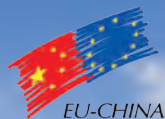


# EU–China Environment Project



HIGHLIGHTS

PHASE ONE RESULTS | JANUARY 2018–JUNE 2021

## **Nature and COP15**

– Preparing a New Global Framework for Biodiversity

## **Integrated Environmental Policies**

– Mainstreaming Pollution Prevention, Ecology and Climate

## **A Better System for Environmental Permits**

– Common Approaches to Ensuring Compliance

## **Environmental Legislation**

– The Yangtze River Protection Law and More



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# Foreword

**W**hile we are progressively moving away from the Covid-19 pandemic the world still faces multiple environmental crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss and ocean degradation. Given the urgency of addressing them it is essential for key global actors like the EU and China to join forces.

This brochure summarizes the results of the EU – China Environment Project that has supported EU-China cooperation on environment and green economy by encouraging the use of good practices and the sharing of experiences in line with the bilateral Environmental Policy Dialogue priorities. Through a flexible approach, the project has been able to cope with the restrictions arising from the pandemic. It responded actively to rapidly evolving priorities

such as promoting a green recovery, contributing to an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework, aligning approaches to pollution prevention and control, preventing marine pollution, and addressing the environmental aspects of global supply chains. The project demonstrates the value of mutually beneficial dialogue to promote joint action towards a more sustainable world.

## **Sebastien Paquot**

Environment and Climate Counselor,  
EU Delegation to China



China and the EU have been cooperating in areas of shared interest to address global challenges. Environmental cooperation between China and the EU is broad, encompassing key areas such as biodiversity, climate change, pollution control and green economic recovery, and has contributed to environmental and sustainable development globally.

The EU – China Environment Project is a good example of such cooperation. Over the past three and a half years, thanks to the strong commitment from both sides, the project has successfully supported exchanges among policymakers and experts, strengthened the understanding of environmental policies of one another, and contributed to the alignment of environmental policies and governance between China and the EU.

The project took place at a crucial stage. China has made steady progress in reducing pollution and improving environmental quality. The final project period coincides with the launch of the 14th Five-Year Plan, which includes even stronger environmental ambitions, including China's pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. At the same time, the European Green Deal, released at the end of 2019, renewed the EU's commitment to addressing climate and environmental challenges.

Despite disruptions caused by the pandemic, both sides have stepped up their efforts to tackle environmental challenges and adjust priorities in response, paving the way for a green post-Covid 19 economic recovery. The outbreak of the

pandemic has sounded the alarm over our exploitation of environment and resources. A rapid and permanent transformation is needed to achieve harmonious coexistence between human and nature, and a closer and stronger partnership is needed to address the shared challenges.

Environmental cooperation between China and the EU serves the best interest of both sides and facilitates the transition towards a green economy and global sustainable development.

### **Tian Chunxiu**

Deputy Director General, Policy Research Centre for Environment and Economy, Ministry of Ecology and Environment. June 2021.



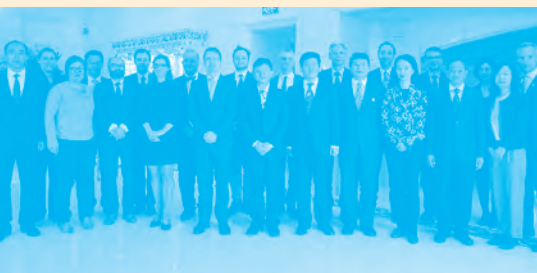
# Highlighted Results

The project took place during a period of great global interest in the environment, with rapidly increasing political commitment in Europe and China. In China, the period was marked by remarkable progress in environmental quality and environmental protection. Rapidly responding to the most debated policy issues in both China and the EU, the project carried out a series of exchange activities on environmental protection and green economy, promoted mutual understanding and experience sharing, and contributed to the joint efforts to tackle global environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development goals. The following are highlighted results:

» **EU-China biodiversity dialogue ahead of Kunming COP:** The project, in cooperation with the Office of the Executive Committee for CBD COP15 co-hosted six workshops and produced five short papers towards the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be agreed upon at COP15 in Kunming.

