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Editors

Sandra Ng
Melissa Ong

Production

Bob Associates Design Consultants
www.bobassociates.com

Contributors

Toby Carroll
Catherine Denise Jayme
Melissa Ong
Benjamin Sovacool

Centre on Asia and Globalisation

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore
Oei Tiong Ham Building
469C Bukit Timah Road
Singapore 259772
Tel: +65 6516 8134
Email: CAG@nus.edu.sg
URL: www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/CAG

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RECENT WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Public Roles of Private Companies



Workshop participants

The Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG) and Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) held a two-day, closed-door workshop on “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Public Roles of Private Companies”. Business executives and CSR practitioners based in the region and representing national, regional and global companies convened at the National University of Singapore’s Bukit Timah Campus on 17-18 April 2007 to discuss the future of business in Asia. The workshop provided participants with a forum to determine how business could anticipate and shape the trends that will define the intersection of business and society in the coming decade.

Representatives from a cross section of companies, such as The Walt Disney Company (Asia Pacific), Citibank India, Hewlett-Packard Singapore and Bayer China, discussed current trends and explored the wide range of existing and emerging possibilities and barriers to business-society engagement: corporate philanthropy, public disclosure, voluntary standards, public-private partnerships and new business models.

On the first day, participants identified the major trends and most urgent challenges that private sector faces today in Asia and the world at large. Climate change was ubiquitous and featured most prominently on everyone’s agenda. Other key trends include Asia’s economic rise, with Asian companies growing larger and becoming more global, and changes in wealth and power distribution, all of which contributes to creating new market opportunities. Participants observed that changes in technology have greatly increased the number of sources of information available and the individual’s access to information. The ability of individuals to generate information in the ‘YouTube’ generation makes it harder for the business sector to keep secrets and much easier for outsiders to monitor and expose business activities. Participants also noted that corporations are dealing with aging and more highly educated customers and shareholders, whose expectations of the business sector may be more demanding than ever.

Day two focused on the private sector’s responsibilities and contribution to sustainability with the conversation shifting to how the private companies are implementing CSR tools – codes of conduct, disclosure, investment screens, philanthropy and public-private partnerships – in reality. In the latter part of the day, participants touched on the progress of CSR and strategies for moving forward in the future.

There was much discussion on the topic of codes of conduct, with questions

to continue on page 3

Economic integration, the relentless march of technology, and the sheer pressures of humanity's ever-expanding numbers are eviscerating national borders. Yet international politics lags far behind the needs for international collective action on issues from energy security to climate change to fundamental security. How can the world cope with the global challenges it faces? What is, and what should be, Asia's role in meeting those challenges?

Answering these questions is the ambitious mission of the Centre on Asia and Globalisation, a research institute established at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in August 2006. In its first year, as this newsletter shows, the Centre has already begun to have an impact on the scholarly and public debates on global issues. Over the past twelve months, we have hosted numerous internationally prominent scholars and analysts in the CAG speaker series, sponsored three international conferences and workshops, and recruited top scholars from around the world. Our second year promises to be even more productive.

In all these activities, the Centre works in pursuit of two goals. First, like most such research centres, the CAG enables scholars from throughout the National University of Singapore and beyond to leverage their efforts in shared research programs that add up to much more than the sum of their parts. These research programs go well beyond Singapore's shores – the Centre is currently developing collaborations with major research institutions in the United States and is exploring research options throughout Asia.

Second, as a centre in the School of Public Policy, the CAG has a particular responsibility to translate research findings into analyses and recommendations that are useful for policy

makers and to educate decision makers and the general public on key global issues. The Centre's many public events and publications are key elements of our programme.

No single research centre could address the full range of global issues, and the CAG agenda focuses on topics of particular importance where the Centre can bring particular strengths to bear. First, the Centre examines the *processes* of global governance – how a world divided into sovereign countries can work together on common challenges. This work includes components on the public roles of private corporations, the changing nature of inter-governmental organizations, and new approaches to governance that rely on transparency and information flows.

