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China

- IOWater - Our projects : news and update -

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French-Chinese cooperation in the Hai River Basin

China is facing many water management challenges.

To face those, the Chinese Government is developing many international cooperation activities, and, in particular, an agreement was signed on 21 December 2009 by the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development.

Under this agreement, the Hai River Basin, which covers 318,000 km² and includes the municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin, was selected for the implementation of a pilot project : It aims to test the application in China of some mechanisms for river basin management, water pollution control and ecosystem protection, which are used in France and in the European Union.

The project partners are, for the Chinese part, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Hai River Water Conservancy Commission and the Water Boards of Tianjin City Hall and Hebei Province, and for the French part, the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE), the Seine Normandy Water Agency (AESN), the Public Sanitation Utility of Greater Paris (SIAAP), the Interdepartmental Institution of the Seine Great Lakes and IOWater, the latter taking care of the technical coordination of the project.

The first phase (April 2011 / March 2012) contributed to a mutual understanding of the operation of basin institutions and procedures and means they use in France and China.

The pilot sub-basin of the Zhou River

The second phase of the project (October 2012 - December 2015) focused on the Zhou River Basin : 2,114 km², 1 million inhabitants and 80% of the drinking water supply of the 5th most populated city of the country, Tianjin. It was developed in three steps :

- Support to the completion of the basin inventory,
- Establishment of a coordination group,
- Support to the drafting of a Basin Management Plan and a Program of Measures.

Since October 2012, French expert missions in China have allowed an in-depth presentation of a wide range of useful technical and institutional tools for the process. Emphasis was also placed on building the capacity of the Chinese partners, who thus benefited from training sessions on Basin Management, on ecological engineering and on water quality monitoring, etc.

Finally, study tours organized in France have shown to the Chinese partners the real practices of applying successfully basin policies in the entire European Union.

All activities carried out contributed to the quick progress of the project. Thus, the inventory and characterization of the Zhou River sub-basin were made and presented in September 2014 at the project steering

committee.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the inventory, year 2015 allowed the drafting of a Management Plan and Program of Measures to meet the major challenges of the sub basin.

Thus, at the end of phase II in late 2015, the Chinese partners integrated all tools and processes useful to achieve the development of a true Basin Management Plan.

Given the success of this French-Chinese cooperation, the partners of both countries agreed to continue this cooperation for a three year period starting in January 2016.

In the presence of the French Ministers for Ecology and International Cooperation, this agreement was signed in Paris on 2 December 2015 at the Water Day, organized during the COP21 on the topic of adaptation and resilience to climate change.

This new phase plans an expansion of these actions to the Luan River Basin (45,000 km², 1 million inhabitants) ; another bigger tributary of the Hai River.

The China-Europe Water Platform

The PIANO (Policies, Innovation And Networks for enhancing Opportunities for China-Europe Water Cooperation) project won a call for proposals of the European Framework Program for Research for 2020 (2014-2020), which aimed at promoting strategic cooperation partnerships for research and innovation between Europe and the rest of the world.

It focuses on the development of business opportunities and cooperation in research and innovation between Europe and China.

The project inception workshop was held on 9 April 2015 in Brussels. The six components of the project were presented on this occasion. The coordinators of each component are :

- 1- International Office for Water, (IOWater) ;
- 2- Technical University of Denmark, (DTU) ;
- 3- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna -(BOKU), for two components ;
4. Stockholm International Water Institute, (SIWI) ;
5. Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, (ISPRA) ?

Among other project partners, there are the Atkins consulting firm, the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering (Portugal), the European Water Association (EWA) and the Chamber of Commerce of the European Union in China.

For its part, IOWater is implementing the activities of the first component aiming at building Research and Innovation in the network and China-Europe Water Platform (CEWP) by developing the mapping and analysis of stakeholders' networks and existing outstanding innovation projects. It also contributes to the facilitation of networks and to the visibility of the project by developing European and Chinese social and professional networks (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Weibo).

It also contributes to the third component by producing case studies of innovative European technologies in the water sector.

Website : <http://www.project-piano.net/>

Twitter : @Piano_EU_China