

EJOLT Evaluation Report

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Submitted by Jennifer Clapp, Independent Evaluator
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Project Details:

Project Title: Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade

Acronym: EJOLT

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Project Coordinator and Organization: Professor Joan Martinez-Alier, ICTA-UAB, Barcelona, Spain

Project Website: <http://www.ejolt.org/>

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EU Project Officer: Isabelle DuPont Cave

Executive Summary:

This is the first report of the independent evaluator of the EU funded FP 7 Project entitled Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT). The EJOLT project has been in operation for approximately 1.5 years and will run for a total of 4 years. The evaluation for this project covers scientific quality and quantity of the research, the implementation of the project, and the societal impact of the project. The main evaluation findings are as follows:

Both the quality and quantity of the research reports associated with the project are excellent. The work on the ecological conflicts map is progressing well, although this progress has been somewhat delayed by the time required to collect, verify and upload the data. Although it is too soon to evaluate, there are a number of planned additional scientific outputs for more academic audiences, which will enrich the scientific quality of the project.

The collaborative research process that integrates the work of academic researchers and environmental justice organizations has been highly beneficial to the project and its participants. The project has been excellent at fostering and strengthening networking and capacity building among participating organizations. The project training activities have been very good, with positive reviews of the online course but also some suggestions for structuring that course in a way that encourages more two-way learning.

While it is too soon to know for sure the societal impact of the project, some positive contributions of the project have been documented thus far. The project webpage and social media strategies are excellent, drawing a large number of visitors to the project outputs on a regular basis. Policy briefs have also already been distributed to policy-makers. And there is evidence that the project is already contributing more broadly to social mobilization around ecological justice issues.

Finally, the management of the project has been good, although areas for improvement have been identified. These areas include improvements to communications, decision-making and funding.

Overall, the project is progressing well. This evaluation has produced 20 recommendations that emerge from the analysis of the project performance thus far in light of the key indicators identified in the methodological framework for the evaluation. These recommendations are offered in the spirit of providing the project management team with ideas for ensuring ongoing success of the project.

1. Introduction:

A. Aims and objectives of the EJOLT project

The EJOLT project is a multi-participant project that seeks to conduct transdisciplinary social-ecological research on issues of environmental justice linked to 4 key sectors where environmental conflicts are widespread: oil and gas, nuclear power, biomass extraction, and mining/shipbreaking. The broad aim of the project's research program is to integrate ecological-social science with activism for societal and ecological betterment.

The project brings together an international consortium of 23 academic and civil society organizations from across Europe and the Global South to collectively research and raise awareness about these types of resource-based environmental justice conflicts. These issues are analyzed through the lens of ecological economics concepts, especially ecological unequal exchange, ecological debt and social metabolism. Considerations of health impacts, ecological valuation, international liabilities, law and policy are essential to this analysis.

The principal objectives of the project are to:

1. Increase visibility of environmental justice conflicts through research on their underlying causes and their potential to be turned into a force for positive environmental change.
2. Foster collaborative research between environmental justice organizations and academics using scientific tools of ecological economics, health studies, valuation, law and policy.
3. Build capacity within environmental justice organizations to influence policy outcomes.

The key planned outputs of the project include major reports on the sectors that are the focus of the research, as well as a database and map of environmental justice conflicts around the world. Capacity building, sharing of best practices and policy recommendations are also integral to the project.

The project is organized around 12 Work Packages that cover the following themes and aspects of the project. The organizations in the consortium that are responsible for these work packages are noted in parentheses. The partner organizations are listed in Appendix 2.

WP1: Management of the project (UAB)

WP2: Database and Map of Environmental Injustice (UAB)

WP3: Nuclear Energy (FOCUS)

WP 4: Oil and Gas Extraction/Climate Justice (UKZN)

WP 5: Biomass and Land Conflicts (UNI-KLU)

WP 6: Mining and Shipbreaking (BOG)

WP 7: Environmental Health and Risk Assessment (FIOCRUZ)

WP 8: Liabilities and Valuation (UVSQ)

WP 9: Law and Institutions (CDCA)

WP 10: Consumption, Unequal Exchange and Ecological Debt (ULUND)

WP 11: Training, Best Practices and Policy Recommendations (SERI)

WP 12: Dissemination

B. Role of the independent evaluator

EC guidelines for FP7 projects specify the requirement of the project to incorporate an on-going evaluator who can provide “in-depth independent monitoring and evaluation of its activities.” (FP7 Call for Proposals). In the case of the EJOLT project, the independent evaluator has been asked to attend workshops, read reports, and give advice over the course of the four years of the project. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide timely and ongoing feedback from a scholar who has expertise in the field related to the subject matter of the project.

The EJOLT management team selected Professor Jennifer Clapp to serve in the role of independent evaluator for the project. She is a world expert in issues on international trade, corporate accountability, environmental governance, political ecology, environmental justice and global food security issues. Professor Clapp's work is subcontracted under WP1 as part of ongoing scientific coordination of the project with direct link to ICTA UAB. A brief summary of Professor Clapp's CV is presented in Appendix 1.

As the independent evaluator of the project, Professor Clapp has followed the EJOLT project closely since the final proposal stage. She attended the inaugural project meeting in Barcelona in April 2011 and the EJOLT workshops held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. Professor Clapp has read the project reports and outputs, and has followed the progress with the database and map. She has been in contact with project coordinator Joan Martinez-Alier as well as his deputy coordinator, Ms. Leah Temper, on a regular basis, regarding the project's progress. Professor Clapp's assessment of the project is from an independent vantage point, as she is not directly engaged in the research or any of the organizations that are partners in the project.

