

# Fact sheet CO-REACH

July 2009



**Project Title:** Co-Ordination of Research between Europe and China  
**Web Page:** <http://www.co-reach.org>  
**Project Start:** 01.05.2005  
**Project Duration:** 60 months  
**Project Coordinator:** Linda Johnson (KNAW)  
**Contact Person in the IB:** Thomas Reineke, International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), thomas.reineke@dlr.de

## Projectpartner

	Name	Acronym	Country
1	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences	KNAW	Netherlands
2	Academy of Finland	AKA	Finland
3	National Centre for Scientific Research	CNRS	France
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MAE	France
5	Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research	DRIC/MENESR	France
6	Federal Ministry of Education and Research	BMBF	Germany
7	Royal Irish Academy	RIA	Ireland
8	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research	NWO	Netherlands
9	Research Council of Norway	RCN	Norway
10	Polish Academy of Sciences	PAS	Poland
11	British Academy for the Promotion of Historical, Philosophical and Philological Studies	BA	United Kingdom
12	Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge	The Royal Society (RS)	United Kingdom
13	German Research Foundation	DFG	Germany
14	International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the Project Management Agency of the German Aerospace Centre	DLR	Germany

The Chinese Partners of CO-REACH are the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC).

## General information about ERA-NETs

ERA-NETs are one of the instruments of the European Commission to stimulate the cooperation of research funding institutions or programme managers. The objective of the instrument is to strengthen the coordination of research activities of the EU Member States and the countries associated to the European Framework Programme for Research to overcome the fragmentation of the European Research Area. The participants of ERA-NETs are ministries, research funding agencies or programme managers that coordinate national or regional programmes (e.g. project management agencies).

The ERA-NET instrument exists since the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006), under which 71 (thematic) ERA-NETs were supported. Only a few ERA-NETs are horizontal, i.e. international ERA-NETS that target the cooperation with a selected third country.

An ERA-NET can include the following activities:

- Systematic exchange of information and best practices with the aim of enhancing the communication between the project partners.
- Strategically targeted activities that develop an evaluation of the options and barriers for cooperation and lead to the development of complementarities and joint objectives of national and regional research projects.
- Implementation of joint activities (e.g. clustering of nationally and regionally financed research programmes), utilization of multinational evaluation processes, joint training measures or the mutual opening of national infrastructures.
- Transnational research activities, e.g. the formulation of joint strategies and work programmes or the implementation of joint calls for research funding. National funding sources of different Member States can be pooled for this.

In the 7th Framework Programme (2007-2013) ERA-NETs were developed further to ERA-NETs PLUS, for which a common funding pot should be established and additional funding can be obtained from the European Commission ('top-up funding' for joint calls).

## Project description

CO-REACH is a network of European S&T policy and funding organisations involved in promoting research co-operation with China in the natural sciences, medical and life sciences, engineering sciences, social sciences and humanities. This network is intended to create coherence and synergy in Europe's S&T relations with China. It will do so by promoting the co-ordination of China related policies and associated research funding programmes of individual European countries, and integrating these efforts with those of other multi-lateral European initiatives, including the programmes and agreements of the European Commission. CO-REACH is supported by the European Commission as an ERA-NET Co-ordination Action. The ERA-NET scheme is the principal means for FP6 to support the coherence and co-ordination of national or regional research programmes within Europe, thereby making a reality of the European Research Area (ERA).

The primary goal of CO-REACH is to develop joint activities and, ultimately, to establish one or more new European programmes of research co-operation with China. These new programmes will build on the strengths of CO-REACH partners' existing bilateral programmes with China and will collectively address priority issues that fall beyond the capacities of individual European countries.

In pursuing this goal, CO-REACH seeks to fulfil four main objectives, namely:

- To contribute towards building the ERA by counteracting the fragmentation of institutional, national and regional efforts at promoting research co-operation with China
- To strengthen the international dimension of the ERA and provide a gateway to European S&T for Chinese organisations and researchers.
- To strengthen European S&T relations with China by building the critical mass required for the support of new European programmes of research co-operation with China, and making optimal and durable use of resources to benefit European and Chinese S&T communities, economies and societies.
- To foster strategic policy-making on European research co-operation with China and to identify critical research needs and priorities, as well as future challenges and opportunities, in both Europe and China.

