

CEWP European Secretariat

Launch of the process for the selection of the next European Secretariat

1. Introduction - The history of CEWP

The China-Europe Water Platform (CEWP) was launched in 2012 at the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille, France, where a Joint Statement was signed by the Chinese Minister for Water Resources (MWR) and the then Presidency of the European Union. The CEWP is formally a Platform for enhancing the co-operation on water between the two regions, with a large number of European countries currently being active within CEWP. Apart from ministerial entities, also several European and Chinese Research Institutions, Companies and Organisations are involved in this co-operation. The European Commission has also been an active partner in this Platform.

CEWP was established to achieve the objectives of realising good governance in managing water resources, enhancing mutual understanding, promoting the exchange of innovative knowledge and technologies to meet common challenges, creating opportunities to undertake business development and joint research programs of common interest.

According with the Joint Statement signed in 2012, the work of the Platform “will be assisted by a European Secretariat hosted by one of the Member States and a Chinese Secretariat hosted by Ministry of Water Resources”.

After the first three years, from 2012 till 2015, where Denmark has assumed the secretariat role, in 2015, the JSC has agreed the assumption of the European Secretariat by Denmark (2016-17), Finland (2018-19) and Portugal (2020-21).

2. Functions of Secretariat

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and the CEWP Secretariat were created pursuant to the Joint Statement upon the establishment of the China-Europe Water Platform (CEWP).

The mandate of the JSC, as written in the Appendix of the Joint Statement, is to oversee the implementation of the CEWP, as the mandate of the Secretariat, described in the Joint Statement, is to assist the cooperation among the various stakeholders involved in the CEWP.

The continuous enlargement of EU Member States interested in participating and the increased diversification of activities and dimensions of the developed work were imposing a consolidation of the CEWP rules and procedures.

In consequence, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the JSC, the CEWP Secretariat and the thematic Focus Areas were adopted at the 10th Meeting of the JSC, on 27 June 2018, in Qingdao - P.R.



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China, after the consultative process by the Ministry of Water Resources of P.R. China, the European Union Member States and the European Commission.

In these ToR it is clear that the JSC is the highest decision-making body of the CEWP and it is the appropriated Forum to decide which of the EU Member State acts as the lead country and holds the European Secretariat for the CEWP for the next two year term.

The main tasks of the CEWP European Secretariat, according to the Terms of Reference (ToR) are:

- Organizing the annual Joint Steering Committee meeting;
- Organizing the annual High-Level Conference;
- Organizing European Coordination meetings when necessary;
- Maintaining and updating the CEWP website and social media;
- Promoting the CEWP on different international Fora ;

The main working routines for doing the tasks, according to the ToR, are:

- Meetings with CEWP Chinese Secretariat, roughly 3-4 meetings/year organized in connection to other activities when possible
- Meetings with EU Commission DG ENV and EEAS, roughly 3-4 meetings/year organized in connection to other activities when possible
- Meetings with CEWP European MS, roughly 3-4 meetings/year organized in connection to other activities when possible
- Meetings with other stakeholders and organizations, roughly 1-2 meetings depending on the needs
- Additional contacts by email, phone, on-line meetings

The mandate for the Secretariat, as it is in the 2018 endorsed ToR, is:

- Assist the Joint Steering Committee and the Focus Areas in their activities and all stakeholders involved in these activities in the water cooperation between China and Europe.
- Providing coordination and oversight for implementation of the CEWP work program
- Prepare a two-year Work Program to be approved by the JSC.
- Implement the remaining parts of the Work Program which are not addressed to be the responsibility of the Focus Areas and subprograms.
- Assist new EU Member States and Chinese organizations to become members of the CEWP.
- Prepare and organize JSC Meetings and Annual High-Level Conferences together with the host countries.
- Establish communication and potential co-operation between CEWP and international organizations, including financing institutions.
- Ensure dissemination of the activities, progress and other relevant information through a web site, newsletter, social media and other relevant medias.

The Secretariat composition, as it is in the 2018 endorsed ToR, is:

- The Secretariat is composed by the Chinese Secretariat hosted by the Ministry of the Water Resources, P.R China and the European Secretariat hosted by the competent Ministry of the lead country in two years terms. When necessary other organizations from the host countries may form a part of the Secretariat, upon mutual approval.
- The previous and forthcoming European host countries are welcome to assist the European Secretariat.



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The working routines of the Secretariat, as it is in the 2018 endorsed ToR, are:

-The Chinese and European Secretariat will meet face-to-face at least twice a year. Between the meetings the Secretariats keep continuous contact via electronic communication.

A special remark must be done these days, with reference with the COVID19 pandemic's impacts, not only during the difficult times from March 2020, but also in terms of the uncertainty for the future.