C. Outline of the report

The remainder of this report will be organized as follows. Section two provides a brief review of the methods employed for this evaluation. Section three provides an in-depth evaluation of the scientific research that undergirds the project. This section examines the scientific quality and quantity of the outputs, the quality of the research process/implementation, and the broader societal impact, including dissemination and policy outreach activities. Section four discusses the quality of the project coordination and management. The final section provides conclusions and a summary of the recommendations that emerged from the evaluation.

2. Evaluation Methods

A. Framework

This evaluation is based on mixed methods of assessment, an approach adopted due to the multiple aims of the project – from research to social change to capacity-building. A methodology based on both formative and summative aspects of the project has been adopted. **Formative** aspects of the project include the project's intention to engage stakeholders, integrate research and action among multiple participants, and provide training for capacity building. **Summative** aspects of the project include the outputs and impacts of the project activities. A document prepared by the evaluator that outlines this methodology in some detail was approved in September 2011 by the EC Project officer for the EJOLT project (see EJOLT Evaluation Methodology report, October 2011).

B. Evaluation indicators and benchmarks

The success of the project will be evaluated on indicators that focus on three key areas of the project: **Scientific Quality and Quantity** (the published outputs from the project) **Implementation** (collaborative research process); and **Impact** (the broader impact on society).

These indicators were outlined in the initial methodology. Specific indicators will be assessed in light of the collected data. These include:

Scientific Quality and Quantity

- Quality and quantity of project reports, policy briefs and other outputs
- Quality of database and map
- Quality of associated academic outputs

Implementation

- Quality of the collaborative research process through workshops
- Networking among the participating organizations
- Training provided by the project

Impact

- Dissemination of outputs for general audiences, including media coverage
- Engagement with policy-makers
- Evidence of social/policy change directly related to project activities (linkages with groups outside of direct project; policy responses to activities)

These indicators will be discussed in terms of their quality - noting whether the project's accomplishments on each indicator is "excellent", "good", "acceptable", "unsatisfactory", or "too soon to tell."

C. Data sources

This evaluation is based on several types of data. These include transcripts of interviews with Work Package leaders regarding the project (transcribed and verified with interviewees), surveys of all project participants, project reports and policy briefs, academic articles linked to the project, notes from EJOLT workshops taken by the evaluator, the EJOLT website, the EJOLT database and map, and documentation from EJOLT partners regarding training activities and dissemination progress.

3. Research Evaluation: Quality, Process and Impact

The research aims of the EJOLT project are significant along three key dimensions: 1) it is the first major study to try to establish an empirical link between ecological conflicts and unequal material flows associated with ecological unequal exchange; 2) it has a unique design in terms of its structure and process for this research that provides for interactive collaboration and capacity building among academics and social activists; and 3) it seeks not only to provide new insights to the research community, but also to effect broader societal change.

It is still somewhat early in the life-cycle of the project – approximately 1.5 years into the 4 years of planned research. There are inevitably heavy investment and start-up costs associated with undertaking a research project of this size and scope, and the EJOLT project is no exception. Much of the work in the first year of the project was laying the groundwork for the research in the later phases. It is therefore impressive that the project has already produced a number of detailed reports, fact sheets and briefs, and work on the database and map has been progressing well.

Below is an assessment of the scientific quality and quantity of the research output, the process and implementation of the research, and the broader societal impact. This assessment takes into consideration the early stage of the project. Each section notes the accomplishments made and challenges encountered thus far, as well as points of consideration for the management team and project participants.

A. Scientific quality and quantity of the research output

As noted above, the main research outputs planned in the EJOLT project are 2-3 project reports for each of the substantive work packages (WPs 3-10) as well as the database/map (WP2). Although not listed as deliverables, the project outputs also include a number of additional and spin-off products, including shorter reports, briefs, fact sheets, and videos as well as academic articles.

i. Scientific quality and quantity of project reports

The quality and quantity of the EJOLT project reports has been excellent. Thus far the EJOLT project has officially published on its website 4 major theme reports, 2 fact sheets, 1 policy brief, 3 videos, 1 pod-cast, and one poster. The focus in this section is on the written components of the research outputs.

The 4 published reports include:

- An overview of industrial tree plantations in the global south (WP5)
- Issues in the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (WP8)
- Legal avenues for EJOs to claim environmental liability (WP9)
- Industrial waste conflicts around the world (WP6)

The first four reports to be published by the project are in a slightly different order and focus than was originally planned in the project, but such deviations from the original plans are minor and inevitable in a project this size. Four major reports were planned by this time, and four major reports have been delivered.

Each of the four theme reports published so far is a very high quality research output. Each report is based on solid scientific research and contains thoughtful analysis that links the report's specific theme to the overall conceptual themes featured in the project. These reports have been published in English and one of them (on industrial tree plantations) has been translated into Spanish. Given that not all of the primary authors have English as a first language, there are some language issues in several of the reports. These are minor issues, however, which are made up for by the strength of the scientific research behind them.

