



上海映绿公益事业发展中心
NPO Development Center, Shanghai

**Mid-Term Evaluation Report on the
Liangshan Development Project
Sponsored By Norwegian Mission Alliance**

By NPO Development Center Shanghai

October, 26 – November, 1, 2009

**Yanyuan County, Liangshan Prefecture,
Sichuan Province, China**

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Part One: Front page

Name of the project evaluated: The Mid-Term Evaluation for Liangshan Development Project

Name and address of the organization the report is submitted to:

Shincon AS, Kunming Office

301,129 Goofing Road, Kunming, Unman Province 650032, P.R.China

Names and organizations of the evaluators:

NPO Development Center Shanghai

Time of the Evaluation Undertaken: October 26 - November2, 2009

Part Two: Acknowledgments (optional)

Invited by Shincon Kunming Office, the Shanghai NPO Development Center Shanghai under the leadership of Dr. Ailing Zhuang had organized a team of evaluation specialists to conduct the mid-term evaluation for the second phase implementation of the project during Oct 26th to November 2nd, 2009.

1. The composition of the evaluation team:

Name	Nationality	Profession	Background	Current Employer / Organization
Ren Xiaodong	China	Social development	community development and evaluation	Guizhou Normal University
Guo Jing	China	Public Health and Economy	Project management and evaluation	NPO Development Center Shanghai
Qiao Yun	China	Financial management	Project management and financial management	NPO Development Center Shanghai

2. The main goals for the evaluation are:

- To evaluate the effect, the efficiency and the sustainability of the main investments done in the project during the second project period, and to give relevant advices for the future
- To evaluate and give advice on the implemented and ongoing capacity building programs in the project

The evaluation team (See table 1) would like to thank everyone who shared their valuable time and knowledge to assist with the evaluation. All of the individuals interviewed were extremely helpful, and contributed significant time in preparing for our visits and openly discussed achievements and challenges. The stakeholders which covered three levels (Shicon, County Office, Village Project management committee and recipients) for interview are too numerous to mention here, but are gratefully listed in Annex 1.

The time dedicated to providing wide-ranging information and arranging comprehensive field visits and interviews in many aspects of the Yanyuan projects site was much appreciated, as was the frankness and welcome shown throughout the exercise.

Specific thanks go to: Ms.Xie Zubai, Ms.Ma Baoyan, Mr.Gao Jianzhong, Mr.Pu Houjun, Mr.Sun Anquan and Mr.Dai Chunsheng for their kind arrangements and coordination in the process of the evaluation, and joining us at Paoma, Beishan and Er Dao Gou project site.

Finally, thanks for the comprehensive and meaningful support logistics kindly arranged by Shincon Kunming office for our survey process.

Part Three: Introduction of the Project

1. Background of the Project

Liangshan Development Project is a holistic community development project initiated with a health and development project for leprosy patients and families in 2001. During the first period of the project (2001-2006), the project has gained knowledge and experiences in a broad field including health, education, infrastructure construction, and agriculture. The project was highly appreciated by the evaluation group in 2006 and as a result, a new five year project (2007-2011) was confirmed to be carried out with more focus on capacity building of local people.

2. Overall goal of the project

The goal of the project is to facilitate sustainable development in Liangshan prefecture through developing the target group's own resources in order to give them the opportunity and motivation to take responsibility for their own and family's lives, and in this way build their own future and their community's future.

3. Objectives of the project: The following objectives should be reached:

- Strengthen the communities through increasing and strengthening the local organizational and administrative capacity, which should increase to identify needs, solutions, to plan and implement needed activities, as well as to advocate their needs in the larger society and at different governmental levels.
- Strengthen the communities through infrastructural and training activities in order to improve the living conditions. Water, education, health and agriculture are all important areas to address in order to achieve this goal.
- Environment – Energy is important for daily life and daily work. Activities like bio gas will

help the communities use environmental friendly energy resources and help the communities avoid dependence on external energy resources volatile to international markets.

- Strengthen the women's situation through improving their educational opportunities; reduce dropouts, and ability to participate in community activities on an equal basis to the men.
- Strengthen the impact in the larger society through networking between communities and authorities, build relationship and thereby sustainability when project financing are phased out.
- Strengthen the local government's capacity to administrate, follow up, evaluate and coordinate project activities. This capacity building should not only focus on technical aspects but emphasis the importance of attitudes toward target group's situation.
- Promote target group to share their newly developed knowledge and experience to other surrounding villages.