» **Environmental permitting:** The project supported the development of China's National Pollutant Discharge Permitting Regulation, through training workshops, a policy visit to Europe, public comments to the draft regulation, and an in-depth comparative study. The Regulation was issued in January 2021, and will be the cornerstone for China's pollution management system.

» **Integrated environmental policies for a green economy:** The project carried out an in-depth study, a policy visit to Europe, and two online workshops, focusing on how to ensure the integration of environmental policies, and integrating environmental considerations into broader economic policies, planning and legislation. This has supported the drafting of the environmental chapter of the 14<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the establishment of a new department in the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and a policy document on "Integrating and Strengthening Efforts in Climate Action and Ecological and Environmental Protection".



» **Environmental legislation:** The project actively shared EU experience in river basin management and lent support for the drafting of the Yangtze River Protection Law, China's first legislation on a specific river basin. It also shared EU experience of the development and implementation of the EU Plastics Strategy and provided recommendations for China to implement plastic pollution prevention policies and reduce plastic packaging waste.

» **Global environmental governance:** The project organized a series of workshops and short papers on climate change, biodiversity, marine protection, environment and trade, green economic recovery and other key topics related to global environmental governance. By bringing together policymakers and broader stakeholders, the project supported China in playing a more active role in global environmental governance.



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EU - China Virtual Workshop  
 The EU Green Deal and Green Recovery





# About the Project

The first phase of the EU-China Environment Project (also known as the EU-China Environment and Green Economy Programme), funded by the EU Foreign Policy Instrument, was implemented from January 2018 to June 2021, by a consortium including GOPA, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE) of China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and ClientEarth.

The project supported the ministerial-level EU-China Environmental Policy Dialogue (EPD), enhanced cooperation between the EU and China on global environmental affairs and priorities, and provided a platform for exchanges between environmental policy makers and experts.

The project carried out policy studies, workshops, trainings, and policy visits. It helped to drive more convergence between the EU and China on environmental governance and greater integration of the environment into other areas of government decision making through various activities on priority topics.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in early 2020 and was ongoing at the time of writing, the project managed to achieve its objectives. International travel was quickly replaced by online workshops and exchanges, and the project focus shifted somewhat to include new priorities such as green economic recovery, and addressing biodiversity loss and climate change in the context of an economic downturn.



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# Activities under the Project

## Biodiversity Dialogue and Preparations for COP15

The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is scheduled to be held in Kunming, Yunnan from 11 to 24 October 2021. A landmark conference in the history of the CBD, COP15 must agree on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and set global biodiversity targets for 2030 and 2050.

To guarantee the success of COP15 in Kunming and to support both China and the EU in playing a bigger role in global nature protection, the project organized a series of workshops for parties

to exchange ideas. The platform has advanced informal consultations on protected areas, area-based conservation measures, nature financing, access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and monitoring and evaluation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The meetings were supported and attended by representatives from China, the EU, the member states, the CBD Secretariat and other Parties.

We hosted a total of six EU-China biodiversity workshops, and produced five related reports.



## The 1<sup>st</sup> Biodiversity Workshop



- ¶ Participants at the first workshop on 9 and 10 October 2018 in Beijing discussed the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and shared perspectives on CBD implementation and options for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

## The 2nd EU-China Biodiversity Workshop



¶ *The 2nd EU-China Biodiversity Workshop was held in Beijing on 13 and 14 May 2019. Stakeholders discussed biodiversity commitments, the 2030 mission and goals, elements of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Belt and Road Initiative. The workshop strengthened the communication of positions between China and the EU member states and enhanced mutual trust.*

## The 3rd EU-China Biodiversity Workshop



¶ The 3rd EU-China Biodiversity Workshop, held in Beijing from 31 October to 1 November 2019, provided insights into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, 2030 mission and targets, implementation, assessment, reporting and review mechanism, area-based conservation measures and more. Huang Runqiu, then Vice-Minister (now Minister) of Ecology and Environment attended the entire meeting, demonstrating the senior commitment to the EU-China Biodiversity Dialogue.

