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China: French-Chinese cooperation in the Hai Pilot River Basin and Zhou Sub-Basin

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The French-Chinese cooperation project for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the Hai River Basin is part of the cooperation agreement signed in 2009 by the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) and the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development.

Its first phase (2011-2012) had allowed the development of mutual understanding by both countries on their respective institutions, procedures and means for managing water.

Since the World Water Forum in Marseilles (2012) and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for a second 3-year phase, in the presence of Mr. Chen Lei, Chinese Minister of Water Resources, the project aimed to test the French tools and methods allowing to bring solutions to the problems related to anthropogenic pressures (untreated wastewater, non-point source agricultural pollution) exerted on the Zhou pilot River Sub-Basin and that affect the water quality of the Yuqiao reservoir for the supply of the City of Tianjin and cause eutrophication and growth of bluegreen algae and macrophytes.

To improve the situation, three main objectives are pursued across the basin :

- Implementation of the basin's resources assessment,
- Establishment of a coordination group for water management,
- · Drafting of a Basin Management Plan.

As part of this second phase, eight technical assistance missions have already been carried out by the French partners and coordinated by the International Office for Water: the Ministry of Ecology, the Seine Normandy Water Agency, the Interdepartmental Syndicate for Sanitation of Greater Paris and the Interdepartmental Institution of the Seine Great Lakes.

Their Chinese counterparts (MWR, the Hai River Conservancy Commission and the Water Boards of the Municipality of Tianjin and Hebei Province) participated in two study visits organized in France.

These activities covered a wide range of tools: planning methods, Water Development and Management Plans, involvement of institutional stakeholders, the Water Interservices Mission (MISE), etc.

Training sessions organized in China on specific technical issues (ecological engineering, calculation of concentrations and water body balances, monitoring strategies and equipment) were greatly appreciated.

They motivated the establishment of a specific project on predictive modeling of cyanobacterial proliferation, supported by the Center for Environmental Monitoring of the Hai River and implemented by the "Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées".

A technical diagnosis report was finalized by the Chinese part in October 2014 and presented to a panel of local authorities, invited to comment it.

The success achieved in the drafting of this diagnosis through dialogue allowed addressing, in the best conditions, the goal of the fourth year of the project (2015): structuring of a Management Plan for the Zhou River sub-basin.

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