

# CEWP European Secretariat

## Re-launching of the process for the selection of the next European Secretariat of CEWP

### 1. Introduction - The history of CEWP

The China-Europe Water Platform (CEWP) was launched in 2012 at the 6<sup>th</sup> 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), which is still guaranteeing the function.

### 2. Functions of the 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.



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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 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the JSC, on 27 June 2018, in Qingdao - P.R. 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.



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According to 2018 endorsed ToR, the Secretariat composition is, as follows:

- 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.

The working routines of the Secretariat, as described 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.

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

Today we can express, based in some experience of the last years, 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 environmentally sustainable and climate friendly.

This does not mean to abandon the *in-site* activities, but only to 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 (actually) 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, considering that CEWP has evolved in the past ten years it is appropriate to define a selection procedure for the European Secretariat host.

So, to choose the future European Secretariat, the acting European Secretariat has circulated a document, elaborated by a special Task-Force, establishing the basis for a consolidated procedure to be used from 2021 onwards. This document was presented in the European Coordination Meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and accepted by all the participants.

Consultations with the Chinese co-secretariat were also developed.



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Based on that document, on the past 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2021 an official procedure for the application for the position of European Secretariat of CEWP was open. Concluded the process for application on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, no formal applications were received by the acting European Secretariat.

According with the launching procedure document, in case of no decision during this process, the current European Secretariat would start consultation to find an alternative and emergency solution. These consultations were made, and the Portuguese Secretariat agreed to perform these functions in a particular relevant moment for CEWP, when PI was ending and negotiations for the next steps were in place.

After extensive informal consultations with several possible candidates, we can now conclude that a relaunching of this process is needed and appropriate.

## 4. Procedure

Since the Portuguese engagement on the Secretariat is already starting the 4<sup>th</sup> year, it is necessary to re-launch a procedure inviting all the Member States to present a candidature to assume the European Secretariat for the period of 2023 and 2024.

This process is launched by the acting European Secretariat in a written way on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February through email and announced in our website.

The candidatures must be presented, in a written way, addressed to the European Secretariat ([pedro.liberato@sgamambiente.gov.pt](mailto:pedro.liberato@sgamambiente.gov.pt) and [diana.carlos@sgambiente.gov.pt](mailto:diana.carlos@sgambiente.gov.pt) ), till March the 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 March the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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 the 8 of March, to have reactions till the 17<sup>th</sup> of March.

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 (2023-2024), which will be circulated, by a written procedure on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, for a silence approval till the 30<sup>th</sup> of March.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, after consultations with the Chinese Co-Secretariat, the current European Secretariat will announce the proposed next European Co-Secretariat.

In case of no decision is achieved during this process, an emergency European Coordination Meeting shall be scheduled to find a solution for the assuring a renovated and rotating European Co-Secretariat.

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



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<b>February 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Official Launch of the procedure</b>
<b>March 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Deadline for the submission of the candidatures</b>
<b>March 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Circulation of a summary of candidatures received</b>
<b>March 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Deadline for comments by Member States</b>
<b>March 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Final proposal for approval by silence procedure</b>
<b>March 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Approval of the proposed new MS to assume the European Secretariat</b>

## 5. Criteria to be applied in the assessment 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