## The 4th EU-China Biodiversity Workshop



- ¶ On 14 and 15 July 2020, the 4th EU-China Biodiversity Workshop was held via Zoom and in person in Beijing. Participants discussed major developments in biodiversity policies in China and the EU, the progress in preparation of COP 15 and related events, the state of play of the negotiations on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the next process. The meeting was attended and addressed by Zhuang Guotai, then Vice Minister of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General of the DG for Environment.

## EU-China Workshop on ABS and Digital Sequence Information I



- ¶ *The first EU-China Workshop on ABS and Digital Sequence Information in Biodiversity was held on 28 and 29 May 2020 via Zoom. Participants discussed the state of play of the ABS legislation in China and the EU, DSI and EU-China cooperation in legislation and databases among other concerns shared by both sides, and reached agreement on multiple issues.*

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## EU-China Workshop on ABS and Digital Sequence Information II

- ¶ *The second EU-China Workshop on ABS and Digital Sequence Information in Biodiversity was held via zoom and attended by representatives of the CBD Parties, including China, the EU and its member states, the UK, Switzerland, Norway, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Argentina, Australia and India, as well as representatives of the CBD Secretariat, and Co-Chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The meeting focused on the terminology and scope of DSI, as well as current international practices in the use of DSI, the DSI benefit-sharing mechanism and its connection with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.*

## Supporting the Development of China's Pollutant Discharge Permit System

In 2016, China kick-started the reform of its pollutant discharge permitting scheme. The permitting scheme is key to the effective management of stationary pollution sources. If fully implemented, a permitting scheme strengthens accountability of polluters, and provides safeguards to improve the environmental governance efficiency and environmental quality.

The EU's efforts to manage emissions culminated in 2010 with the thorough implementation of the integrated environmental permitting system. Developing such a system is an arduous process, but it has left the 27 Member States a clear and consistent regulatory framework and thus secured effective regulation and optimal environmental outcomes across the EU.

The project conducted an encompassing and in-depth study on permitting systems in China and the EU. It was jointly completed by Chinese and international experts, and took stock of the permitting schemes at the EU and national levels, as well as China's permitting scheme development and pilot implementation. The study assessed the process and priorities in establishing the system in China, analyses potential problems and challenges in implementation, identifies key issues to be addressed, and provides recommendations for improvement.

In addition to the in-depth study, the project supported the drafting of the Pollutant Discharge Permit Regulations by hosting several trainings, and a policy visit to the EU.



## Policy Visit in Belgium and Germany (September 2019)



¶ September 2019 in Belgium and Germany - visiting DG ENV, BMU (Germany), and a company.



## Training Seminars Across the Country

- » In 2018 and 2019, four training seminars were held in China. 300 environmental protection officers were trained in total, representing more than 20 Chinese provinces.



¶ Training Session on “Building a Comprehensive Pollutant Discharge Permit System in China and the EU Experience Sharing”, Beijing, 2018



Training Session on "Building a Comprehensive Pollutant Discharge Permit System in China and the EU Experience Sharing", Hangzhou, 2018



¶ *2nd Round of Training on EU-China Pollutant Discharge Permitting and Management, Beijing, November 2019*



¶ *2nd Round of Training on EU-China Pollutant Discharge Permitting and Management, Guangzhou, November 2019*



## In-depth Study Report on Formulation and Implementation of China's Regulatory Framework on Pollutant Discharge Permits



- ¶ *The In-depth Study Report on **Formulation and Implementation of China's Regulatory Framework on Pollutant Discharge Permits** was completed at the end of 2020. It shares EU experiences, analyzes the development of China's permitting system and key issues during the process, and provides recommendations.*

## Supporting the Integration of Environmental Policies in China

Transitioning towards a green economy requires integrated environmental policies. This means that various command-and-control instruments and market-based and economic tools should be aligned and provide a clear signal, and environmental policy objectives should be incorporated into economic and industrial policies.

The project conducted in-depth research on integrated environmental policies and policies promoting green economy in China and the EU, organized a policy visit to the UK and Belgium, and organized several online workshops. A series of research findings and policy recommendations were produced.