Second, the Centre applies this work on governance processes to a truly crucial issue: global energy policy. Energy lies at the heart of most of the world's major challenges: geopolitics and the competition for oil, climate change, air pollution, economic development and the plight of the poor, human rights and the abuses of unaccountable "petro-states." Yet energy is arguably the most poorly governed of all international issues, lacking adequate formal and informal forums and decision-making processes.

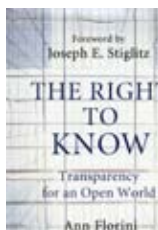
None of the Centre's success to date or plans for the future would be possible without the extraordinary contributions of many people: the CAG staff; the leadership, faculty, and staff of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, the speakers and participants in the Centre's events; and the funders who make it all possible. I am deeply grateful to them all.

I hope you find the following snapshots of the Centre interesting, and I look forward to welcoming you to our events in the coming year. □

Ann Florini

PUBLICATIONS

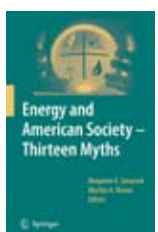
Recent Publications by CAG researchers



The Right to Know
– Transparency for an Open World

Edited by Ann Florini •
June 2007 • ISBN: 978-0-231-14158-1
Columbia University Press

What information should governments and other powerful organizations disclose? Excessive secrecy corrodes democracy, facilitates corruption, and undermines good public policymaking, but keeping a lid on military strategies, personal data, and trade secrets is crucial to the protection of the public interest. The Right to Know distills the lessons of many nations' often bitter experience and provides careful analysis of transparency's impact on governance, business regulation, environmental protection, and national security.



Energy and American Society
– Thirteen Myths

Edited by Benjamin K. Sovacool and
Marilyn A. Brown •
2007 • ISBN: 978-1-4020-5563-8
Springer

This book takes on a central quandary in the study of energy and environmental policy: What myths continue to exist in American culture concerning energy, the environment, and society? It enrolls twenty-four of the nation's top experts working on energy policy in industry, government laboratories, utilities, nonprofit organizations, and universities to debunk and contextualize thirteen energy myths relating to electric power, renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation, and climate change.

continued from page 1



Ann Florini welcomes participants

raised on its effectiveness in Asia. Some participants argued that the non-binding nature of such codes renders them ineffective in compelling companies to comply with them. Others remarked that their company would only sign on to a code of conduct such as the Global Compact if it is compatible to the company's current practices. Although most participants asserted the need for a legal framework with rules and regulations, one participant informed the group that codes for licensees and manufacturers in his company had been reasonably enforced for the past ten years with the use of a third party whistle blower. For some, codes of conduct are useful for companies familiarising themselves with the CSR debate, while for others the codes drive change. In the Asian context, codes could be vital for engendering standardisation, especially for Chinese companies that wish to expand overseas. Participants also touched briefly on investment screens, noting that to date such screens have not been widespread

in the region.

Non-financial disclosure, an increasingly hot topic on the Asian agenda, may prove a more immediately effective driver of change in corporate behaviour. One participant referred to India's sweeping Right to Information law and China's expected national disclosure regulations as evidence that Asia is fully part of the global trend toward greater transparency. Another reported that companies in China publishing CSR reports had increased from 20 last year to more this year. India's new law, which gives individuals the right to request information not only from the Government but under some conditions also from private companies, could make a significant contribution to promoting disclosure as a tool in the CSR field.

The workshop wrapped up with a

discussion of strategies for moving forward through such means as public-private partnerships. Participants agreed that private corporations can be very useful in bringing the government to the table when working with NGOs. One participant gave an example in China, where private companies have successfully engaged the local government, which had previously refused to meet with the NGO, in joint projects involving the three parties. However, others noted that political will on the part of the government is essential for a successful public-private partnership as the government can be very obstructive if the programme or scheme is not a priority on its agenda. One participant gave an example of a successful social development project in India that came to a grinding halt with the advent of a new state government whose

“Non-financial disclosure, an increasingly hot topic on the Asian agenda, may prove a more immediately effective driver of change in corporate behaviour.”

political agenda excluded continuing support for that project.