4. Activities to be undertaken: Based on the objectives, the following activities shall have been conducted in several areas including:

- Facilitate participatory community activities
- Infrastructure improvement
- Training/knowledge transfers
- Networking between communities and groups in society

5. Outcome to be expected:

For villagers:

- Access to clean water needed for drinking and improved hygiene
- All children attending and graduating from primary school
- Use of environmental friendly energy resources, such like biogas
- Decent income
- Improved health situation
- Villagers capacitated in concepts and knowledge relevant for project management and local development
- Improved living and working conditions for women
- Increased inclusion and acceptance of disabled people

For local partners:

- Improved educational system and reduced number of dropouts
- Use of environmental friendly energy resources
- Improved water supply
- Improved economic development in the project villages
- Increased fighting of the spread of HIV Aids
- Increased capacity to gather information and adopt to new concepts and new technology
- Increased cooperation between local villages and county government

6. Activities have been implemented: Since 2007, the project has implemented following activities:

- Adjusted the composition of County Project Steering Group and set up project office in county level with specific project staffs;
- Continue infrastructure contraction in project villages in irrigation, drinking water and school building;
- Conducted bio-gas projects in selected project villages for the promotion of environmental friendly energy use;
- Continue the support for minority and disable girls on school education;
- Provide oral health inspection for primary school children
- Support the capacity building for community organization.

Part Four: Executive Summary

In the five-day on-site evaluation, the evaluation team has conducted interviews with Shincon Kunming Office staffs, Yanyuan Project Office staffs, visiting the project villages, holding meeting with beneficiary villagers and their families and meeting with county project leading group, and got a holistic impression of the project. The following is the executive summary of the main achievements the project has made, recommendations and lessons learned.

1. The main achievements have been made by the project

- The project design is properly meet the problems of the poverty areas of Liangshan. Cooperated with local government, the project had constructed new schools and drinking water infrastructures, introduced bio-gas units. These project activities have greatly accelerated the development of poor villages.
- The project implementation properly followed the project proposal with high participation of all stakeholders. The outputs include: Paoma Village School and 13 bio-gas units of Paoma village; drinking water system of Beishan village (63 households have pipe water in their houses) and 16 bio-gas units; 125 bio-gas units in Er Dao Gou village and a newly expanded village school. In addition to these, the project has created a village level project leading group in Er Dao Gou village.
- The county project office has a good project management system that includes: need assessment and analysis of project villages; strict monitory to project implementation; complete project documentation management; proper financial management regulations and close communication and connection with beneficiaries.
- The beneficiaries commonly agree that the project had settled the urgent difficulties that the villages are facing in the development to carry out direct activities on education, water and energy.
- The Yanyuan county government has give high attention to the cooperation with Shincon and NMA. It has established a project Steering Committee with the leaders of relevant departments as the member. With the efforts of local government, the Er Dao Gou village becomes the model village for resettlement.

2. Recommendations made by the evaluation team

Concluded from the evaluation, recommendations are suggested by the evaluation team:

- To develop a holistic village development project that based on the villagers. The project should take the capacity building as the core and the bio-gas development as the set point to realize an involvement of multiple departments and resources.
- To design an integrative capacity building action plan for villagers including project management, implementation, and various applicable technologies.
- To improve the capacity of project management staffs in county level through diversified ways including training, studying tour and communication etc.
- To design a comprehensive project based on bio-gas but connected with grain production, animal husbandry, sanitary improvement and environmental protection.

3. Lessons learned from the project

Some lessons are learned from the project implementation for further improvement:

- The wide spread of project villages have increased the cost of project. It is suggested to concentrate the project activities in 2 or 3 villages in the next period of the project.
- The large scale of bio-gas construction is more efficiency and has higher effectiveness. It will be easier for post-construction management and maintenance.