In interviews and surveys with WP leaders and project participants, some desire was expressed for a more formal external review process for the project reports and fact sheets. This was not a concern that the already-published outputs were not of high quality. Rather, it was to ensure that all of the project reports were as high quality as they could be, and to give them more academic credibility by having them listed as 'peer-reviewed' publications. Some internal quality checks are already in place within the project for feedback on project outputs, but some felt that a more formalized process for an external eye on the reports might be useful.

Recommendation 1: Project management should consider hiring a copy-editor to read each report prior to publication, to catch obvious language issues, could help to ensure even quality of language across the various project reports. The benefits of such a practice would be to ensure easy readability and consistency of language.

Recommendation 2: Consider instituting a form external peer-reviewed element for the project reports. External reviews are a good way to signal to outside readers the rigorous research and high quality of the research reports. Implementing such a review process might be feasible if the WP leaders can use existing contacts with experts in the field to act as reviewers. External reviews, however, may delay the timing of the release of the reports, and may be difficult to arrange if reviewers are not readily available. This is something for the project coordination team and project board to consider and weigh the benefits and costs.

ii. Quality of map and database

The map of ecological conflicts is a unique product of the project. The aim of the map is to illustrate these linkages and show their geographic concentration and distribution in a clear visual way. Further, the map will include other layers of data, including global material flows, to help assess any possible correlation between material flows and ecological conflict. Because of its uniqueness and visual appeal, the map has enormous potential for both academic and activist work in this area. It is too soon to comment on the final output of the map, as it is not yet released. But the progress on this component of the project has been very good.

The project planned an ambitious goal of entering 2000 cases of ecological injustice conflicts around the world into the database. Work has been progressing well on the collection of this data for the map. Data collection and entry is being carried out primarily by the EJO partners, and is checked and verified by the project coordinators. The data and the map is being managed online by Mapping for Change, a UK based NGO.

There is some concern that perhaps the full 2000 cases might be difficult to meet fully by the expected launch date of the map due to the length of time it takes to collect and verify data on each case. It is important that the map and database contain solid and verified data, and therefore it is important that this data be collected and checked carefully. This process is taking place, but it does take time. Such quality control is vital for the reliability and reputation of the map once it is published. Although there have been some delays due to these quality checks, the database already has 500 ecological conflict cases entered by end of September, 2012.

The conflict entries for the map are currently clustered in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. The project coordinators would like to include more cases from other parts of the developing world, e.g. India and China. The coordinators are working on establishing more concrete linkages with researchers and EJOs in these countries in order to address these gaps.

The map is set for a public release in the first half of 2013. The data does to some extent speak for itself and will be a useful tool for scholars and activists. But at the same time the interpretation of the data on conflicts in relation to the data on biophysical material flows is a central component of the project that must be provided by the project's expert analysts. Work is progressing on the

biophysical indicators to include in this analysis, and the data is being pulled out of existing databases on material flows by researchers at IFF. Analysis of how these two sets of data relate to each other will take place once the map is completed and the material flow data is available.

In discussions with project participants, some concerns were expressed that more discussion could take place among project participants on some of the key concepts behind the database for the map. For example, what exactly constitutes a 'conflict'? (e.g. is it marked by violence, protest, movement, general inequality, etc). Related to this point, several participants expressed that the role of capital/global economic injustice, could feature more prominently in the outputs, particularly the map. This concern was raised because linkages between global economic forces and local outcomes are not always straightforward – particularly with diffuse environmental problems, such as climate change. These points were raised in the spirit of enriching the overall research contributions of the project.

Recommendation 3: The project coordinators should consider hiring an individual for a set number of hours per week to check and verify the data for entry into the map. This might help to reduce any bottlenecks in getting the data for each case entered into the map. The hiring of such a person was discussed at the Rio workshop and was planned for September or October 2012.

Recommendation 4: The project coordinators should consider whether it is useful to initiate more discussion among project participants about the project's definition of ecological conflicts, keeping in mind that the original definitions provided have shaped the database forms for the map.

iii. Articles associated with the project published in refereed journals and book presses

The research at the center of the EJOLT project is also the basis for ongoing and future scientific research among the academic project participants. Scientific research articles published in refereed outlets were not promised as 'deliverables' of the project, but rather are a natural outgrowth from it. The ongoing research on EJOLT related themes among the academic participants adds to the overall scientific quality of the project. While it is too soon to tell the quantity and quality of these outputs, they are in preparation and thus worth discussing.

In discussions with project participants, there are many academic outputs in various stages of preparation that are closely linked to the EJOLT project research. Well over a dozen participants noted ongoing work or plans for refereed journal articles, book chapters, books and conference papers presented. For example, the soon to be published book, *Ecological Economics from the Ground Up*, was co-edited by several EJOLT participants (Joan Martinz Alier, Leah Temper and Hali Healy, among others) and covers materials not only from an earlier FP7 project, but also the EJOLT project (and features chapters by a number of EJOLT participants). These more academic and scientific outputs are for the most part still under preparation, and it is to be expected that the academic outputs will be finalized only later in the life-cycle of the EJOLT project. As plans for this additional scientific work are currently taking shape, some participants wondered if perhaps there could be a more detailed publication strategy for scientific publications associated with the project. Because they were not promised as EJOLT project deliverables, more concrete planning regarding these inputs might increase pressures for outputs that could affect progress on other promised

project deliverables. Careful consideration will be needed regarding the publication of these more academic and scientific publications in light of existing obligations for project outputs.