This work supported the drafting of the environmental chapters of China's 14th Five-Year Plan, and the development of the "Guiding Opinions on Integrating and Strengthening Efforts in Climate Action and Ecological and Environmental Protection", an important policy document issued by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in January 2021.

## Policy visit to Europe in 2019

» In September 2019, we supported a delegation of Chinese environmental policy makers to visit the EU DG Environment (Belgium) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (UK) to learn experience and lessons in environmental policy formulation and assessment.

The knowledge gained from the study tour has proven valuable for China to mainstream environmental considerations in formulating policies, establish policy assessment guidelines, and evaluate and the environmental impact of policies.



» Study tour on Integrated Environmental Policies for Green Economy (September 2019, UK, Belgium)

## In-depth Study on Integrated Environmental Policies for Green Economy

» The study looked into how to combine administrative measures, market instruments, and private resources, into an environmental policy system with equal emphasis on incentives and regulation. It provided innovative ideas and recommendations towards the 14th Five-Year Plan, especially in terms of better aligning policies on pollution prevention and

control, ecological protection and restoration, energy conservation and emission reduction, and climate change mitigation and adaptation with broader economic policies. The findings of the study were presented in a special policy report to the leadership of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

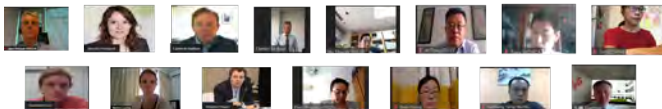
## EU-China Virtual Workshop on the EU Green Deal and Green Recovery

» The meeting, held virtually and in person in June 2020 Beijing, was a great chance for China and the EU to share experiences in green stimulus plans, thus contributing to post-pandemic green recovery. After the meeting,

EU officials provided detailed answers to questions regarding the European Green New Deal raised by the departments and bureaus of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.



### EU – China Virtual Workshop The EU Green Deal and Green Recovery



¶ *EU-China Virtual Workshop on the EU Green Deal and Green Recovery 2020 (Beijing/Zoom)*

## EU-China Workshop on Green Investment and Energy Transition

- » The meeting, held in September 2020, both online and in person in Beijing, contributed to the development of policies to accelerate investment towards the much-needed energy transition.



¶ *EU-China Workshop on Green Investment and Energy Transition, September 2020 (Beijing/Zoom)*



## Tackling Plastic Pollution and the Fight against Plastic Packaging Waste in China

Plastic waste is a major global environmental challenge. This issue has been moved up the agenda in China, the EU, and the rest of the world. The EU has done a great deal in combating plastic pollution, with the aim of transitioning

to a circular and resource-efficient economy. China can draw inspiration from the EU's policy system. The project supported international workshops and research on plastic pollution, and better plastic pollution management.

### Workshop on Plastic Waste and Marine Plastic Pollution

» The workshop was held in Beijing in November 2018, during the Annual General Meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on

Environment and Development. There was clear consensus on the need to step up the fight against plastic pollution.

### Report on Plastic Waste and Marine Plastic Pollution

» A short paper focusing on plastic pollution was released in March 2019. It provides recommendations to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment to develop and introduce policies to combat plastic pollution.

¶ *Report on Proactive Response to Plastic Waste and Marine Plastic Pollution (2019)*



### Study on the Management of Express Plastic Packaging Waste in China and Europe

» The study provides an in-depth analysis of plastic pollution and express delivery plastic packaging pollution management policies in China and the EU. This is a major priority, as e-commerce deliveries are rapidly becoming the new normal in China,

contributing to massive quantities of packaging waste. The study has contributed to better implementation of China's plastic pollution policies, and enhanced city-level responses. The study also makes recommendations for EU-China cooperation in this field.

