazon:** The team is compiling laws and policies related to “mainstreaming” ecosystem and livelihood considerations related to infrastructure planning in the Amazon, with particular interest in Brazil. * **Environmental Disaster Relief in Latin America and the Caribbean:** The team is examining public policies in Guatemala, Jamaica, and Colombia, looking at the interaction between environmental laws and disaster risk management policies—including climate change—in each of them. The work will help WWF integrate environmental considerations into its disaster recovery, reconstruction, and risk reduction programs and policies. * **Mozambique Environmental Policy Overhaul:** (*3/2019 update: This project is on hold until further notice*) The team is advising the Attorney General of Mozambique on the restructuring the country’s enforcement of environmental law and anti-corruption measures. The team is also working on the creation of an interdisciplinary human health needs assessment and report containing recommendations for the Attorney General. |
| ***ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS:*** |
| * **Plastics, Ecosystems, and Public Health:** The new Program on Plastics, Ecosystems, and Public Health at ISEN is a multidisciplinary team science initiative that examines the product lifecycle of everyday plastics, exploring the implications for environmental and human well-being, as well as novel and scalable solutions to mitigate those impacts. ISEN is currently engaging with WWF’s Packaging and Material Sustainability/Sustainability R&D team to formalize the organization’s involvement with the Program. In May 2019, a member of WWF’s team attended the daylong, invitation-only public health workshop at Northwestern and outlined next steps for ongoing partnership. * **Nature-based Methods for Flood Mitigation (Thailand/Southeast Asia):** ISEN and Northwestern’s College of Arts and Sciences are partnering with WWF to educate government stakeholders, regulatory authorities, academics, and NGOs on how community perceptions can be measured and community engagement can be fostered through the planning, implementation, and monitoring stages of nature-based flood management. The to-date, the effort has focused on training seminars in Southeast Asia, but this is likely to expand. * **Disproportionate Impacts of Environmental Challenges Project:** In 2019, members of WWF’s Environment and Disaster Management (EDM) program joined an interdisciplinary team of Northwestern faculty at the inaugural Idea Incubation Workshop, hosted by Northwestern’s Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. Buffett awarded the team approximately $150,000 for their project focused on mitigating the disproportionate effects of environmental challenges on marginalized communities around the world. * **Environment and Disaster Management Communications/Journalism Internships:** ISEN and the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications are partnering with WWF to administer graduate/undergraduate student internship for WWF’s Environment and Disaster Management (EDM) program headquarters in Washington, DC. The EDM program works to ensure that disaster recovery, reconstruction, and risk reduction efforts include environmentally responsible considerations. To-date, three journalism students have taken part in the internship, and one was brought on as a freelance writer following graduation. * **WWF On-campus Engagement:** In February 2018, ISEN hosted WWF on campus for a seminar entitled “Environment and Disasters: Global Emerging Practices for Reducing Risk.” WWF’s day-long visit was also accompanied by individual meetings with faculty members to formalize joint research initiatives. In March 2019, several members of WWF’s leadership team attended a partnership summit at ISEN, where the two organizations developed a long-term roadmap for joint initiatives. In May 2019, ISEN hosted a member of WWF’s Packaging and Material Sustainability/Sustainability R&D team for a public seminar on WWF’s strategies for plastic waste mitigation. |