The meeting launched CAG's research project on the public roles of private corporations and helped to identify research topics of greatest importance to Asia. □

Conference on Transparency and Governance

On 10-11 May, the Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG) convened a public conference on Transparency and Governance to provide insights into the causes and consequences of greater openness. The conference, co-funded by the International Development Research Centre and the Brookings Institution, was held in association with the launch of a new book, *The Right to Know: Transparency for an Open World* (Ann Florini, editor, Columbia University Press, 2007).

The past few years have witnessed an unprecedented explosion of greater transparency around the world. Today, some seventy countries have freedom of information acts that entitle citizens to demand access to government-held documents. A wide array of major corporations are going



Rita Sully, Romdoul Kim and Rajesh Kumar Singh

to continue on page 4

Dean Kishore Mahbubani with Daniyal Aziz to his right



Clockwise L to R: Sonali De Silva, Calla Wiemer, Neo Boon Siong and Dipinder Randhawa

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beyond financial disclosure by reporting on their social and environmental impacts. Formerly secretive international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank now release reams of documents.

The conference brought together leading experts from government, academia and non-governmental organisations (NGO) to explain the explosion in transparency and explore its consequences. In her opening remarks conference chair and CAG Director Ann Florini suggested three possible explanations. First, the spread of the IT revolution has significantly reduced the costs of supplying information. Second, a proliferation of civil society groups around the world has created new demand for disclosure. Third, growing acceptance of the idea that transparency is a necessity for good governance and economic efficiency has also led to greater openness.

The move towards greater transparency in this century was pushed along by two developments in the last. The end of the Cold War left many countries trying to join the EU, which required them to emulate the openness standards of EU members. In addition, a huge increase in global economic integration led international investors and governments to demand disclosure from emerging economies.

Daniel Kaufman via video conference



However, despite this global advance, Singapore remains a paradox, ranking high on some forms of openness but low on others, according to Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. The World Bank Institute's Director of Global Program, Daniel Kaufman, described indicators that measured transparency in economic and political terms. Economic transparency is defined by the provision of economic and

financial information by public institutions, the implementation of freedom of information acts, transparency in the budget process and budget, transparency in the economic policy making and public administration. While political transparency is a response to the citizenry's demand for open debate and accountability in political institutions including openness and competitiveness of political competition, transparency in political funding, independence of the media and disclosure of politician's assets and voting records. He called Singapore an outlier, one of the best in terms of economic transparency but not in political openness.

Jamie Horsley and Garry Rodan



Garry Rodan, Director of the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University, pointed out that Singapore's economic transparency may be overstated and that private sector and government transparency are not mutually exclusive. In Singapore, government-linked companies such as Temasek Holdings and Singapore Investment Corporation differ from public companies as they are not required by law to publicise their financials despite receiving government funding.

Daniyal Aziz, Chairman of Pakistan's National Reconstruction Bureau, emphasised the importance of institutions in economic development and accountability. He stated that Pakistan had tried to reconcile the opposing schools of thought that institutional change could only occur with positive and negative incentives and another that said that it could only occur because of internal and external shocks. Pakistan has tried to design incentives for good governance using a number



Wiewiek Awiati, Thawilwadee Bureekul,
Huang Haili and Henri Subagiyo



Stephen McGurk and Ed Araral



Zhou Hanhua and COL (NS) Sukhvinder Singh Chopra
during coffee break.

of experimental methods. One lesson is that it is difficult to “price” incentives correctly to achieve the desired behavioural changes. Finally, Aziz pointed out that the administrative institutions required to govern these incentives have to be in place to complete the package.