Part Five: Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

1. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation is trying to answer the questions include but not limit to:

- what has been done to follow up the recommendations from the 2006 evaluation, by Shincon and by local partner.
- the effect of the main investments, related to water, education, energy and income generating activities (farmers training)
- the capacity training program in the model village – Er Dao Gou
- the sustainability of the investments
- the effectiveness of the project investment

2. Methodologies adopted: A variety of methods was used to evaluate the project:

- Document review
- Site visits
- Interview and
- Group meeting with project beneficiaries to get know of their attitude to the project, benefits get from the project, participatory and sustainable management capacity, desire to future project etc; formal meeting with government officials to collect the information on government policies and future development plan in order to find potential resources of cooperation; discussion with project staff to assess the ability of project staff in project implementation and management, take their suggestions and desires for future project development. The evaluation team also carried out site observations and investigations to find the advantages and opportunities for further project development.

Due to the remote distance of most of the project villages, the evaluation team only visited to three project villages as Pao Ma, Bei Shan and Er Dao Gou where most of the activities in the second project period were concentrated. Among them, Er Dao Gou is the most important component since its function as a Model Village in the second period.

Part Six: Findings

The findings will be stated from four aspects: output, outcome, efficiency and impact. The ‘output’ refers to the direct virtual achievements of project activities while the ‘outcome’ will focus on the indirect but relative or subsequent results of project activities. The ‘efficiency’ will mainly give emphasis on the management of the project, and the ‘impact’ means the influence of the project to local government and society.

1. Output

The project has got very satisfied outputs in all the three villages that the evaluation group had visited.

Paoma village

- A new primary school with four classrooms and one toilet has been built in Paoma village. The quality of the building meets to relevant regulations and the requirement of the project.
- The school has 120 students at present. All children in nearby villages with suitable ages are studying in school including girls. There are 3 teachers in the school but only one of the three is qualified teacher appointed by local education authority.

Problems need solving: The school however has no electricity now. Children are playing on unpaved ground without any security equipments while one edge of the ground is steep cliff. Since the school has no cooking place and equipments, the students eat nothing till 3-4pm.

- 13 biogas units have been built in the village. We randomly selected two biogas tanks for inspection and found that both of the two work well.

Beishan village

- A drinking water pool had been built in the village in the first period of the project, and water will be connected into individual household in the second period. At the time of evaluation, all villagers can reach to clean water from the project. Most of the household can get water in their own houses. The quality and quantity of the water are satisfied.

Problem needs solving: the water pool has no cover to prevent the falling of children, small animals, dust and rubbish. There is a risk of pollution.

- A water management mechanism has been formed in the village. 2 villagers have been selected to take the responsibility of management of water including regular inspection and maintenance. They are paid by water fees collected from the villagers with 40 yuan per household per year.

Relevant regulations are made for water management such as a) to sanitize and sterilize the water pool twice a year at least; b) to use water rotationally in busy season etc.

- The quantity of water can meet the requirements of drinking. Part of the households can use the water for irrigation. In busy season, the irrigation is still a bottleneck for the agriculture production in the village.
- 16 biogas units have been built in the village. According to the introduction of the village leader, 14 of them work well while 2 can not work for unknown reasons. **However, few of the biogas units are connected with toilets and pigpens.**

Er Dao Gou Village

Err Dao Gou village is resettlement village that all villagers were moved from mountains above 3000 meter of elevation. The project activities in the village include bio-gas and capacity building.

- Cooperated with the County Agriculture Bureau, the project has built 125 bio-gas units in the village. At the time of evaluation, the construction work has finished. Some of the villagers have started to use bio-gas for cooking.
- Capacity building is a new focus of the project in the second phase. A Project Leading Group has been set up in the village with 11 people including village leaders and villager representatives. It is mentionable that the Leading Group has 4 women representatives. Through the training courses of the project, numbers of the leading group has got basic knowledge about participatory project management and leadership. They organized the villagers to pave a shortcut from the village to the township with the seed money provided by the project. The whole process of decision making was participatory using the methods of village meeting, voting and ranking. They have showed very strong organization capacity in the procedure of paving the road. The women representatives actively participated in the decision-making and organization.
- Cooperated with local education authority, the project has invested in the improvement of local primary school. The school is very beautiful with new classrooms and playground.

2. Outcome

Generally speaking, the project has gained very good achievements in the project sites. The project activities are in accordance with the real needs of the village. Some obvious outcomes were founded.

Paoma Village

- Before the project, there was only an informal village school with three classrooms in dangerous situation. The school was far from the village without qualified teachers. After the new school was built, it has been accepted by the local authority as a formal village school. Qualified teacher was appointed and the local education authority has made a plan for the improvement of the school.