Recommendation 5: Project coordinators should consider whether a more concrete plan on academic publications should be adopted, taking the benefits and costs into account given that these were not planned deliverables of the project.

Recommendation 6: Data on academic outputs associated with the EJOLT project should be collected, including information on the publication of books, journal articles, and conference presentations/papers. A place on the EJOLT webpage could list (and link to) these various academic outputs.

B. Implementation of the Research/Process

The interactive process of the EJOLT research among its varied participants is as central to the project as its tangible outputs. Collaboration, networking and capacity building are key ingredients for a project of this sort that links activism and science, and geographically dispersed project partners. This design of the project is in many ways path breaking in that the cases of ecological injustice brought forward by the environmental justice organizations into the research themes help to advance the academic work, and the conceptual tools also assist the activist work.

i. Collaborative research processes and workshops

The collaborative research process thus far has been excellent. Participants who took part in interviews and surveys were on the whole extremely positive about the collaborations that have taken place in the context of the project. Positive synergies have been spurred by the structure of the project that encourages and indeed requires close collaboration between environmental justice organizations and scientific researchers.

Although the two-way learning process between activism and scientific research is viewed positively by project participants, some challenges were brought to the attention of the evaluator and are worth noting. It is the impression of the evaluator that these challenges in no way indicate that participants feel that the structure of the project is problematic. Rather, they are the reflections by project participants on their experiences thus far and thoughts about how to view these challenges.

One of the challenges that was frequently noted is that environmental justice organizations and academic researchers often have different agendas: academics are typically more interested in scientific inquiry including collection of data and its analysis, while EJOs' mandates are to effect societal change through more immediate action. This divergence in agendas can result in different emphasis each group of participants puts on the different aspects of the project. For example, academic participants may put more emphasis on data collection and analysis, while EJOs may put more emphasis on working toward societal change. In a project where close collaboration is part of the research structure, these differences can at times lead to some tensions.

The divergence between the agendas of EJOs and academics was indeed anticipated by project coordinators. This tension between academic and activist participants is largely seen by

participants to be a positive force for the EJOLT project. It encourages academics to consider local struggles and the needs of the EJOs to advance their causes. And it encourages EJOs to see the utility of academic concepts and tools as inputs into advocacy on the issues on which they campaign. Encouraging these kinds of considerations across academic and advocacy groups is generally not taken up more broadly in academic research nor among activist groups, and as such EJOLT provides a unique opportunity for this kind of two-way learning and appreciation. This cross-fertilization between academic and activist worlds in turn enriches the quality and process of both activist and academic work on environmental justice issues.

A second key challenge that was frequently raised by participants is the development of a common language and framework for project participants given their different backgrounds and agendas. A shared language and set of conceptual tools is a key objective of the project, and work has been progressing toward building this mutual understanding.

EJOLT workshops and training activities (the latter is discussed below) have been central to building the common framework and language for academics and EJOs in the context of the project. The workshops (both the general meetings and those specific to certain Work Packages) have enabled sustained interaction in person, which has been vital for engaging in debate over the utility of ideas and concepts within the project. Both EJO and academic participants have noted the positive benefits of these in-person meetings.

Another final challenge regarding the nature of the engagement of academic and activist groups within the project is that not all organizations work at the same speed on the same issues, which can lead to some minor delays in data collection and analysis in the context of the project. There was some concern about the slow pace of engagement by some (but by no means all) EJOs based in developing countries. It was acknowledged, however, that this may be specific to certain countries due to patchy access to the internet, electricity, etc.

Recommendation 7: Open dialogue about the different agendas among project participants should continue. The tensions are largely seen to be positive, and having open discussion about these issues will help to keep all participants aware of the issues and to work toward continuing the positive synergies.

Recommendation 8: Project management should consider opening a discussion with those organizations that are having difficulty engaging fully in the project to find out what the bottlenecks are, and seek to address them to the extent that they can. Addressing the reasons behind weak participation may not be possible in all cases.

ii. Networking

The networking aspect of the project thus far has been excellent. Feedback from project participants on networking opportunities within the context of the EJOLT project was very positive. Participants were pleased that many new connections had been made and existing relationships had been strengthened. New linkages that have been made in the course of the EJOLT project are largely ones that would not likely have occurred outside of the structure of this project. For example, the new collaboration between mining organizations in Malawi and Namibia with those in

Bulgaria, and study of the health impacts of mining in those locations with CRIIAD and FIOCRUZ, are linkages that are unlikely to have occurred without the structure and connections provided by the EJOLT project.

The enthusiasm about the networking component is equally shared among project participants. Many new collaborative relationships have been established among the participants' organizations. Many of the academic participants, for example, noted that they were very grateful for the opportunity EJOLT has presented to make in-depth linkages with EJOs. They were especially appreciative of the ability to learn from specific individual and local cases of environmental injustice and how information of this sort related to their theoretical and scientific work. EJOs were also pleased with the opportunity to have enhanced interactions with academics. Networking with academics has enabled them to learn new ways to advocate their causes using scientific language. EJOs were also appreciative of the financial and legal advice support provided by EJOLT that fed into their advocacy work. New relationships have also been made among academic organizations, as well as among environmental justice organizations that work on related themes.

A number of participants – from both EJO and academic communities – noted that the participation in EJOLT not only widened their networks for learning and collaboration, but also helped to strengthen their existing networks. The sharing of outputs and ideas from the EJOLT project has in many cases helped to engage and raise awareness among existing networks about EJOLT's work.