A panel on the “New Rules in Asia” gave an overview of India and China’s experiences of passing of legislation to promote greater openness. Shekhar Singh, founding member of India’s National Campaign for the People’s Right to Information, called the passage of India’s Right to Information Act (RTI) a bottom up approach, where the legislation “was drafted



Shekhar Singh and Simon Chesterman

and pushed by the masses.” Its sweeping coverage includes central, state and local government, executive, legislature and judiciary, NGOs or any entity that enjoys government assistance. The private sector is also indirectly covered. The Act includes powerful incentives for government officials to fulfill citizens’ requests for information. Officials who stall pay the resulting fines out of their own pockets.

Zhou Hanhua and Jamie Horsley’s presentations on the less sweeping but still significant new openness regulations in China focused on the changes that led up to the passing of the regulations, how they came into being, and the challenges of implementation. According to Zhou, there has been a change in attitude towards freedom of information. The central government came to realise that lack of openness is not good for China and has driven the process with assistance from local government, academia and the media. However, as Horsley explained, implementation varies from province to province and still faces many obstacles. China is taking an evolutionary approach and has many more changes to implement as it moves towards greater openness.

“Political transparency is a response to the citizenry’s demand for open debate and accountability in political institutions.”

The final panel explored case studies on different applications of transparency as a tool of governance. Frances Seymour’s presentation outlined path-breaking uses of transparency as a regulatory tool and producer of significant change the environmental arena. Celia Reyes talked about community based monitoring systems in the Philippines, where local citizens gather the data needed to produce disaggregate poverty and governance indicators. Scott Fritzen presented the use and limitations of community driven development to promote greater transparency in Vietnam. In community driven development, policy-makers encourage the de-centralisation of resources to increase local participation in development projects.

Ann Florini concluded the conference by saying that this meeting was intended as one step in a process meant to integrate those working on innovative approaches governance. There are many dedicated individuals who are taking advantage of technological, institutional and intellectual progress to improve governance. However, these experiments are still relatively small scale. Academics, particularly those in public policy schools, could make a major contribution toward providing the intellectual framework for these innovative approaches to governance. Florini expressed her hope that CAG would promote such progress, serving as a point of connection between the best of scholarship and the best of practice. □



Scott Fritzen and
Celia Reyes

Faculty profiles highlight scholars and associates who collaborate with the Centre on our research agenda. In this issue, we feature Dr. Ann Florini, Director of CAG and Dean Kishore Mahbubani, of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.



Ann Florini Director, Centre on Asia and Globalisation

Ann Florini is Visiting Professor and Director of the Centre on Asia and Globalisation at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. She is also Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution. Her research focuses on new approaches to global governance, including the roles of civil society and the private sector in addressing global issues. She is examining governance in the energy sector. Currently, she co-chairs the International Task Force on Transparency and is a member of the Helsinki Process Steering Committee.

Her previous positions include Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; research director of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Project on World Security; Senior Researcher at the Center for International and Strategic Affairs at UCLA, and director of the Project on Multilateral Issues and Institutions at the United Nations Association of the USA.

She is author or editor of numerous books, monographs, and articles, including *The Right to Know: Transparency for an Open World* (Columbia University Press 2007), *The Coming Democracy: New Rules for Running a New World* (Island Press 2003/Brookings Press 2005), and *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*. Her articles have appeared in such journals as *Disarmament Diplomacy*, *Foreign Policy*, *Harvard International Review*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Issues in Science and Technology*, *New Perspectives Quarterly*, and *WorldLink*.

Dr. Florini received her Ph.D. in political science from UCLA and a Master's in Public Affairs from Princeton University. □



Kishore Mahbubani Faculty Associate, Centre on Asia and Globalisation

Kishore Mahbubani was appointed the first Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy on 16 August 2004. Currently, he is the Dean and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY SPP) of the National University of Singapore. He is also a Faculty Associate for the LKY SPP's Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG). He served in the Singapore Foreign Service from 1971 to 2004. He was Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Ministry from 1993 to 1998 and he also served twice as Singapore's Ambassador to the UN. He graduated in philosophy from Singapore and Canada and served as a Fellow of the Center for International Affairs in Harvard University from 1991 to 1992. He was also listed as one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world by *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines in September 2005.