## **Active cooperation of the International Bureau**

The International Bureau is authorized by the BMBF to act as National Contact Point for the German participation in the CO-REACH Pilot Call in Social Science Research. The design and implementation of this call was carried out until May 2009 in very close cooperation with the Joint Call Secretariat, which was located at the German Research Foundation (DFG). The International Bureau was responsible for the implementation of the online web-tool “pt-outline” for submission and evaluation of applications.

## **Status and interim project results**

CO-REACH will initially undertake a five-year programme of work, designed to build mutual understanding and trust between the network's partners. Partners will cultivate incremental levels of practical co-operation and collaboration. The coordination steps that are being taken along the route to setting up new European programmes of research co-operation with China include:

- Mapping and benchmarking existing programmes with China managed by CO-REACH partners, and maintaining an updated and comprehensive directory of European funding mechanisms for promoting research co-operation with China.
- Analysing opportunities for developing joint activities between CO-REACH partners, and designing action plans to implement such activities and overcome potential barriers to them.
- Preparing a generic protocol that can be used in the design, management and evaluation of new European programmes of research co-operation with China.
- Developing a series of joint activities, which will promote networking between European and Chinese researchers and link or merge existing bilateral China programmes or parts of them.

Since its launch in May 2005, CO-REACH produced the following main outputs:

- Mapping Report comprising a comprehensive, structured overview of bilateral programmes with China managed by CO-REACH partners.
- Benchmarking & Best Practices Analytical report 'Bilateral collaboration with China: trends, systems and challenges'
- Work programme 2007, published on the CO-REACH website.
- Launching a CO-REACH Pilot Joint Call in Social Science Research.

Currently activities of the fifth and sixth Work Packages for the accomplishment of a joint European-Chinese Coordination action are running.

## **Planned activities until May 2010**

- Evaluation of the Joint Pilot Call in Social Science Research (WP 5.3.), June - August 2009
- Evaluation of all CO-REACH – activities, structures und procedures (WP6.1), May – October 2009
- Identifying of future CO-REACH Activities and potential Developments of the Network (WP 6.2), July – November 2009
- Initialisation of jointly agreed activities (WP 6.2), November 2009 – May 2010

## **Funding of cooperation projects with China**

In October 2008, a Pilot Joint Call in Social Sciences was launched together with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) to promote social science research between Europe and China.

The call supports European and Chinese scientists to explore future scientific cooperation in the field of the social sciences and to undertake small research projects. Funds are available for mobility, seminars and certain research costs for a period of two years, subject to national regulations. The programme is aimed both at European and Chinese scholars experienced in collaborating together and at those with little or no previous experience of working together in China and/or Europe. The joint programme therefore provides opportunities for networking and developing experience in unfamiliar research environments and different research traditions.

The programme offers opportunities in a wide range of research areas in the social sciences, extending into the humanities. The broad definition of research topics is intended to offer maximum flexibility among researchers in devising research proposals. Research networks should focus on a research topic jointly developed and presented by the network as a whole.

Proposals were invited with respect to five main thematic areas that have been identified as raising issues of common concern in China and Europe:

- Demography, Family and Welfare
- Cultural Heritage
- Law, Governance and Policy Making
- Participation, Co-determination, Employment and the Quality of Life
- Labour Market Change, Migration and Social Cohesion

In order to ease liaison between European and Chinese scientists, a list of potential CASS collaborating institutes was provided to the applicants. These scientists served as contact points to other Chinese colleagues. Non-CASS academics were involved in a research group from China. Contacts to non-CASS academics were arranged with CASS on a case-by-case basis.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supported this European-Chinese call for social sciences and humanities with its national announcement:

<http://www.internationales-buero.de/de/3155.php>

The program is jointly carried out by twelve partners from seven different countries with their specific national announcements:

- Germany
  - Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)**
  - German Research Foundation (DFG)
- Finland: Academy of Finland (AKA)
- France:
  - Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research (MESR)
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAEE)
- United Kingdom:
  - British Academy (BA)
  - Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
  - Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- The Netherlands:
  - Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
  - The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)
- Austria: Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMWF)
- China: Chinese Academy for Social Sciences (CASS)

For the Pilot Joint Call in total about 2 Million € have been provided, the BMBF supports the programme with 300.000 € and the DFG provides 200.000 €.

For the final evaluation of submitted proposals an international Scientific Evaluation Committee was installed with Chinese representatives being involved. In total, 14 excellent scientific proposals were selected for funding. Eleven of these proposals run with German participation whereof two are coordinated by German Principle Investigators. For Germany the fund flow amounts to approximately 410.000 €. The projects start in August 2009.