Recommendation 9: Given the strong networking achievements of the EJOLT project, the project coordinators should consider preparing a network diagram to illustrate the linkages among the project participants. As the project proceeds, new nodes in the network with organizations from outside of the EJOLT project could be included. Such an illustration of the networking accomplishments will be a useful tool to demonstrate the broader impact and reach of the project.

iii. Training

Both formal and less formal training activities are integral to the EJOLT project and are connected to the capacity building and networking components of the project. The work thus far on training within the project has been very good to excellent.

The EJOLT project has built in a formal training component in the form of an online course on themes of ecological economics and environmental justice. The main idea behind the incorporation of the online course into the project was to provide training on ecological economic concepts for EJOs in order to develop a common language for engagement within the project's research. The training course also provides a space for interaction between academics and EJOs to learn from one another. The course was structured in a way that encouraged EJO participants to use their own detailed knowledge of local cases of environmental justice conflicts in their assignments, which the academic tutors of the course became more familiar with when evaluating the work submitted by the course participants.

The online course was first offered in Fall 2011 and was very well received by those enrolled in it. There were 20 students, 6 of whom were from EJOLT EJO partner organizations. There was wide

appreciation among those involved in the course – from students and instructors – for the opportunity to interact and to learn from each other.

The course contributed to the development of a Glossary (posted on the EJOLT website up to the letter ‘e’ as of end of September 2012), which is a positive concrete output. This Glossary is a very useful tool both within and beyond EJOLT for developing and making available definitions of common terminology/language for activism around ecological justice issues. Tutors in the course from REEDS have also developed an online resource library.

Although the feedback on the online course was very positive, there were some comments by project participants that the course was originally structured to be one-way learning experience from academic to EJO. A number of participants suggested that the course could perhaps build in more opportunities for EJOs to teach cases to the instructors.

Other training activities incorporated within the project include training in communities by CRIAD on how to test for radioactivity. This training was judged by participants to be highly useful for building the capacity among EJOs to document and raise awareness about cases of ecological injustice around mining issues.

A number of PhD students are integrated into the project through their academic institution’s participation in the project network. EJOLT themes and collaborations have provided an excellent training opportunity for these graduate students. Many of these students are directly incorporating the cases and conceptual tools linked to the EJOLT project into their dissertation work (e.g. UAB, Lund, BOG, IIF, etc).

Recommendation 10: The coordinators of the online course should consider whether it would be desirable and/or feasible to make some alterations to the structure of the course in a way that formalizes the two-way learning aspect of the course. This might include open sessions where academic participants/tutors receive instruction from some of the EJO partners regarding their work and case materials.

Recommendation 11: The project should track the work of the graduate students involved in the project in order to document the role the project plays in graduate training. There could be a space on the project website, for example, that profiles these graduate students and notes how their work links to the EJOLT project.

C. Societal impact

The project is still in its early days and it is too soon to tell the extent and quality of societal changes to which the project has contributed. Despite the difficulty of measuring the direct social impact at this stage in the project, participants noted some early evidence of contribution to broader societal goals.

i. Dissemination of outputs for general audiences, including media coverage

Dissemination of EJOLT project outputs for a general audience has thus far been excellent. The EJOLT project website was launched October 1, 2011, and includes a wealth of information

including project reports, briefs, fact sheets, videos, presentations and links. The project has also recently added a Twitter account and Facebook page, which are integrated with the website.

The website quality is excellent. The site is visually pleasing and well designed, making it easy for visitors to find the information they seek. Between its launch and Sept. 15, 2012, the site had over 17,000 page visits, of which over 11,000 were unique visitors. The website saw a strong surge of visits around the Rio +20 conference in late June 2012, and this has helped to maintain a strong number of regular visitors to the EJOLT website since that time. The project's Twitter account has some 500 followers who have signed up for regular updates on project news. The Facebook page has also been highly successful, and has helped to direct people to the EJOLT website. Work Package 12 (Dissemination) is preparing a report the social media and internet reach of the EJOLT project, where further more detailed information can be found.

The work of the project has generated some media coverage in addition to the project's own dissemination to the general public via Internet and social media channels. For example, a film festival on mining in Namibia received local media attention. More broadly, some participants noted that the work of the project, e.g. the Leave the Oil in the Soil work, has raised general awareness of the issue in Africa. The EJOLT map has also become known among environmental organizations in the countries where the EJOs are located.

Generally the dissemination of EJOLT work to general audiences has been going well. Some participants noted that one of the challenges of this work is learning to simplify research findings in order to report them to a more general audience.

Recommendation 12: If it does not do this already, the EJOLT dissemination team should issue press releases to media outlets in both European and developing countries in order to generate more news stories linked to EJOLT's work. These could be issued, for example, each time a major EJOLT report is released.

ii. Engagement with policy-makers

It is too soon to tell whether the project has met its objectives with respect to engagement with policy-makers. The EJOLT project is in its early days and research findings are only just beginning to be translated into policy recommendations. It is worth noting, however, that the EJOLT project has already had some engagement with policy-makers.

The project has now released two Policy Briefs – on industrial tree plantations and shipbreaking – with more in the pipeline and soon to be released. These briefs provide a brief background to the issue as well as explicit policy recommendations. Such tools are vital ways for environmental groups to get their message to policy-makers in an efficient and effective one.