Prof. Mahbubani has published and spoken in all corners of the globe. He is the author of "Can Asians Think?", and of "Beyond the Age of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust between America and the World". His current research interests are on globalization and the rise of Asia, geopolitics of Asia, the role of the United States in the world, and global governance. He has written a number of articles on the geopolitics of Asia for *Foreign Affairs*, such as *Understanding China* (2005), *An Asia Pacific Consensus* (1997), *Pacific Way* (1995), and *Japan Adrift* (1992). In December 2005, his article, *The Impending Demise of the Postwar System*, was published in the journal, *Survival* (Vol. 47, No. 4), of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He wrote on the prospect for an East Asian Community for the *Japan Center for Economic Research* in April 2006. In the same year, his article, *The West in an Asian Century*, was published in *Policy* (Vol. 21, No.4). More recently, he contributed a chapter entitled, *From Confucius to Kennedy: Principles of East Asian Governance*, for The World Bank volume, *East Asian Visions: Perspectives on Economic Development* (January 2007). He has also written for *Time Magazine* and *Newsweek*. □

RESEARCH AT CAG

On August 1, 2007, Toby Carroll and Benjamin Sovacool joined the Centre on Asia and Globalisation as Post Doctoral Fellows. Toby and Benjamin share their current research interests and their plans as CAG Post Doctoral Fellows.

Toby Carroll

Post Doctoral Fellow in Global Governance



“For the past four years my research has involved analysing the shifts in policy and practice of the World Bank. Critical to my research is the development of a framework to understand the Bank’s work in practice, rather than through the organisation’s publications or the pronouncements of key figures associated with it. The application of this framework to the work of the Bank in Southeast Asia has thus far proven useful in understanding what it is that the Bank actually does in the region and the political resistance and assistance that the organisation encounters in its operations.

My analysis argues that the shift in the Bank’s work constitutes a new phase in socio-institutional neoliberalism (‘SIN’). SIN demonstrates an acknowledgement of the earlier implementation difficulties associated with neoliberal reform and thus builds in particular political technologies, such as forms of partnership and participation processes, to attempt to embed market-compatible institutional reforms. My research has highlighted the limits of SIN-styled reform for achieving both implementation success and substantive poverty-reduction outcomes.

My research at CAG, which I intend to publish in book form, will extend upon this work in several ways. First, in addition to deepening my analysis of the Bank’s work in the region, I will also look at the work of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – an organisation that plays a key role throughout Southeast Asia. Second, rather than simply assessing the operation and impact of these organisations and the politics that they both generate and encounter. I will outline proposals and prospects for new policy approaches based around alternatives to SIN-based governance programs. Deeper understanding of the impediments to development that are not addressed by the initiatives of current multilateral development organisations is essential.”

Benjamin Sovacool

Post Doctoral Fellow in Energy Policy



“In the past four decades, policymakers have devised around 20 different policy mechanisms to promote renewable energy in the United States and Europe. Some of these mechanisms (such as production tax credits and subsidies) require continual government funding, whereas others (such as renewable portfolio standards and feed-in tariffs) attempt to harness market forces and minimize government intervention.

While at CAG, I plan to research which of these 20-odd mechanisms will work best for Singapore and Southeast Asia. In the United States and Europe, renewable energy technologies have been impeded by a combination of social, political, cultural, economic, and technical factors. My research will focus on which policy mechanisms will best enable Singapore to overcome similar impediments in their promotion of renewable energy technologies.

Such a project draws heavily from my previous research in two areas. My dissertation, which included more than 60 interviews with renewable energy experts in the U.S., explored the frequently hidden social impediments to renewable energy and distributed generation technologies (small-scale electricity generators that produce energy close to the end user) throughout the country. Since then, I have been deeply involved in discussions about how best to structure a national renewable portfolio standard in the U.S. to promote a renewable energy market that provides flexibility for utilities but predictability for investors and stakeholders.”