- Water was the key constraint of development in Beishan village. With the implementation of the project, part of the villagers can use the water for irrigation. The yield of corn has increased from 200kg to 1000kg per mu, other products like numb pepper has also increase a lot. It shows that the project has very good effect on the income generation of the villagers. In addition to it, since the water problem had solved, some of the villagers have moved from high mountains to the lower place because of the easy access to water.
- Bio-gas is welcomed by villagers in both Beishan and Er Dao Gou village. Villagers' feedback shows that the bio-gas can save a lot of firewood consumption (3000-4000kg per year) and as a result the time for firewood picking has been saved for agriculture production or labor export.
- The project activities, including school, bio-gas and water system, have very positive impact on women since the hard labor of firewood picking, cooking, water carrying were traditionally taken by women. The project has greatly released them from the hard labor as well young girls can have more opportunity of study.

3. Efficiency

The efficiency of project is analyzed from the project management aspect including the organizational structure of the project. Several findings are mentioned hereby.

- The project management gave strong impressions to the evaluation group. The project office in county level has perfect documentary keeping system. Regulations are established and followed perfectly by the project staff. The four staffs we have seen (including one part-time) are all responsible and hard working. They are capable and trusty.
- The accountant of the project office is part-time staff appointed by country CDC. She has been worked in the position as an accountant for more than 10 years and is familiar with the relevant laws and regulations of financial management. The project has stipulated strict financial management regulations in 2006.
- A project steering committee has been set up including almost all relevant government department leaders. For each project activities, an implementing leading group will be formed with direct related government department leaders as the group member. Such kind of coordination mechanism has shown great contribution for the successful implementation of the project.

Problems are also found in the project management:

- The staff of project office is composed by people transferred from health and education sectors. Their knowledge structure can not meet the requirement of an integrative rural development project especially in agriculture, engineering and community development.
- Although there is a steering committee that including many government departments, most of them did not actually participate in the project. The role of steering committee is not fully played.

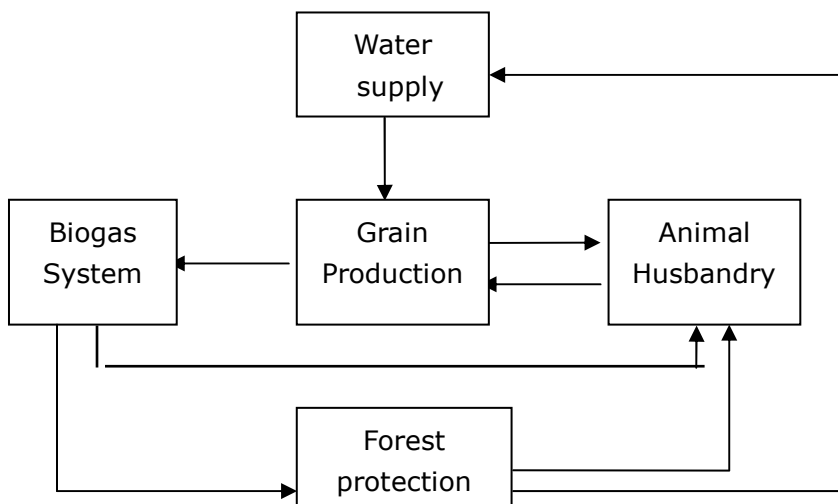
- Due to the part time work, the accountant of the project office can not fully involve in the project. The financial management is sometime lag back to the activities.
- The budget management is weak in the project office. The yearly budget is made by the project staffs themselves with some information collected maybe one year before. The accountant will provide quarterly financial report to Shincon Kunming office, but since there is no monthly budget or quarterly budget, the financial settlement can not be matched with the quarterly budget. It is hard to inspect the financial situation of the project timely.

4. Impact

The impact of a project normally refers to the results that may gained long time after the project had implemented. There is however something positive that we can see now for future development.

- The positive future of bio-gas development and its contribution to environmental protection, agriculture production and economic development in rural areas.
- The advantage of bio-gas is obvious in the project village. Due to the environmental degradation, forests have almost disappeared in the project area. Firewood as the traditional energy of farmers is getting harder and harder to get. For each household, at least one labor will be used on the firewood collecting every day. Normally the hard work of firewood collecting will be taken by women and children and become a great burden for them. In addition to it, the firewood collecting activity will destroy the forests in a large degree and cause more pressure on environmental protection and rehabilitation. The usage of bio-gas can not only save the labor of farmers but also protect the forests.
- In addition to it, a complete bio-gas system has more important roles in agriculture production and husbandry. The terminal effect of the bio-gas can be concluded as social and economic development in rural areas. The relationship between bio-gas and environmental protection, agriculture production, husbandry development in rural areas is shown in the figure 1.