One of the EJOLT briefs – the Policy Brief on shipbreaking – was distributed at a working group of the Basel Convention in late September 2012. The distribution of this brief was well-timed, given that European and other governments gathered to discuss regulations on ship-breaking at this working group meeting.

Some participants in the EJOLT project expressed a desire to engage more actively with policymakers as the project enters a more mature stage and policy recommendations start to stream out directly from the research.

Recommendation 13: A deliberate strategy of timing policy briefs should be considered. To the extent possible, these briefs could be released just prior to important meetings among policy makers around key issues. A deliberate strategy with respect to timing can boost the effectiveness of these briefs.

iii. Evidence of social/policy change directly related to project activities (linkages with groups outside of direct project; policy responses to activities)

It is too early to measure the direct and indirect social impact and policy change to which the EJOLT project has contributed. Indeed, because of the many factors that contribute to social change, determining with certainty the exact contribution of EJOLT will be difficult even after the project is completed. At the same time, however, there is evidence that the project has contributed to societal change along some fronts.

Capacity building is a crucial component of the societal impact of the project. A number of participants noted the significance of the capacity building activities as an indirect societal benefit of EJOLT. The capacity building along these lines includes the training of the EJOs as well as increased visibility of the ecological economic concepts among the general public through the public dissemination mechanisms.

Capacity building was also seen among participants to be a powerful social mobilization tool. The combination of useful scientific concepts with on the ground activism provides a rich base for broader and more effective advocacy and a platform for resistance in local communities. This process has been instrumental, for example, in the Leave the Oil in the Soil campaign in Africa.

The scientific ideas that undergird the project have begun to filter into the advocacy work of the EJOs and into global policy discussions. One example is the increased use of the concept of ecological unequal exchange in global discussions on climate justice. Mention was also made of the wider use of valuation tools and the concept of social metabolism among EJOs and in global discussions on sustainability. Although others beyond EJOLT partners are using these concepts, the EJOLT project has contributed to the diffusion of these ideas more broadly into international policy discussions.

There is also evidence of linkages and networking between the EJOLT project and organizations outside of the immediate list of EJOLT participants. A growing number of academics, EJOs and members of the general public have made inquiries to the project management about how to become involved un the project and how to raise awareness for their own local struggles in the context of the EJOLT project. This outreach beyond the EJOLT project partner organizations is strong evidence of a broad societal impact of the project.

Recommendation 14: The project management should keep track of the inquiries from those outside of the EJOLT partner organizations to document the widening network. This might be included in the recommended network diagram noted above (recommendation 9).

Recommendation 15: The project management team should develop a strategy for handling what is likely to be an increasing number of inquiries from other organizations and from the media.

4. Management/Coordination of the Project

Management of the EJOLT project overall is good, although there is some room for improvement. It is widely recognized among project participants that it is a difficult job to pull together a project of this size and scope. Many participants had no issues with overall coordination. Other participants identified areas for potential improvement. These areas for potential improvement are listed here for the project management to consider. These relate mainly to communications, decision-making and funding issues.

General communications among project participants

There was mixed sentiment among project participants regarding general communications within the EJOLT project. About half of the participants thought that communications were fine, while the other half thought that communications could be improved. This difference in the types of response from the participants may reflect different work and management styles, as well as past connections to the project coordination team. Fruitful discussion among participants with respect to communications within the project took place at the Workshop in Rio in June 2012. Some of the suggestions made at that workshop have already been implemented. The following suggestions frequently came up in interviews/surveys with participants:

- A listserve could be established to enable more regular information flow from the project (this has already been implemented).
- EJOLT project newsletters could be distributed via the listserve (this has already been implemented).
- A better and more targeted use of social media (this has already been implemented to some extent).
- Tracking of project tasks and achievements could possibly be made easier by use of the Basecamp online project-tracking program, rather than Drop Box which is currently used (many participants expressed that they do not like or use Drop Box on a regular basis).
- Project reports and policy briefs could be translated into more languages (especially Spanish and Portuguese)– to widen impact and engagement with the project among the general public in non-English speaking countries. (this has begun with the translation of some of the project outputs).
- More opportunity could be made for internal discussion and debate of concepts that are central to the project.

Recommendation 16: Continue to make the communications improvements that have already started (social media, listserve, newsletter, translation) and consider alternative communication

software (such as Basecamp) which might enable better internal tracking of tasks and more internal discussion of key concepts in the project.

Communication and decision making within the Project Steering Committee

The EJLOT governance structure includes a Project Steering Committee that is comprised of the project coordinator and the leaders of the remaining 11 Work Packages. This body is responsible for making key decisions of direction of the project as well as monitoring its progress. The project has planned for regular meetings of this group, which have mainly taken place at the general workshops where all WP leaders are present.

Some participants expressed a desire for closer collaboration and more regular communication among Project Steering Committee members. Several participants made suggestions for more regularly scheduled conference calls to bring this committee together so that there can be better synergies regarding substantive linkages and smoother information flows between the work packages. Some expressed concern that the Steering Committee meetings at the general workshops do not work that well because time is always tight and the meetings only take place annually. There is little space in these meetings, for example, for in-depth discussion on data challenges and analysis strategies. More substantive, less pressured, and regular interactions among the Steering Committee could help to alleviate these concerns.