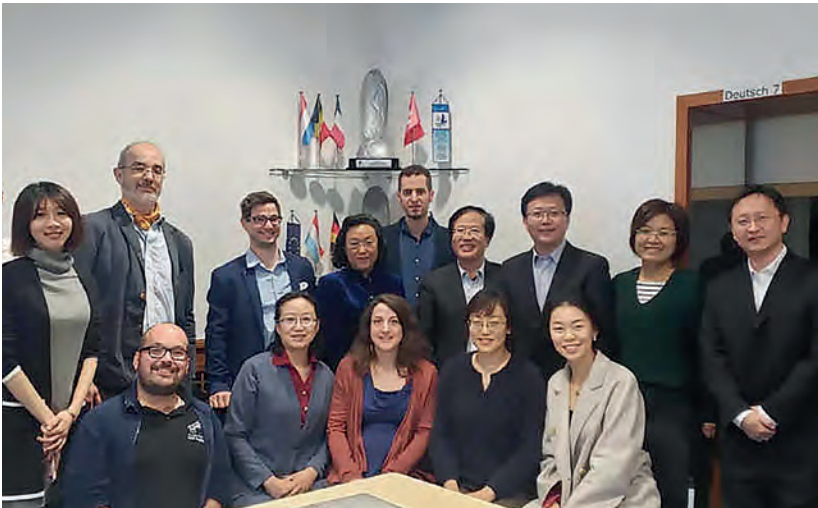
## Cross-Jurisdictional Environment Management

### Training on Integrated Riverbasin Management in Germany (Dec, 2019)

» As Chinese legislators were drafting the Yangtze River Protection Law, the EU-China Environment Project organized an in-depth training in Germany on cross-jurisdictional river-basin management. Legislators from China's National People's Congress (the top legislature) and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, joined the two-week training in Berlin and Bonn. Experts from the German Federal Working Group for Water Management, BMU and DG Environment gave lectures to the delegation. The delegation also visited the

German Parliament, International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine River and other cross-jurisdictional river-basin management organizations. In-depth discussions were carried out on topics such as cross-jurisdiction coordination and the balance between ecological conservation and local economic development – key concerns in China's legislative process. The training supported enhanced convergence of EU-China policies for integrated river-basin management.





¶ Training on Integrated Riverbasin Management in Germany, December 2019

## Regional Environment Management Workshop

- » The workshop, held in Beijing in November 2019, shared experiences on fighting regional air pollution and river basin management. It contributed to the development of the Yangtze River Protection Law, and the regional coordination of air pollution control.



## Promoting Global Environmental Governance

In the face of multiple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and ocean degradation, China is playing an increasingly important role in global environmental governance. The project

organized several international workshops, and drafted several short papers, which contributed to greater alignment of EU and China's policies towards global environmental governance.

### CCICED Roundtable Meeting on Global Governance and Ecological Civilization

» The first activity of the project, on 19 June 2018, co-hosted a roundtable on global environmental governance and ecological civilization in Brussels, together with the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission, Xie

Zhenhua, China's special climate envoy and Erik Solheim, then Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme attended and addressed the meeting. At the meeting, the participants discussed priority areas of global environmental governance, global strategic objectives and China's role.



Roundtable Meeting on Global Governance and Ecological Civilization, Brussels, Belgium, June 2018

## Short Paper on Global Governance and Ecological Civilization

- » Based on the discussions at the high-level workshop held in Brussels in June 2018, the report analyses the global environmental governance focused on the European Union and China, and provides recommendations for further actions and cooperation towards biodiversity, climate and oceans.

## Workshop on Climate Mitigation - How to Decrease Domestic Emissions and Avoid Carbon Leakage

- » The workshop was held on 6 May 2021, in Beijing and online. It focused on how to reduce domestic emissions and prevent carbon leakage, providing a platform for dialogue between China and the EU on a potential carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM).



## Short Paper and Workshop on Global Deforestation Prevention and Green Supply Chains

- » The workshop was held on 18 May 2021, in Beijing and online, to provide a platform to exchange industry best practices and effective policy measures to tackle deforestation from trade in soft commodities, and to promote joint efforts between China and the EU against global deforestation. A short paper was prepared ahead of the workshop, and finalized following the discussions.



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PHASE ONE RESULTS  
(JAN 2018 – JUN 2021)



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