

# EU – CHINA RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Duration	2006-2012
Beneficiary countries	China
EC Grant	25,000,000 EURO
PRC Contribution	79,000,000 EURO
Consultants	DHV B.V. consortium
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Water Resources Ministry of Environmental Protection
Location	Middle reaches of the Yellow River Upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River
EU Delegation Contact Person	Ms Michela Tagliaferri



## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE

The EU-China River Basin Management Programme (RBMP) aims at supporting the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Environmental Protection to enhance Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) policies and practices through sharing EU experience and best practices. A key aspect is the establishment of links with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and other relevant EU directives.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

**Europe - China Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management:** Chinese water management officials and experts were made familiar with EU experiences through a series of conferences, study tours and exchange visits. This dialogue will be continued under the China Europe Water Platform (CEWP).

**Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM):** An exchange of experiences and good practices in governance of water resources with emphasis on stakeholder involvement in policy development and river basin planning.

**Integrated Water Resource Management Tools (IWRM):** Integrated water resource management tools are the set of tools or instruments that water managers have at their disposal to implement strategies and achieve policies for managing the quantity and quality of water. The RBMP shared European best practices with China.

**Integrated Watershed Rehabilitation:** Good river basin management starts at the very source of rivers. The EU therefore took the opportunity to link in a strategic partnership with China and the World Bank in implementing the Changjiang - Pearl River Watershed Rehabilitation Project (CPRWRP). The EU provided technical assistance and a €10 million grant to enable poor households to participate and benefit from the CPRWRP.

**Capacity Building and Joint Learning:** Training events presenting EU approaches and technologies in Chinese contexts and vice versa; research studies with European and Chinese practitioners working together on the key problems of water resource management in China and jointly authoring a series of publications.

## CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

The RBMP is the leading cooperation programme in China in the water sector under the 2007-2013 cooperation program and is closing operations in July 2012. The exposure to EU experiences and best practices as propagated by the EU Water Framework Directive has given further guidance and increased awareness on IWRM in China.

**EU- China Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management:** A significant objective of the RBMP was to foster dialogue in the water sector between the EU and China, through a range of activities, including: *Conferences*, especially the Yangtze Forum (2007, 2009, 2011); the Yellow River Forum (2007, 2009); the World Water Forums in Istanbul (2009) and Marseille (2012); the 2010 and 2011 Singapore Water Week and 2011 Stockholm World Water Week; *Study tours and exchange visits* to most EU Member States and several

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large river basins in Europe; and *Joint research studies* matching Chinese and EU experts and officials within a range of topics. The Programme has also analysed and compared the Chinese and European water policies as laid down in the EU WFD and the China 2011 No.1 Document on Water. Based on this, a strategic knowledge exchange took place with focus on flood, water supply and ecological security.

**Integrated River Basin Management:** RBMP has significantly contributed to the converging of the Chinese and EU approaches to IRBM. It has worked on *water resources governance* in the Yangtze River basin with focus on institutional arrangements to enable greater stakeholder consultation and participation. In the Yellow River Basin this has been tested at sub-basin level based on a “Guideline on Stakeholder Participation” and a “Training Manual on Participatory Planning in IRBM” introducing decision makers and expert officials to the methods which are compulsory in Europe.

On *River Basin Planning*, research was carried out on integrated adaptation measures to impacts induced by climate change and socio-economic development for incorporation in the Yellow River Basin Plan.

**Integrated Water Resource Management Tools (IWRM):** The central theme of the WFD is water quality, the goal is for rivers to support a healthy ecology and thereby support a healthy society. Through training, exchange visits and research studies the RBMP has successfully introduced EU approaches to biological and ecological monitoring and assessment. The RBMP’s team has also advised the Ministry of Water Resources on its programme to introduce a nationwide biological monitoring programme by 2016 and has produced a detailed handbook on how *River Health* is managed in Europe with comparison to China.

To help achieve healthier rivers RBMP has helped with the roll-out of improved pollution load management regulations to better control the high levels of industrial and municipal wastewater discharges, which are among the chief causes of China’s poor river water quality. For this the programme introduced systematic GIS and modelling approaches and adapted them to the unique Chinese institutional systems. To support the Yellow River Conservancy Commission and local government in the event of sudden pollution spills early warning and emergency response systems (EWERS) were piloted. These are now being replicated around the Yellow River Basin. A detailed Chinese language guide to how water quality is regulated in Europe was produced. RBMP also introduced and tested the application of Clean Technology and water saving auditing to encourage direct investments in better environmental performance.

**Integrated Watershed Rehabilitation:** The Changjiang - Pearl River Watershed Rehabilitation Project has rehabilitated some 250,000 hectares of vulnerable and marginal agricultural land along the water divide between the Yangtze and Pearl River basins and helped nearly 250,000 households to shift to more environment-friendly, more sustainable and higher income farming systems. The RBMP’s technical assistance (TA) successfully introduced participatory sub-watershed design, planning and management, which has been adopted as national policy under the 2010 Law on Soil and Water Conservation. It also delivered training in establishment and management of orchards and other measures to improve income for local farmers. The RBMP support was also pivotal in developing and implementing an innovative Management Information System based on IT newest technologies which allowed better management of operations, contracting, reporting and verification, and is considered by the World Bank as one of the most innovative and globally applicable outcomes of the project.

**Capacity Building and Joint Learning:** This has been an integral theme in all components of the RBMP, through numerous study tours, in-depth trainings, seminars and workshops, research studies and publications jointly prepared by Chinese and European experts. This has helped to enhance staff competency levels and raised the level of trust and understanding between European and Chinese water managers. Capacity building was enhanced by preparing and disseminating a number of handbooks on European best practices in water management, including the EU Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive, the Floods Directive, Soils Conservation and Protection policy, Stakeholder Participation, Bio-monitoring and EU practices in regulation of water quality.

#### Legacy of the RBMP: The China Europe Water Platform

On 14 March 2012 the China Europe Water Platform (CEWP) was established by the signing of a Joint Statement by the Chinese Minister of Water Resources and the Minister of Environment of Denmark as then President of the European Council.

The CEWP will promote policy dialogue between China and Europe about challenges, possible solutions and activities related to the water, food security and energy nexus. It will also encourage capacity-building, technical and business cooperation as well as joint research. The CEWP is not a funding mechanism, but a partnership among equal partners and will be implemented within the framework of the EU Water Initiative.

**Knowledge Centre:** The programme’s results and research study reports are documented in a web-based knowledge centre available on the programme’s web-site: <http://euchinarivers.org/en/KnowledgeCenter.aspx>

You can obtain more information on [www.euchinarivers.org](http://www.euchinarivers.org) or contact the project Team Leader Paul van Meel: [paul.vanmeel@dhv.com](mailto:paul.vanmeel@dhv.com)

On the China Europe Water Platform visit [www.cewp.org](http://www.cewp.org) or contact Mr. Hao Zhao ([hao\\_zhao@mwr.gov.cn](mailto:hao_zhao@mwr.gov.cn)) or Mr. Henrik Dissing ([hedis@nst.dk](mailto:hedis@nst.dk))

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