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<http://www.oieau.org/iowater/our-projects-news-and-update/article/china-cooperation-in-the-field-of>

China : Cooperation in the field of water

- IOWater - Our projects : news and update -

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Access to water has become a major concern in China. It has in fact only 7% of the water resources of the planet for a fifth of the world population. The location of these resources is also uneven : abundant in the South, it is lacking in the West and North. Finally, water quality is threatened by pollution from industrial, urban and agricultural discharges.

To cope with these challenges, China is building significant infrastructures and modernizing water management.

For such a purpose, the Chinese Government develops international cooperation, with the European Union in particular, within the River Basin Management Program (EU-China RBMP).

An agreement was signed by the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development to develop cooperation in areas of common interest such as integrated water resources management and protection.

Under this agreement, two cooperation projects are being finalized :

- **The first project focuses on water management in the vicinity of nuclear plants.**

Most Chinese power plants are currently located in coastal areas, but many construction projects along the rivers are being studied. The French Government invited a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources for a study tour in France at the beginning of 2011. The delegation also met the Directorate General for Energy and Climate and the Agency for Nuclear Security. It visited the plant of St Laurentdes- Eaux, which coordinates the radioactive discharges from the four power plants of the Val-de-Loire, and encounters all the problems related to nuclear power plants on a river.

- **A second project concerns river basin management.**

It associates the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and the French Water Agencies, as well as IOWater, which coordinates the project on the French side, and several partners, the EPTBs (River Basin Public Bodies) and municipalities in particular.

The Chinese party proposed that this cooperation focus on the Hai River, whose basin covers 318,000 km², including four provinces (Hebei, Shanxi, Henan, Inner Mongolia) and two Big municipalities (Beijing and Tianjin).

To identify specific ways of cooperation, a Chinese delegation visited France in September for the International "EUROPE-INBO 2010" Conference in Megève, which gathered the European Basin Organizations on the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive. A French delegation from IOWater and Seine-Normandie and Rhone-Mediterranean & Corsica Water Agencies travelled to China in the Haihe River Basin in early December.

In addition, within the EU-China River Basin Management Program and the agreement signed by the Yellow River Commission and INBO, several Chinese delegations visited IOWater in Paris, which introduced them to the organization of water policy in France and to the French 50-year experience in basin management.

A visit of the National Water Training Center (NWTC) and of the National Data Reference Center for Water (Sandre) was also organized in Limoges in November 2010.