Xinyan Lin

+41-76-276-8163 📞
xinyan.lin@graduateinstitute.ch ✉

Summary

PhD-trained field building strategist with 10+ years of experience orchestrating multistakeholder initiatives and government partnerships across environmental and climate sectors. Proven expertise in managing complex international collaborations, designing policy-focused events, and navigating public-sector processes across Asia-Pacific and global contexts. Skilled in bridging Western and Asian perspectives on environmental governance, with particular strength in building government-civil society-private sector coalitions for systems change.

Professional Experience

Independent Consultant   2025-present

- **Ocean-Climate Decarbonizing Strategy:** Advising NGO networks in China on developing ocean-climate decarbonization proposals for government and private foundation funding, bridging ocean conservation with climate mitigation priorities, and translating technical concepts into fundable initiatives.
- **Stanford-Duke Global Ocean Equity Analysis:** Leading the development of two research papers on how social equity is enacted by different networks of relations and interventions in marine governance through major global ocean forums.

Duke University, Collaborative Event Ethnography (CEE) Researcher   2020-2024

- **Large Event Orchestration Analysis:** Led CEE team at UN Ocean Conference 2022, managing analysis across multiple conservation themes under SDG 14, developed peer-reviewed analysis of event design, stakeholder coordination, and narrative building in high-stakes international settings
- **Multistakeholder Collaboration:** Conducted collaborative research across 10+ international policy meetings (CBD, UNOC, BBNJ), analyzing how governments, business, and civil society stakeholders coordinate messaging, build coalitions, and navigate competing priorities in multilateral settings
- **Decarbonizing Technologies Analysis:** Analyzed how Nature-based Solutions/decarbonizing technologies are framed, justified, and contested by multistakeholders, providing insights into effective government engagement strategies
- **Strategic Synthesis:** Led analysis of China's position in global marine negotiations, integrating data across multiple international environmental agreements, demonstrating capacity to navigate complex political landscapes and prepare analytical inputs for policy engagement.

China Marine Funders Alliance (CMFA), Founding Director   2017-2020

- **Donor Network Development:** Established and grew the network from 4 to 30+ Chinese and international grantmaking foundations by orchestrating bi-monthly online convenings and annual offline meetings back-to-back to major national forums. The network tripled annual investments in marine conservation in China.
- **Major Event Delivery and Government Fundraising:** Co-organized 2017 China Ocean NGO Forum with 300% increase in stakeholder participation, successfully securing 100,000 USD from local government and other foundation partners to support the event.
- **Government Relationship Building:** Led a multi-year effort to build government trust and engagement in the China Ocean NGO Forum through the role of CMFA director, transforming the forum from a grassroots civil society forum (2015-2019) to a government-sponsored platform by 2022 through consistent narrative building, strategic patience across county, city, provincial, and national levels of the Chinese government.
- **World Economic Forum Strategic Partnership:** Developed a strategic partnership between CMFA and the World Economic Forum's Friends of Ocean Action, collaborating on shared convenings and contributing to WEF's philanthropic and government engagement infrastructure for ocean conservation.

WWF China, Consultant   2017-2018

- **Strategy Design and Fundraising:** Designed program strategy, monitoring and evaluation system for WWF China Ocean Program for capacity building in fisheries management and marine plastic pollution, and secured funding from international donors

- **Government Relations and Multi-sector Coordination:** Coordinated with Chinese government agencies and civil society networks on agenda setting for issue areas such as fisheries management, marine plastic pollution, and ocean-climate decarbonization.
- **Cross-sectoral Corporate Partnership Development:** Developed corporate partner relations across different marine industry sectors, including fisheries, shipbuilding, marine engineering, pharmaceuticals, shipping, seawater desalination and comprehensive utilization, renewable energy, marine tourism and culture, etc.

Oak Foundation Marine Programme, Associate   2016-2017
- **Portfolio Management:** Managed three grant portfolios (marine plastic pollution, IUU fishing, small-scale fisheries) totalling over 20 million USD.
- **International Event Convening:** Organized strategy development workshop for IUU fishing portfolio with a dozen international NGOs in Taipei, demonstrating capacity for international event logistics and facilitation
- **MEL Development:** Supported the Marine team and the Environment Programme Director in organizing the development of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) learning system of the marine sub-programme

Oak Foundation Climate Change Programme, Grants Management Trainee   2014-2015
- **Due Diligence:** Processed information from potential grantees and prepared application summaries
- **Grant Administration:** Drafted grant recommendations and supported the due diligence process
- **Project Monitoring:** Assisted with the monitoring of grants and wrote progress reports
- **Strategic Research:** Conducted strategic research for capacity building in climate change for grantees in China and India

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (Japan), Consultant   2012-2013
- **Field Research:** Conducted a field study in Beijing and Tokyo, interviewed numerous area experts
- **Policy Analysis:** Published a 90-page-long research report on China's air pollution policies and presented research in the S-7-3 International Expert Workshop on Transboundary Air Pollution in East Asia

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (Japan), Intern   2011
- **Post-Disaster Resilience Policy Workshop:** Participated in Business Continuity Plan workshops for local enterprises following the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami, supporting government efforts to strengthen private sector resilience in crisis contexts
- **Industry Stakeholder Engagement:** Conducted interviews with local representatives across energy, traditional industries, tourism sectors, and social enterprise associations, gathering insights for policy development

Education
Ph.D. in Marine Science and Conservation, Duke University   2018-2024
- Thesis: Mobilizing Ocean Equity: Global and Chinese Assemblages, Onto-Epistemological Possibilities, and Gongyi Agency

Master in International Affairs, Graduate Institute Geneva   2013-2015
- Thesis: Deconstructing Resource Curse in Western China, the Case of Coal Industry in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
- Government Simulation in the Course "Politics and Economics of International Energy": Led government decarbonization and energy transition simulation as President of Mozambique

Bachelor of Business Administration, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan   2008-2012
- Thesis: Forest Certification for China's Bamboo Industry: Pathway, Problem, and Prospect (Best Thesis Award)

Selected Publications:
- **Lin, X,** Campbell, LM, Basurto, XG, Cohen P., under review, How Committed are We to Ocean Equity? Equity Mobilization at UN Ocean Conference 2022. Journal of Earth System Governance
- **Lin, X**, Basurto, XG, Campbell, LM. under review, The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in China's Marine Conservation Governance. Journal of Conservation Science and Practice
- Bennett, A., Basurto, X., Virdin, J., **Lin, X**., Betances, S., Smith, M., Allison, E., et al. (2021) Recognize Fish as Food in Policy Discourse and Development Funding. Ambio.
- **Lin, X.,** and Elder, M. (2014). Major Developments in China's National Air Pollution Policy during the Early 12th Five-Year Plan Period. IGES Policy/Research Report. Hayama, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.

Language Proficiency
Chinese: Native • English: C2 • Japanese: C1 • French: B2