Acknowledging the new used technological means and working practices that all of us were obliged to perform during these times, we can infer that some of those 2018 Terms of Reference must be adapted, and most of the work can be shifted from a hard agenda of in-site contacts, coordination and meetings to a more use of virtual tools for the same purposes.

Today we can express, based in some experience of the last year and a half, that using those virtual tools we gain efficiency (less hours debating), better agenda management (half a day meeting, instead of a full day plus the travelling time), budget savings and a Platform more environmental sustainable and climate friendly.

This does not mean to abandon the in-site activities, but only be more rational in our agendas' management.

3. Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to CEWP's evolution is always a challenging exercise needing a key solid knowledge of the actual basis of our work, if aiming to succeed.

As already pointed in the introduction, Denmark, Finland and currently Portugal have assumed the European Secretariat. In this initial phase of the Platform the assumption of the secretariat for each of these countries, was based on their expression of willingness, not responding to a specific procedure of selection.

However, taking into account that CEWP is now in a more mature phase and with an enlarged representation, it is appropriate to define a selection procedure for the European Secretariat host.

So, to choose the future European Secretariats, namely for the next two years period, the current European Secretariat has circulated a document, elaborated by a special Task-Force, establishing the basis for a consolidated procedure to be used from 2021. This document was presented in the European Coordination Meeting on the 2nd December 2020 and accepted by all the participants.

Consultations with the Chinese co-secretariat were also developed.

4. Procedure

Since the Portuguese engagement on the Secretariat will end on the 31st December 2021, it is necessary to launch a procedure inviting all the Member States to present a candidature to assume the European Secretariat for the period of 2022 and 2023.



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This process is launched by the current European Secretariat in a written way on the 21st May, through email and announced in our website.

The candidatures must be presented, in a written way, addressed to the European Secretariat (pedro.liberato@sgambiente.gov.pt and diana.carlos@sgambiente.gov.pt), till July the 9th

This enlarged period to receive candidatures is designed trying to give equal conditions for all the potential candidates to have the necessary references and delegation of competences from the National Government.

After the 9th of July, the current European Secretariat will prepare a document with a summary of all the candidatures and an evaluation of them, following the established criteria. This document will be circulated, in a written way, to all the European Members of CEWP on July the 23rd, to have reactions till September the 3rd.

After this written consultation, the current Secretariat will formally present the final proposal for the next Country and Entity to assume the European co-Secretariat for the next biennium, which will be circulated, by a written procedure on September the 13th, for a silence approval till the September the 17th.

On September the 20th, after consultations with the Chinese co-Secretariat, the current European Secretariat will announce the proposed next European co-Secretariat, which will be formally approved by the next JSC.

Taking in due account the impacts of COVID-19 in the CEWP work in 2020 and 2021, the current European Secretariat will guarantee a smooth transition to the next European Secretariat.

In case of no decision is achieved during this process, on September the 13th, the current European Secretariat will start consultations to find an alternative and emergency solution.

So, the general calendar for this process will be as follows:

May 21st	Official Launch of the procedure
July 9th	Deadline for the submission of the candidatures
July 23rd	Circulation of a summary of candidatures received
September 3rd	Deadline for comments by Member States
September 13th	Final proposal for approval by silence procedure
September 17th	Approval of the proposed new MS to assume the European Secretariat
Date to be defined	JSC meeting to approve the new Secretariat



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5. Criteria to be applied in the assesement of candidates

For a country, to assume this role of European Secretariat, must be in-line with the following three criteria:

1. Being member of the CEWP
2. Being engaged on the main events of CEWP (HLM, or JSC, or Focus Areas)
3. Being part of the technical work (taking part on projects, seminars, etc.)

The candidates will be excluded not fulfilling the first point and evaluated on their engagement on the second and third points.

After complying with the first set of criteria, there is a second set of criteria that the entity, assuming this task, must fulfill in terms of preference:

1. Being a Ministerial entity (as the counterpart in China is the Ministry of Water Resources)
2. Being an organization mandated by the Ministry
3. Being an organization involved on the CEWP work, with a mandate from the Ministry

In case there is more than one country on the top of the list, after combining these criteria, additional criteria are applied taking into consideration the quality and ambition of the presented program for the biennium and their antiquity in CEWP.

The candidates have to demonstrate the way they fulfill the above-mentioned criteria, with a special attention, for the potential entity to assume this task, which has to demonstrate being a Ministerial entity or to have the necessary delegation of powers from the respective National Ministry.

6. Annexes

- 6.1. Joint Statement and Appendix
- 6.2. TOR JSC and Secretariat