Figure 1 Relationship between bio-gas and environmental protection, agriculture production and husbandry development



- Capacity building especially village organization development has been approved as a powerful method to change the situation of project site. The experiences in Er Dao Gou village illustrate that village organization established through participatory method has strong life force in the village. With continuing capacity building, the village organization will play more important role in the rural development especially in sustainable development. According to the introduction of government officers, about 10 more villages will be built for resettlement in 10 year in Yanyuan County. About 100,000 people will move from the high mountains to plains for ecological protection reason. Resettlement is a comprehensive procedure that involves many aspects including culture, economy and society. Government compulsory order usually can not settle all the problems caused by culture and the change of life style. Village organization however has big advantage in this field. The Er Dao Gou village has the opportunity to become a model for future resettlement work of government.

- The cooperation between foreign assistant project and local government is new and promising trial in the project. In the bio-gas construction for Er Dao Gou village, the resources of project and Agriculture Bureau was properly integrated together to reach the same goal. This way of resource integration should be encouraged and promoted in future project implementation. In many cases, the government has rich resources in terms of money, technology, human resources, management structure and authority also. While the foreign assistant project has the resources of new methodology, rich experiences and enthusiasm. A good cooperation between the project and government advantages can settle the problem in an easy and cheap way.

Part Seven: Recommendations

In accordance with the findings that the evaluation team had seen in the three project villages, we have following recommendations for the next two years of the project.

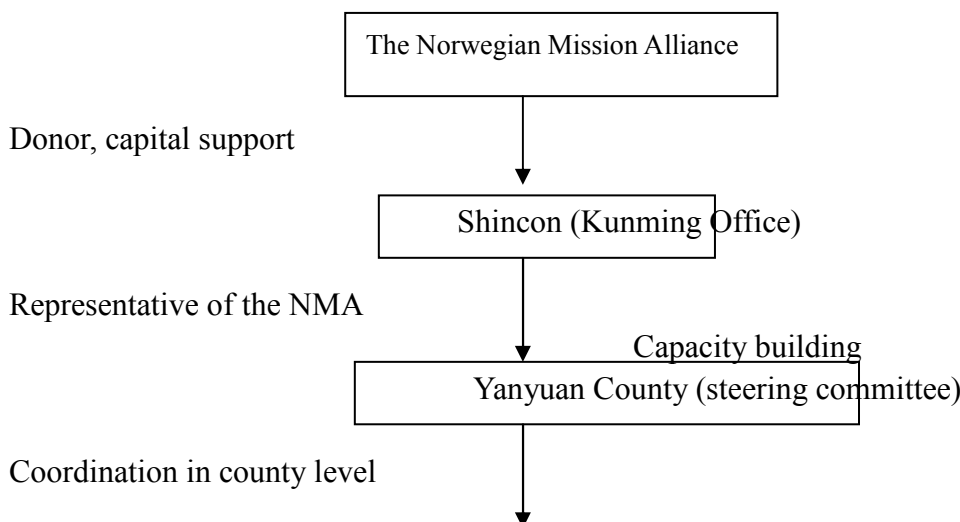
- The project' priority should be transferred from hardware construction (such as school building) to software development (such as capacity building and community organization development). The experiences of the project in last 10 year show that software construction has more advantage in reach the goal described as 'to facilitate sustainable development in Liangshan prefecture through developing the target group's own resources in order to give them the opportunity and motivation to take responsibility for their own and family's lives, and in this way build their own future and their communities future.' The forms of software can be various including training, study tour, dialogue and field visiting etc. The target group of capacity building should not limit to farmers but also government officers especially in township level.