Recommendation 17: Consider implementing more regular communication among the Steering Committee members in the form of regular conference calls, perhaps on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Such meetings could help ensure smoother decision-making procedures regarding the overall direction of the project and ensure that project tasks are completed in a coordinated among WPs in an efficient and timely manner.

Decision-making at the level of the Project Secretariat

In addition to the decision-making communications of the Steering Committee, concern was expressed by some participants with respect to decision-making within the Project Secretariat, which includes the coordinator and three scientific assistants, mainly located at UAB. In particular, there was some desire to have a clearer sense of who is responsible for what aspects of the project within the Secretariat. Project participants were not always certain which of the members of the Project Secretariat to contact about which issues. Some delays receiving responses and decisions from the Secretariat were reported by some participants.

Recommendation 18: The Project Secretariat could usefully develop a matrix delineating which member of the secretariat is responsible for what aspects of the project. This will help participants better understand who to contact with which questions they have for the management team.

Funding issues

Several participants raised issues about funding glitches that occurred already in the context of the EJOLT project. Some of these were delays caused by issues outside of the control of the EJOLT coordinators. Smooth transfer of funds to participating organizations is vital for the continued success of the project, and such matters should be monitored.

Recommendation 19: The project management and financial officer should monitor finances closely to ensure smooth transfer of funds to participating organizations. The recent hiring of a new EJOLT financial officer at UAB was a first step in this direction.

5. Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Overall, the EJOLT project is progressing well towards its objectives and goals. There are areas of strength where the project has had excellent performance with respect to the key indicators used in this evaluation. In other areas, there is some room for improvement. The evaluation has produced 19 concrete recommendations that emerged from the analysis of the data and indicators used for this evaluation. These recommendations, summarized briefly below, are given in the spirit of suggestions to improve the project and contribute to its ongoing success:

Recommendation 1: Consider hiring a copy-editor to read each report prior to publication.

Recommendation 2: Consider instituting a form external peer-reviewed element for the project reports.

Recommendation 3: Consider hiring an individual for a set number of hours per week to check and verify the data for entry into the map.

Recommendation 4: Consider initiating more discussion among project participants about the definition of ecological conflicts, and clarify the working definition for the purpose of the project.

Recommendation 5: Consider whether a more concrete plan on academic publications should be adopted, taking the benefits and costs into account given that these were not planned deliverables of the project.

Recommendation 6: Data on academic outputs associated with the EJOLT project should be collected, including information on the publication of books, journal articles, and conference presentations/papers. A place on the EJOLT webpage could list (and link to) these various academic outputs.

Recommendation 7: Open dialogue about the different agendas among project participants should continue.

Recommendation 8: Project management should consider opening a discussion with those organizations that are having difficulty engaging fully in the project to find out what the bottlenecks are, and seek to address them to the extent that they can.

Recommendation 9: Consider preparing a network diagram to illustrate the linkages among the project participants and additional organizations that have made contact with the project.

Recommendation 10: Consider whether the online course could be restructured in a way that formalizes the two-way learning aspect of the course.

Recommendation 11: The project should track the work of the graduate students involved in the project in order to document the role the project plays in graduate training.

Recommendation 12: If it does not do this already, the EJOLT dissemination team should issue press releases to media outlets along with releases of major EJOLT outputs.

Recommendation 13: A deliberate strategy of timing policy briefs should be considered.

Recommendation 14: The project management should keep track of the inquiries from those outside of the EJOLT partner organizations to document the widening network (see recommendation 9).

Recommendation 15: The project management team should develop a strategy for handling what is likely to be an increasing number of inquiries from other organizations and from the media.

Recommendation 16: Continue to make the communications improvements that have already been started (social media, listserv, newsletter, translation) and consider alternative communication software (such as Basecamp).

Recommendation 17: Regular communication among the Steering Committee members should be implemented in the form of regular conference calls.

Recommendation 18: The Project Secretariat should clarify for participants which member of the secretariat is responsible for the various specific aspects of the project.

Recommendation 19: The project management and financial officer should monitor finances closely to ensure smooth transfer of funds to participating organizations.

***Recommendation 20:* One final recommendation is that the Project Steering Committee should consider the above recommendations and decide whether concrete action should be taken in response.**

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Abbreviated CV of Independent Evaluator

Jennifer Clapp is a Faculty of Environment Chair in Global Environmental Governance and Professor in the Environment and Resource Studies Department at the University of Waterloo. She is presently Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo. She is author of a number of books and articles on themes related to the interface of the global economy and the global environment. She has served as co-editor of the journal *Global Environmental Politics* (2008-2012). Her current research focuses on the interface of environmental sustainability and food security.

Professor Clapp's recent books:

Hunger in the Balance: The New Politics of International Food Aid (Cornell University Press, 2012)

Food (Polity, 2012)

Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment (2nd Edition, co-authored with Peter Dauvergne, 2011, MIT Press)

Global Governance, Poverty and Inequality (Co-edited with Rorden Wilkinson, Routledge, 2010).

The Global Food Crisis: Governance Challenges and Opportunities (co-edited with Marc J. Cohen, WLU Press, 2009)

Corporate Power in Global Agrifood Governance (co-edited with Doris Fuchs, MIT Press, 2009).

Corporate Accountability and Sustainable Development (Co-edited with Peter Utting, Oxford University Press, 2008).