PEOPLE AT CAG

Toby Carroll

Post Doctoral Fellow in Global Governance

Toby Carroll recently completed his Ph.D on “The Politics of the World Bank’s Socio-institutional Neoliberalism” at Murdoch University. While completing his Ph.D Toby was a research assistant at the Asia Research Centre and tutored courses in the Politics and International Studies Program at Murdoch. Toby is published in journals such as the Australian Journal of International Affairs Journal of Contemporary Asia, Centre. He received both his Ph.D and BA in Politics from Murdoch University

in Western Australia.

Sandra Ng

Business Development Manager

Sandra Ng managed the International Policy Centre at the Ford School of Public Policy prior to joining CAG. She spent the last 13 years engaged in international development work and managing research centers. Sandra was previously with the Sustainable Development Research Institute and the Center on Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia. She spent over 4 years engaged in strategic planning and evaluation work at Oxfam

America. Sandra received her M.Sc from the London School of Economics and her BA from the University of British Columbia.

Rani Das

Personal Assistant to Director

Rani Das has over 25 years of secretarial experience working both in the private and public sectors. She has worked with companies such as Deleuw Cather Coordinating Consultants, Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (now Land Transport Authority), Ministry of Defence and Architectural Restoration Consultants. Rani worked at the Singapore General

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Hospital prior to joining the Centre on Asia and Globalisation. She received her MBA and BA from Vancouver University in Singapore.

Melissa Ong

Research Associate

Melissa Ong worked with the International Rescue Committee in Sudan and Afghanistan prior to joining CAG. She has extensive experience in humanitarian and international development work. She worked with organisations such as Oxfam International, the Crisis Management Initiative, and the United

Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor. Melissa holds a Masters from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and a BA from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Benjamin Sovacool

Post Doctoral Fellow in Energy Policy

Benjamin Sovacool taught in the Government and International Affairs Program at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University in the USA prior to joining CAG. He is a former Eugene P. Wigner Fellow at the Oak

Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and a Senior Research Fellow at the Network for New Energy Choices in New York. He also served as a Senior Research Fellow for the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research, where he assessed renewable energy issues for the state of Virginia. His most recent book is *Energy and American Society—Thirteen Myths*, published by Springer in 2007. Benjamin received his Ph.D from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University and his M.A. from Wayne State University.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Addressing the Risk of Climate Change

Sherri K. Stuewer
Vice President - Safety, Health and Environment
Exxon Mobil Corporation

Date Friday 17 August 2007
Time 10.30am - 12.00pm
Venue Block B Seminar Room 4-4,
Faculty of Law, NUS

Energy Policies and Technologies for a New Millennium: Perspectives on Asian Global Competitiveness

Dr. Robert K. Dixon
Head, Energy Technology Policy Division
International Energy Agency

Date Tuesday 11 September 2007
Time 12.15pm - 1.30pm
Venue Manasseh Meyer Seminar Room 3-1,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS

1st Annual Forum of Developing Country Investment Negotiators

Co-sponsored by the Centre on Asia and Globalisation and the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Date Monday - Tuesday, 1 - 2 October 2007
Time 9.00am - 5.30pm
Venue Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS
BY INVITATION

Roundtable on Global Energy Governance

In association with the Helsinki Process

Date Sunday - Tuesday, 4 - 6 November 2007
Time 9.00am - 5.30pm
Venue Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS
BY INVITATION

“Attend” CAG Events on the Web

The Centre on Asia and Globalisation will be taping many of its public lectures, making them available for viewing on our website. Please visit www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/CAG to view recorded events and check in for future lectures.

For comments and suggestions, please contact our editor at sng@nus.edu.sg

Energy Fact:

Replacing one incandescent lightbulb with an energy-saving compact fluorescent bulb means 1,000 pounds less carbon dioxide is emitted to the atmosphere and \$5103 dollars is saved on energy costs over the bulb's lifetime.

(Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Alliance to Save Energy)