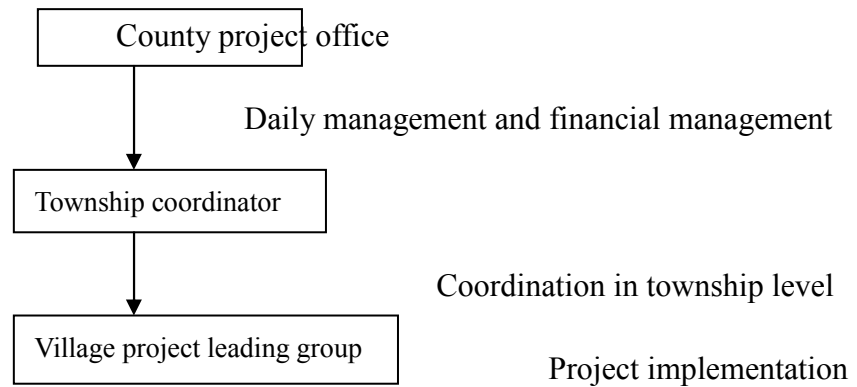
- The common problems that have been found in the project areas are poverty and environmental degradation. These two problems have actually strong relationship of interactive. Bio-gas is a good alternative to settle both of the two problems. The function of bio-gas in environmental protection and economic development is shown in figure 1. The development of bio-gas however should not be separate from animal husbandry and agriculture production. In all the three villages that the evaluation team had visited, none of the households who have the bio-gas units constructed had used the bio-gas residual for fertilizer. Most of the bio-gas units are not connected with piggins and toilets, except in Er Dao Gou village. The integrative utilization of

bio-gas is an important precondition of the development of bio-gas and its sustainability. Therefore we suggest that the designing of bio-gas activities in future project should pay more attention to the role of bio-gas in the whole agriculture chain and post-construction technical support is a very important aspect for the sustainable development of bio-gas.

- An integrative village strategic plan is strongly recommended. The project should take one or two typical villages (such as Er Dao Gou and Beishan village) to make 3 to 5 years development strategic plan using participatory methods. The plan will be the guideline for the development of the village that includes measurable objectives, detailed activities to reach the objectives, resources needed and how to get it, management and monitoring etc. The plan should also be meaningful for local government in the decision-making process related to the village development. For this purpose, the participation of government officers in the procedure of planning is essential factor.
- The project has conducted innovative trial of resource integration in the construction of bio-gas in Er Dao Gou village and has got excellent success. Such experiences should be promoted in the future to take fully advantage of the role of the County Project Steering Committee. The different government department involved has different resources. There are many opportunities for the project to find these resources and integrate them into the project in order to get more achievements. The village plan mentioned above will be a useful instrument for resource integration. The role of project office as the coordinator should be strengthened.
- In order to strengthen the capacity of the project office, we suggest adjusting the composition of project staff with more young people from the department of poverty alleviation or environmental protection. In addition to it, more involvement in the township level should be thought about. We suggest that the project can set a coordinator in the township to do routine monitory and coordination work for the project. While in the village level, a village link man can be selected from the villagers to take the job of collecting information and simple coordination in village level. By this way, a complete project management structure will be set up as figure 2.

Figure 2 Project management structure





In terms of financial management, we suggest to strengthen the budget management with monthly budget and quarterly budget. A detailed timeable of activities should be included with the budget. It will be perfect if the project office can have a full time accountant who can participate in the project implementation to get more information about the project.

Part Eight: Lessons Learned

Two main lessons are learned from the project:

- **The selection of project site:** The selection of project site should be very careful. The cost of carrying out activities (eg. bio-gas) in some villages (like Paoma) is too high and the scale economy is very low because the transportation and dispersive of households. A preferred project village should be typical (eg. Er Dao Gou) and promising (eg. Beishan). We suggest that future project should be comparatively concentrated in two or three villages in order to save the cost as well as get more efficiency.
- **The post-construction technical support for bio-gas:** As mentioned before, the development of bio-gas is an integrative process that involves agriculture, animal husbandry and health. A simple bio-gas tank is not economic and sustainable. More emphasis should be given to the post-construction management and technical support of bio-gas project.

Part Nine: Reference

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- 盐源县挪威协力会外援项目领导小组办公室 2008 年度外援经费收支情况审计报告
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2008 Norwegian Mission Alliance training course summary for local project village
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- 盐源县下海乡二道沟村综合扶贫项目申请报告
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Beneficiary Family survey Form
- 盐源县下海乡二道沟村推选沼气项目收益户的条件和要求
Criteria for to choose Bio-Gas beneficiary family at Er Dao Gou Village
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- 盐源县农村户用沼气安全使用手册
Instruction Book of Bio-Gas

The End!!!