Toxic Exports: The Transfer of Hazardous Wastes from Rich to Poor Countries. (Cornell University Press, 2001).

Appendix 2. EJOLT Partner Organizations

Acción Ecológica – OCMAL

The Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros de América Latina, housed by Accion Ecológica (AE) in Quito, defends communities affected by the mining boom in Latin America since the 1990s

<http://www.ocmal.org>

ANPED – Northern Alliance for Sustainability

ANPED (Northern Alliance for Sustainability) is an international non-profit organisation and movement for strong sustainability

<http://www.anped.org>

BOG – Bogazici University

Bogaziçi University was established in 1863 in Istanbul and is now a top Turkish state university

<http://www.boun.edu.tr/tr-TR/Content/Default.aspx>

Business and Human Rights

The purpose of the Resource Centre of BHR (London, UK) is to increase the transparency of companies' human rights impacts

<http://www.business-humanrights.org>

CCS – Centre for Civil Society

The Centre for Civil Society from Durban (SA) occupies a central position in debates on Climate Justice and “carbon trading”

<http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/>

CDCA – Centro Documentazione Conflitti Ambientali

The centre for documentation of environmental conflicts supports indigenous and social organisations in the South of the world

<http://www.cdca.it/>

CFJ – Citizens For Justice

Citizens For Justice – Friends of the Earth Malawi is a non-profit organisation advocating environmental and social justice in Malawi.

<http://www.cfjmalawi.org/>

CRIIRAD – Commission de Recherche et d'Information Indépendantes sur la RADioactivité

CRIIRAD is an NGO that works to improve information and protection of the public against ionizing radiation

<http://www.criirad.org/>

ELN – Earthlife Namibia

Earthlife Namibia is a non-profit organisation that seeks a better life for all people without exploiting other people or degrading their environment.

ERA – Environmental Rights Action

Environmental Rights Action is a Nigerian advocacy NGO founded in 1993 to deal with environmental human rights issues in Nigeria

FIOCRUZ – Fundação Oswaldo Cruz

Attached to the Brazilian Ministry of Health, we are the most prominent science & technology health institution in Latin America

<http://www.ensp.fiocruz.br>

FOCUS – Association for Sustainable Development

The vision of the NGO Focus is a society that perceives itself as a part of nature and therefore lives with

nature, not next to it
<http://www.focus.si>

GRAIN – Genetic Resources Action International

GRAIN is a non-profit think-tank/activist group that supports community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems
<http://www.grain.org/>

IFF – Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Fortbildung

The Institute of Social Ecology is a subdivision of the IFF at Klagenfurt University, in Austria
<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/socec/inhalt/1.htm>

JNU – Jawaharlal Nehru University

Jawaharlal Nehru University is a renowned University in India and abroad

Lund University

Lund University in southern Sweden has an important place in the environmental sciences in the European research area
<http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/>

Nature Kenya

The East Africa Natural History Society (EANHS/NK) studies natural history and conserves the natural environment in eastern Africa
<http://www.naturekenya.org>

REEDS – International Centre for Research in Ecological Economics, Eco-Innovation and Tool Development for Sustainability

The Research in Ecological Economics and Development for Sustainability unit is a centre at the UVSQ University
<http://www.uvsq.fr/>

SERI – Sustainable Europe Research Institute

The Sustainable Europe Research Institute is a non-profit working on research projects towards sustainability strategies
<http://www.seri.de>

UAB – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The Institute for Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA-UAB) is one of the top research centres on environmental studies in Spain. ICTA-UAB will coordinate EJOLT
<http://icta.uab.es/>

URV – Universitat Rovira i Virgili

The Tarragona Centre for Environmental Law Studies (CEDAT, URV) is a research and education centre on environmental law
<http://www.cedat.cat>

WRM – World Rainforest Movement

The World Rainforest Movement is an international network of citizens' groups involved in efforts to defend the world's forests
<http://www.wrm.org.uy>

Za Zemiata

Za Zemiata is a Bulgarian NGO developing positive and sustainable alternatives to socially and environmentally harmful activities and projects.
<http://www.zazemiata.org>

Appendix 3. Evaluation Interview Guide and Survey 2012

Survey for EJOLT Participants – June 2012 (post-Rio meeting)

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Work package involvement: _____ (list the work packages you are associated with)

Role: _____ (WP leader, participant, etc)

Instructions: please type your answers under each question, save the document with your name in the title, and email it back to the external evaluator at jclapp@uwaterloo.ca

Please note: your comments will be kept strictly confidential

1. **Networking:** Has participation of your organization in the EJOLT project been helpful for building/strengthening networks? Please note any examples of positive connections that have been made as a direct result of your organization's involvement in EJOLT.
2. **Research:** What aspects of the research component of the project are most important to your organization? Please note any examples of successes or challenges for the research component of your involvement in the EJOLT project.
3. **Training:** Is the training component integral to your involvement in EJOLT? Please note any specific examples of successes and/or challenges.
4. **Impact:** What is your sense of the societal impact of the EJOLT project? Are there specific examples of successes linked to your organization's involvement in the project? What are the challenges?
5. **Involvement:** What is the most positive aspect/experience so far that has come from your organization's involvement in EJOLT?
6. **Concerns:** Do you have any concerns about the EJOLT project? (processes, communications, funding, etc).
7. **Other comments/suggestions:** Please note any additional comments you wish to make available to the evaluator.